

BALTIMORE DRIVERS LOSE NEARLY \$3,000 A YEAR TO BAD ROADS

By [Emily White](#) | Published on March 11, 2026



Baltimore drivers are effectively writing a nearly \$3,000 check every year thanks to potholes, gridlock, and crashes, a new analysis finds. The hit shows up not only in repair bills but also in hours lost in traffic and extra fuel burned in clogged commutes. The tally puts a hard price on everyday travel and raises fresh questions about how Maryland plans to pay to fix it.

According to a report by [TRIP](#), the average Baltimore-area motorist loses \$3,017 annually: about \$954 in extra vehicle operating costs, \$1,502 from congestion, and roughly \$561 tied to crashes. The report says 62% of major

locally and state-maintained roads in the Baltimore urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, and roughly 5% of bridges are rated poor or structurally deficient. “It will be critical that Maryland adequately invest in its transportation network,” TRIP executive director Dave Kearby said.

How the costs add up

According to [TRIP](#), those conditions translate into roughly 68 hours of delay per driver each year and about 18 gallons of fuel wasted in congestion. That lost time and fuel make up the largest slice of the \$3,017 figure, while rough pavement drives up repair and tire costs. The net effect for thousands of Baltimore commuters is more frequent trips to the mechanic and longer, more frustrating daily drives.

Why repairs are lagging

TRIP points to a budget squeeze: its review of the Maryland Department of Transportation’s six-year capital plan shows a \$1.3 billion shortfall that could delay projects and leave worn pavement and bridges unattended. The group also flags rising construction costs, noting that the Federal Highway Administration’s national construction cost index jumped sharply through 2024–25, and falling gas-tax revenue as more drivers shift to hybrids and electric vehicles. Without new revenue or re-prioritized spending, TRIP warns, the financial pain for motorists is likely to keep climbing.

Local reaction and safety stakes

Local leaders at the report release highlighted choke points and safety concerns, with Jim Kercheval of the Greater Hagerstown Committee urging a third lane on a twelve-mile stretch of I-81 to improve freight flow and cut down on crashes, [CBS Baltimore](#) reports. The analysis also says traffic crashes claimed an average of 119 lives a year in the Baltimore area from 2019 to 2023, a number county and city officials say underscores the urgency of fixes. Tourism and business leaders warned that unreliable roads dent the local economy and visitor experience.

For drivers, the takeaway is blunt: the bill for poor infrastructure is already showing up in their own budgets. State and local policymakers now face choices, from new user fees and gas-tax adjustments to redirecting capital funds, if they want to reverse the trend before the tab climbs even higher. If nothing changes, the report makes clear that motorists and the regional economy will keep shouldering the burden.