$5.00 POWERING MLIVE.COM SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2022

SAVE THE PLANET

MINDLESS SHOPPING HAS COSTS BEYOND THE PRICE OF THE OBJECT AND HOW CLUTTER AFFECTS OUR MENTAL HEALTH. IT'S ALSO DRAINING OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCES. L1

Sunday

Muskegon Chronicle

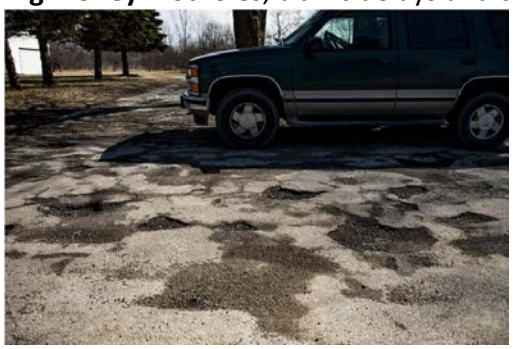
LeafGuard
Get it. And forget it.
Call today for your FREE estimate and in-home demonstration
CALL NOW 313-486-0895
SERVING THE MUSKEGON AREA
*Guaranteed not to clog for as long as you own your home, or we'll clean your gutters for free.

Our roads are costing us

FRONT PAGE

Big problem: A recent study finds 24% of state roadways in poor condition

Big money: Potholes, traffic delays and crashes cost Michiganders $4,845 a year



A new study of Michigan's roadways showed the average Michigan household is paying $4,845 a year in costs related to poor road conditions, traffic delays, crashes and deficient bridges. In this MLive file photo, a man veers around the various potholes along S. 25th Street in Buena Vista Township, Tuesday, March 19, 2019. (MLive file photo)Rachel Ellis | MLive

By Melissa Frick | mfrick@mlive.com

A recent study of Michigan's roads, highways and bridges found the average household is paying $4,845 a year in costs related to poor road conditions, traffic delays, car crashes and insufficient bridges.

And the cost of driving on poorly maintained roadways will continue to rise for Michiganders – to over $6,000 a year by 2031 – if the state doesn't invest more into improving its transportation systems, according to the 2022 report by TRIP, a national nonprofit that analyzes transportation issues.

The report released this week found that nearly one quarter, or 24%, of the state's major roads and highways are rated in poor condition for their pavement surfaces. Forty-three percent of the roadways are in fair condition, and only 34% are rated in good condition.

In addition, more than one in 10 bridges across the state are rated as structurally deficient, meaning there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components, the report found.

The overall costs of poor roadways are detrimental to the quality of life in Michigan as well as the health of the state's economy, according to the report.

"Michigan's roads, highways and bridges serve as the backbone of the state's transportation network, providing mobility to the state's residents, visitors and businesses," the report states. "But Michigan's roads, highways and bridges have significant deficiencies that could limit the state's economic competitiveness, hamper economic recovery and increase costs to Michigan households."

The report outlined four reasons Michigan drivers are paying more out of pocket each year as a result of insufficient roadways: Poor road surface conditions, traffic congestion, safety and deficient bridges.

Driving on poorly maintained roadways – which could include potholes, rutting or rough surfaces – results in accelerated vehicle depreciation, extra vehicle repair costs, increased fuel consumption and increased tire wear, costing Michigan an average of $1,093 per household, according to the report.

Traffic congestion, particularly in the state's largest urban areas, also continue to be a burden on Michigan's economic development, the report said. The average household is paying $1,382 a year because of costs like time lost and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion.

Safety was another concern outlined in the study, which showed 1,083 people were killed in crashes on Michigan's roads and highways in 2020. Traffic crashes in areas where a lack of adequate roadway safety features were likely a contributing factor costs Michigan households an average of $1,084 a year.

Structurally deficient bridges are also a huge burden on Michigan residents because they represent a future financial liability in the cost to repair or replace the bridge, costing an average of $1,286 per household, the report said.

Rocky Moretti, TRIP director of policy and research, said the key to lowering these costs in the long run is by investing more funding into Michigan's transportation systems now.

"Providing a transportation system that saves lives, that improves reliability and also improves conditions, it's going to cost additional investment," Moretti said in a Thursday, April 14 news conference.

"Currently the average Michigan household is investing approximately $436 annually into improving its transportation system, and the ideal investment to make these improvements would be $1,309 annually."

Moretti said the state would see a huge return on its investment by putting more money into the transportation system. By investing an additional $873 per household a year, the average annual cost of inadequate roadways to Michigan households would decline to $2,479, he said.

"An additional investment of $873 annually per household results in a reduction in household costs of $3,794," he explained. "Quite simply, the return on investment of putting additional money into transportation system is more than four times the cost of making those investments."

The report showed that investing in infrastructure would boost the state's economy by reducing household costs, enhancing the reliability of Michigan's transportation systems and boosting business competitiveness.

"In order to boost the state's economy and enhance long-term economic competitiveness, Michigan must improve road and bridge conditions, relieve traffic congestion and enhance traffic safety," the report reads.

Wendy Block, vice president of business advocacy and member engagement for the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, said the state's economy relies on its transportation systems.

$5.00 POWERING MLIVE.COM SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2022

SAVE THE PLANET

MINDLESS SHOPPING HAS COSTS BEYOND THE PRICE OF THE OBJECT AND HOW CLUTTER AFFECTS OUR MENTAL HEALTH. IT'S ALSO DRAINING OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCES. L1

Sunday

Muskegon Chronicle

MICHIGAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Our roads are costing us

Big problem: A recent study finds 24% of state roadways in poor condition

Big money: Potholes, traffic delays and crashes cost Michiganders $4,845 a year

COLORFUL MICHIGAN

Murals bring beauty to state's downtowns

David Rice, of Portland, Oregon, works on his mural for Bright Walls in Jackson in 2020. MLive.com/files

Splashes of vivid color provide vibrancy on what would be ordinary walls and bridges.

UKRAINIAN CULTURE

Easter tradition

With her ancestral homeland under attack, an American of Ukrainian descent works to carry on Easter egg decoration. Perspective, page 1

SPORTS

Hall of Fame career

Detroit's Miguel Cabrera will soon join elite company, as the seventh player in MLB history with 500 home runs and 3,000 career hits. B1

SATURDAY APR. 23
FAN APPRECIATION NIGHT!
CATERED FOOD • DRINKS • HOCKEY
TICKETS ONLINE AT MUSKEGONLUMBERJACKS.COM

"As this report points out, every year $1.25 trillion worth of goods and services or goods are shipped to and from sites in Michigan," Block said at Thursday's press conference. "We rely on our roads for so many things. We connect workers to their jobs through it, we connect supply chains (through it). So for the state that put the world on wheels, we believe we must find lasting solutions to this problem."

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor said it wasn't a surprise to see the poorly rated conditions of Michigan's roadways outlined in the report. He said rough roads were one of the top two complaints he heard from residents while campaigning last year.

"I got an email yesterday from a business owner who's on a local road who said, you know, it's like a warzone," Schor said Thursday.

"This report shows what we anecdotally know, and we've been talking about for a while, that we need more investment in our roads."

Lansing receives about $17 million a year in revenue for its roads through federal, state and local funding, Schor said. That money goes toward everything from plowing to major repairs to fixing potholes.

Schor said that funding addresses only a fraction of the city's needs in terms of roadway repairs.

"We have about $300 million in needs right now," he said. "So trying to satisfy that kind of a need, it's just not possible."