It is well-established that poor road quality has a direct cost to drivers and a devastating, negative impact on economic development. Most recently, on October 17, 2018, TRIP—an independent, nonpartisan national transportation research organization—issued a new report identifying the roughest roads in the United States with the highest cost impact per driver. The report, [“*Bumpy Roads Ahead: America’s Roughest Rides and Strategies to make our Roads Smoother*,”](http://www.tripnet.org/docs/Urban_Roads_TRIP_Report_October_2018.pdf) examines urban pavement conditions, transportation funding, travel trends and economic development for urban areas with populations of 200,000 or greater. Wisconsin made the top 20 WORST roads or highest vehicle operating cost in every category examined.

For percentage of pavement in poor condition, Milwaukee ranks 4th worst for large urban areas (populations over 500,000). For mid-sized urban areas (populations of 200,000 – 500,000), Madison ranks 3rd worst, Green Bay ranks 8th worst and Appleton ranks 11th worst.

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| **Rank** | **Large Urban Areas - 500K+** | **State** | **Poor**  **Share** | **Mid-Sized Urban Areas - 200K-500K** | **State** | **Poor**  **Share** |
| **1** | San Francisco--Oakland, CA | CA | 71% | Antioch, CA | CA | 57% |
| **2** | San Jose, CA | CA | 64% | Concord, CA | CA | 56% |
| **3** | Los Angeles--Long Beach--Anaheim, CA | CA | 57% | Madison, WI | WI | 49% |
| **4** | Milwaukee, WI | WI | 54% | Oxnard, CA | CA | 48% |
| **5** | Honolulu, HI | HI | 54% | Round Lake Beach--McHenry--Grayslake, IL--WI | IL-WI | 44% |
| **6** | Akron, OH | OH | 49% | Jackson, MS | MS | 44% |
| **7** | Cleveland, OH | OH | 49% | Santa Rosa, CA | CA | 43% |
| **8** | New York--Newark, NY--NJ--CT | NY-NJ-CT | 46% | Green Bay, WI | WI | 43% |
| **9** | Providence, RI--MA | RI-MA | 46% | Stockton, CA | CA | 43% |
| **10** | Philadelphia, PA--NJ--DE--MD | PA-NJ-DE-MD | 43% | Victorville--Hesperia, CA | CA | 42% |
| **11** | Seattle, WA | WA | 41% | Appleton, WI | WI | 41% |
| **12** | Sacramento, CA | CA | 41% | Santa Clarita, CA | CA | 41% |
| **13** | Riverside--San Bernardino, CA | CA | 40% | Laredo, TX | TX | 40% |
| **14** | Memphis, TN--MS--AR | TN-MS-AR | 40% | Lafayette, LA | LA | 40% |
| **15** | Bridgeport--Stamford, CT--NY | CT-NY | 40% | Lubbock, TX | TX | 39% |
| **16** | Fresno, CA | CA | 40% | Fayetteville--Springdale--Rogers, AR--MO | AR-MO | 38% |
| **17** | Denver--Aurora, CO | CO | 40% | Thousand Oaks, CA | CA | 38% |
| **18** | Baton Rouge, LA | LA | 38% | Canton, OH | OH | 38% |
| **19** | Colorado Springs, CO | CO | 37% | Little Rock, AR | AR | 38% |
| **20** | Oklahoma City, OK | OK | 37% | Modesto, CA | CA | 37% |

Poor road conditions damage vehicles and researchers qualify this as a “vehicle operating costs” (VOC). Milwaukee drivers incur the 3rd highest VOC in the County for large urban areas. For mid-sized urban areas, Madison drivers incur 3th highest VOC, Appleton drivers incur the 6th highest VOC and Green Bay drivers incur the 9th highest VOC.

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| **Rank** | **Large Urban Areas - 500K+** | **State** | **VOC** | **Mid-Sized Urban Areas- 200K-500K** | **State** | **VOC** |
| **1** | San Francisco--Oakland, CA | CA | $ 1,049 | Jackson, MS | MS | $ 944 |
| **2** | San Jose, CA | CA | $ 983 | Antioch, CA | CA | $ 942 |
| **3** | Milwaukee, WI | WI | $ 944 | Concord, CA | CA | $ 923 |
| **4** | Los Angeles--Long Beach--Anaheim, CA | CA | $ 921 | Madison, WI | WI | $ 910 |
| **5** | Tulsa, OK | OK | $ 898 | Laredo, TX | TX | $ 858 |
| **6** | Oklahoma City, OK | OK | $ 897 | Appleton, WI | WI | $ 855 |
| **7** | Cleveland, OH | OH | $ 887 | Oxnard, CA | CA | $ 852 |
| **8** | Honolulu, HI | HI | $ 851 | Lubbock, TX | TX | $ 801 |
| **9** | Akron, OH | OH | $ 837 | Green Bay, WI | WI | $ 795 |
| **10** | Riverside--San Bernardino, CA | CA | $ 795 | Fayetteville--Springdale--Rogers, AR--MO | AR-MO | $ 782 |
| **11** | El Paso, TX--NM | TX-NM | $ 788 | Santa Clarita, CA | CA | $ 780 |
| **12** | Baton Rouge, LA | LA | $ 755 | Santa Rosa, CA | CA | $ 776 |
| **13** | Fresno, CA | CA | $ 755 | Little Rock, AR | AR | $ 771 |
| **14** | Sacramento, CA | CA | $ 754 | Victorville--Hesperia, CA | CA | $ 768 |
| **15** | Memphis, TN--MS--AR | TN-MS-AR | $ 746 | Thousand Oaks, CA | CA | $ 765 |
| **16** | Denver--Aurora, CO | CO | $ 739 | Lafayette, LA | LA | $ 765 |
| **17** | Philadelphia, PA--NJ--DE--MD | PA-NJ-DE-MD | $ 732 | Stockton, CA | CA | $ 743 |
| **18** | Detroit, MI | MI | $ 732 | Shreveport, LA | LA | $ 727 |
| **19** | Bridgeport--Stamford, CT--NY | CT | $ 730 | South Bend, IN--MI | IN-MI | $ 720 |
| **20** | Providence, RI--MA | RI-MA | $ 724 | Fort Wayne, IN | IN | $ 719 |

Perhaps most telling is that the TRIP study does not include most local roads. It analyzes only major locally and state-maintained roads and highways. The TRIP study confirms what those of us in the Wisconsin transportation industry already know. Until Wisconsin finds a sustainable funding solution for transportation, Wisconsin road quality will continue to deteriorate. The economy, generally, and every driver, personally, suffers the consequences of Wisconsin’s poor roads.