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Wisconsin road woes cost drivers \$6.8 billion each year, study says



[Chris Mueller](#), Appleton Post-Crescent

A combination of rough roads, traffic congestion and missing safety features costs drivers in Wisconsin \$6.8 billion each year, according to a study released Tuesday by a national transportation research group.

That comes to about \$1,500 a year for every driver in the Appleton, Green Bay and Oshkosh area, the study said, referencing higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and delays due to congestion.

The cost is about the same for drivers in Wausau, but even higher for those on the roads in Madison and Milwaukee — at about \$2,100 and \$2,300, respectively.

The [study was released Tuesday by TRIP](#), a Washington, D.C.-based research group, which also found that about half of the state's major

locally and state-maintained roads and highways are in poor or mediocre condition due to a lack of state and local funding.

That number is even higher in the Appleton, Green Bay and Oshkosh area, where 70 percent of those types of roads are in poor or mediocre condition. That alone costs drivers in the area \$816 each year, according to the study.

“Until state elected officials are able to agree on long-term, sustainable transportation funding, Wisconsin will be unable to meet mounting needs on our local roads and state highways,” said Daniel Fedderly, executive director of the Wisconsin County Highway Association.

The traffic fatality rate between 2012 and 2016 in Wisconsin was 0.95 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles, which is below the national average of 1.18. The state had more than 2,800 traffic fatalities in that time period. The impact of all traffic crashes costs drivers in the Appleton, Green Bay and Oshkosh area an average of \$277 each year, the study said.

The study also found traffic congestion in the region is getting worse, causing 14 hours worth of delays each year for the average driver at a cost of \$363 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

“Adequate funding for the state’s transportation system would allow for smoother roads, more efficient mobility, enhanced safety, and economic growth opportunities while saving Wisconsin’s drivers time and money,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director.

The condition of roads in Wisconsin are vital to economic development in the state, the study said.

A total of about \$580 billion worth of goods are shipped to and from sites in the state each year. And about 1.4 million full-time jobs in industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing depend on the state's transportation infrastructure.