

## How much do potholes cost motorists? Apparently quite a bit annually, per report

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Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost New York motorists a total of \$26 billion statewide annually – \$1,626 per driver in the Rochester area – due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays.

Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in New York, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation research nonprofit.

The TRIP report, “New York Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility,” finds that throughout New York, nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition, ten percent of locally and state-maintained bridges (20 feet or more in length) are rated poor/structurally deficient, and 5,127 people lost their lives on the state’s roads from 2014-2018. New York’s major urban roads are congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce. The TRIP report includes regional pavement and bridge conditions, congestion data, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Albany-Schenectady-Troy, Binghamton, Buffalo-Niagara Falls, New York-Newark-Jersey City, Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, Rochester, Syracuse and Utica urban areas and statewide.

Driving on roads in the Rochester urban area costs the average driver \$1,626 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway safety features likely were a contributing factor.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zv3CZEwTpes&feature=youtu.be>

The TRIP report finds that 12 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Rochester urban area are in poor condition and another 19 percent are in mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$353 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Statewide, 25 percent of New York’s major roads are in poor condition and 22 percent are in mediocre condition.

“As an advocate for traffic safety, AAA supports initiatives to provide safe roads and bridges for all motorists. The TRIP findings reinforce the need for a long-term transportation reauthorization bill in 2021 that would provide increased federal funding for New York and the nation’s infrastructure as a whole,” said Elizabeth Carey, director of public relations at AAA Western and Central New York. “AAA urges Congress and the incoming administration to prioritize transportation investments to ensure safe, efficient and reliable mobility here in New York and across the country.”

Traffic congestion in the Rochester urban area causes 40 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costs the average driver \$769 annually in lost time and wasted fuel. Rochester

drivers waste approximately 8.6 million gallons of fuel each year due to traffic congestion, an average of 20 gallons per motorist. Statewide, drivers lose \$14.2 billion annually as a result of lost time and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, vehicle travel in New York dropped by as much as 45 percent in April 2020 compared to vehicle travel during the same month the previous year, but rebounded to 10 percent below the previous year’s volume in September 2020.

In the Rochester urban area, eight percent of bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Statewide, ten percent of New York’s bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient. Traffic crashes in New York claimed the lives 5,127 people between 2014 and 2018. New York’s overall traffic fatality rate of 0.76 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2018 is lower than the national average of 1.13. In the Rochester urban area, on average, 128 people were killed in traffic crashes each year from 2014 to 2018. The financial impact of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway safety features were likely a contributing factor was an average of \$504 annually per each Rochester area driver.

“With the deterioration of so many roads and bridges causing business and industry billions of dollars in increased costs per year, we appreciate the continued focus on this issue in the TRIP report,” said Johnny Evers, senior director of government affairs for the Business Council of New York State. “It is only through careful study that New York State and the nation can address this problem. We hope the thoroughness of this study will lead to the change necessary to fix this ongoing business concern.”

The efficiency and condition of New York’s transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy. Annually, \$1.3 trillion in goods are shipped to and from New York, relying heavily on the state’s network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region’s transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system. The design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in New York supports approximately 319,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy. Approximately 3.5 million full-time jobs in New York in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety and reliability of the state’s transportation infrastructure network.

“These conditions are only going to get worse, increasing the additional costs to motorists, if greater investment is not made available at the federal, state and local levels of government,” said Dave Kearby, TRIP’s executive director. “Without adequate funding, New York’s transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth, safety and quality of life.”