



## Transportation Finance Issues

### How much is spent on new highway construction vs. fixing existing roads?

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#### **State's primary responsibility is the state highway system**

Wisconsin is home to approximately 114,800 miles of public roads – including federal, state and Interstate highways, local roads and streets. A little more than 10 percent of these comprise the state highway system.

While the state highway system accounts for only 10 percent of all public road mileage in the state, it carries 60 percent of the traffic load.

#### **Rehabilitating existing highways and bridges the top priority**

Rehabilitation includes resurfacing projects, reconditioning and reconstructing highways to ensure safe driving conditions. Work on bridges along the state highway system generally includes improvements to increase load-carrying capacity and widen deck roadways.

Input from the general public and elected officials, as well as analysis by state transportation engineers and planners, helps determine which highway rehabilitation projects get constructed.

#### **Major highway projects are a small part of highway spending**

Major projects account for approximately 7.1 percent of transportation spending in 2015-17.

Under state law, there are two categories of major highway projects.

Projects with a total cost threshold of \$35.7 million and any of the following:

- Constructing a new highway 2.5 miles or more in length
- Reconstructing or reconditioning an existing highway by relocating 2.5 miles or adding five or more miles in length
- Improving to freeway standards 10 or more miles of an existing divided highway having two or more lanes in either direction

State Trunk Highway Rehabilitation (SHR) projects with a cost of at least \$89.2 million that do not meet the other statutory requirements defining a major highway project.

For both categories of major highway projects, the total cost of threshold is adjusted annually using the WisDOT Transportation Price Index, Yearly Moving Average.