

Transportation research group releases report on Kentucky roadways



LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- A national transportation research group says roadway conditions in Louisville and Kentucky should be improved.

[TRIP](#) compiled data from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Federal Highway Administration, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for a report on Kentucky road conditions, congestion and safety. TRIP held a [virtual news conference](#) on Tuesday to release findings of the report.

"Most critical finding in the report is TRIP estimates that costs of driving on roads in Kentucky, driving on rough roads, lost time and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion and traffic crashes in which the lack of roadway safety features were a contributing factor is \$4.7 billion annually," Rocky Moretti, director of policy and research for TRIP, said.

TRIP said the average motorist in Louisville pays an additional \$1,884 as a result of driving on roads that are deteriorated, are congested or lack desirable safety features.

Moretti said 7% of Kentucky's major roadways are rated in poor condition, while 21% are in mediocre condition. In Louisville, 19% of roadways are in poor condition and 25% are rated mediocre condition.

Vehicle traffic dropped 36% in the early stages of the pandemic, but by Nov. 2021, motorist travel was 4% higher than pre-pandemic levels.

"Traffic is back and it's higher than it was before the pandemic," Moretti said.

TRIP said average motorists in Louisville spend around 46 hours more annually in traffic due to traffic congestion, leading to an additional 19 gallons of fuel being used yearly.

Kentucky has the fourth-highest traffic fatality rate in the U.S.

"We know that roadway safety improvements, while most of these traffic crashes are serious traffic crashes and ultimately are not the result of the condition of the roadway, we do know when roadway safety features are provided, that we see a significant improvement in traffic safety," Moretti said.

Louisville averages 165 people killed annually in motorist-related crashes, according to TRIP.

Eleven percent of the state's motorist-related fatalities involve bicyclists or pedestrians.

"There's a real issue with pedestrian fatalities too, I think you see that in a lack of modernization," Jennifer Kirchner, executive director of Kentuckians for Better Transportation, said.

Moretti said strategies for enhancing roadway safety includes adding rumble strips and crash barriers, along with improving lighting and intersection designs.

Kentucky [is set to receive around \\$438 million](#) over the next five years from the Federal Highway Administration. Overall, the state will receive more than \$880 million in federal funding to improve and build roads and bridges around Kentucky after the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) was signed into law last November.

TRIP has done three reports on Kentucky roadways since 2017.