



Local road repairs stall as Michigan's funding debate continues

By Justin Hicks, July 9, 2025

County road agencies say progress in fixing local infrastructure has stalled as available state funding has forced them to shift to more short-term asset preservation.

In 2024, county agencies improved 491 more miles than in 2023, representing a less than 1% increase according to the Michigan County Road Association (CRA).

Officials say they're growing [more reliant on "stopgap" repairs](#) while they wait for lawmakers to pass a long-term road funding solution. They note declines in fuel sales and rising construction costs for limiting their progress in recent years.

CEO Denise Donohue said CRA's goal is to improve 15% of county road miles every year, or 13,500 total miles. In 2024 they improved 6,571 miles.

"We're not halfway to the goal and the trajectory has flatlined," Donohue said in a prepared statement. "Our 2024 progress report should be a clear call for our legislators and governor to come together and enact a long-term, sustainable road funding plan as quickly as possible."

Legislators in the House passed a bill package in March that would redirect [\\$3.14 billion toward road funding](#) using Corporate Income Tax revenue and more of the existing tax dollars paid at the fuel pump.

The House proposal hadn't been touched by the Senate, as of Wednesday, July 9. It awaits consideration by the Committee on Appropriations.

CRA has supported the House proposal, as well as a [plan pitched](#) by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in February. Neither plan has gained traction recently, despite leadership from both parties expressing interest in finding a long-term solution.

The Michigan Transportation Fund is the largest county road funding source, capturing funds from the state fuel tax and vehicle registration fees.

Counties are responsible for 75% of Michigan's road miles and 52% of its bridges, and account for about 32% of vehicle miles traveled. Of the remaining roads, 8% are maintained by the Michigan Department of Transportation (52.5% of miles traveled) and 17% are maintained by cities and villages (15.5% of miles traveled).

County road agencies have increased the miles of roads they can fix annually since the state enacted funding increases in 2015. Those miles have more than doubled since then, but officials say they're a long way from their target and can't keep up with deteriorating pavement.

Donohue called it a hard reality that counties are making more minor fixes and [fewer long-term reconstructions](#) due to funding constraints. She has said agencies are also considering staffing cuts and putting off equipment purchases.

Last week, House Speaker Matt Hall, R-Richland Township, [tried pushing for road funding](#) and the 2025-26 K-12 schools budget to be completed together. House Democrats opposed the combination, accusing Republican leadership of attempting to "fund a theoretical roads plan on the backs of Michigan students."

Hall criticized the Democrat-led Senate for not offering a road-funding plan of their own.

"How would Gov. (Gretchen) Whitmer or myself or anybody get them to commit to fixing roads if they don't have a plan, in public or private," Hall said.

"I don't think there's a shared commitment to getting roads done."

The governor's office said Whitmer remains committed to signing a fully negotiated, bipartisan budget that funds schools and fixes roads.

"Our office will continue to meet with both sides to work toward an agreement that will make another historic investment in our kids and enact a long-term road funding solution," according to a statement from Whitmer's office. "We can and must do both."

A spokesperson for Senate Majority Leader Winnie Brinks, D-Grand Rapids, didn't respond to an MLive request for comment.