

Gov. Evers: Kicks off annual “Pothole Patrol” tour

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers will this week travel across the state on his [annual statewide “Pothole Patrol” tour](#), repairing potholes and highlighting proposals in his 2023-25 biennial budget to make historic investments in the state’s roads and infrastructure.

“In 2018, I made a promise to fix the darn roads, and I’m proud of our work over the past four years to do just that. But our efforts can’t end there—with a historic budget surplus, we have a historic opportunity to invest in the needs that have long been neglected, including building infrastructure, workforce, and economy that are ready for the 21st Century,” said Gov. Evers. “While I’m disappointed Republicans have chosen to waste this opportunity to pay down our state debt, save taxpayer money, and continue focusing on road improvement and maintenance, I remain hopeful that they will join me in making the investments necessary to help grow our state, support our communities, and lay the foundation for the future of our infrastructure for generations to come.”

After already improving over 5,800 miles of roads and nearly 1,600 bridges during the governor’s first term, Gov. Evers’ 2023-25 budget initiatives include providing the highest level of funding ever for general transportation aids, which go directly toward helping counties and local communities repair and maintain local roads.

The governor’s comprehensive transportation budget proposal also prepares the state for its future by proposing two new funding sources for the state’s transportation fund and utilizing federal funding to further build out Wisconsin’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure, enabling the state to use \$34.5 million in federal funds over the biennium, along with potential state funds, to allow greater

use of electric vehicles throughout the state.

Unfortunately, earlier this month, Republicans on the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) voted to remove [more than 540 provisions](#) from Gov. Evers' budget, including several of the governor's proposals to update Wisconsin's infrastructure. Republicans on the JFC voted to remove the governor's proposals to:

- Use nearly \$380 million of the state's historic nearly \$7 billion surplus to pay down state debt in transportation review bonds to save taxpayer dollars in future debt and interest and focus resources on road improvement and maintenance;
- Restore the ability of cities, villages, and towns to use eminent domain to build pedestrian and bike paths;
- Allow local governments to establish Regional Transit Authorities throughout the state as local governments deem necessary for the benefit of their residents;
- Support employer-sponsored commuting options for workers; and
- Keep roads safe by establishing a new traffic calming grant program, implementing Driver Licenses for All, restoring roadway design considerations known as "Complete Streets," requiring first-time offenders to install an ignition interlock device for all offenses involving operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, and increasing Wisconsin's seatbelt violation penalty.

A breakdown of the governor's proposals that are still being considered by the JFC to build safe, reliable infrastructure to support an economy and workforce of the 21st Century is available below.

Local Roads and Services

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Increasing general transportation aids for both counties and municipalities by four percent in calendar year 2024 and another four percent in calendar year 2025, providing the highest level of funding for general transportation aids in the program's history;
- Providing \$50 million in segregated funds annually for an ongoing supplement to the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) to increase direct support of local road and bridge projects across the state. Additionally, increasing funding for the existing LRIP program by four percent in each year of the biennium;
- Increasing state support of mass transit aids by four percent in calendar year

2024 and calendar year 2025 to further support non-drivers' access to employment, healthcare, and recreation throughout the state. Additionally, increasing funding to programs supporting transportation for the elderly and people with disabilities and paratransit;

- Providing \$1.2 million of segregated funds annually to provide matching funds for the Transportation Alternatives Program for small communities; and
- Allocating \$8 million of segregated funds to support local government administration of federal funding opportunities to support local roads, including technical assistance opportunities.

Bridges and Highways

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Providing \$47.2 million in bonding to begin reconstruction of the Blatnik Bridge in Superior in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation;
- Providing \$50 million in bonding to support the Southern Bridge project on the Fox River in Brown County;
- Directing \$1.2 million in segregated funds for pressing repairs for the Ray Nitschke Memorial Bridge in Green Bay; and
- Investing \$77 million over base in the State Highway Rehabilitation Program.

Road Safety

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Improving the safety of travel on Wisconsin's highways by providing 35.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for additional state troopers and 10.0 FTE positions for motor carrier inspectors;
- Providing \$16,000 to develop and implement electric vehicle license plate stickers to assist first responders in emergency response for electric vehicles; and
- Invest \$6.5 million to cover the cost of comprehensive driver education for economically disadvantaged students.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Establishing a program to utilize federal funding to further build out Wisconsin's electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This action will enable the

state to use \$17.1 million of federal funding in fiscal year 2023-24 and \$17.4 million of federal funding in fiscal year 2024-25, along with potential state funds, to allow greater use of electric vehicles throughout the state.

Supply Chain Investments

Gov. Evers is proposing:

- Providing \$16 million in bonding for dredging, seawall reconstruction, and other projects associated with the Harbor Assistance Program; and
- Providing \$20 million in bonding for the Freight Rail Preservation program.

Laying the Foundation for Future Infrastructure

The governor proposes providing two new sources of revenue to fund infrastructure improvements throughout Wisconsin and maintain a healthy transportation fund, including:

- An amount calculated from the state sales tax generated by the sale of electric vehicles; and
- A transfer of a portion of the state sales tax on the sale of auto parts, tires, and repair services.

These transfers will allocate nearly \$190 million from the general fund to the transportation fund over the biennium.