

## **Editorial: Potholes in the road meet holey pockets**

Thursday, March 14, 2019

Local ad seen recently: “3-bedroom, 2-bath for rent. Cheap, move in ready.” The photo? An area pothole.

Ha, ha, groan. Any Michigander with a driver’s license grudgingly gets the joke, as potholes join the joyous spring rites we count on, like flooded basements and dandelions.

But each year, it seems that the streets-turned-moonscapes catch us unawares until our cars are dealt that sickening crunch. We patch up the potholes and seem to forget about it, and the car, now rusted and dented, continues to get kicked down our scarred, pockmarked roads.

Statewide 40 percent of federal-aid eligible roads and highways in Michigan are in poor condition. Eleven percent of our bridges are “structurally deficit,” according to the Michigan’s 2017 Roads and Bridges Annual Report.

And unfortunately, the solutions put in place to date won’t repair what needs fixing.

A much-cited recent TRIP report sets out the inadequacies of our current solutions — the gradual rise in state spending from \$2.2 billion in 2015 to \$3.7 billion in 2023 — and the rise in cost passed down to taxpayers via an \$646 average road repair bill, traffic congestion and safety issues.

The report, authored by a Washington, D.C. group funded by car insurance companies, businesses and other organizations with skin in the game, has been used by former Gov. Rick Snyder for his pitches and current Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in her proposed 45-cent fuel tax hike.

Her plan was rebuked for rolling back on a previous promise not to raise taxes by more than 20 cents and for its favoritism of larger road systems.

We are earnest in our sincere push for a workable, bi-partisan solution.

The majority of Grand Traverse County road commission dollars comes from a millage renewal (expected to bring in \$4,620,529 from 2016-2019) and fuel taxes.

But our roads are bad everywhere, as we can plainly see as we dodge and curse the potholes.

This week’s warm-up will hit roads hard. Be patient with inexplicable slow downs. Be ready for cars careening wildly out of their lanes. Report potholes to the Road Commission. And take a picture lest we forget what road we’re on.