

Roads and bridges.

We can't take them for granted, assuming that because they've always been here, they always will be.

As your local road professionals, our goal is to provide safe and convenient roads—a goal that is only reached with proper funding at both state and national levels to ensure equitable distribution of road dollars to local agencies.

Our infrastructure is like our homes—both are investments. To protect these investments, we must creatively seek the necessary dollars to fund road and bridge maintenance and improvements.

Kalamazoo County Road Commission projects are funded in several ways:

- ◆ Michigan fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees
- ◆ Special assessment districts
- ◆ Economic development funds
- ◆ Local Bridge Fund dollars
- ◆ Surface Transportation Program funds
- ◆ Cost-sharing with townships

This brochure has been prepared to explain how these funds are secured and how they are used.

For more information

If you have further questions about county road or bridge funding, we invite you to call us or visit our offices between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

We also encourage you to attend any hearings or informational meetings on road or bridge projects in your area. We'd like to get to know you, update you on the projects and discuss any concerns you may have about them.

All programs, activities and services are provided equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin or handicap.



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FUNDING

County Roads and Bridges



(269) 381-3171

Michigan fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees

State fuel taxes and vehicle registration fee revenues are assigned to the Michigan Transportation Fund, established by Public Act 51. This act also provides for distribution of funds, by formula, to the Michigan Department of Transportation, county road commissions, cities, villages and public transit providers. These funds are the main source of operating revenue for the Kalamazoo County Road Commission. The Road Commission has no taxing authority and does not receive any revenue directly from property taxes.

PA 51 is dynamic legislation that has been amended more than six dozen times since 1951 to reflect the changing needs of the Michigan transportation network. The last increase in the current state gas tax rate of 19¢ per gallon occurred in 1997, while the last increase in the current diesel fuel tax rate of 15¢ per gallon occurred in 1984.

The proper funding of road maintenance and road improvements is a statewide issue with local implications. While many states also charge tolls on some of their highways, Michigan doesn't have a single toll road.

Above all, the fuel tax is a fair tax because the people who use the roads pay for them.

Special assessment districts

In certain situations, the special assessment process for a particular project, such as road paving, provides for contributions from the property owners who will benefit from the project.

Special assessment districts are set up in two ways:

◆ Landowner petition

Property owners representing a minimum of 51 percent of the front footage along a section of road sign a petition asking that the road be improved. The Board of County Road

Commissioners verifies the need, develops specifications and costs, and holds public hearings to receive citizen comments and to adopt the assessment roll.

◆ Township board resolution

In the case of a township-initiated petition, two public hearings are held. In the first hearing, the need is determined and the property owners are given an opportunity to petition against the project if they so desire. Property owners representing at least 51 percent of the front footage along the road in question must sign the discontinuance. The second hearing is held to receive citizen comments and to adopt the assessment roll.

Both types of districts have been established in Kalamazoo County in recent years. For more detailed information on the special assessment process, call the Road Commission office.

Economic development funds

The Transportation Economic Development Fund, or TEDF, includes state dollars authorized by the Transportation Economic Development Fund Act and administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The Road Commission applies for TEDF assistance for three types of projects:

- ◆ Projects related to economic development opportunities in one of the following target industries: agriculture or food processing, tourism, forestry, high-technology research, manufacturing, or office centers with certain specifications.
- ◆ Improvements to expand the all-season road network and avoid disruptions that result from seasonal load restrictions.
- ◆ Improvements to upgrade roads that are rural urban links, thereby improving safety and all-season capabilities on routes with heavy commercial traffic.

Twenty percent of a given TEDF project's cost must come from local monies.

Local Bridge Fund dollars

County road commissions, cities and villages receive these state and federal monies to help fund the replacement of bridges that cannot safely carry today's traffic because they are structurally or functionally deficient. As these funds are limited, they are awarded on a competitive basis.

Surface Transportation Program funds

Some federal road funding is provided under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or SAFETEA-LU. These dollars are awarded on a competitive basis. Also, county road commissions must provide matching funds to cover 20 percent of the actual road construction cost.

Cost-sharing with the townships

Townships may apply to the Road Commission annually for participation funds to cover preventative maintenance, structural-preservation improvement construction, or special-assessment projects on the local road system. These funds are based on each township's population and the number of miles of local roads.

To receive these dollars, a township must provide matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis. This match money can come from the township's own funds, from a special millage for roads, from property owners' special assessment payments or from unique private/public contributions.

The Road Commission sets the total amount of participation funds on an annual basis.