

# Road Report

A publication of the Road Commission for Oakland County for public officials serving Oakland County [www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org)

## RCOC Board approves \$100.8 million 2015 budget

The Board of Oakland County Road Commissioners, on Sept. 25, approved the \$100.8 million Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) fiscal year 2015 budget.

The 2015 budget represents a decrease in revenues and expenditures of about \$7.2 million compared to the \$108 million 2014 budget. The 2015 budget is less than the 2014 budget primarily due to an anticipated decrease in federal road funding.

Federal funds are awarded on a project-by-project basis, and the amount RCOC receives fluctuates from year to year. These funds cannot be used for routine road maintenance (pothole patching, gravel road grading, snow plowing, etc.).

The budget includes work on road improvement projects with a total value of more than \$44 million (many of the projects include expenses spread over several budget years).

RCOC's fiscal year runs Oct. 1 to Sept. 30.

RCOC anticipates receiving \$61.3 million in state revenues in fiscal year 2015, compared to \$58.7 million in the current fiscal year. State revenues, derived primarily

from the state-collected fuel taxes and vehicle-registration fees, are RCOC's largest source of funding and the main funding source for RCOC operations. In 2015 RCOC expects to receive approximately the same amount of state revenues that it received 12 years ago in 2003.

"We are committed to fiscal responsibility," RCOC Board Chairman Greg Jamian said. He noted the Road Commission has gone to great lengths to improve its operational efficiency so it can stretch available dollars as far as possible.

"We're pleased we will receive a bit more state-collected funding for 2015 than in 2014, but that slight increase will not offset the cost increases we have seen for materials and equipment," RCOC Vice-Chairman Ron Fowkes said. He added RCOC currently has 185 fewer staff members than in 2007, a reduction of nearly 35 percent.

"Today, we have fewer employees than at any time since the 1950s, when the county had half the population it has today, there were far fewer road lanes and traffic volumes were one fifth what they

are today," noted RCOC Board Member Eric Wilson.

"While years of declining budgets have taken a serious toll on the Road Commission," RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar said, "we have also taken many steps to become more efficient and to cut costs. It's true we are not able to do as much as we did in the past, but we are now using the available resources much more efficiently than ever before. That's a tribute to the commitment and dedication of the Road Commission employees."

Among the road projects planned for 2015 are:

- ▶ Completion of the widening of Tienken Road from 2 lanes to 3 from Rochester Road west to the Paint Creek Trail in Rochester Hills
  - ▶ Paving the gravel portion of Clyde Road from Tipsico Lake Road to east of Hickory Ridge in Highland Township
  - ▶ Reconstructing Milford Road from Pontiac Trail to the Milford Village limits in Milford Township
  - ▶ Concrete pavement repair on Greenfield Road near 10 Mile Road on
- CONT'D ON PAGE 2. SEE BUDGET**

## RCOC Board honors long-serving counsel

Long-time Road Commission General Counsel Pat Carty on Sept. 1 closed the book on a nearly 40-year career at the agency.

Carty is respected across the state as one of the foremost experts in the area of road-related law. During his career he worked with numerous local, county and state officials and attorneys on road-related matters.

Carty started at



*RCOC Board Members (left to right) Ron Fowkes, Greg Jamian and Eric Wilson present a retirement resolution to Carty (second from right).*

RCOC in 1977 as a staff attorney in the Legal Dept. For many years, he chaired

the County Road Association of Michigan's Legal Affairs Committee.

## What's Inside

Breaking ground on "triangle" project . . . .2

Road Improvement Program for 2015 . . .3

Crews clean up from historic floods . . . . .4

New SAD brochure . . .4

## Officials break ground on next phase of Northwestern Connector project

On July 29, the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) marked the official start of work on the long-awaited 14 Mile Road/Orchard Lake Road/Northwestern Highway "triangle" project on the West Bloomfield Township/Farmington Hills border.

The project, which will be constructed over two years, will include a roundabout at the 14 Mile/Orchard Lake intersection, the realignment of 14 Mile Road east of Northwestern Highway and the reconstruction of Northwestern Highway, 14 Mile and Orchard Lake in the triangle area.

The realignment of 14 Mile Road east of Northwestern Highway will be completed this year, with the rest of the work to take place in 2015. During this year's work, 14 Mile Road is closed on the east side of Northwestern Highway. The realigned Fourteen Mile will curve south and intersect Northwestern Highway south of the current intersection.

"We have been planning this work for many years as part of the Northwestern Connector project," stated RCOC Chairman Greg Jamian. "This is one of the most significant projects we have taken on in recent years. Once completed, it will help improve traffic flow and safety and reduce gridlock in the area."

For the ground-breaking ceremony, RCOC leaders were joined by officials from the City of Farmington Hills and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) as well as State Senator Mike Kowall and State Rep. Vicki Barnett.

This year's work is expected to be completed in November. Work will then resume in spring 2015. The detour route for this year's 14 Mile Road work is Middlebelt Road to Northwestern Highway and back to 14 Mile and vice versa.

"We recognize that this work is causing inconvenience for motorists," stated



*Shown above at the ground-breaking ceremony are (L-R): Farmington Hills City Manager Steve Brock, RCOC Commissioner Eric Wilson, State Senator Mike Kowall, RCOC Vice-Chairman Ron Fowkes, State Representative Vicki Barnett, Farmington Hills Mayor Barry Brickner, MDOT Oakland Transportation Service Center Manager Sandy Montes, RCOC Chairman Greg Jamian and RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar.*

RCOC Vice Chairman Ron Fowkes. "We ask for their patience -- it will be worth it when it's done."

The Northwestern Connector project is a partnership of RCOC, MDOT, West Bloomfield Township and the City of Farmington Hills that involves road improvements intended to help move traffic as Northwestern Highway would have if it had been constructed beyond Orchard Lake Road as originally planned in the 1950s. Previously constructed Northwestern Connector project improvements include the roundabouts at 14 Mile and Farmington, Maple and Drake and Maple and Farmington as well as the widening of 14 Mile to three lanes west of Orchard Lake.

The Northwestern Connector project has included significant input from the public and local governments over many years through numerous public meetings

and hearings. That input led to the plan that is now being implemented.

"We received more public input on this project design than probably any other project RCOC has ever undertaken," stated Road Commissioner Eric Wilson. "This project design truly represents the voice of the residents of these communities."

The project is expected to cost approximately \$13 million to construct. Approximately \$9 million will be covered with federal dollars. MDOT is contributing \$1.5 million and the two communities (West Bloomfield Twp. and Farmington Hills) and the Road Commission are adding \$3 million collectively.

The Northwestern Connector project was conceived in the 1990s as a way to address traffic congestion caused by the dead-ending of Northwestern Highway at Orchard Lake Road.

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### **BUDGET -- CONT'D FROM FRONT**

the Southfield/Oak Park border. RCOC Chairman Jamian explained the proposed 2015 budget represents the agency's efforts to cut costs where possible while impacting services as little as possible. "We are calling on our employees to continually try to find ways to do more with less or at least to maintain the highest possible level of service with fewer resources and less staff."

Managing Director Kolar noted despite

the road-funding crisis, RCOC remains committed to customer service. "We will continue to do everything we can, with the resources available, to meet the needs of our customers," he stated.

"We are charged by the public with using their money to accomplish the greatest good on the county road system. We take that responsibility very seriously."

*The 2015 Road Improvement Program (the complete list of projects expected to be built in 2015) is on page 3.*

### **Roads & Risk Reserve projects in full swing**

The Road Commission has pulled out all the stops to ensure its projects funded with state Roads and Risk Reserve Fund dollars are underway this year. The funds, which were not allocated until July, were intended to be used this year. However, because of the lateness of the allocation, some agencies deferred the projects until next year.

# 2015 RCOC Road Improvement Program

This list Includes only projects that will be constructed in 2015, not those where design or right of way work is planned for 2015, but where construction will occur in a later year. To avoid confusion over project costs, the costs listed are the estimated construction costs for each project, and do not include any preliminary engineering or right of way acquisition costs.

<u>PROJECT TYPE</u>	<u>PROJECT COST</u>
<b><u>Safety Widenings</u></b>	
▶ Tienken, Paint Creek Trail to Rochester in Rochester Hills (2 lanes to 3)	\$7.9 million
▶ Haggerty, north of Pontiac Trail to Richardson, Commerce Twp. (add center left-turn lane)	\$3.2 million
▶ 14 Mile/Orchard Lake/Northwestern Highway on West Bloomfield Twp./Farmington Hills border (construct roundabout/reconstruct roads)	\$12.8 million
<b>Total Safety Widenings:</b>	<b>\$23.9 million</b>
<b><u>Reconstruct/Replace</u></b> (completely reconstruct or replace an existing road)	
▶ South Hill, Grand River to I-96 in Lyon Twp.	\$1.2 million
<b>Total Reconstruct/Replace:</b>	<b>\$1.2 million</b>
<b><u>Repair, Rehabilitate and Resurface</u></b> (repair road base & add 3 or 4 inches of new asphalt to existing lanes)	
▶ Lahser, 13 Mile to Maple in Beverly Hills and Bloomfield Twp.	\$3.2 million
▶ Milford, Pontiac Trail to Milford Village limits in Milford Twp.	\$5.6 million
<b>Total Repair, Rehabilitate and Resurface:</b>	<b>\$8.8 million</b>
<b><u>Concrete Slab Replacement</u></b>	
▶ Greenfield, near 10 Mile on the Southfield/Oak Park border	\$500,000
<b>Total Concrete Slab Replacement</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b><u>Pave Gravel Road</u></b> (provide paved surface on currently unpaved road)	
▶ Clyde, Tipsico Lake Rd. to Hickory Ridge in Highland Twp.	\$3 million
▶ Griswold, 8 Mile to 9 Mile in Lyon Twp.	\$2.5 million
<b>Total Pave Gravel:</b>	<b>\$5.5 million</b>
<b><u>Bridge Maintenance</u></b>	
▶ Grand River over the CSX railroad in Novi	\$450,000
▶ 10 Mile over the Rouge River in Southfield	\$150,000
▶ 10 Mile over the Pebble Creek in Southfield	\$150,000
▶ Cooley Lake over the Clinton River in Waterford Twp.	\$ 50,000
▶ Elizabeth Lake over Clinton River in Waterford Twp.	\$ 50,000
▶ Walton over the Clinton River in Waterford Twp.	\$ 50,000
▶ Andersonville over the Clinton River in Independence Twp.	\$ 50,000
▶ Andersonville over the Clinton River in Independence Twp.	\$ 50,000
<b>Total Bridge Maintenance:</b>	<b>\$1 million</b>
<b><u>Culvert Replacement</u></b>	
▶ Snell over the McClure Drain in Oakland Twp.	\$300,000
▶ 11 Mile over the Blackwood Drain in Lyon Twp.	\$400,000
▶ Fish Lake over Swartz Creek in Holly Twp.	\$700,000
▶ Maybee over the Sashabaw Creek in Independence Twp.	\$500,000
<b>Total Culvert Replacement:</b>	<b>\$1.9 million</b>
<b><u>Relocation</u></b> (shifting the location of a road)	
▶ Court Tower Blvd. South on the Oakland County government campus in Waterford Twp.	\$1.5 million
<b>Total Relocation:</b>	<b>\$1.5 million</b>
<b>Total cost of projects to be under construction in 2015:</b>	<b>\$44.3 million</b>

## RCOC crews key to cleanup of I-75 and I-696 after historic flood

While I-696 and I-75 are state highways under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), when both roads flooded at the place where they intersect on Aug. 11 following the historic torrential rains, it was the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) who was called to clean things up.

In fact, while MDOT was in charge of the massive cleanup efforts, it was the staff of RCOC's Troy and Southfield garages who were on the scene figuring out how to remove literally tons of muck and debris from the freeways and get



*RCOC trucks on scene on I-75 during the cleanup efforts.*

them driveable again.

The RCOC crews even worked around

the clock, staying on site until both free-ways were clear and ready to re-open. It was the Road Commission that coordinated with the Hazel Park Fire Department to do a final hose-down of the roads to make sure all the muck was gone.

"I'm very proud of the work the RCOC crews did to get those roads open," Maintenance Director Darryl Heid said.

In addition to the work on I-75 and I-696, several RCOC drivers and dump trucks also spent several days this month helping to clean up the debris left from the flood in Huntington Woods and Hazel Park.

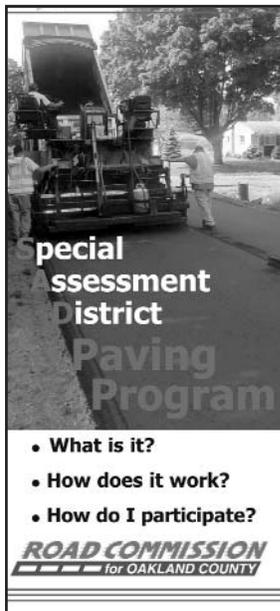
## RCOC publishes updated SAD brochure

The Road Commission has produced an updated brochure explaining the special assessment district paving process for residents of subdivision streets in townships.

The Road Commission does not receive enough funding to pay for the resurfacing of paved subdivision roads or the paving of gravel sub streets. Consequently, agency policy has long required subdivision homeowners to pay for paving or resurfacing projects through a special tax assessment.

The brochure walks homeowners through the SAD process, including explaining how to initiate an SAD project and what the homeowners should expect. It also outlines the requirements that must be met in order for an SAD project to proceed.

Copies of the brochure are available by contacting RCOC Public Information officer Craig Bryson at 248-645-2000, ext. 2302 or via e-mail at [cbryson@rcoc.org](mailto:cbryson@rcoc.org).



*The new SAD brochure.*

Visit RCOC online at  
[www.rcocweb.org](http://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 Public Information Officer Craig Bryson at (248) 645-2000, ext. 2302 or send him an e-mail at [cbryson@rcoc.org](mailto:cbryson@rcoc.org).

### Board of Road Commissioners:

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*Ronald J. Fowkes, Vice Chairman*

*Eric S. Wilson, Commissioner*

*Dennis G. Kolar, PE, Managing Director*

*Gary Piotrowicz, PE, PTOE, Dep. Managing Dir./  
County Highway Engineer*

**Have a question for RCOC? Call:**  
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**(877) 858-4804 or visit RCOC online at**  
[www.rcocweb.org](http://www.rcocweb.org)

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