

# WHAT DOES CONGESTION COST US?

Congestion has several effects on travelers, businesses, agencies and cities. One significant element is the value of the additional time and wasted fuel. The top 14 urban areas include about two-thirds of the delay estimated for 2005, and the top 20 areas account for over 75 percent of annual delay. Some other highlights include:

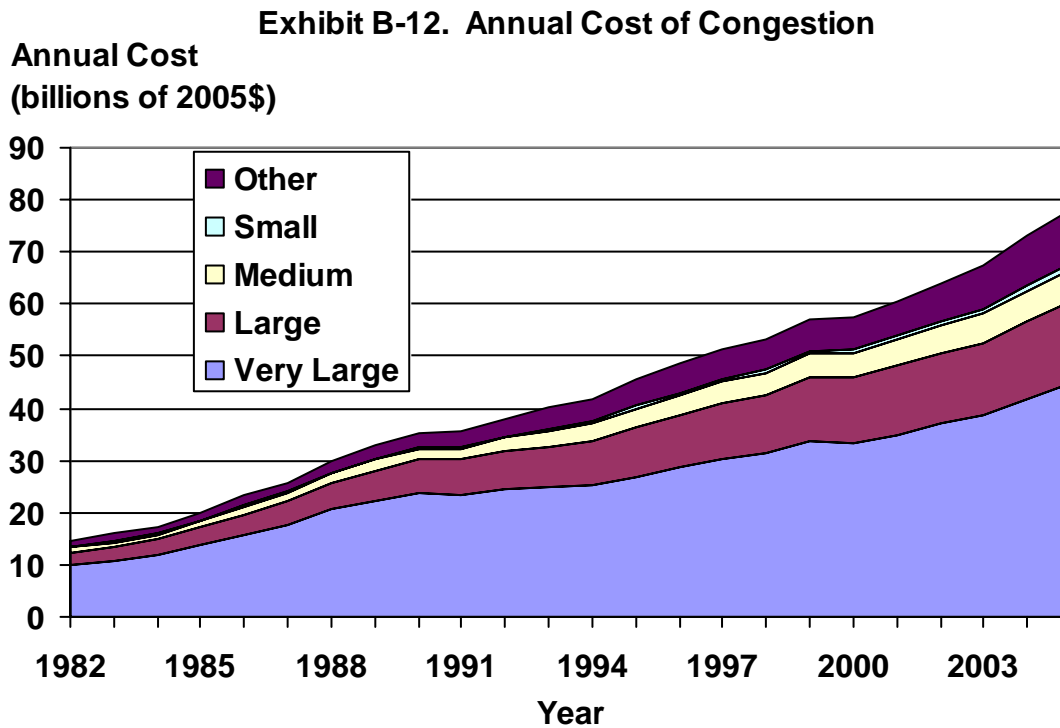
- In 2005, congestion (based on wasted time and fuel) cost about \$78.2 billion in the 437 urban areas, compared to \$73.1 billion in 2004. (See Exhibit B-11).
- The average cost per traveler in the 437 urban areas was \$707 in 2005, up from \$680 in 2004 (using constant dollars). The cost ranged from \$1,041 per traveler in Very Large urban areas down to \$318 per traveler in the Small areas.
- Exhibits B-13 and B-14 show that 2.9 billion gallons of fuel were wasted in the 437 urban areas. This amount of fuel would fill 58 super-tankers or 290,000 gasoline tank trucks.
- The urban areas with populations greater than 3 million accounted for 1.7 billion gallons (about two-thirds) of wasted fuel.
- The amount of wasted fuel per traveler ranges from 38 gallons per year in the Very Large urban areas to 6 gallons per year in the Small areas.

**Exhibit B-11. Congestion Effects on the Average Traveler – 2005**

Population Group	Congestion Statistics per Traveler		
	Average Cost (\$)	Average Delay (hours)	Average Fuel (gallons)
Very Large areas	1,014	54	38
Large areas	683	37	25
Medium areas	512	28	18
Small areas	318	17	10
Other Urban Areas	370	21	13
437 Area Average	707	40	26
437 Area Total	\$78.2 billion	4.2 billion	2.9 billion

### **What is the Total Cost of Congestion?**

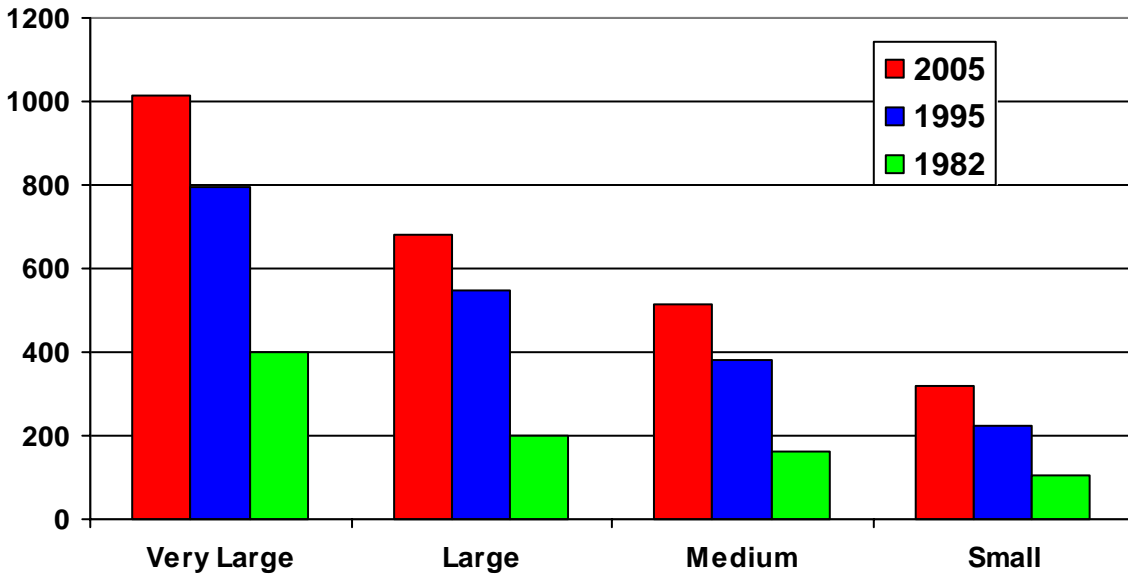
The total cost of congestion for each population size group is shown in Exhibit B-12. This cost accounts for the amount of wasted time and fuel due to traffic congestion. The total cost of congestion in the urban areas is \$78.2 billion in 2005 or an average of \$707 per traveler.



- Nineteen urban areas had a total annual congestion cost of at least \$1 billion each.
- The areas with populations over 3 million persons account for about 60 percent of the congestion cost.

### Exhibit B-13. Annual Cost of Congestion per Traveler

Cost per Traveler  
(constant 2005\$)



#### What is the cost of congestion for me?

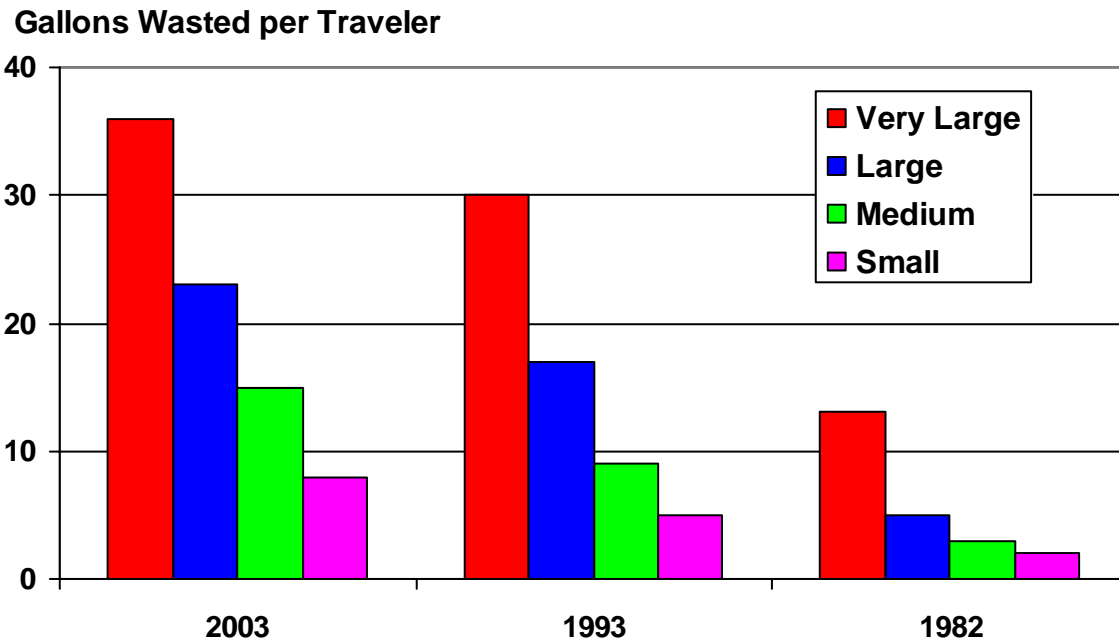
The total cost of congestion is divided by the number of peak period travelers to determine the effect of congestion on an individual (Exhibit B-13). The average annual cost to each of these travelers is about \$707.

- Travelers of 74 areas are “paying” more than \$1 per workday in congestion costs; 45 areas have a congestion value exceeding \$2 per workday.
- The average cost of congestion per traveler ranged from \$1,014 in the Very Large population group to \$318 in the Small population group in 2005.

## How Much Fuel is Wasted in Congestion?

As with cost, the amount of fuel wasted in congestion is divided by the estimated number of persons in the urban area. This provides an estimate of the amount of fuel consumed for each individual because of congestion (Exhibit B-14), a quantity that can be compared to other per capita consumptions. More than 26 gallons are wasted per traveler in the 437 urban areas. (See Exhibit B-14 for more information).

**Exhibit B-14. Wasted Fuel per Traveler**



- The average amount of wasted fuel per traveler in 2005 in the 437 study areas was 26 gallons.
- The amount of wasted fuel per traveler ranged from 3 gallons in the Small population group to 38 gallons in the Very Large population group in 2005.
- The total amount of wasted fuel in the 437 urban areas was approximately 2.9 billion gallons in 2005.