



Road funding a top priority for Michigan Republicans in upcoming state budget

By Michael Kransz, 1/14/25

The new Republican House majority's No. 1 budget priority this year is fixing the state's roads without raising taxes, House Speaker Matt Hall said Tuesday.

That goal will be made easier in part after recent revised estimates from the Michigan Department of Treasury show the state will have about \$770.4 million more in revenue to spend in the upcoming budget.

"What we're trying to do, we're trying to do a few things. No. 1, we're trying to fix the roads without raising taxes," the Richland Township Republican said during a press conference Tuesday, Jan. 14. "And thank God they just found \$1 billion ... that's just going to make it so much easier to fix the roads without raising taxes."

Michigan lawmakers have yet to agree on a plan for increasing road funding.

In November, [Hall pitched a plan to add \\$2.7 billion in infrastructure funding each year](#) by redirecting a gasoline tax that mostly goes to schools and using existing corporate income tax dollars. Hall has said any money directed from schools would be replaced.

While Hall didn't fully outline a new road funding plan Tuesday, he did hint that Republicans may try to use the \$770.4 million in projected additional revenue along with cuts to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) programs, such as state benefits, to fund roads.

"A lot of this value for your dollars that we're going to get is going to come out of DHHS and other places," he said. "If it's 50% of the government spending, a lot of it is going to have to come out of there ... and so then you take all this money and you use it to, with the \$1 billion they just found ... and then they're going to fund the roads. We'll fund the roads and bridges and infrastructure without raising taxes. And if we can find enough, maybe we'll even reverse the Democrat income tax hike when they raised the income tax last year." Michigan's fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. Lawmakers approve the budget during the summer.

After Hall unveiled his road funding plan last year, [House Democrats introduced three bills](#) to bolster road funding by increasing the fuel tax by 19 cents per gallon, increasing the annual vehicle registration fee by \$100 and creating a tolling authority to select roads and set toll fees for them.

No action was taken on either plan last year, when Democrats controlled the House.

Along with road funding, Hall outlined fiscal oversight and cutting out unnecessary programs as other priorities for the Republican's watch over the budget.

He announced Rep. Ann Bollin, R-Brighton Township, as the chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Rep. Matt Maddock, R-Milford, as the majority vice chair.

"We needed people that were meticulous, that will get into the weeds and the details and look at each one of these programs and determine where is the value for the taxpayer, what is the return on investment for the taxpayer," said Hall. "That's what we're going to do."

Bollin didn't offer specifics on what programs might face cuts but said they'll be looking for "duplicative programs." Hall said a lot of focus will be on Michigan Department of Health and Human Services programs, such as people receiving benefits they're not eligible for.

"My focus has always been on respecting taxpayers and refusing to spend their money frivolously," Bollin said. "The state budget must reflect our values by funding essential services like public safety, elections, and infrastructure. Additional revenue should be returned to the hardworking families who earned it and to whom it rightfully belongs." Hall named Rep. Alabas Farhat, D-Dearborn, as the minority vice chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

"I know we agree on roads, so hopefully there's a lot more alignment there," Farhat said.

"Right now I think the conversation has to be around the cost of living crisis that people are experiencing and how we solve that and how we take real steps toward affordability, which I know we've started these past two years and hopefully continue doing."

Hall's budget priorities align with the caucus' plan to expand the House Oversight Committee and create new subcommittees [to investigate Chinese influence in the state, the "weaponization" of state government by top Michigan Democrats and more.](#)

Among those subcommittees, one will look into public assistance programs, examining "welfare program performance, programs that are duplicative and programs that spend money meant for lifelines on questionable things," according to a copy of the plan obtained by MLive.

Another will investigate corporate subsidies and state investments, looking into "bad corporate welfare deals" and more.