

# Road Funding Alternatives

## Pay Now or Pay Later

### AS MAINTENANCE NEEDS GO UNFUNDED, DRIVERS PAY

Roads like the one on the right wreak havoc on the vehicles that use it. The U.S. Department of Transportation found that road deterioration increases the cost of ownership, repair, fuel and tire costs. They also found that these deteriorated roads accelerate the depreciation of vehicles in proportion to the roughness of the surface.

At the same time, each passing vehicle increases the damages. The maintenance needs of Michigan's county roads have been chronically underfunded. It is estimated that \$2 BILLION worth of needed repairs on county roads go unfunded each year.



**THE ROAD INFORMATION PROGRAM DETERMINED THAT DRIVING ON CRUMBLING AND CONGESTED ROADS COSTS MOTORISTS AN AVERAGE OF \$383 PER YEAR IN ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE COSTS, WASTED FUEL AND LOST PRODUCTIVITY—UP FROM JUST \$107 IN 1993.**



**IF PAVEMENTS CAN BE RESURFACED WHILE STILL IN FAIR CONDITION, REPAIRS GENERALLY COST 1/4 THE COST OF REPAIRING ROADS IN POOR CONDITION.**

### RETURN PAVED ROADS TO GRAVEL

Without adequate funding for maintenance and repairs, paved roads are deteriorating beyond affordable preservation fixes. For road commissions that lack the funds to maintain these hard surfaced roads, the cost of rebuilding them is even further out of reach.

The cost to return a road to gravel is a fraction of the cost to rebuild a hard surface road. Additionally, gravel roads are cheaper to maintain.

The trade off in the situation is that gravel roads offer lower capacity, lower speeds, rougher rides and increased nuisances to the property owners that border the road.

At least fifteen road commissions have already taken, or are considering, this drastic measure. As maintenance needs go unfunded, you can expect that number to rise.

## FEWER BRIDGES

As Michigan was settled, our forefathers did an excellent job of weaving together communities across the State with a network of roads and bridges. Michigan's naturally wet environment and soils resulted in the need for many river and stream crossings. Bridges and culverts are expensive pieces of our State's infrastructure. In addition to steep increases in the cost of materials used for construction and maintenance of the more than 5600 bridges on the county road system, greater environmental-related expenses make it harder to keep Michigan connected.

We can easily draw back the memory of the tragic collapse of I-35 in Minneapolis, and the news has been dotted with recent stories of bridges being closed due to structural deficiencies...the impact of this option is obvious.

Detours around closed bridges can often be many miles long, weight-restricted bridges delay or restrict not only commercial traffic but also emergency services and public transportation services.

Without increased funding, there is no other option but to close or limit lower-volume crossings in order to maintain higher-volume structures.



**ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN ROAD AND  
TRANSPORTATION BUILDERS ASSOCIATION, EACH  
\$100 MILLION INVESTED IN TRANSPORTATION CREATES  
4,750 JOBS AND RETURNS MORE THAN \$600 MILLION  
IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.**

**CALL 1.888.719.3087**

**TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS TO STEP UP  
AND INVEST IN MICHIGAN'S  
FUTURE...AND YOURS!  
TELL THEM TO FUND MICHIGAN'S  
ROADS NOW!**



## FEWER PLOWS

The idea of fewer plows clearing fewer roads with reduced frequency is not popular, but has already materialized, at least to some extent, in every county across the State.

Not only have the costs of people, materials and equipment for snow removal increased, more than 1,000 miles have been added to the county road system since the last time the fuel tax was increased in 1997—these new miles do not include the addition of lanes to existing roads.

The Winter of 2008-09 was so expensive that many counties, and MDOT, were forced to reduce maintenance activities and projects.

