

TRANSPORTATION

Reality Check

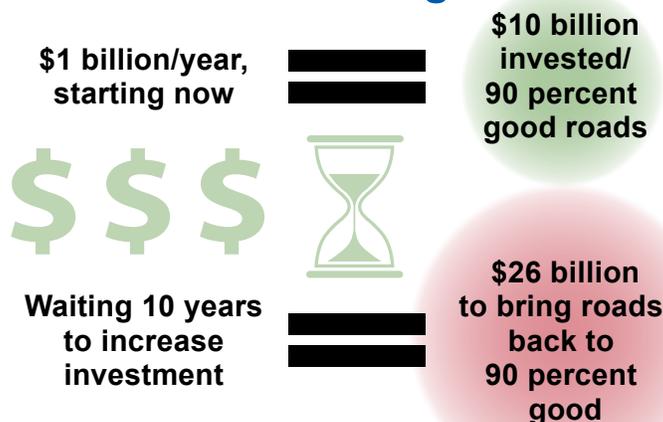
Myth #1: Michigan's roads and bridges aren't that bad, and there are plenty of other priorities.

Reality: Michigan's transportation system is hurting, and waiting just makes things worse.

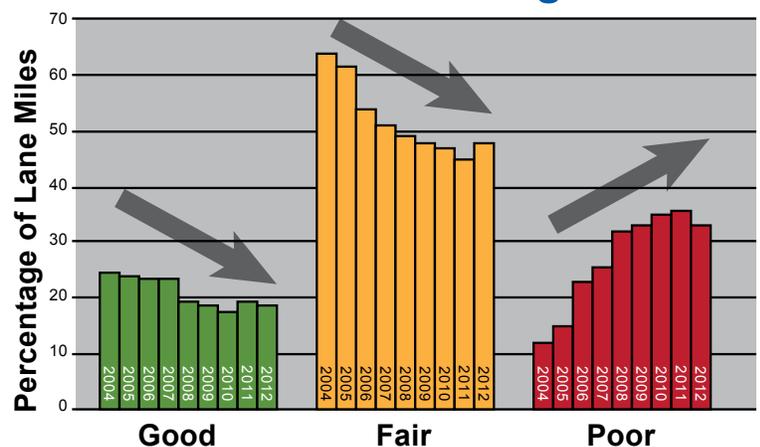
For many years, MDOT, county road commissions, and city public works departments have done the best they could with dwindling construction and maintenance funds and the higher costs of materials, keeping roads driveable and bridges safe. For the most part, that's worked to stave off the worst of the deterioration from weather, traffic and age. But now it's no longer enough, and more extensive work is inevitable. Roads and bridges are falling apart at a rapidly increasing rate, and the cost to repair them keeps rising.

Michigan's annual gas tax revenue has declined by roughly \$100 million over the past decade, while costs for asphalt, steel, concrete and fuel have risen.

The cost of waiting...



Road Conditions Getting Worse



Several studies have indicated that Michigan's transportation system is in desperate need of greater investment. Currently, it's believed that at the state and local level the system needs \$1.6 billion more each year to keep the components in good condition.

A long-term funding solution is needed, because as roads and bridges deteriorate, the cost to repair them increases greatly. As it stands, state highways could be kept in good conditions for about \$10 billion over 10 years. If we wait 10 years, roads and bridges will need more extensive work, materials will be more expensive, and the overall cost rises to \$26 billion.

Everyone wants good roads and safe bridges. *The question is, can we afford to wait until they fall apart to fix them?*

For more on this transportation myth, visit www.michigan.gov/realitycheck

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Myth #2: MDOT has gotten dangerously stingy with salt, and they need to use more!

Reality: MDOT has made changes to be more efficient with salt, but not at the expense of safety for motorists.

Salt is one of MDOT's main weapons for fighting winter weather, used along with plows to keep Michigan's roads and bridges as clear of ice and snow as possible. And when winter delivers, one of the first things motorists call for is "more salt!" Salt certainly is a valuable tool, but it's not a cure-all for winter roads.

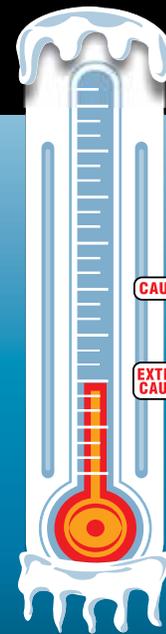
Rising salt prices and decreased funding over the past decade prompted MDOT to implement new "sensible salting" procedures. These include setting application guidelines for winter conditions, using weather stations to better target areas that will benefit most from salt, pre-wetting the salt so it sticks to the road and starts working faster, and slowing plow trucks to 25 mph when applying salt to prevent it from bouncing and scattering off the roadway. These guidelines help conserve overall salt use, saving money, while at the same time making sure more of the salt that's applied gets to where it does the most good.

There are some times when MDOT and its contract county road commissions and municipal public works departments will hold off on the salt. During normal winter conditions, when temperatures are between 20 and 30 degrees, salt works great for melting snow and ice so plows can more easily blade it from the roadway. Below 20 degrees, however, salt takes longer to work and may increase the speed at which roads refreeze. Below 10 degrees the roads refreeze even faster, making them icier and slipperier than if salt hadn't been applied in the first place. In those conditions, it's safer not to use salt, but sand instead.

Use of salt is primarily dictated by prevailing winter conditions, and each year we've used hundreds of thousands of tons. Safety is MDOT's top concern for winter maintenance, and we continue to use salt when and where it's the best tool for the job.

MORE SALT

...not always the cure for slippery roads! 



30° Normal winter conditions
20° Salt takes longer to work and ROADS REFREEZE FASTER
10° CAUTION ROADS REFREEZE EVEN FASTER
Ice melts very slow
0° EXTREME CAUTION

When salt is used at these lower temperatures, it may cause wet pavement to refreeze

Tons of Salt Used



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