

Study: Oklahoma City drivers paying most for rough roads

by [Lorne Fultonberg](#)



OKLAHOMA CITY - Local drivers are claiming the top spot in an undesirable ranking system.

According to [TRIP](#), which studies road conditions and their effects, Oklahoma City drivers pay more than anyone else in the country dealing with poor pavement.

The average Oklahoma City driver is coughing up an extra \$1,025 because of sub-par roads, according to the report, which lists 53 percent of local streets in "poor" condition.

Those costs are passed on to drivers through additional costs for fuel, repairs and other maintenance.

"I was astonished at the high cost of driving," said Bobby Stem, Executive Director of the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors. "That \$1,000 can obviously go to a lot of other places, so it's pretty costly. And, I think that's basically just from poor condition of our pavement and potholes."

Not helping, Stem said, Oklahoma City's location at the "crossroads of America," a spot that features heavy truck traffic and an expanding downtown scene.

"You have many more people coming into OKC to participate in Thunder games or all of the new nightlife, all of the new restaurants and such that are popping up all over OKC," he said. "Well, that puts traffic on roads."

Jeff Beck, of Beck's Garage, has seen the side effects of that traffic for 25 years.

The \$1,000 figure isn't surprising to a man who's seen more than his fair share of bent rims and damaged suspensions.

"It only takes one to ruin one wheel and tire and, in some cases, you're at that \$1,000 mark," he said. "Beware if you drive a smaller car or a sportscar that sits low to the ground. You need to be picking, you need to be familiar with your roads that you use and pick your route wisely."

But, Stem and TRIP warn a detour will mean a hit to your wallet.

Stem said the way to offset costs is to repair the roads and dedicate more funding to do so.

"Let's start using our gas tax revenues, stop siphoning money off the top to go other places, start using those on our roads and bridges," he said. "It's time to prioritize."

Oklahoma City officials said voters can prioritize the roads, starting with a bond issue on the ballot in September 2017.