



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, January 24, 2018
Report available at: tripnet.org

Contact: [Carolyn Bonifas Kelly](mailto:Carolyn.Bonifas.Kelly@tripnet.org) 703.801.9212 (cell)
[Rocky Moretti](mailto:Rocky.Moretti@tripnet.org) 202.262.0714 (cell)
TRIP office 202.466.6706

SANTA FE MOTORISTS LOSE MORE THAN \$1,500 PER YEAR ON ROADS THAT ARE ROUGH, CONGESTED & LACK SOME SAFETY FEATURES - \$2.4 BILLION STATEWIDE. NMDOT’S \$500 MILLION ANNUAL FUNDING SHORTFALL LEADS TO INCREASING DETERIORATION AND STALLED PROJECTS

Eds.: The report includes regional pavement conditions, congestion levels, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Santa Fe urban areas. Info-graphics for each area can be downloaded [here](#).

Santa Fe, NM– Roads and bridges that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features cost New Mexico motorists a total of \$2.4 billion statewide annually - \$1,511 per driver in the Santa Fe urban area - due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. Increased investment in transportation improvements at the local, state and federal levels could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in New Mexico, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, “[New Mexico Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility](#),” finds that throughout New Mexico, nearly half of major locally and state-maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition and six percent of locally and state-maintained bridges are structurally deficient. The report also finds that New Mexico’s major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, causing significant delays and choking commuting and commerce. TRIP’s report details nearly \$2 billion in needed transportation projects throughout the state that are stalled due to lack of funding. The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) projects a transportation funding shortfall of more than half a billion dollars in FY2018.

Driving on roads in the Santa Fe area costs the average driver \$1,511 per year in the form of extra vehicle operating costs (VOC) as a result of driving on roads in need of repair, lost time and fuel due to congestion-related delays, and the costs of traffic crashes in which roadway features likely were a contributing factor. The TRIP report calculates the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in the Albuquerque, Las Cruces and Santa Fe urban areas. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area along with a statewide total is below.

Location	VOC	Safety	Congestion	TOTAL
Albuquerque	\$728	\$340	\$972	\$2,040
Las Cruces	\$642	\$282	\$241	\$1,165
Santa Fe	\$653	\$379	\$479	\$1,511
NEW MEXICO STATEWIDE	\$950 Million	\$754 Million	\$690 Million	\$2.4 Billion

The TRIP report finds that 59 percent of major locally and state-maintained roads in the Santa Fe urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$653 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

“Our state needs to continue to invest more on our highway infrastructure to accommodate the economic growth that we anticipate in New Mexico,” said New Mexico State Senator Clemente Sanchez, chairman of the Senate Corporations and Transportation Committee. “Needed improvements will create jobs and stimulate economic growth in our state.”

Traffic congestion in the Santa Fe area is worsening, causing 21 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing the average driver \$479 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

Six percent of New Mexico’s bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components.

“Driving continuously on deteriorating and unsafe roads in New Mexico is not acceptable to our residents, businesses, and thousands of tourists who visit our state,” said New Mexico State Representative Roberto “Bobby” Gonzalez, chairman of the House Transportation, Public Works and Capital Improvement Committee. “We need to find a way to address the needs of our statewide transportation infrastructure. New Mexico’s economy is dependent upon a quality network of roads and bridges across our state.”

Traffic crashes in New Mexico claimed the lives of 1,758 people between 2012 and 2016. New Mexico’s overall traffic fatality rate of 1.44 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is the 12th highest in the nation and significantly higher than the national average of 1.18. In the Santa Fe area, on average, 19 people were killed in traffic crashes in each of the last three years. The financial impact of traffic crashes costs each Santa Fe driver an average of \$379 annually.

The efficiency and condition of New Mexico’s transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy. Annually, \$109 billion in goods are shipped to and from sites in New Mexico, relying heavily on the state’s network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region’s transportation system when deciding where to relocate 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.

“These conditions are only going to get worse, increasing the additional costs to motorists, if greater investment is not made available at the state and local levels of government,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director. “Without adequate funding, New Mexico’s transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth, safety and quality of life.”