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Here's how much time Charlotte drivers waste in traffic. (It's worse than we thought.)

By Adam Bell

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A new study has an answer for all those drivers who think the Charlotte area's traffic and road conditions are the absolute worst in the state: You're right.

[The 27-page report](#) released Thursday by TRIP, a nonprofit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C., highlighted transportation troubles in the region and statewide and pushed for more funding to help fix those problems.

For instance, no drivers in the state waste more time in traffic than the ones in the Charlotte area, who lose 40 hours a year due to congestion.

That adds up to a collective 13.8 million gallons of fuel wasted a year, the report stated. With some local gas stations charging \$2.19 a gallon now, it's the equivalent of wasting more than \$30 million a year.

40 Annual hours lost due to congestion in the Charlotte area

31 Annual hours lost in Raleigh-Durham

26 Annual hours lost in the Asheville area

25 Annual hours lost in The Triad

20 Annual hours lost in the Wilmington area

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The next closest area to Charlotte for traffic headaches was Raleigh-Durham,

where drivers lost 31 hours a year, the report stated.

As for major roads in the Charlotte area, 49 percent are either in poor or mediocre condition, also worst in the state.

The report concludes that "significant challenges still remain in providing a safe, smooth and efficient network of roads, highways and bridges in North Carolina."

The N.C. Department of Transportation received \$53 billion in project requests from state and regional transportation groups for inclusion in the the 2018-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program, according to TRIP, but only had funding available to include \$9 billion.

"With an already large transportation funding shortfall, North Carolina is poised to see increasingly deteriorated and congested roads in the future," TRIP Executive Director Will Wilkins said in a statement. "Additional transportation funding will allow the state to move forward with dozens of needed projects...."

During a news conference Thursday afternoon at the Charlotte Chamber, report co-author Carolyn Bonifas Kelly spoke about the transportation funding shortfall. "As a result, drivers... are spending more time staring at the brake lights ahead of them rather than getting to their destination."

TRIP study co-author Carolyn Bonifas Kelly

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TRIP hopes the report will serve as an impetus for additional funding discussions.

As chamber President Bob Morgan put it, North Carolina needs to "invest comprehensively in a transportation infrastructure of all modes," which includes toll roads.



TRIP study co-author Carolyn Bonifas Kelly
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Other highlights in the report include:

- 4 percent of the bridges in the Charlotte area are structurally deficient, which is actually the lowest rate among the state's regions.
- From 2013 to 2015, the Charlotte area averaged 68 traffic fatalities a year. The Triad had the highest average, with 138 a year.
- Vehicle miles traveled in North Carolina increased by 29 percent from 2000 to last year, the ninth highest rate in the nation.
- Every \$1 of deferred maintenance on roads and bridges costs an additional \$4 to \$5 in needed future repairs.
- And while N.C. DOT is spending \$1.3 billion annually on road, highway and bridge repairs, it should be spending \$1.6 billion to \$1.9 billion on that work.

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