



# Winnipeg's roads to ruin

Even the city's worst streets may not be fixed any time soon

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More than 20% of Winnipeg streets are in poor condition — the worst rating on the city scale — but the city says it guarantees any given street on that list will be fixed in the next decade or longer.

There are 1,755 street segments — typically two- or three-block stretches of the same road — listed in poor condition to data the recently provided to the *Sun* by the City of Winnipeg.

Poor is the worst rating the city gives out. It means the street is in need of major rehabilitation or a complete rebuild.

However, competing budget priorities and an ever-expanding network of roads means even the city's worst street may not be fixed any time soon.

"It would be very hard to say whether 15 years from now, your street will be completed," said Rod Hamilton, an infrastructure management engineer with the city's public works department. "It's a fairly big infrastructure deficit and everybody has to live with it."

Indeed, municipal politicians have decried the infrastructure deficit for some time, urging senior levels of government to fill the need. In practical terms, the deficit means the city knows how many streets are in poor condition, but doesn't have enough money to fix them all.

The city's 2011 capital budget contained more than \$42 million in renewal and reconstruction of mostly regional, residential, streets. That number is forecast to dip to \$28 million next year and \$36 million in 2013, before rising to \$42 million in 2014.

Hamilton said reconstructing "poor" streets is so expensive the city has begun to shift its budget more towards keeping streets rated "good" or "fair" from getting any worse.

"We want to keep the good streets good as long as possible so they don't slip into poor," he said.

Brian Sumner, a Dominion Street resident whose block is on the poor list, wasn't thrilled to hear that.

"This road is basic transportation. I'd like to see them give this a higher priority. Most of the people that live on this street are maintaining their homes, spending money on their homes to keep them in good shape, and it looks like the city is forgetting about this road," Sumner said.

"We like living in this city, but my own feeling has been that they can't fix the infrastructure. Look how they're letting it go. I find that bothers me and it bothers my spouse, too."

## WINNIPEG'S WORST ROADS

We checked out the stretches of roads readers submitted to us as the city's worst, and man, there are some real doozies out there. Here are the five worst, based on the submissions. All are listed as "poor" by the city.

1. **Wilton St. (from Taylor to Hector):** This street almost makes you want to take engineering courses, just to see how a road can deteriorate so badly. It's like driving on railroad ballast.
2. **Parr St. (from Inkster to Rupertsland):** Slowing down on a side street is a great move if there are kids or people walking dogs; not so fun if it's because the road is worn down to practically bare gravel.
3. **Brookside Blvd. (from Logan to Eagle):** Kind of looks like the countryside out there, and it might as well be. Brookside is no better than a gravel mile road after a month of rain.
4. **Machray Ave. (from McPhillips to Airlies):** Cracks, heaves, bumps — pick your poison, because this street is a mess. And this is supposed to be a bike route?
5. **Marion St. (from Archibald to Dupuy):** Welcome to the St. Boniface Industrial Park, where if the giant trucks don't get you, the dips will.

*Honourable mentions: Henderson Highway (from Hespeler to Disraeli), Logan Avenue (from King Edward to Sony Place (from Hamelin to Irene).*

## BAD ROADS ARE EVERYWHERE

Is your street one of the city's worst? Our interactive map shows the roads given a "poor" rating by the city.

## HOW THE ROADS ARE RATED

- **New** — Just like it sounds, this means a new street that requires essentially no repair.
- **Good** — Requires only preventative maintenance and small fixes here and there.
- **Fair** — Needs concrete repair or minor rehabilitation of whole segments.
- **Poor** — Needs major treatment, either a complete rebuild or rehabilitation to higher standard.

Road conditions (based on 2010 data, most recent available):

Regional streets (major arteries) = 50% new/good\*, 30% fair, 20% poor

Local streets (residential) = 60% new/good\*, 15-20% fair, 20-25% poor

*\*City of Winnipeg groups new and good together because they require similar maintenance*

Winnipeg's worst roads

IMAGE: 1 OF 10



**1. Wilton St. (from Taylor to Hector):** This street almost makes you want to take engineering courses, just to understand how a road can deteriorate so badly. It's like driving on railroad ballast.

## READER'S COMMENTS »

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