Get it Done: Rebuild Michigan

GRETCHE WHITMER’S PLAN FOR SAFE ROADS, CLEAN WATER, AND A BETTER ECONOMY
To get ahead, Michiganders need one good job and we need to be able to get to that job. But our roads are so bad they cost the average driver more than $540 a year, and none of that fixes a single pothole.¹ We know that we’re not helpless because Michigan gets the same weather as our neighbors do.

More than 70 communities have drinking water systems with higher lead levels than Flint² and billions of gallons of sewage currently contaminate our water ways.³ It’s time to fix it, and fix it right.

To grow our economy and make Michigan a state that businesses move to and can grow in, we must invest in our roads, bridges, water systems, broadband, and electrical grid. Good roads are good for Michigan families and businesses and infrastructure investment is economic development. We can attract the jobs of the future and help businesses grow right here in Michigan.

Now let’s get to work.

**Whitmer’s Plan Would:**

1) *Fix it and fix it right. Upgrade Michigan’s roads, bridges, and water systems*
2) *Invest in good infrastructure because it’s good for business*
3) *Make a bold investment in the Rebuild Michigan Bank, a state infrastructure bank that will pay for high quality upgrades and create thousands of good jobs*
4) *A strategic plan to dig less and build smarter*
5) *Make commutes safer and faster*
6) *Ensure clean safe water*
7) *Build a new Soo Lock*
8) *Connect more Michiganders to high-speed broadband Internet*
1) Fix it and fix it right. Upgrade Michigan’s roads, bridges, and water systems

Our roads cost the average Michigan driver more than $540 per year⁴, but that money doesn’t go to fixing a single pothole. In Metro Detroit, the average motorist pays $865.⁵

• We’re going to fix our roads the right way, the first time -- with high-quality material and mix, so that we get the job done right.

• Michigan does not have to settle for second-rate repairs and patch jobs.

2) Invest in good infrastructure because it’s good for business

We are falling behind in attracting new businesses and jobs because the state of our roads is costing us on bids like Amazon. Good roads, clean water, lower utility costs and access to high-speed Internet are good for business. Investing in our infrastructure is the first step to growing our economy so that our family incomes grow with it.

• Every dollar designated for roads should go to fixing the roads.

• Rapidly escalate funding for roadway and bridge improvements with bold, adequate investment from the Rebuild Michigan Bank.

• Invest in smoother, higher quality roads means businesses will save money and can ship and receive products safely and reliably.
3) Make a bold investment in the Rebuild Michigan Bank, a State Infrastructure Bank that will pay for high quality upgrades to our state and municipal roads, bridges, water systems and broadband

The bank will loan, match, grant and leverage federal, state and municipal dollars for infrastructure funding.

- Provide secure loans at a low interest rate that can be used for federal matching dollars.
- Accelerate ongoing projects.
- Sufficiently fund and fine-tune the Rebuild Michigan Bank to its full capacity working with the legislature through mechanisms like user fees. If the legislature refuses, we will go directly to the voters to pass a bond.
- Between 15,000 and 24,000 jobs would be created or sustained per $1 billion investment. With a bold $3 billion increase in our annual infrastructure investment, we could put up to 72,000 Michiganders to work. But the most our state infrastructure bank has ever been funded is $15 million.
- Fully funding the bank provides us with a mechanism to pay for significant and long-overdue upgrades to our roads and water system.

4) A strategic plan to dig less and build smarter

To save taxpayer dollars, we will commit Michigan to a dig less, build smarter approach to upgrades like roads, pipes, utility lines, and broadband with the guidance of a strategy team.
• With the oversight of industry experts leading a redesigned State Infrastructure Council to coordinate with other agencies, when we dig up a bad road, we can lay the high-speed broadband infrastructure at the same time we replace water drinking lines, maintain drainage systems, install new sewers, upgrade electrical lines, and redo the asphalt and concrete.

• We will dig less and save resources as we rebuild our infrastructure.

• Create, publish, and maintain a state broadband map to help communities coordinate -- so that we put broadband cables in at the same time we fix our roads.

5) Make commutes safer and faster

We can ensure safer, faster commutes by fixing the roads the right way, the first time.

• Reduce traffic congestion by rebuilding roads in ways that reduce congestion and collisions, like smart lanes and traffic controls.

• Auto crashes are on the rise, and the state of our roads is a direct result of our crumbling infrastructure.

• In 2016, Michigan hit a nine-year high with 980 fatalities experienced as a result of an auto accident.⁹

• Making a bold investment in our roads will decrease fatalities.¹⁰

6) Ensure clean safe water

The people of Michigan should be able to trust that the water coming out of their taps is safe to drink, cook with, and bathe in. We will put people to work repairing and replacing our pipes, drains, sewers, dams, and water infrastructure so that every Michigander has access to clean, safe water.

• Expedite the replacement of lead service lines in cities across our state. Michigan can become a leader in lead line replacement and develop techniques that other states can replicate.
• Retire and remove dams to promote the free flow of water that helps keep it clean, and create rich environments that boost our agriculture, tourism and recreation centers.

• Secure long-term funding for PFA cleanup sites, because contaminated groundwater hurts our people and is bad for our economy. We will also create a statewide database of all known contaminated aquifer systems across Michigan and seek all funding, including EPA grants.\(^{11}\)

• Secure long-term funding for water and sewer systems: Michigan is currently underfunding its water and sewer systems by $800 million annually, and needs an additional $227 million investment over the next 20 years just to inventory and retire existing dams.\(^{12}\) We will use the Rebuild Michigan Bank to secure long-term funding for repairs and upgrades.

• Use the Rebuild Michigan Bank to finance sewer and drain maintenance and dam removals, and provide $812 million in additional water infrastructures funding through 2038.

7) **Build a new Soo Lock**

The Soo Locks that connect Lake Superior and Lake Huron are a crucial piece of infrastructure that allow for the transportation of approximately 10,000 ships and 80 million tons of iron ore, grain, coal, and other cargo every year.\(^{13}\) But due to their age and lack of investment in their maintenance, only two of the locks are functional today. The 50-year-old Poe Lock, the largest of the locks, is used for 70 percent of the freight passing through the lakes.\(^{14}\)
The economic consequences of even a temporary shutdown of the Poe Lock would be devastating. It is estimated that a 30-day outage would result in around $160 million in economic losses.\textsuperscript{15} A six-month closure would shut down the Great Lakes steel industry, layoff 11 million workers in the U.S. alone, and cost the economy $1.1 trillion.\textsuperscript{16} For the sake of our economy, we must update and upgrade the Soo Locks. We will:

• Lead an aggressive multi-state effort to secure funding and build a new, state-of-the-art large freight lock to upgrade and maintain the existing locks.

• Lead a concerted effort to inform businesses, governments, and stakeholders with interest in the locks on the severe consequences of inaction to get the upgrades to the Soo Locks funded, and get the job done.

• Build a new lock and pay for it by actively lobbying Washington and leveraging federal and international interests to secure funding.

• Support passage of the bipartisan Soo Locks Modernization Act that calls for building a new, state-of-the-art, large-freight lock in order to both protect the good jobs that rely on the locks and create jobs to energize the local economy.

• Actively lobby Washington and leverage federal and international interests to secure funding. The Lake Carriers’ Association reports “the $590 million project is shovel ready, and would, over a decade, generate 1.5 million man hours for construction workers. One economist likens the project to opening an auto manufacturing plant in the area.”\textsuperscript{17}

8) **Connect more Michiganders to high-speed broadband Internet**

Broadband is the foundation of the new economy, and to compete, we must connect more Michiganders to high-speed Internet, because right now, 450,000 households lack access to advanced broadband services.\textsuperscript{18} We will pursue access to high-speed broadband Internet for every Michigan resident by 2022.
• Implement Net Neutrality through an executive order. Michigan can and should implement consumer protections for a free and open Internet, and states must step up to protect the small businesses and entrepreneurs selling their services, ideas, and opinions on the Internet.

• Immediately commission a report to determine broadband availability, and maintain a public state broadband map to identify unserved and priority areas.

• Establish a State Broadband Office to manage and track the state broadband map, facilitate public-private partnerships to get connected, and oversee a comprehensive statewide high-speed Internet access plan and Internet user protections.

• Through designated offices of broadband development, other states have had tremendous success in getting underserved and unserved households connected.

• Pursue an aggressive rural broadband strategy to bridge the urban-rural divide. It is incredibly expensive to provide service in areas with low-grade infrastructure or rural areas that lack economies of scale. One way to bridge this gap is that as we rebuild Michigan, upgrading subsurface assets and resurfacing roads, we will coordinate the installation of conduit underneath roads and work with providers who are seeking to expand fiber optic connectivity into new markets.

• Harness the lost productivity of unused TV and AM Radio bandwidth in rural areas to broadcast internet signals, and greater expansion of the Merit Network.19,20,21

![Density of Households Unserved by a Broadband Provider by Census Block](image)

*Courtesy of Connect Michigan*
• Consider municipal service options, like the one adopted in Chattanooga, Tennessee that has transformed the once faltering middle-sized city into a gig-economy powerhouse, attracting business development because of high-speed connectivity.22

• Access to affordable, high-speed internet must be a top priority for Michigan to improve quality of life, create more economic equality, modernize our economy, and leverage Michigan’s competitive advantages in economic development.

1. http://www.tripnet.org/docs/Fact_Sheet_MI.php
11. https://www.epa.gov/grants/how-apply-grants
21. https://www.merit.edu