

The Gazette

gazette.com

2014 PULITZER PRIZE

NATIONAL REPORTING

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2017 \$1.50

Colorado Springs' deteriorating roads costing drivers, out-of-date report says

By: [Chhun Sun](#)



Workers with Schmidt Construction Co. work Monday, October 31, 2016, to pave a section of Venetucci Blvd that signals this year's end of paving operations funded by the voter-supported Ballot Item 2C. Photo by Mark Reis, The Gazette

The poor condition of Colorado Springs' roads costs drivers about \$2,000 a year in additional maintenance and wasted gas because of traffic jams, according to a report released Wednesday by a Washington, D.C.-based, nonprofit transportation research group.

But the information is not up-to-date.

The report by TRIP - titled "Colorado Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility" - used data prior to 2016 and before Colorado Springs got a special sales tax for a citywide roads project.

"The TRIP report is based on 2- to 6-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 in a statement, referring to a measure approved in 2015 to raise \$50 million a year to rehabilitate city streets through a five-year, 0.62-percent sales tax increase.

"However," the mayor added, "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."

At a February Colorado Springs City Council meeting, Corey Farkas, manager of the Public Works Operations and Maintenance Division, said the city spent less than \$46 million on road repairs during the first year in 2016

that included fixing more than 123,000 linear feet of curb and gutter, resurfacing almost 100 miles of roads as part of the chip seal program and sealing cracks on more than 446 miles of city streets.

TRIP announced its findings Wednesday morning at a press conference at America the Beautiful Park, while crews were working on the \$113.1-million Interstate 25/Cimarron Street Interchange project in the background.

Carolyn Kelly, associate director of research and communications at TRIP, said 76 percent of roads in urban Colorado Springs are in poor or mediocre condition. She added that about 5 percent of the city's bridges need to be repaired or replaced.

The city's problems, Kelly said, are part of a larger state issue.

"Colorado roads that are deteriorated or congested and lack some safety features cost the state's drivers \$6.8 billion each year," she said, referring to issues caused by traffic crashes, vehicle maintenance and fuel used while drivers wait in traffic. "These costs are already startlingly high and they're projected to grow even higher in the future unless the state can provide additional transportation funding at local, state and federal levels."

TRIP officials and Colorado Springs Chamber and Economic Development Corporation President Dirk Draper, who also spoke at the press conference, noted to reporters that Colorado Springs officials have put a focus on roads.

"They've already taken an important step in approving the referendum that allow the improvements of many important city streets and will continue to do so in the coming years," Kelly said. "That's been an important step and it has led to the improvement in the condition of the transportation system here in Colorado Springs."

She added, "More work and more funding is still needed."

Contact Chhun Sun: 636-0235