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Report shows high cost of poor roads to Maine drivers

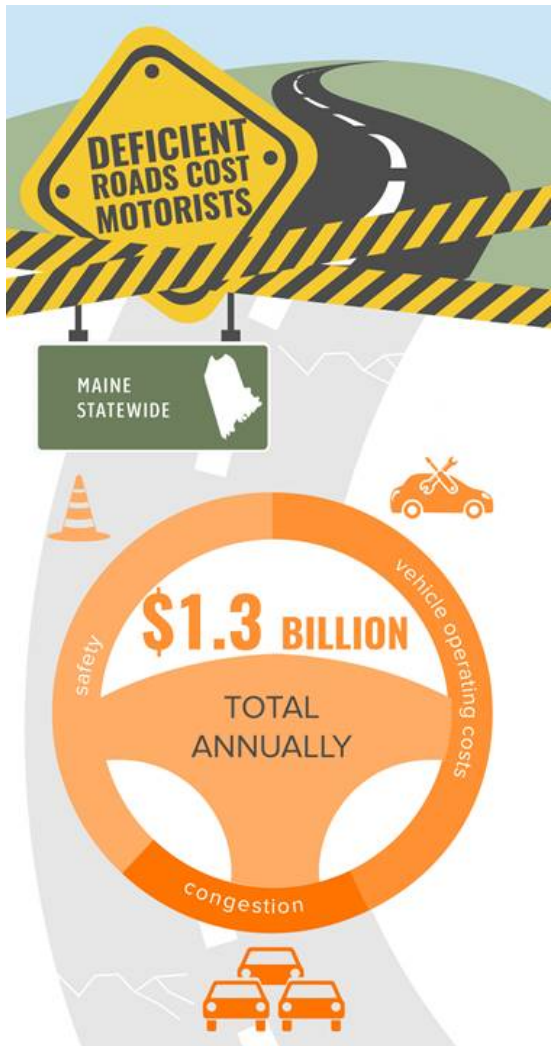
By [Renee Cordes](#)

Driving on Maine roads that are deteriorated, congested and that lack some desirable safety features costs Maine drivers a total of \$1.3 billion each year.

That's among the findings in a [report](#) released last week by TRIP, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit that researches, evaluates and distributes economic data on surface transportation issues.

The group is sponsored by insurers, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

TRIP has calculated the cost to the average motorist in the state's largest urban areas in the form of additional vehicle operating costs as a result of driving on rough roads as well as other expenses.



INFOGRAPHIC/TRIP REPORT

Poor roads in Maine cost drivers a pretty penny, as shown in a new national report.

The report, "Maine Transportation by the Numbers," paints a grim picture of road conditions in Maine. The \$1.3 billion cost to motorists takes into account not just the conditions of the roads, but also the cost of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion and the financial cost of traffic crashes.

Issuing a call to policymakers, the report concludes that "Maine will need to modernize its surface transportation system by improving the physical condition of its transportation network by enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient, safe and reliable mobility for businesses."

It also links better surface transportation to economic development, noting: "Making significant improvements to the state's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems would provide a significant boost to the economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access."

Looking at the state's largest urban areas, researchers calculate that the price tag to drivers is highest in Bangor at \$1,561 per driver, followed by Portland at \$1,392 and Lewiston-Auburn at \$1,273.

The report also blamed inadequate state and local funding for the fact that 44% of major roads and highways in Maine being in poor or mediocre condition. In terms of vehicle operating costs, the average Maine driver was found to pay an additional \$541 a year because of rough roads.

Traffic congestion also has its price, costing Maine drivers \$250 a year in terms of lost time and wasted fuel. In the most congested urban areas, drivers were found to lose up to \$568 and up to 28 hours sitting in traffic.

One bright side is that, perhaps as a result of the pandemic, vehicular travel in Maine dropped by as much as 40% in April 2020 compared to the previous year. Traffic picked up again in November to 12% below the previous year's volume.

All of Maine's 20 most congested corridor segments during typical morning and evening peak travel periods were in Portland, with the Congress Street corridor from Interstate 295 to the Eastern Promenade at the top of the list.