



TRIP
The Bob Clark Podcast
January 20, 2026

Description

How Much would it cost to fix all of the roads in New Mexico? Carolyn Kelly, Director of Communication and Research for National Transportation Research Non Profit, Trip, joins the Morning Show to help answer that question and more regarding New Mexico's roads.

Transcript

00:01- Speaker 1

Trip, Bob Clark, along with Dale Cornelius, Candy Cruz ninety six y three News Radio KKOB. It's an annual report that is released usually just a few days before the start of the legislative session up in Santa Fe, which begins today at noon. This year's report from TRIP on the state of our roads and bridges here in New Mexico and the hidden costs to all of us for driving on deficient roads and bridges I was released last Thursday by TRIP, which is a transportation research firm back in Washington, d C. And joining us now to talk more about that this year's report is Carolyn Kelly, who's the director of Communication and Research for TRIP. Carolyn, thank you very much for your time this morning. How are you doing today?

Trip, Bob Clark, along with Dale Cornelius, Candy Cruz ninety six y three News Radio KKOB. It's an annual report that is released usually just a few days before the start of the legislative session up in Santa Fe, which begins today at noon. This year's report from TRIP on the state of our roads and bridges here in New Mexico and the hidden costs to all of us for driving on deficient roads and bridges I was released last Thursday by TRIP, which is a transportation research firm back in Washington, d C. And joining us now to talk more about that this year's report is Carolyn Kelly, who's the director of Communication and Research for TRIP. Carolyn, thank you very much for your time this morning. How are you doing today?

00:43 - Speaker 2

Thank morning, Bob. I'm doing well. Thanks for having me.

Thank morning, Bob. I'm doing well. Thanks for having me.

00:45 - Speaker 1

You know, as we're driving day to day, going to work or running errands, or getting this kids to school or back home from school, sometimes we're not actually sitting there thinking about how much it really does cost each individual person in this state in terms of the hidden costs of driving on deficient roads and bridges. But suffice as to say it totals up to quite an eye popping number, doesn't it.

You know, as we're driving day to day, going to work or running errands, or getting this kids to school or back home from school, sometimes we're not actually sitting there thinking about how much it really does cost each individual person in this state in terms of the hidden costs of driving on deficient roads and bridges. But suffice as to say it totals up to quite an eye popping number, doesn't it.

01:10 - Speaker 2

That's right. Like you said, it's probably not news to drivers in New Mexico that the roads that they're driving on are rough and sometimes in deteriorated condition with potholes and cracks, or that they're sitting in traffic and congestion more often. But what they might not realize, and what our report quantifies, is that there is a price tag to that. So the report that we released last week finds that in statewide in New Mexico, drivers in the state are losing three point three billion dollars each year. That's because they're driving on roads that are deteriorated and that are essentially beating up their vehicles and sending them back to their mechanics more often. The second part of that is the cost of lost time in wasted fuel because they're stuck in

congestion more often. And then the third part of that cost is the financial cost of traffic crashes, some of which perhaps could have been prevented with the Mextra safety feature on those roads and in the Albuquerque area, we've calculated that each driver loses about three thousand dollars each year. Again, that's results of driving on works that are in rough condition, that are congested, and that aren't as sake as they could be.

That's right. Like you said, it's probably not news to drivers in New Mexico that the roads that they're driving on are rough and sometimes in deteriorated condition with potholes and cracks, or that they're sitting in traffic and congestion more often. But what they might not realize, and what our report quantifies, is that there is a price tag to that. So the report that we released last week finds that in statewide in New Mexico, drivers in the state are losing three point three billion dollars each year. That's because they're driving on roads that are deteriorated and that are essentially beating up their vehicles and sending them back to their mechanics more often. The second part of that is the cost of lost time in wasted fuel because they're stuck in congestion more often. And then the third part of that cost is the financial cost of traffic crashes, some of which perhaps could have been prevented with the Mextra safety feature on those roads and in the Albuquerque area, we've calculated that each driver loses about three thousand dollars each year. Again, that's results of driving on works that are in rough condition, that are congested, and that aren't as sake as they could be.

02:14 - Speaker 1

Carolyn, are you I know you highlight obviously specifically Albuquerque and then Lost Crusis in Santa Fe. So the numbers issued in this report that are highlighted in this report, are these numbers just specifically for those three urban areas of New Mexico or do you take into account estimates regarding the entire state.

Carolyn, are you I know you highlight obviously specifically Albuquerque and then Lost Crusis in Santa Fe. So the numbers issued in this report that are highlighted in this report, are these numbers just specifically for those three urban areas of New Mexico or do you take into account estimates regarding the entire state.

02:33 - Speaker 2

Well, we've got the overall cost statewide, which is three point three billion dollars, okay, and then we've also calculated based on the congestion levels and the condition of the roads in those major urban areas, what the individual cost for driver is there as well.

Well, we've got the overall cost statewide, which is three point three billion dollars, okay, and then we've also calculated based on the congestion levels and the condition of the roads in those major urban areas, what the individual cost for driver is there as well.

02:47 - Speaker 1

Okay, very good. And for Albuquerque specifically, the yearly cost is estimated that a little bit more than three thousand dollars almost we're almost two thousand dollars for drivers in Los Crusis and about twenty one hundred for drivers up in Santa Fe. Let's talk specifically about the very small percentage of roads and bridges in New Mexico that are considered to be in good conditions. So kind of break down

the percentages for us when we're talking about roads in terms of good conditioned, fair, mediocre, and poor.

Okay, very good. And for Albuquerque specifically, the yearly cost is estimated that a little bit more than three thousand dollars almost we're almost two thousand dollars for drivers in Los Cruis and about twenty one hundred for drivers up in Santa Fe. Let's talk specifically about the very small percentage of roads and bridges in New Mexico that are considered to be in good conditions. So kind of break down the percentages for us when we're talking about roads in terms of good conditioned, fair, mediocre, and poor.

03:17 - Speaker 2

Yeah, we find that statewide, more than half of the state's roads are in either poor or mediocre condition. Now these roads that are visibly in rough shape where you can see those rutting and cracks and potholes. So more than half of the miles that New Mexicans are driving on are in poor condition and essentially beating up their vehicle. We also looked at brisk conditions in the state, and with some additional funding, the state's been able to improve the condition of bridges in the state, but they're still more than one hundred and seventy bridges across New Mexico that are in poor or structurally deficient conditions. Now, it's important to note that these bridges are safe for travel and they're monitored very closely, but some of them do need replacement or or even reconstruction, and according to the New MEXICODOT, the share of bridges that's projected to be in poor condition will increase in the future because there's not enough funding available to make all the needed repairs.

Yeah, we find that statewide, more than half of the state's roads are in either poor or mediocre condition. Now these roads that are visibly in rough shape where you can see those rutting and cracks and potholes. So more than half of the miles that New Mexicans are driving on are in poor condition and essentially beating up their vehicle. We also looked at brisk conditions in the state, and with some additional funding, the state's been able to improve the condition of bridges in the state, but they're still more than one hundred and seventy bridges across New Mexico that are in poor or structurally deficient conditions. Now, it's important to note that these bridges are safe for travel and they're monitored very closely, but some of them do need replacement or or even reconstruction, and according to the New MEXICODOT, the share of bridges that's projected to be in poor condition will increase in the future because there's not enough funding available to make all the needed repairs.

04:13 - Speaker 1

Carolyn Kelly, who is from Trip, the national transportation firm in Washington, DC Transportation Research Firm, whether it's here on news radio KKV talking about the report they just released last Thursday on the state of roads and bridges here in New Mexico and ultimately the cost. I mean, I guess in a perfect world, with the New Mexico Department of Transportation had every single penny that they needed to get all of our roads and bridges up to good condition, it would be seven and a half billion dollars your report lays out, and that's dramatically more than it was just nine years ago, wasn't it.

Carolyn Kelly, who is from Trip, the national transportation firm in Washington, DC Transportation Research Firm, whether it's here on news radio KKV talking about the report they just released last Thursday on the state of roads and bridges here in New Mexico and ultimately the cost. I mean, I guess in a perfect world, with the New Mexico Department of Transportation had every single penny that they needed to get all of our roads and bridges up to good condition, it would be seven and a half billion dollars your report lays out, and that's dramatically more than it was just nine years ago, wasn't it.

04:47 - Speaker 2

That's right. As part of this report, the New MEXICODOT provided a list of almost eighty projects across the state that they've identified as being needed but that there's not funding for right now. So these are projects that are actually stranded on the drawing board because there just isn't funding available. So there's seven and a half billion dollars in needed projects that can't move forward right now. And as you said, the backlog of projects has increased tremendously. In about a decade ago, there was about one point three billion dollars in

projects. So the number of projects has expanded and the cost of those projects has also gone up significantly in the last decade, because the longer you put off these needed improvements, the more expensive they become, and the longer that list grows.

That's right. As part of this report, the New MEXICODOT provided a list of almost eighty projects across the state that they've identified as being needed but that there's not funding for right now. So these are projects that are actually stranded on the drawing board because there just isn't funding available. So there's seven and a half billion dollars in needed projects that can't move forward right now. And as you said, the backlog of projects has increased tremendously. In about a decade ago, there was about one point three billion dollars in projects. So the number of projects has expanded and the cost of those projects has also gone up significantly in the last decade, because the longer you put off these needed improvements, the more expensive they become, and the longer that list grows.

05:31 - Speaker 1

Absolutely, Carolyn, I have a couple of other questions for you. I do have to take a quick check of traffic and weather together every ten minutes here at eight seventeen. Will continue with you in just a moment. Right now, here's Candy Cruise with an update on rush hour. All right, we continue now with Carolyn Kelly as the director of Communication and Research from a Trip Transportation Research firm AMOUNT of Washington, DC, which released its annual report on the state of New Mexico roads and bridges just last Thursday. As the thirty day legislative session gets underway today. A couple of other things, Carolyn, I'm going to assume, I mean, well, maybe I shouldn't assume, but do you do reports like this for all fifty states.

Absolutely, Carolyn, I have a couple of other questions for you. I do have to take a quick check of traffic and weather together every ten minutes here at eight seventeen. Will continue with you in just a moment. Right now, here's Candy Cruise with an update on rush hour. All right, we continue now with Carolyn Kelly as the director of Communication and Research from a Trip Transportation Research firm AMOUNT of Washington, DC, which released its annual report on the state of New Mexico roads and bridges just last Thursday. As the thirty day legislative session gets underway today. A couple of other things, Carolyn, I'm going to assume, I mean, well, maybe I shouldn't assume, but do you do reports like this for all fifty states.

06:06 - Speaker 2

We don't do reports in all fifty states, but as you said, this is usually an annual report that we do in New Mexico, typically as the legislature as we can beeting, so that as there are decisions being made about the condition and the funding of the transportation system. The legislator and the public have got all the information available.

We don't do reports in all fifty states, but as you said, this is usually an annual report that we do in New Mexico, typically as the legislature as we can beeting, so that as there are decisions being made about the condition and the funding of the transportation system. The legislator and the public have got all the information available.

06:23 - Speaker 1

Yeah, and I know the state legislature this year is going to consider what they are referring to as a one point five billion dollar road bond, which is good. But we always seem to have plenty of oil and gas revenues available for lawmakers every year. We always hear about hundreds of millions of dollars being put aside for infrastructure and roads, but yet we just it sounds like we are having a difficult time even just playing catch up before we can really make significant progress. Would that be a fair way to describe it. We're still in catch up mode. Major Well, there's.

Yeah, and I know the state legislature this year is going to consider what they are referring to as a one point five billion dollar road bond, which is good. But we always seem to have plenty of oil and gas revenues available for lawmakers every year. We always hear about hundreds of millions of dollars being put aside for infrastructure and roads, but yet we just it sounds like we are having a difficult time even just playing catch up before we can really make significant progress. Would that be a fair way to describe it. We're still in catch up mode. Major Well, there's.

06:56 - Speaker 2

A number of factors that go into that that funding gap that we see in New Mexico. As vehicles are becoming more fuel efficient and there's more electric vehicles on the roads, that cuts significantly into the amount of money that's coming into the state from the motor fuel taxes. And at the same time that there's less money coming in. Inflation has increased dramatically in recent years, and so the money that is there simply doesn't stretch far enough, so you've got less money coming in, higher inflation and an existing transportation funding gap that's growing by the year. So it's really a combination of factors that have put New Mexico in a position where they'll need to find additional revenue to address some of the efficiencies on the transportation system and to get some of these needed projects off of the drawing board and underway.

A number of factors that go into that that funding gap that we see in New Mexico. As vehicles are becoming more fuel efficient and there's more electric vehicles on the roads, that cuts significantly into the amount of money that's coming into the state from the motor fuel taxes. And at the same time that there's less money coming in. Inflation has increased dramatically in recent years, and so the money that is there simply doesn't stretch far enough, so you've got less money coming in, higher inflation and an existing transportation funding gap that's growing by the year. So it's really a combination of factors that have put New Mexico in a position where they'll need to find additional revenue to address some of the efficiencies on the transportation system and to get some of these needed projects off of the drawing board and underway.

07:44 - Speaker 1

And one last question for you, too, Carolyn, is the fact that obviously, for those of us who live in Albuquerque, we drive Albuquerque roads every day. Of course, we have tens of thousands of vehicles just passing through on I forty and I twenty five here in the Albuquerque area and in the other urban areas of Lost, Crisis and Sane. How much do you believe the fact that we're a very rural state as well kind of plays into the difficulties of our New Mexico Transportation Department trying to kind of keep up with the with the minimum amount of work that really needs to be happening every year.

And one last question for you, too, Carolyn, is the fact that obviously, for those of us who live in Albuquerque, we drive Albuquerque roads every day. Of course, we have tens of thousands of vehicles just passing through on I forty and I twenty five here in the Albuquerque area and in the other urban areas of Lost, Crisis and Sane. How much do you believe the fact that we're a very rural state as well kind of plays into the difficulties of our New Mexico Transportation Department trying to kind of keep up with the with the minimum amount of work that really needs to be happening every year.

08:19 - Speaker 2

Great, there it's a large system across the state that covers different areas in different terrain, and that can make it a bit more difficult to repair. But the state's roads are incredibly important for the economy in the States, particularly in the rural areas. The state's tourism industry and the mining industry and agriculture industry and energy extraction all rely on an efficient transportation system that's well maintained and that's safe to get people and products where they need to go.

Great, there it's a large system across the state that covers different areas in different terrain, and that can make it a bit more difficult to repair. But the state's roads are incredibly important for the economy in the States, particularly in the rural areas. The state's tourism industry and the mining industry and agriculture industry and energy extraction all rely on an efficient transportation system that's well maintained and that's safe to get people and products where they need to go.

08:47 - Speaker 1

Very good Carolyn, and I appreciate your time this morning, and thank you very much for the information. Thank you all right, Carolyn Kelly from Trip with Us here on ninety six to three news radio KKOB