

Houston leads Texas in worst roads—more than half rated 'poor'

Data confirms what Houston drivers already know about the road conditions

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Houston has the highest share of bad roads among Texas metros
Houston Chronicle/Hearst Newspaper/Houston Chronicle via Getty Image

[Houston's pothole problem](#) isn't just a punchline—more than half of the region's roads are [rated in poor condition](#), federal highway data shows.

An analysis by the [Transportation Research and Innovation Program \(TRIP\)](#), a national nonprofit that studies roadway conditions, found that 51 percent of state—and locally maintained roads in the Houston metro area are in poor condition—the highest share among major Texas cities.

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Transportation Research and Innovation Program (TRIP)

Roads rated in "poor condition" typically have significant cracking, potholes or uneven pavement—the types of issues transportation researchers say can increase wear and tear on vehicles, worsen traffic congestion and raise the risk of crashes. By comparison, 45 percent of roads in the Dallas–Fort Worth area were rated poor, compared with 36 percent in San Antonio and 14 percent in Austin, according to the analysis.

Researchers said deteriorating roads can drive up repair costs for motorists, damage tires and suspensions, increase fuel use and contribute to longer commutes. Transportation experts have long pointed to rapid population growth, heavy truck traffic, flooding and chronic underinvestment in maintenance as major contributors to roadway decline in the Houston region.

Roads in the analysis are maintained by a mix of TxDOT, Harris County and local governments, meaning responsibility for repairs is spread across multiple agencies. TxDOT oversees state highways and farm-to-market roads, while Houston Public Works maintains most neighborhood streets.

Chron has reached out to both Houston Public Works and TxDOT for comment about the findings. Both agencies, however, have previously said maintaining aging infrastructure remains a challenge as traffic volumes continue to grow.

TRIP's report notes that state and local officials have proposed billions of dollars in transportation investments in the coming years, including resurfacing and expansion projects, though it remains unclear how quickly those efforts will improve driving conditions across the Houston area.

Chart 3. Share of State and Locally-Maintained Roadways in Poor Condition (Based on Roughness Index).

	Share of State and Local Pavements in Poor Condition
Austin	14%
Dallas-Fort Worth	45%
Houston	51%
San Antonio	36%
Texas Statewide	24%

Source: TRIP Analysis of Federal Highway Administration Data.

Federal highway data show more than half of Houston-area

For now, Houston drivers are likely to keep feeling the effects—and the bumps—every time they hit a pothole.