

Where He Stands: *Roads & Infrastructure*



Safe roads and public infrastructure are essential to our economy here in Michigan. Like many of you, I was very frustrated for years about the deteriorating condition of our highways, byways and local roads. When I was first elected to the state House of Representatives in November 2014, I relayed my concerns and sense of urgency to the leadership.

No one person or party deserves the blame for the long delay in allocating funds for infrastructure repair. The “Great Recession” of 2008-09 had a major impact on state finances and local budgets alike. Resulting cutbacks in the wake of that downturn left many state and local agencies without the wherewithal to make necessary repairs.

Fortunately, our state’s economy is now much healthier and we are much better able to dedicate the funds needed for this important effort.

Finally, after many false starts and delays spanning a decade or more, Michigan legislators came together in November 2015 to approve a package of seven bills that provided a comprehensive solution to funding road repairs and other crucial infrastructure projects. The new funding package provides 20% more revenue than the previous roads bill passed in 1997.

Most of the funds, about 61% of the total amount, is earmarked for local road agencies in cities and counties around the state. The remaining 39% is dedicated



to repairing state highways. On the local level, cities will be permitted to use up to 10% of their funding for mass transit (except for Detroit which may use up to 20% for mass transit.)

Instead of spending all of the money at once, the new funding package is being implemented over a 5-year period to allow for planning and fiscal responsibility. All together, the funding package provides \$1.2 billion for fixing Michigan’s roads and bridges. (See update now!)

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