



Report: Bad roads cost ABQ drivers \$2K per year

By [Scott Turner / Journal Staff Writer](#)

Driving on deteriorating and congested roads costs each Albuquerque driver more than \$2,000 a year, according to a study released Thursday by a national transportation research group.

Results of the report – New Mexico Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility – were shared by TRIP associate director of research and communication Carolyn Bonifas Kelly to members of the state Legislature this week. Overall, she said conditions of the state’s roads were costing state motorists \$2.6 billion.

She told the Journal the cost to motorists factored in three elements: vehicle operation costs, safety and congestion.

“For vehicle operational costs, it’s the wear and tear on vehicles, including tires,” she said, also mentioning lost time at work waiting on repairs and insurance costs with crashes. “With congestion, there’s fuel efficiency, the loss of fuel.”

For a driver in Albuquerque, the amount comes out to \$2,114, the report states. For a Santa Fe driver, it’s \$1,655 per year and motorists in Las Cruces spend \$1,467.

The report stated that 54% of major roads and highways in the state are in poor or mediocre condition, while 34% of roads are in good condition. It lists 38% of roads in Albuquerque in poor condition, 22% in mediocre condition and 39% in either fair or good condition.

Kelly said statistics are based on reports sent in by local and state governments to the Federal Highway Administration.

The report also stated that the New Mexico Department of Transportation identified nearly \$2.8 billion in needed, but unfunded, projects throughout the state.

Included in that are \$850 million for reconstruction along the Interstate 10 corridor in southern New Mexico and \$500 million for reconstruction of Interstate 25 from the Sunport to the Big I in Albuquerque.

The Legislature appropriated \$389 million for road repairs around New Mexico in last year’s budget bill.

The most congested areas in the state are also listed. Nine of the top 10 are in Albuquerque. Topping the list is I-40 from I-25 to Juan Tabo. Paseo del Norte from Coors NW to Barstow NE and I-25 from Paseo del Norte to Comanche are next on the list.

Kelly said the rankings are based on Google analytic data.

“It’s based on peak driving time, 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. rush hour traffic,” she said.

The report also lists 1,853 traffic fatalities in New Mexico from 2014-18, for an average of 371 per year. It attributes a third of the fatal crashes to road conditions, which it said drove up safety costs. It said Albuquerque averaged 83 deaths per year.

Efforts to reach the New Mexico Department of Transportation for comment were unsuccessful.

Washington, D.C.-based TRIP is a private nonprofit that researches, evaluates and distributes data on surface transportation issues, according to its website.

It’s sponsored by “insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers, businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction, labor unions and organizations concerned with an efficient and safe surface transportation network that promotes economic development.”

Online

Read the report at tripnet.org