

Study: Michigan's roads cost households \$19 billion in crashes, congestion, and repairs in 2021

By Jack Nissen | [FOX 2 Detroit](#)

(FOX 2) - As it stands, [Michigan's](#) deteriorating road and bridge infrastructure costs drivers \$19.3 billion a year in the form of [traffic](#) crashes, congestion, and vehicle costs - about \$4,845 per household.

But if its current road and bridge funding were to remain the same over the next 10 years, that figure would rise to \$25 billion a year in costs.

[A new report](#) from the National Transportation Research Nonprofit in Washington D.C. says that unless the state dramatically increases funding for improvements to its infrastructure now, roads and bridges will continue to deteriorate while residents would see their average costs related to their vehicles rise another \$1,428 per year.

That adds up to more than \$6,200 a year, not including the taxes shelled out on gas and car registration.

The TRIP simulated three scenarios of different funding allocations to measure how boosts in funding would save Michigan drivers money. It concluded that were Michigan to boost its funding of road improvements now, the average savings that households would receive would be in the thousands.

- Scenario A: Funding based on the current formula deployed by the Michigan Department of Transportation remains the same, regardless of whether they are adequate to maintain or improve conditions for the future. At this level by 2031, Michigan households would pay on average \$6,273 a year on vehicle-related expenses associated with Michigan's current roads and bridges. That adds up to \$25 billion.
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- Scenario B: Funding based on the formula necessary to maintain the current conditions of Michigan's roads At this level by 2031, Michigan households would pay on average \$4,694 a year. That adds up to \$18.7 billion statewide
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The costs of Michigan's poor roads

Traffic crashes that result in fatalities represent a significant loss to Michigan's economy. So do unreliable travel times for commuters that increase fuel consumption and vehicle damages that accelerate the depreciation of a car while increasing repair costs. According to the report, Michigan households spend \$1,093 on vehicle operating costs - about \$4.3 billion. Without any change in funding, that figure would rise by \$500 per households and \$2 billion overall.

The current funding would also lead to more traffic deaths by 2031, rising from 1,083 in 2020 to 1,113 in 2031.

Deaths and injuries often have a wide-ranging series of economic costs that are tricky to untangle. But studies show they do lead to decreases in productivity, property damage, medical costs, legal and court costs, and costs for emergency services.

Michigan's road congestion costs households \$1,382 and \$5.5 billion overall.

Grading Michigan's roads

A breakdown of the quality of Michigan's roads in 2021 is as follows:

- 24% are graded as poor
- 43% are graded as fair
- 34% are graded as good

At the state's current funding, the percentage of poor roads would double to 50% by 2031, while the number of fair and good-rated roads would fall.

What will it cost?

The report from TRIP concludes for Michigan drivers to save money in the long-term, the state will need to shell out a lot more funding in the short term.

The current funding for roads and bridges in Michigan is \$1.27 billion - about \$318 per household.

- Under scenario A, the investment from the state remains the same, but the added costs households pay in vehicle repairs, road congestion, and traffic crashes would rise by \$6,273 by 2031
- Under scenario B, the investment from the state rises to \$1.98 billion, about \$497 per household. Those same households would pay \$4,694 in added costs by 2031
- Under scenario C, the investment from the state rises to \$2.82 billion, about \$709 per household. Those same households would pay \$2,479 in added costs by 2031

In other words, the TRIP scenarios conclude that to save money, Michigan will have to spend money.

The savings from scenario C, where adequate funding to improve Michigan's roads is allocated, would be \$3,794 a year. That figure represents the difference between a household's initial investment and the vehicle costs in scenario A and scenario C.