

Troubled roads cost New Orleans drivers over \$2K per year, report says

By: [Lance Traweek, Managing Editor](#)

Roads and bridges that are in decline, congested or have deficient safety features cost Louisiana motorists about \$6.5 billion each year, \$2,171 per driver in the New Orleans area. Costs stem from higher vehicle operating expenses, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays, according to a new [report](#) by a national transportation research group.

Increased investment in transportation upgrades at the local, state and federal levels could alleviate traffic congestion, advance road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in the state, according to the report by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based organization.

It says that throughout Louisiana, about two-thirds of major locally and state-maintained urban roads are in poor or mediocre condition. In addition, 13 percent of locally and state-maintained bridges are structurally deficient, and the state has the seventh highest rate of fatal traffic crashes in the United States. The report also finds that Louisiana's major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, causing significant delays and slowing down commutes and commerce.



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Driving on undesirable roads in the New Orleans area costs the average driver \$2,171 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs, the report says. And 59 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the New Orleans area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an extra \$672 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Don Redman, AAA Louisiana public affairs specialist, said AAA members are aware on a daily basis the shortcomings of the roadway system and want to see greater focus and action to improve roads.

Traffic congestion in the New Orleans area is getting worse, causing 45 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing the average driver \$1,161 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

Brandy Christian, Port of New Orleans president and CEO, said farmers, manufacturers and consumers are connected to the world marketplace by ports, which are responsible for more than 23 million U.S. jobs and \$321 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue.

“For efficient goods movement, transportation infrastructure investment must be a top priority,” Christian said in a news release.

The report states that 13 percent of the state's bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. In the New Orleans area, 12 percent of bridges, 89 of 772, are structurally deficient.