

Report: Rough roads are costing you

WAMC Northeast Public Radio | By [Lucas Willard](#)

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WAMC photo by Dave Lucas

According to a new report, Capital Region motorists spend nearly \$1,800 on their vehicles annually due to deficient roadways and traffic congestion.

Those potholes are costing you.

A new analysis by Washington, D.C.-based non-profit TRIP breaks down how much New Yorkers are spending on their vehicles due to roadway conditions. Rocky Moretti is the group's Director of Policy and Research.

"The report finds that the cost to New York motorists of driving on rough roads, of losing time to due to traffic congestion, and also the economic cost of traffic crashes is \$28 billion annually. TRIP estimates that the average cost to a motorist in the Capital District area of roads that are deteriorated, congested, or lacking some desirable safety features is \$1,750 annually," said Moretti.

Moretti shared the results on a virtual press conference Wednesday.

In addition to explaining how deteriorated roadways weigh on your wallet, TRIP's analysis also looks at roadway safety features – like guardrails and pedestrian crossings. Moretti said one third of fatal crashes were attributed in some way to a lack of roadway safety features.

"Over the last five years, an average of 43 people annually have been killed in traffic crashes in the Capital District," said Moretti.

Road quality is vital to the area's economy, according to the report. But Moretti says things are getting better with more state and federal investment in recent years.

Tom O'Connor is Vice President of Government Relations at the Capital Region Chamber. He's bullish on the bipartisan federal infrastructure law.

"We're very hopeful with the passage of the infrastructure investment bill and the continued commitment of state and local governments, that the current state and our region's roads and bridges will improve."

According to the TRIP report, 10 percent of New York's bridges are structurally deficient, including about 8 percent in the Capital District. In the Albany-Schenectady-Troy area, 16 percent of roads are listed as in poor condition, and 22 percent in mediocre condition.

On average, the report says, local motorists spend about 45 hours a year in traffic, wasting 21 gallons of fuel.

In her State of the State address this month, Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul recalled standing on the White House lawn when President Biden signed the infrastructure law, joking that she has "personal experience with just about every pothole in New York."

Elizabeth Carey, Director of Public Relations and Corporate Communications at AAA Western and Central New York, said when roads begin to thaw in each spring, AAA expects calls for tire, wheel, and suspension issues due to potholes.

"So AAA is pleased that state legislators have secured record transportation investments here in New York State. They've also created many new programs to help cities across New York in 2022. The DOT Capital Plan is at a record level, thanks to legislators like Senator Kennedy."

Carey is referring to State Senator Tim Kennedy, a Western New York Democrat who chairs the Senate's Transportation Committee.

To read the report visit: https://tripnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/TRIP_New_York_Transportation_by_the_Numbers_Report_January_2022.pdf