

Deteriorated, congested roads costing Lowcountry drivers \$1,850 each year



By [Rebecca Collett](#) | Wednesday, March 21, 2017 (PM)

Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack safety features cost South Carolina drivers \$5.4 billion statewide every year, according to a report released Tuesday by [TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation organization](#).

For the average driver in Charleston, the cost is \$1,850 each year. The report blames higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays for the extra expense to driver. The TRIP report finds that 43 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Charleston urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$452 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Traffic congestion in the Charleston accounts for 41 hours of lost time annually for Charleston drivers. That's more than any other region in the state.

“The current condition of our state’s roads places a significant cost on residents, both in time and money, but also puts them at risk each and every time they get in their car,” said Mary Graham, Chief Advancement Officer for the [Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce](#). “With the highest rate of traffic fatalities in the nation, we must urge our elected officials to pass the infrastructure funding bill, H.3516, to fix our roads.”

The TRIP report found drivers in Colorado Springs, Denver, and Louisville are dealing with even more costs associated with rough roads per driver than the Charleston region. The South Carolina Department of Transportation currently spends \$415 million annually on road and highway pavement repairs and reconstruction. The DOT needs \$900 million needed annually to significantly improve the state’s major roads and highways.

“These conditions are only going to get worse, increasing the additional costs to motorists, if greater investment is not made available at the state and local levels of government,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director. “Without adequate funding, South Carolina’s transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth, safety and quality of life.”

Not all lawmakers are on board with boosting funding to the DOT to fix our road issues. Senator Tom Davis says the problem is a lack of accountability and the need for reform. This week he’s threatening a filibuster to hold up the senate’s gas-tax bill.