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This report says bad roads cost Dayton drivers \$1,700 each year. Here's what you need to know.

LOCAL By Bailey Gallion - Staff Writer



Many roads in Ohio are in poor condition, and they're costing drivers money, according to a research group.

A report from TRIP, a national transportation research group, found that badly maintained roads cost Dayton-area drivers an average of \$1,740 per year. The costs stem from repairing damaged vehicles, loss of time and fuel from waiting in traffic and depreciation of vehicle values.

At a Thursday news conference, local officials and a TRIP representative stressed the need for more funding for vehicle maintenance.

Costs for drivers

The TRIP report measured costs to drivers by analyzing the impact of decreased vehicle value, traffic crashes and wasted gas and time due to congestion. In the Dayton area, vehicle depreciation and congestion had the greatest impact. Vehicle depreciation cost the average driver \$649 per year, congestion cost \$631 and safety issues cost \$352.

The Dayton area had the lowest cost to drivers out of Ohio's largest urban areas. Drivers in the Cleveland/Akron area paid the highest cost at about \$2,180 per year.

The average driver in the Dayton area spends 27 hours per year stuck in traffic. Cincinnati drivers spent the most time in traffic, losing an average of 44 hours per year.

More than a fifth of roads are in poor or mediocre condition

According to the report, 23 percent of Ohio's major locally and state-owned roads are in poor or mediocre condition.

Rural roads see more fatal crashes than urban roads, according to the report. The fatality rate on Ohio's non-interstate rural roads in 2016 was about two-and-a-half times that on all other roads.

Seven percent of Ohio's locally and state-owned bridges are structurally deficient, according to the report. Montgomery County Engineer Paul Gruner said those bridges are still safe to travel on, but have weight limits that restrict access by tractor-trailers, emergency vehicles and school buses.

Spending less now increases costs down the line

The report identified 21 needed transportation projects in major urban areas that lack adequate funding for construction to proceed, including a project to improve access to Dayton International Airport and improvements to interchanges on US 33.

According to the report, every \$1 in deferred maintenance on roads and bridges costs an additional \$4 to \$5 in future repairs. Pavement deterioration also accelerates with time, and older roads cost drivers more money in vehicle repairs.

Funding is decreasing

The use of roads in Ohio has increased over the years at the same time funding has decreased.

Ohio's population has increased 2 percent since 2000. Since 2000, the number of miles vehicles travelled on roads in the state increased 12 percent. By 2040, miles travelled are projected to increase another 20 percent.

The largest source for funding of roadways in Ohio are federal and state motor vehicle fuel fees. Inflation has eroded the worth of those fees, which were last increased in 1993. Revenue from the fuel fees has decreased over 40 percent since 1993.

The Ohio Department of Transportation estimates the the cost of maintaining roadway and public transportation systems is about \$55 billion through 2040, but only \$41 billion is projected to be available.