

New York State Thruway Authority
Annual Highlights - 2021

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 **26.7 million visitors** to the Thruway's 27 service areas and three welcome centers
- **160,991 square feet** of highway pavement repaired
- More than **59.4 million gallons** of gasoline and diesel fuel sold at Thruway service areas
- **35,984** roadside service calls received by the Thruway Statewide Operations Center
- **132,906 tons** of salt and **457,903 gallons** of anti-icing agents applied during winter maintenance season
- **203,686 staff hours** worked and **1,855,169 miles** traveled conducting snow and ice operations
- **58,168** special hauling permits issued to oversize and overweight vehicles
- **Total of 131,247 tickets** issued by New York State Police Troop T, including but not limited to:
 - **64,209** for speeding
 - **1,439** for cell phone usage
 - **2,487** for texting while driving
 - **4,657** for no seatbelt
 - **2,812** for violating the ***Move Over Law***
- **8,216** crashes investigated
- **1,289** criminal and **1,105** **DWI arrests**

Winter Operations and Emergency Management

In 2021, the Authority continued strengthening its snow and ice fleet operations. These efforts included:

- Replaced equipment including 1 Heavy Duty Plow Truck, 4 Heavy Duty Loaders, 13 Spreaders, 19 11-foot Reversible Plows and 5 10-foot Reversible Plows
- 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 can be a safety hazard and must be removed as quickly as possible. Ensuring that authorized tow operators are dispatched and respond to disabled vehicles quickly enhances safety on the Thruway. In 2021, the average wait time was 28.9 minutes on the Thruway system.

Motor Vehicle Fatalities on the Thruway System

In 2021, there were 17 fatal crashes resulting in 18 fatalities on the Thruway. In comparison to the US Department of Transportation's national fatality rates, the Thruway Authority's estimated fatality rate for 2021 is 0.26, far below the national projected rate of 1.34 for the first half of 2021. USDOT reported the national fatality rate increased between 2020 and 2021, while the Thruway Authority's fatality rate decreased.

NYS Thruway - Vision Forward

In November 2020, the Thruway Authority completed a system-wide conversion to cashless tolling, ending nearly 70 years of cash toll collection. This new model of revenue collection has greatly impacted the Authority and requires a top to bottom review and modernization of operations, business processes, and available technology resources. As part of this modernization project, we have engaged Accenture LLP to assess toll collection function, supporting systems, and processes within all areas of the Authority. This will help us to better align the organizational structure and resource allocation with the realities and customer expectations of the 21st century.

Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge

The twin-span Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge—the longest bridge in New York State—is fully open to traffic and the project remains within its \$3.98 billion budget.

More than 140,000 people visited the bridge's 3.6-mile bicycle and pedestrian path in 2021, including 9,400 who arrived via a free seasonal weekend bus shuttle sponsored by NYSDOT. During the summer months, visitors were greeted by college student "Ambassadors" who helped orient and share information about the path's many recreational features, including the public art, bike rentals, and refreshments.

Visitors were notified of the latest path news and real-time information through the bridge's Instagram (@gmmcb_ny) and Twitter (@gmmcb) feeds.

The bridge's architectural features—its eight towers, 192 stay cables, and scores of piers—were lit nightly in 2021. The bridge was bathed in color—in sync with other state landmarks—to observe major federal, state and religious holidays, and in support of numerous awareness days.

The bridge's website, which includes information for visitors, a design and engineering overview, and content regarding the legacy of the former Tappan Zee Bridge, was enhanced in 2021 to allow groups to apply for permits online and now features the aesthetic lighting calendar.

The website’s “FalconCam” continued to be popular feature, allowing visitors to watch the bridge’s resident falcons, including three new falcons born in the nest box located atop one of the towers. To celebrate their arrival, the project team held a falcon naming contest. Nearly 1,000 visitors to the path voted for their favorite names—Luke Flywalker, Talon Zee, and Jimmy Falcon—culled from 50 submitted by local elementary and middle school students.

Additionally, the project team closed out its \$20 million Community Benefits Program and \$1.5 million Waterfront Revitalization Grant program. It also continued to advance the Route 9 multimodal improvements project, which extends the bridge side path in Tarrytown south to Lyndhurst and features a 270-foot-long pedestrian bridge over the Thruway. Other improvements include widening a section of Route 9 and the eastbound I-87/I-287 on-ramp, adding a second southbound left turn lane onto the Thruway ramp, repaving, and adding a traffic signal at a key Route 9 intersection.

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 2021, the Thruway Authority awarded bids for 22 projects worth a total of more than \$218 million. These projects included:

LOCATION (MP - Milepost)	PROJECT	CONSTRUCTION COST
I-95 (New England Thruway) MP 600.170-614.110	Bridge Maintenance Cleaning for Steel Preservation	\$0.5 million
New York Division: MP NE5.76	North Avenue Bridge over I-95 (New England Thruway) - Relocate Utilities for Replacement	\$2.0 million
Albany Division: MP 801.08	Castleton Bridge - Rehabilitation	\$47.6 million

LOCATION (MP - Milepost)	PROJECT	CONSTRUCTION COST
Buffalo Division: MP 483.0 to MP 496.0	East of Westfield to Pennsylvania State Line Eastbound: Pavement Resurfacing	\$19.6 million
New York Division: Various	Pavement Safety Striping - 2021	\$0.4 million
Albany and Syracuse Divisions: Various	Pavement Safety Striping - 2021	\$0.5 million
Syracuse and Buffalo Divisions: Various	Pavement Safety Striping - 2021	\$0.8 million
Administrative Headquarters: MP 141.92:	Computer Room Renovations	\$1.6 million
Albany Division: MP 121.2 to MP 141.9	North of Coxsackie to south of Albany: Safety Upgrades	\$6.2 million
New York Division: I-95, New England Thruway: MP 608.8 to MP 610.8 Northbound and MP 613.0 to MP 614.1	Pavement Resurfacing: North of Exit 17 to north of Exit 18B Northbound Only and north of Exit 19 to north of Exit 21	\$19.9 million
Albany Division: Various Locations	Culvert Rehabilitations/ Replacements - 2021	\$4.8 million
New York/Albany Divisions: MP 84.14 & MP 30.23	Bridge Scour Repairs	\$2.5 million
New York Division: I-95, New England Thruway; Various Locations	Highway Improvements 2022-2023	\$8.5 million

LOCATION (MP - Milepost)	PROJECT	CONSTRUCTION COST
Syracuse Division:	On-Demand Repair Contract 2022 - 2023	\$3.4 million
New York Division:	On-Demand Repair Contract 2022 - 2023	\$3.0 million
Buffalo Division:	On-Demand Repair Contract 2022 - 2023	\$2.9 million
Albany Division: Headquarters – MP 141.92	Computer Room Renovations	\$1.6 million
Syracuse Division: MP 284.1 to MP 289.3	Pavement Replacement from Electronics Parkway (Exit 37) to I-690 (Exit 39) and Replacement of the Thruway Bridge over CSX Railroad (Geddes) and Rehabilitation of Bridge over Onondaga Pkwy and Bridge over Onondaga Lake Outlet	\$84.3 million
Syracuse Division: MP 225.48 and MP 225.49	Thruway Bridges over County Road 53 - Replacements	\$5.9 million
New York Division:	Pavement Safety Striping - 2022	\$0.6 million
Albany and Syracuse Divisions:	Pavement Safety Striping - 2022	\$0.6 million
Syracuse and Buffalo Divisions:	Pavement Safety Striping - 2022	\$1.0 million

Enhanced Services and Attractions for Thruway Motorists

Service Area Project

In July 2021, Empire State Thruway Partners commenced construction at 10 service area locations across the Thruway system and interim operations at another six sites as part of the \$450 million project to redevelop and modernize all 27 service areas. The project is funded through a public-private partnership and no toll dollars or state tax dollars are being used.

The contract with Empire state Thruway Partners is a 33-year term with two phases of construction. Phase one takes place 2021-2023 and includes 16 services areas. Phase two takes place 2023-2025 and includes 11 service areas. To ensure continuity of services, no two consecutive service areas in the same direction of travel will be closed for renovations at the same time. Fuel services remain available at all locations.

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.

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, 2020. The last phase of the project was completed in 2021 and included the demolition of the remaining toll barriers and toll plazas at 52 locations, realignment of the roadway to match abutting roadway sections and accommodate standard design speeds and removal of excess pavement leading into and out of the toll plaza. The project was substantially completed on October 18, 2021, weeks ahead of schedule.

Work Zone Safety

A law (New York State Chapter 421 of the Laws of 2021; S.4682-B/A.485-B) was enacted in September 2021 authorizing the Authority and NYSDOT to develop a five-year pilot program to use automated photo enforcement technologies to impose monetary liability on vehicle owners for speed violations in work zones. The program goal is to improve safety by reducing speeding in active work zones. The agencies have issued a public request for proposal to acquire automated photo speed enforcement services for work zones in New York State that will provide roadside equipment, technicians, data collection services, customer service, violation review and processing, and reports/reporting capabilities. This vendor will provide ten mobile units that will be used in active work zones across the Thruway. Notices will be sent to violators which will include violation fees as provided by the statute. Adjudication of notice of liability will be conducted by the local jurisdiction. Work zone enforcement is expected to begin in the Summer of 2022.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Sustainability at the Service Areas

The Service Area modernization project, which began in 2021, will incorporate numerous strategies to promote sustainability and reduce energy consumption. United

States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles will be incorporated into the buildings and surrounding sites. Items being considered include low flow water fixtures, high efficiency heating and air conditioning systems, fixtures to improve indoor air quality, rainwater management features, non-invasive, low maintenance plantings, and much more. These features will also 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

The Authority's efforts to support pollinators continued in 2021. The Authority participated in the 2021 Invasive Species Summit, providing information to attendees on the Authority's efforts to protect pollinators and prevent the spread of invasive species. In addition, a research study being undertaken by the Rochester Institute of Technology continues, including three locations along the Thruway. The Authority is partnering on the Study, being led by the New York State Department of Transportation. The Study is designed to identify impacts of a modified mowing regime on pollinators. The findings from the research are anticipated in 2023. The Authority is continuing to reduce mowing limits in other locations along the system to allow the growth of native plants species that support pollinators, The Authority began drafting updated guidance for vegetation management of the Right of Way, which will include additional efforts to protect pollinator species.

Solar Highway

The Authority's solar array at Woodbury continues to provide renewable energy to the local utility, which is used to offset the energy utilities at several Authority facilities. Moving forward, the Authority has identified potential sites along the system for additional solar installations. The Authority is working with the New York Power Authority (NYPA) on a procurement process to progress these installations.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

As part of the service area modernization project, all 27 service areas will have at least two and up to six, Level 3 fast charging stations able to charge all types of electric vehicles. When completed, there will be 120 EV charging stations installed statewide across the Thruway system, with an average of 30 miles between each location.

Currently, there are 40 charging stations located at eight service areas, three welcome centers, nine commuter park and ride lots and the two Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge landings.

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.
 - 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 45th 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.