



## Report: Metro Detroit Drivers Lose Nearly \$3,000 Per Year on Rough, Congested, Unsafe Roads

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Nik Rajkovic / news@whmi.com

Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost Michigan motorists a total of \$17.3 billion statewide annually - \$2,921 per driver in the Detroit urban area - due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays.

This is according to a new report released Thursday by TRIP, a Washington, DC-based national transportation research nonprofit.

The TRIP report, "Keeping Michigan Mobile: Providing a Modern, Sustainable Transportation System in the Great Lakes State" finds that while the state has used increased state and federal funding to improve its transportation system in recent years, Michigan still faces an annual transportation funding gap of \$3.9 billion, which could be even higher if maintenance is deferred and repairs become more costly over time. Michigan's motor fuel tax, set at 31 cents per gallon for 2025 and adjusted annually for inflation, is a key source of transportation funding. But rising fuel efficiency, growing electric vehicle use, and inflation in highway construction costs are straining existing transportation funds.

The 2019 the Rebuilding Michigan Program authorized \$3.5 billion in bonds for road and bridge projects statewide between 2020 and 2024. As the program ends, the Michigan Department of Transportation's annual reconstruction funding will fall from \$495 million to \$222 million.

The TRIP report finds that throughout Michigan, 40 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition, 11 percent of locally and state-maintained bridges (20 feet or more in length) are rated in poor condition, and the number of traffic fatalities in the state increased 16 percent since 2014. Michigan's major urban roads are congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce. TRIP's report includes statewide and regional pavement and bridge conditions, congestion data, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Ann Arbor, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo/Battle Creek, Lansing, Muskegon, Saginaw-Bay City-Midland and Traverse City urban areas.

Detroit area drivers lose an average of \$2,921 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which the lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, likely were a contributing factor. The TRIP report finds that 42 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Detroit urban area are in poor condition and another 19 percent are in mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$1,015 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Statewide, 21 percent of Michigan's major roads are in poor condition and 19 percent are in mediocre condition.

In the Detroit area, nine percent (248 of 2,619 bridges) of bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Statewide, 11 percent of Michigan's bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient, the ninth highest

share in the nation. Two-thirds of MDOT bridges have exceeded their design life, and without new funding, more than 100 trunkline bridges could close by 2035, disrupting travel for 1.8 million drivers daily.

Traffic congestion in the Detroit urban area causes 64 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costs the average driver \$1,465 annually in lost time and wasted fuel. Detroit drivers waste an average of 24 gallons of fuel per motorist annually due to congestion. Statewide, drivers lose \$5.9 billion annually as a result of lost time and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, vehicle travel in Michigan dropped by as much as 54 percent in April 2020 (as compared to vehicle travel during the same month the previous year) but by 2024 had rebounded to four percent lower than in 2019. Through the first four months of 2025, vehicle miles of travel in Michigan was one percent higher than during the same period in 2024. In 2024, Michigan had 1.07 traffic fatalities for every 100 million miles traveled, lower than the national average of 1.2. While the number of traffic fatalities

\$495 million to \$222 million.

The five-year federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed into law in November 2021, provides \$7.3 billion in road, highway and bridge funding over five years, representing a 29 percent increase in annual federal funding for roads and bridges in the state over the previous federal surface transportation program.



Location	VOC	Safety	Congestion	TOTAL
Ann Arbor	\$672	\$350	\$484	\$1,506
Detroit	\$1,015	\$441	\$1,465	\$2,921
Flint	\$1,081	\$698	\$345	\$2,124
Grand Rapids	\$896	\$464	\$942	\$2,302
Kalamazoo - Battle Creek	\$779	\$729	\$442	\$1,950
Lansing	\$924	\$496	\$436	\$1,856
Muskegon	\$781	\$624	\$368	\$1,773
Saginaw-Bay City-Midland	\$956	\$524	\$366	\$1,846
Traverse City	\$405	\$634	\$895	\$1,934
<b>MICHIGAN STATEWIDE</b>	<b>\$6 Billion</b>	<b>\$5.4 Billion</b>	<b>\$5.9 Billion</b>	<b>\$17.3 Billion</b>

in Michigan has declined eight percent from 2018 to 2024, the number of traffic fatalities is up 16 percent since 2014. Traffic crashes imposed a total of \$16.1 billion in economic costs in Michigan in 2024 and traffic crashes in which a lack of adequate roadway safety features, while not the primary factor, were likely a contributing factor, imposed \$5.4 billion in economic costs.

"Each Michigan driver is paying a hidden tax every year driving on deteriorated roads in the form of blown tires, bent rims, wasted fuel, and even the heartbreak of crashes that could have been prevented," said Rob Coppersmith, executive vice president of the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association. "Now, as the Rebuilding Michigan program winds down, we're facing the added threat of losing thousands of good-paying construction jobs if lawmakers fail to act now. The human cost of inaction is clear: families paying more to keep their cars running, workers losing their livelihoods, and communities falling further behind. Michigan deserves better than crumbling roads and shrinking opportunity."

Recognizing the need for additional transportation funding, the State of Michigan and the Michigan legislature increased the state's motor fuel tax to 26 cents per gallon in 2017, which increased revenue from fuel taxes by \$347 million annually. In 2019 the Rebuilding Michigan Program provided \$3.5 billion in one-time bonding for state and federal roads. However, as the Rebuilding Michigan program ends, MDOT's annual funding for road reconstruction is expected to drop sharply - from

While the additional state and federal funding has been helpful, the Growing Michigan Together Council submitted a report in 2023 to Gov. Whitmer, the Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan Senate noting that Michigan still faces an annual transportation funding gap of \$3.9 billion, which could be even higher if maintenance is deferred and repairs become more costly over time. As highway construction costs have increased due to inflation, the buying power of existing transportation funding has been diminished. The Federal Highway Administration's national highway construction cost index, which measures labor and materials cost, increased by 54 percent from the beginning of 2022 through the third quarter of 2024. "Michigan's previous commitment to increasing transportation funding has paid off in the form of improvements to the state's transportation network in recent years," said Dave Kearby, TRIP's executive director.

"In order to continue to make progress, the state will need to recommit to long-term, sustained investments in its transportation network." The full report is attached below.

**Attachment:** [TRIP Keeping Michigan Mobile Report August 2025.pdf](#)