



[Atlanta has some of the nation's best-kept roads, according to a report by the Road Information Program. \(ABCNEWS.com\)](#)

Rocky Roads

Motorists Pay Big Bucks for Bumpy Rides

By Steve Osunsami



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— Residents of Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose and San Diego enjoy what may be the country's best weather, but they're stuck driving on some of its worst roads.

Drivers in these cities pay an extra \$700 a year on car repairs made necessary by awful roads, according to a report from the Road Information Program, a lobbying group in Washington.

The report estimates that more than 60 percent of these cities' major streets and surrounding freeways need serious work.

Jeff Morales of California's Department of Transportation says the federal government must step in with assistance.

"We've made improvements," he says, "but it's never going to be enough."

Praise for Atlanta, Phoenix, Orlando

Not all the news is bad: The report gives a blue ribbon to Atlanta, Phoenix and Orlando, Fla., where 98 percent to 100 percent of the roads surveyed were smooth.

The difference, according to road engineers, is in the asphalt or cement. These three cities spend more up front on their roads. They build thicker streets, and they use more durable ingredients. In Atlanta, for example, construction crews have the advantage of using granite. The region is full of it.

The cities with the smoothest roads also are known to resurface their roads while they're still in good condition. It costs more, and is less effective, to wait.

Only 14 major cities have been able to come anywhere close to this success, the report found. Most American cities fail to keep a majority of their roads in excellent condition.

And it's not getting any easier. By 2020, the number of vehicles and heavy trucks using the nation's largest roads and highways is expected to nearly double.

That's bad news for the average driver, says Frank Moretti of the Road Information Program.

"We looking at the likelihood that pavement conditions are going to get worse," he says.

Congress could help with a new highway bill that would cost \$300 billion over the next six years. But unless the plan comes with an increase in the gas tax as well, it may not be nearly enough.

THE CITY OF PHOENIX HAS ONE OF THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE CRACK SEAL PROGRAMS IN THE NATION. (Crafco comment)