

Down the Road



2025 Spring/Summer NEWSLETTER





A WORD FROM OUR MANAGING DIRECTOR

Travis Batholomew, Managing Director

Dear Members of the Kalamazoo County Community,

As we welcome the warmer months, I'm pleased to share our plans for the upcoming construction season. This season, we have an exciting slate of projects lined up — from resurfacing roads and upgrading culverts to improving intersections and enhancing safety features across the county. These improvements are the result of careful planning, collaboration with local agencies and townships, and the dedication of our hardworking staff. Each project represents our ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and efficient transportation network for everyone who lives, works, and travels through our communities.

Construction season also brings a renewed focus on work zone safety. Every orange cone and flashing sign marks a space where our crews are working hard — often just feet away from moving traffic. We ask for your support and vigilance as you drive through these areas. Please slow down, stay alert, and give our crews the space they need to work safely. It takes all of us to ensure that everyone gets home safely at the end of the day.

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight the power of teamwork. Whether it's our maintenance crews repairing potholes in the early morning, our engineers coordinating complex construction projects, or the residents and officials who help us identify local priorities, success is only possible when we work together. The strength of our

community partnerships is what makes progress possible, and I'm deeply grateful for your continued cooperation and support.

Let's make this construction season one of shared success — built on safety, communication, and mutual respect. We encourage you to stay connected by following project updates on our website or social media channels, and to reach out with questions or concerns.

Thank you for your patience in work zones, your feedback throughout the year, and your trust in our team. Together, we're building a better road ahead.

Sincerely,

Travis Batholomew

Managing Director Road Commission of Kalamazoo County

Road Commission of Kalamazoo County was honored with three statewide IMPRESS Awards!

Press Release Published by the Michigan County Road Association

LANSING, MI – The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) was honored with three statewide IMPRESS Awards at the 2025 County Road Association (CRA) of Michigan Highway Conference held in late

March in Lansing. IMPRESS Awards recognize county road agencies that demonstrate innovation on noteworthy projects in the categories of Communications, Operations and Collaboration.

This year, RCKC received IMPRESS Awards in:

- **COLLABORATION** for its “Davis Olmstead Project,” which showcased effective partnerships in completing a complex drain project.
- **COMMUNICATIONS** for its “Onsite Project Informational Meetings” that enhanced public engagement.
- **OPERATIONS** for its new state-of-the-art RCKC facility, boosting overall operational efficiency.

“Kalamazoo’s achievements in collaboration, communication and operations reflect a holistic commitment to innovation,” said Denise Donohue, CRA CEO. “Their proactive strategies and community engagement are setting new standards for the county road agency.”

The “Davis Olmstead Project” involved coordinated efforts with multiple stakeholders to address drainage challenges. The onsite informational meetings have increased transparency, while the new facility represents a significant leap in operational capacity. Altogether they reflect big advances for RCKC.

An independent panel of communications and operations experts from several of Michigan’s 83 county road agencies judged all IMPRESS Awards submissions. Award recipients were honored for projects that solved time constraints, labor costs, communication barriers and fostered collaboration.

The 83 members of the County Road Association of Michigan represent the unified voice for a safe and efficient county transportation infrastructure system in Michigan, including appropriate stewardship of the public’s right-of-way in rural and urban Michigan. Collectively, Michigan’s county road agencies manage 75% of all roads in the state, including 90,500 miles of roads and 5,900 bridges. County road agencies also maintain the state’s highway system in 63 counties. Michigan has the nation’s fourth-largest local road system.



Pictured above from left: Larry Stehouwer, RCKC commissioner; Travis Bartholomew, Debbie Hill, RCKC HR director; Randy Thompson, RCKC commissioner.

MEET YOUR RCKC ROAD COMMISSION LEADERS!

THE ROAD COMMISSION IS GOVERNED BY A BOARD OF FIVE ROAD COMMISSIONERS WHO REPRESENT THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, AND ARE APPOINTED BY THE KALAMAZOO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS. OUR ROAD COMMISSIONERS ANNUALLY REVIEW TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATION TO BE A LIAISON AND ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION LINK.

Meet our 2 newest commissioners in 2025!

RANDY THOMPSON

Mr. Thompson, Member, was appointed to the Road Commission in December 2024. Township liaison to Climax, Cooper, and Ross Townships.



ANDY DAVIS

Mr. Davis, Member, was appointed to the Road Commission in December 2024. Township liaison to Alamo, Charleston, and Richland Townships.



DAVID C. PAWLOSKI

Mr. Pawloski, Vice Chair, was appointed to the Road Commission in March of 2017. Township liaison for Brady, Kalamazoo, and Texas Townships.



LARRY STEHOUWER

Mr. Stehouwer, Member, was appointed to the Road Commission in March of 2017. Township liaison for Comstock, Oshtemo, and Pavilion townships.



KESHIA DICKASON

Ms. Dickason, Member, was appointed to the Road Commission in February of 2021. Township liaison for Prairie Ronde, Schoolcraft, and Wakeshma townships.



The Board's regular public meetings, are held at 3:00 p.m. on alternate Tuesdays at the Road Commission office, 4400 S 26th Street Kalamazoo, MI 49048. A meeting schedule and meeting Zoom link can be found on the Meetings tab of the RCKC website at www.kalamazooountyroads.com/meetings.php.

ROAD COMMISSION CHATS

CHECK OUT THIS COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITY ONCE EVERY OTHER MONTH ON ZOOM AND FACEBOOK!!

Connect with our team members from different departments for new perspectives each time!

Bring your road related questions! Want to know...

*How are speed limits set?

*How are road projects funded?

*How can I help slow people down on my road?

Follow us on Facebook or on RCKC Connect for updates and scheduling.



2025 RCKC Road Projects



At the County Road Commission, our top priority is maintaining a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation network for all who live, work, and travel through our communities. As we look ahead to the upcoming construction season, we're excited to share details about several key road improvement projects planned throughout the county. These projects are designed to extend the life of our roadways, reduce congestion, and enhance safety for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians alike.

We're committed to keeping residents informed every step of the way—and we appreciate your patience as we work to build better roads for everyone. Some of our biggest projects in the upcoming 2025 construction season include:

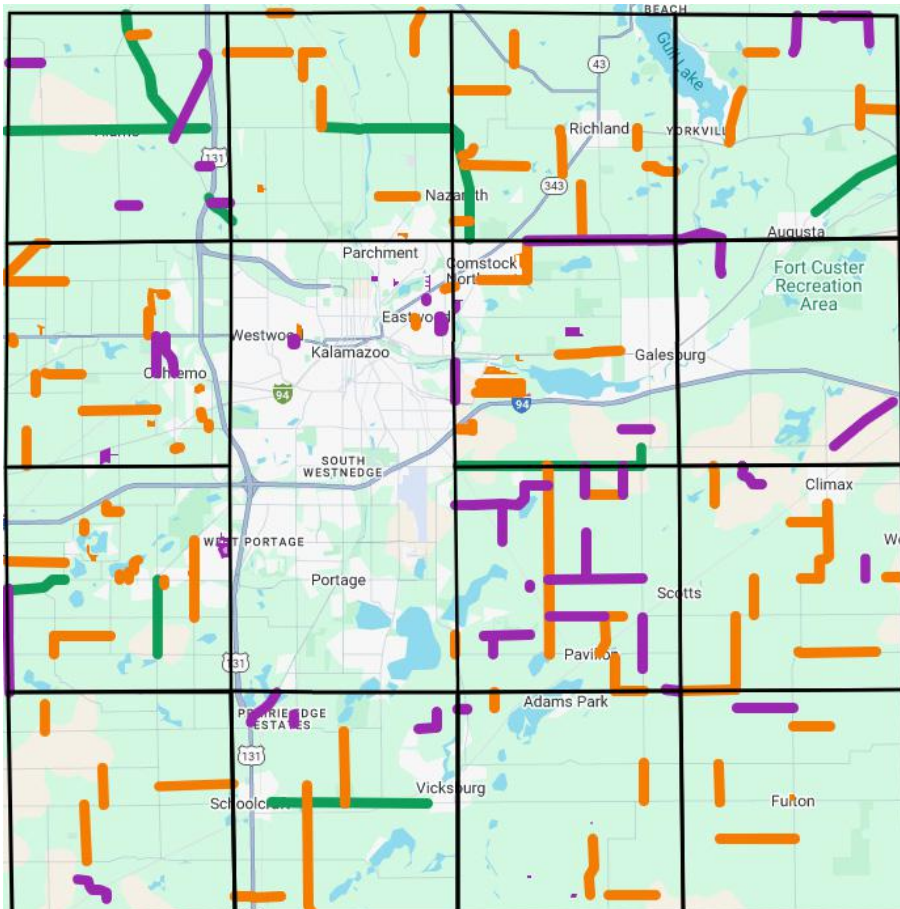


*Sprinkle Road I-94 BL to 581' north of Lake Street - Mill / Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) Overlay, Comstock Township

*G Avenue - 28th Street to 38th Street - Intersection Improvements, Richland and Ross Townships

*Q Avenue - 29th Street to 34th Street - Pulverize / HMA Overlay / Shoulder Widen, Pavilion Township

*U Avenue/23rd Street - 22nd Street to 375 ft S of TU Avenue - Tree Clearing / Drainage Improvement / Paving and Restoration, Schoolcraft Township



CHECK OUT OUR NEW INTERACTIVE MAP!



***2025 Road Projects**

***Chip Seal/Fog Seals**

***Safe Streets For All**

***Key Project Info**

***Easy to Read Format**

<https://www.kalamazooountyroads.com/projects.php>

Keeping the Public Informed: How the RCKC Communicates Road Projects

We understand that construction delays can be frustrating, especially when they come by surprise. As part of the project development process, the Road Commission works to identify potential disruptions and proactively reach out to affected communities. This includes distributing project timelines, anticipated traffic impacts, and detour routes through multiple channels.

The Road Commission uses a variety of tools to reach the public, ensuring updates are accessible and timely:

Website Updates: The Road Commission's website serves as a hub for current and upcoming project information, interactive maps, and traffic advisories. When it comes to road projects and possible traffic disruptions, there are two key areas on the website to follow; the projects tab and the News Releases Page

Projects tab: This area will provide you with information and recorded presentations of the largest/most potentially disruptive projects of the 2025 construction season, including timelines, project details, contacts, and more. This page also includes a list of all 2025 Local Primary Construction Season Projects. Below this is the 2025-2029 Primary Road Capital Improvement Plan, which can help provide a tentative plan for the coming years as well.

<https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/projects.php>

News Release page, found under the About Us tab: News releases allow us to provide the most comprehensive timely information. Once a week, a News Release is published that details the progress of all projects currently in the construction phase, as well as a tentative idea of what to expect in the near future of each project.

<https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/news.php>

Social Media: Platforms like Facebook, X, and Instagram allow for real-time updates, detour notifications, and daily project lists. We will also provide photos, relevant community information, safety tips, and much more

<https://www.facebook.com/Kalamazoocountyroads>

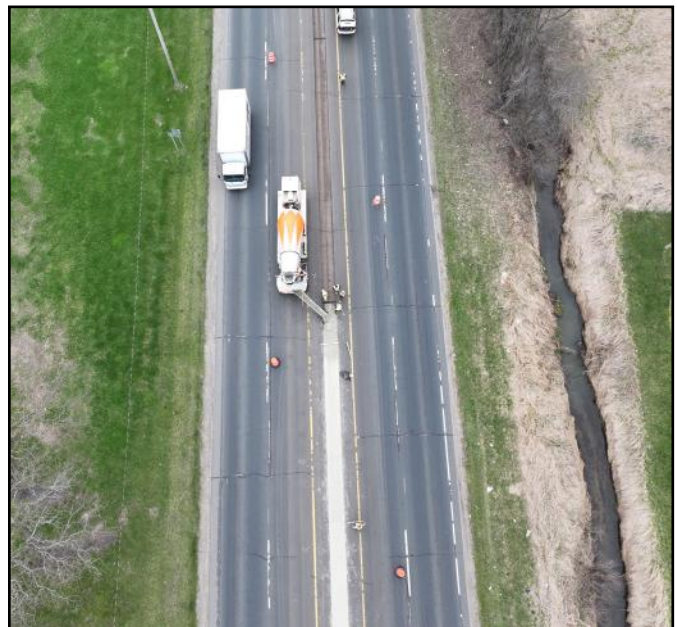
<https://x.com/RCKCROADS>

Email and Text Alerts: Residents can subscribe to project-specific alerts that deliver information directly to their inbox or mobile device with RCKC Connect. You can customize your notifications by type, area, and more.

<https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/contact.php>

Media Coordination: Local news outlets are kept in the loop through press releases and interviews, helping extend the reach of key messages.

Community Meetings and Public Notices: For larger or long-term projects, the Road Commission hosts in-person meetings at a venue near the project to give information and answer questions. Residents near the projects are invited via postcards. You can find the recording from those meetings on the Projects page.



Road Commissions Face a Fiscal Cliff: What It Means



Across Michigan, local road commissions are discussing an impending financial crisis — a so-called fiscal cliff that threatens the future of road maintenance, repair, and infrastructure development. This looming shortfall is not just a bureaucratic issue; it has real consequences for drivers, businesses, and communities that rely on safe, functional roads.

What Is the Fiscal Cliff?

In this context, the fiscal cliff refers to the expected drop-off in available funding for local road commissions in the coming years. Many commissions have been relying on temporary funding boosts — such as federal COVID-19 relief dollars, one-time infrastructure grants, or additional allocations from the Michigan Transportation Fund — to sustain operations, improve road quality, and manage rising costs. But as those sources dry up and costs continue to climb, road agencies are approaching a financial edge where expenses outpace revenues.

Why Michigan Road Commissions Are at Risk

Aging Infrastructure: Much of Michigan's road network was built decades ago and is reaching the end of its usable life. Rebuilding these roads is significantly more expensive than routine maintenance.

Inflation and Material Costs: The cost of asphalt, concrete, fuel, equipment, and labor has skyrocketed since the pandemic, driving up the price of road projects beyond what was originally budgeted.

Flat or Declining Revenue: While Michigan's fuel tax and vehicle registration fees are primary funding sources, these revenues are relatively flat — and in some areas, declining — due to improved fuel efficiency, increased adoption of electric vehicles, and inflation's erosion of purchasing power.

Temporary Funding Sources Are Ending: Federal relief funds and state budget surpluses that once provided a temporary cushion are ending. Once they're gone, many road commissions will face budget shortfalls with no long-term replacement in sight.

Real-World Consequences

If the fiscal cliff becomes a reality, Michigan residents could face:

More potholes and fewer repairs: Without adequate funds, routine maintenance will be delayed or limited, leading to more road hazards and longer repair timelines.

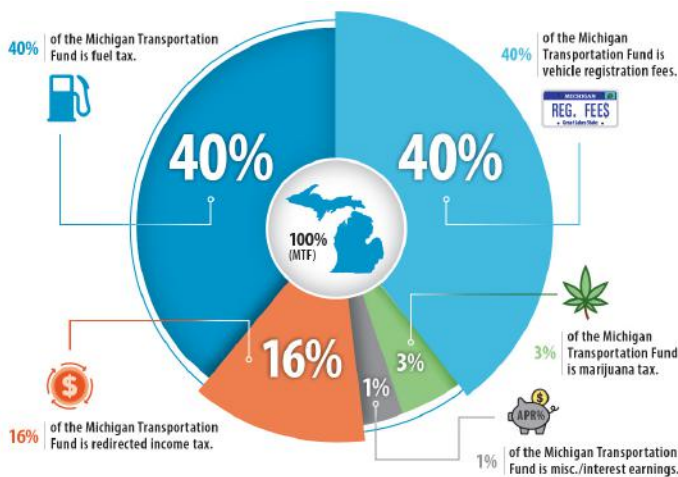
Project cancellations: New construction projects or major reconstructions may be shelved, even if they're urgently needed.

Worsening road conditions: Michigan already ranks among the worst states for road quality — a funding cliff could further erode the system.

Safety concerns: Poor road conditions increase crash risks, especially in rural or high-traffic areas.

Economic impacts: Businesses depend on reliable infrastructure for logistics and workforce mobility. Deteriorating roads can hurt local economies and drive up transportation costs.

Michigan's Current Transportation Fund Sources



What Can Be Done? We Can Fix this!

Solving the road funding crisis will require a mix of short- and long-term strategies:

State-level policy reform: Lawmakers may need to revisit how road funding is collected and distributed, potentially restructuring the gas tax model or adding alternative revenue sources like mileage-based fees for EVs.

Local funding mechanisms: Some counties are considering local road millages or bonding proposals to raise necessary funds.

Innovation and efficiency: Road commissions are exploring cost-saving technologies and more efficient maintenance strategies to stretch existing dollars.

Public awareness and support: Voter-approved funding measures require strong public understanding of the stakes. Transparency about the funding gap and its consequences will be essential.

Conclusion

Michigan's road commissions are standing at a crossroads. Without action, the fiscal cliff could lead to widespread deterioration of the state's road network, affecting every Michigander who drives, bikes, or relies on road-based services. Addressing this crisis will require thoughtful policy changes, public engagement, and investment in long-term solutions. Together, we can bridge this fiscal cliff. The roads we drive on tomorrow depend on the decisions made today.

Work Zone Safety is Top of Mind as Road Construction Season Begins

Orange barrels, cones and signs are popping up across the state like flowers in springtime, signaling the start of a new construction season. For Michigan drivers, orange cones are a signal to be extra cautious when navigating work zones. While these zones are essential for improving transportation systems, they can also pose significant safety risks for both motorists and workers. Understanding and practicing road work zone safety is critical to prevent accidents and save lives. Patience can run thin, or drivers can be tempted by distractions. Both can lead to crashes, injuries and deaths for road workers. It only takes a split second of distraction to change lives forever.

Safety Tips for Drivers

Stay alert, minimize distractions

Avoid using cell phones or engaging in activities that take your eyes off the road.

Obey all posted signs and flaggers

Signage and traffic control personnel are there to guide you safely through the zone.

Reduce your speed

Slower speeds give you more time to respond to unexpected changes or obstacles.

Maintain a safe following distance

Rear-end collisions are common in work zones, often due to sudden stops.

Be patient and expect delays

Planning ahead and allowing extra travel time can reduce the temptation to speed or drive aggressively.

Watch for workers and equipment

Keep an eye out for people working near or on the road, and yield when necessary.



We've already seen a very dangerous work zone incident this year. Significant damage was done to the fresh concrete median on Sprinkle Road in April as a driver decided to pull a U turn in the wet concrete. Construction delays are frustrating, but actions like these require rework, which adds even more time to the project. The damage is also costly to fix—funds that could have gone toward other important road improvements.

This situation also comes as a disappointment to the team members that worked hard on this project, as well as grave concerns, because this incident happened near where workers were present. Respect construction zones and our public service work and workers. Everyone deserves to go home safe at the end of the day.

If you see vandalism taking place on county roads, projects, bridges, signs, etc., PLEASE call law enforcement to file a report. Thank you for your cooperation!





FAQ Corner



Does RCKC remove dead animals from the road or side of the road?

If a dead animal is causing a road hazard, or blocking the traveled portion of the road; RCKC crews will move the dead animal off the road and let nature take its course. Our crews will make an effort, if we find a tag or telephone number, to contact the owner of a domestic dead animal. We will not dispose of any dead animals.

I'm fixing up my property. I want to plant some trees along the road. Is that OK?

Trees do add beauty, color and character to our roadsides, but if they're too close to the road edge, they can be both hazardous and a potential liability for property owners, utilities and the Road Commission. We've prepared a brochure that provides guidelines on the roadside planting of trees and shrubs, explaining what will not only meet requirements but also improve the likelihood of tree survival and reduced maintenance as the tree matures. (See Guidelines for Planting Trees and Shrubs Near Roads Maintained by the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County on our website under Resources.)

People are speeding on our road. How do I get the speed limit lowered?

Changing a speed limit is not a whimsical process. Any decision regarding speed limits must be based on facts and an objective analysis of the characteristics of the roadway. When a request is received to lower the speed limit on a county road, the township, the Road Commission and the Michigan State Police (Establishing Speed Limits) work together to conduct studies such as speed studies, accident analyses, and driving environment surveys. Recommendation is made based on an objective analysis of all the data collected. (See Speed Limits Brochure.)

Keep in Touch With Us!

269-381-3171

4400 S 26th Street

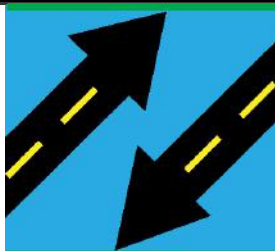
Kalamazoo, MI 49048

www.kalamazoocountyroads.com

Regular Business Hours: 7:30am - 4:00pm

Sign up for RCKC CONNECT!

CONNECT TO ROAD COMMISSION
OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY ALERTS



RCKC CONNECT

To Sign Up Visit: www.kalamazoocountyroads.com

HAVE YOU SIGNED UP?

Receive Message Alerts for:

- ◆ Road Construction
- ◆ Road Closures/Detours
- ◆ General Public News



RCKC CONNECT is a mass notification service that allows RCKC to send citizens voice and/or text messages to home phones, businesses, local agencies and mobile phones in just minutes regarding road closures, detours, and road construction projects. Citizens can choose to receive notifications about RCKC events that may affect their home, workplace, schools and more. RCKC CONNECT is also a great way for the RCKC to remind citizens of upcoming public meetings and RCKC General News.