

## Morgantown roads worst for costing drivers money according to report

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**MORGANTOWN, W.Va.** — A national transportation research group found West Virginia's mangled roads and bridges have us slipping in rankings landing the Mountain State at the back of the pack for infrastructure conditions.

According to Will Wilkins, the executive director of TRIP, drivers here are paying a hefty price, \$1.4 billion annually, due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays.

“That could be as much as \$1,439 per driver per year actually in Morgantown,” Wilkins noted.

Morgantown drivers experience the highest costs compared to other more urban areas of the state.

TRIP found the cost is \$1,121 in Huntington, \$1,274 in Parkersburg, \$1,315 in Wheeling and \$1,357 in Charleston.

“As a nation, we have under invested in our roads, bridges and transit systems all over the country. In fact this came up as an issue in the recent presidential campaign,” summarized Wilkins.

Statewide, TRIP reports 29 percent of major roads are in poor condition. In 2016, West Virginia had the fifth highest share of bridges rated structurally deficient, with 17 percent of the state's bridges rated structurally deficient. This ranking is up from 12th in 2014, when 13 percent of the state's bridges were rated structurally deficient.

“So, you're losing ground in maintaining bridges in what is a state that really relies on them,” Wilkins explained.

The TRIP report found that 68 percent of major roads in the Morgantown urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$815 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

[Governor Jim Justice has proposed an ambitious state infrastructure plan that includes an increased gas tax and fees.](#)