

## Bad roads increase vehicle-operating costs, group says

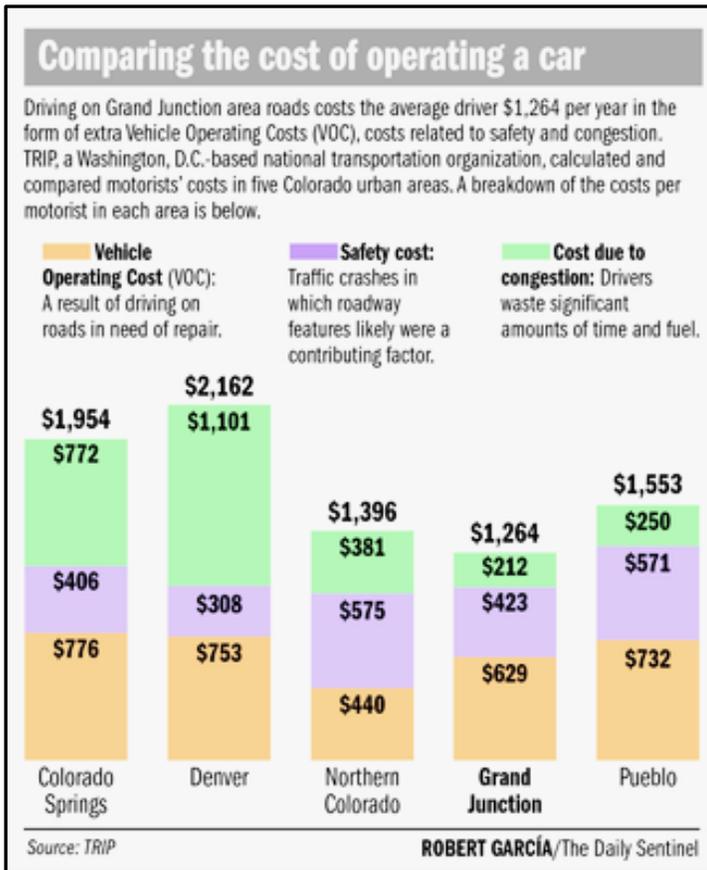
By Amy Hamilton

Driving on roads in poor condition can increase costs to maintain vehicles, according to a study released last week by the Washington, D.C.-based group TRIP, a national transportation research group.

Bad road conditions, combined with roads' safety hazards and congestion, cost motorists an additional \$1,264 a year in overall vehicle costs in Grand Junction, the group reported.

TRIP also analyzed the data in the areas around Colorado Springs, Denver, Northern Colorado and Pueblo. In a statewide comparison, Grand Junction motorists pay the lowest amount of additional costs, while Denver drivers pay the most — \$2,162 a year, the report stated.

The survey reports 76 percent of local and state-maintained roads in the urban Grand Junction area are in poor or fair condition. In Grand Junction, congestion is worsening, the report stated, locking drivers in traffic for an average of 10 hours a year. That lost time and wasted fuel costs drivers \$212, an amount that is factored into the overall amount. Poor road conditions that lead to safety hazards cost Grand Junction drivers \$423 annually, an amount which also is included in the total.



The figures are derived from standard vehicle operating costs from AAA, figures from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and an urban mobility study.

TRIP calculates the data by using a formula for the three factors.

Depressions in roadways or motorists needing to accelerate while driving can increase repair costs, and fuel costs increase because vehicles don't run efficiently, TRIP spokeswoman Carolyn Bonifas Kelly said.

In Colorado, poor roads cost drivers an additional \$6.8 billion, the report stated.

Kristi Pollard, executive director of Grand Junction Economic Partnership, said in a release that good transportation networks boost economic development.

“With its central location, and access to I-70 and U.S. 50, Colorado’s Grand Valley is a natural epicenter of connectivity, poised for faster and less expensive transportation and distribution throughout the U.S. and Canada,” she said. “Our ability to remain competitive economically depends in large part on the preservation of that system. The TRIP report calls attention to the need to make transportation funding a policy priority so that communities like ours can continue to thrive.”