

Bottom Line: Report finds Kentuckians lose billions a year on deteriorated, congested and unsafe roads

by Sawyer Coffey | February 16, 2022

Transportation systems that are deteriorated, congested, or lack some safety components cost Kentucky motorists a total of \$4.7 billion statewide per year because of higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes, and congestion-related delays.

A new report released by [TRIP](#), a national transportation research nonprofit based in Washington, D.C., called for increased investment in transportation at the local, state, and federal levels as a key to improve conditions, increase safety and support long-term growth in Kentucky.

Key takeaways from the report are that more than 25 percent of Kentucky's roads are considered in poor or mediocre condition, seven percent of bridges across the state are rated poor or structurally deficient, and Kentucky has the fourth-highest rate of traffic fatalities in the nation.

The report also shows that major urban roads are congested in Kentucky, which poses challenges for business and creates significant delays to Kentuckians' commutes. See the costs per motorist in Kentucky's largest urban areas and statewide totals below.

Location	VOC	Congestion	Safety	TOTAL
Bowling Green	\$170	\$788	\$563	\$1,521
Lexington	\$306	\$809	\$398	\$1,513
Louisville	\$586	\$868	\$430	\$1,884
Northern Kentucky	\$549	\$1,238	\$367	\$2,154
Owensboro	\$627	\$344	\$419	\$1,390
Kentucky Statewide	\$1.3 Billion	\$1.8 Billion	\$1.6 Billion	\$4.7 Billion

Transportation infrastructure supports approximately 47,000 full-time jobs across all sectors of Kentucky's economy, which includes areas of design, construction, and maintenance.

TRIP noted the positive impact the federal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA) will have on Kentucky over the next five years, which will allocate \$5.1 billion in road, highway, and bridge investment in Kentucky. There will also be a 35 percent funding increase in 2022 that will result in about \$300 million annually in additional funds.

The funds from this investment will help to offset Kentucky's significant decrease in revenue from its outdated motor fuels tax, which has caused Kentucky to lose out on \$1.2 billion since 2015, the group says.

"The efficiency and condition of Kentucky's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$587 billion in goods are shipped to and from Kentucky, relying heavily on the state's network of roads and bridges," the report says. "Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to relocate 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."

When making the case for increased investment beyond the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, TRIP pointed to the 907,000 full-time jobs and key sectors of Kentucky's economy, that are dependent on a safe, quality, and reliable transportation infrastructure network.

Click here to read the full report, "[Kentucky Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility.](#)"