

**New York State Thruway Authority**  
**Annual Highlights - 2020**

**Overview**

***New York State Thruway Authority (Authority)***

The 570-mile New York State Thruway, operated by the Thruway Authority, has served as the central artery of the state's transportation system for nearly six decades.

The Thruway is renowned for being among the safest and most reliable superhighway systems in the country. Throughout the history of the system, toll revenues have been the primary source of funds to support Thruway operations, maintenance and capital investments.

**Thruway by the Numbers**

- More than **26.5 million visitors** to the Thruway's 27 service areas and three welcome centers
- **166,965 square feet** of highway pavement repaired
- More than **47.2 million gallons** of gasoline and diesel fuel sold at Thruway service areas
- **43,113** roadside service calls received by the Thruway Statewide Operations Center
- **137,560 tons** of salt and **449,108 gallons** of anti-icing agents applied during winter maintenance season
- **208,574 staff hours** worked, and **1,508,451 miles** traveled conducting snow and ice operations
- **54,157** special hauling permits issued to oversize and overweight vehicles
- More than **119,700 tickets** issued by New York State Police Troop T, including but not limited to:
  - **61,249** for speeding
  - **1,257** for cell phone usage
  - **1,567** for texting while driving
  - **4,149** for no seatbelt
  - **2,438** for violating the ***Move Over Law***
- **6,778** crashes investigated
- **1,518** criminal and **918 DWI arrests**

***Winter Operations and Emergency Management***

In 2020, the Authority continued strengthening its snow and ice fleet operations. These efforts included:

- Replaced equipment including 25-Heavy Duty Plow Trucks, 13-Heavy Duty Loaders, 33 Spreaders, 15 11-foot Reversible Plows and one 10-foot Reversible Plow.
- Continued to develop and enhance the Authority's Emergency Management Operations Protocol (EMOP) document and train staff on requirements in conjunction with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES).

- Coordinated statewide storm response with Authority and New York State Department of Transportation staff.
- Conducted drills with outside agencies and transportation partners.
- Reviewed winter operations protocols and response plans.

### ***Average Customer Wait Time for Thruway Roadside Assistance***

The safety of motorists on the Thruway system is a top priority. Disabled vehicles in need of roadside assistance are a safety hazard and must be removed as quickly as possible. Ensuring that authorized tow operators are dispatched and respond to disabled vehicles quickly improves safety on the Thruway. In 2020, the average wait time was 28.2 minutes on the Thruway system.

### ***Motor Vehicle Fatalities on the Thruway System***

In 2020, there were 28 fatal crashes resulting in 37 fatalities on the Thruway.

## **Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge**

The twin-span Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge is fully open to traffic and remains within its \$3.98 billion budget.

As one of the largest bridge projects in the nation, and the biggest in the history of the Thruway Authority, the project achieved several milestones in 2020.

In January, Governor Cuomo announced the winners of the bridge's Public Art Program — ten commissions were awarded to eight New York State artists. Five sculptures were placed on Thruway property on or near the Tarrytown (Westchester County) and South Nyack (Rockland County) sides of the bridge's bicycle and walking path. Three of the sculptures incorporate remnant steel salvaged from the decommissioned Tappan Zee Bridge. An abstract mural adorns the path's underpass in South Nyack and there are four custom-designed bike racks on or near its landings. The Authority partnered with ArtsWestchester and the Arts Council of Rockland to select artists through a competitive multi-stage review process.

In February, the new State Police Troop T barracks and the new Authority Maintenance Facility opened in Tarrytown. Located along either side of the New York State Thruway, both buildings provide immediate access to the bridge, decreasing response time to accidents and emergencies, and allowing for the quick clearing of vehicle breakdowns.

Throughout the winter and spring, work continued to finish the bridge's 3.6-mile shared bicycle and pedestrian path and related visitor facilities at both landings. On June 15, Governor Cuomo officially opened the path, providing an environmentally friendly new connection for families, runners, cyclists, walkers and commuters to travel between Westchester and Rockland counties. Safety protocols were in place to limit the potential spread of COVID-19.

As part of the path's opening, the Authority launched several new digital platforms for the bridge: a website ([mariomcuomobridge.ny.gov](http://mariomcuomobridge.ny.gov)); Twitter feed (@GMMCB); and Instagram account (@gmmcb\_ny).

The completion of the path was quickly followed by the opening of the dedicated bus lane on the westbound span, and the reopening of the “Ramp E” connector from Route 9 in Tarrytown to the bridge’s Rockland-bound span.

By year’s end, more than 250,000 people had visited the path to take in the scenic views, public art and interpretive displays. The Authority also partnered with the NYS Department of Transportation to utilize its Hudson Link regional bus service as a free weekend shuttle serving the path and commuter parking lots. More than 5,600 people used the shuttle.

The project’s Community Benefits Program awarded more than \$100,000 in grants in 2020, bringing the innovative program to a close. During its existence, approximately \$20 million was awarded to fund noise-reducing windows and doors, emergency response equipment, public safety and other community and environmental improvements.

TZC, the project’s design-builder, used nearly 950 subcontractors and suppliers based in New York, providing a significant economic boost to the lower Hudson Valley and the state, as envisioned by Governor Cuomo. Approximately 7,000 people worked on the project, accounting for more than 13.2 million work hours.

The project team held more than 1,300 meetings with the public, with its educational outreach team reaching more than 75,000 students in the tri-state area.

### ***Protecting the Environment***

In construction as well as design, the project team continued to work diligently to minimize the environmental impacts associated with the project. From the start, the project has transparently protected the residents of and near the Hudson River by minimizing noise, vibration and air quality impacts, and by limiting the effects on endangered species and water quality through a combination of state-of-the-art technology and leading-edge construction and demolition techniques.

Environmental accomplishments for the project during 2020 include:

- All environmental permits were closed and all obligations under the permits were fulfilled.
- Partnered with the Billion Oyster Project, Hudson River Foundation, the NY Harbor School, Cornell University, Scenic Hudson, Riverkeeper, NY/NJ Baykeeper, National Marine Fisheries Service and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to finish monitoring more than 400 oyster reef structures the project placed in five locations in the Hudson River near the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge as part of the state’s commitment to re-establish wild oyster population in the river. Monitoring in 2020 indicated that the reefs in all locations show substantial oyster growth. This fulfilled the Authority’s responsibility for this mitigation.
- The resident peregrine falcons were present in the nest box on the bridge.
- The Authority completed post-construction monitoring of the successful mitigation project to restore a secondary channel in the Hudson River at Gay’s Point in

Columbia County through active collaboration with the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). DEC will conduct all future monitoring.

- The successful Green Infrastructure mitigation project to improve water quality to the Sparkill Creek and Hudson River was completed at the Tappan High School where four storm water improvement projects were installed and landscaped. Post construction monitoring was completed, and Tappan High School will conduct all future maintenance and monitoring, as described in the agreement between the Authority and the High School.
- The Authority’s partnership with NYS Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and NYSDOT was successfully concluded, and mitigation of impacts to a 19<sup>th</sup> century coal barge that was in the affected area of the new bridge as required by the Memorandum of Agreement with SHPO was completed.

**Capital Projects and Construction Contracts**

To balance the needs of its extensive interstate highway and bridge network, the Thruway Authority developed an innovative and comprehensive asset management program in 2012. This program enables the Authority to use extensive data about pavement and bridge conditions, crash profiles, frequent flooding zones, historical investments, and other important elements of the system to prioritize capital projects and determine the most cost-effective and efficient ways to complete those projects.

In 2020, the Thruway Authority opened bids for nine projects worth a total of more than \$42 million. These projects included:

<b>LOCATION</b> (MP - Milepost)	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTION COST</b>
Three Bridges over Thruway, Scotland Hill Road (MP 23.62), Hungry Hollow Road (MP 24.62) and College Road (MP 26.37)	Bridge Replacement	\$30.8 million
I-787 (Exit 23, MP 141.9) to Northway (Exit 24, MP 148.15), Southbound Only	Concrete Pavement Diamond Grinding	\$2.9 million
Albany Division	On-Demand Repair Contract 2021 - 2022	\$2.8 million
Catskill Creek (MP 113.22)	Slope Stabilization	\$1.7 million
Kensington Expressway - Route 33 (MP 421.57) and Center Road (CR91, MP 463.45)	Steel Repairs	\$1.5 million
Methyl-Methacrylate of Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge Shared Use Path	Surface Treatment & Adjacent Concrete Barriers	\$1.4 million

LOCATION (MP - Milepost)	PROJECT	CONSTRUCTION COST
Route 295 Bridge (MP 816.26)	Steel Repairs	\$0.9 million
Brookside Road (MP 74.17)	Steel Repairs	\$0.7 million
Geneva Interchange (Exit 42, MP 327.10)	Construct New Salt Shed	\$0.1 million

**Enhanced Services and Attractions for Thruway Motorists**

***Service Area Project***

In July 2020, the Authority signed a lease agreement with Empire State Thruway Partners to modernize and reimagine the 27 service areas across the Thruway system. The new operator will upgrade and enhance the service areas by providing sustainable and technologically advanced designs, enhanced services for commercial drivers, Taste NY products and promoting local businesses and tourism through the I LOVE NY program at all service areas. Construction is scheduled to begin at 10 locations in the Summer of 2021.

***Cashless Tolling***

The Thruway Authority modernized its 570-mile transportation system by implementing system-wide cashless tolling. This \$355 million transformative investment reduces congestion, improves traffic flow, is better for the environment, and allows for non-stop travel on New York’s toll roads, bridges and tunnels. During the first phase which was completed in 2018, the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, Grand Island North and South Bridges, Harriman, Yonkers, New Rochelle and Spring Valley toll barriers were converted to cashless tolling. The next phase was the conversion of the ticketed portion of the Thruway, which included the 21 mainline gantries and 34 ramp gantries. The Design-Build contract was awarded in August 2019, construction began in late 2019 and it was completed in October 2020. The entire Thruway system converted to cashless tolling on November 14<sup>th</sup>. The last phase of the project is the removal of the remaining plazas and realignment of the ramps and interchanges. Six toll plazas were removed by the end of 2020 and the remainder will be removed by the end of 2021.

**Environmental Stewardship**

***Environmental Sustainability at the Service Areas***

The Service Area modernization project is designed to promote sustainability by implementing strategies to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The Project is anticipated to begin mid-2021 and will incorporate the United States Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles and renewable sources of energy to support New York State Executive Orders 88 and 166, as well as the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

### ***New York State Pollinator Task Force***

In 2020, the Authority continued its efforts to support pollinators. Such efforts included reduced mowing limits to allow the cultivation of native species, which support pollinators. The Authority also increased wildflower plantings that also supported pollinators. The Authority's partnership on the research study being led by the New York State Department of Transportation continues. The research is being undertaken by the Rochester Institute of Technology and is designed to identify the impacts of a modified mowing regime on pollinators. Three locations on the Thruway have been included in the study. The findings from the research are anticipated in 2023.

### ***Solar Highway***

The solar array at Woodbury is complete and the site is now operational. This project is part of the New York State Department of Transportation's solar highway initiative. The Thruway Authority is currently pursuing options for additional solar installations along the Thruway and has engaged with the New York Power Authority (NYPA) while also reviewing potential locations for siting new installments.

### ***Electric Vehicle Charging Stations***

The Authority partnered with NYPA to install Level 2 charging stations at nine Authority-owned commuter lots and the landings of the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge. Additionally, Level 3 fast charging stations were installed at four Service Areas in the Central and Western NY regions and on the Westchester landing side of the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge. As part of the Service Area modernization project, all Service Areas will have at least one, Level 3 fast charging station able to charge all types of electric vehicles.

## **Troop T**

New York State Police Troop T is the State Police unit dedicated to patrolling the Thruway system. In addition to regular enforcement activities, Troop T is an integral part of Thruway safety-related initiatives throughout the year.

- Speed Week campaigns are enforcement initiatives that focus on speeding motorists and aggressive driving. Troopers conducted enforcement for distracted drivers (e.g., texting or cell phone use), impaired drivers, drivers violating the *Move Over Law* and vehicle occupants who are not properly using seat belts.
- The annual *Operation Work Brake* campaign, which took place during April, targeted speeding motorists and aggressive driving in and around construction work zones. Because of COVID-19, Operation Work Brake was combined with National Work Zone Awareness Week.
- State Police continue to vigilantly enforce DWI laws. Their enforcement campaigns include dedicated patrols and checkpoints, which are conducted randomly at undisclosed locations along the statewide Thruway system.
- The 44<sup>th</sup> Annual *Pumpkin Patrol*, aimed at preventing Halloween pranks and protecting motorists along the Thruway involves volunteers from local organizations from numerous counties throughout the state. Troopers and volunteers, posted on highway bridges and overpasses, successfully prevented incidents of property damage or mischief.