

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2017

Knox motorists lose \$1,376 annually from insufficient roads — report

USA TODAY NETWORK - Tennessee



Tennessee roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack basic safety features cost the state's motorists a collective \$6 billion annually, [according to a new report](#) from a national transportation research group.

In Knoxville, road woes cost motorists an average of \$1,376 a year, the report found.

The release of the study, conducted by Washington, D.C.-based TRIP, comes on the eve of a crucial Tennessee House of Representatives vote Wednesday on Gov. Bill Haslam's IMPROVE ACT, which includes a 6-cent increase over three years on the state's tax on gasoline to fund a \$10 billion backlog in road projects.

Cost factors taken into consideration in the report — dubbed Tennessee Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility — included vehicle operating costs, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and traffic crashes,

The report found 18 percent of major, locally and state-maintained urban roads are in poor or mediocre condition, producing \$192 million in annual costs to motorists. Five percent of Tennessee's locally and state-maintained bridges are structurally deficient. In Knoxville, 2 percent of bridges are structurally deficient.

In Knoxville, traffic congestion costs motorists \$849 annually, according the report, while the absence of roadway safety features costs motorists \$355 a year. Vehicle operating costs account for \$172 a year in costs annually.

Of the state's four largest urban areas, Memphis motorists, at \$2,019, have the greatest costs annually because of insufficient roads. Chattanooga motorists have \$1,471 in costs a year. Nashville motorists have \$1,667 in costs annually.

Officials from TRIP held a news conference in Nashville to unveil the report. They were joined by the chairman of the Tennessee Infrastructure Alliance, which has lobbied the state legislature for approval of Haslam's IMPROVE Act.

“TDOT’s first priority is the safety of Tennessee’s motoring public,” Bill Moore, chairman of Tennessee Infrastructure Alliance and a former TDOT chief engineer, said in a statement. “We must have additional transportation funding, as proposed in Governor Haslam’s IMPROVE Act currently before the Tennessee General Assembly, not only to maintain and expand our system, but to significantly decrease congestion levels in our urban cities, which continue to rise each year.”