

WHAT IS RCOC?

The Road Commission for Oakland County is Michigan's largest county road commission, with a 2,600-mile road system (including 850 miles of gravel roads). Only the state highway system is larger.

RCOC also maintains:

- ◆ Approximately 80 bridges,
- ◆ Approximately 1,200 traffic signals,
- ◆ Approximately 90,000 traffic signs and
- ◆ More than 310 miles of state highway.

SAFETY FIRST

As a matter of policy, major road improvement projects are conducted by the Road Commission based on a safety ranking system. At RCOC "Safety First" is more than a motto.



RCOC:

- ✓ Is separate from county general government and does not receive any revenue from property taxes
- ✓ Receives the majority of its funding from the state-collected gas tax
- ✓ Has congested roads due to the tremendous growth in the county
- ✓ Receives no direct revenue from growth and development
- ✓ Pays as much as \$1 million to pave a mile of gravel road
- ✓ Pays \$3 to \$4 million to widen one mile of road from two lanes to five
- ✓ Is located in a state with a gas tax below the national average (even after the 1997 4-cent gas tax increase)
- ✓ Is located in a state that ranks in the bottom nine states in per capita road funding

ROAD COMMISSION
for OAKLAND COUNTY

31001 Lahser Road • Beverly Hills • MI 48025

BOARD OF ROAD COMMISSIONERS

RUDY D. LOZANO

LARRY P. CRAKE

RICHARD G. SKARRITT

Brent O. Bair
Managing Director

Gerald M. Holmberg, P.E.
Deputy Managing Director
County Highway Engineer

RCOC MISSION STATEMENT

RCOC strives to provide the public with leadership in:

- Safe and convenient roads
- Sound financial management
- Responsive and dependable service
- Respect for the environment
- Sensitivity to community concerns

HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE ROAD COMMISSION?

CALL OR WRITE:

DEPARTMENT OF CITIZEN SERVICES
2420 PONTIAC LAKE ROAD
WATERFORD, MI 48328
(248) 858-4804

TDD: (248) 858-8005

OR, visit RCOC online at
www.rcocweb.org

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ROAD COMMISSION
for OAKLAND COUNTY

GRAVEL ROADS



Are they different?

What about paving?

How many miles?

MAINTENANCE -INTENSIVE GRAVEL ROADS NEED CONSTANT ATTENTION

FACT: *850 of Oakland's 2,600 miles of county roads are not paved, and many won't be for years.*

People call them "dirt," but unpaved roads really are gravel (plus sand and clay).

These fragile roads can cause as much trouble for motorists as they do for the Road Commission. Drainage problems are common because many gravel roads evolved from trails or farm access lanes and were not designed by engineers.



SUMMER MAINTENANCE

Summer means applying extra gravel, mowing, ditching, cleaning culverts, grading and applying chloride. It can also mean dusty gravel roads.

For less dust and a better gravel road surface, RCOC Dust Control Program crews spray calcium chloride brine (essentially salt water) every four weeks through the summer.

Lower cost brine from the Road Commission's own well has made the dust control program self-supporting. To find out if your community pays for road chloriding (many do), call the Department of Citizen Services at (248) 858-4804. In non-participating areas, residents can pay to have chloriding performed.

Grading smooths gravel roads. It also breaks up the chlorided surface and creates dust, so it's performed about every three weeks (it's done just before chloriding). A safety concern may mean grading sooner.



WINTER MAINTENANCE

Gravel roads can be troublesome in winter. Frozen gravel surfaces cannot be graded, and snow and ice removal are difficult.

More gravel can be applied for safety. Sand is spread on curves and corners for traction (salt cannot be used — it soaks in and will not stay on the surface to make ice-melting "brine"). Snow plowing is performed on a priority basis similar to paved roads.

GRAVEL ROAD PAVING

Paving solves many gravel road problems, but lack of road funding frequently prevents paving. And, paving is more costly in Oakland County than in many other places.

The county's many lakes and wetlands create soil problems that add to the price of paving, and increasing property values drive up the price of necessary right of way. It now costs nearly \$1 million to pave one mile of a major or "mile-type" gravel road in Oakland County.

Although more people are moving to rural areas with gravel roads (increasing traffic and maintenance needs), those roads still serve fewer people than most paved roads. Without more funding, pothole patching, winter maintenance and safety improvements on higher-traffic paved roads will be the priority. This means many gravel roads will remain unpaved.

This situation frustrates some ex-city dwellers. To them, "the country" has meant dust, ruts and being last for road service. They want roads paved (or maintained as if they were).

Others, however, oppose paving because they are

concerned about increases in traffic speeds and volumes or the loss of trees.

Planners say that gravel roads should be paved when traffic exceeds 500 cars per day (that is the point at which maintenance becomes more costly and less effective). If, by 2004, growth continues to exceed road revenues and people keep moving to rural areas, 120 miles of gravel roads will need paving at a cost of nearly \$120 million.

There are no gravel roads in newer subdivisions. For more than 30 years, developers have been required to pave subdivision streets in townships in Oakland County. Some have also paid to pave the roads leading to their developments.

RCOC sets aside about \$1 million each year to pave one mile of gravel road. However, aside from this mile and property owners, who can pay up to \$226,000 or more per mile for paving in Special Assessment District paving projects in subdivisions, real estate developers have been just about the only other source of gravel road paving in Oakland County.

