

MONTANA TRANSPORTATION BY THE NUMBERS:

Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility

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Founded in 1971, TRIP ® of Washington, DC, is a nonprofit organization that researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues. TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction; labor unions; and organizations concerned with efficient and safe surface transportation.

Ten Key Transportation Numbers in Montana

46%	Forty-six percent of Montana's major locally and state-maintained urban roads are in either poor or mediocre condition.
\$484 \$170 million	Driving on rough roads costs the average urban Montana motorist \$484 annually in extra vehicle operating costs, a total of \$170 million annually statewide. Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.
#3	Montana's traffic fatality rate of 1.72 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel is the third highest in the nation.
211 1,053	On average, 211 people were killed annually in Montana traffic crashes from 2008 to 2012, a total of 1,053 fatalities over the five year period.
2X	The fatality rate on Montana's non-interstate rural roads is nearly double that on all other roads in the state (2.25 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 1.26).
18 %	A total of 18 percent of Montana bridges are in need of repair, improvement or replacement. Eight percent of the state's bridges are structurally deficient and ten percent are functionally obsolete.
43 % 30 %	Vehicle miles of travel in Montana increased 43 percent from 1990 to 2012 and are expected to increase another 30 percent by 2030.
\$395 million	If a lack of adequate revenue into the Federal Highway Trust Fund is not addressed by Congress, funding for highway and transit improvements in Montana could be cut by \$395 million for the federal fiscal year beginning October 1, 2014.
\$3.07	From 2008 to 2012, the federal government provided \$3.07 for road improvements in Montana for every dollar paid in federal motor fuel fees.
\$1.00 = \$5.20	The Federal Highway Administration estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs, and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.

Executive Summary

Montana's extensive system of roads, highways and bridges provides the state's residents, visitors and businesses with a high level of mobility. This transportation system forms the backbone that supports the state's economy. Montana's surface transportation system enables the state's residents and visitors to travel to work and school, visit family and friends, and frequent tourist and recreation attractions while providing its businesses with reliable access to customers, materials, suppliers and employees.

As Montana looks to retain its businesses, maintain its level of economic competitiveness and achieve further economic growth, the state will need to maintain and modernize its roads, highways and bridges by improving the physical condition of its transportation network and enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient and reliable mobility for motorists and businesses. Making needed improvements to Montana's roads, highways and bridges could also provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access.

With a current unemployment rate of 5.2 percent and with the state's population continuing to grow, Montana must improve its system of roads, highways and bridges to foster economic growth and keep businesses in the state. In addition to economic growth, transportation improvements are needed to ensure safe, reliable mobility and quality of life for all Montanans. Meeting Montana's need to modernize and maintain its system of roads, highways and bridges will require a significant boost in local, state and federal funding.

Signed into law in July 2012, MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act), has improved several procedures that in the past had delayed projects, MAP-21 does not address long-term funding challenges facing the federal surface transportation program.

The impact of inadequate federal surface transportation revenues could be felt as early as summer of 2014, when the balance in the [Highway Account of the federal Highway Trust Fund](#) is expected to drop below \$1 billion, which will trigger delays in the federal reimbursement to states for road, highway and bridge projects. States are expected to respond to this delay in federal reimbursement for road, highway and bridge repairs and improvements by delaying or postponing numerous projects.

As a further result, nationwide federal funding for highways will be cut by almost 100 percent from the current investment level for the fiscal year starting on October 1, 2014 (FY 2015) unless Congress provides additional transportation revenues. This is due to a cash shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund as projected by the [Congressional Budget Office](#).

The level of funding and the provisions of the federal surface transportation program have a significant impact on highway and bridge conditions, roadway safety, transit service, quality of life and economic development opportunities in Montana.

Population and economic growth in Montana have resulted in increased demands on the state's major roads and highways, leading to increased wear and tear on the transportation system.

- Montana's population reached approximately 1 million in 2012, a 26 percent increase since 1990. Montana had 757,812 licensed drivers in 2012.
- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Montana increased by 43 percent from 1990 to 2012 – jumping from 8.3 billion VMT in 1990 to 11.9 billion VMT in 2012.
- By 2030, vehicle travel in Montana is projected to increase by another 30 percent.
- From 1990 to 2012, Montana's gross domestic product, a measure of the state's economic output, increased by 72 percent, when adjusted for inflation.

While the Montana Department of Transportation places a priority on the most cost-effective pavement preservation methods, a lack of adequate state and local funding has resulted in forty-six percent of major urban, locally and state-maintained roads and highways in Montana having pavement surfaces in poor or mediocre condition. These rough conditions provide a rough ride and cost motorist in the form of additional vehicle operating costs.

- Twenty-eight percent of Montana's major urban roads and highways have pavements in poor condition, while an additional 18 percent of the state's major urban roads are rated in mediocre condition. Twenty-two percent are rated in fair condition and the remaining 32 percent are rated in good condition.
- The pavement data in this report for all arterial roads and highways is provided by the Federal Highway Administration, based on data submitted annually by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) on the condition of major locally and state-maintained roads and highways.
- Roads rated in poor condition may show signs of deterioration, including rutting, cracks and potholes. In some cases, poor roads can be resurfaced, but often are too deteriorated and must be reconstructed. Roads rated in mediocre condition may show signs of significant wear and may also have some visible pavement distress. Most pavements in mediocre condition can be repaired by resurfacing, but some may need more extensive reconstruction to return them to good condition.
- The Montana Department of Transportation utilizes an asset management strategy called the [Performance Programming Process](#) which links goals and expenditures for road and bridge conditions, safety and traffic congestion by prioritizing investment on the state's roads, highways and bridges which are cost-effective, safe, efficient and environmentally efficient.

- Driving on rough roads costs each urban Montana motorist \$484 annually per in extra vehicle operating costs. Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.
- Driving on rough roads costs all Montana motorists a total of \$170 million annually in extra vehicle operating costs. Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Eighteen percent of locally and state-maintained bridges in Montana show significant deterioration or do not meet current design standards often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment. This includes all bridges that are 20 feet or more in length.

- Eight percent of Montana's bridges are structurally deficient. A bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Structurally deficient bridges are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including commercial trucks and emergency services vehicles.
- Ten percent of Montana's bridges are functionally obsolete. Bridges that are functionally obsolete no longer meet current highway design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment.

Montana's traffic fatality rate is the third highest in the nation. Improving safety features on Montana's roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in the state's traffic fatalities and serious crashes. Roadway features are likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal and serious traffic crashes.

- Between 2008 and 2012 a total of 1,053 people were killed in traffic crashes in Montana, an average of 211 fatalities per year.
- Montana's overall traffic fatality rate of 1.72 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2012 is the third highest in the nation. The national traffic fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel was 1.13 in 2012.
- The fatality rate on Montana's rural non-Interstate roads was 2.25 fatalities per 100 vehicle miles of travel, nearly double the 1.26 fatality rate on all other roads and highways in the state.
- Roadway features that impact safety include the number of lanes, lane widths, lighting, lane markings, rumble strips, shoulders, guard rails, other shielding devices, median barriers and intersection design. The cost of serious crashes includes lost productivity, lost earnings, medical costs and emergency services.
- Several factors are associated with vehicle crashes that result in fatalities, including driver behavior, vehicle characteristics and roadway features. TRIP estimates that

roadway features are likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of fatal traffic crashes.

- Where appropriate, highway improvements can reduce traffic fatalities and crashes while improving traffic flow to help relieve congestion. Such improvements include removing or shielding obstacles; adding or improving medians; improved lighting; adding rumble strips, wider lanes, wider and paved shoulders; upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes; and better road markings and traffic signals.
- Investments in rural traffic safety have been found to result in significant reductions in serious traffic crashes. A 2012 report by the [Texas Transportation Institute](#) (TTI) found that improvements completed recently by the Texas Department of Transportation that widened lanes, improved shoulders and made other safety improvements on 1,159 miles of rural state roadways resulted in 133 fewer fatalities on these roads in the first three years after the improvements were completed (as compared to the three years prior). TTI estimates that the improvements on these roads are likely to save 880 lives over the next 20 years.

The efficiency of Montana’s transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state’s economy. Businesses are increasingly reliant on an efficient and reliable transportation system to move products and services. A key component in business efficiency and success is the level and ease of access to customers, markets, materials and workers.

- Annually, \$21.6 billion in goods are shipped from sites in Montana and another \$37.9 billion in goods are shipped to sites in Montana, mostly by truck.
- Fifty-nine percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in Montana are carried by trucks and another nine percent are carried by courier services or multiple mode deliveries, which include trucking.
- Businesses have responded to improved communications and greater competition by moving from a push-style distribution system, which relies on low-cost movement of bulk commodities and large-scale warehousing, to a pull-style distribution system, which relies on smaller, more strategic and time-sensitive movement of goods.
- Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region’s transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system.
- Highway accessibility was ranked the number one site selection factor in a 2011 survey of corporate executives by [Area Development Magazine](#).
- A [2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration](#) found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries

supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.

- The [Federal Highway Administration](#) estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.

The federal government remains a critical source of funding for Montana's roads, highways and bridges and provides a significant return to Montana in road and bridge funding based on the revenue generated in the state by the federal motor fuel tax.

- The MAP-21 program, approved by Congress in July 2012, increased funding flexibility for states and streamlined project approval processes to improve the efficiency of state and local transportation agencies in providing needed transportation improvements in the state.
- MAP-21 does not provide sufficient long-term revenues to support the current level of federal surface transportation investment.
- The impact of inadequate federal surface transportation revenues could be felt as early as summer of 2014, when federal funding for road, highway and bridge projects is likely to be delayed because the balance in the [Highway Account of the federal Highway Trust Fund](#) is expected to drop below \$1 billion. This delay and uncertainty in funding will likely result in the postponement of numerous projects.
- Nationwide federal funding for highways is expected to be cut by almost 100 percent from the current investment level for the fiscal year starting October 1, 2014 (FY 2015) unless Congress provides additional transportation revenues. This is due to a cash shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund as projected by the [Congressional Budget Office](#).
- If the funding shortfalls into the federal Highway Trust Fund are addressed solely by cutting spending it is estimated that federal funding for highway and transit improvements in Montana will be cut by \$395 million for the federal fiscal year starting October 1, 2014, unless Congress provides additional transportation revenues.
- From 2008 to 2012, the federal government provided \$3.07 for road improvements in Montana for every dollar the state paid in federal motor fuel fees.

Sources of information for this report include the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the U.S. Census Bureau, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Introduction

Montana's roads, highways and bridges form vital transportation links for the state's residents, visitors and businesses, providing daily access to homes, jobs, shopping, natural resources and recreation. Today, with the Treasure State hoping to foster quality of life improvements and economic competitiveness, the modernization of Montana's transportation system is crucial, particularly to critical areas of the state's economy including tourism, agriculture and manufacturing.

As the U.S. and Montana look to rebound from the recent economic downturn, the preservation and modernization of the state's transportation system could play an important role in retaining Montana's economic competitiveness and improving its economic well-being by providing critically needed jobs in the short term and by improving the productivity and competitiveness of the state's businesses in the long term. As Montana faces the challenge of preserving and modernizing its transportation system, the future level of federal, state and local transportation funding will be a critical factor in whether the state's residents and visitors continue to enjoy access to a safe and efficient transportation network.

Meeting Montana's need to modernize and maintain its system of roads, highways and bridges will require a significant boost in local, state and federal funding.

Signed into law in July 2012, MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act), will fund surface transportation programs in Montana at approximately \$398 million annually for fiscal years 2013 and 2014.¹ While it makes provisions to streamline procedures that in the past delayed projects, MAP-21 does not address long-term funding problems facing surface transportation programs.

The level of funding and the provisions of the federal surface transportation program have a significant impact on highway and bridge conditions, roadway safety, transit service, quality of life and economic development opportunities in all of the states.

This report examines the condition, use and safety of Montana's roads, highways and bridges, federal, state and local funding needs, and the future mobility needs of the state. Sources of information for this study include the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Census Bureau, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Population, Travel and Economic Trends in Montana

Montana residents and businesses require a high level of personal and commercial mobility. Population increases and economic growth in the state have resulted in an increase in the demand for mobility as well as an increase in vehicle miles of travel (VMT). To foster a high quality of life and spur economic growth in Montana, it will be critical that the state provide a safe and modern transportation system that can accommodate future growth in population, tourism, recreation and vehicle travel.

Montana's population grew to approximately 1 million residents in 2012, a 26 percent increase since 1990.² Montana had 757,812 licensed drivers in 2012.³ From 1990 to 2012, Montana's gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the state's economic output, increased by 72 percent, when adjusted for inflation.⁴

From 1990 to 2012, annual vehicle miles of travel in Montana increased by 43 percent, from 8.3 billion miles traveled annually to 11.9 billion miles traveled annually.⁵ Based on population and other lifestyle trends, TRIP estimates that travel on Montana's roads and highways will increase by another 30 percent by 2030.⁶

Condition of Montana's Roads

The life cycle of Montana's roads is greatly affected by the state and local government's ability to perform timely maintenance and upgrades to ensure that road and highway surfaces last as long as possible.

The Montana Department of Transportation utilizes an asset management strategy called the [Performance Programming Process](#) which links goals and expenditures for road and bridge conditions, safety and traffic congestion by prioritizing investment on the state's roads, highways and bridges which are cost-effective, safe, efficient and environmentally efficient.⁷

The pavement condition of the state's major locally and state-maintained urban roads – generally roads other than neighborhood roads or minor local roads --is evaluated and classified as being in poor, mediocre, fair or good condition.

Throughout the state, 46 percent of major locally and state-maintained urban roads and highways have deficient pavements, providing motorists with a rough ride.⁸ Twenty-eight percent of Montana's major urban roads and highways have pavements rated in poor condition.⁹ Another 18 percent of Montana's major urban roads are rated in mediocre condition, while 22 percent are rated in fair condition and the remaining 32 percent are rated in good condition.¹⁰

The pavement data in this report for all arterial roads and highways is provided by the Federal Highway Administration, based on data submitted annually by the Montana Department

of Transportation (MDT) on the condition of major state and locally maintained roads and highways in the state.

Roads rated poor may show signs of deterioration, including rutting, cracks and potholes. In some cases, poor roads can be resurfaced but often are too deteriorated and must be reconstructed. Roads rated in mediocre condition may show signs of significant wear and may also have some visible pavement distress. Most pavements in fair condition can be repaired by resurfacing, but some may need more extensive reconstruction to return them to good condition.

Pavement failure is caused by a combination of traffic, moisture and climate. Moisture often works its way into road surfaces and the materials that form the road's foundation. Road surfaces at intersections are even more prone to deterioration because the slow-moving or standing loads occurring at these sites subject the pavement to higher levels of stress. It is critical that roads are fixed before they require major repairs because reconstructing roads costs approximately four times more than resurfacing them.¹¹ As roads and highways continue to age, they will reach a point of deterioration where routine paving and maintenance will not be adequate to keep pavement surfaces in good condition and costly reconstruction of the roadway and its underlying surfaces will become necessary.

The Costs to Motorists of Roads in Inadequate Condition

TRIP has calculated the additional cost to motorists of driving on roads in poor or unacceptable condition. When roads are in poor condition – which may include potholes, rutting or rough surfaces – the cost to operate and maintain a vehicle increases. These additional vehicle operating costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional vehicle repair costs,

increased fuel consumption and increased tire wear. TRIP estimates that additional vehicle operating costs borne by Montana motorists as a result of poor road conditions is \$170 million annually.¹² Driving on rough roads costs the average urban Montana motorist \$484 annually in extra vehicle operating costs.¹³

Additional vehicle operating costs have been calculated in the Highway Development and Management Model (HDM), which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Transportation and more than 100 other countries as the definitive analysis of the impact of road conditions on vehicle operating costs. The HDM report is based on numerous studies that have measured the impact of various factors, including road conditions, on vehicle operating costs.¹⁴

The HDM study found that road deterioration increases ownership, repair, fuel and tire costs. The report found that deteriorated roads accelerate the pace of depreciation of vehicles and the need for repairs because the stress on the vehicle increases in proportion to the level of roughness of the pavement surface. Similarly, tire wear and fuel consumption increase as roads deteriorate since there is less efficient transfer of power to the drive train and additional friction between the road and the tires.

TRIP's additional vehicle operating cost estimate is based on taking the average number of miles driven annually by a motorist, calculating current vehicle operating costs based on AAA's 2012 vehicle operating costs and then using the HDM model to estimate the additional vehicle operating costs paid by drivers as a result of substandard roads.¹⁵ Additional research on the impact of road conditions on fuel consumption by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) is also factored into TRIP's vehicle operating cost methodology.

Bridge Conditions in Montana

Montana's bridges form key links in the state's highway system, providing communities and individuals access to employment, schools, shopping and medical facilities, and facilitating commerce and access for emergency vehicles.

Eighteen percent of Montana's locally and state- maintained bridges (20 feet or longer) are currently rated as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

Eight percent of Montana's locally and state- maintained bridges are rated as structurally deficient.¹⁶ A bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Bridges that are structurally deficient may be posted for lower weight limits or closed if their condition warrants such action. Deteriorated bridges can have a significant impact on daily life. Restrictions on vehicle weight may cause many vehicles – especially emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, school buses and farm equipment – to use alternate routes to avoid posted bridges. Redirected trips also lengthen travel time, waste fuel and reduce the efficiency of the local economy.

Ten percent of Montana's locally and state- maintained bridges are rated functionally obsolete.¹⁷ Bridges that are functionally obsolete no longer meet current highway design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment with the approaching roadway.

The service life of bridges can be extended by performing routine maintenance such as resurfacing decks, painting surfaces, insuring that a facility has good drainage and replacing deteriorating components. But most bridges will eventually require more costly reconstruction or major rehabilitation to remain operable.

Traffic Safety in Montana

A total of 1,053 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes in Montana from 2008 through 2012, an average of 211 fatalities per year.¹⁸

Chart 1. Traffic fatalities in Montana from 2008 – 2012.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Fatalities</i>
2008	229
2009	221
2010	189
2011	209
2012	205
Total	1,053

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Three major factors are associated with fatal vehicle crashes: driver behavior, vehicle characteristics and roadway features. It is estimated that roadway features are likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of fatal traffic crashes. Roadway features that impact safety include the number of lanes, lane widths, lighting, lane markings, rumble strips, shoulders, guard rails, other shielding devices, median barriers and intersection design.

Montana's overall traffic fatality rate of 1.72 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2012 is significantly higher than the national average of 1.13 and is the third highest in the nation, behind only West Virginia and South Carolina, both at 1.76.¹⁹ The fatality rate on Montana's non-Interstate rural roads was 2.25 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2011, nearly double the fatality rate of 1.26 on all other roads and highways in the state.²⁰

Improving safety on Montana's roadways can be achieved through further improvements in vehicle safety; improvements in driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior; and a variety of improvements in roadway safety features.

The severity of serious traffic crashes could be reduced through roadway improvements, where appropriate, such as adding turn lanes, removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, widening lanes, widening and paving shoulders, improving intersection layout, and providing better road markings and upgrading or installing traffic signals.

Roads with poor geometry, with insufficient clear distances, without turn lanes, having inadequate shoulders for the posted speed limits, or poorly laid out intersections or interchanges, pose greater risks to motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Investments in rural traffic safety have been found to result in significant reductions in serious traffic crashes. A 2012 report by the [Texas Transportation Institute](#) (TTI) found that improvements completed recently by the Texas Department of Transportation that widened lanes, improved shoulders and made other safety improvements on 1,159 miles of rural state roadways resulted in 133 fewer fatalities on these roads in the first three years after the improvements were completed (as compared to the three years prior). TTI estimates that the improvements on these roads are likely to save 880 lives over the next 20 years.²¹

Transportation Funding

Investment in Montana's roads, highways and bridges is funded by local, state and federal governments. The federal government provides funding for the state's transportation system largely as part MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act), the current two-year federal surface transportation program, which expires on September 30, 2014.

The federal government remains a critical source of funding for Montana's roads, highways and bridges and provides a significant return to Montana in road and bridge funding based on the revenue generated in the state by the federal motor fuel tax. From 2008 to 2012, the federal government provided \$3.07 for road improvements in Montana for every dollar the state paid in federal motor fuel fees.²²

The MAP-21 program, approved by Congress in July 2012, greatly increased funding flexibility for states and streamlined project approval processes to improve the efficiency of state and local transportation agencies in providing needed transportation improvements in the state. But the MAP-21 program did not provide sufficient long-term revenues in place to support the current level of federal surface transportation investment.

The impact of inadequate federal surface transportation revenues could be felt as early as summer of 2014, when the balance in the [Highway Account of the federal Highway Trust Fund](#) is expected to drop below \$1 billion, which will trigger delays in the federal reimbursement to states for road, highway and bridge projects. States are expected to respond to this delay in federal reimbursement for road, highway and bridge repairs and improvements by delaying or postponing numerous projects.²³

Nationwide, federal funding for highways is expected to be cut by almost 100 percent from the current investment level for the fiscal year starting October 1, 2014 (FY 2015) unless Congress provides additional transportation revenues. This is due to a cash shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund as projected by the [Congressional Budget Office](#).

If the funding shortfalls into the federal Highway Trust Fund are addressed solely by cutting spending it is estimated that federal funding for highway and transit improvements in

Montana will be cut by \$395 million for the federal fiscal year starting October 1, 2014, unless Congress provides additional transportation revenues.²⁴

Increasing investment in the state's roads, highways and bridges could boost Montana's economy by creating jobs. A [2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration](#) found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.²⁵

Importance of Transportation to Economic Growth

Today's culture of business demands that an area have well-maintained and efficient roads, highways and bridges if it is to remain economically competitive. The advent of modern national and global communications and the impact of free trade in North America and elsewhere have resulted in a significant increase in freight movement. Consequently, the quality of a region's transportation system has become a key component in a business's ability to compete locally, nationally and internationally.

Businesses have responded to improved communications and the need to cut costs with a variety of innovations including just-in-time delivery, increased small package delivery, demand-side inventory management and by accepting customer orders through the Internet. The result of these changes has been a significant improvement in logistics efficiency as firms move from a push-style distribution system, which relies on large-scale warehousing of materials, to a pull-style distribution system, which relies on smaller, more strategic movement of goods. These

improvements have made mobile inventories the norm, resulting in the nation's trucks literally becoming rolling warehouses.

Highways are vitally important to continued economic development in Montana, particularly to the state's lumber, mineral extraction and tourism industries. As the economy expands, creating more jobs and increasing consumer confidence, the demand for consumer and business products grows. In turn, manufacturers ship greater quantities of goods to market to meet this demand, a process that adds to truck traffic on the state's highways and major arterial roads.

Every year, \$21.6 billion in goods are shipped from sites in Montana and another \$37.9 billion in goods are shipped to sites in Montana, mostly by trucks.²⁶ Fifty-nine percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in Montana are carried by trucks and another nine percent are carried by courier services or multiple-mode deliveries, which include trucking.²⁷

The cost of road and bridge improvements are more than offset by the reduction of user costs associated with driving on rough roads, the improvement in business productivity, the reduction in delays and the improvement in traffic safety. The [Federal Highway Administration estimates](#) that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.²⁸

Local, regional and state economic performance is improved when a region's surface transportation system is expanded or repaired. This improvement comes as a result of the initial job creation and increased employment created over the long-term because of improved access, reduced transport costs and improved safety Highway accessibility was ranked the number one site selection factor in a [2011 survey](#) of corporate executives by [Area Development Magazine](#).²⁹

Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system.

Conclusion

As Montana looks to build and enhance a thriving, growing and dynamic state, it will be critical that it is able to provide a 21st century network of roads, highways and bridges that can accommodate the mobility demands of a modern society.

As the nation looks to fully rebound from the recent economic downturn, the U.S. will need to modernize its surface transportation system by improving the physical condition of its transportation network and enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient and reliable mobility for motorists and businesses. Making needed improvements to Montana's roads, highways and bridges could provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access.

Without a substantial boost in federal, state and local highway funding, numerous projects to improve the condition and expand the capacity of Montana's roads, highways and bridges will not be able to proceed, hampering the state's ability to improve the condition of its transportation system and to enhance economic development opportunities in the state.

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Endnotes

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- ¹ Federal Highway Administration (2013). FY 2013 and FY 2014 MAP-21 Apportionment tables. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/>
- ² U.S. Census Bureau (2013).
- ³ Highway Statistics (2012). Federal Highway Administration. DL-1C
- ⁴ TRIP analysis of Bureau of Economic Analysis data.
- ⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration: Highway Statistics 1990 and 2012.
- ⁶ TRIP calculation based on U.S. Census and Federal Highway Administration data.
- ⁷ Performance Programming Process (2012). Montana Department of Transportation.
- ⁸ Federal Highway Administration (2013). Pavement condition data is for 2011.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Selecting a Preventative Maintenance Treatment for Flexible Pavements. R. Hicks, J. Moulthrop. Transportation Research Board. 1999. Figure 1.
- ¹² TRIP calculation
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Highway Development and Management: Volume Seven. Modeling Road User and Environmental Effects in HDM-4. Bennett, C. and Greenwood, I. 2000.
- ¹⁵ Your Driving Costs. American Automobile Association. 2012.
- ¹⁶ Federal Highway Administration (2013). National Bridge Inventory.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ TRIP analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data (2013).
- ¹⁹ TRIP analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Highway Administration data (2013).
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Adding Highway Shoulders, Width, Reduce Crash Numbers and Save Lives (August 9, 2012). Texas Transportation Institute.
- ²² TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration data. 2008 to 2012 Highway Statistics sf-1.
- ²³ [Testimony of Michael Hancock, president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.](#) (Fe. 12, 2014).
- ²⁴ U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (2013). http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Files.View&FileStore_id=cf1dfe4e-8e60-4506-a9e0-205fe809f314
- ²⁵ Federal Highway Administration, 2008. Employment Impacts of Highway Infrastructure Investment.
- ²⁶ Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2010), U.S. Department of Transportation. 2007 Commodity Flow Survey, State Summaries. http://www.bts.gov/publications/commodity_flow_survey/2007/states/
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ FHWA estimate based on its analysis of 2006 data. For more information on FHWA's cost-benefit analysis of highway investment, see the 2008 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions and Performance.
- ²⁹ Area Development Magazine (Winter, 2012). 26th Annual Survey of Corporate Executive Results.