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IDAHO TRANSPORTATION BY THE NUMBERS:

MEETING THE STATE'S NEED FOR SAFE, SMOOTH & EFFICIENT MOBILITY

MARCH 2026

Founded in 1971, TRIP® of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

IDAHO KEY TRANSPORTATION FACTS

THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DEFICIENT ROADS

Driving on portions of Idaho roads that are deteriorated, congested or lacking in some desirable safety features costs Idaho drivers a total of \$2 billion each year. TRIP has calculated the cost to the average motorist in the state’s largest urban areas in the form of additional vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on rough roads, the cost of lost time and wasted fuel due to congestion, and the financial cost of traffic crashes. The chart below shows the cost of deficient roads statewide and for the average driver in the state’s largest urban areas.

Location	VOC	Safety	Congestion	TOTAL
Boise	\$405	\$330	\$916	\$1,651
Coeur d'Alene	\$499	\$374	\$725	\$1,598
Idaho Falls	\$429	\$602	\$410	\$1,441
IDAHO STATEWIDE	\$763 Million	\$594 Million	\$620 Million	\$2 Billion

IDAHO ROAD CONDITIONS

Due to inadequate state and local funding, 43 percent of all major locally and state-maintained roads and highways in Idaho are in poor or mediocre condition. Driving on rough roads costs the average Idaho driver \$546 annually in additional vehicle operating costs – a total of \$763 million statewide. The chart below details pavement conditions on major roads in the state’s largest urban areas and statewide.

Location	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Boise	10%	21%	7%	63%
Coeur d'Alene	10%	31%	14%	45%
Idaho Falls	6%	30%	16%	48%
IDAHO STATEWIDE	12%	31%	12%	45%

IDAHO BRIDGE CONDITIONS

Five percent of Idaho’s bridges (250 of 4,646 bridges) are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition, meaning there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Sixty-three percent of the state’s bridges are rated in fair condition and the remaining 32 percent are in good condition. Most bridges are designed to last 50 years before major overhaul or replacement, although many newer bridges are being designed to last 75 years or longer. In Idaho, 38 percent of the state’s bridges were built in 1969 or earlier. The chart below details bridge conditions statewide and in the state’s largest urban areas.

	POOR/STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT		FAIR		GOOD		TOTAL BRIDGES
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	
Boise	21	3%	472	60%	295	37%	788
Coeur d'Alene	7	4%	101	64%	51	32%	159
Idaho Falls	17	3%	470	74%	146	23%	633
IDAHO STATEWIDE	250	5%	2,928	63%	1,468	32%	4,646

ITD maintains 29 percent (1,369 of 4,646) of the state’s bridges, including bridges on the Interstate highway system and most of the state’s most heavily travelled bridges. This includes bridges that are 20 feet or longer. Currently, 82 percent of bridges maintained by ITD are rated in good or fair condition, surpassing the state’s goal of 80 percent in good or fair condition.

The cost to keep state-maintained bridges in good condition will increase significantly starting in 2038 to account for advancing bridge ages and the anticipated need for multiple large bridge projects. Approximately 60 percent of bridges on Idaho’s State Highway System were constructed between 1960 and 2000 and many of these bridges are projected to fall below “Good” condition between 2038 and 2050, requiring a larger investment in bridge rehabilitation and replacement.

From 2025 to 2037, IDT projects the average annual bridge expense needed to keep 80 percent of its bridges in good condition to be \$118 million dollars. However, given the declining condition of aging bridges and the need for multiple large bridge projects beginning in 2038, ITD estimates the cost to keep 80 percent of its bridges in good condition will rise to an average annual bridge expense of \$1.05 billion from 2038 to 2050.

IDAHO ROADS ARE INCREASINGLY CONGESTED

In addition to having the fastest rate of population growth in the nation from 2010 to 2025, Idaho has seen the fastest increase in vehicle miles of travel since prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2010 to 2025, Idaho’s population increased by 29 percent, reaching 2 million residents. This was the fastest rate of population growth in the U.S. and significantly higher than the national rate of 10 percent. Similarly, vehicle miles of travel in Idaho increased by 14 percent from 2019 to 2025 – the fastest rate of vehicle travel growth in the U.S. and significantly higher than the U.S. average of one percent.

Rapid growth in population and vehicle travel in Idaho is resulting in increased traffic congestion, particularly in the state’s largest urban areas. Congested roads choke commuting and commerce and cost Idaho drivers \$620 million each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel. The chart below shows the annual number of hours lost to congestion, the cost of lost time and wasted fuel, and gallons of fuel lost to congestion for the average driver in the state’s largest urban areas.

Location	Hours Lost to Congestion	Congestion Cost Per Driver	Gallons of Fuel Wasted Per Driver
Boise	48	\$916	14
Coeur d'Alene	41	\$725	10
Idaho Falls	30	\$410	6

IDAHO TRAFFIC SAFETY AND FATALITIES

From 2019 to 2024, 1,441 people were killed in traffic crashes in Idaho, an average of 240 fatalities each year. In 2024, Idaho’s traffic fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel (VMT) was 1.2, the same as the national average. From 2014 to 2024, the number of traffic fatalities in Idaho has increased 29 percent and the state’s traffic fatality rate per 100 million VMT has increased four percent.

IDAHO TRAFFIC FATALITY DATA							
	2014	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Traffic Fatalities	186	224	214	273	215	275	240
Fatalities per 100M VMT	1.15	1.24	1.23	1.41	1.12	1.40	1.20

TRIP estimates that fatal and serious traffic crashes in Idaho in 2024 caused a total of \$7.2 billion in the value of societal harm, which includes \$1.8 billion in economic costs and \$5.4 billion in quality-of-life costs. TRIP estimates that roadway features, while not the primary cause of a crash, were likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal traffic crashes, resulting in \$594 million in economic costs in Idaho in 2024.

According to a [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) report](#), the economic costs of traffic crashes includes work and household productivity losses, property damage, medical costs, rehabilitation costs, legal and court costs, congestion costs, and emergency services.

The chart below details the average number of annual fatalities in the state’s largest urban areas and the annual cost of traffic crashes per driver in each area.

Location	Average Fatalities 2019-2023	Crash Costs per Driver
Boise	63	\$330
Coeur d'Alene	16	\$374
Idaho Falls	30	\$602

In early 2022 the U.S. Department of Transportation adopted a comprehensive [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#), a roadmap for addressing the nation’s roadway safety crisis based on a [Safe System](#) approach. The Safe System approach, which is also being adopted by state and local transportation agencies has five objectives: [Safer People](#), [Safer Roads](#), [Safer Vehicles](#), [Safer Speeds](#), and improved [Post-Crash Care](#).

IDAHO TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Improvements to Idaho’s roads, highways and bridges are funded by local, state and federal governments.

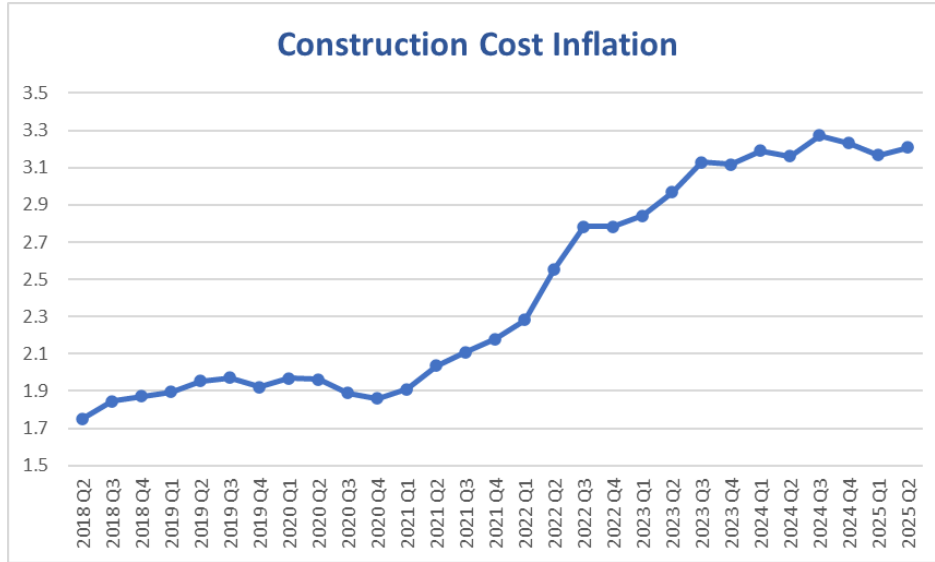
In addition to state transportation funding, the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA), signed into law in November 2021, provides approximately \$2 billion in federal funds to the state for highway and bridge investments in Idaho over five years, representing a 29 percent increase in annual federal funding for roads and bridges in the state over the previous federal surface transportation program. The IIJA is set to expire on September 30, 2026.

Highway and bridge spending multiplies through the economy by stimulating additional output. A 2021 macroeconomic [analysis](#) by [IHS Markit](#) found that that every dollar spent on highway and bridge improvements results in \$3.4 dollars in combined direct, indirect and induced output from industries throughout the economy, resulting in a multiplier for highway and bridge investment of 3.4.

The ability of revenue from Idaho’s motor fuel tax – a critical source of state transportation funds – to keep pace with the state’s future transportation needs is likely to erode as a result of increasing vehicle fuel efficiency, the increasing use of electric vehicles and inflation in highway construction costs.

In the first quarter of 2025, hybrid vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, and battery electric vehicles made up approximately 22 percent of total new light-duty vehicle sales in the U.S. The average fuel efficiency of U.S. passenger vehicles increased from 20 miles per gallon in 2010 to 24.5 miles per gallon in 2020. Average fuel efficiency is expected to increase another 31 percent by 2030, to 32 miles per gallon, and increase 51 percent by 2040, to 37 miles per gallon.

Increasing inflation has also hampered Idaho’s ability to complete needed projects and improvements, as the available funding now covers significantly less work. The Federal Highway Administration’s national highway construction cost index, which measures labor and materials cost, increased by 47 percent from the beginning of 2022 through the first half of 2025.



TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The health and future growth of Idaho’s economy is riding on its surface transportation system. In 2024, Idaho’s freight system moved 191 billion tons of freight, valued at \$117 billion. From 2024 to 2050, freight moved annually in Idaho by trucks is expected to increase 42 percent by weight and 80 percent by value (in inflation-adjusted dollars).

The amount of freight transported in Idaho and the rest of the U.S. is expected to increase significantly because of further economic growth, changing business and retail models, increasing international trade, and rapidly changing consumer expectations that place an emphasis on faster deliveries, often of smaller packages or payloads.

According to a [report by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association](#), the design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure in Idaho supports approximately 19,300 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy. These workers earn \$696 million annually. Approximately 304,000 full-time jobs in Idaho in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are completely dependent on the state’s transportation network.

Sources of information for this report include AAA, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), ITD (Idaho Transportation Department), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), The Transportation Research Board (TRB), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the U.S. Department of Transportation. Cover photo credit: iStock.com.

INTRODUCTION

Idaho's roads, highways and bridges form vital transportation links for the state's residents, visitors and businesses, providing daily access to homes, jobs, shopping, natural resources and recreation. Idaho's economic competitiveness and quality of life may be threatened by insufficient transportation investment, which will result in deteriorated transportation facilities and diminished access.

To accommodate rapid population and economic growth, maintain its level of economic competitiveness and achieve further economic growth, Idaho will need to maintain and modernize its roads, highways and bridges by improving the physical condition of its transportation network and enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient, reliable and safe mobility for residents, visitors and businesses. Making needed improvements to Idaho's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems could also provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access.

This report examines the condition, use, safety and funding needs of Idaho's roads and bridges. Sources of information for this report include AAA, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the U.S. Census Bureau, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), ITD (Idaho Transportation Department), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), the Transportation Research Board (TRB), and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

In addition to statewide data, the TRIP report includes regional data for the Boise, Coeur d'Alene and Idaho Falls areas. An urban area is defined as a region's municipalities and surrounding suburbs for pavement condition and congestion data; bridge and traffic fatality data include a region's major counties.¹

POPULATION, TRAVEL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS IN IDAHO

Idaho motorists and businesses require a high level of personal and commercial mobility. To foster quality of life and spur continued economic growth, it is critical that the state provide a safe and modern transportation system that can accommodate future growth in population, tourism, business, recreation and vehicle travel.

Idaho's population grew to approximately 2 million residents in 2025, a 29 percent increase since 2010. This was the fastest rate of population growth among U.S. states during that time and significantly outpaced the national rate of 10 percent population growth.² Idaho had approximately 1.4 million licensed drivers in 2024.³

Idaho is also leading the nation in vehicle miles of travel growth since just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2019 to 2025, vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in Idaho increased by 14 percent, the highest rate among all states and significantly higher than the one percent increase in U.S. VMT during the same period.⁴

From 2000 to 2024, Idaho's gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the state's economic output, doubled, increasing by 100 percent, when adjusted for inflation.⁵ This was the fifth largest GDP growth in the nation. U.S. GDP increased 66 percent during the same period.⁶

CONDITION OF IDAHO ROADS

The life cycle of Idaho’s roads is greatly affected by the state and local governments’ ability to perform timely maintenance and upgrades to ensure that road and highway surfaces last as long as possible.

The pavement data in this report, which is for all arterial and collector roads and highways, is provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), based on data submitted annually by ITD on the condition of major state and locally maintained roads and highways. Pavement data for Interstate highways and other principal arterials is collected for all system mileage, whereas pavement data for minor arterial and all collector roads and highways is based on sampling portions of roadways as prescribed by The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to ensure the data collected is adequate to provide an accurate assessment of pavement conditions on these roads and highways.

Statewide, 43 percent of Idaho’s major roads are rated in poor or mediocre condition. Twelve percent of Idaho’s major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor condition and 31 percent are in mediocre condition.⁷ Twelve percent of Idaho’s major roads are in fair condition and the remaining 45 percent are in good condition.⁸

Fourteen Idaho’s major locally and state-maintained **urban** roads and highways have pavements rated in poor condition and 26 percent are in mediocre condition.⁹ Eleven percent are in fair condition, and the remaining 49 percent Idaho’s major urban roads are rated in good condition.¹⁰

Twelve percent of Idaho’s major locally and state-maintained **rural** roads and highways have pavements rated in poor condition and 32 percent are in mediocre condition.¹¹ Twelve percent are in fair condition, and the remaining 45 percent of Idaho’s rural roads are rated in good condition.¹²

The chart below details pavement conditions on major roads in the state’s largest urban areas and statewide.¹³

Chart 1. Pavement conditions on major roads in Idaho’s largest urban areas and statewide.

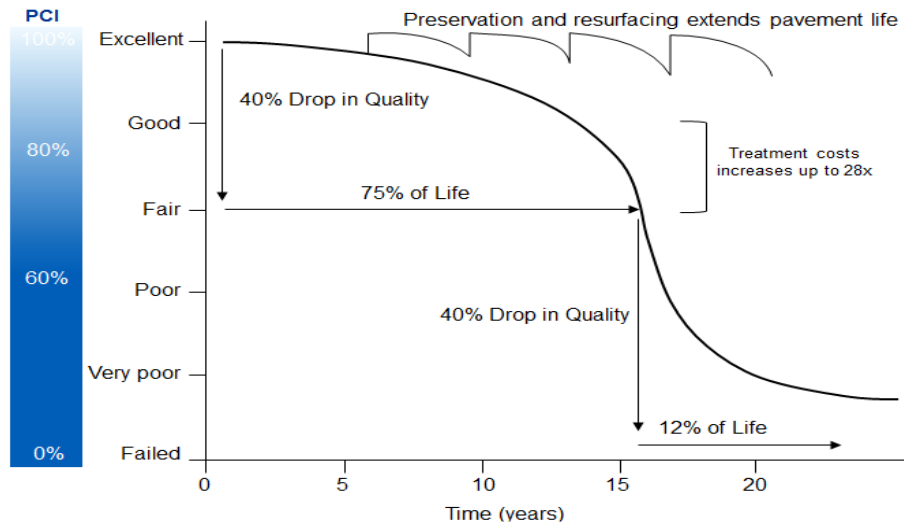
Location	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Boise	10%	21%	7%	63%
Coeur d'Alene	10%	31%	14%	45%
Idaho Falls	6%	30%	16%	48%
IDAHO STATEWIDE	12%	31%	12%	45%

Source: TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration data.

Currently, 87 percent of pavement maintained by ITD is rated in good or fair condition, surpassing the state’s goal of 80 percent in good or fair condition.¹⁴

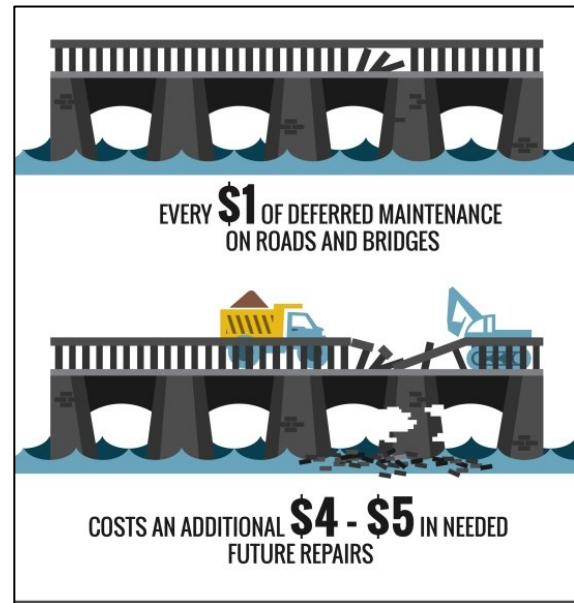
Pavement failure is caused by a combination of traffic, moisture and climate. Moisture often works its way into road surfaces and the materials that form the road’s foundation. Road surfaces at intersections are more prone to deterioration because the slow-moving or standing loads occurring at these sites subject the pavement to higher levels of stress. It is critical that roads are fixed before they require major repairs because reconstructing roads costs approximately four times more than resurfacing them.¹⁵ As roads and highways continue to age, they will reach a point of deterioration where routine paving and maintenance will not be adequate to keep pavement surfaces in good condition and costly reconstruction of the roadway and its underlying surfaces will become necessary.

Chart 2. Pavement Condition Cycle Time with Treatment and Cost



Source: North Carolina Department of Transportation (2016). [2016 Maintenance Operations and Performance Analysis Report](#).

Long-term repair costs increase significantly when road and bridge maintenance is deferred, as road and bridge deterioration accelerate later in the service life of a transportation facility and require more costly repairs. A [report on maintaining pavements](#) found that every \$1 of deferred maintenance on roads and bridges costs an additional \$4 to \$5 in needed future repairs.¹⁶



THE COST TO MOTORISTS OF ROADS IN INADEQUATE CONDITION

TRIP has calculated the additional cost to motorists of driving on roads in poor, mediocre or fair condition. When roads are in poor, mediocre or fair condition – which may include potholes, rutting or rough surfaces – the cost to operate and maintain a vehicle increases. These additional vehicle operating costs (VOC) include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional vehicle repair costs, increased fuel consumption and increased tire wear. TRIP estimates that additional VOC borne by Idaho motorists as a result of deteriorated road conditions is \$763 million annually, an average of \$546 per driver statewide.¹⁷ The chart below shows additional VOC per motorist in the state’s largest urban areas.

Chart 3. Vehicle operating costs per motorist as a result of driving on deteriorated roads.

Location	VOC
Boise	\$405
Coeur d'Alene	\$499
Idaho Falls	\$429
IDAHO STATEWIDE	\$763 Million

Source: TRIP estimates.

Additional vehicle operating costs have been calculated in the Highway Development and Management Model (HDM), which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Transportation and more than 100 other countries as the definitive analysis of the impact of road conditions on vehicle operating costs. The HDM report is based on numerous studies that measured the impact of various factors, including road conditions, on vehicle operating costs.¹⁸ The HDM study found that road deterioration increases ownership, repair, fuel and tire costs. The report found that deteriorated roads accelerate the pace of depreciation of vehicles and the need for repairs because the stress on the vehicle increases in proportion to the level of roughness of the pavement surface. Similarly, tire wear and fuel consumption increase as roads deteriorate since there is less efficient transfer of power to the drive train and additional friction between the road and the tires.

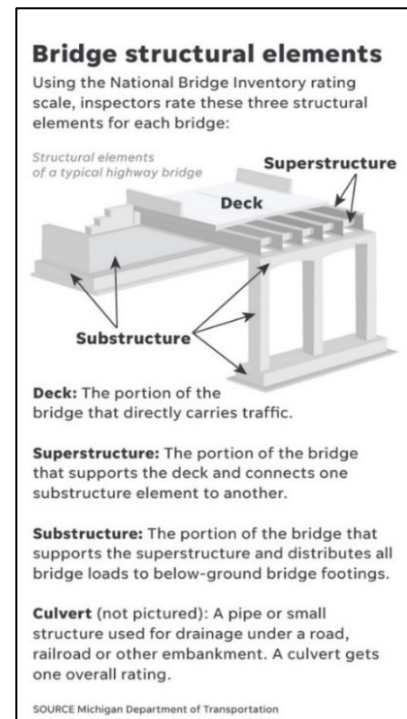
TRIP’s additional VOC estimate is based on taking the average number of miles driven annually by a motorist, calculating current VOC based on [AAA’s driving cost estimates](#) and then using the HDM model to estimate the additional VOC paid by drivers as a result of substandard roads.¹⁹ Additional research on the impact of road conditions on fuel consumption by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) is also factored into TRIP’s vehicle operating cost methodology.

BRIDGE CONDITIONS IN IDAHO

Idaho’s bridges form key links in the state’s highway system, providing communities and individuals access to employment, schools, shopping and medical facilities, and facilitating commerce and access for emergency vehicles.

Five percent (250 of 4,646) of Idaho’s locally and state-maintained bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition.²⁰ This includes all bridges that are 20 feet or more in length. A bridge is deemed structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components.

Bridges that are structurally deficient may be posted for lower weight limits or closed if their condition warrants such action. Deteriorated bridges can have a significant impact on daily life. Restrictions on vehicle weight may cause many vehicles – especially emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, school buses and farm equipment – to use alternate routes to avoid posted bridges. Redirected trips also lengthen travel time, waste fuel and reduce the efficiency of the local, state and national economy.



Sixty-three percent of Idaho’s locally and state-maintained bridges have been rated in fair condition.²¹ A fair rating indicates that a bridge’s structural elements are sound but minor deterioration has occurred to the bridge’s deck, substructure or superstructure. The remaining 32 percent of the state’s bridges are rated in good condition.²²

The chart below details the condition of bridges statewide and in Idaho’s largest urban areas.

Chart 4. Bridge conditions statewide and in Idaho’s largest urban areas.

	POOR/STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT		FAIR		GOOD		TOTAL BRIDGES
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	
Boise	21	3%	472	60%	295	37%	788
Coeur d'Alene	7	4%	101	64%	51	32%	159
Idaho Falls	17	3%	470	74%	146	23%	633
IDAHO STATEWIDE	250	5%	2,928	63%	1,468	32%	4,646

Source: TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration National Bridge Inventory (2025).

Most bridges are designed to last 50 years before major overhaul or replacement, although many newer bridges are being designed to last 75 years or longer. In Idaho, 38 percent of the state’s bridges were built in 1969 or earlier.²³

The service life of bridges can be extended by performing routine maintenance such as resurfacing decks, painting surfaces, ensuring that a facility has good drainage and replacing deteriorating components. But most bridges will eventually require more costly reconstruction or major rehabilitation to remain operable.

ITD maintains 29 percent (1,369 of 4,646) of the state’s bridges, including bridges on the Interstate highway system and most of the state’s most heavily travelled bridges.²⁴ This includes bridges that are 20 feet or longer. Currently, 82 percent of bridges maintained by ITD are rated in good or fair condition, surpassing the state’s goal of 80 percent in good or fair condition.²⁵

The cost to keep state-maintained bridges in good condition - including maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement of older bridges - is a large expense and will increase significantly starting in 2038 to account for advancing bridge ages and the anticipated need for multiple large bridge projects. Approximately 60 percent of bridges on Idaho’s State Highway System were constructed between 1960 and 2000 and many of these bridges are projected to fall below “Good” condition between 2038 and 2050, requiring a larger investment in bridge replacement.²⁶

From 2025 to 2037, IDT projects the average annual bridge expense needed to keep 80 percent of its bridges in good condition to be \$118 million dollars. However, given the declining condition of aging bridges and the need for multiple large bridge projects beginning in 2038, ITD estimates the cost to keep 80 percent of its bridges in good condition will rise to an average annual bridge expense of \$1.05 billion from 2038 to 2050.²⁷

TRAFFIC SAFETY IN IDAHO

A total of 1,441 people were killed in Idaho traffic crashes from 2019 to 2024, an average of 240 fatalities per year.²⁸ Idaho’s overall traffic fatality rate of 1.20 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2024, is the same as the national average.²⁹ From 2014 to 2024, the number of traffic fatalities in Idaho has increased by 29 percent and the state’s traffic fatality rate per 100 million VMT has increased four percent.³⁰

Chart 5. Traffic Fatalities and Fatality Rate per 100M VMT in Idaho 2014 and 2019-2024.

IDAHO TRAFFIC FATALITY DATA							
	2014	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Traffic Fatalities	186	224	214	273	215	275	240
Fatalities per 100M VMT	1.15	1.24	1.23	1.41	1.12	1.40	1.20

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Three major factors are associated with fatal vehicle crashes: driver behavior, vehicle characteristics and roadway features. Roadway features that impact safety include the number of lanes, lane widths, lighting, lane markings, rumble strips, shoulders, guard rails, other shielding devices, median barriers and intersection design.

Fatal and serious traffic crashes in Idaho in 2024 caused a total of \$7.2 billion in the value of societal harm, which includes \$1.8 billion in economic costs and \$5.4 billion in quality-of-life costs.³¹ TRIP estimates that roadway features, while not the primary cause of a crash, were likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal traffic crashes, resulting in \$594 million in economic costs in Idaho in 2024.³² According to a [2023 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\) report](#), the tangible economic costs of traffic crashes include medical care, lost productivity, legal and court costs, insurance administrative costs, workplace costs, congestion impacts (travel delay, excess fuel consumption and pollution), emergency services, and property damage. NHTSA has also estimated the annual value of the lost quality-of-life cost of traffic crashes causing serious injury or death. The lost quality-of-life costs include the loss of remaining lifespan, extended or lifelong physical impairment, or physical pain.

The chart below shows the average number of people killed annually in traffic crashes in the state’s largest urban areas between 2019 and 2023 and the cost of traffic crashes per driver.

Chart 6. Average fatalities between 2019 and 2023 and the annual cost of crashes per driver.

Location	Average Fatalities 2019-2023	Crash Costs per Driver
Boise	63	\$330
Coeur d'Alene	16	\$374
Idaho Falls	30	\$602

Source: TRIP analysis of NHTSA data.

The significant increase in traffic fatalities since the onset of the pandemic appears largely related to increased risks being taken by drivers. In an [October 2021 report](#), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that “after the declaration of the public health emergency in March 2020, driving patterns and behaviors in the United States changed significantly. Of the drivers who remained on the roads, some engaged in riskier behavior, including speeding, failure to wear seat belts, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.”³³

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety (AAAFTS) drew similar conclusions about the role of increased risks being taken by drivers during the pandemic. A survey taken of drivers in October and

November 2020 by the AAAFTS asked whether their level of driving had decreased, remained the same or increased since the beginning of COVID-19 related restrictions, and whether the motorist had engaged in a variety of risky driving behaviors in the previous 30 days.³⁴ In a February 2022 [brief](#) about the survey, the AAAFTS noted that drivers who maintained or increased their pre-COVID travel levels indicated that they were more likely to engage in risky driving behavior, including speeding, not wearing a seat belt, being impaired and driving aggressively. “It is possible that many of the individuals who were willing to travel—and even increase their travel—despite the health risks associated with the pandemic were already more willing than average to take other risks,” the AAAFTS report found.³⁵

In early 2022 the U.S. Department of Transportation adopted a comprehensive [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#), a roadmap for addressing the nation’s roadway safety crisis based on a [Safe System](#) approach that acknowledges the following: humans make mistakes and are physically vulnerable; traffic deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable; traffic deaths and serious injuries need to be reduced by the provision of a redundant transportation system that reduces or minimizes crashes and ensures that, if crashes do occur, they do not result in serious injury or death.³⁶

Chart 7. The Safe System Approach.



Source: Federal Highway Administration.

The Safe System approach, which is also being adopted by state and local transportation agencies has five objectives:

- [Safer People](#): Encourage safe, responsible behavior by people who use our roads, and create conditions that prioritize their ability to reach their destination unharmed.
- [Safer Roads](#): Design roadway environments to mitigate human mistakes and account for injury tolerances, to encourage safer behaviors, and to facilitate safe travel by the most vulnerable users.
- [Safer Vehicles](#): Expand the availability of vehicle systems and features that help to prevent crashes and minimize the impact of crashes on both occupants and non-occupants.

- [Safer Speeds](#): Promote safer speeds in all roadway environments through a combination of thoughtful, context-appropriate roadway design, targeted education and outreach campaigns, and enforcement.
- [Post-Crash Care](#): Enhance the survivability of crashes through expedient access to emergency medical care, while creating a safe working environment for vital first responders and preventing secondary crashes through robust traffic incident management practices.

Improving safety on the nation’s roadways will require that additional steps are taken to make further progress in achieving the Safe System’s objectives. NHTSA, which provides states with roadway safety grants, requires states to submit annually a [state highway safety plan](#). The state plans outline numerous steps states are taking to improve traffic safety. Elements of these state roadway safety plans aimed at addressing the Safe System objectives include:

- [Safer People](#): education on speeding, impaired or disadvantaged driving; education on safe pedestrian and bicycling behavior; education on driving safely around large commercial vehicles; enforcement of commercial driver license and vehicle weight requirements; extension of safety belt laws and their enforcement to include all passenger vehicle occupants; enhancing enforcement action of speeding, impaired, aggressive and distracted driving, particularly at high-risk locations; increase penalties, particularly for repeat offender drivers; and increased enforcement at work zones.
- [Safer Roads](#): removing or shielding roadside objects; the addition of left-turn lanes at intersections; improved signalization and lighting at intersections; adding or improving median barriers; improved roadway lighting; adding centerline or shoulder rumble strips; improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities, including sidewalks and bike lanes and providing pedestrian crossing islands; improved work zone safety measures; wider lanes and paved shoulders; upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes; providing or improving lane markings; updating rail crossings; eliminating vertical pavement drop-offs; and providing large truck parking spaces.
- [Safer Vehicles](#): Support the development, testing and deployment of connected and autonomous vehicle technology such as collision avoidance, lane departure avoidance systems and turning detection systems.
- [Safer Speeds](#): Where appropriate, provide roadway features to encourage safer speeds, including traffic roundabouts and curb extensions; improved signage and dynamic speed signing at high-risk locations; education on the consequences of speeding; and increased speeding enforcement, particularly at high-risk locations.
- [Post-Crash Care](#): Reduce crash response time including the use of emergency vehicle preemption technology; improve emergency response to multi-vehicle or hazardous material crashes; and increase access to level one or two trauma centers for seriously-injured crash victims.

Improving safety on Idaho’s roadways can be achieved through further improvements in vehicle safety; improvements in driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior; and, a variety of improvements in roadway safety features. The severity of serious traffic crashes could be reduced through roadway improvements, where appropriate, such as converting intersections to roundabouts; removing or shielding roadside objects; the addition of left-turn lanes at intersections; the signalization of intersections; adding or improving median barriers; improved lighting; adding centerline or shoulder rumble strips; providing appropriate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, including sidewalks and bicycle

lanes; providing wider lanes, wider and paved shoulders; upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes; providing better road and lane markings; and updating rail crossings.

The U.S. has a \$146 billion backlog in needed roadway safety improvements, according to a 2017 [report](#) from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. The report found implementing these cost-effective and needed roadway safety improvements on U.S. roadways would save approximately 63,700 lives and reduce the number of serious injuries as a result of traffic crashes by approximately 350,000 over 20 years.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN IDAHO

In recent years, Idaho’s growth in population, vehicle travel and GDP have been among the fastest in the nation. The rapid growth in the state has outpaced the expansion of the Idaho’s transportation network, leading to increasing congestion on major routes.

Increasing levels of traffic congestion cause significant delays in Idaho, particularly in the state’s larger urban areas, choking commuting and commerce. Traffic congestion robs commuters of time and money and imposes increased costs on businesses, shippers and manufacturers, which are often passed along to the consumer. Increased levels of congestion can also reduce the attractiveness of a location to a business when considering expansion or where to locate a new facility.

Based on methodology developed by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), TRIP estimates the value of lost time and wasted fuel due to traffic congestion in Idaho is approximately \$620 million per year. The chart below shows the annual number of hours lost to congestion, the cost of lost time and wasted fuel, and the gallons of fuel lost for the average driver in each of the state’s largest urban areas.

Chart 8. Annual hours lost to congestion, congestion costs and gallons of fuel wasted per driver.

Location	Hours Lost to Congestion	Congestion Cost Per Driver	Gallons of Fuel Wasted Per Driver
Boise	48	\$916	14
Coeur d'Alene	41	\$725	10
Idaho Falls	30	\$410	6

Source: 2025 Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) Urban Mobility Report.

TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Today’s culture of business demands that an area have well-maintained and efficient roads, highways and bridges if it is to remain economically competitive. Global communications and the impact of free trade in North America and elsewhere have resulted in a significant increase in freight movement, making the quality of a region’s transportation system a key component in a business’s ability to compete locally, nationally and internationally.

Highways are vitally important to continued economic development in Idaho. As the economy expands, creating more jobs and increasing consumer confidence, the demand for consumer and business products grows. In turn, manufacturers ship greater quantities of goods to market to meet this demand, a process that adds to truck traffic on the state’s highways and major arterial roads.

The ability of the nation's freight transportation system to efficiently and safely accommodate the growing demand for freight movement could be hampered by inadequate transportation capacity, a lack of adequate safety features on some transportation facilities, institutional barriers to enhancing the nation's freight facilities, a lack of adequate funding for needed improvements to the freight network and a shortage of drivers.

The need to improve the U.S. freight network is occurring at a time when the nation's freight delivery system is being transformed by advances in vehicle autonomy, manufacturing, warehousing and supply chain automation, increasing e-commerce, and the growing logistic networks being developed by Amazon and other retail organizations in response to the demand for a faster and more responsive delivery and logistics cycle.

In 2024, Idaho's freight system moved 191 billion tons of freight, valued at \$117 billion.³⁷ From 2024 to 2050, freight moved annually in Idaho by trucks is expected to increase 42 percent by weight and 80 percent by value (in inflation-adjusted dollars).³⁸ This anticipated growth in freight transport in Idaho, and the rest of the U.S., is a result of further economic growth, changing business and retail models, increasing international trade, and rapidly changing consumer expectations that place an emphasis on faster deliveries, often of smaller packages or payloads.

Investments in transportation improvements in Idaho play a critical role in the state's economy. A [report](#) by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association found that the design, construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure supports the equivalent of approximately 19,300 full-time jobs across all sectors of the state economy, earning these workers approximately \$696 million annually.³⁹ These jobs include approximately 9,600 full-time jobs directly involved in transportation infrastructure construction and related activities. Spending by employees and companies in the transportation design and construction industry supports an additional 9,700 full-time jobs in Idaho.⁴⁰ Transportation construction in Idaho contributes an estimated \$127 million annually in state and local income, corporate and unemployment insurance taxes and the federal payroll tax.⁴¹

Approximately 304,000 full-time jobs in Idaho in key industries like tourism, retail sales, agriculture and manufacturing are dependent on the quality, safety and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure network. These workers earn \$10.6 billion in wages and contribute an estimated \$1.9 billion in state and local income, corporate and unemployment insurance taxes and the federal payroll tax.⁴²

Local, regional and state economic performance is improved when a region's surface transportation system is expanded or repaired. This improvement comes as a result of the initial job creation and increased employment created over the long-term because of improved access, reduced transport costs and improved safety.

Highway access has a significant impact on the competitiveness of a region's economy. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system.

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION SAFETY, RESILIENCY AND EFFICIENCY

Recognizing that extreme weather, wildfires, and changes in environmental conditions may threaten the condition and longevity of the nation's transportation infrastructure, transportation agencies have begun to assess vulnerabilities and consider the resilience of their transportation assets during the transportation planning process. Transportation agencies across the country have begun to

incorporate resilience in asset management plans, addressing resilience in project development and design and optimizing operations and maintenance practices.⁴³

Based on the importance of maximizing the level and safety of mobility provided by its transportation system, transportation agencies are adopting Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) practices and incorporating improved resiliency into their transportation network. While a TSMO program does not eliminate the need for capacity expansions along some routes, it helps enhance the mobility of an existing corridor as much as possible.

A TSMO program adopts an integrated set of strategies to improve traffic flow and safety on a portion of a roadway, including work zone management, traffic incident management, freight management, traveler information, traffic signal coordination, ramp management, transit management and improved bicycle and pedestrian crossings.⁴⁴ The benefits of TSMO can include reduced traffic congestion, reduced fuel consumption and reduced emissions.

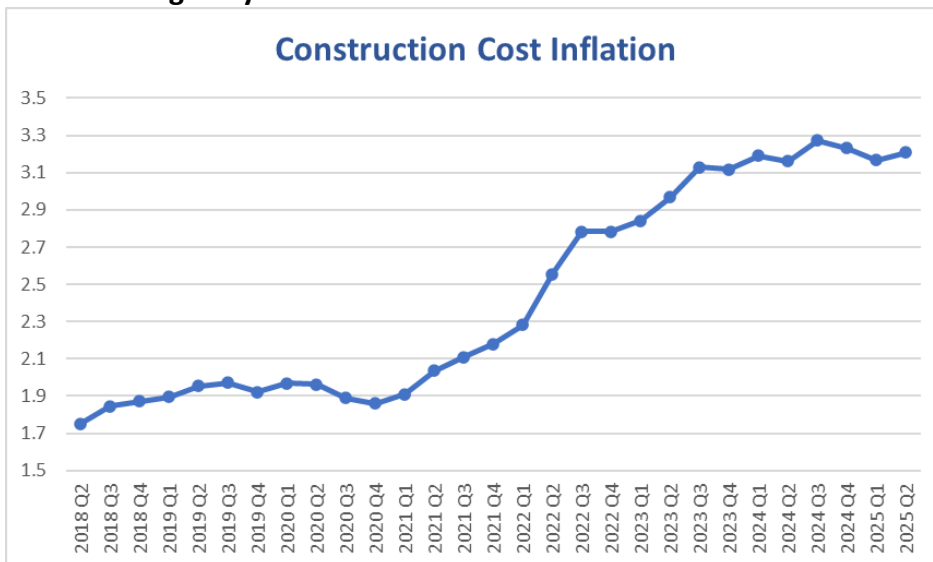
IDAHO TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The ability of revenue from the Idaho and the federal motor fuel tax - as well as other sources of state and federal transportation funding - to keep pace with Idaho's future transportation needs is likely to erode as vehicles become more fuel efficient, the number of electric and hybrid vehicles on the road increases, and inflation in highway construction costs reduces the purchasing power of existing funds.

In the first quarter of 2025, hybrid vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, and battery electric vehicles made up approximately 22 percent of total new light-duty vehicle sales in the U.S.⁴⁵ The average fuel efficiency of U.S. passenger vehicles increased from 20 miles per gallon in 2010 to 24.5 miles per gallon in 2020. Average fuel efficiency is expected to increase another 31 percent by 2030, to 32 miles per gallon, and increase 51 percent by 2040, to 37 miles per gallon.⁴⁶

Increasing inflation has also hampered Idaho's ability to complete needed projects and improvements, as the available funding now covers significantly less work. The Federal Highway Administration's national highway construction cost index, which measures labor and materials cost, increased by 47 percent from the beginning of 2022 through the first half of 2025.⁴⁷

Chart 9. FHWA's national highway construction cost index.



Source: Federal Highway Administration.

In addition to state funds, the federal government is a critical source of funding for Idaho's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems and provides a significant return in road and bridge funding based on the revenue generated in the state by the federal motor fuel tax.

Most federal funds for highway and transit improvements in Idaho are provided by federal highway user fees, largely an 18.4 cents-per-gallon tax on gasoline and a 24.4 cents-per-gallon tax on diesel fuel.

The [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA), signed into law on November 2021, provides approximately \$2 billion in federal funds to the state for highway and bridge investments in Idaho over five years, representing a 29 percent increase in annual federal funding for roads and bridges in the state over the previous federal surface transportation program.⁴⁸ The IIJA is set to expire on September 30, 2026.

Highway and bridge spending multiplies through the economy by stimulating additional output. A 2021 macroeconomic [analysis](#) by [IHS Markit](#) found that that every dollar spent on highway and bridge improvements results in \$3.4 dollars in combined direct, indirect and induced output from industries throughout the economy, resulting in a multiplier for highway and bridge investment of 3.4.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

As Idaho works to enhance its thriving, growing and dynamic state, it will be critical that it is able to address the most significant transportation issues by providing a 21st century network of roads, highways, bridges and transit that can accommodate the mobility demands of a modern society.

Idaho will need to continue to modernize its surface transportation system by improving the physical condition of its transportation network and enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient, safe and reliable mobility for residents, visitors and businesses. Making needed improvements to the state's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems would provide a significant boost to the economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access. Despite federal funding provided by the IIJA and Idaho state funding, numerous projects to improve the condition and expand the capacity of the state's roads, highways, bridges and transit systems will not proceed without a substantial boost in funding.

If Idaho is unable to complete needed transportation projects it will hamper the state's ability to improve the condition and efficiency of its transportation system or enhance economic development opportunities and quality of life.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Bridge condition data and safety data for each urban area includes the counties noted: Boise: Ada, Boise, Canyon, Gem and Owyhee Counties; Coeur d'Alene: Kootenai County; Idaho Falls: Bingham, Bonneville, Butte and Jefferson Counties.

² U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts (2025).

³ Highway Statistics (2024). Federal Highway Administration. DL-1C.

⁴ [Federal Highway Administration – Traffic Volume Trends.](#)

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/travel_monitoring/tvt.cfm

⁵ TRIP analysis of Bureau of Economic Analysis data (2025).

<https://apps.bea.gov/itable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=70&step=1#reqid=70&step=1&isuri=1>

⁶ [Ibid.](#)

⁷ Federal Highway Administration: Highway Statistics 2024. TRIP analysis of Charts HM-63 and HM-64. The following scale is used to evaluate pavement conditions:

	IRI	PSR
Poor	170+	0-2.5
Mediocre	120-170	2.6-3.0
Fair	95-119	3.1-3.4
Good	0-94	3.5+

⁸ [Ibid.](#)

⁹ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁰ [Ibid.](#)

¹¹ [Ibid.](#)

¹² [Ibid.](#)

¹³ [Ibid.](#)

¹⁴ ITD response to TRIP survey. 2026.

¹⁵ Selecting a Preventative Maintenance Treatment for Flexible Pavements. R. Hicks, J. Moulthrop. Transportation Research Board. 1999. Figure 1.

¹⁶ [Pavement Maintenance](#), by David P. Orr, PE Senior Engineer, Cornell Local Roads Program, March 2006.

¹⁷ TRIP calculation.

¹⁸ Highway Development and Management: Volume Seven. Modeling Road User and Environmental Effects in HDM-4. Bennett, C. and Greenwood, I. 2000.

¹⁹ Your Driving Costs. American Automobile Association. 2024.

²⁰ TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration National Bridge Inventory data (2025).

²¹ [Ibid.](#)

²² [Ibid.](#)

²³ [Ibid.](#)

²⁴ ITD (2026). Response to TRIP survey.

²⁵ [Ibid.](#)

²⁶ ITD 2025 Long Range Plan.

²⁷ [Ibid.](#)

²⁸ Federal Highway Administration National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2019-2024. 2024 data is preliminary.

²⁹ [Ibid.](#)

³⁰ [Ibid.](#)

³¹ TRIP. *Addressing America's Traffic Safety Crisis*. July 2025. <https://tripnet.org/reports/addressing-americas-traffic-safety-crisis-july-2025/>

³² [Ibid.](#)

³³ [Continuation of Research on Traffic Safety During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: January-June 2021](#). U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

³⁴ [Self-Reported Risky Driving in Relation to Changes in Amount of Driving During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). February 2022.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

³⁵ [Ibid.](#)

³⁶ U.S. Department of Transportation National Roadway Safety Strategy, 2022. <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS>

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- ³⁷ TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration’s Freight Analysis Framework data (2024). Annual estimate is for 2024. <https://faf.ornl.gov/fafweb/>
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ American Road & Transportation Builders Association (2015). The 2015 U.S. Transportation Construction Industry Profile. https://www.transportationcreatesjobs.org/pdf/Economic_Profile.pdf
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Federal Highway Administration (2019). Resilience. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/sustainability/resilience/>
- ⁴⁴ Federal Highway Administration (2019). What is TSMO? <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/tsmo/index.htm#q1>
- ⁴⁵ U.S. Energy Information Administration. Today in Energy. *Hybrid vehicle sales continue to rise as electric and plug-in vehicle shares remain flat.* May 30, 2025. <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=65384>
- ⁴⁶ KPMG. (2019). Evaluating Sustainable Transportation Funding Options.
- ⁴⁷ Federal Highway Administration (2025). National Highway Construction Cost Index. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/nhcci/>
- ⁴⁸ Federal Highway Administration (2024). Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Additional analysis by TRIP. <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/funding.cfm>
- ⁴⁹ IHS Markit (2021). Economic Impacts of Transportation Infrastructure. [ARTBA EIA IJJA Report Sept2021.pdf](#)