



Road congestion, potholes cost Fort Worth drivers \$1,700 a year

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Texas roads and bridges cost the state's motorists a total of \$25.1 billion statewide annually, more than \$1,700 per driver in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, according to a new report by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based transportation group.

The TRIP report, "Texas Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," finds that throughout Texas, 16 percent of major urban roads and highways are less than adequate. Nearly one-fifth of Texas bridges are in need of replacement, repairs or modernization, according to the report and the state's major urban roads are becoming increasingly congested, with drivers wasting significant amounts of time and fuel each year.

"These high costs are like a hidden tax on our motorists; we'd all be better off investing a little more in improving our transportation infrastructure and avoiding these costs," said Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes, chairman of the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition.

A total of 19 percent of Texas' state maintained bridges are currently in need of replacement, repair or modernization. Two percent of the state's bridges are structurally deficient, meaning there is significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge. An additional 17 percent of the state's bridges are designated as functionally obsolete because they no longer meet current highway design standards.

Traffic crashes in Texas claimed the lives of 16,041 people between 2009 and 2013. Texas' traffic fatality rate of 1.41 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is 27 percent higher than the national average of 1.11. The traffic fatality rate on Texas' non-Interstate rural roads was 2.63 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, more than two-and-a-half times higher than the 0.99 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel on all other roads and highways in the state. 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 Texas, according to the report.

According to the report, 21 percent of roads in Dallas, Fort Worth and Arlington are rated as poor, just below San Antonio's 32 percent. Dallas, Fort Worth and Arlington residents wasted 45 hours in traffic annually, just below Houston's 52 hours wasted.

Vehicle operating costs (VOC) annually in Dallas, Fort Worth and Arlington are \$508 annually, below San Antonio's \$662, but above Houston's \$450. - Robert Francis



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