

## Springfield drivers lose \$1,600 a year by driving on deficient roads, report says

[Alissa Zhu](#), Springfield News-Leader



A car splashes through a pothole on National Avenue near Brower Street. (Photo: News-Leader File Photo)

The average Springfield driver loses nearly \$1,600 a year from driving on deteriorating, congested and unsafe roads, according to a new report from [TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group](#).

TRIP's calculation looked at statistics on road condition, congestion and traffic crashes, according to a news release.

The report found that about 43 percent of roads in the Springfield area are rated "poor" or "mediocre." Springfield drivers lose, on average, 26 hours to traffic congestion every year. Between 2014 and 2016, an average of 32 people died every year in crashes.

Rocky Moretti, director of research and policy for TRIP, told the News-Leader that Missouri has seen a lot of economic growth and increased numbers of travelers, which contributes to wear and tear on roads.

"The challenge in the Springfield area is to get ahead of deteriorating road and bridge conditions to make improvements that will support economic growth in the region (and) to make sure all needed roadway safety improvements are made in the region to keep not only motorists safe but also bicyclists and pedestrians," Moretti said.

Compared to Kansas City, St. Louis, and Columbia and Jefferson City areas, Springfield has better roads, the report indicates.

Sixty percent of Columbia and Jefferson City roads are in "poor" or "mediocre" condition, the report says. In Kansas City, it's 53 percent. For St. Louis, it's 51 percent.

Driving on rough roads costs motorists across the state a total of \$3 billion each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including faster depreciation, additional money spent on repair, more consumption of fuel and wear on tires, the release said.

There are also fewer fatal crashes in Springfield compared to the other major Missouri cities, TRIP said.

From 2012 to 2016, 4,163 people were killed in crashes statewide, according to the report. Looking only at the crashes in which roadway features were likely a contributing factor, the economic cost was \$2.4 billion in 2016.

Unsurprisingly, Kansas City and St. Louis have the worst traffic in the state, with drivers in each city losing more than 40 hours a year to congestion, on average.

On average, a driver in Columbia and Jefferson City only loses 13 hours to congestion a year — half that of Springfield drivers.

TRIP calculated that congestion costs \$2.4 billion each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel, statewide.

The report also looked at bridge conditions. Out of 461 bridges in the Springfield area, 6 percent were structurally deficient, TRIP says. Columbia and Jefferson City had the highest share — 10 percent — of structurally deficient bridges. Kansas City had the lowest percentage, with only 5 percent of its 2,925 bridges being deficient.

Overall, in Missouri 13 percent of bridges are structurally deficient, the report said. About 40 percent of the state's bridges were built in 1969 or earlier.

TRIP said in its report that Missouri should invest in maintaining and modernizing its roads, bridges and highways.

Moretti said there's "significant concern" as many of Missouri's major pieces of infrastructure are now more than 50 years old.

"The cost of improvements are increasing. It's much harder to catch up if you fall behind in maintaining your transportation system," Moretti said.

TRIP's [full report](#) is available online at [tripnet.org](http://tripnet.org).