

SoCal's Roads Are Rough, and They Might Be Costing Drivers Hundreds of Dollars Per Year



Bumpy roads, uneven pavement and pot holes cost drivers in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim areas more than \$900 a year in repairs, maintenance, fuel consumption and tire wear, accelerating vehicle deterioration and depreciation, a nonprofit transportation group reported Wednesday.

The report from the Washington D.C.-based TRIP ranked the top 20 large and mid-sized urban areas with the highest share of pavement in poor condition and the highest vehicle operating costs as a result of poorly maintained roads.

The report showed nearly 60 percent of the freeways and roads used most by drivers in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim region are in poor condition, ranking third in the nation behind only the San Francisco-Oakland area (71 percent of roads in poor condition) and San Jose (64 percent).

While drivers in our area are paying more than \$900 in increased vehicle operating costs, drivers in the Bay Area endure the highest increase at \$1,049 a year and drivers in San Jose pay \$983 a year. That compares to drivers in Providence, Rhode Island, which came in 20th in the survey, who pay \$724 in increased vehicle operating costs. The report large replicates a report issued by TRIP Aug. 15 that also found drivers paid on average about \$300 annually for vehicle repairs from traffic crashes in which roadway features were likely a contributing factor. TRIP also stated that an investment in transportation strengthens the economy, supporting the equivalent of 4 million full-time jobs across all sectors of the nation's economy. "Approximately 63 million full-time jobs in the U.S. in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and

manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety and reliability of America's transportation infrastructure network," the report said.

"Highways are vitally important to continued economic development in the United States," it added. "As the economy expands, creating more jobs and increasing consumer confidence, the demand for consumer and business products grows. In turn, manufacturers ship greater quantities of goods to market to meet this demand, a process that adds to truck traffic on the nation's highways and major arterial roads."

The group said a significant boost in funding is needed to improve roadway conditions. It cited a U.S. Department of Transportation semi-annual report that found the nation's current \$41 billion annual investment in maintaining roads and highways should be increased by 33 percent to \$61 billion dollars a year.

TRIP issued the following recommendations for increasing the smoothness of urban roads in order to reduce additional vehicle operating costs:

- Implement and adequately fund a pavement preservation program that postpones the need for significant rehabilitation by performing initial maintenance and preservation on road surfaces while they are still in good condition.
- Consider using pavement materials and designs that will provide a longer-lasting surface when critical routes are constructed or reconstructed.
- Resurface roads in a timely fashion using pavement material that is designed to be the most durable given local climate and the level and mix of traffic on the road.
- Maintain an aggressive pothole-patching program that uses the best material available.
- Invest adequately to insure that 75 percent of local road surfaces are in good condition.

The full report can be found at www.tripnet.org.

TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.