

Bad roads cost each Rochester driver \$1,691 a year

By Jane Flasch - Thursday, January 21st 2016

Drivers concerned about snowy conditions on Thursday might also worry about the condition of the roads and highways underneath.



An organization that monitors Rochester's highways said 29 percent of them need some - or considerable - repair.

"We would all like to think we're driving on roads that are as safe as they can be. Unfortunately that's not the case," said Rocky Moretti of TRIP, which bills itself as a [national transportation research group](#).

The mechanics at Piehler Vision measure the condition of the roads by the condition of the vehicles that arrive here for emergency repairs.

George Lazor showed us a coil that has been snapped in two.

"This is on the front of the car," Lazor said. "It suspends the car when you go over bumps. Over time fatigue from deep pot holed just breaks the spring and it becomes unsafe."

It is just the beginning of a laundry list of problems for this particular vehicle George is working on.

"I had two springs break on it and I had to replace the back brakes and the tires were shot," said Carl Davies, the owner of the car.

Mechanics say our cars are growing old before their time. Suspensions, tie rods and belts on vehicles with low miles are wearing faster than they should be. It's the cumulative impact of driving on rough roads year after year after year.

TRIP says rough roads cost Rochester drivers \$314 a year in wear and tear on their vehicles.

When that wear adds up over time - to break a spring or strut - so does the repair bill.

"Steering and suspension - they're expensive parts," Lazor said. "They're hard to get at, they're labor intense."

In Davies' case, the bill is \$1,100. In a way, he's paying twice.

New York drivers already pay gas tax and vehicle fees that are supposed to pay for road and bridge repair. Yet, a recent 13 WHAM investigation found only a quarter of the \$3.8 billion collected each year is actually spent on road work. A comptroller's audit has since sparked changes at the Department of Transportation.

TRIP also added up the cost of crashes and time lost in rush hour or congested traffic.

When all of that is added to the wear and tear bill, it comes to \$1,691 a year.

"There certainly is a cost to providing good infrastructure," Moretti said. "But the reality is the cost of not making needed transportation improvements is far higher."