

Traverse City**Report finds bad roads cost Traverse City drivers \$1,934 per year**

Olivia Fellows | August 28, 2025



TRAVERSE CITY — Roads and bridges in poor condition, congestion and outdated safety features are costing Michigan drivers \$17.3 billion annually, with motorists in the Traverse City area paying an average of \$1,934 each year, according to a new report from the transportation research group TRIP.

The report, “[Keeping Michigan Mobile: Providing a Modern, Sustainable Transportation System in the Great Lakes State](#),” was released late August and found that deteriorated infrastructure and delays add costs through higher vehicle operating expenses, wasted fuel and traffic crashes.

Statewide and local conditions

In the Traverse City area, 10% of major roads are in poor condition and 14% are in mediocre condition, adding an estimated \$405 per year in vehicle costs such as repairs, fuel consumption and tire wear. 6% of bridges in the area — two of 33 — are rated in poor or structurally deficient condition.

Congestion contributes significantly, with drivers losing 31 hours annually to traffic delays and wasting 14 gallons of fuel, which adds up to \$895 in extra yearly costs.

Statewide, 40% of major roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and 11% of bridges are rated poor. Traffic congestion alone costs Michigan drivers \$5.9 billion annually.

Safety and funding concerns

The report noted that traffic fatalities in Michigan rose 16% since 2014, with roadway safety issues likely contributing to \$5.4 billion in economic costs in 2024.

Michigan’s 2019 Rebuilding Michigan Program authorized \$3.5 billion in bonds for road and bridge projects through 2024, but with the program ending, the Michigan Department of Transportation’s annual reconstruction funding will fall from \$495 million to \$222 million.

TRIP’s findings suggest the state faces an ongoing \$3.9 billion annual transportation funding gap. Rising vehicle fuel efficiency, electric vehicle use and inflation in construction costs are straining fuel tax revenues, which remain the primary source of road funding.

Industry and expert perspectives

“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. He warned of further job losses in construction and worsening road conditions if lawmakers fail to act.

TRIP Executive Director Dave Kearby added that while recent state and federal funding has improved conditions, long-term investment is needed. “In order to continue to make progress, the state will need to recommit to long-term, sustained investments in its transportation network,” he said.

The report highlights that without additional funding, more than 100 trunkline bridges could close by 2035, disrupting travel for 1.8 million drivers daily.