Just FIX IT
Eau Claire Area ROUGH ROAD Tour

Running Out of Options

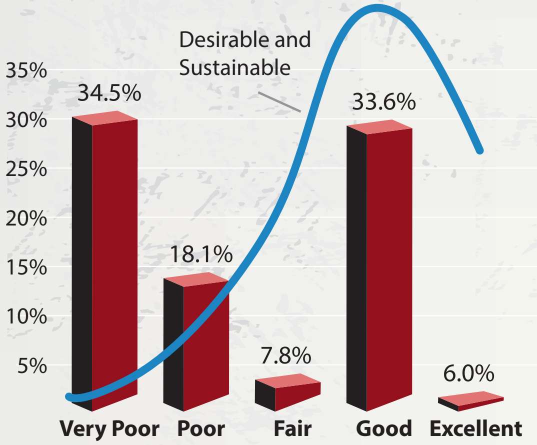
A 2014 review of Eau Claire County highways told an alarming story.

More than half (52.6%) of the system was in poor or worse condition despite stepping up investment in 2008 to begin to reverse the trend of declining pavement conditions.

At the time of the report, it was estimated the highway infrastructure needs of Eau Claire County ranged from \$90–\$100 million. The report laid out a number of funding scenarios and the anticipated improvement to pavement conditions. With an average annual capital expenditure of \$5 million a year (a 20-year plan to address the backlog but a substantial increase to post-2008 amounts), the average pavement rating was expected to increase to 5.3 by 2019, the highest rating in two decades.

The county surpassed the target for 2014–2017, and the average rating increased to 5.4 in 2017. But it is getting harder to come up to the mark. *(See chart of Road Investment and Average Condition Rating on next page.)*

PASER Pavement Rating

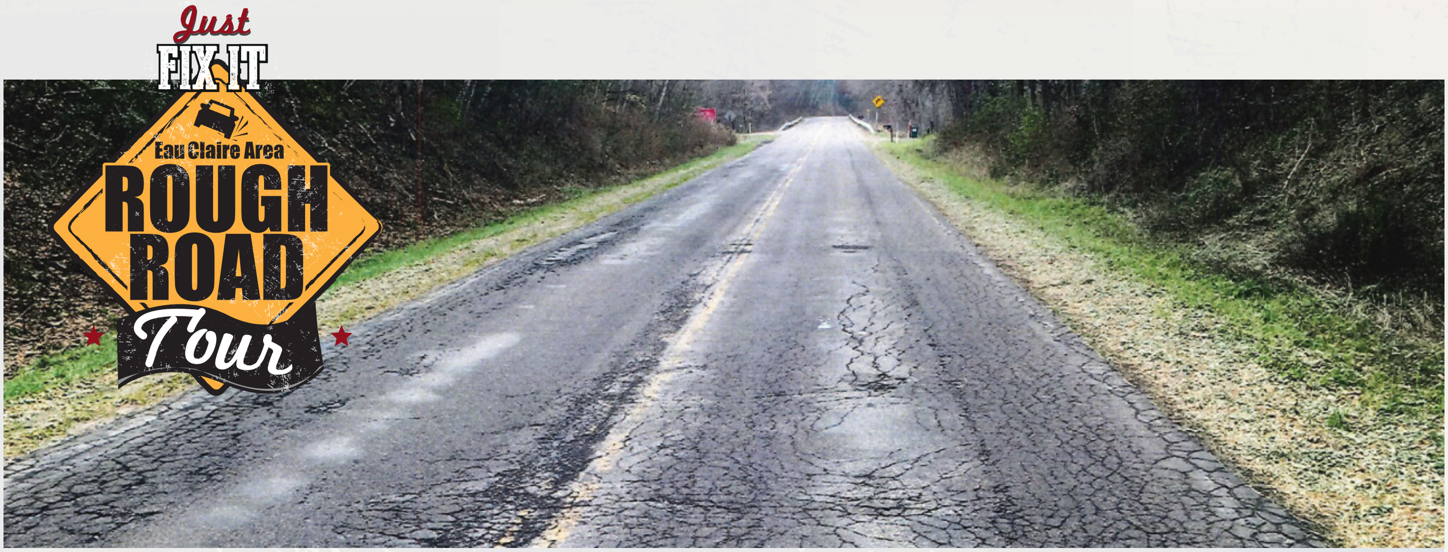


Source: Highway Outlay & Maintenance Review, Eau Claire County 11/2014

Stagnant state revenue and levy limits leave the county few options to fund needed repairs and improvements. For the last decade capital improvements have been funded almost exclusively with debt.

"We currently have the need to replace \$35 million of poor and failed pavement in the county," said Jon Johnson, Eau Claire County highway commissioner. "However, we can't afford to continue to borrow as we have."

The Eau Claire County Board recently voted 20–9 to enact a \$30 local vehicle registration fee (wheel tax) that is estimated to generate \$2.39 million a year for county road maintenance. "It's a start. It gets us back on track to having roads that are viable," said Supervisor Colleen Bates.



Road Investment and Average Condition Rating

1995-2017

9-10
EXCELLENT
Minimal/No Maintenance required
Crack sealing at year 3-5

7-8
GOOD
Crack sealing and/or minor patching
Sealcoat at year 8-12

5-6
FAIR
Preservation treatments
Crack sealing, patching, sealcoating, thin overlays

3-4
POOR
Structural Renewal
Overlay, Mill and Overlay – evaluate drainage & subgrade

1-2
VERY POOR
Reconstruction or Recondition
Grading, base, ditches, drainage, pavement

Highway Surface Management Recommendations Key