



Road Commission
of Kalamazoo County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Federal Funding Awarded for Fire Department Traffic Signal Preemption Devices in Comstock Township

KALAMAZOO, MI- The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) was approved for federal funding through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in the amount of \$333,000. This funding is the first of its kind in Michigan to be awarded for this type of Highway Safety Improvement Program project to an agency. The RCKC was notified of the award on December 2, 2020. The project, approved for fiscal year 2022, is a collaborative effort between the RCKC and Comstock Township.

The devices use Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking to communicate to the traffic signals to adjust traffic patterns, essentially flushing out the area to give the fire department improved response times, improved safety, and reduced liability. This means when a Comstock Township fire truck or emergency response vehicle approaches the upgraded signal the light would be shifted to green for them and cross-traffic would be halted. This would reduce both head-on and side-impact crashes.

“What really drove [me] to pursue this technology in the Township is the limited sight intersections along Sprinkle Road,” shared Matt Beauchamp, Fire Chief for Comstock Township. “We regularly cross Sprinkle Road for emergency responses and many times motorists on Sprinkle Road are caught by surprise when we approach an intersection. Our Township Superintendent, Scott Hess, worked with us to secure funding and our Township board unanimously voted in support of the project. The project calls for all signal-controlled intersections in the Township, including our borders, and all department owned vehicles to be outfitted with the technology.” In addition to reduced collisions and emergency response times, the technology is expected to save wear and tear on department vehicles by minimizing aggressive stops and turns at signal-controlled intersections.

“Introducing this new technology and partnering with the Comstock Township Fire Department for implementation is another innovative and collaborative attempt by RCKC to promote safety on our roadways in Kalamazoo County,” states Jim Hoekstra, RCKC Traffic and Project Engineer. “We hope that showcasing this technology and the benefits to safety and improved responsiveness with Comstock Township may lead to other emergency service implementations in the county.” The scope of work for the grant includes the installation of the signal upgrade at 20 signals in Comstock Township and 15 vehicle kits for emergency response vehicles. Because the funding is awarded for fiscal year 2022 the construction will not begin until that year. Impacts to traffic during construction are expected to be minimal.



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The RCKC has served as the local road professionals of Kalamazoo County since 1909. RCKC remains committed to our goal of using our expertise, energy, and funds to provide the safest and most convenient road system possible, and to contribute to economic development and high quality of life throughout the county.

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