



By [Ian Cassette](#) | Thursday, April 27, 2017

Kansas drivers losing money over poor roads

TOPEKA, Kan. (WIBW) --

Deteriorated roads and bridges are costing Kansas motorists \$2.7 billion statewide annually and specifically \$1,453 per driver in the Topeka urban area, according in a report by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

These numbers are being attributed to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes, and congestion-related delays.



The TRIP report, "Kansas Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility," alarmingly finds that more than one-third of major, locally, and state-maintained urban roads in Kansas are in poor or mediocre condition. In addition, nine percent of Kansas' locally and state-maintained bridges are structurally deficient.

The ability of the Kansas Department of Transportation to repair and improve the state's transportation system has been hampered by the transfer of \$2.4 billion in state highway funds to state general funds between FY (fiscal year) 2011 and FY 2017, according to the report. Governor Sam Brownback's FY 2018/FY 2019 budget proposal would increase transfers of state highway funds to state general funds and other state agencies to \$ 3.4 billion from FY 2011 to FY 2019.

"If you allow the system to deteriorate, it comes down at a significant cost," said Rocky Moretti, Director of Policy and Research, TRIP. "What most states and local governments have found is that it costs less to make the improvements that are necessary than the cost if you don't make the improvements."

Research also shows that the state's major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with drivers wasting significant amounts of time and fuel each year. In Topeka, traffic congestion is worsening, causing 16 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing each driver \$388 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

The TRIP report finds that 73 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Topeka urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist \$819 each year in extra costs.

With \$395 billion in goods shipped mostly by trucks annually to and from Kansas, the condition of Kansas' transportation system is suggested to be a top priority by Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director.

"The condition of Kansas' transportation system will worsen in the future as additional monies are diverted away from the highway fund, leading to even higher costs for drivers," Wilkins said.