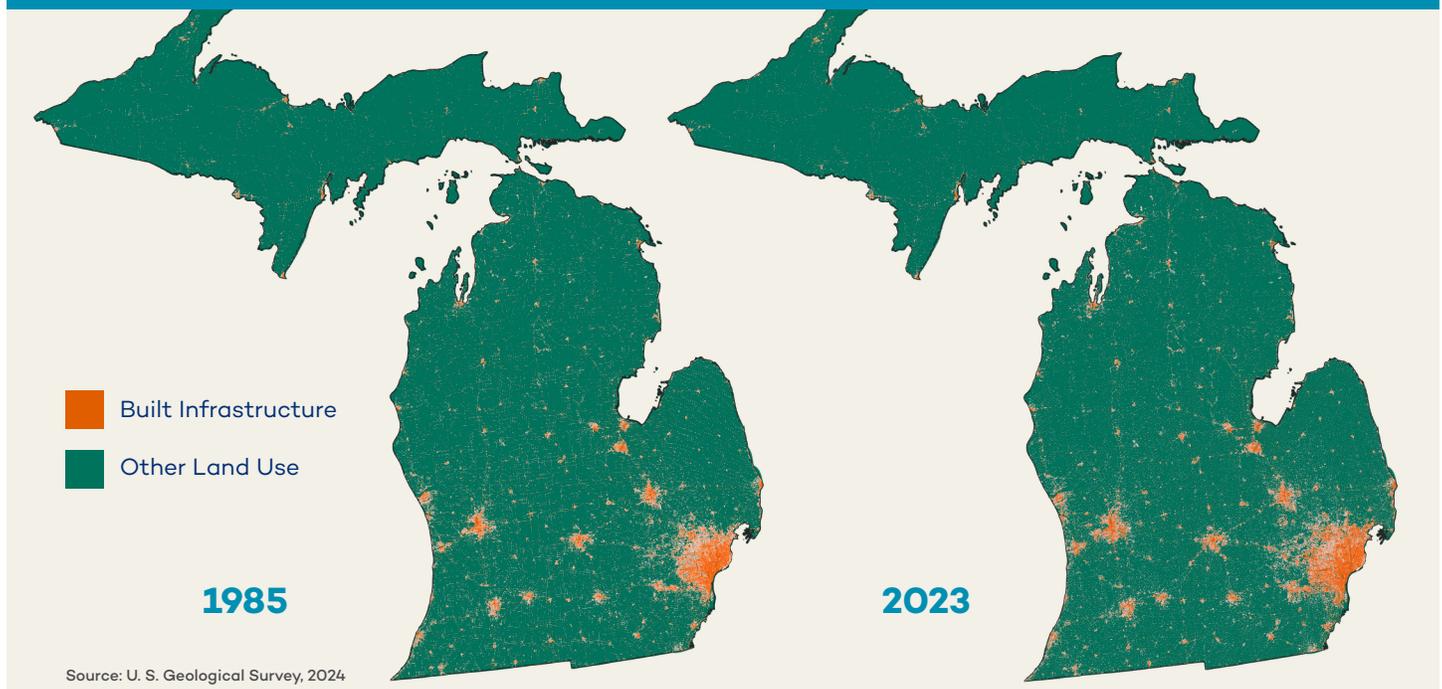


A Generation of Expansion Without Growth

For decades, Michigan's population has remained nearly flat—yet we continue to build outwards from our traditional neighborhoods and town centers. The footprints of our 15 largest urbanized areas grew 40 percent from 1980 to 2020, adding 747 square miles of developed area,¹ while their populations grew only eight percent. As a result, each Michigander is shouldering the cost of 30 percent more infrastructure.

When we can't pay for that infrastructure, the results are potholes, power outages, pipe breaks, and public safety services stretched too thin. Michigan must invest in reliable and high-quality infrastructure, prioritizing reinvestment in existing system repair and meeting the needs of the many different people in our communities.

1985–2023: +11% Population, +45% Developed Land Area



Our Road Funding Gap Hurts Local Streets

Michigan must ensure the full transportation network is maintained. State road funding has long favored highways and trunklines, neglecting the local streets where every trip begins and ends. MDOT receives 40 percent of road maintenance funding, but only maintains eight percent of Michigan's road network.²

As a result, our local streets are in significantly worse condition than state-managed roads.³ The justification given for this funding mismatch is based on vehicle miles traveled, not on how well the system meets people's daily needs.

Fixing the damn roads means ensuring people and goods are connected to their destinations, not just maximizing movement of vehicles in the middle of the journey.

Thriving Michigan evaluates how well Michigan is fostering thriving communities where people want to live, work, and build their futures. This series benchmarks the state's performance across key indicators that contribute to long-term prosperity. Each report presents a clear, data-driven snapshot of how state policies and investments are impacting one of the key indicators in Michigan communities, including health and safety, economic and financial security, natural resources, virtual and physical infrastructure, arts and cultural, lifelong learning opportunities, and housing.

Weathering Storms Requires Resilient Infrastructure

Flooding caused \$3.1 billion in property damage in Michigan from 1996 to 2021.⁴ Insurance industry source First Street forecasts an additional 10,500 Michigan homes and 608 miles of roadway will come under new flood risk in the next 30 years.

Flooding brings cascading dangers: washouts, electrical hazards, contaminated floodwaters. Effective flood and stormwater management prevents greater harm.

Municipalities can help reduce flooding through green and traditional stormwater infrastructure, but Michigan lacks strong funding for local systems. State support and clear legal guidance are critical to mitigating rising flood risks.



Number of stormwater utilities in Michigan compared to neighboring states.

Michiganders Have Limited Options for Getting Around

Michigan ranks 26th in transit access, behind most of our regional neighbors. While transit riders can reach an average of 32,000 jobs in 30 minutes, access is limited to major metro areas—residents in 44 counties have no job access without a car.⁵

While several local agencies have recently passed millages to expand service, Michigan still needs to invest in transit networks to connect metro areas and link smaller towns.

Regional Peer States	Jobs Within 30-minute Transit Commute
Illinois	157,954
Pennsylvania	86,482
Minnesota	66,683
Wisconsin	41,632
Ohio	38,480
Michigan	32,020
Indiana	17,138

High-speed Broadband Is Essential to Our Livelihoods

Michigan is trailing its neighbors in high-speed broadband.⁶ While most have basic access, only 35 percent of addresses can get 1Gb speeds—ranking us behind 40 states.

High-speed access is notably poor in our largest counties. Of the United States' fifty largest counties, Oakland ranks 39th and Wayne 45th in gigabit availability. With fast, affordable broadband becoming not just an amenity but fundamental to accessing jobs, schooling, and other opportunities, Michigan needs to catch up.

The Path to Thriving

A thriving Michigan means state policies must commit to resilient, efficient, and effective infrastructure:

- Prioritize the state of good repair of existing systems—local streets, our electrical grid, water and sewer networks—over system expansion.
- Increase connectivity and expand access via broadband, transit, and non-motorized transport—give Michiganders a range of ways to access opportunities and get where they need to go.
- Boost existing infrastructure use by directing housing and business growth where there is capacity already, avoiding costly new development.

Full Citations: 1 U.S. Census Bureau 2 "2023 Michigan Roadway Statewide Statistics," Michigan Department of Transportation, Accessed May 20, 2025 from <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/-/media/Project/Websites/MDOT/Programs/Planning/Asset-Management/HPMS/Statewide-Statistics-LS-County.pdf> 3 "A Data-Driven Assessment of Michigan's Road Program," Citizen's Research Council of Michigan Report 420, March 2025. Accessed April 18, 2025 from https://cromich.org/PUBLICAT/2020s/2025/rpt420-Michigan_Road_Funding_Condition.pdf 4 Michigan State Police - "Michigan Hazard Analysis (Natural Hazards)," 2024. 5 Center for Neighborhood Technology 2024, "AllTransit", alltransit.org 6 FCC Broadband Data Collection, June 2024 data update, <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/>, "U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), 2024, Annual NLCD Collection 1 Science Products: U.S. Geological Survey data release, <https://doi.org/10.5066/P94UXN7S>.