



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, February 16, 2017
Report available at: tripnet.org

Contact: [Will Wilkins](mailto:Will.Wilkins@tripnet.org) 202.262.6043 (cell)
[Carolyn Kelly](mailto:Carolyn.Kelly@tripnet.org) 703.801.9212 (cell)
TRIP office 202.466.6706

DEFICIENT ROADWAYS COST AVERAGE MORGANTOWN AREA DRIVER MORE THAN \$1,400 ANNUALLY, A TOTAL OF \$1.4 BILLION STATEWIDE. COSTS WILL RISE AND TRANSPORTATION WOES WILL WORSEN WITHOUT INCREASED FUNDING

Eds.: The report includes regional pavement condition, congestion levels, highway safety data, and cost breakdowns for the Charleston, Huntington, Morgantown, Parkersburg and Wheeling urban areas. Info-graphics for each area can be downloaded [here](#).

Morgantown, WV – Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost West Virginia motorists a total of \$1.4 billion statewide annually - \$1,439 per driver in the Morgantown 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, enhance safety, and support long-term economic growth in West Virginia, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, [“West Virginia Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility,”](#) finds that throughout West Virginia, 29 percent of major roads are in poor condition. In 2016, West Virginia had the fifth highest share of bridges rated structurally deficient, with 17 percent of the state’s bridges rated structurally deficient. This ranking is up from 12th in 2014, when 13 percent of the state’s bridges were rated structurally deficient. The state’s major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with drivers wasting significant amounts of time and fuel each year. And, more than 1,500 people were killed in crashes on West Virginia’s roads from 2011 to 2015.

Driving on deficient roads costs each Morgantown area driver \$1,439 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 Charleston, Huntington, Morgantown, Parkersburg and Wheeling urban areas. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area along with a statewide total is below.

	VOC	Safety	Congestion	Total
Charleston	\$530	\$346	\$481	\$1,357
Huntington	\$418	\$341	\$362	\$1,121
Morgantown	\$815	\$313	\$311	\$1,439
Parkersburg	\$626	\$331	\$317	\$1,274
Wheeling	\$720	\$320	\$275	\$1,315
West Virginia	\$758 Million	\$461 Million	\$225 Million	\$1.4 Billion

The TRIP report finds that 68 percent of major roads in the Morgantown urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$815 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

"The people always pay today for the leadership failures of the past," said Eldon A. Callen, vice president for government affairs and community and economic development for the Greater Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce. "This is the stark reality demonstrated by this report. The question before us now is whether today's leadership will address basic infrastructure needs of our state or again kick it down the road. We are paying dearly in money and lives for poor roads. We would pay a lot less for good roads."

Traffic congestion in the Morgantown area is worsening, causing 14 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing each driver \$311 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

Seventeen percent of West Virginia's bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. In the Morgantown urban area, 14 percent of bridges are structurally deficient.

Traffic crashes in West Virginia claimed the lives of 1,548 people between 2011 and 2015. West Virginia's 2015 overall traffic fatality rate of 1.35 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel was significantly higher than the national average of 1.13. The fatality rate on West Virginia's rural non-Interstate roads was 2.24 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, nearly three times higher than the 0.81 fatality rate on all other roads and highways in the state.

The efficiency and condition of West Virginia's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$119 billion in goods are shipped to and from sites in West Virginia, mostly by truck. Seventy-two percent of the goods shipped annually to and from sites in West Virginia are carried by trucks and another 10 percent are carried by courier services or multiple mode deliveries, which include trucking.

"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, West Virginia's roads and bridges will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, hampering economic growth and quality of life of the state's residents."