

Colorado drivers lose billions to bad roads, report says

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Cathy Proctor Reporter *Denver Business Journal*

Colorado drivers lose \$6.8 billion a year in time, operating costs and crashes due to roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack desirable safety features, according to a new study from [TRIP](#), a Washington, D.C.-based national transportation organization.

In Denver, that amounts of \$2,162 per driver, according to the study [“Colorado Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility.”](#)



The average driver in the Denver metro area spends 49 hours a year stuck in traffic jams, the report said.

More money invested in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve congestions, improve the conditions of the state’s roads, bridges and transit systems, as well as boost safety and support economic growth, the report said.

“Our transportation infrastructure is falling further and further behind,” said Kelly Brough, president and CEO of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, in a statement.

“If we want to continue to grow our economy, ensure our quality of life and create jobs, we must build and invest in a system that provides mobility choices for everyone — from increased lanes to technology solutions to bicycle and pedestrian options. Transportation is our top priority and we urge lawmakers to join us in finding a long-term, sustainable funding source for our infrastructure needs,” she said.

The efficiency and condition of Colorado’s transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy.

Every year, about \$323 billion in goods are shipped to and from sites in Colorado, mostly by truck. Seventy-five percent of the goods shipped every year to and from sites in Colorado are carried by trucks and another 21 percent are carried by courier services or multiple mode deliveries, which include trucking.

The TRIP report also calculated the cost of poor roads for drivers in Colorado Springs, Denver, Northern Colorado, Grand Junction and Pueblo urban areas.

Across metro Denver, the TRIP report found that 80 percent of major roads, including those maintained by local governments of the Colorado Department of Transportation, are in “poor” or “mediocre” condition and cost the average motorist an extra \$753 each year via higher operating costs for their vehicles, accelerated depreciation of their vehicle, and additional repair costs, fuel consumption and tire wear.

“Colorado has experienced unprecedented growth in the last 20 years, but the state lacks a reliable and sustainable long term funding source to meet our resulting transportation infrastructure needs,” said Bob Golden, president and CEO of the South Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce, in a statement.

“This report makes a direct connection between that lack of investment and the impact to our pocketbooks. Now, more than ever, we need our policymakers to identify a solution to address this challenge. The cost to our businesses and our citizens of doing nothing is far too extreme,” Golden said.

Said Jeff Wasden, president of the Colorado Business Roundtable: “Business leaders around our state see Colorado trailing states such as Utah and Texas, two of our biggest competitors, on key commerce and tourism opportunities due to outdated, unmaintained and congested roadways.

“We can no longer kick this can down the road and this report makes that connection in a very real way,” Wasden said.

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