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# Transportation Infrastructure in Michigan: Democrats Work to “Fix the Damn Roads”

## Background

When Gov. Whitmer ran for Governor in 2018, she campaigned on the slogan “Fix the Damn Roads”—with good reason. Michigan’s roads, bridges, railroads, and public transit system have been chronically underfunded and in need of immediate repair for years. The dismal state of Michigan’s dilapidated transportation infrastructure costs lives, forces Michiganders to pay extra to fix and maintain their cars, harms existing business and hampers the state’s ability to attract new business.

## Core Message

GOP-led majorities in the MI Legislature have failed to provide even close to adequate funding to address the state’s urgent infrastructure needs. Even the small amount of funding Republicans provided was harmful, as they diverted the money from Michigan’s already-underfunded public schools. Republicans killed Gov. Whitmer’s budget containing new infrastructure funding, forcing her to come up with a new and innovative funding mechanism, which they also oppose. The way to make sure Michigan’s crumbling roads, bridges, railroads and public transit system are fixed is to flip the state House, and kick out the GOP-led majority this November 3.

## Key Arguments

**Michigan’s Infrastructure is in Bad Shape.** In 2018, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) rated Michigan’s infrastructure an overall D+ (poor, at risk). Among the lowest-rated infrastructure components were Michigan’s roads (which received the lowest rating, a D-), bridges (C-), transit (C-) and rail (C-).

**Bad Infrastructure Harms Michigan’s People and Businesses.** Since 2009, traffic fatalities in Michigan have increased by 22%—a frightening reality that ASCE attributes to the state’s crumbling infrastructure.

Michigan’s pothole- and sinkhole-ridden roads force Michiganders to spend the above-average amount each year of \$648 (\$824 in Detroit) to fix their cars. This year a bridge rated in “fair” condition, better than 43% of Michigan’s bridges, nonetheless dropped a chunk of concrete on a passing car. Michigan lost out in the competition for a new Amazon headquarters, in part because of its lack of effective mass transit.

**Republicans Have Underfunded Infrastructure for Years and Impede Democrats.** In 2016, Republicans provided less than 5% of the supplemental infrastructure funding that then-Gov. Snyder’s own Commission said was needed. More recently, Republicans have tried to block Gov. Whitmer’s initiative, Rebuilding Michigan, a project devised to raise \$3.5 billion in bonds to go directly to 122 road projects.

See complete report: [Transportation Infrastructure in Michigan](#)

## TALKING POINTS

- Michigan’s roads, bridges, railroads and public transit systems are in terrible shape. The state’s infrastructure received an overall D+ rating (poor, at risk) in 2018.
- Republicans have done little to maintain and fix Michigan’s crumbling infrastructure, let alone upgrade it.
- Gov. Whitmer ran on the slogan “Fix the Damn Roads,” and has championed innovative ways to fund the urgently needed repairs and improvements.
- The longer Michigan Republicans keep infrastructure underfunded and poorly maintained, the more expensive and burdensome it will be to correct the damage.
- It is time that Democrats win back the Legislature to maintain, repair, and improve infrastructure—without raiding the public-school budget.

