

Lansing State Journal

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WHY LANSING ROADS ARE WORSE THAN STATE AVERAGE

FRONT PAGE

Eric Lacy, Lansing State Journal



Schor supports Gov. Gretch Whitmer's proposed 45-cent fuel tax hike to improve infrastructure statewide. Eric Lacy, Lansing State Journal

LANSING — A national transportation research organization delivered Tuesday some sobering news about the Lansing region's infrastructure. Six of every 10 roads in the region are considered in poor or mediocre condition and 13 percent of local bridges are structurally deficient, according to the report from TRIP.

The report also said 34 percent of major roads in Lansing are in poor condition and 26 percent are in mediocre condition.

Those numbers are significantly higher than state averages. Statewide, 24 percent of major roads are in poor condition and 20 percent are in mediocre condition, according to the report.

The solution, according to the Michigan Department of Transportation, is to increase funding for statewide improvements far more than former Gov. Rick Snyder's \$1.2 billion road funding package in 2015.

"We still have our work cut out for us when there's not enough money to get the job done," MDOT Chief Operating Officer and Chief Engineer Tony Kratofil said Tuesday in a news conference.



A national transportation research group called TRIP reported Tuesday driving on deficient roads costs Michigan motorists an average of \$1,740 annually. (Photo: Detroit Free Press file)

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer proposed last week raising the state's gas tax by 45 cents per gallon by Oct. 1, 2020. She said the action would raise more than \$2 billion annually to fix roads. The proposal has faced plenty of Republican opposition.

Lansing Mayor Andy Schor said Tuesday at a news conference he supports Whitmer's proposal and is hopeful the Michigan Legislature will get behind it or find another funding mechanism — quickly.

"I think there's a lot of pieces to this puzzle, but the first and most important piece is funding," Schor said. "If it's not going to be a gas tax increase then there's got to be a conversation regarding what the alternative is."

This fiscal year, more than \$8 million in local, state and federal funding will be going to improving the underlying condition of Lansing's roads. That compares to an average of \$4.2 million annually since 2010, according to figures from the city.

Schor said timing is everything when it comes to additional road funding.

"This conversation really needs to happen very fast," Schor said. "The longer it takes, the longer down the road we go, the less time we have during the next construction season."

Driving on rough roads, according to TRIP's report, costs the average Lansing area driver \$708 annually in the form of accelerated vehicle depreciation, repair costs, increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

Passage of the state's 2015 road funding package is expected to increase state funding for local roads and bridges, state roads and bridges, and transit from \$2.2 billion in 2015 to nearly \$3.7 billion in 2023, TRIP's report said.

The last TRIP report was released in 2017. This year's report also indicates Lansing has a severe problem with its bridges.

The 2019 report said 13 percent of bridges 20 feet or longer in the Lansing area (88 of 652) are structurally deficient.

Statewide, the report said 11 percent of bridges (1,175 of 11,180) are structurally deficient. Of that group, the report said 4,815 bridges were built in 1969 or earlier.

The average driver in the Lansing area, according to the report, loses 25 hours each year as a result of traffic congestion.

The report also said lost time and wasted fuel as a result of congestion cost the average Lansing area motorist \$554 annually.

Joanna Johnson, County Road Association of Michigan president, said counties throughout the state are desperate for solutions.



Most states have laws to protect the government from liability for potholes and other road defects. However, there is a chance you could be reimbursed after a pothole damages your car. Here are some tips for filing a successful claim. Sarah Lehr



Okemos punches its ticket to state basketball semifinals

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Sparrow CEO accused of sex assault

Woman filing suit says there is video to prove it. Sparrow CEO, who began his job as president and CEO of Sparrow Health Services in January, was accused of sexual assault by a woman who filed a lawsuit Tuesday. The woman says she has a video that proves her allegations. Sparrow Health Services is a for-profit health care provider based in Lansing, Michigan.



Worse Than State Average

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NAACP meets with mayor regarding diversity

LANSING — Lansing Mayor Andy Schor met Tuesday with leaders of the NAACP following public criticism from Lansing Mayor Schor about the city's commitment to diversity. The NAACP president, who is also a member of the Lansing NAACP, met with Schor and his staff Tuesday and discussed the city's commitment to diversity. Schor said he is committed to diversity and is working to improve the city's diversity efforts.

USA TODAY logo, Local Lansing information, Weather forecast, and a promotional banner for a play titled 'I AND YOU' at Wharton Center.

"Funding levels need to reach the level necessary to fix decades, decades of under-funding," Johnson said. "We are all working extremely hard to appreciate and understand that we all want good roads and good infrastructure." Officials said Tuesday the TRIP report gets its data from the Federal Highway Administration, national and statewide studies and municipalities who are required to report their infrastructure conditions annually. For more information visit fixmiste.org TRIP's report can be read below. Eric Lacy is a reporter for the Lansing State Journal. Contact him at 517-377-1206 or elacy@lsj.com. Follow him on Twitter @EricLacy. Modernizing Michigan's Transportation System report by Eric Lacy on Scribd