Key facts about Montana's surface transportation system

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Investing in Montana's surface transportation system improves road and bridge conditions and reduces driver costs

- A total of 31% of Montana's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition. Driving on deteriorated roads costs Montana motorists $532 million a year – $605 per driver – in the form of additional repairs, accelerated vehicle depreciation, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

- A total of 7% of Montana's bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, meaning there is significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge. A total of 39% of the state's bridges were built prior to 1970. Many bridges that are 50 years or older may require significant rehabilitation or replacement.

- Vehicle travel in Montana dropped by 31% in April 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic (as compared to the same month the previous year), but rebounded to 7% above pre-pandemic levels by 2025. Since 2000, vehicle travel on Montana's roads increased 40% and the state's population increased 27%.

- The five-year Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which expires on September 30, 2026, will provide $2.8 billion in federal funds for highway and bridge investments in Montana over five years, including a 29% increase over the previous federal surface transportation program.

- Construction cost inflation, the erosion of motor fuel taxes due to inflation, improved fuel efficiency, and the adoption of hybrid and electric vehicles threaten the state's ability to keep pace with growing transportation needs. The Federal Highway Administration's national highway construction cost index, which measures the rate of inflation in labor and materials cost, increased 52% from the beginning of 2022 through the third quarter of 2025.

Roadway improvements can reduce traffic crashes and save lives

- From 2020 through 2025, 1,067 people died on Montana's highways, an average of 213 annual fatalities. Montana's traffic fatality rate of 1.43 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is higher than the national average of 1.1.

- A total of 850 people were killed in traffic crashes in work zones in the U.S. in 2024, 19% higher than a decade ago. There were 12 work zone fatalities in Montana from 2020 to 2024. Work zone safety can be improved through the use of safety countermeasures including improved work zone design, improved driver messaging, high-visibility markings and speed enforcement.

- Traffic crashes in Montana imposed a total of $1.5 billion in economic costs in 2024. TRIP estimates that a lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, was likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal traffic crashes, resulting in $499 million in economic costs in the state in 2024. These costs include work and household productivity losses, property damage, medical costs, rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, congestion costs, and emergency services.

Investing in our transportation system generates jobs, fosters economic recovery and growth, and improves safety

- Investments in the surface transportation system will boost Montana's economy in the short-term by creating jobs and in the long-term will enhance economic competitiveness, stimulate sustained job growth, improve access and mobility, improve traffic safety, reduce travel delays, and improve road and bridge conditions.

- Roads and highways are the backbone of our economy, allowing Montana motorists to travel 13.9 billion miles annually and moving a significant portion of the $83 billion worth of commodities shipped to and from the state each year. But, conditions on the system are deteriorating, as the need for transportation improvements far outpaces the amount of state and federal funding available.

- The design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in Montana supports approximately 17,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy. Approximately 214,000 full-time jobs in Montana in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are completely dependent on the state's transportation network.

Latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau, USDOT, FHWA, BTS, ARTBA, NHTSA, and AAA compiled and analyzed by TRIP.

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1101 Connecticut Ave., NW, #450 ■ Washington, DC 20036 ■ 202.466.6706 ■ tripnet.org ■ @TRIP_Inc