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### New report emphasizes issues in road funding, infrastructure

Michigan faces an annual \$3.9 billion deficit in road funding to preserve infrastructure, and the loss of bonds in the next year will exacerbate the issue, according to [a new report](#) from TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit.

Although the bonds borrowed by the Department of Transportation in the last five years have allocated approximately \$3.5 billion to transportation programs, these bonds run out after the next fiscal year, dropping reconstruction funds from \$500 million annually to \$222 million. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding will also run out.

With a 54% rate of inflation on highway costs, according to Ricky Moretti, director of policy and research at TRIP, Michigan is looking at cutting 2,800 construction jobs, and the current findings of the report becoming bigger problems.

The report broke down some of the numbers regionally when it comes to unpaved roadways and costs to individual drivers. In Detroit, the average cost to motorists, based on deterioration or unsafe roads, is \$2,921 per year. In Grand Rapids, it costs \$2,302 and \$1,856 in Lansing.

Across the state, 21% of major roads are in poor condition with another 19% in mediocre condition, according to the report.

In Detroit, 42% of the roads are in poor condition and another 19% are in mediocre condition.

Around 36% of roads in Grand Rapids are in poor condition with another 18% in mediocre condition. In Lansing, 37% of major roadways are in poor condition and 20% are mediocre.

Around 11% of bridges in Michigan are rated in poor condition and "in need of immediate repair," and another 56% are in fair condition.

Lansing is on par with the state, with 11% of bridges in need of repairs, while 9% of Detroit's bridges need repair and 8% of Grand Rapids bridges are in poor condition.

The report also covered driver experience instead of just infrastructure, stating that the average driver in Detroit spends an additional 64 hours annually stuck in traffic, leading to a waste of 24 gallons of fuel. In Grand Rapids, this is 43 hours and 16 gallons, and in Lansing, this is 16 hours and six gallons of fuel.

Fatalities on Michigan roads have also increased 16% in Michigan during the past five years. In the Detroit area, an average of 382 fatalities occur.

Even with all this need, Moretti acknowledged Michigan has made progress during the last five years with additional funding from the state, but that it could be challenging moving forward with traffic inflation back to pre- COVID-19 levels.

Lance Binoniemi, vice president of government affairs at the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association, said the report helps lawmakers understand where they need to invest and brings "a human element" to the road funding issue.

"As a driver of 30 years in Michigan, I take for granted the fact that we have poor roads and that I have to replace tires, and so does everyone else in our state," Binoniemi said. "There's not a single person that doesn't know a family member or a friend or themselves who has been affected by poor roads and damage to their vehicle or costly commute times or safety measures."

Although the bonds were a good short-term investment, Binoniemi said, they also did not include increases in the local systems that have been "beat up" by construction season and then continuing deterioration of pavement.

He said in the next three years that more than 10,000 jobs will be cut from industry if the funding cliff happens with nothing to backfill it.

Binoniemi said his association is very supportive of the House road funding plan and hopeful in negotiations to start soon for the full

passage.

The nine-bill package was passed back in March to provide \$3.1 billion for a long-term funding plan (See [Gongwer Michigan Report, March 19, 2025](#)).

The focus on the local level is most attractive in the House's plan, Binoniemi said, with \$275 million set aside for a neighborhood streets program without requiring local townships to match the funds.

With the increased funding, for every \$1 billion invested, 20,000 jobs are created, according to Binoniemi.

"On a macro level, you know, good roads really affect all of our economy," Binoniemi said, "It affects tourism. It affects agriculture. And so, every aspect of Michigan's economy really is impacted by good roads. Even our ability to attract businesses to our state has a huge impact on our road system. And so, we believe that good roads will support a great economy."

– By Liz Nass

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