



Report: Mid-Michigan drivers lose thousands annually from driving on poor roads

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MID-MICHIGAN (WNEM) – Poor road conditions could be costing drivers in the Tri-cities area and Flint area thousands of dollars.

According to a report from TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit, in the Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland area, drivers lose an average of \$1,846 annually. In Flint, drivers lose an average of \$2,124, the TRIP report said. Statewide, drivers are losing \$17.3 billion due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes, and congestion-related delays.

TRIP believes higher vehicle operating costs are 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 a lack of adequate roadway safety features were likely a contributing factor.

The TRIP report determined that 39% of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Saginaw, Bay City and Midland urban area are in poor condition, with another 21% are in mediocre condition, costing the average driver another \$956 each year in extra vehicle operating costs.



A report says poor roads could be costing mid-Michigan drivers thousands annually. (WNEM)

In Flint, the conditions are worse, TRIP said, adding 49% of roads are in poor condition, and 11% are in mediocre condition, costing the average driver \$1,081 in extra vehicle operating costs.

TRIP said that statewide, 21% of major roads are in poor condition and 19% are in mediocre condition, bringing an average annual statewide cost to \$6 billion.

Vehicle operating costs includes quicker vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel usage and tire wear.

“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.”

In the Tri-cities, 18% of bridges are rated poor or structurally deficient, according to TRIP. Flint has 14% of bridges sharing that rating. Statewide, it is 11%, the ninth highest share in the nation, said TRIP, adding two-thirds of Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) bridges have exceeded their design life.



Genesee Co. I-75/I-69 interchange needs \$1.3B reconfiguration, MDOT says. (MDOT)

TRIP said traffic congestion in the Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland area causes 14 hours of delay annually for the average driver, and costs them \$366 annually lost in time and wasted fuel. Traffic congestion in Flint causes 13 hours of delay annually, costing the average driver about \$345 per year.

In 2023, the Growing Michigan Together Council submitted a report to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, the Michigan House of Representatives, and the Michigan Senate, stating that Michigan has an annual transportation funding gap of \$3.9 billion, which could grow if maintenance is deferred and repairs become more costly over time, said TRIP.

The Rebuilding Michigan Program allowed \$3.5 billion in bonds to be used for road and bridge projects statewide between 2020 and 2024, and this program is coming to an end. TRIP said MDOT’s annual reconstruction funding will fall from \$495 million to \$222 million.

“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 report, “Keeping Michigan Mobile: Providing a Modern, Sustainable Transportation System in the Great Lakes State,” can be found at this [link](#).