



## Michigan spent \$2B to improve its roads, bridges in 2023

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Another year of road construction is winding down in Michigan.

In 2023, the Michigan Department of Transportation invested almost \$2 billion to improve and maintain its share of Michigan's roads and bridges.

Those dollars resulted in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of about 1,187 lane miles and 96 bridges, plus maintenance on another 914 lane miles and 131 bridges, according to data provided to MLive by MDOT.

Gregg Brunner, chief operating officer for the department, called 2023 one of the largest construction years on record in terms of investment.

"I'm sure if you've driven around the roads in Michigan this year, you were able to see construction on many of the roads," Brunner said. "We'd like to thank the motorists for dealing with the construction zones. Now that the season is winding down they can see kind of the benefits of good roads around the state."

MDOT is responsible for about 9,700 of the more than 122,000 route miles of roadway throughout the state. They include those with an M, I, or U.S. designation.

The other 113,000 or so miles fall under the jurisdiction of local cities, counties and villages.

Michigan road and bridge repairs are typically funded through gas tax, vehicle registration fees, and federal tax dollars. Local roads can have additional funding streams through an income tax and/or voter-approved millage.

This year, MDOT's 1,187 miles of improved roadway was less than last year's 1,469 miles but more than the 1,164 miles improved in 2021. The 227 bridge projects in 2023 were down from 260 in 2022 and 350 in 2021.

Preventive maintenance across 914 lane miles, however, did put this year ahead of both 2022 (637 miles) and 2021 (859 miles).

Below is a breakdown of MDOT's 2023 road construction progress by region

- **Bay:** The Saginaw and Bay City area region had about 159 lane miles reconstructed and about 47 miles of preventative maintenance. It also had 16 bridges repaired or replaced, and 38 more maintained.
- **Grand:** The Grand Rapids/Muskegon area had about 130 lane miles reconstructed and about 167 miles of preventative maintenance. It

also had seven bridges repaired or replaced, and five more maintained.

- **Metro:** The Metro Detroit area had about 186 lane miles reconstructed and about 65 miles of preventative maintenance. It also had 15 bridges repaired or replaced, and 32 more maintained.
- **North:** The northern Lower Peninsula area had about 79 lane miles reconstructed and about 256 miles of preventative maintenance. It also had 13 bridges repaired or replaced, and 11 more maintained.
- **Southwest:** The Kalamazoo area had about 284 lane miles reconstructed and about 119 miles of preventative maintenance. It also had 11 bridges repaired or replaced, and 15 more maintained.
- **Superior:** The Upper Peninsula had about 147 lane miles reconstructed and about 163 miles of preventative maintenance. It also had four bridges repaired or replaced, and four more maintained.
- **University:** The Ann Arbor and Lansing region had about 202 lane miles reconstructed and about 97 miles of preventative maintenance. It also had 30 bridges repaired or replaced, and 26 more maintained.

In general, Brunner said Michigan has been able to invest significantly more dollars into its roads over the last few years thanks to the Rebuilding Michigan Program, established by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2020. The program allowed the state to sell up to \$3.5 billion in bonds to finance new road construction projects through 2024.

Including expenses beyond construction, like snow plowing, sweeping, trunkline modernization and other miscellaneous programs, the state highway program invested about \$3 billion into the state's trunkline system in 2023. That's on par with 2022, and up from about \$2.62 billion in 2021.

"With not only our normal transportation funds that we utilize, but also this year's Rebuilding Michigan Program, we've been able to get a significant amount of work done in the 2023 construction season," he said.

The construction industry hasn't been impervious to the effects of rising costs in recent years. Brunner noted that overall costs continue to go up, though they did seem to "stabilize somewhat" later in the year.

"Overall, we were able to manage our funds and still deliver the construction program that we had committed to for 2023," he said.

Michigan's goal is to have 90% of its state trunkline system in good or fair condition. Last year, 68% of Michigan's assessed federal-aid roads met that designation, according to the

Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council's [annual report](#), published in May. It was an improvement from 57.6% in 2020.

As for bridges, about one in every 10 of the state's 11,300 bridges [was in poor condition this fall](#), according to data published by MDOT.

Consultants have estimated that Michigan is underfunding its road system by \$3.9 billion annually. Some of their [proposed options to increase revenue](#) include increasing the gas tax, increasing sales tax on gas, assessing a per-mile fee for vehicles, and installing tolls.