



Report: Poorly Maintained Roads Cost Oklahomans Billions Of Dollars

By CLAIRE DONNELLY • MAY 10, 2017



Driving on poorly maintained roads is costing Oklahoma drivers \$5 billion dollars each year, according to a report released Wednesday.

The report, authored by the nonprofit transportation research group [TRIP](#), found that 45 percent of Oklahoma's major urban roads and highways are in poor condition.

One of the report's authors, Rocky Moretti, said poor road conditions can lead to increased wear on vehicles--meaning higher repair costs for drivers.

"You're spending more money on gas because the car's not running as efficiently as it should, but more critically, vehicles don't last as long when roads are in poor condition," Moretti said.

Oklahoma Department of Transportation Director Mike Patterson said TRIP's report findings were not surprising.

"The last six or seven years of budget problems and using transportation funding to help balance the entire state budget is taking its toll on our effort to get improvements to the level we would like it to be," Patterson said.

Oklahoma's state transportation budget could face funding cuts as lawmakers work to fill a budget hole of nearly \$900 million.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation [may suspend work on more than 80 bridges and roads](#) across the state, according to an announcement made at the Oklahoma Highway Commission's meeting May 2.

The commission also deferred the awarding of highway construction contracts for May, and the department instructed contractors not to begin work on 12 previously awarded contracts.

The TRIP report numbers reflect road conditions from across the state, including rural roads as well as interstates and highways.

Shannon Cox, a spokeswoman for the Oklahoma City Department of Public Works, said she finds this problematic.

"Lumping the city and county and state [road conditions] together is not exactly an apples to apples comparison," Cox said.

Cox said Oklahoma City road conditions are improving, and the city spends \$70 million each year on projects like widening and resurfacing.