



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

The Examiner News: Coalition Demands More State Funding for Local Roadways

RICK PEZZULLO February 27, 2024

A coalition of construction trade unions and state lawmakers joined forces in Elmsford last week to demand more funding be allocated in the New York State budget to repair and maintain roadways in the Hudson Valley.

The large contingent of speakers who rallied Feb. 21 at the Teamsters Local 456 Union Hall contended Region 8, which includes 13 cities, 75 villages and 107 towns in Westchester, Putnam and five other counties, is being shortchanged by \$650 million in Gov. Kathy Hochul's proposed 2025 spending plan.

The group demanded that funding in the upcoming year's state budget must be increased by \$400 million for core roads and bridges, and aid to local highway departments must be hiked by \$250 million to offset the effects of inflation.

The group also claimed Region 8 has had the worst road and bridge conditions in the state for more than 10 years, costing drivers \$8.7 billion last year in repairs, fuel and wear and tear.

"The reality is it's time for the rubber to meet the road," said Edward Cooke, vice president of the Westchester and Putnam Counties Building Construction Trades Council. "This is beyond roads. You come into New York and see a crappy set of roads. This isn't against the

Department of Transportation. They deserve better. Let's get this done and help everybody."

According to a chart produced by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association, 78 percent of Region 8 roads were ranked in good to excellent condition in 2002. By 2021, that number plunged to 44 percent. Meanwhile, during that same time period, roads in fair to poor condition rose from 22 percent to 56 percent.

"This crisis must be addressed immediately, and it is not a political issue," said John Cooney, executive director of the Construction Industry Council of Westchester and Hudson Valley. "The disgraceful conditions affect anyone who drives our state roads. Enough is enough."

Read the article here: <https://www.theexaminernews.com/coalition-demands-more-state-funding-for-local-roadways/>

Members of the state Senate and Assembly in attendance all agreed that the top complaint constituents call their offices about are the subpar road conditions.

"Every day we get complaints about craters, they're not just potholes," said state Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers).

Assemblyman Matt Slater (R-Yorktown), who held a press conference a few days earlier with local highway superintendents advocating that the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS) funding cap be increased from \$350,000 to \$1 million, said he's optimistic the legislature will be able to get more money to fix roads.

"There's no Republican or Democratic way to fill a pothole," Slater said. "I think this is about parity and equity. I'm confident and hopeful we will finally be able to deliver the investment needed."

In her 2025 proposed executive budget that was released in mid-January, Hochul touted investments to continue road, bridge and safety improvements across New York, including \$7.6 billion for the Department of Transportation Capital Plan, \$577.8 million for CHIPS and \$100 million for the Pave Our Potholes (POP) Program.