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## Sacramento's roadways are in bad shape and getting worse, study says

By Michael McGough  
[mmcgough@sacbee.com](mailto:mmcgough@sacbee.com)

Sacramento has some of the worst urban roadways in the nation, a recent study shows.

About 41 percent of the Sacramento area's roads are rated in "poor condition," according to a report on urban road quality released Wednesday by nonprofit research group TRIP. That ranks No. 12 among the 20 large urban areas (population 500,000 or higher) with the nation's most deteriorated roads and highways.

The study further breaks down road quality into four categories: poor, mediocre, fair or good quality. Only 18 percent of roadways are considered "good" in Sacramento, and 12 percent are rated fair. With poor roadways coming in at 41 percent, and 29 percent rated mediocre, this means about 70 percent of the area's paved roads are considered unsatisfactory, according to TRIP.

One clear example of the region's deteriorating roadways took place this summer, when more than two dozen cars were [damaged by a large pothole on northbound Interstate 5 near Richards Boulevard](#) during a single weekday morning commute. Potholes on that stretch of freeway have made emergency repairs and intermittent night work necessary since August.

California as a whole did not fare well in TRIP's findings. The three large urban areas with the poorest road quality in the nation, as well as six of the 20 worst, can be found in the Golden State. The list is topped by the San Francisco/Oakland area, where 71 percent of roads are reportedly in poor shape, followed by San Jose at 64 percent and the greater Los Angeles area at 57 percent.

And for mid-sized urban areas (200,000 to 500,000 people), California fared even worse with eight cities in the Top 20. Antioch (57 percent in poor shape), Concord (56), Stockton (43) and Modesto (37) are among notable bumpy regions.

TRIP's [survey](#) is based on Federal Highway Administration data from 2016. Roads rated poor "show significant signs of pavement wear and deterioration and may also have significant distress in their underlying foundation," the survey says. Overall, 33 percent of major roads in the U.S. are in poor condition.

The survey also gives recommendations for how transportation agencies should best handle poor roadways: using higher-quality pavement materials when roads are constructed, creating a pavement preservation program, patching potholes aggressively and resurfacing roads in a timely manner.

"The timing of the maintenance and rehabilitation of road surfaces is critical, impacting the cost-effectiveness of the repairs and ultimately the overall quality of a regional road network," the survey says.

Senate Bill 1, passed last year, created the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program to address deteriorating roadways in California. The Caltrans website includes a [map of projects](#) funded by SB 1, including repaving and improving stretches of I-5 throughout the state.

TRIP also calculated the average cost of deteriorated roadways to a typical driver. Estimating that the average motorist loses \$599 a year to damage caused by driving on unkempt roads, San Francisco Bay Area drivers spend nearly double that (\$1,049). Sacramentans are spending \$754 on average to keep up with their bumpy roads.

In TRIP's previous urban road report, from 2016, Sacramento didn't crack the 25 worst metro areas.

Last year, TRIP looked at rural areas on a statewide basis. California ranked third-worst with 38 percent of rural pavement in poor condition.

The nation's most populous state also ranked second highest in fatality rates per miles driven on rural roads. California's rate of auto fatalities on rural roads were more than quadruple the rate for non-rural roads, TRIP's data showed, also among the highest ratios in the U.S.