

Here's What Congestion Costs The Average NoVA Driver: Report

A nonprofit's new transportation study looked at the cost of congestion, rough roads and crashes to the average driver.

By [Emily Leayman, Patch Staff](#)



A new transportation study suggests congestion costs thousands to the average Northern Virginia driver. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

VIRGINIA — Sitting in traffic on the Beltway, I-95 or your local thoroughfare isn't just costing you time. According to a new transportation study from the nonprofit TRIP, congestion, deteriorated road conditions and other factors cost Northern Virginia drivers big time.

The [study estimated costs of congestion](#), operating expenses due to rough roads, and traffic crashes to the average driver. Results are provided for major regions — Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, Richmond and Roanoke — in addition to statewide totals.

The estimated cost of congestion in Northern Virginia significantly outpaces its Virginia counterparts, according to data taken from the Texas Transportation Institute Urban Mobility Report. The \$2,015 cost to the average Northern Virginia driver is more than the \$758 for Hampton Roads and \$641 for Richmond combined. In addition, an average Northern Virginia driver loses an estimated 102 hours each

year due to congestion. That's more than half of Hampton Roads' 46 hours lost and 35 in Richmond.

The study also estimated \$485 in vehicle operating costs due to rough roads in Northern Virginia, which was lower than \$684 for the average Hampton Roads driver. The \$83 cost of traffic crashes was lower than Roanoke's \$457, Richmond's \$349 and Hampton Roads' \$317.

Another major finding was that transportation needs outpace transportation revenues, partly due to greater use of electric and more fuel efficient vehicles reducing gas tax revenue. Statewide, vehicle miles of travel increased by 3.2 percent from 2016 to 2018, but gas tax collections fell by 0.4 percent. TRIP's study estimated that electric vehicles make up 2 percent of passenger vehicles in Virginia and could account for 46 percent by 2040.

Gov. Ralph Northam's [proposed transportation package](#) calls for a 4-cent gas take hike annually for three years, then indexing it to inflation. Vehicle registration fees would be cut in half beginning in fiscal year 2022.

"Despite Virginians driving more than ever, revenues from motor fuel taxes have continued to drop," read a statement from the governor's office. "This legislation modernizes Virginia's transportation funding model by cutting vehicle registration fees in half, raising the gas tax, and indexing it to inflation. New revenues will build a sustainable transportation system over the next decade and will be distributed through a new streamlined funding mechanism that supports a multimodal network."

TRIP's study concluded that future economic growth depends on Virginia maintaining and modernizing roads, highways and bridges with more local, state or federal transportation funding. [See the full transportation study here.](#)