

Northern Colorado Drivers Face \$2,100 Annual Hit from Rough Roads and Traffic Issues



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 By Blaine Howerton | NorthFortyNews.com
Fort Collins, CO – Driving in Northern Colorado comes with hidden costs. Motorists in the region lose an estimated \$2,099 annually due to deteriorating roads, traffic congestion, and safety challenges, according to a recent report by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit based in Washington, DC. Statewide, these issues add up to a staggering \$11.4 billion in extra costs for Colorado drivers.

The Hidden Costs of Colorado's Transportation Challenges

The TRIP report, titled *"Keeping Colorado Mobile: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth, and Efficient Mobility"*, highlights several alarming statistics:

- **Road Conditions:** Nearly one-third (31%) of major roads in Northern Colorado are in poor condition, adding \$843 annually to the average motorist's vehicle operating costs (VOC). This includes higher expenses for vehicle repairs, increased fuel consumption, and accelerated wear and tear.
- **Traffic Congestion:** Northern Colorado drivers lose 25 hours annually stuck in traffic, wasting an additional nine gallons of fuel and \$639 in lost time. Statewide, congestion-related costs total \$4.8 billion each year.
- **Bridge Safety:** Three percent of bridges in the region are rated as poor or structurally deficient, compared to five percent statewide.
- **Traffic Fatalities:** From 2018 to 2022, Northern Colorado experienced an average of 86 traffic-related fatalities annually. The financial impact of crashes where roadway safety features could have played a role costs drivers \$617 annually.



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Local Leaders and Business Owners Weigh In

Weld County Commissioner Kevin Ross expressed concern over the lack of funding directed toward rural infrastructure. "Poorly maintained roads and insufficient capacity make it harder to do business in Weld County, the fastest-growing county in Colorado," said Ross. "This hurts commerce, stifles growth, and threatens our economic viability." Agriculture is also feeling the impact. Marc Arnusch, owner of Marc Arnusch Farms, noted that deteriorating roads limit the industry's ability to thrive. "Unsafe and inefficient routes are closing doors to opportunity for Colorado agriculture," said Arnusch. "We must address these challenges to ensure a sustainable future for our farmers and workers."

Efforts to Address the Problem

While Colorado has increased transportation funding in recent years, significant gaps remain. State funding rose with the passage of SB 260 in 2021, providing \$5.3 billion over ten years for transportation infrastructure. Additionally, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is expected to contribute \$3.7 billion over five years. However, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) estimates an annual shortfall of \$350 million to maintain and enhance the state's transportation system. Rising construction costs, increased vehicle fuel efficiency, and the growing adoption of electric vehicles are further straining funding sources.

The Economic Stakes

Colorado's transportation infrastructure plays a critical role in the state's economy. In 2022, the freight system moved 344 million tons of goods valued at \$326 billion. By 2050, freight volume is expected to increase by 63%, underscoring the urgent need for efficient and reliable roads.

"Despite increased funding, Colorado still faces a significant shortfall in maintaining and improving its transportation network," said Dave Kearby, executive director of TRIP.



"Investing in smooth, safe, and efficient infrastructure is essential to the state's economic health and quality of life."



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A Call to Action

Northern Colorado's roads are more than a means of getting from point A to point B—they're the backbone of the region's economy and community. Addressing these challenges will require sustained investment and innovative solutions to ensure that the state's transportation system keeps pace with its growth and demands.

For a detailed breakdown of the findings, access the full TRIP report here. To learn more about TRIP and its mission, visit their [official website](http://officialwebsite.com).