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DEFICIENT, CONGESTED ROADWAYS COST AVERAGE KNOXVILLE AREA DRIVER NEARLY \$1,300 ANNUALLY, A TOTAL OF \$5.6 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 Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville urban areas. Info-graphics for each area can be downloaded here [TRIP Tennessee Info-graphics](#).

Knoxville, TN – Roads and bridges that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost Tennessee motorists a total of \$5.6 billion statewide annually - nearly \$1,300 per driver in the Knoxville 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 Tennessee, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, “[Tennessee Transportation By The Numbers: Meeting the State’s Need for Safe, Smooth and Efficient Mobility](#),” finds that throughout Tennessee, 40 percent of major locally and state-maintained urban roads are in poor, mediocre or fair condition. Nearly one-fifth of Tennessee’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, nearly 5,000 people were killed in crashes on Tennessee’s roads from 2010 to 2014.

Driving on deficient roads costs each Knoxville area driver \$1,282 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 calculated the cost to motorists of insufficient roads in the Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville urban areas. A breakdown of the costs per motorist in each area along with a statewide total is below.

Location	VOC	Safety	Congestion	TOTAL
Chattanooga	\$426	\$284	\$730	\$1,440
Knoxville	\$188	\$245	\$849	\$1,282
Memphis	\$516	\$225	\$1,080	\$1,821
Nashville	\$239	\$225	\$1,168	\$1,632
Tennessee - Statewide	\$1.3 Billion	\$1.5 billion	\$2.8 billion	\$5.6 billion

The TRIP report finds that 14 percent of major roads in the Knoxville urban area are in poor or mediocre condition, costing the average motorist an additional \$188 each year in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

“We urge the state to find fair, solid and creative ways to pay for transportation projects that meet the citizen’s needs,” said O. T. Wright, regional president, AAA – The Auto Club Group. “That will bring us tremendous economic and safety benefits.”

Traffic congestion in the Knoxville area is worsening, causing 35 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing each driver \$849 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

"TDOT's first priority is the safety of Tennessee's motoring public," said Bill Moore, chairman of Tennessee Infrastructure Alliance and former chief engineer at the Tennessee Department of Transportation. "We must have additional transportation infrastructure funding, not only to maintain and expand our system, but to significantly decrease congestion that continues to rise each year."

A total of 19 percent of Tennessee’s bridges show significant deterioration or do not meet modern design standards. Five percent of Tennessee’s bridges are structurally deficient, with significant deterioration to the bridge deck, supports or other major components. An additional 14 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 Knoxville urban area, two percent of bridges are structurally deficient and 29 percent are functionally obsolete.

Traffic crashes in Tennessee claimed the lives of 4,948 people between 2010 and 2014. Tennessee’s overall traffic fatality rate of 1.40 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is significantly higher than the national average of 1.09. The fatality rate on Tennessee’s rural non-Interstate roads was 2.38 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2013, nearly two-and-a-half times higher than the 1.03 fatality rate on all other roads and highways in the state.

The efficiency and condition of Tennessee’s transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy. Annually, \$433 billion in goods are shipped from sites in Tennessee and another \$266 billion in goods are shipped to sites in Tennessee, mostly by truck.

The Federal surface transportation program is a critical source of funding in Tennessee. From 2009 to 2013, the federal government provided \$1.20 for road improvements in Tennessee for every dollar the state paid in federal motor fuel fees. Signed into law in December 2015, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, provides modest increases in federal highway and transit spending, allows states greater long-term funding certainty and streamlines the federal project approval process. But the FAST Act does not provide adequate funding to meet the nation’s need for highway and transit improvements and does not include a long-term and sustainable funding source.

“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. “Without additional transportation funding, Tennessee’s transportation system will become increasingly deteriorated and congested, the state will miss out on opportunities for economic growth and quality of life will suffer.”