



COLD

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# Dayton Daily News

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DAYTONDAILYNEWS.COM

## Study: Dayton drivers wasting less time in traffic

FRONT PAGE

National transportation group TRIP rates Dayton area road conditions near midpoint of Ohio's bigger cities; ODOT road ratings differ



Ohio Department of Transportation continues to work with the Montgomery County Transportation Improvement District to evaluate possible transportation improvements at the busy Interstate 675 and Wilmington Pike interchange. Various alternative for potential improvements were presented during an open house last summer, and a consultant is still working to finalize a feasibility study, according to ODOT. JIM NOELKER/STAFF

By [Eric Schwartzberg](#) | January 12, 2024

Dayton-area motorists might not always have the smoothest roads on which to travel, but they're spending less time in traffic than other Ohio metro cities.

That's according to "Keeping Ohio Mobile: Providing a Modern, Sustainable Transportation System in the Buckeye State," a report by national transportation research nonprofit TRIP. The study found that congested roads and highways cost Ohio drivers \$5 billion in lost time and wasted fuel annually, choking commuting and commerce.

"In the Dayton area, TRIP estimates that each year, the average motorist is spending 30 hours stuck in traffic due to traffic congestion and wasting 12 gallons in fuel, costing the average commuter in the region \$627 annually," said Rocky Moretti, TRIP director of policy & research.

That's markedly better than Columbus, Cleveland and Toledo, all of whom exceed three dozen hours stuck in traffic and Cincinnati, where motorists spend 48 hours, or two full days stuck in traffic each year.

### TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN OHIO

Location	Driver hours Lost	Cost Per Driver	Gallons of Fuel Wasted
Cincinnati	48	\$1,157	24
Columbus	46	\$1,099	20
Cleveland-Akron	40	\$938	21
Toledo	37	\$789	20
Dayton	30	\$627	12

Source: Study by TRIP (note: figures are annual estimates)

Saturday  
January 13, 2024

Today  
VERY WINDY TODAY;  
FRIGID TONIGHT: 28/7

COLD  
Sunday  
SOME SUN, THEN  
CLOUDS; WINDY: 15/5

COLD  
Monday  
FRIGID, WITH A THICK  
CLOUD COVER: 18/5  
FORECAST: D8

## Dayton Daily News

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**SPORTS**  
QB Joe Flacco's  
playoff past gives  
Browns hope. D1

**THROUGH  
OUR LENS**  
Our photographers'  
best images.

**SECOND ACT  
BONUS SECTION**  
Actor explores  
vulnerability.

**NATION & WORLD**  
Israel defends itself  
against allegations of  
genocide in Gaza. A2

**NEW DETAILS**

### Cargill cited after 35K gallons of corn byproduct spills into waterway

Neighbors, sick for weeks, say water's 'been mint green.'

By [Aimee Hancock](#)  
Staff Writer

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has wrapped up an investigation this week into an accidental spill of corn protein into a channel of the Great Miami River that flows near the Cargill plant in Dayton, just over two months after the spill was first reported.

On Oct. 27, 2023, employees at the Cargill corn milling plant on Needmore Road discovered an issue within the facility's systems that resulted in the contamination of non-contact cooling water with corn protein meal product.

Under typical circumstances, water within this system remains unattached by any raw material as it's used as a heat control method during the milling process before being readily discharged into the river channel adjacent to the Cargill plant, a practice that's legal with an Ohio EPA permit.

A representative for Cargill said the incident was caused by a "mechanical malfunction" that allowed the corn byproduct to leak into the cooling system and subsequently discharge into the channel.

"The discharge was contained to the tributary, and the initial clean-up was completed immediately," the Cargill representative said via email this week.

Cargill reported the spill to the city of Dayton and the Ohio EPA, prompting a multi-agency emergency response to determine the scope of the spill and its potential effects.

Cargill continued on A8

**OUR TOP STORY**

## Study: Dayton drivers wasting less time in traffic

Due to additional federal and state funding, Ohio Department of Transportation plans to move forward with \$1.4 billion in major construction projects through 2026. That includes replacement of the existing U.S. 35-Valley/Treblein intersection with an interchange and overpass of Valley-Treblein over U.S. 35 in Greene County. [BY JACQUELYN STUM](#)

**National group rates roads near midpoint of state's biggest cities.**

By [Eric Schwartzberg](#)  
Staff Writer

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State lawmakers are in full throttle on a bill that would prohibit transgender minors from undergoing gender affirming hormone treatments and surgeries

in the state and ban transgender girls from participating in girls' and women's scholastic sports. Transgender men and women from the Miami Valley — specifically those who began their medical transition when they were much older than 18 — told this news organization that they're concerned about the impact taking away such medical treatments will have on a future generation of transgender Ohioans.

This includes Holly Arnold, a 45-year-old transgender woman in rural Preble County who started feminizing hormones in her mid-30s. Arnold said she would have jumped at the opportunity to have begun her transition earlier in life.

"Looking back, absolutely, I would have undergone this at the earliest age possible. I can just imagine how different my life would be — would have been — if I had had access to that at an earlier age," Arnold said.

Transgender continued on A5

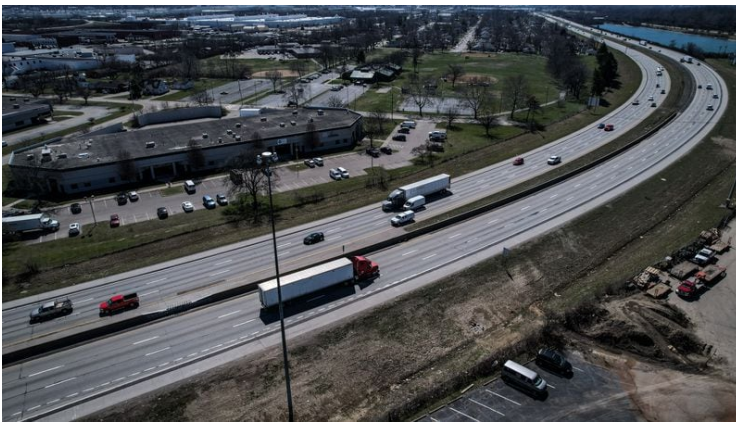
**COMING UP**

SUNDAY  
State law could increase kids' exposure to marijuana.

**AFTER THE GAME**  
Get next-day coverage of all University of Dayton men's basketball games.

**DIGITAL GAMES**  
Start playing at Games.DaytonDailyNews.com

**SATURDAY EXPLAINER**  
State lawmakers seek to limit property tax increases as home values soar.



On Interstate 75, just south of Dryden Road exit, ODOT started a \$47 million project in March 2023. The work is between exit 47 and the railroad overpass bridge just north of exit 50A.

Credit: JIM NOELKER

The TRIP report suggests that about 31% of Ohio's major locally and state-maintained roads are in what it calls a deteriorated state (16% in poor condition and 15% in mediocre condition). But the report says that in bigger cities, road conditions are much worse than in rural areas.

TRIP lists the Dayton area with 55% of major roads are in poor or mediocre condition (28% poor, 27% mediocre ... the other categories are fair and good). It shows Cincinnati and Cleveland-Akron slightly worse than Dayton, and lists Columbus and Toledo roads in better condition than Dayton's.

TRIP says the average Dayton area driver pays \$675 annually in additional vehicle operating costs as a result of driving on rough roads.

"TRIP's report finds that increased federal state transportation dollars are allowing the state to complete needed projects to repair Ohio's roads and bridges, relieve traffic congestion and improve traffic safety," Moretti said. "But inflation and highway construction costs and a potential decline in fuel tax revenues will likely impact the state's ability to fund roadway improvements at a time when highway travel in Ohio has returned to pre-pandemic levels."

During the first nine months of 2023, vehicle miles traveled in Ohio were 2% higher than the first nine months of 2022, returning Ohio to pre-COVID levels, Moretti said.

## ODOT road ratings don't match TRIP ratings

Ohio Department of Transportation spokesman Matt Bruning told the Dayton Daily News that ODOT uses a different rating system, with only three categories (poor, fair and good).

Bruning clarified that ODOT is not responsible for all Ohio roads and bridges. But he said ODOT's rating for the roads it controls is much better than the rating TRIP listed.

"On the state and U.S. routes outside municipalities and all interstates, except the Ohio Turnpike that ODOT is responsible for, we leverage a Pavement Condition Rating System (PCRS) that requires specially trained staff to physically assess pavement conditions," Bruning said.

### ADVERTISING

While a specific breakdown for the Dayton area was not available, Bruning said the PCRS data showed less than 1% of ODOT's highway system is considered poor, with 70% good and 29% fair.

For non-interstate systems, less than 2% are considered poor, while 51% are rated good and 47% are fair, Bruning said. As for bridges, ODOT has 61% rated good, 37% as fair and less than 2% as poor.

Both non-interstate systems and bridges have steadily improved since 2014, Bruning said.



The traffic light intersection of U.S. 35 at Trebein Road is being turned into a traditional highway exit with ramps in 2023 and 2024. Jim Noelker/Staff

## Major road projects locally

Due to additional federal and state funding, ODOT plans to move forward with \$1.4 billion in major construction projects through 2026. That, TRIP said, includes two area projects: U.S. 35-Valley/Trebein interchange construction that's been underway in Greene County and the widening of Ohio 63 in Warren County.

The Greene County project involves replacement of the existing U.S. 35-Valley/Trebein traffic light intersection with a highway interchange and overpass of Valley-Trebein over U.S. 35. ODOT District 8 spokeswoman Kathleen Fuller said construction began in March and is scheduled for completion in October 2025. The cost is approximately \$40.1 million.

Sponsored by [the Warren County Transportation Improvement District](#), or TID, the widening of Ohio 63 in Warren County will be from Union Road at Monroe to just east of the Ohio 741 intersection. Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2024 and wrap up in October 2025, according to ODOT. The cost is approximately \$19.8 million.

The TRIP report also points to unfunded projects across Ohio, including possible transportation improvements in the area of Interstate 675 and Wilmington Pike

ODOT continues to work with the Montgomery County Transportation Improvement District to evaluate improvements at the busy interchange. Proposals were presented during an open house last summer, and a consultant is still working to finalize a feasibility study, Fuller said.

While no Dayton area road made top 10 lists of the most congested portions of Ohio highways during weekday morning and afternoon peak travel hours, a 3.3-mile stretch of westbound Interstate 70 between Kimmel Road and Brookville Phillipsburg Road is listed at number 8 on a list of the state's top 10 truck bottlenecks.

The report notes that each year, \$1.1 trillion of goods are shipped to and from sites in Ohio. The state's highways carry the largest share of that travel and by 2050 the value adjusted for inflation of freight moved in Ohio is going to increase by 98% and by weight by 42%, Moretti said.

"Ohio continues to make significant progress in improving its transportation system to keep people safer in Ohio and keep the system more reliable, but between inflation and a return of a significant vehicle travel, the state will face challenges in the future in continuing to address those needs," he said.