

# Bad Roads Cost Each Worcester Driver \$1,700+ Per Year

Thursday, October 23, 2014

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Deficient roads and bridges and congested or lack desirable safety features throughout Worcester are proving costly to motorists in the city, as a new report suggests that each Worcester driver is spending an additional \$1,733 per year.

The report – which was released by TRIP, a nonprofit transportation organization based out of Washington D.C. – says that higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes, and congestion-related delays are all factors that contribute to Worcester residents having to pay additional money.

“Driving on deficient roads costs each Worcester area driver \$1,733 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the financial cost of traffic crashes,” read a press release from TRIP.

In analyzing trends throughout the state, TRIP determined that Massachusetts motorists as a whole spend \$8.3 billion annually because of these various problems. The report also states that one-fifth of major roads and highways are in poor condition and more than half of Massachusetts’ bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

## Troubling Problems

The TRIP report finds that a total of 21-percent of major roads in the Worcester urban area are rated in poor condition and an additional 62-percent are rated in mediocre condition, costing the average Worcester motorist an additional \$541 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Traffic congestion is also a major factor in the city, as data shows that it accounts for 33 hours of delays per motorist per year, which accounts for \$677 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

“Improvements to our infrastructure are an investment in public safety – whether it be for drivers, cyclists or pedestrians,” said Mary Maguire, director of public and government affairs for AAA Southern New England.

## Solutions

Infrastructure improvements to the city is vital to the overall development; after all transportation is key in bringing people into the city and having them be able to properly move about.

Massachusetts is a state that has been working to improve infrastructure by trying to finance projects that could help bring more money to improve the roads and bridges throughout the Commonwealth. Passed in 2013, the Transportation Act aimed to fund \$600 million annually for transportation projects throughout the state. Unfortunately, the funds from this act shortfall the actual needs of the state; the report estimates that the state needs \$1 billion per year for the next 20 years.

“Improving these conditions in Massachusetts and reducing transportation costs to the public will require significant and reliable funding at the state and federal levels,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director.