

## Aging roads and rising costs put pressure on Montana's infrastructure system



Photo by: MTN News



By: [Quentin Shores](#)

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GREAT FALLS — Transportation leaders across Montana say aging roads and bridges, combined with rising construction costs and increasing traffic, are placing growing pressure on the state's infrastructure system.

A [new report](#) from transportation research group TRIP found that while Montana continues making progress on several highway improvement projects, funding remains a major obstacle for many critical transportation needs statewide.

**Quentin Shores reports - watch the video here:**



According to the report, 31% of Montana's major roads are currently rated in poor or mediocre condition.

TRIP Director of Policy and Research Rocky Moretti said Montana is facing the same financial pressures affecting transportation agencies nationwide.

“One of the challenges faced in Montana, unfortunately, is the challenge we're seeing for transportation agencies across the country, which is that there's been a significant

increase in inflation in highway construction,” Moretti said.

The Federal Highway Administration reports highway construction costs — including labor and materials — have increased by more than 50% since early 2022.

In Great Falls, city Public Works officials say rising asphalt prices and long-term maintenance costs are forcing communities to prioritize preventative maintenance and asset management strategies in an effort to stretch limited funding further.

Montana Infrastructure Coalition Executive Director Allison Corbyn said Montana's aging bridges remain a major concern.

“We're looking at nearly 40% of our bridges being built in 1969 or earlier. So, we've really got some aging infrastructure,” Corbyn said.

The report also highlighted traffic safety concerns across the state. From 2019 through 2024, Montana recorded more than 1,200 traffic fatalities, with rural non-interstate roads accounting for a disproportionate number of deadly crashes.

Moretti also noted that the federal Surface Transportation Program — a major source of funding for Montana transportation projects — is scheduled to expire at the end of September.

“The federal Surface Transportation Program, a critical source of funding in Montana, expires at the end of September of this year,” Moretti said.

Transportation advocates say future federal funding decisions will heavily influence how quickly Montana can move forward with roadway repairs, bridge replacements, and capacity improvements.

“This really tells us where we need to put our focus, when we're looking at opportunities for greater investment in infrastructure from both the state and the federal government,” Corbyn said.

TRIP's report also found Montana's traffic fatality rate ranked seventh highest in the nation in 2024. The organization projects freight traffic across the state will continue increasing significantly over the coming decades.

[Click here to read the report](#) (PDF).