



Roads in Review

The Washtenaw County Road Commission's Newsletter

Winter 2017/2018 | wcroads.org | facebook.com/washtenawroads | [@washtenawroads](https://twitter.com/washtenawroads)

Construction, Winter Maintenance, Permits...Oh My!

By Roy Townsend, Managing Director

It has been another busy autumn at the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC). We have been busy finishing our road construction, starting early winter maintenance and upgrading our transportation permit process.

We were able to finish almost all of our planned construction work before the end of the year, including opening the Shield Road Bridge in Scio Township at the end of October and the Ridge Road Bridge in York Township in early November. *Read more about our construction projects on page 2.*

This Fall also marked the one-year anniversary of the four-year millage passed by Washtenaw County voters last November. Revenues generated for WCRC from this millage are expected to be around \$3.3 million. With these funds, we have been able to improve more than 50 miles of road across the county, in just one year. *Read more about these projects on page 3.*

December has already proven to be a snowy month, the county experienced its first major winter event during the week of December 11. During this week, we used more than 9,200,000 pounds of salt, and our plow truck drivers worked around the clock to clear snow and ice from nearly 1,700 miles of county roads and 580 lane-miles of state highways. *Read more about our winter maintenance tools on page 4.*

We have also been preparing for changes to our transportation permit process. Starting January 3, 2018, all permits will be submitted online through Oxcart Permit Systems. We are hopeful that this new process will increase efficiency for us and the carriers requesting permits. *Learn more about these changes on page 5.*

Lastly, we would like to congratulate MDOT for the opening of Flex Route 23 in Washtenaw County. While motorists are still getting acclimated to the new configuration, we have already seen improvements to rush-hour congestion. This new layout also means a new pattern for snow plowing US-23 during the winter, *read more on page 6.*

As you can see, we have had a great year and are looking forward to 2018. Thanks for your support. Happy Holidays!



Shield Road and Bridge - Before



Shield Road and Bridge - After

In this Issue:



2017 Construction and Millage Summary



Winter Maintenance Overview



Changes coming to WCRC Transportation Permits



Flex Route 23 Opens in Washtenaw County

2017 Construction Summary

WCRC staff and contractors had another very successful construction season this year. They completed roadway improvements throughout the county, including safety enhancements, preventative maintenance, and total intersection, road and bridge reconstruction.

Bridge and Culvert Work

WCRC is responsible for the maintenance of more than 2,000 culverts and 119 bridges. Many of these structures were built in the early 1900s. Each year, WCRC performs preventative maintenance on bridges and culverts with available resources. However, a structure must be completely replaced if it is deemed structurally unsound during WCRC's routine inspections. Here are just a few examples of this work:



Weber Road

Lodi Township

Replacement of culvert west of Dell Road.



Ridge Road Bridge

York Township

Replacement of bridge over Macon Creek and resurfacing of road to Mooreville Road.



Cherry Hill Road

Superior Township

Replacement of culvert and placement of 900 tons of limestone.

Other Projects:

Currie Road Culvert,
Northfield Township

Geddes Road Culvert,
Superior Township

Pleasant Lake Road Culvert,
Saline Township

Resurfacing

WCRC is responsible for the maintenance of nearly 1,700 miles of county roads, paved and unpaved. On paved roads, WCRC can pulverize and resurface or mill and resurface to create a smooth driving surface. For unpaved roads, WCRC can add tons of limestone and grade the road for a smoother road surface. Here are just a few examples of this work:



Parker Road

Scio Township

Pulverize and resurface from Jerusalem Road to Jackson Road.



Willow Road

Saline and York Township

11,000 tons of limestone from Macon Road to Maple Road.



Austin Road

Bridgewater Township

Mill and resurface from Ernst Road to Schneider Road.

Other Projects:

8 Mile Road Mill and
Resurface,
Northfield Township

Harris Road Mill and
Resurface,
Ypsilanti Township

Bethel Church Road
Limestone Haul,
Freedom Township

Jennings Road
Limestone Haul,
Webster Township

Chip Sealing

Also known as tar and gravel, chip sealing is a relatively low-cost surface treatment that prevents water from seeping into the roadways, which helps prevent potholes. A chip seal can help extend the life of a road by 3-7 years. WCRC applies this treatment to roads that are in relatively good shape to help protect the surface. Here are just a few examples of this work:



North Territorial Road

Salem Township

Chip seal from Dixboro Road to Tower Road.



Pleasant Lake Road

Sharon Township

Chip seal from M-52 to the Freedom Township border.



Ellsworth Road

Pittsfield Township

Chip seal from State Road to South Maple Road.

Other Projects:

Clinton Road,
Bridgewater Township

Island Lake Road,
Dexter Township

Bush Road,
Sylvan Township

Baker Road,
Scio Township

Year 1 - Four Year Millage Summary

2017 Highlights

50
miles

EXTRA MILES

The millage funded more than 50 miles of road improvements throughout the county.

37,000
tons

LIMESTONE HAULS

The millage funded 37,000 tons of limestone for gravel roads in 2017.

27
projects

ROAD PROJECTS

The millage funded 27 projects in 2017.

30,000
tons

TONS OF ASPHALT

The millage funded resurfacing that used nearly 30,000 tons of asphalt.



Have you seen this sign?

These signs indicate that a road project was funded with local dollars generated from the millage.

A Few Projects

East Shore Drive

Northfield Township

Main Street to the County Line - pulverize and resurface. Est. cost: \$350,000



Before



After

MacArthur Blvd

Superior Township

Harris Road to Wiard Road - pulverize and resurface. Est. cost: \$270,000



Before

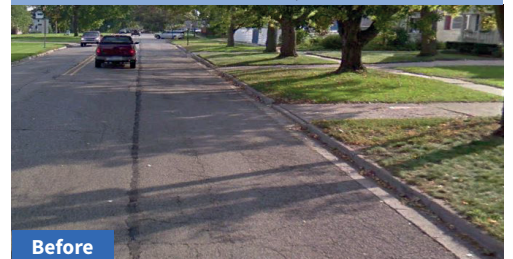


After

Harris Road

Ypsilanti Township

Grove Road to Ecorse Road - mill and resurface. Est. cost: \$310,000



Before



After

Liberty Road

City of Ann Arbor

Main Street to First Street- reconstruction. Est. cost: \$650,000



Before



After

Clark Road

Ann Arbor and Pittsfield Townships

Hogback Road to Golfside Road - mill and resurface. Est. cost: \$285,000



Before



After

Miller Road

City of Ann Arbor

M-14 to Maple Road - mill and resurface. Est. cost: \$250,000



Before



After

Winter Maintenance

The Nitty Gritty - Plows, Salt and Grit

The leaves have fallen and the flurries are flying...winter is upon us. Every winter, WCRC is responsible for maintaining nearly 1,700 miles of county roads and 580 lane miles of state highways throughout the county. This is not a simple task. WCRC has many tools in its arsenal to keep the roads safe for the traveling public and it is up to the Operations team to apply the right tool at the right time.

Here is a summary of the different tools WCRC is planning to use this winter and the ideal conditions for each.

Snow Plows

The WCRC has 46 heavy trucks that are outfitted for winter maintenance. These trucks are located across the county, ready to respond in a winter storm.

Front Plow - Used only during large snow storms or when there are drifts to cut through.

Wing Plow - This can be deployed to extend the width the truck can clear. Do not ever pass a snow plow, they could be using this plow and you may not see it.

Underbody Scraper - The most frequently used plow on primary and local roads. It sits under the body of the vehicle. The driver can control the direction of snow discharge while driving.

Spreader - Discharges salt or grit from the back of the truck. The driver can control the speed of application while driving.



Grader - Has an underbody scraper that can help clear gravel roads in big storms.



One-Ton Truck - Can be used to clear subdivision roads, highway turnarounds, and cul-de-sacs.

Materials

There are three materials that WCRC can use to help melt icy roads and provide traction for drivers.



Salt - The material of choice for paved roads when the pavement temperatures are between 18 and 32 degrees. The blue color is from an anti-caking additive.



Salt/Sand Mix - A mix of salt and grit to help provide traction when road temperatures drop below 18 degrees. The salt is mixed in to melt ice once the road warms up.



Grit (Quarter for scale) - The material of choice for unpaved roads where salt cannot be used. Also helps to provide traction at turns, curves, and intersections on paved roads.

Changes to Transportation Permit Process

WCRC is partnering with Oxcart Permits Systems to process and issue all transportation permits electronically. Beginning January 3, 2018, all transportation permit applications must be submitted via www.oxcartpermits.com and WCRC will no longer process applications using the previous application forms.

This new process will speed up permit approvals and eliminate the tedious paper-oriented processes. Oxcart will send online permit approvals to your inbox and approved permits can be downloaded to your computer or mobile device. No software is required to be downloaded or installed. Oxcart is available wherever there is an internet connection. Dashboards, account management, and permit approvals can all be viewed in real-time.



So, here is what is changing on January 3, 2018:

- All transportation permits will be submitted via oxcartpermits.com. WCRC will no longer process applications using the previous forms.
- All fees will be paid online with a credit card. WCRC will no longer invoice for transportation permits or accept checks for payment.
- WCRC permit fees will stay the same but Oxcart will require both a nominal processing fee for its service and a credit card processing fee for each permit processed.

Companies will need to register for a free account with Oxcart. Registration is easy and can be completed at www.oxcartpermits.com/users/signup.

Get the Latest Updates from WCRC

WCRC staff have been working hard all year to improve and streamline updates to the community about projects and programs.

Make sure you are signed-up to receive these timely updates:

Social Media

WCRC is on Facebook and Twitter. Follow these pages for updates on road construction, winter maintenance, employment opportunities and more.

New WCRC Website - www.wcroads.org

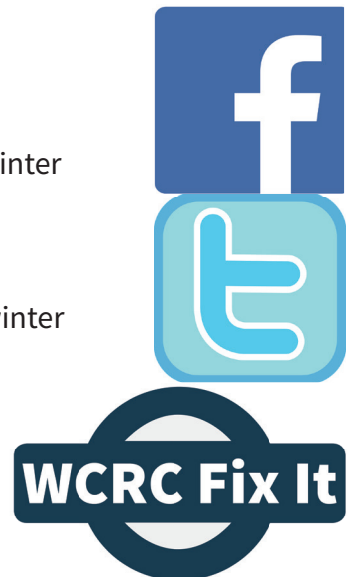
Launched earlier this year, check out the new site for updates on road work, FAQs about winter maintenance, permit application information and much more.

Email Distribution Lists

Sign-up at www.wcroads.org to receive a weekly road work report during the construction season.

Download the WCRC Fix It App

Available for Android and Apple phones. Download this app to report road issues throughout the year. Issues can also be reported at www.wcroads.org.



MDOT Opens Flex Route 23 in Washtenaw County

The first Flex Route in Michigan has opened in Washtenaw County and Livingston County this fall. This MDOT project is an innovative solution to the morning and afternoon rush-hour congestion on the US-23 corridor north of Ann Arbor.

Since this is a new road system in Michigan, it is important that all motorists understand the rules.

Here are the basics from michigan.gov/mdot:

Dynamic Lane and Shoulder Use

- When motorists see a green arrow on the overhead sign, it means that the shoulder/flex route is open to improve traffic flow and relieve congestion.
- When traffic is light or there are no traffic incidents, a red X posted above the lane means the shoulder/flex route is closed and should not be used.



Governor Rick Snyder and the MDOT team celebrate the opening of the Flex Route in November.

Queue Warning System

- A yellow chevron/merge sign posted overhead advises motorists to merge or move over to avoid any incidents.
- Additional signs might provide motorists with more information, such as that there is an incident or blocked lane ahead. This early warning system promotes safety by minimizing the potential for secondary crashes along the route ahead.

Real-Time Speed Advisory System

- Traffic speed is constantly monitored to detect any slowdowns. Recommended speeds will be posted above each open lane.
- If traffic slows, a lower recommended speed limit will then be posted above the open lane, which will enhance safety by alerting motorists to a change in conditions ahead.

The new road configuration means that WCRC will be plowing this section of US-23 differently than it has in the past. WCRC plows will be “gang plowing” this section, meaning 2 or 3 plows will plow in a staggered formation in order to push all of the snow to the right of the road in one trip. Motorists need to stay at least 50 feet back from this formation; there is no room to pass while the plows are working together.



Much like how Canadian geese fly, WCRC plows will be clearing the lanes of the new Flex Route in a staggered formation.

Please use extra caution on this stretch of road while everyone gets used to this new configuration.