



## Annual Highlights – 2023

### 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 seven 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

- 2023 Overall Revised Budget: **\$1.2 billion**
- Thruway Operating Expenses: **\$378.4 million**
- Debt Service: **\$359.3 million**
- Thruway System-wide Capital Projects Revised Budget: **\$360 million**
- Five-year Capital Plan (2023-2027): **\$1.9 billion**
- State Police Troop T: **\$67 million**
- More than **1,136,563 visitors** to the Thruway's three welcome centers
- **172 lane miles** of highway pavement rehabilitated or reconstructed
- **5 bridges** replaced
- **13 bridges** rehabilitated
- More than **54.3 million gallons** of gasoline and diesel fuel sold at Thruway service areas
- **47,610** roadside service calls received by the Thruway Statewide Operations Center
- **103,609 tons** of salt and **312,004 gallons** of anti-icing agents applied during winter maintenance season
- **156,927 employee hours** worked and **1,376,103 miles** traveled conducting snow and ice operations
- **62,746** special hauling permits issued to oversize and overweight vehicles
- **468** bridges inspected
- **123,343 tickets** issued by New York State Police Troop T including:
  - **53,861** for speeding
  - **1,237** for cell phone usage
  - **2,607** for texting while driving
  - **5,011** for no seatbelt
  - **2,014** for violating the ***Move Over Law***
  - **8,979 crashes** investigated
  - **700** criminal arrests **and 773** DWI arrests

### ***Winter Operations and Emergency Management***

In 2023, the Authority continued strengthening its snow and ice fleet operations. These efforts included:

- Replaced equipment including 27 Heavy Duty Plow Trucks, 3 Medium Duty Snow Plow Trucks, 1 Heavy Duty Loader, 2 Spreaders, 4 11-foot Reversible Plows and 4 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, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), State Police and DHSES staff
- Conducted drills with outside agencies and transportation partners
- Reviewed winter operations protocols and response plans with specific attention to items covered in the Blizzard of 2022 After-Action Review issued by the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services in August 2023.

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

The safety of motorists on the Thruway system is the 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 2023, the average wait time was 29 minutes on the Thruway system.

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

The Thruway continues to be one of the safest highways in the nation. In comparison to the US Department of Transportation's national fatality rates, the Thruway's estimated fatality rate for 2023 is 0.29, far below the national rate of 1.37 for 2021. There were 25 crashes resulting in 27 fatalities reported on the Thruway in 2023.

### **Toll Adjustment Public Process**

In December 2022, the New York State Thruway Authority Board of Directors authorized the start of the toll adjustment process on the New York State Thruway system. The adjustments create a responsible, stable financial plan and ensure the Authority can meet its future capital and infrastructure needs. It represents the first toll adjustment for NY E-ZPass customers since 2010.

The public process included five public hearings in 2023, receipt and consideration of 210 public comments, completion of the Environmental Assessment for the proposed toll modification, as well as the completion of all of the necessary actions required by the Public Authorities Law, the State Administrative Procedure Act (SAPA) and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

In September 2023, the Thruway Authority Board of Directors approved the toll adjustment proposal, which went into effect on Jan. 1, 2024.

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

The twin-span Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge—the longest bridge in New York State—fully opened to traffic in 2018; more than 50 million vehicles cross the bridge each year.

Nearly 650,000 people have visited the bridge’s 3.6-mile bicycle and pedestrian path since it opened in June 2020, including more than 140,000 in 2023. Just over 6,500 visitors arrived at the path via a free seasonal weekend Hudson Link bus shuttle sponsored by NYSDOT.

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 2023. 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 approximately 100 times.

The bridge’s website allows the public to make lighting requests. Visitors also can find information about the path’s many recreational features, including the public art and bike rentals, along with a design and engineering overview, and content regarding the legacy of the former Tappan Zee Bridge.

The website’s “BridgeCam” and “FalconCam” continued to be popular features, allowing visitors to capture views of the main span, and the resident falcons that live atop one of its towers.

Additionally, construction began in Spring 2023 on the Route 9 multimodal improvements project, which extends the bridge side path in Tarrytown one mile 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. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

### **Federal Grant Applications**

The Thruway Authority has increased its efforts to find and apply for grant opportunities to diversify the Authority’s revenue portfolio when funding is awarded.

In 2023, the Authority was awarded two federal grants applied for in 2022: a \$1.5 million federal grant as part of the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grants program to implement the Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) technologies, and a \$21 million federal grant as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration Bridge Investment Program, for a

project on the Castleton-on-Hudson bridge. Also announced in 2023, the Authority was awarded a \$1.2 million federal grant for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A).

A comprehensive list of grant funding applications submitted in 2023 in support of the strategic plan and Capital Program is listed below.

<b>PROJECT / LOCATION (MP – Milepost)</b>	<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Grant Request Amount</b>	<b>Status</b>
NYSTA Advanced Technology Systems for Bridge Hit Detection	Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation program (SMART)	\$1.35 Million	Pending Decision
Comprehensive Safety Action Plan	Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)	\$1.5 Million	<b>Selected \$1.2 Million</b>
Thruway Flood Mitigation Niagara Pump House Upgrade	Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)	\$3.7 Million	Pending Decision
Town of Clarkstown Flood Mitigation along Thruway MP 19.51	Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)	\$500,000	Not Selected
South Grand Island Bridge  Steel Retrofit/Repair Roller Bearings, Pins and Hangars  MP 914 to MP 915	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)</li> <li>2. Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Program (PROTECT)</li> </ol>	<p>\$25 Million</p> <p>\$39 Million</p>	<p>Not Selected*</p> <p>Pending Decision</p>

<b>PROJECT / LOCATION (MP – Milepost)</b>	<b>Grant Program</b>	<b>Grant Request Amount</b>	<b>Status</b>
I-95 (New England Section) 3.5” Asphalt Overlay MP 604 to MP 608	1. Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)	\$25 Million	Not Selected*
	2. Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA)	\$25.5 Million	Not Selected
I-90 Medium and Heavy Duty Vehicle Charging Network Enabling Large Vehicle Electrification in New York State and Beyond	Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (CFI)	\$82 Million	Not Selected
Hudson Highlands Land Bridge	Wildlife Crossing Program	\$43.7 Million	Not Selected
I-90 Rehabilitating a 4.3-mile Segment between MP 347.1 and MP 351.4	Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA)	\$25 Million	Not Selected

*\*Application advanced through all stages of the ratings process and was advanced to final pool of applications for consideration by the Secretary of Transportation.*

### **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 2023, the Thruway Authority awarded 22 construction contracts in all four divisions worth more than \$168.5 million including the following:

<b>LOCATION (MP - Milepost)</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTION COST</b>
Buffalo Division: Various Locations	On-Demand Repair Contract	\$3.0 million
New York Division: MP 60.1 - MP 68.0	Pavement Resurfacing	\$9.7 million
I-95 (New England Thruway) Various Locations	Bridge Maintenance Cleaning	\$0.5 million
New York Division: Various Locations	On-Demand Repair Contract	\$3.0 million
I-95 (New England Thruway) Various Locations	Highway Improvements	\$7.9 million
Buffalo Division: Various Locations	Culvert Rehab/Replace	\$2.2 million
New York Division: Various Locations	Replacement of ITS Equipment	\$4.4 million
Albany Division: MP 141.92	Admin Headquarters TSOC & State Police Renovations	\$3.0 million
Buffalo Division: MP 411.60	Bridge Replacement at Ransom Road over Thruway	\$4.1 million
Albany Division: MP 111.13 & MP 113.22	Bridge Preservation	\$9.3 million
Buffalo Division: North Grand Island Bridges	Bridge Rehab incl. Steel Repairs	\$67.8 million
Buffalo Division: MP 438.5 - MP 443.60 WB and MP 443.6 - MP 451.5	Microsurfacing	\$4.8 million
Albany Division: MP 180.0 - MP 197.9	Pavement Repairs	\$4.6 million
Buffalo Division: Various Locations	Bridge Painting	\$2.5 million
Albany Division: MP 112.57	Bridge Replacement at Cauterskill Road Bridge over Thruway	\$4.5 million
Buffalo Division: Various Locations	Bridge Preservation	\$4.1 million
Syracuse Division: MP 274.48	Bridge Replacement at Shepps Corners Road	\$5.0 million
Syracuse Division: Various Locations	On-Demand Repair Contract	\$3.3 million
Albany Division: MP 93.8 - MP 109.3	Pavement Resurfacing	\$21.4 million
New York Division: Various Locations	Pavement Marking Installation	\$0.6 million

<b>LOCATION (MP - Milepost)</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTION COST</b>
Albany Division: Various Locations	Pavement Marking Installation	\$1.6 million
Buffalo Division: Various Locations	Pavement Marking Installation	\$2.0 million

**Enhanced Services and Attractions for Thruway Motorists**

***Service Area Project***

In 2023, Empire State Thruway Partners continued construction at numerous service area locations across the Thruway system. As part of the \$450 million project to redevelop and modernize all 27 service areas, nine service areas reopened the height of construction. The project is funded through a public-private partnership and no toll dollars or state tax dollars are being used for the construction.

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

Empire State Thruway Partners will upgrade and enhance the service areas by providing sustainable and technologically advanced designs, enhanced services for commercial drivers at select locations and promoting local businesses and tourism through the I LOVE NY program. A variety of restaurant options such as Shake Shack, Chick-fil-A, Panera, Popeyes, Panda Express, Burger King and Starbucks are available at service areas as well as Taste NY Products.

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

The Service Area modernization project, which began in 2021, incorporates numerous strategies to promote sustainability, reduce energy consumption and achieve the objectives of New York State Executive Order 22. Items include high efficiency heating and air conditioning systems, fixtures to improve indoor air quality, non-invasive, low maintenance plantings, and much more. United States Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles will be incorporated into the buildings and surrounding sites.

***Electric Vehicle Charging Stations***

At the end of 2023, there were 32 charging stations located at nine service areas and three welcome centers, and 22 charging stations located at nine commuter park and ride lots and the two Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge landings.

As part of the service area modernization project, all 27 service areas will have at least four and up to eight, Level 3 fast charging stations able to charge all types of electric

vehicles. All of these locations support the objectives of New York's NEVI Plan.

Once the service area project is completed, it is anticipated there will be 130 EV charging stations installed statewide across the Thruway system, with an average of 30 miles between each location. Additionally, Empire State Thruway Partners is planning for future growth to support more EV charging stations at all service areas as demand increases. In ten years, we expect a total of 130 charging stations on the I-87 corridor from Albany to the New York City line, and a total of 190 charging stations on the I-90 corridor from Albany to the Pennsylvania border.

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act established the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program. NEVI will provide funding to states to deploy electric vehicle (EV) fast chargers along designated electric vehicle corridors to establish an interconnected EV charging network across the state and nation.

The Authority is part of an interagency workgroup, led by NYSDOT, to develop and implement New York's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan (Plan).

### ***Work Zone Safety***

The Automated Work Zone Speed Enforcement program (New York State Chapter 421 of the Laws of 2021) went live in April 2023. The law was passed 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 vendor administers the automated photo speed enforcement services for work zones in New York State which provides roadside equipment, technicians, data collection services, customer service, violation review and processing, and reports/reporting capabilities. The vendor provides ten mobile units to be used in active work zones across the Thruway. The program was implemented on the Thruway and NYSDOT roadways by issuing warnings in April 2023, and Notices of Liability(s) sent to violators beginning in May 2023. The notices sent to violators include violation fees as provided by the statute.

From May 2023 until the end of 2023, more than 41,000 notices of liability to were sent to violators on the Thruway.

Of the more than 2.6 million vehicles that passed an automated work zone vehicle during the first seven months, less than two percent were issued violations. During that period, the average speed in work zones with a posted 45 mph speed limit dropped from 47 mph in May to 41 mph in December. The average speed in work zones with a posted speed limit of 55 mph was approximately 47 mph. Despite the speed reductions, more than 2,500 or 2.6 percent of all Thruway speed violations were repeat offenders.

### ***Land Mobile Radio Upgrade Project***

In 2023, the Authority issued an RFP for the design, implementation, and maintenance of a public safety grade P25 compliant Phase 2 land mobile radio system. The Authority



is currently using a radio system that has components that date back over 20 years and have reached end of life. As part of the project, system infrastructure will be upgraded along with all subscriber equipment. The new radio system will provide enhanced coverage statewide along the Thruway corridor, increasing safety and reliability for all users including Thruway staff, New York State Police Troop T, and responders. Final award of the contract is expected in 2024 with work commencing the same year.

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

The Authority's work to support pollinators continued in 2023. The New York State Pollinator Protection Plan focuses on development of Best Management Practices for all pollinator stakeholders; habitat enhancement efforts to protect and revive populations of all pollinators; research and monitoring efforts to better understand, prevent and recover from pollinator losses; and development of an outreach and education plan to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and engage the public as active participants in reversing pollinator decline.

The Authority continued to utilize a reduced mowing program, promoting the growth of native plant species which support pollinators. The Authority will be updating its Right of Way maintenance guidance for vegetation management, which will recommend efforts to protect pollinator species.

The Authority also carries on efforts to promote pollinator habitat through plantings of wildflowers in select areas, using specific seed blends that attract pollinators. Test plots of herbicide-resistant wildflower seeds were planted near exit 36 in Central New York and will be evaluated to determine if the herbicide-resistant plantings make it more efficient to manage common weeds that often out-compete desirable species. If the planted areas perform well, this approach will expand to other plantings along the system. In addition, the Authority includes flowering shrubs, as conditions permit when planting living snow fences.

In addition, a research study undertaken by the Rochester Institute of Technology to identify impacts of a modified mowing regime on pollinators continued in 2023. The Study, being led by the New York State Department of Transportation, was extended for two more years and included three locations on the Thruway. The findings from the research are anticipated in 2025.

### ***Solar Highway***

The Authority's solar array at Woodbury continues to provide renewable energy which is used to offset the energy utilities at several Authority facilities.

### **Troop T**

New York State Police Troop T is the State Police unit dedicated to patrolling the Thruway system. The Thruway Authority spent \$67 million in 2023 to support Troop T operations. 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. Troop T issued 2,237 tickets for speeding, violating the *Move Over Law*, safety belt infractions and distracted driving, and made 14 DWI arrests during the 2023 campaign.
- 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 47<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.