



# EPIC-MRA Press Release On Infrastructure Poll Results

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## 600 Sample Statewide Poll of Active & Likely November Voters

*Polling Dates: May 11-17, 2022*

*Conducted by live interviewers, including 70% cell phones -- Margin of Error: ±4.0%*

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### Key survey findings

**32% said infrastructure top Michigan problem/issue concern**

**66% said all aspects of infrastructure important, with roads next at 16%**

**93% offered negative rating for condition of roads, including 65% poor**

**35% favor raising taxes/fees to fund upgrades/36% favor program cuts**

**With more vehicles not paying gasoline tax, 32% favor taxes & fees, 25% favor toll roads, & 13% favor fees based on miles traveled/emissions tests**

**After hearing about cuts required to fund upgrades, 41% then favored raising taxes/fees, 33% favored cuts & 11% favored combo of both**

**91% opposes cuts to education, 89% opposes cuts to health care, 80% opposes cuts in revenue sharing, 69% opposes cuts to existing road funding, and 49% oppose cuts for colleges and universities**

Questions were commissioned by the Michigan Infrastructure and Transportation Association (MITA). The poll was conducted among a stratified sample of active & likely November general election voters as part of statewide poll conducted by EPIC ▪ MRA.

When survey respondents were asked to select the one state problem or issue from a list of 8 that concerned them the most, top problems/issues chosen were: 32% cited improving state infrastructure, including roads, bridges, dams, drinking water and wastewater treatment systems; 15% cited controlling crime and drugs; 14% cited improving the quality of education; 10% chose reducing state and local government spending; 8% cited providing quality, affordable health care; and 7% chose keeping state and local taxes low.

- Educational
- Political
- Industrial
- Consumer
  
- Market
- Research
- Analysis

Top double-digit issue concerns for Democrats were infrastructure (39%); education (17%); and crime (12%). Top concerns for Independents were infrastructure (34%) and crime (15%), and top issue concerns for Republican were infrastructure (26%); government spending (21%); crime (17%); taxes (14%) and education (11%).

Detroiters are most concerned about infrastructure (29%), crime and drugs (28%) and education (15%). Black voters are most concerned about infrastructure (27%); crime (26%); education (15%); health care (12%) and COVID (11%).

Every demographic group said by solid majorities that all aspects of infrastructure need to be addressed, with roads usually mentioned as the second highest response by double-digit percentages.

It is a near unanimous opinion that Michigan roads and bridges are in terrible condition, with 93% offering a negative rating of just fair (28%) or poor (65%), and only 6% offering a positive rating.

When survey respondents were told that experts suggest that Michigan's leaders need to implement a long-term infrastructure plan to improve the condition of our roads and bridges, 35% said they supported a plan to raise state taxes, fees or both to fund improvements, 36% said funding could be provided just by cutting existing state programs and services, 12% supported a combination of both cuts and new taxes as a volunteered response, with 17% undecided.

Democrats favored raising taxes, fees or both by 59%, making cuts in programs and services by 15%, using both tax increases and budget cuts by 11%, with 15% undecided. Independents narrowly favored making budget cuts by 32%, increasing taxes, fees or both by 31%, using both by 17%, with 20% undecided. Republicans favored making budget cuts by 58%, raising taxes, fees or both by 14%, using both by 11%, with 18% undecided.

All respondents were told that Michigan funds road investments through multiple sources such as license and registration fees, lower than average gas taxes, and millages. Other states have toll roads, sales taxes, and higher gas taxes. As we look towards the future of autonomous and electric vehicles, Michigan must find a way to account for the impact of those vehicles on our roads that don't currently pay the same user fees that gas powered vehicle users do. They were then asked which of a following funding approaches they would support the most for meeting Michigan's road funding needs with future travel solutions.

The responses were: 32% said they supported a combination of fees and taxes; 25% said they supported toll roads; 13% said they supported user fees based on vehicle miles traveled or emissions tests; 8% supported increased license and registration fees; 3% supported increased sales taxes; 2% supported increased gas taxes, with 17% undecided.

Among Democrats, 39% supported a combination of taxes and fees, 25% supported toll roads, and 15% supported higher user fees based on miles traveled or emissions tests. Among Independent voters, 34% supported a combination of taxes and fees, 25% favored toll roads, and 13% favored higher user fees based on miles traveled or emissions tests. Among Republicans, 25% favored a combination of taxes and fees, 24% favored toll roads, 11% favored higher user fees based on miles traveled or emissions tests, and 10% favored higher license fees.

Respondents were asked if they favored or opposed cutting five specific programs and services in the state budget to increase funding for transportation and infrastructure needs. Cuts to four programs/services were opposed by 61% to 91%, and one was opposed by 49% with 48% supporting cuts. Responses were:

91% opposed major cuts of about 25 percent in K-12 education and schools.

89% opposed major cuts in health care aid for low-income women, children, disabled and senior citizens.

80% opposed major cuts in revenue sharing dollars that pay for local police and firefighters.

69% opposed major cuts in state funding already set aside to pay for improving state roads and bridges.

49% opposed major cuts in funding for colleges, universities, and community colleges (48% favored cuts).

Democrats opposed K-12 education cuts by 98%, cuts in health care by 97%, cuts in revenue sharing by 75%, cuts in existing road funding by 73%, and opposed cuts in funding for colleges and universities by 68%. Independent voters opposed cuts to health care by 94%, cuts to education by 89%, revenue sharing cuts by 80%, cuts to existing road funding by 61%, and they supported cuts to colleges and universities by 52% with 44% opposed. Republicans opposed cuts to revenue sharing by 88%, education cuts by 84%, health care cuts by 81%, cuts to existing road funding programs by 68%, but they favor cuts to colleges and universities by 66% with 29% opposed.

Respondents were then told: knowing that the state budget cannot be balanced while increasing transportation and infrastructure funding without making most, if not all of the budget cuts just described, let me ask you again – do you think it will be necessary to raise state taxes, fees or both as part of a plan to balance the state budget, or do you think that the needed funding can be raised just by cutting existing state programs and services?

The responses were:

41% said it will be necessary to raise state taxes, fees, or both (up 6 points)

33% said funding can be raised just by cutting existing state programs and services (down 2 points)

11% said a combination of both cuts and new taxes will be needed (down 1 point)

15% were undecided (down 2 points)

Democrats favored raising taxes, fees, or both by 66% (up 7 points), making cuts in programs and services by 13% (down 2 points), using both tax increases and budget cuts by 9% (down 2 points), with 12% undecided (down 3 points). Independents continued to narrowly favor making budget cuts by 32% (unchanged), increasing taxes, fees or both by 31% (unchanged), using both by 13% (down 4 points), with 24% undecided (up 4 points). Republicans favored making budget cuts by 53% (down 5 points), raising taxes, fees or both by 20% (up 6 points), using both by 12% (up 1 point), with 15% undecided (down 3 points).

Said Bernie Porn, President of EPIC-MRA, “as in past surveys, improvements to infrastructure continues to be a top issue concern among Michigan voters, they want all areas of infrastructure improved, and the view is almost unanimous that roads and bridges are in terrible condition. At first voters are split on whether increased taxes and fees are needed, or increased funding can be provided by budget cuts alone, but after hearing about budget cuts that could be required, support increased for raising taxes and fees, with support for budget cuts dropping.”

The wording of the questions are as follows:

*Now I am going to read a list of state problems and issues that Michigan voters say they are concerned about. After I read the whole list of eight problems, please tell me which one problem or issue concerns you the most. [READ AND ROTATE 1 TO 8 BELOW – CODE FIRST AND ONLY ONE RESPONSE]*

- 32% *Improving state infrastructure, including roads, bridges, dams, drinking water and wastewater treatment systems*
- 15% *Controlling crime and drugs*
- 14% *Improving the quality of education in Michigan*
- 10% *Reducing state and local government spending*
- 8% *Providing quality, affordable health care*
- 7% *Keeping state and local taxes low*
- 6% *Protecting Michigan’s environment, including our air and water*
- 3% *Protecting public health, especially as it relates to coronavirus*
- More than one (volunteered – ASK: “But which problem concerns you the most?” AND CODE BEST RESPONSE)*
- 5% *Undecided/Refused*

*Thinking specifically about the need to improve infrastructure in Michigan, which of the following aspects of the state’s infrastructure do you think is most important to address: [READ 1 TO 6 BELOW -- ROTATE 1 TO 5 – CODE FIRST AND ONLY ONE RESPONSE]*

- 66% *Improving all aspects of the state infrastructure because they are equally important*
- 16% *Repairing and improving state highways and local roads worsened because of neglect*
- 9% *Replacing water systems in many communities that have deteriorated or have lead pipes*
- 4% *Improving aging wastewater treatment systems that are polluting lakes and groundwater*
- 4% *Improving state bridges, many of which are in poor or even dangerous condition*
- 1% *Fixing and improving aging state dams which can flood nearby communities if they fail*
- 1% *Undecided/Refused*

*On another topic, overall, how would you rate the current condition of Michigan roads and bridges – would you rate them positively as excellent or pretty good, or negatively as just fair or poor?*

- 0% *Excellent*
- 6% *Pretty good*
- 6% *TOTAL POSITIVE*
- 93% *TOTAL NEGATIVE*
- 28% *Just fair*
- 65% *Poor*
- 1% *Undecided/Refused*

*Experts suggest that Michigan’s leaders need to implement a long-term infrastructure plan to improve the condition of our roads and bridges. Would you support a plan that [READ 1 AND 2 BELOW]?*

- 36% *Provide funding just by cutting existing state programs and services*
- 35% *Raising state taxes, fees, or both to fund improvements*
- 12% *Combination of both cuts and new taxes (VOLUNTEERED)*
- 17% *Undecided/Refused*

*Michigan funds road investments through multiple sources such as license and registration fees, lower than average gas taxes, and millages. Other states have toll roads, sales taxes, and higher gas taxes. As we look towards the future of autonomous and electric vehicles, Michigan must find a way to account for the impact of those vehicles on our roads that don't currently pay the same user fees that gas powered vehicle users do. Which one of the following funding approaches would you support the most for meeting Michigan's road funding needs with future travel solutions?*

- 32% Combination of fees and taxes*
- 25% Toll roads*
- 13% User fees based on vehicle miles traveled or emissions tests*
- 8% Increased license and registration fees*
- 3% Increased sales tax*
- 2% Increased gas tax*
- 17% Undecided/Refused*

*Now I would like to read you a list of state programs and services in the state budget that could be cut in order to increase funding for transportation and infrastructure needs to get our roads in good condition across Michigan. For each, please tell me if you would favor or oppose that cut. The first one is... [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE, ASK: "Would that be strongly or somewhat?" CODE BEST RESPONSE]*

<i>[ROTATE]</i>	<i>STRONG FAVOR</i>	<i>TOTAL FAVOR</i>	<i>TOTAL OPPOSE</i>	<i>STRONG OPPOSE</i>	<i>UND D/K</i>
<i>Major cuts of about 25 percent in K-12 education and schools?</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>82%</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Major cuts in health care aid for low-income women, children, the disabled and senior citizens?</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Major cuts in revenue sharing dollars that pay for local police and firefighters?</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>Major cuts in state funding that has already been set aside to pay for improving state roads and bridges?</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>9%</i>
<i>Major cuts in funding for colleges, universities and community colleges?</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>3%</i>

*Knowing that the state budget cannot be balanced while increasing transportation and infrastructure funding without making most, if not all of the budget cuts I just described, let me ask you again -- do you think it will be necessary to raise state taxes, fees, or both as part of a plan to balance the state budget, or do you think that the needed funding can be raised just by cutting existing state programs and services?*

- 41% It will be necessary to raise state taxes, fees, or both*
- 33% Funding can be raised just by cutting existing state programs and services*
- 11% Combination of both cuts and new taxes (VOLUNTEERED)*
- 15% Undecided/Refused*

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