

Deficient roads and bridges cost Iowa drivers an extra \$2 billion each year

:
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Interstate 35 in Iowa

Twenty-seven percent of Iowa's major urban roads and highways are in poor condition, and 21 percent of the state's bridges are structurally deficient, according to a report from The Road Improvement Program (TRIP).

On Wednesday TRIP released "[Iowa's Top Transportation Challenges: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility](#)" at a press conference at the Iowa State Capitol building in Des Moines.

TRIP estimates that it costs Iowa drivers \$935 million a year in extra vehicle operating costs for driving on rough roads. Wasted fuel and lost time during traffic congestion costs \$380 million, and traffic crashes add on an additional \$654 million.

"It's time to fix our roads, because this has been put off far too long," said Iowa Farm Bureau President Craig Hill. "A safe and efficient transportation system is vital for Iowans, whether it's rural buses taking our kids to school or moving commerce."

TRIP says good roads is "critical to the health" of Iowa's economy, reporting that \$157 billion in goods are shipped out of the state each year, while an additional \$142 billion in goods are shipped into Iowa, most of this being done via truck.

"These conditions are only going to get worse if greater funding is not made available at the local, state and federal levels," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director. "Congress can help by approving a long-term federal surface transportation program that provides adequate funding levels, based on a reliable funding source. If not, Iowa is going to see its future federal funding threatened, resulting in fewer road and bridge improvements, loss of jobs, and a burden on the state's economy."

Iowa legislators are working on proposals to [add road construction funding with an increase in the state's gas tax](#).

Here is a breakdown of TRIP's findings for roads and bridges in Iowa.

Major urban roads and highways

- 27% have pavements in poor condition
- 50% are rated in mediocre or fair condition
- 23% are rated in good condition

Rural roads

- 13% are in poor condition
- 45% are in mediocre or fair condition
- 42% are in good condition

Bridges

- 21% bridges structurally deficient*
- 5% bridges functionally obsolete*

*A structurally deficient bridge has significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports, or other major components and is often closed or offers limited access to large vehicles, TRIP says. A functionally obsolete bridge no longer meets current design standards.