

# TRANSPORTATION

# Reality Check

**Myth #5:** Michigan needs to learn how to build roads that last, or MDOT needs to hold contractors responsible when repairs don't hold up.

**Reality:** Michigan follows national design and construction standards, and is a leader in roadwork warranties. Several other factors are to blame for our crumbling roads.

It's easy to find examples of roads in Michigan that saw repairs just a few years ago and are falling apart again. It's also easy to see why drivers and taxpayers think shoddy workmanship is to blame.

The reality is that most of the work MDOT has done to Michigan highways in the past decade has focused on resurfacing, rather than reconstruction. The purpose of resurfacing is to keep good roads good, but when the underlying road is no longer in good condition, it needs to be rebuilt, not resurfaced. Dwindling transportation funding and skyrocketing costs for road repair materials mean MDOT and local road agencies can fix fewer miles of roads adequately, and those fixes, by design, will not last as long as more expensive, but longer-lasting, reconstruction.

Although a recently repaired road starts off very smooth, looks can be deceiving. Many repair projects only involve replacing the top inch or two of pavement, or may only seal the surface, leaving deteriorating pavement and roadbed beneath. It looks the same as a reconstructed road, but can't possibly last as long.

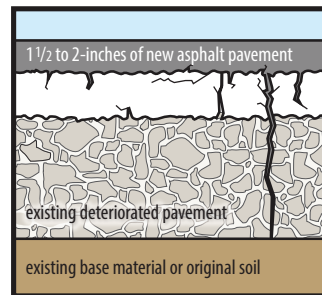
This type of resurfacing project won't hold up, but is designed to get a few more years out of a road and keep it from crumbling completely. It's far less expensive, though, than a reconstruction project - which can cost eight to 10 times as much. Better, longer-lasting roads are certainly possible, but Michigan's current transportation funding simply won't permit that level of construction.

## Building a Better Road

### RESURFACING

Grinding off and replacing the top few inches of pavement

**4 to 9-year fix**

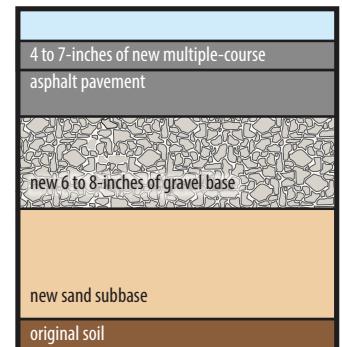


**\$100,000 per mile**

### FULL RECONSTRUCTION

Removing and replacing the pavement and base material

**33-year fix (with ongoing maintenance)**



**\$1.5 million per mile**

In the few instances where full reconstruction is done, quality results are achieved. MDOT uses widely accepted design and construction methods and techniques, and builds quality, long-lasting roads. Michigan is also a national leader in roadwork warranties, holding contractors accountable for their work.

***MDOT can and does build quality roads, but Michigan's current investment in transportation doesn't support much more than short-term fixes for our aging system.***

For more on this transportation myth, visit [www.michigan.gov/realitycheck](http://www.michigan.gov/realitycheck)