

Report: New Mexico roads are costing drivers \$2.7 billion

By: Jackie Kent



ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (KRQE) - A transportation research group says New Mexico has seen the biggest increase in the number of cars and trucks on the road of any state in the past five years, causing a lot of wear and tear and costing drivers.

"Here in Albuquerque, more than half of major roads have pavements in poor or mediocre condition," TRIP Director of Policy and Research Rocky Moretti said.

Bad roads are a problem that the research group said is costing New Mexico drivers \$2.7 billion a year.

In Albuquerque, the average is about \$2,058 annually, according to TRIP.

"In the cost of repairing vehicles that are driving on rough roads, the value of lost time and the economic consequences of serious traffic crashes," Moretti explained.

TRIP's [annual report](#) outlines the state's top transportation needs of about \$3 billion in projects to help lower that impact on drivers.

The big projects in Albuquerque include replacing deficient bridges at the I-25 and Gibson interchange; adding a new interchange at the I-25 and Los Lunas corridor with a new river crossing; expanding the Paseo del Volcan corridor on the northwest side from US 550 to I-40; sidewalk and drainage improvements along Coors in the South Valley; and extending the Gibson bypass to improve traffic flow across southeast Albuquerque.

"Unfortunately, each year we fall further and further behind if we do not make the necessary improvements," Consulting Engineer Brian Burnett said.

All of the proposed projects are ideas that drivers say are needed to help with traffic congestion.

TRIP estimates Albuquerque drivers spend an average of 42 hours a year sitting in traffic.

"Just a few days ago I was on I-40 for almost an hour trying to get home, so it's just a problem that really needs to be fixed and I hope that Albuquerque does," Sean Fowler of Albuquerque said.

To help pay for the road improvements, the New Mexico Trucking Association is supporting two legislative bills that would increase the fuel tax.