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DEFICIENT ROADWAYS COST EACH GREENVILLE-SPARTANBURG-ANDERSON AREA DRIVER MORE THAN \$1,200 ANNUALLY, A TOTAL OF \$3 BILLION STATEWIDE. COSTS WILL RISE AND TRANSPORTATION WOES WILL WORSEN WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT FUNDING BOOST

Eds.: The report includes regional pavement and bridge condition, congestion and highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for Charleston, Columbia and Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson.

Spartanburg, SC – Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost South Carolina motorists a total of \$3 billion statewide annually – more than \$1,200 per driver in the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson 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 and bridge conditions, boost safety, and support long-term economic growth in South Carolina, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](http://tripnet.org), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, “[South Carolina Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility](#),” finds that throughout South Carolina, 46 percent of major roads and highways (state-maintained Interstate, primary and secondary routes) are in poor condition, a significant increase from 2008 when 32 percent of the state’s major roads were rated in poor condition. One-fifth of South Carolina’s bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The state’s major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with drivers wasting significant amounts of time and fuel each year. And South Carolina is tied with West Virginia for the highest overall traffic fatality rate in the nation.

Driving on deficient roads costs each Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson area driver \$1,248 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 cost of traffic crashes in which roadway features likely were a contributing factor. The TRIP report calculated the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in South Carolina’s largest urban areas: Charleston, Columbia and Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area along with a statewide total is below.

Location	VOC	Congestion	Safety	TOTAL
Charleston	\$ 294	\$ 647	\$ 227	\$ 1,168
Columbia	\$ 362	\$ 663	\$ 225	\$ 1,250
Greenville - Spartanburg- Anderson	\$ 405	\$ 590	\$ 253	\$ 1,248
South Carolina - Statewide Total	\$1.1 Billion	\$775 Million	\$1.1 Billion	\$3 Billion

The TRIP report finds that a total of 48 percent of major roads in the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$405 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear. Traffic congestion in the area is worsening, causing 27 annual hours of delay for the average Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson motorist and costing each driver \$590 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

“The TRIP report further validates what we already know as citizens and business people of South Carolina,” said Allen C. Smith, president and CEO of the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce. “The state of infrastructure in South Carolina is deplorable. The economy is the vehicle that provides our citizens with jobs. Unfortunately, that vehicle, according to the TRIP report, is traveling on an infrastructure system speeding towards a title none of us want or can afford – ‘the worst road and bridge network in the United States.’ I call on our elected officials to act, to lead and to address this issue. Present and future jobs depend on it.”

A total of 21 percent of South Carolina’s bridges show significant deterioration or do not meet modern design standards. Eleven percent of South Carolina’s bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. An additional ten percent of the state’s bridges are functionally obsolete, which means they no longer meet modern design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment. In the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson urban area, eight percent of bridges are structurally deficient and 14 percent are functionally obsolete.

South Carolina’s overall traffic fatality rate of 1.76 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is the highest in the nation (tied with West Virginia) and significantly higher than the national average of 1.13. Traffic crashes in South Carolina claimed the lives of 4,315 people between 2008 and 2012. The fatality rate on South Carolina’s rural roads was 2.99 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2012, which is 61 percent higher than the national rural road average of 1.86 fatalities per 100 million miles. From 2010 to 2012, an average of 151 traffic fatalities occurred annually in the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson area.

The efficiency and condition of South Carolina’s transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy.

The Federal surface transportation program is a critical source of funding in South Carolina. From 2008 to 2012, the federal government provided \$1.12 for road improvements in South Carolina for every dollar the state paid in federal motor fuel fees. In July 2014 Congress approved an eight-month extension of the federal surface transportation program, which will now run through May 31, 2015. The legislation will also transfer nearly \$11 billion into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to preserve existing levels of highway and public transportation investment through the end of May 2015.

“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, South Carolina is going to see its future federal funding threatened, resulting in fewer road and bridge repair projects, loss of jobs, and a burden on the state’s economy.”