

## National report says 76 percent of Colorado Springs roads are in poor shape

By Lena Howland

COLORADO SPRINGS - Nearly a year and a half after drivers voted in a tax to repair roads in Colorado Springs, a new study says they're still in poor shape and costing drivers thousands of dollars in repairs.



The city disagrees after spending the last year working on hundreds of miles of 2C road tax projects, but drivers say this study is spot on.

"The roads in Colorado Springs have always been bad. It's almost a running joke," Colorado Springs resident Ian Davis said.

"These roads are destroyed," said Christ Johnston, another resident. "It's driving me crazy, I can't seem to keep my car aligned and my new tires aren't doing so well."

The new study by a national transportation research group says Colorado Springs residents are paying more because of poor road conditions.

"Here in the Colorado Springs urban area, 76 percent of major roads -- nearly three out of every four miles -- are in poor or mediocre condition," said Carolyn Bonifas Kelly, author of the TRIP report. According to the

report, Colorado Springs roads are costing drivers nearly \$2,000 each year on average.

"It includes the cost of lost time and wasted fuel as a result of congestion, and it includes the financial cost of traffic crashes," Kelly said. And those costs are projected to grow higher, unless the state can provide more transportation funding at local, state and federal levels.

But the Mayor of Colorado Springs said that's not the case, and that the report is based on outdated numbers from before voters approved the 2C road tax. The city says the \$50 million funneled in from the tax last year helped pave hundreds of miles of roads.

"I've seen a lot of construction, but not on the roads that we need it I don't think," Johnston said.

The 2C road tax is putting in \$50 million into our road projects every year through 2020. Here's a list of the projects completed with 2016 2C tax dollars:

- Paved 254 lane miles (includes all funded programs)
- Replaced 254 affected lane miles of curb and gutter
- Conducted 688 lane miles of routine maintenance (chip/crack seal)
- Placed more than 230,716 tons of asphalt
- Placed 23,279 tons of asphalt for dig outs and mechanized paving (surgical replacement of portions of deteriorated roads)
- Replaced 267,372 square feet sidewalk
- Installed 367 new pedestrian ramps
- Retrofitted 237 existing pedestrian ramps

"The TRIP report is based on two-to-six-year-old numbers and indicators on state and federal roadways, which are not covered by Ballot Measure 2C or maintained by the city," Mayor John Suthers said. "However, this report does provide a similar picture to what could have been true for our city-maintained roads, had we failed to commit to this vital effort."

"In the fall of 2015, voters in Colorado Springs stepped up in support of 2C. The funding measure created a temporary sales tax increase, which provides an additional \$50M each year (2016-2020) to fund vital city road projects and infrastructure improvements. The first year of 2C was a true success, as crews completed scheduled projects on-time and on-budget and started on the following year's priority list before year-end."

"While the effort is young - in its second year - we have been incredibly impressed by the significant progress already made toward reversing the trajectory of our city's roadway infrastructure, in the interest of both safety and economic development."

"We are grateful to the citizens of Colorado Springs, the City Council and the Public Works department for the work that has reversed the 2011-2015 trends for city roads. While we know there is work yet to do, we look to the continued progress of 2C as we truly create a city that matches our scenery."