

Decaying state of infrastructure in memphis

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If you look around the city of Memphis in the year 2018, you will notice that the city is not the best looking in a lot of locations, previously attractive old architecture quickly become dingy eyesores when not cared for. There is more of a problem than the simple aesthetic presentation of the city though, a problem that is growing in size and need every day. If you've ever driven in Memphis, you know that the infrastructure is in a state of disrepair and overall decay. Bridges all around the area are at high risk, and the roads are scarred with massive potholes and construction that will seemingly never begin, let alone be finished. In addition to the roads which are in much need of repaving, there have even been instances where raw sewage has been accidentally spilled into the Mississippi River. This lacking infrastructure is simply unacceptable for a city with a population of over 650, 000 people, which is only slightly less than Nashville at this time. With a high population like this, these issues can quickly become less of an inconvenience and more of a public safety issue. Because of this, action needs to be taken in order to resolve this growing problem inside the city. If measures are not taken in a timely manner, the citizens of Memphis, and the Memphis area, are going to suffer greatly.

Bridges in Memphis are not in the best shape, while it may be difficult to ascertain based off of the outer appearance of the bridges, they are, in reality, huge public safety concerns. The bridge in particular that will be addressed is the massive " Hernando de Soto Bridge", which is an important link between Memphis and Arkansas. Unfortunately, the bridge is located in a very dangerous location, " the bridge also sits on the southeast edge of the New Madrid Seismic Zone, which is considered to be the highest earthquake

risk in the United States apart from the West Coast. ” (Jaramilla). The bridge’s location on a massive fault line was irresponsible in its previous state, as the bridge was unequipped to withstand seismic activity. In response to this, the bridge was given a post-construction repair to help prepare for a seismic event. While the Hernando de Soto Bridge may be repaired now and prepared for earthquakes, the same cannot be said for the rest of the bridges in Memphis, Furthermore; as the problem of the de Soto Bridge may be repaired, it is unfortunate that a so called “ retrofit” had to be implemented, and while hindsight is 20/20, steps need to be taken to ensure that something like this will not have to happen again. Bridges in Memphis are crucial to the daily function of the city, and need to be protected in all ways possible. Steps also need to be taken in order to update the rest of the city to higher standards when it comes to preparedness for earthquakes.

Another big problem facing the city today is the quality of the roads. A massive number of potholes can be found all around the Memphis area and as potholes increase in size and frequency the danger also grows bigger. Damage in varying levels of severity can be done to people’s vehicles from hitting said potholes, from scraped bumpers and popped tires to even more serious issues. There’s nothing worse than driving on a stretch of road in town, only to hit a massive pothole, which damages your vehicle. This creates a safety concern, and is something that needs to be addressed. In addition, the citizens of Memphis seem to struggle with driving; this is shown in the 2017 crash data from the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security. The combined number of reported traffic accidents in Shelby County last year was “ 37, 602” (TDOSHS), which is the highest in the

State. This is a shockingly high figure and reflects how dangerous driving in Memphis can be. The diminishing road quality cannot be overlooked in this case, and is not doing anything to decrease the number of crashes per year. The number of crashes is reflective not only of the drivers in Memphis, but also the quality of the roads. The crash figure is very high, and a good place to begin in lowering them is with better roads. Driving in Memphis is dangerous enough as it is, and roads need to be repaired in order to make navigating the city quicker, more efficient, and most importantly safer.

The city of Memphis recently gained National attention, as well as backlash, for a sewage incident. More specifically, the city pumped an estimated 300 million gallons of untreated sewage into the Mississippi River. A sewage treatment plant experienced a series of events that caused their pumps to fail. In an attempt to solve this issue, the plant began pumping the waste into the river. This incident was something that could have been avoided though, because this event was a result of outdated infrastructure, particular plant in question was over 40 years old. Wastewater management is very important to a city, and pumping sewage into a major body of water does not need to become a habit for the city. Unfortunately though, this is not the first time that this has happened recently, and events like this are becoming more and more common, as the plant's current infrastructure is unable to operate efficiently in its current state.

Of course, there will always be those who believe that things are fine as they are, and perhaps that funding and attention needs to be given to other focuses like decreasing the crime rate. While there definitely are many

things about Memphis that need to be changed or fixed, like the rate of crime, it is important to remember a few things. There is, and already has been, a huge focus in crime suppression in Memphis in recent years, and many steps have been taken to approach this. Millions of dollars have been put into this and has proven to be somewhat effective. Infrastructure on the other hand, does not gain as much attention or notoriety, regardless of the fact that infrastructure is crucial to the function of the city. In addition, while arguments can be made all day on what deserves the most funding, and what should be given the most focus out of anything, but it is difficult to dispute that the citizens of Memphis don't at least deserve safe roads to drive on. Or perhaps water treatment plants that operate effectively and don't pollute the surrounding waterways with sewage. It is in the best interest of the citizens and government of Memphis to repair the old and outdated infrastructure of the city and plan for the future that is ahead.

In closing, the city of Memphis is in a state of disrepair in regard to infrastructure. Roads are diminishing in quality every day and are a hazard to those driving in the city. As a reflection of the road quality traffic accidents are higher in Shelby County than anywhere else in the State of Tennessee. Bridges also show a lack of preparedness for natural disasters such as earthquakes, regardless of the fact that they are so essential to the inner workings of the city itself. Water treatment plants have also proven themselves to not only be old and outdated, but also unsafe. Based off of the recent sewage incidents in Memphis. Indisputably, it is unacceptable for Memphis to continue to pump millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Mississippi River. In a metropolitan area the size of Memphis, these issues

have become more than simple inconveniences to people's every day lives, and have morphed into a bigger problem, a safety problem. Steps needs to be taken in all aspects in order to make Memphis a safer place to live and work. This will not happen overnight, but it is important to remember how important infrastructure is to the daily workings of the city and people in it.