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Bad Streets Cost Jackson Drivers Over \$2,000 a Year in Extra Vehicle Costs



A new study of Mississippi's infrastructure found that Jackson drivers pay more in additional vehicle operating costs than Mississippians on the Gulf Coast, in Hattiesburg or in DeSoto County. Photo by [Imani Khayyam](#).

By Arielle Dreher

JACKSON — Jacksonians spend an additional \$2,046 per year driving on Jackson roads, a new study from the TRIP group shows.

The [study](#) looked specifically at the state's high-population areas including Jackson, Hattiesburg, the Coast and DeSoto County. Of those four areas, Jackson drivers cough up the most money in additional expenses due to rough roads, wasted gas and unsafe infrastructure.

Carolyn Kelly, with TRIP, a nonprofit transportation research group, said drivers in the Jackson area spend the most additional money on congestion, which costs the average driver \$878 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

The vehicle operating cost, the cost of operating a vehicle in Jackson on rough roads, is \$823 a year. Infrastructure troubles are not limited to Jackson or other metropolitan areas. TRIP released a statewide report as well that shows Mississippi's infrastructure costs residents \$2.9 billion in additional costs annually.

"The condition of Mississippi's transportation system will worsen in the future without additional funding, leading to even higher costs for drivers," Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director said in a press release.

The debate over infrastructure funding is at least in part responsible for the Legislature's special session set for Monday. The House, led by Speaker Philip Gunn, has [repeatedly pushed for additional funding mechanisms for the state's roads and bridges](#). Prior to the special session, House leaders sent Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves a [list of seven proposals](#) to consider ahead of the special session. Reeves and the Senate have shown no signs of cooperation or willingness to discuss additional funding streams, thus far.

Laura Hipp, Reeves' communications director, released a statement to reporters after the House announced its post-session proposals on infrastructure.

"Out of respect for Gov. Bryant's authority to set the agenda for the special session, the lieutenant governor sees no reason to comment on ideas that are not likely to be part of any call," Hipp said in an emailed comment. "Until told otherwise, he expects to pass the appropriation bills as agreed to by House and Senate conferees during the regular session."

This morning, Gov. Phil Bryant [released his special session agenda](#), which makes no mention of additional funding for roads and bridges—although it also does not specify what should go into the Department of Transportation budget bills. The special session starts Monday, June 5, at 10 a.m.

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