

THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2018 ■ CINCINNATI.COM ■ PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

You're losing \$2,000 a year to Cincy's bad roads, a full work week stuck in traffic

[Hannah Sparling](#), Cincinnati Enquirer



Rocky Moretti, TRIP director of policy and research, explains findings from the nonprofit's latest report. (Photo: Hannah Sparling)

A deteriorating, congested system of roads and bridges is costing Cincinnati drivers – about \$2,000 each a year, according to one new study.

Queen city drivers lose money when they're stuck idling in traffic.

They lose money when potholes pop tires and rough pavement adds to vehicle wear and tear.

They lose money – and even their lives – when poor roadway safety features contribute to crashes.

It adds up to \$2,022 a year per driver in Cincinnati, according to TRIP, the Washington, D.C.-based transportation group behind the study. TRIP representatives visited Cincinnati on Thursday to deliver the study and advocate for better infrastructure funding.

“Ohio is seeing a resurgence in economic growth, but that resurgence needs to be met with infrastructure,” said Rocky Moretti, TRIP’s director of policy and research. “Right now, the lack of adequate infrastructure is holding the region’s economic growth hostage.”

If you're a Cincy driver, here's how you lose that \$2,022:

- **\$574 on vehicle operating costs.** That's the extra cash you spend on gas when you're stuck sitting still in traffic. Or, the money you spend on extra repairs from the wear and tear of driving on rough roads.
- **\$391 on safety.** That's money spent after crashes, including on emergency services and medical bills. Ohio averages more than 1,000 traffic fatalities a year, Moretti said, but those could be curbed by adding features such as rumble strips, guardrails and pedestrian lights.
- **\$1,057 on congestion.** That's the money Cincinnatians lose while they're stuck on the road, doing nothing. It's a combination of lost wages and productivity. Cincinnati drivers spend about 44 hours a year – a full work week – sitting in congested traffic.



Northbound traffic ahead of the Brent Spence Bridge Thursday, Aug. 3, 2017. (Photo: Provided, KYTC)

In Cincinnati, the TRIP report found half of the major urban roads are in poor or mediocre condition. And there are several major transportation projects – the Brent Spence Bridge and the Western Hills Viaduct included – that do not have funding.

Making matters worse, the Ohio Department of Transportation is projecting a \$14 billion shortfall by 2040.

The competition for funding is fierce, said Hamilton County Engineer Ted Hubbard, and it is only going to intensify. That means city and county leaders have to prioritize and pick what they want to do and fund it.

“If we want to maintain jobs, we have to maintain our system,” Hubbard said. “If we want to expand jobs, we have to expand our system.”

TRIP did similar presentations in cities around Ohio on Thursday. Columbus drivers are faring slightly better than those in the Queen City, losing about \$1,900 a year to poor road conditions.

Dayton drivers have it even better than those in Columbus, losing \$1,700 each.

Toledo is in line with Cincinnati, at just under \$2,000, and Cleveland is slightly worse, at \$2,200.

TRIP is partially funded by businesses involved in highway construction and engineering, so take the findings with that caveat – such groups would benefit from more work being done on roads.

But Moretti said TRIP’s goal is not to drive profits but to better the nation’s infrastructure, grow the economy and ultimately save lives.

And to anyone who drives in Cincinnati, it's hard to argue this: It'd be nice to have an extra \$2,000 a year.

Getting stuck in traffic is a bore.

And potholes suck.