

Road Report

A publication of the Road Commission for Oakland County for public officials serving Oakland County www.rcocweb.org

RCOC Board spearheads largest-ever preservation-overlay program: \$25 million worth of resurfacing projects

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) has undertaken the largest-ever preservation overlay, or simple resurfacing, program this year.

The RCOC Board approved the contract for the nearly \$25 million program in February. Work began in April and, when complete, will result in just over 90 miles of roads being resurfaced.

The preservation overlay program involves simple resurfacing with two inches of asphalt on roads that are in fair condition. The program provides a smooth, new road surface and extends the life of the road by five to 10 years.

"This Board is committed to doing everything we can, with the resources available, to improve the roads," stated RCOC Chairman Greg Jamian. "We believe the preservation overlay program



is the best bang for the dollars and the best way to improve as many roads as possible as quickly as we can."

Jamian noted that while this is RCOC's largest-ever preservation overlay contract, the need on RCOC roads remains great. "We are taking a step in the right direction with this contract," he noted. "However, due to Michigan's decades of under-fund-

ing its roads, the needs on our roads remains far larger than this contract."

Preservation overlay projects involve minimal milling of the road surface (grinding off sections of bad pavement) and the application of the new asphalt. They usually involve about three days worth of work over about a two-week period. During the work days, one lane of the road is closed, and traffic is directed by flaggers.

"This program allows us to get in and out quickly," Jamian noted. "However, there still is disruption of traffic, and we ask for motorists' patience as we work to improve the roads."

He added the contract calls for projects in all sectors of the county. Work will be completed in the summer. A complete list of preservation overlay projects is on page 3.

County Board Chair Woodward, Road Commissioner LaLonde try hand at pothole patching

Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Board Member Andrea LaLonde and Oakland County Board of Commissioners Chairman Dave Woodward got a chance in May to see what the pothole-patching experience is like first hand.

The pair joined a Road Commission pothole-patching crew on Walton Boulevard in Waterford Township, filling holes along an approximately mile-long section of the road on May 3. Both noted they wanted to see for themselves what the process was like.

Both also noted that the process was not as easy as it looked, especially with cars flying by just a few feet away in the next lane. They praised the patching crew of Victor Sand, Tim Cuthrell and John Foulis for showing them the ropes.



Oakland County Board of Commissioners Chairman Dave Woodward, left, and RCOC Commissioner Andrea LaLonde patch potholes, while RCOC's Laborer Victor Sand looks on.

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RCOC 2019 Road Improvement Program (RIP)

This list includes projects that are expected to be constructed in 2019. To avoid confusion over the project costs, the costs listed are the estimated construction costs for each project and do not include any preliminary engineering (PE) or right of way acquisition costs. The list does not include preservation overlay projects (simple resurfacing projects) — those are listed on page 3.

	<u>Project Cost</u>
Widen (reconstruct adding additional through lanes)	
• Baldwin Road, Gregory to Waldon in Orion Twp. (widen to 5-lane/4-lane blvd., construct three roundabouts (second phase of a two-part project))	\$18,500,000
• John R, Long Lake to South Blvd. in Troy (widen 2 lanes to 3 – city leading project)	\$18,000,000
• Sashabaw Road, I-75 to south of Clarkston Road (widening & reconstruction), Independence Twp.	\$ 4,800,000
Repair, Rehabilitate & Resurface (repair road base/add 3 to 4 inches new asphalt)	
• Livernois Road, Avon to north of Walton, Rochester Hills	\$ 5,600,000
• 12 Mile Road at Novi Road (intersection – partnership with Novi), Novi	\$ 1,000,000
• Sashabaw Road crossovers, Bow Pointe to Sheffler driveway, Independence Twp.	\$ 266,000
• 10 Mile Road, Evergreen to Greenfield (concrete repair), Southfield	\$ 3,200,000
Gravel-Road Paving	
• Sashabaw Road, Sherwood to Granger, Brandon Twp.	\$ 2,900,000
• Dixboro Road, 8 Mile to 9 Mile, Lyon Twp./South Lyon/Green Oak Twp.	\$ 3,400,000
• Grass Lake Road, Ormond to Steeple Hill, White Lake Twp.	\$ 1,500,000
Intersection Safety Improvement	
• Maple Road at Middlebelt (roundabout & culvert replacement), West Bloomfield Twp.	\$ 5,600,000
• Adams Road at Gunn Road (roundabout), Oakland Twp.	\$ 2,000,000
• Carroll Lake Road at Cooley Lake Road (compact roundabout), Commerce Twp./White Lake Twp.	\$ 900,000
Bridge Preventive Maintenance	
• 8 Mile Road over the Rouge River, Farmington Hills/Livonia	\$ 450,000
• Adams Road over the Paint Creek, Oakland Twp.	\$ 450,000
Culvert Replacements	
• Kurtz Road over Swartz Creek, Holly Twp.	\$ 700,000
• Lake George Road over Stoney Creek, Oakland Twp.	\$ 100,000
• Cooley Lake Road over Lake Sherwood, Commerce Twp.	\$ 750,000
• Square Lake Road over the Amy Drain, Bloomfield Twp.	\$ 700,000
• Wise Road over the Huron River, Commerce Twp.	\$ 750,000
• Davisburg Road over the Garner Drain, Springfield Twp.	\$ 650,000
• Haggerty over the tributary to the Seeley Drain, Farmington Hills & Novi	\$ 450,000
• Milford Road over the tributary to the Shiawassee River, Rose Twp.	\$ 825,000
Independence Twp. Millage Resurfacing (paid for with township millage funds)	
• Flemings Lake Road/Walters Road, Clarkston to Maybee	\$ 750,000
• Andersonville Road, south township line to Old White Lake Rd.	\$ 650,000
• Sashabaw Road, south township line to Maybee	\$ 550,000
• Clintonville Road, Mann to Clarkston	\$ 1,300,000
Federally Funded Preservation Overlays (simple resurfacing – additional projects list on page 3)	
• Oakwood Road, M-15 to Leese, Ortonville	\$ 450,000
• Dixie Highway, Oak Hill to northern county line, Springfield, Groveland and Holly townships	\$ 2,500,000
• Grange Hall Road, Van to Jossman, Groveland Twp.	\$ 750,000
• RCOC-funded preservation overlay program (projects listed on page 3)	\$ 25,000,000
Total cost of projects to be constructed in 2019:	\$105,441,000

RCOC supports governor's road-funding plan, notes minor tweaks needed

The good news is Michigan's governor has proposed an aggressive road-funding plan. Some of the details of the proposal, however, are causing concern among road commissions.

"We very much appreciate the fact that this governor had the courage to propose a road-funding package that actually could address the true magnitude of the problem," stated Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) Managing Director Dennis Kolar. "No previous governor since at least the 1980s has been willing to do this."

Governor Whitmer's 45-cent gas tax increase would generate approximately \$2.1 billion annually in new road funding for the state. Most objective studies in recent years have concluded Michigan needs at least \$2 billion in additional road funding each year to return its road system to good condition.

While it remains to be seen if the

state Legislature will take up the governor's proposal, Kolar noted RCOC will continue to support the efforts to increase road funding.

"We will do everything we can to support the governor and her efforts to raise the kind of revenue we really need," Kolar added.

A few elements of the plan should be tweaked, though, Kolar said. "We are concerned that the plan currently calls for 70 percent of the new revenue to go to MDOT," he noted. "We also are concerned that the proposal seems to attempt to limit where road commissions, cities and villages can spend the new money. We are experienced professionals; we can figure out where to best spend the money."

Currently, all state road funding is distributed according to a formula that calls for 39.1 percent going to MDOT, 39.1 percent going to county road agencies and 21.8 percent going to cities and villages.

"The new formula proposed by the governor would be a major shift of funding away from local road agencies and to MDOT," Kolar explained. "And it would happen at a time when MDOT's roads are in better shape than county roads."

Kolar noted that every time there has been a serious road-funding proposal over the last 25 years, MDOT has made an effort to take a larger share of the money. Fortunately, each time, those efforts have been thwarted by the state Legislature.

"The need is great on all roads across the state, not just state highways," Kolar said. "In fact, you could argue the need is greater on county and local roads that are currently in worse condition than the state highways."

The managing director noted the proposal is likely to evolve as it goes through the legislative process in Lansing. "It's too early to know what this might ultimately look like," he said. "We'll just have to wait and see."

Why does road maintenance cost so much?

People frequently ask why it costs "so much" to maintain roads. While costs are, of course, relative, one of the challenges for road agencies is that all the costs associated with road maintenance have risen far more than the rate of consumer inflation for many years.

Recently, the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) reviewed just how much road-maintenance-related expenses have risen in recent years. Here are some examples:

- The cost of asphalt rose 14 percent from 2018 to 2019.

- The cost of gravel for shoulders increased 100 percent from 2018 to 2019.

- The cost of a standard RCOC dump truck rose 54 percent over 10 years (2007 to 2017).

- The cost of a medium-duty truck rose 33 percent over 10 years (2006 to 2016).

- Cold patch (material used to patch potholes in winter months) rose 44 percent over 10 years (2008 to 2018).

- Salt prices doubled from 2018 to 2019.

Preservation overlay program 2019

Road	From	To	Road	From	To
Cooley Lake	Union Lake	Oxbow Lake	Quarton	Inkster	Franklin
General Motors	Hickory Ridge	Milford Vill. limits	Quarton	Lahser	Woodward
Milford	N. Milford Vill. limits	Highland Twp. limits	Square Lake	I-75 ramp	Adams
Oakley Park	Benstein	Haggerty	Adams	Birmingham city limits	Wattles
Pontiac Trail	S. Commerce	Welch	Willow	Union Lake	Hiller
10 Mile	E/O Pontiac Trail	Meadowbrook	Gilbert Lake	Maple	Quarton
Milford	S. Milford Vill. limits	N. vill. limits	Timberlake Dr.	Lone Pine	South
Andersonville	Farley	Davisburg	Dublin Dr.	Andover	Exeter
Indianwood	Baldwin	M-24	Maceday Dr.	Lotus	Williams Lake
Silverbell	M-24	Adams	Midland Ave.	Dixie Highway	Oakview
South Blvd.	I-75	Adams	Middlebelt	Orchard Lake	Maple
Waldon	Giddings	M-24	Square Lake	Middlebelt	Telegraph
Adams	Hamlin	Gunn	12 Mile	W/O Southfield	E/O Southfield
Cass Lake	Pontiac Lake	Otter	13 Mile	Telegraph	Beverly Hills limits
Farmington	14 Mile	Walnut Lake	Haggerty	8 Mile	9 Mile
Franklin	Walnut Lake	Lone Pine	Lahser	8 1/2 Mile	10 Mile
Inkster/Lone Pine	Lone Pine	Orchard Lake	10 Mile Service Drives	E/O Woodward	I-75
Maple	Telegraph	Cranbrook	10 Mile	E/O I-75	Dequindre
Maple	E/O Middlebelt	Inkster	10 Mile Service Drives	W/O Coolidge	W/O Woodward

Missed maintenance, due to inadequate funding, has taken a great toll on roads

This is part of a guest editorial by Road Commission for Oakland County Managing Director Dennis Kolar that appeared recently in Crain's Detroit Business.

In light of the ongoing road-funding debate in our state, I am often asked what we at the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) would do differently if we had adequate funding. The answer is a great deal.

We have been underfunded for so long that we struggled to properly maintain the roads for decades. Of course, we simply haven't been able to reconstruct roads and bridges when needed either or buy new equipment when existing equipment becomes old. However, it is the routine maintenance that we have had to forego that has had the greatest impact on the system.

What many people don't realize is that you don't just build a road and then leave it alone for 30 years. Rather, for a road to last 30 years, numerous maintenance activities must occur at specific points in the life of the road.

These include crack sealing early in the road's life, as cracks begin to appear. Sealing these cracks prevents water from getting into the pavement and the base, which can quickly destroy a road.

Later, needed maintenance includes joint repairs, shoulder regraveling and grading, drainage repairs, pothole patching, simple resurfacing (over-laying with asphalt) and, finally, major resurfacing involving removal of pavement and base repair.

If all these steps are taken, at the appropriate times, a road should last its full life expectancy or more. If one or more of these steps is missed or is postponed, the result is reduced life expectancy for the road.

In recent decades, there have been numerous cases where we had to defer many maintenance steps on many roads. For example, we were forced to eliminate crack sealing altogether during the most-lean years. We have brought it back, but we cannot make up for those lost years.

The analogy I like to use is that to keep your house in good shape, there are always maintenance activities that need to be addressed. If you defer the maintenance on a house, pretty soon a small roof leak becomes damaged ceilings, damaged walls, damaged floors, etc.

The same is true of roads – deferring maintenance means when you do get to it, the work required is often much more expensive and extensive than if you had simply been able to do the routine maintenance when it was needed.

It is truly the routine maintenance that additional road funding would allow us to resume that would make the greatest difference on our roads.

Contacting RCOC

If your constituents need information about a road project or want to report a pothole, traffic-signal problem or other road issue, they should call RCOC's **Department of Customer Services** toll free at:

(877) 858-4804

OR

Fill out a report via the RCOC Web site:

www.rcocweb.org

ROAD REPORT

*Road Report is published quarterly by the Road Commission for Oakland County. Have a question or comment about **Road Report**? Call Senior Communications Manager Craig Bryson at (248) 645-2000, ext. 2302.*

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