

## Report finds Michigan's rural roads, bridges have 'significant deficiencies'

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A new report finds Michigan's rural roads and bridges are in need of serious repairs.

This is according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit. The report, *Rural Connections: Challenges and Opportunities in America's Heartland*, evaluates the safety and condition of the nation's rural roads and bridges and finds that the nation's rural transportation system is in need of immediate improvements to address deficient roads and bridges, high crash rates, and inadequate connectivity and capacity.

Twelve percent of Michigan's rural bridges are rated as poor/structurally deficient, the eleventh highest share in the U.S. Bridges that are poor/structurally deficient have significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge and are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including agricultural equipment, commercial trucks, school buses and emergency services vehicles.

The report finds that 16 percent of Michigan's rural roads are rated in poor condition – the 19th highest rate in the nation - and 18 percent are rated in mediocre condition.

The rate of traffic fatalities on Michigan's non-Interstate, rural roads is nearly double the fatality rate on all other roads in the state – 1.55 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel vs. 0.83.

“While new funding is beginning to improve the outlook for our roads, Michigan local bridges are rapidly declining in condition,” said Denise Donohue, director of the County Road Association of Michigan.

“Requests by Michigan county road agencies for bridge funding to the statewide Local Bridge Advisory Board are six times the dollar amount available to fund repairs. Many road agencies don't even bother submitting deteriorating bridges for funding, as they know the waiting list is so long. We are looking for out-of-the-box funding solutions in Michigan because the problem of obsolete, load restricted and serious- and critical-rated bridges isn't going away.”

“Rural roads play a critical role in supporting the transportation needs of millions of Americans every day,” said Adrienne Woodland, spokesperson, AAA Michigan. “Damaged and deteriorating roadways too often result in deadly crashes, and it is time to act. Making critical safety improvements to rural roads will save thousands of lives each year and help move our economy forward.”

[Read the full report here.](#)