Saving Texans' Lives, Time and Money:

The Impact of Increased Transportation Funding in Providing Texas with a Smoother, Safer, More Reliable Transportation System

TRIP | A National Transportation Research Nonprofit

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Founded in 1971, TRIP ® of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

Executive Summary

Texas' extensive network of roads, highways, and bridges is crucial for the state's economic vitality and the quality of life of the state's residents. Recognizing the need for sustainable transportation funding, Texas voters approved Proposition 1 in 2014 and Proposition 7 in 2015, directing portions of oil and gas severance taxes and sales tax revenues to the State Highway Fund.

Since their enactment, Propositions 1 and 7 have generated nearly $40 billion in additional revenue for Texas' transportation infrastructure. In 2024, these funds constituted approximately 49 percent (nearly $6.2 billion) of the Texas Department of Transportation's Unified Transportation Program budget.

In this report, "Saving Texans' Lives, Time and Money," TRIP examines the benefits to Texas households of the passage of Proposition 1 and Proposition 7. The additional transportation funding allowed Texas to improve pavement and bridge conditions, reduce congestion and travel times, and make needed safety improvements. The increased transportation investment has saved lives, time and money for the state's households.

TRIP estimates that the improvements to the state's roads and bridges provided by additional transportation funding have yielded annual savings of $18.1 billion for Texas residents - up to $2,301 per household - and saved 3,565 lives because of traffic safety improvements.

	ANNUAL SAVINGS PER HOUSEHOLD AS A RESULT OF INCREASED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT				
	PAVEMENT	BRIDGES	CONGESTION	SAFETY	Total Annual Savings
Austin	$ 151	$ 58	$ 1,264	$ 828	**$ 2,301**
Dallas-Fort Worth	$ 327	$ 58	$ 760	$ 828	**$ 1,973**
Houston	$ 343	$ 58	$ 1,035	$ 828	**$ 2,264**
San Antonio	$ 282	$ 58	$ 1,039	$ 828	**$ 2,207**
All Other Texas Households	$ 266	$ 58	N/A	$ 828	**$ 1,152**
Total Savings per Household	**$2.9 Billion**	**$648 Million**	**$5.3 Billion**	**$9.3 Billion**	**$18.1 Billion**

BENEFITS OF INCREASED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT IN TEXAS

Pavement Conditions: Without the additional investments, the current share of state-maintained roads in poor or fair condition would be 16 percent higher. When roads are deteriorated, which may include potholes, rutting or rough surfaces, the cost to operate and maintain a vehicle increases. These additional vehicle operating costs (VOC) include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional vehicle repair costs, increased fuel consumption, and increased tire wear. Improved pavements have led to annual savings of $2.9 billion statewide in VOC, an average savings of $265 per household.

	Current VOC per Household	VOC per Household without Props 1 & 7	VOC Savings per Household Due to Prop 1 & 7
Austin	$ 927	$ 1,078	**$ 151**
Dallas-Fort Worth	$ 2,008	$ 2,335	**$ 327**
Houston	$ 2,103	$ 2,446	**$ 343**
San Antonio	$ 1,731	$ 2,013	**$ 282**
Average Texas Household	$ 1,630	$ 1,896	**$ 266**

Bridge Conditions: The number of state and locally maintained bridges in poor condition decreased by 32 percent from 2015 to 2024 (1,008 bridges to 686). Additionally, 1,824 new bridges have been constructed over the last decade at a cost of approximately $1.9 billion, enhancing mobility and safety. In 2024 the cost to replace all Texas bridges in poor condition was $725 million. TRIP estimates that without additional funding from Proposition 1 & 7 it would cost $986 million in 2024 to replace all Texas bridges in poor condition - a reduction of $263 million. These improvements saved Texans $648 million annually, or $58 per household.

Traffic Congestion: Funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 has supported the Texas Clear Lanes program and other projects, mainly in the state's largest urban areas. These efforts have reduced congestion, improved travel reliability, and made travel times more predictable, cutting the cost of lost time and wasted fuel for drivers.

	Current Annual Congestion Cost	Congestion Cost Without Props 1 & 7	Annual Savings per Household
Austin	$3,202	$4,466	**$1,264**
Dallas-Fort Worth	$3,053	$3,813	**$760**
Houston	$3,546	$4,581	**$1,035**
San Antonio	$2,326	$3,364	**$1,039**
STATEWIDE SAVINGS			**$5.3 BILLION**

Traffic Safety & Fatalities: From 2015 to 2023, it is estimated that roadway safety improvements made possible with revenue generated by Propositions 1 and 7 saved 3,565 lives in Texas. In 2023, traffic crashes in Texas imposed $40.9 billion in economic costs, including work and household productivity losses, property damage, medical costs, rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, congestion costs, and emergency services. TRIP estimates that without the roadway safety improvements made possible by Proposition 1 and Proposition 7, the annual economic cost of traffic crashes in the state would have been $50.2 billion, saving Texans $9.3 billion dollars - a savings of $843 per household.

Year	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT Without Props 1 & 7 Funds	Estimated Lives Saved as a Result of Props 1 & 7 Funds
2015	1.39	1.41	52
2016	1.40	1.42	58
2017	1.36	1.39	71
2018	1.30	1.35	133
2019	1.26	1.34	240
2020	1.49	1.69	525
2021	1.58	1.84	725
2022	1.55	1.83	784
2023	1.45	1.78	977
	TOTAL LIVES SAVED		**3,565**

Sources of data for this report include the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Texas A&M's Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

Introduction

Texas' roads, highways and bridges serve as the backbone of the state's transportation network, providing mobility, connections and economic opportunities to the state's residents, visitors and businesses. The state's transportation system allows Texans to travel to work and school and to access recreation, healthcare, social and commercial activities. The system also provides the state's industries and businesses with access to customers, suppliers, and employees.

The modernization of Texas' transportation system is critical to quality of life and continued economic competitiveness in the Lone Star State. To facilitate economic growth, maintain its level of economic competitiveness and achieve further growth, Texas will need to continue to invest in the maintenance and modernization of its roads and bridges to provide efficient, reliable and safe mobility for residents, visitors, and businesses. Making needed improvements to Texas' transportation systems also provides a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs in the short-term and stimulating long-term economic growth because of enhanced mobility and access.

Investing in the state's transportation network improves the condition, reliability and safety of the system, saving Texans' lives, time, and money as a result of smoother pavements, less congested roadways and reduced traffic fatality rates. This report examines the benefit to Texas households of the passage of Proposition 1 in 2014 and Proposition 7 in 2015, which have generated nearly $40 billion in additional revenue to Texas' State Highway Fund since they were passed. The additional state funding allowed Texas to improve critical components of the state's transportation system, underscoring the importance of adequate, reliable transportation funding to provide Texans with safe and efficient mobility on a well-maintained transportation system.

Population, Travel and Economic Trends in Texas

Texas motorists and businesses require a high level of personal and commercial mobility. To foster quality of life and spur continued economic growth, it is critical that the state provides a safe and modern transportation system that can accommodate future growth in population, tourism, business, recreation and vehicle travel.

Texas' population reached approximately 31.3 million residents in 2024 – an increase of 50 percent since 2000 and the fourth fastest rate of growth in the nation during that time.[1] Texas had approximately 19.2 million licensed drivers in 2023.[2] The U.S. Census estimates the number of households in Texas is 11.3 million.[3]

From 2000 to 2024, annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Texas increased by 38 percent, from approximately 220.1 billion miles traveled annually to approximately 304.7 billion miles traveled annually.[4] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, vehicle travel in Texas dropped by as much as 38 percent in April 2020 (as compared to vehicle travel during April 2019). By 2025, VMT in the state had rebounded to eight percent higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2019.[5] During the first seven months of 2025, VMT in Texas is two percent higher than the same period in 2024.[6]

From 2000 to 2023, Texas' gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the state's economic output, increased by 112 percent (adjusted for inflation), the third fastest rate of growth in the nation during that time.[7] U.S. GDP increased 61 percent during the same period.[8]

Texas Transportation Funding

To accommodate population and economic growth that are among the fastest in the nation, Texas' residents, businesses, and visitors require a transportation network that is well-maintained, reliable, safe, and efficient.

Recognizing the need for additional transportation funding, Texas voters approved ballot measures in 2014 and 2015 that boosted transportation funding in the state to record levels and allowed critical improvements to the state's transportation system to proceed.

Proposition 1 was approved by 80 percent of the state's voters in 2014 and divided equal portions of existing oil and natural gas production taxes between the state's Economic Stabilization Fund and the State Highway Fund (SHF). These additional proceeds to the SHF are used for constructing, maintaining and acquiring rights-of-way for public roads (not including toll roads).[9] From FY 2015 through FY 2025, Proposition 1 deposits to the State Highway Fund totaled $19.1 billion.[10]

In 2015, 83 percent of Texas voters approved Proposition 7, which authorized a constitutional amendment for transportation funding that dedicated a portion of the state's general sales and use tax, motor vehicle sales, and rental taxes to the State Highway Fund for use on non-tolled roads. From FY 2018 through FY 2024, deposits to the State Highway Fund as a result of Proposition 7 totaled $19.5 billion.[11]

Proceeds from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 make up a significant portion of TxDOT's revenue. In 2024, of the more than $12.5 billion in funding for TxDOT's Unified Transportation Program (UTP), 49 percent - nearly $6.2 billion - came from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 funding.[12]

In addition to state transportation funding, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law on November 2021, will provide $26.9 billion in federal funds to the state for highway and bridge investments in Texas over five years, representing a 43 percent increase in annual federal funding for roads and bridges in the state over the previous federal surface transportation program.[13] Federal funds currently support 43 percent of the revenue used by TxDOT to fund highway and bridge improvements.[14]

Revenue from Texas' motor fuel tax - a critical source of state transportation funding - is likely to erode due to increasing vehicle fuel efficiency, the increasing use of electric vehicles, and the impact of highway construction inflation. The average fuel efficiency of U.S. passenger vehicles increased from 20 miles per gallon in 2010 to 24.5 miles per gallon in 2020. Average fuel efficiency is expected to increase another 31 percent by 2030, to 32 miles per gallon, and increase 51 percent by 2040, to 37 miles per gallon.[15] Electric vehicles made up one percent of all passenger vehicles in Texas in 2024, a share that is expected to rise to eight percent by 2030.[16]

Increasing inflation has also hampered Texas' ability to complete needed projects and improvements, as the available funding now covers significantly less work. The Federal Highway Administration's national highway construction cost index, which measures labor and materials cost, increased by 48 percent from the beginning of 2022 through the first quarter of 2025.[17]

Chart 1. FHWA's national highway construction cost index.

Source: Federal Highway Administration.

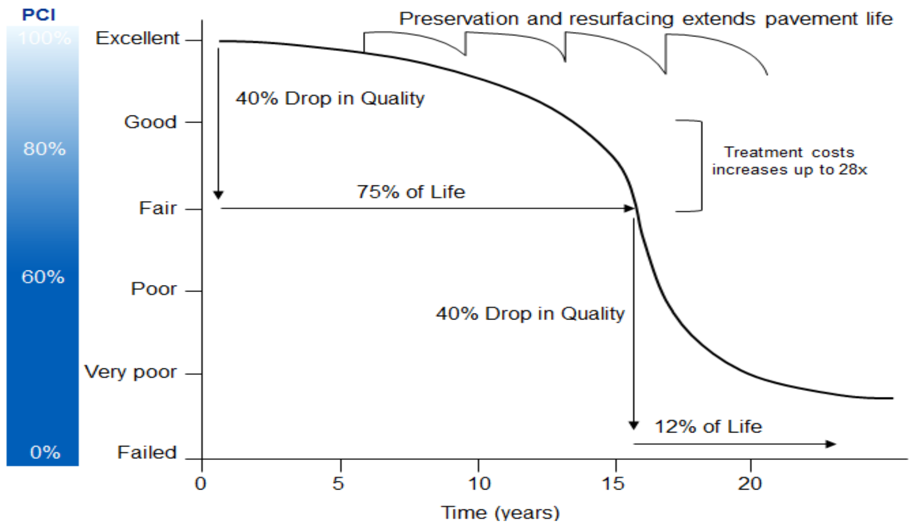
Approximately 5.4 million full-time jobs in Texas in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure network. These workers earn $239 billion in wages and contribute an estimated $43.6 billion in state and local income, corporate and unemployment insurance taxes and the federal payroll tax.[18]

Texas Pavement Conditions and Cost Savings Due to Improved Pavement Conditions

The life cycle of Texas' roads is greatly affected by the state's ability to perform timely maintenance and upgrades to ensure that road and highway surfaces last as long as possible. The pavement condition of the state's major roads is evaluated and classified as being in poor, fair, or good condition.

Pavement failure is caused by a combination of traffic, moisture, and climate. Moisture often works its way into road surfaces and the materials that form the road's foundation. Road surfaces at intersections are more prone to deterioration because the slow-moving or standing loads occurring at these sites subject the pavement to higher levels of stress. It is critical that roads receive timely, ongoing rehabilitation to delay the need for major repairs or reconstruction, which costs approximately four times more than resurfacing them.[19] As roads continue to age, they will reach a point of deterioration where routine paving and maintenance will not be adequate to keep pavement surfaces in good condition and reconstruction of the roadway and its underlying surfaces will become necessary.

Chart 2. Pavement Condition Cycle Time with Treatment and Cost.



Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation (2016). [2016 Maintenance Operations and Performance Analysis Report.]

Based on the International Roughness Index, which is used to evaluate pavement smoothness, 23 percent of Texas' major locally and state-maintained roads were rated in poor condition in 2023, while 24 percent were rated in mediocre condition.[20] (TxDOT is not responsible for locally maintained roads and highways.) Nineteen percent of Texas' major state and locally maintained roads were rated in fair condition in 2023, and the remaining 34 percent were in good condition.[21] In addition to statewide conditions, the chart below details the share of locally and state-maintained pavements in poor condition in Texas' largest urban areas.

Chart 3. Share of State and Locally-Maintained Roadways in Poor Condition (Based on Roughness Index).

	Share of State and Local Pavements in Poor Condition
Austin	14%
Dallas-Fort Worth	45%
Houston	51%
San Antonio	36%
Texas Statewide	**24%**

Source: TRIP Analysis of Federal Highway Administration Data.

Based on a measurement scale that also evaluates the condition of the underlying pavement and subsurface, 10.5 percent of state-maintained roads are rated in poor or fair condition.[22] These are the most heavily traveled portions of Texas's roadways.

TxDOT estimates that without the additional pavement preservation funding provided by Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 since 2015, 12.2 percent of state-maintained roads would be in poor or fair condition today - 16 percent higher than if additional investments had not been made.[23]

When roads are deteriorated - which may include potholes, rutting or rough surfaces - the cost to operate and maintain a vehicle increases. These additional vehicle operating costs (VOC) include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional vehicle repair costs, increased fuel consumption, and increased tire wear.[24]

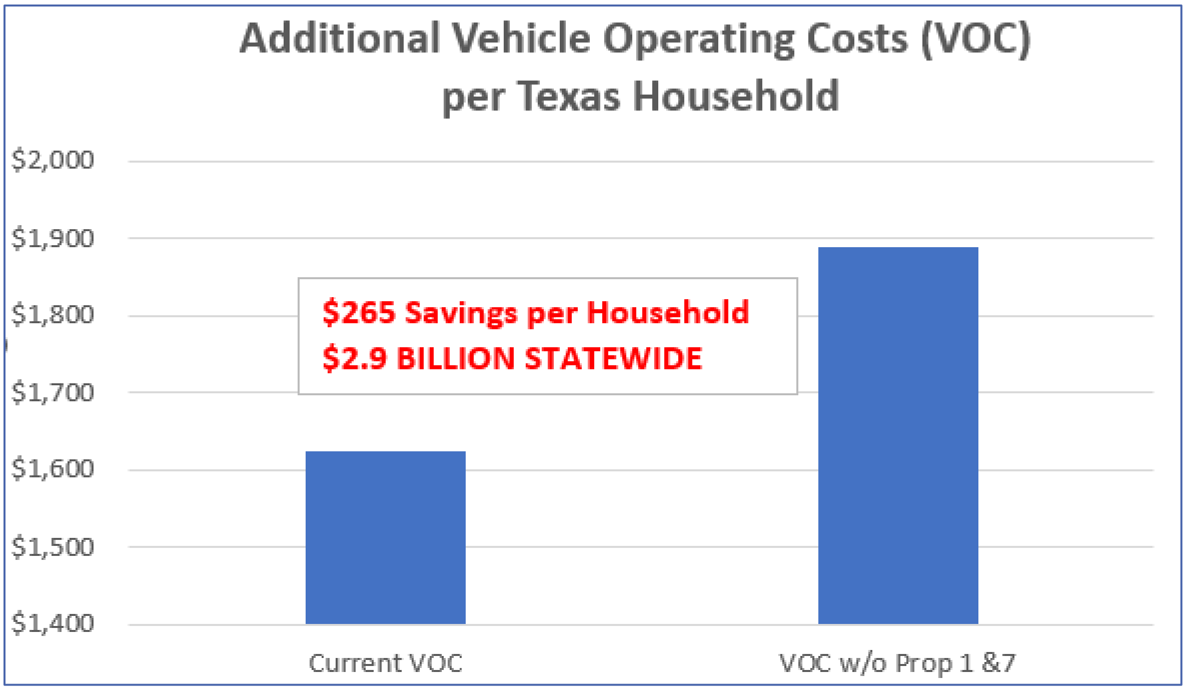
The additional funding provided by Propositions 1 and 7 allowed the state to accelerate the pace of needed pavement condition repairs and improvements, improving the overall condition of pavements across the state.

Based on current pavement conditions in Texas, TRIP estimates that Texas motorists lose a total of $18 billion annually in additional vehicle operating costs as a result of driving on rough roads, an average of $1,625 per household statewide.[25]

Without the improvements to the state's pavements provided by additional funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7, TRIP estimates that Texans would be losing $20.9 billion annually in additional VOCs, an average of $1,889 per Texas household.

Increased investment and the resulting improvement in pavement conditions resulted in annual per-household savings of $266 in additional vehicle operating costs, a total of $2.9 billion statewide.

Chart 4. Additional Vehicle Operating Costs per Texas household with and without additional funding from Propositions 1 and 7.



Source: TRIP analysis based on TxDOT pavement condition data.

In addition to statewide savings, TRIP has also calculated the vehicle operating costs for households in the state's largest urban areas with and without additional funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7.

Chart 5. Additional annual Vehicle Operating Costs per Texas household in the state's largest urban areas with and without additional funding from Propositions 1 and 7.

	Current VOC per Household	VOC per Household without Props 1 & 7	VOC Savings per Household Due to Prop 1 & 7
Austin	$ 927	$ 1,078	**$ 151**
Dallas-Fort Worth	$ 2,008	$ 2,335	**$ 327**
Houston	$ 2,103	$ 2,446	**$ 343**
San Antonio	$ 1,731	$ 2,013	**$ 282**
Average Texas Household	$ 1,630	$ 1,896	**$ 266**

Source: TRIP analysis.

Additional vehicle operating costs have been calculated in the Highway Development and Management Model (HDM), which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Transportation and more than 100 other countries as the definitive analysis of the impact of road conditions on vehicle operating costs. The HDM report is based on numerous studies that have measured the impact of various factors, including road conditions, on vehicle operating costs.[26] The HDM study found that road deterioration increases ownership, repair, fuel and tire costs. The report found that deteriorated roads accelerate the pace of depreciation of vehicles and the need for repairs because the stress on the vehicle increases in proportion to the level of roughness of the pavement surface. Similarly, tire wear and fuel consumption increase as roads deteriorate since there is less efficient transfer of power to the drive train and additional friction between the road and the tires.

TRIP's additional VOC estimate is based on taking the average number of miles driven annually by a motorist, calculating current VOC based on AAA's driving cost estimates and then using the HDM model to estimate the additional VOC paid by drivers as a result of substandard roads.[27] Additional research on the impact of road conditions on fuel consumption by Texas A&M's Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) is also factored into TRIP's vehicle operating cost methodology.

Texas Bridge Conditions and Cost Savings Due to Increased Investment

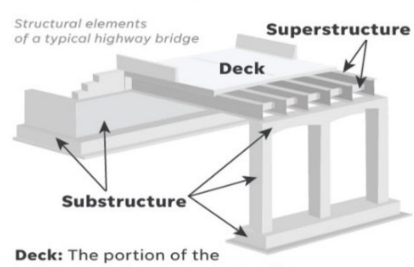
Texas' bridges form key links in the state's highway system, providing communities and individuals access to employment, schools, shopping and medical services, and facilitating commerce and access for emergency vehicles.

One percent (686 of 56,529) of Texas' locally and state-maintained bridges were rated in poor condition in 2024.[28] This includes all bridges that are 20 feet or longer. A bridge is rated as poor if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components.

Bridges that are rated in poor condition may be posted for lower weight limits or closed if their condition warrants such action. Deteriorated bridges can have a significant impact on daily life. Restrictions on vehicle weight may cause many vehicles - especially emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, school buses, and farm equipment - to use alternate routes to avoid posted bridges. Redirected trips also lengthen travel time, waste fuel, and reduce the efficiency of the local economy.

Bridge structural elements

Using the National Bridge Inventory rating scale, inspectors rate these three structural elements for each bridge:



Deck: The portion of the bridge that directly carries traffic.

Superstructure: The portion of the bridge that supports the deck and connects one substructure element to another.

Substructure: The portion of the bridge that supports the superstructure and distributes all bridge loads to below-ground bridge footings.

Culvert (not pictured): A pipe or small structure used for drainage under a road, railroad or other embankment. A culvert gets one overall rating.

SOURCE Michigan Department of Transportation

Forty-seven percent of Texas' locally and state-maintained bridges are rated in fair condition.[29] A fair rating indicates that a bridge's structural elements are sound but minor deterioration has occurred to the bridge's deck, substructure or superstructure. The remaining 51 percent of the state's bridges are rated in good condition.[30]

The service life of bridges can be extended by performing routine maintenance such as resurfacing decks, painting surfaces, ensuring that a facility has good drainage and replacing deteriorating components. However, most bridges will eventually require more costly reconstruction or major rehabilitation to remain operable.

The additional transportation funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 allowed the state to reduce the number of bridges in poor condition from 1,008 in 2015 to 686 in 2024 - a reduction of 32 percent.[31] Without the additional funding provided by Propositions 1 and 7, TxDOT estimates that 935 bridges would now be in poor condition - 36 percent higher than the current number of Texas bridges in poor condition.[32]

Chart 6. Texas bridges in poor condition in 2015 and 2024 without additional funding.

Year	Texas Bridges in Poor Condition
2015	1,008
2024	686
2024 Without Props 1 & 7 Funds	935

Source: TxDOT response to TRIP survey.

Since 2015, approximately $1.9 billion in funding from Propositions 1 and 7 has also allowed TxDOT to construct 1,824 new bridges, improving mobility, safety and economic competitiveness for Texans and the state's businesses.[33]

The cost to replace all bridges in the state rated in poor condition is significantly lower than it would have been without Proposition 1 & 7 funding. TxDOT estimates that the cost to reconstruct or replace the state's poor bridges was $725 million in 2024. Without Proposition 1 & 7 funding, the cost would total $986 million in 2024 – a difference of $263 million.[34]

The reduction in the number of poor bridges and the construction of new bridges in Texas, which improves safety and increases access, has resulted in significant benefits to Texas households. TRIP estimates that the annual benefit to Texas households due to the reduction in the number of poor bridges and the construction of new bridges as a result of additional Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 funds is $648 million annually statewide - an average of $58 annually per household.[35]

Traffic Congestion Levels in Texas and Household Savings Due to Reduced Congestion

Traffic congestion in Texas continues to be a burden to the state's residents, businesses and visitors, particularly in the largest urban areas. Increasing congestion threatens to impede the state's economic development and reduce quality of life for Texas residents. According to Texas A&M's Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), while the number of registered vehicles in the state rose 174 percent in the last four decades, highway capacity in Texas increased by just 19 percent during that time, leading to increasingly congested roads throughout the state.[36]

Since it began in 2015, the Texas Clear Lanes program has allowed TxDOT and metropolitan planning organizations to prioritize non-tolled improvements and expansions to the state's transportation system that aim to reduce congestion in Texas' largest urban areas. Funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 has supported the Texas Clear Lanes program and other transportation projects, mainly in the state's largest urban areas. These efforts have reduced congestion and improved the reliability of the transportation network, making travel times more predictable.[37]

Additional investment in projects to improve highway reliability has significantly impacted congestion levels in the state's largest urban areas. Despite a 17 percent increase in vehicle miles of travel in the state in the last 10 years, total hours of delay for Texas commuters are down 15 percent during that time, largely due to additional capacity projects that reduced congestion.[38]

The chart below shows the 2024 Travel Time Index (TTI) in the state's largest urban areas as well as a TxDOT estimate of what the area's TTI would be without the capacity expansion projects completed as a result of additional funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7.

The Travel Time Index compares travel conditions during peak travel times versus travel times when traffic is free flowing and indicates how much longer a trip takes during congested travel times compared to light traffic conditions. For example, a Travel Time Index of 1.3 indicates that a trip during peak congestion would take 30 percent longer to reach the destination than during non-peak times.

Chart 7. 2024 Travel Time Index (TTI) and TTI without additional funding from Propositions 1 and 7.

	Current TTI	TTI Without Props 1 & 7
Austin	1.27	1.43
Dallas-Fort Worth	1.23	1.37
Houston	1.27	1.43
San Antonio	1.21	1.33

Source: TRIP analysis of TxDOT and Texas Transportation Institute data.

As a result of improved highway reliability made possible by projects funded with Proposition 1 and 7 revenues, households in Texas's largest urban areas are losing significantly fewer hours annually due to traffic congestion. The chart below details the current annual number of hours lost to congestion for households in Texas's largest urban areas and the estimated annual number of hours lost to congestion per household if the state had not used additional funding from Propositions 1 and 7 to expand the capacity on Texas roads and reduce congestion.

Chart 8. Hours lost to congestion with and without additional funding from Propositions 1 and 7.

	Current Hours Lost to Congestion	Hours Lost to Congestion Without Props 1 & 7	Hours Saved per Household
Austin	118	165	**47**
Dallas-Fort Worth	110	137	**27**
Houston	131	169	**38**
San Antonio	85	123	**38**

Source: TRIP analysis of TxDOT and Texas Transportation Institute data.

Even with extensive expansion to the capacity of the state's transportation network, traffic congestion continues to inflict a significant financial burden on Texas residents. These costs include the value of time lost and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion.

The reduction in travel delays due to additional investment is saving time and money for Texas households. The chart below details the current cost of congestion for each Texas household in the form of lost time and wasted fuel and the estimated cost of congestion per household if the state had not used additional funding from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 to expand the capacity on Texas roads and reduce congestion.

Chart 9. 2024 annual congestion cost per household and cost without additional funding.

	Current Annual Congestion Cost	Congestion Cost Without Props 1 & 7	Annual Savings per Household
Austin	$3,202	$4,466	**$1,264**
Dallas-Fort Worth	$3,053	$3,813	**$760**
Houston	$3,546	$4,581	**$1,035**
San Antonio	$2,326	$3,364	**$1,039**
STATEWIDE SAVINGS			**$5.3 BILLION**

Source: TRIP analysis of TxDOT and Texas Transportation Institute data.

Traffic Safety in Texas

Traffic safety on Texas' roads represents a significant factor in the quality of life of the state's residents and visitors. From 2014 to 2023, a total of 38,942 people were killed in traffic crashes on Texas roads, an average of 3,894 fatalities per year.[39]

The chart below details the number of traffic fatalities and the traffic fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in Texas each year from 2014 through 2023.

Chart 10. Texas traffic fatalities and fatality rate per 100 million miles of vehicle travel, 2014-2023.

Year	Number of Traffic Fatalities	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT
2014	3,538	1.46
2015	3,585	1.39
2016	3,794	1.40
2017	3,726	1.36
2018	3,656	1.30
2019	3,623	1.26
2020	3,893	1.49
2021	4,437	1.58
2022	4.407	1.55
2023	4,283	1.45

Source: Texas Department of Transportation.

Three major factors are associated with fatal vehicle crashes: driver behavior, vehicle characteristics, and roadway design. Based on an analysis of roadway safety data, TRIP estimates that roadway design, while not the primary factor, is a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal and serious traffic crashes.[40] Improving safety on Texas roads can be achieved through further enhancements in vehicle safety; improvements in driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior; and the implementation of a variety of additional roadway safety features.

Where appropriate, roadway improvements such as providing rumble strips, adding turn lanes, removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, widening lanes, widening and paving shoulders, improving intersection layout, providing better road markings, and upgrading or installing traffic signals could reduce the severity of serious traffic crashes.

Because TxDOT was able to increase funding for roadway safety improvements as a result of additional revenue from Proposition 1 and Proposition 7, the number of fatalities and the fatality rate statewide are estimated to be lower than they would have been had these additional roadway safety features not been provided.

From 2015 to 2023, it is estimated that roadway safety improvements made possible with revenue generated by Propositions 1 and 7 saved 3,565 lives.[41] The chart below details the traffic fatality rate in Texas each year from 2014 to 2023, the estimated fatality rate if safety improvements made possible with additional funding provided by Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 had not been made, and an estimate of the number of lives saved each year because of additional roadway safety features.

Chart 11. Texas fatality rates 2015-2023, fatality rates without additional funding from Propositions 1 and 7, and total lives saved as a result of additional funding.

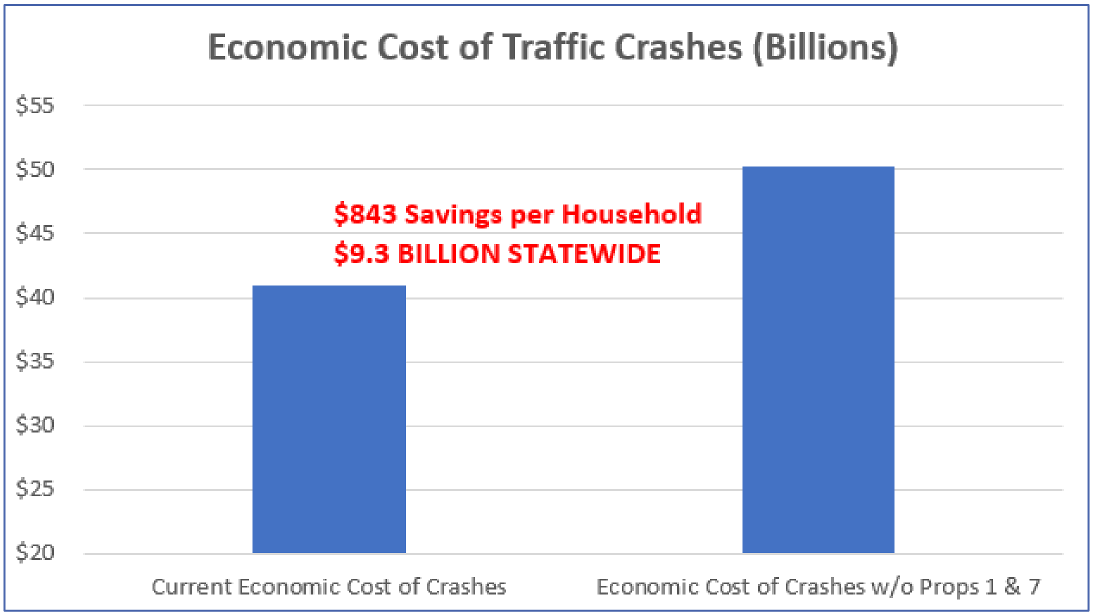
Year	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT	Fatality Rate per 100M VMT Without Props 1 & 7 Funds	Estimated Lives Saved as a Result of Props 1 & 7 Funds
2015	1.39	1.41	52
2016	1.40	1.42	58
2017	1.36	1.39	71
2018	1.30	1.35	133
2019	1.26	1.34	240
2020	1.49	1.69	525
2021	1.58	1.84	725
2022	1.55	1.83	784
2023	1.45	1.78	977
	TOTAL LIVES SAVED		**3,565**

Source: TRIP analysis of Texas Department of Transportation data.

The economic costs of traffic crashes include work and household productivity losses, property damage, medical costs, rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, congestion costs, and emergency services. In 2023, traffic crashes in Texas imposed $40.9 billion in economic costs.

Without the roadway safety improvements made possible by Proposition 1 and Proposition 7 funds, TRIP estimates the economic cost of traffic crashes in the state would have been $50.2 billion, saving Texans $9.3 billion dollars total and $843 per household.[42]

Chart 12. Economic cost of traffic crashes in Texas in 2023 with and without additional funding from Propositions 1 and 7.



Source: TRIP analysis of Texas Department of Transportation data.

How Transportation Investments Support Economic Growth

Today's business culture demands that an area have well-maintained and efficient roads, highways, and bridges if it is to remain economically competitive. Global communications and the impact of trade in North America and elsewhere have resulted in a significant increase in freight movement, making the quality of a region's transportation system a key component in a business's ability to compete locally, nationally, and internationally.

Every year, $3.1 trillion in goods are shipped to and from sites in Texas.[43] The value of freight shipped to and from sites in Texas by truck, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is expected to increase 89 percent by 2050.[44]

Investments in transportation improvements in Texas play a critical role in the state's economy. A report by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association found that the design, construction, and maintenance of transportation infrastructure supports the equivalent of approximately 358,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy, earning these workers approximately $15.4 billion annually.[45] These jobs include approximately 179,000 full-time jobs directly involved in transportation infrastructure construction and related activities. Spending by employees and companies in the transportation design and construction industry supports an additional 180,000 full-time jobs in Texas.[46] Transportation construction in Texas contributes an estimated $2.8 billion annually in state and local income, corporate and unemployment insurance taxes, and the federal payroll tax.[47]

Approximately 5.4 million full-time jobs in Texas in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture, and manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety, and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure network. These workers earn $239 billion in wages and contribute an estimated $43.6 billion in state and local income, corporate and unemployment insurance taxes, and the federal payroll tax.[48]

Businesses have responded to improved communications and the need to cut costs with a variety of innovations including just-in-time delivery, increased small package delivery, demand-side inventory management, and e-commerce. The result of these changes has been a significant improvement in logistics efficiency as firms move from a push-style distribution system, which relies on large-scale warehousing of materials, to a pull-style distribution system, which relies on smaller, more strategic movement of goods. These improvements have made mobile inventories the norm, resulting in the nation's trucks literally becoming rolling warehouses.

The economic benefits of a well-maintained, efficient and safe transportation system can be divided into several categories, including the following:

Improved competitiveness of industry: An improved transportation system reduces costs of production and distribution by lowering barriers to mobility and increasing travel speeds. Improved mobility provides the manufacturing, retail, and service sectors improved and more reliable access to increased and often lower-cost sources of labor, inventory, materials, and customers.[49] An increase in travel speeds of 10 percent has been found to increase labor markets by 15 to 18 percent and a 10 percent increase in the size of labor markets has been found to increase productivity by an average of 2.9 percent.[50]

Improved household welfare: An improved transportation system gives households better access to higher-paying jobs, a wider selection of competitively priced consumer goods, and additional housing and healthcare options. A good regional transportation system can also provide mobility for people without access to private vehicles, including the elderly, disabled, and people with lower incomes.[51]

Improved local, regional, and state economies: By boosting regional economic competitiveness, which stimulates population and job growth, and by lowering transport costs for businesses and individuals, transportation improvements can bolster local, regional, and state economies. Improved transportation also stimulates urban and regional redevelopment and reduces the isolation of rural areas.[52]

Increased leisure, tourism, and business travel: The condition and reliability of a region's transportation system impacts the accessibility of activities and destinations such as conferences, trade shows, sporting and entertainment events, parks, resort areas, social events, and everyday business meetings. An improved transportation system increases the accessibility of leisure/tourism and business travel destinations, which stimulates economic activity.[53]

Reduced economic losses associated with vehicle crashes, traffic congestion, and driving on deficient roads: When a region's transportation system lacks some desirable safety features, is congested, or is deteriorated, it increases costs to the public and businesses in the form of traffic delays, increased costs associated with traffic crashes, increased fuel consumption, and increased vehicle operating costs. Transportation investments that improve roadway safety, reduce congestion and improve roadway conditions benefit businesses and households by saving time, lives, and money.

Transportation investment creates and supports jobs: A 2021 macroeconomic analysis by IHS Markit, a global economic analysis firm, found that every $1 million spent on highways, bridges, and public transit supports 21 jobs annually, with 10 jobs in sectors related to providing the transportation improvements and 11 jobs being induced elsewhere in the economy.[54]

Highway and bridge spending multiplies through the economy by stimulating additional output: In addition to adding jobs, every dollar spent on highway and bridge improvements results in $3.4 in combined direct, indirect, and induced output from industries throughout the economy, resulting in a multiplier for highway and bridge investment of 3.4.[55]

Needed transportation projects that expand capacity and preserve the existing transportation system generate significant economic benefits. Transportation projects that provide additional roadway lanes, expand the efficiency of a current roadway (through improved signalization, driver information, or other Intelligent Transportation Systems), or provide additional transit capacity, produce significant economic benefits by reducing congestion and improving access, thus speeding the flow of people and goods.[56] Similarly, transportation projects that maintain and preserve existing transportation infrastructure also provide significant economic benefits. The preservation of transportation facilities improves travel speed, capacity, load-carry abilities, and safety, while reducing operating costs for people and businesses.[57] Projects that preserve existing transportation infrastructure also extend the service life of a road, bridge, or transit vehicle and save money by postponing or eliminating the need for more expensive future repairs.[58]

Conclusion

Texas' roads, highways and bridges are the backbone of the state's transportation system, and their good condition and performance are critical to the quality of life for Texas households and the health of the state's economy. Improvements in the condition, reliability, and safety of Texas' roads, highways, and bridges are critical to the state's ability to achieve its economic goals by improving the competitiveness of the state's businesses and enhancing quality of life fpr Texans.

The transportation investments made in Texas over the last decade have been critical in making needed improvements to the condition, efficiency, and safety of the state's roads and bridges. Making transportation improvements in Texas has provided the state with a transportation system that is safer, more efficient, and better maintained, saving Texans' lives, time, and money. The state must continue to prioritize investment in its transportation network to accommodate population and economic growth, further economic development, and provide a higher level of safety for the traveling public.

# # #

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