

Baltimore drivers lose nearly \$3,000 per year due to poor road conditions, traffic, report finds

By JT Moodee Lockman, Kaicey Baylor | March 11, 2026

Drivers in Baltimore lose about \$3,017 per year from driving on roads and bridges that are congested, rough and lacking in safety features, according to a [report from TRIP, a National Transportation Research Nonprofit](#).

In Baltimore, higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays add to the annual loss, the report says.

TRIP evaluates economic and technical data related to transportation issues, and its report also found that more than half of Maryland's local and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition.

According to the report, a lack of investments in transportation, coupled with increasing inflation for construction costs, could impact the state's ability to make necessary improvements to its transportation infrastructure.

"Maryland's transportation dollars are already being stretched thin by increased inflation in construction costs, and the state's existing transportation funding shortfall will make it harder to complete needed improvements," said Dave Kearby, Executive Director of TRIP. "It will be critical that Maryland adequately invest in its transportation network in order to provide a system that is smooth, safe and efficient."

Baltimore road and bridge conditions

According to the report, driving on roads in the Baltimore area incurs extra vehicle operating costs due to lost time and fuel, delays and traffic crashes, where lack of safety features is a contributing factor.

The report found that 62% of local and state-maintained roads in the Baltimore area are in poor or mediocre condition, and cost drivers an average of \$954 in vehicle operating costs each year. This includes repair costs and increased fuel consumption.

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Nearly 5% of bridges in the area are rated poor or structurally deficient, with

significant deterioration to supports, decks or other major parts.

Annually, traffic congestion in the region causes about 68 hours of delays for the average driver and costs about \$1,502 in lost time and wasted fuel, according to the report.

Baltimore drivers waste about 18 gallons of fuel annually due to traffic congestion, the report says.

Maryland road and bridge conditions

The report found that drivers across Maryland lose about \$12.5 billion annually due to road conditions, traffic and crashes.

Nearly 4% of local or state-maintained bridges in the state are rated poor or structurally deficient, according to the report. 51% of major roads were found to be in poor or mediocre condition.

Across the state, drivers lose about \$6.1 billion annually due to traffic congestion, the report details.

Baltimore drivers on rough city roads

Baltimore drivers say there are a few things to think about before getting on the road.

"It's all about timing," said driver Mickey Deegan. "Traffic here with the school kids is always crazy."

They said you have to be on alert.

"You got to be careful," David Waldo said. "Sometimes you got to avoid an accident."

Also, watch out for potholes.

"It was potholes before but now it's like big like you can drive your car inside of them," Bryant Coleman said.

Coleman said those big dips in the road have done some damage to his vehicle.

"I just spent thousands of dollars on my front suspension," Coleman said. "I'm about to have to do the same thing again. I just finished it two weeks ago."

Drivers also noted a price increase when it comes to managing their cars.

"I would say my car insurance has gone up," Deegan said.

"The fuel prices are crazy," Coleman said. "I don't think that really helps when your tires are going bad, your car is breaking down because you're driving on bad roads."

Coleman said it's not easy driving around anymore.

"A lot of the times you're trying to avoid a pothole, you're also trying to avoid another car," he said. "So, I don't feel like it's safe. You're trying to avoid pedestrians, cars. You got the bike lanes now. You got potholes in the bike lanes. Where are we swerving to?"

Increase in transportation funding recommended

According to the TRIP report, costs for drivers will increase, and necessary transportation projects will be delayed without additional funding on the local, state and federal levels.

The organization reviewed the Maryland Department of Transportation's six-year spending plan and found that spending and operating costs outpace revenue by \$1.3 billion.

The report also notes that Maryland's motor fuel tax is falling behind, especially as a rise in electric and hybrid vehicles prompts reduced gas tax collections.

Traffic fatalities on the rise in Maryland

The TRIP report details a 31% increase in traffic fatalities in the last 10 years, between 2014 and 2024.

In Baltimore, an average of 119 people were killed each year from 2019 to 2023 due to traffic crashes.

"Fourteen people have died on Maryland's stretch of I-81 in the last five years as truck traffic has grown and congestion has worsened," said Jim Kercheval, Executive Director of the Greater Hagerstown Committee. "The tragic human toll is reason enough to act, but even the federal economic analysis shows the short and long-term costs of these crashes exceeds the cost of adding a third lane to improve safety forever."