

# Genesee County bridges in rough shape and bill to repair them could be a whopper, according to new report

GENESEE COUNTY, Michigan -- Bridges in the county are in rough shape, and a new report is predicting things are only going to get much worse. The county Planning Commission forecast estimates fully 90 percent of the 369 bridges scattered from Clio to Fenton will need to be replaced by 2035 at an estimated cost of \$1.5 billion. Forty-nine percent of those bridges are already in either poor condition or were not built to current standards, the report says, and future funding estimates "falls severely short" of what's needed. "The bridge situation in Genesee County is not so hot. ... We're looking at an older infrastructure," said Nate Scramlin, an associate planner for the county. "We want to provide a good inventory where we're at." The report was turned over to the county Technical Advisory Committee last week and could lead to recommendations aimed at fixing what officials said is a problem that's getting increasingly worse. County bridges are ranked the third-worst in the state, trailing only Wayne and Newaygo counties in the percentage of problem bridges. Among the solutions discussed at a meeting of county, state and federal agencies earlier this year: a local bridge tax or fee on private companies. The poor condition of bridges in the county has been no secret. Just last year, seven area bridges were included on a list of spans in poor condition and one crossing on Lovejoy Road is in such poor shape that it has been closed since January 2002. Genesee County Road Commission Manager-Director John Daly said news about roads and bridges will continue to be discouraging until a new funding plan emerges. "This process will continue until there's a groundswell of public opinion that we have to fix the bridges," Daly said. "The problem will have to escalate (before something is done)." Daly said people are becoming frustrated as the condition of roads and bridges continues to deteriorate. On Lovejoy Road -- on the Genesee-Livingston county line -- barricades designed to keep people off the closed bridge have been repeatedly moved. "It's not safe for cars (but) it's very frustrating to (try) to get around that," said Tammy Moen, who lives on the Livingston County side of Lovejoy. "The length (of time) it's been out. ... it's not like it's a work in progress," Moen said.

A new Genesee County Planning Commission report says nearly half of all bridges in the county are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Only cities and agencies that own at least six bridges are listed. Here is a partial breakdown of the deficient:

- 47 percent of 191 Michigan Department of Transportation bridges.
- 44 percent of 120 county Road Commission bridges.
- 72 percent of 32 city of Flint bridges.
- 78 percent of nine city of Burton bridges.
- 33 percent of six city of Fenton bridges.

Source: Genesee County Planning Commission