



Michigan drivers rack up thousands in yearly vehicle costs due to poor roads, report says



Michigan drivers rack up thousands in yearly vehicle costs due to poor roads, report says

By The Detroit Free Press | August 28, 2025

Poor road conditions in Michigan are costing drivers serious cash, according to a [new report](#) published Thursday, Aug. 28. And with decision makers in Lansing debating how to pay for road repairs in Michigan moving forward, advocates argue it's vital that a funding agreement is reached.

The report, authored by Washington-based transportation research nonprofit TRIP, found drivers in Michigan face thousands in annual additional costs on average due to poor road conditions, factoring in added vehicle repair costs, safety and time lost to being stuck in traffic. Furthermore, not investing in the state's transportation infrastructure will continue to make driving in Michigan pricey for residents and cause the state to lose out on construction jobs, the report states.

TRIP found more than 1 in 5 Michigan roads and 1 in 10 of the state's bridges currently are in poor condition. Statewide, the cumulative cost for all of Michigan drivers due to those poor conditions crosses \$17 billion each year, including an average annual cost of \$2,921 for drivers in metro Detroit, the highest for any urban region in the state.

Sources for the report include state and federal transportation data, as well as other studies on transportation in Michigan compiled by other researchers.

It wasn't all bad news, however, as the TRIP report found Michigan's road fatality numbers were lower than the national average — from 2019 to 2024, there 1.07 traffic deaths for every 100 million miles traveled on Michigan roads, lower than the national average of 1.2 traffic deaths over the same distance, according to the report.

The report lands as leaders in Michigan debate the future of the state's road funding. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, has called for a long-term solution in budget discussions, having unveiled a \$3 billion plan earlier this year to pay for road

repairs. The Republican-led House has authored a plan of its own, [passing budget bills Aug. 26](#) that also set aside around \$3 billion for roads. [There are differences in how the funding is generated under the two proposals however](#), and a consensus on road funding has yet to be reached as state budget negotiations continue.

"As a driver of 30 years in Michigan, I take for granted the fact that we have really poor roads," said Lance Binoniemi, vice president of governmental affairs for the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association, during an Aug. 28 press call. "There's not a single person that doesn't know a family member or a friend or themselves who has been affected by poor roads and damage to their vehicle or costly commute times."

Money generated by the state's current road funding formula — a \$3.5 billion [bonding plan](#) approved by the State Transportation Commission Whitmer called for in 2019 — is set to expire. Rocky Moretti, director of policy and research at TRIP, pointed out federal infrastructure dollars funneled to states under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed in 2021 are also dwindling.

The funding cliff, [coupled with rising construction costs](#) as prices for materials and labor increase, has put Michigan on the brink of an annual \$3.9 billion road funding deficit, the TRIP report states.

"Obviously, this is going to have a significant impact on the state's ability to maintain the conditions of its roads and bridges," Moretti said.

The TRIP report also argues Michigan stands to lose out economically without an annual road funding plan, as infrastructure repairs create construction jobs. The report echoes a joint release issued by the state Department of Transportation and Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity earlier in August [that said](#) an estimated 2,800 fewer construction jobs in Michigan would be available in 2026 without a road funding plan. Additionally, the agencies said without a plan, 10,000 other skilled labor, equipment operation and small business jobs would be lost in Michigan.

"If we do have to lay people off and there are tens of thousands of jobs missing, they will find jobs in other states where they are properly investing in their infrastructure," Binoniemi said.

Contact Arpan Lobo: alobo@freepress.com

This article originally appeared on Detroit Free Press: Michigan drivers rack up thousands in yearly vehicle costs due to poor roads, report says

Reporting by Arpan Lobo, Detroit Free Press / Detroit Free Press