

TOWNSHIP PARTNERSHIP GUIDE



Approved 12/12/2024

The information provided within this document does not and is not intended to constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials are available for general information purposes only.

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GLOSSARY

Abandonment	The process by which the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County relinquishes all or a portion of the previously dedicated public right-of-way easement.
Asset Management	A best management practice which focuses on preserving the condition of roads rather than allowing them to deteriorate to a more expensive state of repair.
Certified Road	Roads that are under the jurisdiction of the Van Buren County Road Commission which are routinely maintained/repared, within limitations.
De-Certify	The process by which the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County removes all or a portion of a roadway from Certification, but right-of-way is not relinquished.
HMA	Hot Mix Asphalt.
Local Roads	Certified roads, streets and avenues and roadways within certified subdivisions.
MDOT	Michigan Department of Transportation
MTF	Michigan Transportation Funds – which come from the state fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees. These funds are the VBCRC’s main source of funding.
Non-Certified Roads	Roads that are NOT under the jurisdiction of the Van Buren County Road Commission and, therefore, are not maintained by the VBCRC.
PASER	Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating. A 1-10 rating system for road surface conditions using visual inspection. Data collected annually.
Primary Roads	Blue Star Highway, Red Arrow Highway, and all roadways with the “CR” designation.
Public Act 51	Commonly referred to as “Act 51” governs how state revenue for roads and bridges is allocated and spent.
Right-of-Way	The roadway and space on either side of the road for storm drainage and a safe recovery area for vehicles that leave the road surface. Typically, 66’ wide, but can vary.
TAMC	Transportation Asset Management Council – a resource for independent, objective data on the condition of Michigan’s roads and bridges and a resource for implementing the concept of Asset Management.
IBR	Inventory Based Rating. Surface, drainage and width evaluation for gravel roads. Data collected once every three years.

Township Partnership Guide

Introduction:

The Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) strives to maintain positive relationships with our township partners. Whether you're a long-time township or county official, or new to the role, we have developed this guide to assist in understanding the need for a cooperative relationship between Townships and the Road Commission.

Van Buren County Road Commission Board:

The VBCRC is comprised of a five-member Board of County Road Commissioners (Board) who are appointed by the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners. Each Road Commissioner is appointed to a six-year term and their terms are staggered.

The Board has a governing responsibility and is charged with setting policies and the performance of duties imposed by law. Other duties include adopting the annual budget, awarding bids and contracts, adopting job classifications with corresponding compensation and benefits, and employing the chief administrative officer (Managing Director).

Each Commissioner represents the entire county as well as acts as a liaison between the Road Commission and Townships based on districts laid out by the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners. A map depicting the liaison districts of Road Commissioners is included as Appendix A. These duties as a liaison assist in enhancing and improving communications through attendance at meetings and other personal contact. Because the duties of a Road Commissioner do not include day-to-day operations, the first point of contact should always be directly to Road Commission staff as set forth in the Van Buren County Road Commission Communication Structure (Appendix B).

Road Commission board meetings are typically held the first Thursday of the month from October through April and the first Wednesday of the month from May through September. These meetings are held at 5pm at the Road Commission office. The Board meeting schedule is available on the Road Commission website at <https://www.vbcrc.org/boardmeetings>. Questions or concerns on day-to-day operations should be directed to Road Commission staff. If Board action is needed, the Managing Director will propose adding the item to the agenda for the Board meeting.

Road Commission Staff:

The Managing Director is the chief administrative officer of the VBCRC and is responsible for managing and administering the organization, coordinating activities, and overseeing engineering, financials, personnel, equipment, facilities, and operations. The VBCRC utilizes a County Highway Engineer responsible for the Engineering, Permit and Traffic Services Department; a Finance and Human Resources Director for accounting, budgeting, administration, and human resources; and an Operations Director for day-to-day road operations, fleet, and facilities. Additional information about Road Commission staff can be found in Appendix C.

Road and Bridge Routine Maintenance:

The VBCRC is responsible for maintaining a county road network of 1,313 miles of roads, over 72 bridges, 225+ large culverts or box structures, over 9,000 signs, three traffic signals, and five flashing lights at intersections. Funding received by the VBCRC provides for routine repairs and maintenance (within limits) on all Public Act 51 certified roads within its jurisdiction. Routine maintenance, within limitations, includes a variety of work, such as:

- Snow plowing and ice control
- Gravel road grading/scraping
- Asphalt patching
- Shoulder maintenance
- Traffic signs and signals
- Pavement marking
- Roadside mowing and extra width mowing, invasive species spray operations, and Primary Road brush control
- Removing trees/limb that have fallen in the roadway
- Road culvert maintenance (under 36" in diameter)
- General bridge maintenance

Special and Heavy Maintenance:

Work designed to preserve and improve the road and bridge system throughout Van Buren County is considered special and/or heavy maintenance. Those projects that preserve the road/bridge system are considered special maintenance while those projects designed to improve the road/bridge system are considered heavy maintenance. The VBCRC's Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP) <https://www.vbcrc.org/tamp> outlines those projects that the Road Commission plans to accomplish within the funding it receives. Work beyond that outlined in the TAMP must be funded by other means, typically Townships.

Examples of special and heavy maintenance are below:

Special Maintenance	Heavy Maintenance
Gravel Resurfacing	Wedge and Seal Coat
Seal Coat, Fog Seal, Crack Seal	Hot Mix Asphalt Overlay
Dust Control	Mill and Overlay
De-Berミング	Reconstruction
Boom Mowing	Paving a Gravel Road
Brush and Tree Trimming including Brush Spray	Trench, Widening and Pave
Ditching	Bridge Repair
Failed Cross-Pipe Replacements Over 36"	
Bridge Maintenance	

Additional information about each of these maintenance activities, including when they should be applied and the associated expectations for each project, are contained in Appendix D.

Funding:

The main source of funding for the Road Commission is the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF), which comes from state fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees. These funds are distributed by the State of Michigan to the Michigan Department of Transportation, County Road Commissions, and cities and villages according to a formula established in Public Act 51. This revenue provides funding for routine road and bridge maintenance, limited repair and improvements, road materials, fuel, equipment, facilities, and staff.

In 1978 the citizens of Van Buren County first passed a ballot proposal for a county-wide road millage. Sums generated by the millage are distributed by the County Treasurer directly to the Road Commission and 11 cities and villages in the County. Millage funds are NOT spent on routine maintenance, fuel, equipment, facilities, or staff. County-wide road millage funds are utilized to:

1. Leverage Federal and State funds to do larger, more expensive road and bridge projects. By utilizing the funds in this manner and when available, the Road Commission can accomplish many projects it would likely never accomplish without funds from the county-wide road millage.
2. Fund most of the improvements outlined in the TAMP.
3. Fund the Revenue Sharing (RevShare) Program, formerly known as the County-wide Road Millage allocation.

RevShare Funds:

Revenue Sharing (RevShare) funds are allocated by the VBCRC annually to each Township as a revenue share program. These funds, as stated above, come from the county-wide millage. While the sharing of millage money is not required, the Road Commission values the input of Townships. Townships can choose to participate in accomplishing various road projects each year in accordance with the RevShare program. Additional details are found in Appendix E.

Township Funds:

Townships are not legally or otherwise required to contribute to the maintenance, construction, or reconstruction of county roads. However, Act 51 does restrict how much funding a road commission can spend on local county road construction. In addition, road commissions do not have taxing authority, so their funding sources are limited. Van Buren County is not alone in its challenges to secure much needed road funding. Looking beyond county lines, we see townships throughout Michigan turning to other taxing mechanisms to generate the revenue necessary to repair and maintain roads.

Due to limited funding, the road work that is requested which is not included in the Road Commission's budget is often funded by the townships, such as seal coat, fog seal, gravel road improvement projects, and paved road improvement projects. The Road Commission and its Township Partners have worked together for decades to provide additional road projects with funding from the township level. This partnership between the Road Commission and the townships is built from necessity to best serve the public of Van Buren County and is greatly appreciated by the Road Commission and the motoring public. The Road Commission's Projects Funded by Townships Policy 2022-01 is attached as Appendix F.

Whereas the VBCRC does not have any legal taxing authority, townships have three options to help raise revenue to fund road improvements: a millage through Act 51, a township-wide millage, or a special assessment district as set forth below:

Act 51 millage: Act 51 of 1951 outlines two options for townships to raise revenues for the maintenance and improvements of roads.

1. Township boards can levy a property tax of no more than three mills in any year, without a vote of the people, for the maintenance or improvement of county roads within the township.
2. With voter approval, township boards may levy a property tax of no more than 6 mills in any year for the maintenance or improvement of county roads within the township.

Township-Wide Millage: Section 6 of Article IX of the Constitution of Michigan of 1963 authorizes townships to levy millages with a majority vote of the people.

Special Assessment Districts (Township-wide or Neighborhood-to-Neighborhood): Public Act 188 of 1954 allows townships to pay for road improvements through a special assessment district (SAD). A SAD is an area where the majority of property owners agree to allow a government agency to levy a property tax in exchange for a specific service such as road improvements. The area can be limited to a neighborhood or can be township wide. Act 188 outlines the process for levying a township SAD.

As the needs for road improvements grow and the Road Commission, Townships, and residents prioritize road improvements, the partnership between the Road Commission and Townships will be more important and necessary than ever.

Partnership and Communication:

As previously stated, the partnership between the VBCRC and Townships is very important to the road and bridge system within Van Buren County. To build a successful partnership, effective communication is vital. How do we ensure communications within our partnerships are effective? By actively engaging with each other and providing feedback to one another.

Active engagement and cooperation include:

- The Road Commission continues to develop and distribute a Weekly Update and the Township Partners regularly review the Weekly Update. This Update includes sharing information about current and upcoming projects and priorities of the organization. If you don't already receive the Updates, please subscribe on our website at this link: <https://www.vbcrc.org/weeklyupdates> where past editions of the Weekly Update can also be viewed.
- Communication in both directions. If the Road Commission has a concern, a member of our staff will contact the Township. If the Township has a concern, they should contact our office either by calling 269-674-8011, emailing vbcrc@vbcrc.org, or entering your request in the Road Commission's customer service platform SeeClickFix. Utilizing these platforms ensures that your request is entered into our service request system, so it is documented, and timely feedback is received.

- If the Township has specific questions about a project or operations, they should contact our office either by calling 269-674-8011, emailing vbcrc@vbcrc.org, or entering your request in the Road Commission’s customer service platform SeeClickFix. If the Township prefers, a VBCRC staff member will make themselves available to attend a Township Board meeting to provide responses and details to the Township Board and the public.
- Road Commissioner’s attend Township Board meetings to provide an Ambassador Relationship. They are not present to provide updates on daily operations or projects, as they serve in a liaison capacity to ensure the Township is receiving answers to questions or concerns the Township has already voiced to Road Commission staff. When Townships expect Road Commissioners to know daily operation updates, it causes frustration between our agencies. To put this in perspective, we have the following example:
 - If a resident has a question about a township zoning ordinance, their first step should not be to go immediately before the Zoning Board of Appeals. Their first course of action would be to contact the zoning official for the township to seek answers to their questions before then moving on to the ZBA, if appropriate.

Please work with our Commissioners in the same light by contacting our office directly and utilizing the Commissioners within their role as Ambassador. This distinction will greatly improve our relationships and the effectiveness of our communications.

Additional information about the Communication guidelines and opportunities to enhance communications is included in Appendix B.

Township Project Planning:

The Road Commission will typically hold a Township Annual Meeting during the fall to help the township prepare its road plan for the following year. The “Road Planning” sheet must be received by the Road Commission ***no later than December 31st of each year***, including the following information FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY:

- Requests for project estimates
- Total tons of contract gravel requested
- Total miles planned for sealcoat/fog seal, and crackseal
- Total programmed dollars for boom mowing
- Total number of applications of dust control

The Road Commission may not be able to complete work that season if the Road Planning sheet is received after December 31st. In addition, certain requests for larger road projects may require additional time in order to re-locate utilities in the road right-of-way, obtain any necessary permits, etc. The Road Project Procedure is attached as Appendix G.

Specific locations for gravel resurfacing, sealcoat/fog seal and crack seal must be received by the Road Commission ***prior to March 31st of each year*** so that materials can be procured, and contract work can be scheduled.

Any changes to a previously approved project must be approved by the township board and communicated to the Road Commission in written form prior to March 31st. Any township requested deviations from the Road Commission's engineering department's recommendations must be approved by the Van Buren County Road Commission.

Township Liaison:

While the Road Commission invites questions, concerns, and feedback from all Township Board members (and residents), it's necessary to have one point of contact with the Township to coordinate road-related matters with the Road Commission. Annually, each township is requested to appoint a liaison for those purposes. The Township liaison shall be responsible for communicating all road-related information to the township board. It is preferred that the road liaison be the township supervisor or, if that is not possible, a township board member.

Again, general questions and communication are accepted, and encouraged, by ALL township officials. However, the Road Commission's staff will receive verbal and/or written directions only from the liaison appointed by each township. Each township should notify the Road Commission of the liaison appointed in writing, on their Township planning sheet, by December 31st of each year.

Road Commission Information, Policies, and Procedures:

The following information, policies, and procedures of the Road Commission are also attached to this guide in appendices for reference by the Townships:

- Requests for Improvements on the Primary Road System – Appendix H
- Dust Control Policy – Appendix I
- Failed Condition Road Policy – Appendix J
- PASER Data Collection Agreement – Appendix K
- Snow Plowing Policy – Appendix L
- Mailbox Replacement and Proper Installation – Appendix M
- Driveway Permits – Appendix N
- Requests for Work on Non-Certified Roads – Appendix O
- Certification of Roads – Appendix P
- Abandonment of Right-of-Way – Appendix Q
- Traffic Control Orders for Speed & Parking Restrictions – Appendix R
- Policy Regarding Encroachments Within the County Highway Right-of-Ways – Appendix S

Conclusion:

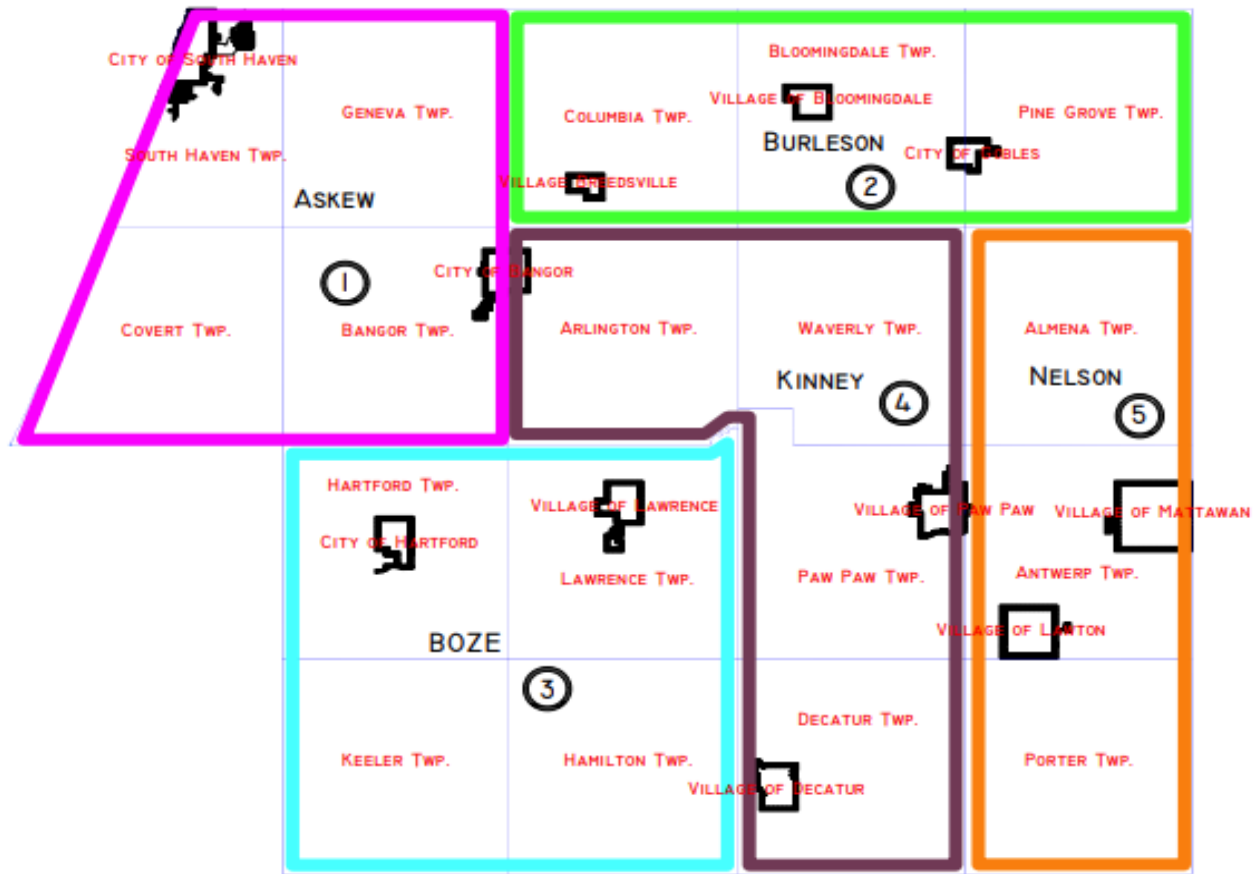
Thank you for your interest and partnership with the Road Commission. Your service to the residents within Van Buren County is greatly appreciated and recognized. Please contact the Road Commission with any comments, concerns, suggestions, and feedback.

Appendix A – Commissioner Liaison Map

**BOARD OF COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONERS
Van Buren County, Michigan**

W.C. ASKEW, SR. (Bangor, Covert, Geneva, South Haven) District 1
11230 Park Meadows Dr., Apt. A, P.O. Box 514, South Haven, MI 49090
Phone: (269) 944-9634 (Cell)

DOUG BURLESON (Bloomingdale, Columbia, Pine Grove) District 2
04239 CR665, Bloomingdale, MI 49026
Phone: (269) 674-8011 (Road Commission Office)



REGINALD D. BOZE (Hamilton, Hartford, Keeler, Lawrence) District 3
50201 - 50th Street, Lawrence, MI 49064
Phone: (269) 674-8011 (Road Commission Office)

GREGORY H. KINNEY (Arlington, Decatur, Paw Paw, Waverly) District 4
410 Kinney Road, P.O. Box 243, Decatur, MI 49045
Phone: (269) 423-2302 (Home)

WAYNE NELSON (Alma, Antwerp, Porter) District 5
32626 - 28th Avenue, Gobles, MI 49055
Phone: (269) 808-4907 (Cell)

Appendix B – Guidelines for Attendance/Communication

Policy No. 2020-04

Guidelines for Attendance/Communication

The Van Buren County Road Commission (“Road Commission”), and the Road Commissioners of Van Buren County (“Commissioners”) should remain in close contact throughout the year with its Partners in Transportation so as to improve the quality and safety of our roads. Partners in Transportation include, but are not limited to:

**Road Commissioners of Van Buren County
Van Buren County Road Commission Staff
Van Buren County Board of Commissioners
Van Buren County Township Officials
Residents and the Motoring Public of Van Buren County**

Each partner plays a distinct role to improve communications, and more effectively serve each other as set forth herein.

Road Commissioners’ Role as an Ambassador

The Road Commissioners’ role to the Township Board is to serve as an Ambassador or Liaison representing the Road Commission. The definition of Liaison is a “**person who establishes communication between multiple groups**”; in this instance, one who helps facilitate cooperation between the Road Commission, the Township, and its residents. Specifically, a Road Commissioner Liaison’s duties are to:

- Communicate important Board action to the Township/Residents.
- Share Road Commission resources that are available for Township/Resident assistance.
- Cultivate constructive relationships with the Township Board and its residents
- Promote learning.
- Serve as a bridge between the Township Board and its residents.

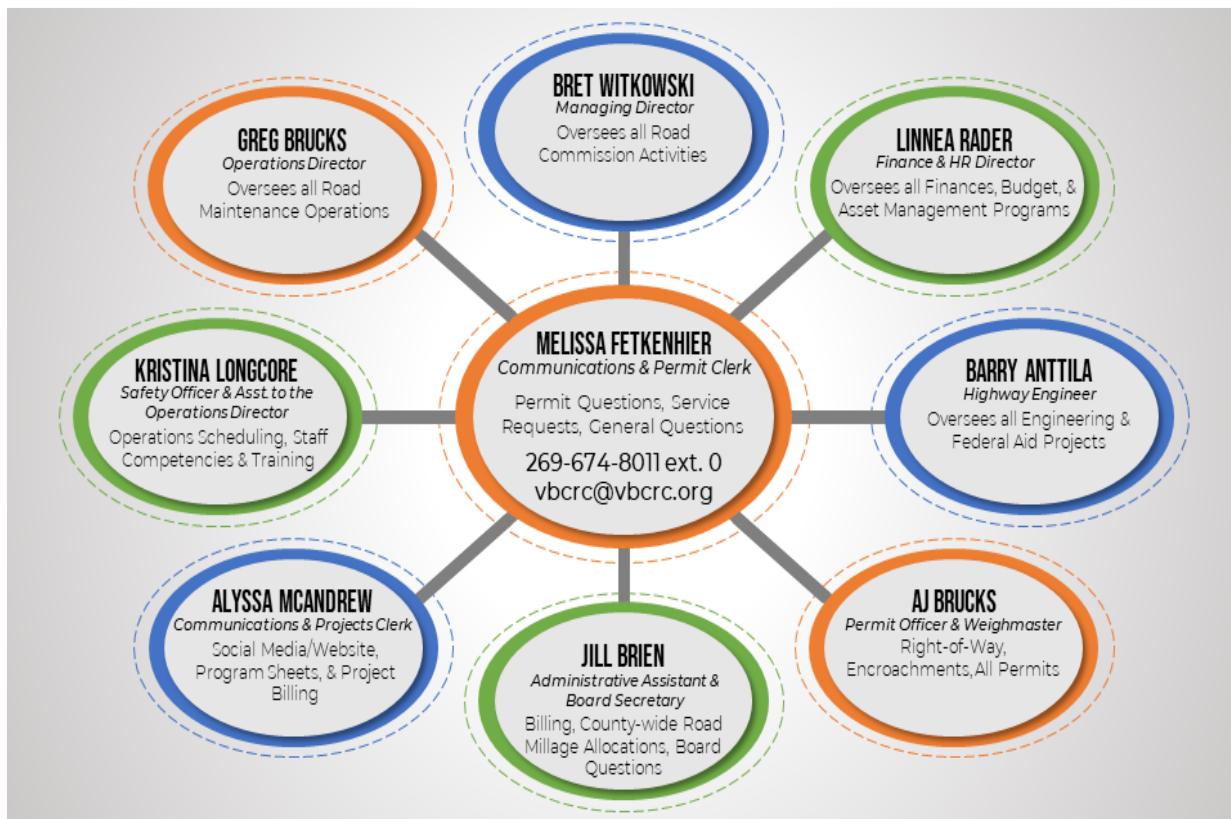
If questions arise during a township board meeting either from a Township Board Member or from a member of the audience about the day-to-day operations of the Road Commission, as a key player in bringing everyone together and supporting the Road Agency itself, a Road Commissioner will:

- Admit to not knowing the answer.
- Connect the individual(s) with VBCRC Administration.
- Continue to facilitate and foster those township or intergovernmental relationships.
- Advocate for their Road Commission.

By building this understanding, the Road Commissioner will help the Township Board and the public to understand his or her role as part of a collaborative board, listening to resident concerns, linking them with the appropriate staff, and sharing their vision for roads and right of way in Van Buren County.

Road Commission Staff

Road Commission Staff (“Staff”) are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance operations, special maintenance, road and bridge projects, service requests and other road-related responsibilities. Townships and the Public should contact the Van Buren County Road Commission as a **first source** of communication to ensure proper tracking of their request. Staff are available to provide information, take complaints and requests for service, answer questions relating to projects as follows:



Township Officials and the Public

The Township Officials play an intricate role in communications with Staff and Commissioners. Their role is two-fold in that the Public will, at times, contact them for service requests, project concerns, maintenance issues, etc. In addition, the Township must communicate their own maintenance and project needs and concerns to the Road Commission.

As stated herein, the most effective means of communication regarding administrative, project, service requests, or other such communications are **directly with Staff**, as set forth in the Communication Flow Chart. This is so that delays and mis-information regarding locations, and other concerns can be avoided.

In addition, Staff and Commissioners provide many other opportunities for communication throughout the year, such as:

- Weekly Operations Update.
- Township Road Rating and Asset Management data.
- Transportation Asset Management Plan
- News Releases.
- Township Partnership Guide, which includes information regarding Road Commission operations, policies and procedures.
- Board Meeting Minutes.
- Various booklets and handouts and information packets from the County Road Association of Michigan.
- Notification or invitation to various seminars and workshops, such as Traffic Safety Workshops, RoadSoft Training by Michigan LTAP, and Asset Management / Road Rating.
- Information, news, updates, and more via the Road Commission's website (www.vbcrc.org)
- News, information, project updates, and more through social media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Strategic Plan development.

Attendance

In addition to the communications set forth herein, Staff and Commissioners have many opportunities to meet with their Township Partners and the Public throughout the year.

A. Specifically, Commissioners will make every reasonable effort to:

- Attend Township Board Meetings; both as encouraged by County Commission, and as may be requested by Township officials.
- Attend Annual Township Meetings in the fall, either individually, or as a group.
- Attend special meetings with Township and Public over specific issues.
- Attend Township Supervisors' Association meetings annually, or as otherwise requested.

B. Specifically, Staff will make every reasonable effort to:

- Hold Annual Township Meetings, either individually or as a group, in the fall for the purpose of:
- Planning the Township's following year Call for Projects.

- Discussing ongoing or upcoming issues to better build the Township/Road Commission partnership.
This Annual Meeting is open to all Township Officials, Road Committee Members, and County Board Officials.
- Provide the option for a fall road tour to review projects, maintenance and plans.
- Attend annual spring road tour for the purpose of identifying current road needs, and assisting with planning future road work.
- Attend special meetings with Township and Public over specific issues.
- Attend Township Board Meeting at the Township's specific request.
- Provide newly elected Township officials an orientation packet and/or provide orientation, at official's request, for the purpose of education.
- Attend Township Supervisors' Association meetings annually, or as otherwise requested.

The Commissioners, and the Staff believe that delays and mis-information are less likely to occur through these Guidelines, thus providing the means for enhanced and more effective communications with the Township and Public.

Townships can provide the following form to residents to gather information for service requests. Anyone utilizing this form can then submit their request to the Road Commission per the instructions on the form.

VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION SERVICE REQUEST

For the most prompt and efficient service, please have the Resident contact VBCRC directly at (269) 674-8011 ext. 0 with the information as set below. The request can also be sent via facsimile at (269) 674-3770 or via email to vbcrc@vbcrc.org.

1. Fill out **completely**. Incomplete requests cannot be processed properly.
2. Be sure to get correct spelling of first and last name.

DATE _____

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

REQUEST FOR SERVICE _____

LOCATION _____ TOWNSHIP _____

If the request is to remove a tree, does the homeowner want the wood? _____



Scan the QR code with your phone camera for a link to See Click Fix

Appendix C – Road Commission Staff Information

VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

Administrative Office: 325 West James Street, Post Office Box 156, Lawrence, MI 49064
 Phone: 269-674-8011 Fax: 269-674-3770

Bret Witkowski Managing Director Ext. 222 BretWitkowski@vbcrc.org
 Barry Anttila Highway Engineer Ext. 224 BarryAnttila@vbcrc.org
 Greg Brucks Operations Director Ext. 227 GregBrucks@vbcrc.org
 Linnea Rader Finance & Human Resources Director ... Ext. 233 LinneaRader@vbcrc.org

Jill Brien Administrative Assistant Ext. 236 JillBrien@vbcrc.org
 AJ Brucks Permit Officer-County Weighmaster ... Ext. 252 AJBrucks@vbcrc.org
 David Clift Engineering Technician Ext. 230 DavidClift@vbcrc.org
 Melissa Fetkenhier Communications-Permit Clerk Ext. 221 vbcrc@vbcrc.org
 Joel Hoort Engineering Technician Ext. 228 JoelHoort@vbcrc.org
 Shawna Kelley Accountant Ext. 235 ShawnaKelley@vbcrc.org
 Kristina Longcore Assistant to Operations Dept. Ext. 248 KristinaLongcore@vbcrc.org
 Alyssa McAndrew Communications-Project Clerk Ext. 249 AlyssaMcAndrew@vbcrc.org
 David Mills Engineering Technician Ext. 229 DavidMills@vbcrc.org
 Marla Salmon Payroll and HR Clerk Ext. 234 MarlaSalmon@vbcrc.org

Supervisors

Brian Burrows Road Maintenance Supervisor-Right of Way . Ext. 291 BrianBurrows@vbcrc.org
 Kevin Clayton Road Maintenance Supervisor-Surface . . Ext. 290 KevinClayton@vbcrc.org
 Nicholas Mead Fleet & Facilities Superintendent Ext. 292 ShopSupervisor@vbcrc.org

Maintenance Garages

Southern District-Lawrence

Randy Moser	Tim Nicholas	Mike Ritsema	Dan Kurzmann	Mike Sinkler
Bryan Wrona	John Noffke	Ernie New	Johnny Chancellor	David Stafinski
David DeLoach	Eric Page	Ryan Mattimore	Zane Yandell	Jared Frank
Anthony White	Austin Mead	Joseph Potter	Austin Hammond	David DeLoach II
Megan Stainbrook	Kirby Heindorf	Lewis Turner	Benjamin Greiner	Kolton Meyer
Colten Vincent	Riley Babcock	Ethan Johnson	Trevor Hiatt	

Northern District-Bloomingtondale

Trevor Holt	James Cochran	Rick Molenda	Zachery Overacker	Brandon Hammond
DoRon Moore	Chris Milhollin	Jesse Harris	Nicholas Dunn	

Western Garage - Bangor

Larry Click	Scott Helm	Jessie Keeton	Justin Simko	Christina Clayton
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Road Commissioners and County Board Representatives

W.C. Askew, Sr. 12-31-2030
 Reginald D. Boze 12-31-2028
 Doug Burleson 12-31-2028
 Gregory H. Kinney 12-31-2026
 Wayne Nelson 12-31-2030
 County Commissioner Mike Chappell Board Representative
 County Commissioner Kurt Doroh Board Representative



VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

MEET THE COMMISSIONERS & MANAGING DIRECTOR



From left to right, Commissioners Boze, Askew, Nelson, Kinney, and Burleson



Managing Director, Bret Witkowski, guides and directs the organization toward its primary objectives based on board policy and annual revenue. In addition, Bret researches and makes recommendations for changes to road commission policies, and represents the road commission to local, state, and federal officials.



VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

Meet the Administrative Staff



LINNEA RADER

Linnea is the Finance and Human Resources Director. She works with the Board of County Road Commissioners and the Directors to develop the budget and monitor revenues and expenditures throughout the year, compiling the data into the annual report and in accordance with Act 51. Linnea also works with the PASER road rating and traffic count data to develop asset management plans for the Road Commission and the Township Partners, creating more understandable processes that can better benefit the road system, our Township Partners, and the public. Additionally, Linnea facilitates the development and updates for the Road Commission's Strategic Plan and Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP).



JILL BRIEN

Jill is the Administrative Assistant - Secretary for the Road Commission and Deputy Secretary for the Board of Public Works. She provides direct support to the Board of County Road Commissioners, the Managing Director, and the Finance and Human Resources Director. In addition, Jill assists in the preparation of bid packages, monitors and tracks Rev-Share allocations, prepares Township billing statements and pre-construction deposit requests.



MELISSA FETKENHIER

Melissa is the Road Commission's Communications/Permit Clerk. She assists the public and our transportation partners in understanding and completing the permit process, logging service requests, and general Road Commission operations. Additionally, she maintains the phone system and front desk to serve all public calling or visiting the Road Commission. Melissa also processes and logs various permits, and assists the Permit Officer with the organization and issuing of permits, contacting MISS DIG, and working with the Sheriff Department regarding storms, clean-up, road closures, accidents, and other situations as they arise.



SHAWNA KELLEY

Shawna Kelley is the Accountant for VBCRC. She works with the Finance and Human Resources Director to maintain accounting records for all phases of the Road Commission Operations. Shawna also codes, posts, and tracks vendor payments; maintains data files on fixed assets, inventory, equipment, A/P, job costs, and prepares related reports, and tracks sign and road material usage. Furthermore, she prepares billings, collects and submits bonds, interest and service payments for Public Works bonds.



ALYSSA MCANDREW

Alyssa is VBCRC's Communications/Project Clerk. She develops and distributes infographics, newsletters, videos, and brochures for public and staff education and training, as well as managing the Road Commission's social media pages and website to maintain an open communication and information source for the public and Township Partners. Alyssa additionally communicates with our Township Partners, the Operations Director, and Engineering Staff to document and track engineering and operations projects, program sheets, and resident notices, and provides administrative assistance for project planning and tracking.



MARLA SALMON

Marla is the Road Commission's Human Resources and Payroll Clerk. Her duties include processing payroll on a bi-weekly basis, tracking employee licenses, endorsements, and certifications, and maintaining personnel records. Marla also coordinates employee on-boarding and orientation, manages benefits and enrollment, and documents employee leave of absence situations, FMLA, COBRA, STD, and LTD. She provides additional support to the Finance and Human Resources Director for human resources related activities.



VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

MEET THE OPERATIONS & ENGINEERING STAFF



GREG BRUCKS

Greg is the Operations Director for the Road Commission. He coordinates and plans work for Road Maintenance

Employees in all three road commission garages to accomplish daily and long-range tasks relating to the maintenance of primary and local roads within the jurisdiction of the Road Commission. In addition, Greg works with the public, township officials, and Road Commission staff to address various needs as they arise.



BARRY ANTTILA

Barry is the Road Commission's Highway Engineer. He oversees all primary and local construction projects and engineering

activities including planning, design, surveying, construction, and monitoring of utility activities. Barry also reviews and makes recommendations for the maintenance and improvement of road and bridge structures that are eligible for bridge funding. In addition, he reviews surveys, aerial photographs and other information for long-term construction planning.



KRISTINA LONGCORE

Kris is the Safety Coordinator-Assistant to the Operations Department. She manages daily road crew schedules,

oversees the employee training and competency program, and maintains the Road Commission's safety program including random and pre-employment drug screening. Kris additionally manages worker's compensation claims, equipment maintenance reports, and acts as the Health Management Program's Training Director.



KEVIN CLAYTON

Kevin is the Road Commission's Surface Supervisor. He is tasked with coordinating daily activities and assisting in long-range

planning for asphalt and gravel roads on the County wide road system. Kevin also oversees and coordinates the sealcoat and fog seal program, the contract gravel program, and dust control program. He directs and coordinates efforts to resolve road surface issues as they are reported to the Road Commission via SeeClickFix.



BRIAN BURROWS

Brian is the Right-of-Way Supervisor for the Road Commission. He coordinates drainage and tree projects and maintenance and is tasked with assisting in long-range planning in relation to drainage and roadside activities. Brian oversees the storm clean-up efforts, roadside mowing, and tree trimming and removal maintenance. He additionally directs and coordinates staff to resolve drainage and roadside issues as they are reported to VBCRC via SeeClickFix.



NICK MEAD

Nick is the Road Commission's Fleet and Facilities Superintendent. He coordinates and assists in short-term and long-range planning relating to the Road Commission facilities and equipment fleet. Nick is responsible for ensuring the safe and efficient operation of vehicles and equipment, purchasing parts and maintaining an appropriate inventory for day-to-day operations of fleet and facilities. He also oversees and coordinates daily duties and schedules of mechanic staff and shop tasks.



AJ BRUCKS

AJ is the Permit Officer- County Weighmaster for the Road Commission. She is tasked with reviewing, inspecting, and issuing all permits, investigating encroachments and reports of operating/working without a permit, and assisting in initial speed studies, including crash investigation, traffic count data, and police reports. AJ also enforces "frost laws", overweight and oversizes vehicle permits, and issues associated warnings and/or citations.



JOEL HOORT

DAVE MILLS



DAVE CLIFT

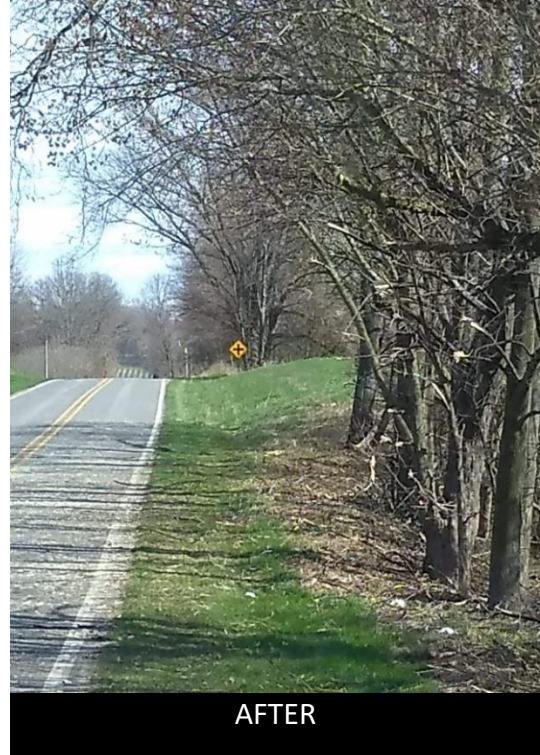


Joel, Dave, and Dave are the Road Commission's three Engineering Technicians. They are responsible for shared duties of preparing large project estimates, overseeing Heavy Maintenance projects, maintaining Act 51 records and maps annually, developing road and bridge grant and federal aid funding applications, and obtaining proper permits for projects.

Appendix D – Road Work Explanations

Special / Preventative Maintenance Projects

- A. Boom Mowing. Boom mowing within the right-of-way helps control brush and low hanging limbs that obstruct driver vision and/or clearance for larger vehicles and equipment. To be clear, boom mowing is cutting brush, NOT grass. Each year the Van Buren County Road Commission funds \$1,000.00 of boom mowing in each township. The townships may choose to contribute additional money to assist with this clearing of vision and right-of-way obstructions.



- B. De-berming. Over time sod, soil and material can build up along the shoulder of the roadway. This build-up “holds” water on the surface of the road and delays drainage. De-berming is the process of removing the build-up of this material from the edge of the road which allows water to effectively drain. The width of de-berming varies depending upon the drainage needs for any section of roadway; however, all work is accomplished within the county road right-of-way. Townships may choose to contribute funds to provide de-berming on the Local Road system.

- C. Brush Spray Operations. Hand clearing and boom mowing are expensive operations and cannot be used safely in all areas. Therefore, selective vegetation management activities may be performed on select Primary Roads typically in August/September of each year. Specially trained, licensed, and experienced professionals selectively apply herbicides to specific vegetation that could obstruct driver vision. Townships may choose to contribute funds to provide for brush spray on the Local Road system.

Residents may opt out of brush spray operations. To exercise this option the property owner must provide the Road Commission with an Application Form requesting that they be omitted from the treatment **and**, in consideration, agree to accept the responsibility for maintaining the roadside area by cutting all roadside weeds and brush, and trimming low hanging tree limbs. The Application Form is available on the Road Commission's website (<https://www.vbcrc.org/vegetationmaintenance>) or by calling the Road Commission.

- D. Routine Maintenance Tree Removals and Trimming. The Van Buren County Road Commission is charged by statute to keep highways under their jurisdiction in reasonable repair; however, the definition of "highway" specifically excludes trees. Trees are the tangible property of the adjacent landowners. That said, while the Road Commission has no legal duty to maintain trees within the public right-of-way and cannot be held liable for failing to do so, they do have the authority to trim or remove trees where necessary to protect the public rights.

Trees identified for removal or trimming which are located within the road right-of-way are typically cut down or trimmed during late fall, winter, or early spring when the Road Commission is not plowing snow. Property owners may contact the Road Commission and request tree trimming or removal.

Road Commission staff will determine if or when a tree should be removed. The property owner may arrange to keep the wood or request that the Road Commission remove it.



The northern long-eared bat is listed as a *threatened* species, and the Indiana bat is listed as an *endangered* species. The bats have a habitat of live and dead trees three (3") inches or larger in diameter. Therefore, in Zone 5, tree removals must take place during periods of hibernation (October 1 through April 15) or, in some instances, require additional consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This cutting prohibition does not affect emergency operations.

If a property owner requests that a tree be removed that is not included in the Road Commission's routine operations, the property owner may hire a contractor to remove the tree through an Application to Work in the County Road Right-of-Way, which must include proper

insurance. Alternatively, a property owner can remove the tree through an Application to Work in the County Road Right-of-Way (permit fee waived) and by reading, understanding and signing a Hold Harmless Agreement. Anyone working in the county road right-of-way, contractor or property owner, must follow **all** requirements set forth in the permit regarding notification, hours of work, temporary traffic control, restoration, *etc.*

E. Liquid Dustlayer Application “Dust Control”. Sealed bids are received by the Road Commission each year in February or March for the application of a liquid dustlayer (calcium chloride or brine) to control dust on gravel roads. Townships may choose to fund one or more applications of liquid dustlayer in a season by a sub-contractor approved by the Board of County Road Commissioners. The Road Commission grades the gravel roads prior to the application and supervises the dustlayer application process at no cost to the township. As an alternative, or in addition to the liquid dustlayer, a township may offer bags of calcium chloride to its residents to control the dust in front of their property. The property owner must receive an Authorization Slip from the township allowing the resident to pick up the bag chloride at the Road Commission’s Administrative Office in Lawrence during regular business hours.

F. Road Drainage/Ditching. Attention to proper roadside drainage design and maintenance cannot be over-emphasized. The major function of a road ditch is to carry water away from the roadway into streams or other natural waterways. To fulfill this function, ditches must be properly shaped and maintained so that water does not stand in them. Standing water may saturate the subsurface material beneath the roadway preventing the road from draining during the next storm and reduce the ditch's capacity to handle run-off. It is NOT the Road Commission’s responsibility, NOR are the ditches designed to drain private property. Townships may designate funds for “Miscellaneous Ditching” to be used by the Road Commission to address drainage / ditching concerns in their township. These concerns can be prioritized by Road Commission staff and/or the township’s road liaison. If the Township has a specific location(s) they would like ditched, the location(s) must be included on a signed Program Sheet.

G. Local Road Cross-Pipe Replacements.

Failed cross-pipe replacements on the Local Road system measuring **under 36”** are funded 100% by the Road Commission. Failed cross-pipe replacements measuring **36” or over** on the Local Road system are cost shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township in which the pipe is located. The township may elect to allocate all or a portion of its RevShare funds to fund its share of the failed cross-pipe project. Non-routine repairs or replacements may require township participation and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

H. Township Water and/or Sewer Systems in County Road Right-of-Way. When a township’s water and/or sewer system is located within the county road right of way, prior to the commencement of any cross-pipe replacement project the township must cause to have the area surveyed specifically to locate water/sewer systems. The survey is the township’s cost to bear 100%. If the water/sewer is found to be less than 18” from the location of any cross-pipe, the township or water/sewer district

must have the water/sewer lines re-located and pay 100% of the cost of the re-location prior to the cross-pipe replacement.

- I. Contract Gravel Resurfacing. Townships may choose to add gravel to specific Local gravel roads. The Road Commission requests sealed bids in March for furnishing and hauling 22A gravel. Prices vary by township due to the quantity of tons requested, hauling distance from contractor pit locations, etc. Because the Road Commission seeks these bids in March, a township requesting contract gravel must designate an estimated number of tons of gravel **prior to December 31st**.

Gravel resurfacing costs billed to the township include the cost of the gravel, as bid by the contractor, plus a per ton price for Road Commission staff and equipment to spread the gravel on the road surface. Specifications call for four inches (4") of gravel to be spread. Road Commission staff can provide the township suggested locations at which to place the gravel, or the township can provide the locations. If a Township requests contract gravel resurfacing at a specific location(s), they **MUST** include the location(s) on a signed Program Sheet. Gravel resurfacing does not include tree removals, ditching, sub-base, or base construction.



Surface Treatments

- A. Sealcoat and Fog Seal. Sealcoat is a thin layer of emulsion or asphalt covered with a single layer of crushed slag, rock, or stone to seal the surface of an existing paved roadway. A sealcoat surface typically lasts 4 to 6 years, when applied at an appropriate time (i.e. PASER 5 or greater). This treatment can be applied on roads rated less than a PASER 5, but the expectation of the outcome should be discussed with Road Commission staff. Pavement that is exceedingly cracked, patched or distorted should be reviewed for possible hot rubber crack sealing (see "F" below) prior o sealcoating, or potential re-paving, or crush and shape for paving. When a roadway is sealcoated, it must also be fog sealed the same year. Fog Seal is a layer of emulsified (liquid) asphalt applied over the top of a recently sealcoated surface. The layer of emulsion further seals the roadway thereby reducing infiltration of water. The optimum conditions for this liquid to dry quickly are approximately 75 degrees with limited humidity. Dry times will vary as temperatures and humidity levels change.



1. Bids are secured each year for the materials necessary for sealcoat and fog seal operations. The cost of sealcoat/fog seal is then established at a uniform cost per mile based upon PASER Surface rating.
 2. Upon completion, the township invoicing is based on actual mileage of the project as measured in the field.
- B. Wedge, Seal & Fog: A wedge, seal and fog can help reduce an excessive crown and build up the shoulder of existing asphalt roads. While the resulting surface will be improved, it will still have some level of distortion. The Road Commission reserves the right to recommend bituminous aggregate surface overlay (paving) rather than wedge, seal and fog.
- C. Slurry Seal: A slurry seal is the application of an emulsion like a fog seal, but with very small, crushed rock as part of the mixture. Slurry seal applications serve to seal areas with low to moderate distress and narrow crack widths. Because a slurry seal is performed by a contractor, the township must make such a request on their annual planning sheet prior to December 31st of the prior year to allow for the best pricing via the bid letting process. Traditionally, costs for a slurry seal are approximately 30% more than a regular sealcoat and fog seal.
- D. Micro-Surfacing: Micro-Surfacing includes polymer modified asphalt (key in flexibility), aggregate, mineral filler, additives, and water. Micros effectively seal, level, rejuvenate, and aid in skid resistance on existing paved surfaces. Micro-Surfacing can be applied in a wide range of thicknesses allowing it to treat a large variety of road surfaces. Costs are similar to the cost of a slurry seal, or slightly higher.
- E. Hot Rubber Crack Sealing: A rubber material consisting of polymers, virgin rubber and asphalt emulsion combined to form an elastic moisture barrier over cracks in the road that, when properly heated and applied, will maintain its form over extreme heat and cold fluctuations in the roadway. The application's average life is one to three years. A typical crack seal program will focus on PASER roads rated 7 or better, with transverse and longitudinal defined cracks that are 1/4" or greater in width. Sealing alligator cracks or map cracked areas are typically limited to a 3' x 3' area, or less. Attempting to seal areas larger than 3' x 3' is not cost effective or efficient and, in some cases, tends to create a slippery surface in the traveled portion of the roadway.

F. Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) Overlay: Placing 1½” - 2” of new pavement material over existing pavement that is not distorted, extensively cracked or patched. Shoulder material is added to match the elevation of the new pavement. Although much progress has been made in delaying reflective cracking, townships should take this into consideration when requesting an overlay. Reflective cracking is caused by peaks in strain centered over cracks or joints in the lower layer of pavement and is to be expected to some degree. Reflective cracking will occur to one extent or another, even under the best of pavement conditions.



Bridge Maintenance and Repair Projects

Bridges under the jurisdiction of the Van Buren County Road Commission are regularly inspected by certified bridge inspectors who check for deterioration and damage and make recommendations for necessary repairs. Road Commission engineering staff work to secure critical bridge funds, when possible, at both the federal and state levels. For critical bridge maintenance, repair or replacement projects funded with federal and state dollars, the local authority’s share is five (5%) percent of the project cost, plus construction engineering, and design engineering.



For bridges located on the Primary Road system, the 5% local authority’s share, plus construction engineering and design engineering are paid for by the Road Commission. For bridges located on the Local Road system, the

5% local authority’s share, plus construction engineering and design engineering are shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township. Bridge repairs, maintenance or replacements located on the Local Road system without critical bridge funding will be paid for by the townships or, if located on the Primary Road system, paid for by the Road Commission.

Heavy Maintenance Projects

A. **Mill and Overlay.** Mill and Overlay (otherwise known as Mill and Fill) is the process of grinding off the top layer of the existing asphalt pavement by means of a large milling machine and replacing this layer with a new HMA driving surface.

B. **Reconstruction.** Reconstruction includes: 1) clearing the road right-of-way, as necessary, of brush, trees and stumps; 2) constructing ditches and installing drainage culverts; 3) constructing road with a minimum 12" sub-base of compacted sand, and a minimum of 8" of compacted gravel; and 4) HMA paving the roadway with a minimum of two courses of asphalt (base and top), with shoulder material being added to match the elevation of the new pavement.



Milling Machine Removing Top Layer of Asphalt

C. **HMA Paving of Gravel Road.** Before a gravel road can be paved it must first be constructed to the Road Commission's published standards, as set forth in its Road Development Policy. This includes, but is not limited to grading, drainage structures, and aggregate surface to provide for adequate drainage and cross-section. HMA paving involves placing a minimum of two layers of asphalt over the properly constructed gravel base. Shoulder material is added to match the elevation of the new pavement.

D. **Trench, Widen and Pave.** When a road needs a new surface but has not been built to current width standards as outlined in the Road Commission's Road Development Policy, additional width can be trenched (cut) from the area outside the pavement. That area can then be constructed with a minimum 12" sub-base of compacted sand, and a minimum of 8" of compacted gravel and then HMA paved with a minimum of a 2" base course and 2" top course of asphalt. An HMA Overlay is then placed over the existing pavement, as well as the widened section to create a road section with proper width that meets current standards.

E. **HMA Crush and Shape.** A pavement treatment that creates a new structural base from the existing pavement. A crushing machine grinds the existing asphalt and 1-2" of the underlying gravel. The material is then re-graded and compacted.

Appendix E – Revenue Share (RevShare) Policy (2022-03)

Overview

Townships are not legally required to contribute to the maintenance, construction, or reconstruction of county roads. However, Act 51 does restrict how much funding a road commission can spend on local county road construction. In addition, road commissions do not have taxing authority, so their funding sources are limited. Van Buren County is not alone in its challenges securing much needed road funding. Looking beyond county lines, we see townships throughout Michigan turning to other taxing mechanisms to generate the revenue necessary to repair and maintain roads.

Due to limited funding, road work that is requested which is not included in the Road Commission's budget is often funded by the townships, such as seal coat, fog seal, gravel road improvement projects, and paved road improvement projects. The Road Commission and the Township Partners have worked together for decades to provide additional road projects with funding from the township level. This partnership between the Road Commission and the townships is built from necessity to best serve the public of Van Buren County and is greatly appreciated by the Road Commission and the motoring public.

Revenue Sharing Program (RevShare)

To enhance the partnership, the Van Buren County Road Commission has utilized a county-wide road millage allocation to share in the costs of road work requested by Townships that is not included in the Road Commission's budget. While the sharing of millage money is not required, the Road Commission values the input of Townships. Beginning in 2023, this allocation will be referred to as the Revenue Sharing Program (RevShare). This change brings consistency in language to our surrounding Road Commissions. By ensuring consistency in language, Townships can more directly see correlations in the various cost sharing agreements in place in surrounding Counties.

Each year, the RevShare formula is reviewed and approved by the Board. Any changes implemented by the Board will be made and communicated to Townships no later than December 31 of each year.

The formula for RevShare, per township will be:

1. A fixed amount per township of \$10,000; and
2. 65% of the remaining balance based upon the TOTAL road miles in each Township factored as a fraction of total road miles in the County; and
3. 35% of the remaining balance based upon the population in each Township (unincorporated area) factored as a fraction of total population within the jurisdiction of the Road Commission. The unincorporated population totals from the 2020 census will now be used as they became available in mid-2022.

Uses of RevShare Funds

As a part of the RevShare policy, each Township understands the need for cooperation between the Road Commission, Townships, and the residents we serve. This cooperation and partnership is necessary to maintain and improve the road system throughout Van Buren County. Townships can choose to fund road maintenance and improvements that are not included in the Road Commission's budget through various funding sources.

Townships may utilize RevShare funds to fund road improvement projects as follows:

- Contract Gravel Resurfacing,
- Surface treatments such as seal coat, fog seal, cape seal, slurry seal, micro layers, crackseal, etc., as approved by the VBCRC Highway Engineer,
- Cross-pipe replacements including the Township's 50% match on failed and upsized cross-pipes 36" and greater on local roads,
- Heavy Maintenance projects such as reconstructing and placing a hard surface on a gravel road, reconstructing an existing paved road or bridge, resurfacing a road with hot mix asphalt overlay, or installing new catch basins,
- Design and construction costs for road and bridge improvements, and
- Bridge replacement, or bridge preventative maintenance projects (usually 5% on State/Federal aid local bridge projects, 2.5% on State/Federal aid primary bridge projects, and half of engineering costs).

Banking of RevShare Funds

RevShare allocations may be banked by a township for up to three (3) years. This allows a township to "save" funds for those larger improvement projects, while still showing its residents the county-wide road millage dollars at work in a reasonable amount of time. Holding RevShare funds for a longer time period not only limits the work that can be accomplished but could also hinder the future of the millage. Road Commission staff members work hard to show county taxpayers where these millage dollars are being spent and how the millage positively impacts Van Buren County's Road network.

RevShare Agreement

Each Township shall sign an acknowledgment of this RevShare program annually when funds are allocated by the Board. This acknowledgment ensures that each Township and the Road Commission understand the purpose and terms of the RevShare program.

Appendix F – Projects Funded by Townships (Policy 2022-01)

Overview

Due to limited funding, road work that is requested which is not included in the Van Buren County Road Commission’s (“Road Commission”) budget is often funded by the townships, such as sealcoat, fog seal, gravel road improvement projects, and paved road improvement projects. The Road Commission and the Township Partners have worked together for decades to provide additional road projects with funding from the township level. This partnership between the Road Commission and the townships is built from necessity to best serve the public of Van Buren County and is greatly appreciated by the Road Commission and the motoring public.

1. Project Billing

- A. The Road Commission may enter into agreements with the Township Boards in Van Buren County to perform highway, road and street special maintenance and construction operations on roads and streets. Work so contracted shall be invoiced at specified per mile/ton pricing or at cost.
- B. The township should ensure that it fully understands the scope of any work to be performed prior to authorizing a project and should ensure that all project details are included on the Program Sheet if there are specific instructions.
- C. Upon signing any Engineer’s Opinion of Costs for projects that will be let for bid, the Townships will provide a \$500 deposit prior to the Road Commission developing plans and bid packet documents. Once the project has been let for bid, if the Township proceeds with the project, the deposit will be credited to the pre-construction deposit. If the Township cancels the project, the deposit, less expenses incurred to date will be refunded to the Township. If the project’s costs to date exceed the \$500 deposit, the Township will be billed for the remaining balance.
- D. The Road Commission shall require a 75% pre-construction deposit on any township funded projects over \$10,000, less the \$500 deposit, to be paid before work commences.
- E. Townships may utilize the Road Commission’s revenue sharing program, RevShare, in accordance with the RevShare policy 2022-03 to assist with funding various township requested road projects.
- F. The Road Commission shall absorb any over-run costs on projects funded by the Township as set forth in the signed Program Sheet/Change Orders.
- G. Should the Road Commission invoice a township for work performed and the township neglect and/or refuse to pay the bill in a reasonable amount of time the Road Commission, at its discretion, may utilize the township’s current and/or future RevShare fund(s) as may be necessary to pay for the township’s portion of the project.
- H. Any work performed by the Road Commission for projects/special maintenance on roads outside the jurisdiction of the Road Commission (i.e., under special assessment)

shall be billed at cost, to include fringe benefits and overhead expenses. No RevShare funds may be utilized for work performed on roads not under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission. It is recommended by the Road Commission that private subcontractors be hired for this purpose without involving the Road Commission as this allows the Road Commission to focus solely on roads within its jurisdiction.

2. Cross-pipe Replacements, Bridge Replacements, and Bridge Preventative Maintenance

- A. Cross-pipes, regardless of the size, bridge replacements, and bridge preventative maintenance on the Primary Road system are typically funded 100% by the Van Buren County Road Commission. (Townships may choose to participate as set forth in Policy 2011-01, Requests for Improvements on Primary Roads.)
- B. Failed cross-pipe replacements on the Local Road system measuring under 36" are funded 100% by the Van Buren County Road Commission.
- C. Failed cross-pipe replacements on the Local Road System measuring 36" and larger are cost-shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township in which the failed cross-pipe is located.
- D. Undersized cross-pipes replaced on the Local Road System up-sized to measure 36" or larger are cost shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township in which the cross-pipe is located.
- E. Typically, all cross-pipes and driveway pipes (culverts) are replaced during heavy maintenance projects on Local Roads and on Primary Roads. Regardless of the size of the cross-pipe or the driveway pipe, they are funded 100% by the township on Local Road projects.
- F. Any costs for bridge replacements and bridge preventive maintenance on the Local Road system not paid for through federal and/or state local bridge funds, including design/construction engineering costs, are cost-shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township.
- G. Non-routine cross-pipe installations, repairs and/or replacements, regardless of size or location (Primary Road versus Local Road), may require township participation and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

3. Public Safety Issues on Local Roads

- A. In the event of a Public Safety Issue on a Primary or Local Road, as deemed by the Managing Director of the Road Commission, or their designee, the Road Commission shall do everything within its reasonable means to open the road to the motoring public as soon as reasonably possible.
- B. If a Public Safety Issue exists on a Local Road, such as a failed cross-pipe, the Road Commission shall:

- i. Make contact with the Township Road Liaison as soon as it is feasible to discuss the Public Safety Issue location, project cost estimate, road closure plans, if any, etc.
- ii. Provide the Township Road Liaison with a Program Sheet or Engineer's Opinion of Costs and shall request that the Township authorize the project funding (typically 50/50).
- iii. Move forward with the project to resolve the Public Safety Issue as soon as reasonably possible and regardless of the status of the Township's project authorization.
- iv. Invoice the Township for its portion of the cost share which can be paid for by the Township through its funding sources, or with RevShare funds as allocated by the Township, or as set forth herein in Section 1(G).

4. Traffic Signs and Signals

- A. The Road Commission shall install, maintain, repair and/or replace all Regulatory and Warning Signs, Posts, and Signals on its certified roadways as set forth in Policy No. 2018-05, Sign Policy.
- B. The installation of any non-regulatory signs, such as street name signs, township boundary signs, etc., may be funded by the Township, as approved by the Highway Engineer or their designee.
- C. As approved by the Highway Engineer or their designee, LED traffic signs may be installed by the Road Commission upon receipt of a Resolution from the Township stating:
 - i. That the Township will pay for any and all costs associated with the purchase and installation of the approved sign(s).
 - ii. That the Township will pay for any and all costs associated with the maintenance, replacement and/or removal of a LED sign(s) as may be deemed necessary by the Road Commission for a minimum of 10 years following installation.
 - iii. That the Road Commission's engineering staff shall have the sole discretion, based upon sound engineering decisions made in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, to remove the LED sign(s) at any time following installation upon written notice to the Township.
- D. The Board of County Road Commissioners requests that each township in Van Buren County consider a private road ordinance, policy, or requirement that sets forth minimum required signage where non-certified roads connect to the certified road system, such as a stop sign, street name sign, no outlet sign, etc.

5. PASER Data Collection Program

- A. The Road Commission has implemented the use of PASER, a uniform rating system for all asphalt roads in the State of Michigan. This data is collected annually by the Road Commission and provides the Road Commission and the townships with important data, serves as a tool to evaluate maintenance operations, and is used to make decisions and provide data to back-up those decisions.
- B. The Road Commission asks that all townships participate in the PASER Data Collection Program as follows:
 - Year 1 The townships reimburse the Road Commission for the cost of rating all Local and Primary Roads. (Years 2026, etc.)
 - Year 2 Road Commission will cover the cost of rating all Local Roads and Primary Roads. (Years 2027, etc.)
 - Year 3 Road Commission receives reimbursement from the Asset Management Council for rating all Local and Primary Roads. (Years 2025, etc.)
- C. If a township refuses or neglects to sign a Program Sheet authorizing PASER data collection, the data will not be collected on the Local Road system in that township for that year.

6. Township Water and/or Sewer Systems

- A. When a township's water and/or sewer system is located within the county road right of way, prior to the commencement of any cross-pipe replacement project the township must cause to have the area surveyed specifically to locate water/sewer systems. The survey is the township's cost to bear 100%.
- B. If water/sewer is found 18" or less from the location of any cross-pipe the township or water/sewer district must have the water/sewer lines re-located and pay 100% of the cost of the re-location prior to the replacement of the cross-pipe.

7. Miscellaneous

- A. Nothing in this Policy shall prohibit the Road Commission from performing such operations as may be necessary for the protection of life and property in the event of either nuclear or natural disaster.
- B. This Policy amends any and all previous policies adopted by the Board of County Road Commissioners including, but not limited to the Policy Relative to Force Account Contracts adopted/amended 11/1/79, 1/28/80, and 2/7/80; Policy for Private Road Engineering on Roads Which Will Be Dedicated As Public Highways After Reconstruction adopted 8/20/87; and the Policy of Absorbing Any Overrun Costs on Locally Funded Township Projects adopted 12/15/94.

Appendix G – Road Project Procedure

Road Project Procedure

The Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) maintains a Transportation Asset Management Program (TAMP) which includes the agency's 5-year road plan. This plan utilizes traffic counts, road ratings (PASER and IBR), connectivity routes, and available funding sources to prioritize road maintenance and improvements. Annually the TAMP is updated to continually provide a 5-year road plan moving forward. The TAMP is discussed each year during the Road Commission's Township Annual meeting and is available on the Road Commission's website <https://www.vbcrc.org/tamp>.

Due to limited funding, road work beyond routine maintenance, that is requested which is not included in the Van Buren County Road Commission's ("Road Commission") budget is often funded by the townships, such as sealcoat, fog seal, gravel road improvement projects, and paved road improvement projects. The Road Commission and the Township Partners have worked together for decades to provide additional road projects with funding from the township level. This partnership between the Road Commission and the townships is built from necessity to best serve the public of Van Buren County and is greatly appreciated by the Road Commission and the motoring public.

- 1) Project Initiation – Road projects in addition to those included in the TAMP can be initiated by Townships.
 - a) Townships develop long-term plans and priorities to the road system in their Township. Road Commission staff are available to meet with Township representatives, as requested by the Township to discuss goals and plans.
 - b) A list of projects for the next construction season is developed by the Township and submitted to the Road Commission no later than December 31 of each year. This list should contain several years of road project plans for any projects that need tree work, DEQ permits, etc., as there are limitations for timing of tree work, permitting requirements that take additional time to acquire, and other limiting factors.

If a Township would like to prioritize a project not included in the TAMP, a Township Resolution pursuant to Policy 2011-01, Policy on Requests for Improvements on Primary Roads must be submitted to the Road Commission outlining the location and scope of the project as well as the funding proposed by the Township.

- 2) Engineer's Opinion of Costs – Project Estimate
 - a) Based upon the list of projects submitted by the Townships each year, the Engineering Staff will provide an estimate of the requested project(s) based upon location, project scope, recent average unit prices, and anticipated construction timeframes.
 - b) As the Township, or Road Commission may deem appropriate, a Public Meeting may be held at which Road Commission staff, property owners, Township officials, etc. may present to discuss the scope the project, impact, proposed outcome, etc.

- c) The Township Board considers the Engineer's Opinion of Costs and notifies the Road Commission of its commitment to proceed with a road project by returning the signed Engineer's Opinion of Costs within 60 days of Township's receipt.
- d) The Township will submit a \$500 pre-bid deposit with each signed Engineer's Opinion of Costs. Any project that will need to be let for bid will have the following as the signature line:

"The prices listed are for planning purposes only. Bids will be opened to determine the actual cost of the project. Please sign below and submit a \$500 pre-bid deposit to authorize the Road Commission to proceed with the project as outlined above. Once the bid is opened, the Township will have the opportunity to cancel the project at that time. If the Township cancels the project after this sheet is signed, the Township agrees to pay the Road Commission's costs to date."

3) Survey, Project Plans, Utilities and Permits

- a) If and when the Engineer's Opinion of Costs is approved by the Township, signed and returned to the Road Commission with the necessary deposit, Road Commission staff will proceed with the following:
 - i) A survey crew will gather field data, as may be deemed appropriate by Engineering Staff.
 - ii) A full set of plans or specifications will be developed, as may be deemed appropriate by Engineering Staff.
 - iii) Utility companies are identified, and first contact is made by Engineering Staff.
 - iv) Application is made by Engineering Staff for any permits that may be necessitated by the proposed project, such as DEQ permits, identified endangered species, etc.

4) Road Project File

- a) Engineering Staff prepares and maintains a Project File throughout the course of the project containing all information relevant to the project, including, but not limited to:
 - i) Map(s) and aerial photographs,
 - ii) Property owners adjacent to the project,
 - iii) Any and all correspondence, phone logs, e-mails, etc.,
 - iv) Meeting notes, sign-in sheets, and
 - v) Any and all other documentation which may potentially be referred to in the future.

5) Bidding Process

- a) If appropriate, the project is let for bid by Engineering Staff.
- b) All bids shall be publicly opened by Road Commission Staff, unless otherwise noticed in the Notice to Bidders.
- c) The results of the bid opening are communicated to the Township Liaison by Engineering Staff. If the Township does not approve the low bidder for reasons other than extenuating circumstances, the Township shall provide the Road Commission with a signed authorization stating the reason(s) for choosing another contractor other than the lowest-bid responsible contractor so as to ensure that the Road Commission is in compliance with state statutes regarding proper expenditure of public funds.

6) Award of Bid

- a) The contract is awarded by the Board of County Road Commissioners, or the Managing Director, and the approved Contractor is notified, in writing.
- b) The Road Commission prepares, and the Township approves a Program Sheet with the bid price, including any additional project costs and/or contingencies.
- c) If the cost of the project is over \$10,000, the Township is provided with a Pre-Construction Bill, which is 75% of the estimated Township cost, less the \$500 deposit. If the estimated cost is less than \$10,000, no pre-construction deposit is required.
- d) The Remonumentation Committee is notified of the project location, as deemed appropriate by Road Commission Engineering Staff.

7) Prior to Commencement of the Project

- a) A Pre-Construction Meeting is scheduled with the Contractor to:
 - i) Obtain a list of Sub-Contractors.
 - ii) Source of materials for testing.
 - iii) Set Project schedule.
 - iv) Coordinate utilities.
 - v) Verify Performance and Payment Bonds, as applicable.
 - vi) Verify all Permits are in place, including permits(s) to work in the county road right-of-way for the Contractor, and any Subcontractor(s).
- b) Property Owners and other stakeholders (schools, Fire Departments, Sheriff's Department, etc.) are contacted, as deemed appropriate by Engineering Staff, either by letter, project flier, phone call, or personal visit to define the impact of the project.
- c) To ensure proper coordination, if the Township sends any resident correspondence about the upcoming project, they will include the Road Commission in that correspondence.

8) Project Commences

- a) Project records are maintained by Road Commission Staff using Field Manager and/or Merl.
- b) Inspector's Daily Report forms are prepared by Road Commission Staff through on-site visits.
- c) Project files continue to be maintained by Road Commission Staff.
- d) Road Commission Staff prepares and submits requests for payment to the Board of County Road Commissioners for approval. Contractor payments are made with the Road Commission holding retainage monies, as it may deem appropriate.
- e) Project updates are provided on the Road Commission's social media platforms and website.

9) Project Completion

- a) Punch list is prepared by Road Commission Staff.
- b) Final payments are made, to include retainage as may be appropriate.
- c) A Final Billing Statement is sent to the Township for payment.
- d) The Project is closed by the Road Commission's Accounting Department.

Appendix H - Township and/or Village Requests for Improvements on the Primary Road System

Due to budget constraints, limits on roads eligible for federal aid and other circumstances the Van Buren County Road Commission must limit the special and/or heavy maintenance projects it can accomplish. The following Policy was adopted by the Board of County Road Commissioners in response to requests received by townships (and/or cities/villages) for improvements on the Primary Road System:

VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION **Requests for Improvements on Primary Road System** **Policy No. 2011-01**

The Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) maintains a Transportation Asset Management Program (TAMP) which includes the agency's 5-year road plan. This plan utilizes traffic counts, road ratings (PASER and IBR), connectivity routes, and available funding sources to prioritize road maintenance and improvements. Annually the TAMP is updated to continually provide a 5-year road plan moving forward. The TAMP is discussed each year during the Road Commission's Township Annual meeting and is available on the Road Commission's website <https://www.vbcrc.org/tamp>.

Due to limited funding, road work beyond routine maintenance, that is requested which is not included in the Van Buren County Road Commission's ("Road Commission") budget is often funded by the townships, such as sealcoat, fog seal, gravel road improvement projects, and paved road improvement projects. The Road Commission and the Township Partners have worked together for decades to provide additional road projects with funding from the township level. This partnership between the Road Commission and the townships is built from necessity to best serve the public of Van Buren County and is greatly appreciated by the Road Commission and the motoring public.

The VBCRC will consider a request from a township and/or a municipality for improvements that are not included in the TAMP which would be funded in part by Township funds and Road Commission funds. To consider such a request, the Road Commission must be in receipt of a Resolution from the requesting governing Board stating:

1. The name of the Primary Road, the point of beginning, the point of ending and a brief description of the requested improvement project it wishes to be funded.
2. Amount of funding the township/municipality proposes to support the improvement project, including any millage funds and/or township/municipality funds.
3. The year, or years, in which the township/municipality would financially support this improvement project.

The Board of County Road Commissioners will, upon receipt of such Resolution, consider the township/municipality's request using the TAMP criteria as a guideline, which includes:

- Road Commission staff recommendations made through data collection utilizing the PASER system.
- If the traffic volume of the road is considered high, medium, or low based upon VBCRC guidelines.
- If the road segment is on the VBCRC's defined connectivity route and/or if the road improvement would connect other improved routes.
- Road Commission budget constraints.

Additionally, the Road Commission will consider the following information in determining feasibility of the township's request:

- The date in which the township's/municipality's Resolution is received by the Board of County Road Commissioners.
- The percentage of project cost share from the township/municipality.
- How the request fits into the TAMP's 5-year road plan.
- Other such mitigating circumstances that may arise.

Appendix I – Dust Control Policy (2021-06)

The purpose of this Policy is to establish criteria and procedures for application of dust control chemicals on aggregate surfaced roadways under the jurisdiction of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

It can be difficult to justify the use of any product for dust control alone; however, the added benefit of a stabilized surface that controls the loss of “fines” through dust control is a great economic benefit. When the “fines” are lost from a gravel surface, the stone and sand-sized particles that remain will tend to remain loose on the surface leading to distress pocketing, like wash-boarding, etc. In addition, roadways that do not receive proper dust control will:

- Become very hard to maintain requiring extra blading, shaping, patching or other repairs which increases maintenance costs borne by the Van Buren County Road Commission; and,
- Increase intervals between the need to resurface and/or add new gravel.

Requests for Dust Control

1. All requests for dust control shall be made through the Van Buren County Road Commission.
2. Townships may choose to fund a dust control program by signing a Program Sheet stating the selected contractor from the list of bidders approved by the Road Commission, the number of applications they wish to receive over the season, including bag chloride, if offered by the Township to its residents. The Road Commission grades the gravel roads prior to the application and supervises the dustlayer application process at no cost to the townships.
3. No “spot” applications of dust control will be permitted.
4. The application must be a “continuous” application over all aggregate surfaces in the Township certified by the Van Buren County Road Commission.
5. Should individuals want to apply bag chloride to further control the dust in front of their property, the property owner must receive an Authorization Slip from the township in which they reside allowing them to schedule an appointment to pick up the bag chloride at the Road Commission’s Administrative Office in Lawrence.

Appendix J – Failed Condition Road Policy

Due to budget constraints and limited funding. There may be roads that cannot be effectively and efficiently maintained as asphalt surfaced roads. To address these situations, the following policy was adopted by the Board of County Road Commissioners.

Failed Condition Road Policy (2018-06)

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) is responsible for the safety of the traveling public and has a duty to provide “reasonably safe” road conditions; and,

WHEREAS, the VBCRC also has a duty to maintain its infrastructure assets as efficiently and cost effectively as possible; and,

WHEREAS, the VBCRC has sought the input of all 18 Townships in the implementation of the adoption of this Policy; and,

WHEREAS, the VBCRC shall consider this Failed Condition Road Policy to apply to all Primary Roads and Local Roads under the jurisdiction of the VBCRC; and,

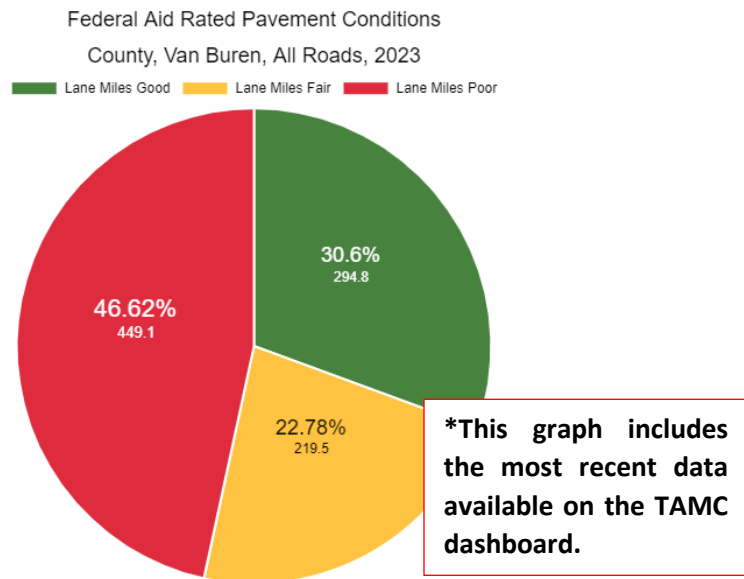
NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby adopts this Failed Condition Road Policy as follows:

1. A Road shall be deemed to be in “Failed Condition” if rated by VBCRC staff according to the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER) system to be a PASER 2, or below, using:
 - a. Historical PASER rating data; and,
 - b. Sound engineering judgment.
2. A Township Board shall be notified of the road sections deemed to be in Failed Condition on an annual basis.
3. If plans to improve said Failed Road are not initiated by the VBCRC or the Township within six (6) months, the VBCRC may implement one or more of the following steps to decrease its liability, and to maintain a roadway that is reasonably safe for public travel:
 - a. Attend a Township Board Meeting to specifically discuss and seek solutions for the Failed Road segment.
 - b. Host a public meeting inviting the Township Board, the Township residents along the Failed Road, and the general public to discuss possible options for improvements.
 - c. As an intermediate step, for a maximum of six months, and/or as deemed to be in the best interest of public safety, the VBCRC may:
 - i. Post rough road signs;
 - ii. Post advisory speed panels to recommend a reduced speed (not enforceable);
 - d. Continue to provide minimal routine maintenance in an effort to sustain the infrastructure in a manner deemed to be reasonably safe for access by the residents on said roadway.
 - e. Continue to pursue methods by which to fund a reconstruction project, such as Federal/State Aid (on eligible routes only), a township special assessment, township or county-wide road millage allocations, if available, bonding, etc.
4. If steps have not been initiated in a time frame acceptable by the VBCRC, the VBCRC Board will move forward with pulverization, and will pay 100% of the cost to pulverize the Failed Road segment.

Appendix K – PASER Data Collection

Asset Management is a best management practice which focuses on preserving the condition of roads rather than allowing them to deteriorate to a more expensive state of repair. Using asset management allows road agencies to extend the service life of roads in good or fair condition with less expenditure.

The Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) has implemented the use of PASER, a uniform rating system for all roads in the state. Road entities within the State of Michigan work with the Transportation Asset Management Council to submit data on the health of our road system. The data submitted has assisted several Legislative committees in understanding the need for additional funding to maintain our road systems. This data is not only available to the State for concerns on funding; it also provides all road agencies with important data regarding the condition of our individual road systems and serves as a tool to evaluate the maintenance operations performed on our roads. Asset Management is becoming more and more necessary for decision making and providing data backing-up those decisions. It also provides us with another means to show transparency to our residents and to the State.



The Van Buren County Road Commission believes this data collection will prove to be helpful for all townships within Van Buren County. As a result, a plan for cooperation on data collection has been implemented as follows. The Road Commission asks that all townships participate in this program.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Year 1 | The townships reimburse the VBCRC for the cost of rating all Local and Primary Roads. (Year 2026) |
| Year 2 | VBCRC will cover the cost of rating all Local and Primary Roads. (Year 2027) |
| Year 3 | VBCRC receives reimbursement from the Asset Management Council for rating all Local and Primary Roads. (Year 2025) |

Appendix L – Snow Plowing Policy

The Van Buren County Road Commission will adhere to the following Policy, and as amended, for winter operations:

SNOW PLOWING POLICY **POLICY 2008-01**

1. Each winter snow event will be treated as an individual occurrence, due to the unique characteristics of each event (i.e., depth or type of snow, temperature fluctuations, ice formation, etc).
2. Routine snow removal operations will begin on the affected areas of the County Primary Road network, as a first priority. These roads include Red Arrow Highway, Blue Star Highway, and all roads with the "County Road (CR)" designation. The affected areas of the Local Roads system (streets and avenues), and the affected roadways within subdivisions are given secondary priority.
3. Normal scheduled operations of the Van Buren County Road Commission occur within eight (8) hour days, Monday through Friday.
4. Weekend operations and/or overtime operations are authorized as follows:
 - A. In the event of a snowfall in excess of four (4") inches, the most critical locations on selected County Primary Roads will be covered, as conditions permit.
 - B. Unusual ice and/or wind conditions causing hazardous driving, or impassable conditions on the affected areas of the road system, as conditions permit.
 - C. In the event of a snowfall in excess of eight (8") inches, authorization shall be extended to cover the Local Road system of the affected area(s), as conditions permit.

In all cases, minimum crew sizes will be utilized to cover the affected areas.

5. Every effort within the physical and financial resources of the Road Commission shall be made to keep the roads in a safe and reasonable condition for public travel.

Appendix M – Mailbox Replacement Policy and Proper Installation

Mailbox Replacement Policy. In an effort to maintain good public relations, the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County has adopted Policy 2015-02, Mailbox Replacement Policy as follows:

MAILBOX REPLACEMENT POLICY Policy No. 2015-02

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Van Buren County Road Commission to maintain the County Road Right-of-Way in a manner reasonably safe for public travel and for the exclusive use of the public, as opposed to the private use of an individual maintaining an encroachment upon the public right-of-way; and,

WHEREAS, snow being thrown by the plow can significantly impact the mailbox and cause damage. Mailboxes must be securely fastened in the ground to reduce or resist the impact of thrown snow; and,

WHEREAS, mailboxes shall be installed and constructed as set forth in the Van Buren County Road Commission's Guidelines for Mailboxes and Supports, as posted.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that if it is determined by Road Commission staff that a mailbox and/or post was struck directly by Road Commission equipment, the Road Commission will replace the existing mailbox and/or post with a standard mailbox and/or post. Custom mailboxes and posts will not be replaced in-kind.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Road Commission will replace the mailbox and/or post only when Road Commission equipment is found to have made direct contact with the mailbox; not when the box is knocked over by snow or slush that is thrown by the plow.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that if a mailbox has been hit by Road Commission equipment, it must be reported to the Van Buren County Road Commission within 24 hours, unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the Managing Director, or his or her designee; and,

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that other encroachments, such as sprinkler systems, ornamental plantings, fences, advertising signs and others are not permitted and will not be replaced, repaired, or reimbursed by the Van Buren County Road Commission.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Managing Director, or his or her designated representative, is authorized to use reasonable discretion in resolving matters involving unusual circumstances.

Proper Mailbox Installation. The Road Commission requires mailboxes and newspaper delivery boxes located in the right-of-way to be constructed in a manner which does not interfere with the safety of the traveling public or the maintenance and operation of the road network. A mailbox installation that does not conform to the provisions of the Mailbox Guidelines set by the U.S. Postal Services and the Guidelines established by the VBCRC shall be considered an encroachment and removal shall be administered in accordance with MCL 247.171, et seq.

Mailbox Re-installation After Construction. In the course of a road reconstruction project, it may become necessary to remove the mailboxes along a roadway. In this event, the Road Commission, or its contractor, will reinstall mailboxes and posts to the standards specified by the Road Commission. Nonstandard mailboxes (i.e. multiple mailboxes, metal cylinders, structures made of brick, stone, or other similar materials) and non-standard posts (i.e. large steel post, railroad ties, telephone poles, etc.) will be replaced with an aluminum mailbox, which is approximately 19" long x 6-1/2" wide x 9" high, on a single 4" x 4" wooden post. In the cases where the post or mounting system is in violation, just the post will be replaced.

Appendix N – Driveway Permits

General Information. Driveways are a resident's access point to their property. This access point must be permitted by the Road Commission according to the permit application process, a portion of which is outlined below, to ensure proper roadway drainage is maintained and appropriate sight distance is present.



Driveway Culvert Blocked with Debris

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR TOWNSHIPS TO REQUIRE PROPERTY OWNERS TO OBTAIN A DRIVEWAY PERMIT PRIOR TO ISSUING ANY BUILDING PERMIT. The Road Commission must understand the changes being made, and the volume and type of traffic at the access point in order to assist in safe access. This is a FREE permit process for residential driveways UNLESS the property owner fails to obtain a driveway permit prior to installation, at which time a charge of \$100 for an after-the-fact permit fee is assessed.

Proper installation of driveways, including culverts, is the responsibility of the property owner (or a designated, permitted contractor). In addition, property owners must maintain their driveway culvert to prevent drainage problems for the roadway. Proper driveway culvert maintenance includes removing debris from the culvert regularly and maintaining culvert end sections.

If the Road Commission recognizes a concern with a property owner's driveway and/or culvert, the Road Commission will contact the property owner either in person or by mail/notice. The Road Commission will work with the property owner by providing the information necessary to assist the property owner in making the necessary corrections. If the corrections are not timely made, the Road Commission will issue an encroachment notice giving the property owner 30 days within which to correct the situation. If the property owner refuses to make the required corrections, the Road Commission may proceed to remove such encroachment, the cost of which may be assessed, levied, and collected in the same manner as other taxes are collected pursuant to MCL 247.172.

Residential and Farm Field Driveway Permit Applications. Standard procedures for a residential or farm field driveway permit application are as follows:

1. Property Owners must complete a Residential or Other than Commercial Driveway Application. There is no charge for a single-family residential driveway application. There is a \$25.00 fee for a farm field driveway application. Property owners in both instances are required to furnish and maintain their driveway culvert if one is required.
2. Applicant must stake/mark the location at which they propose to install the driveway so the Road Commission's Permit Officer may locate and review the site for adequate site distance in both directions, and to make a determination as to whether a driveway culvert is required.
3. Upon issuance of the permit by the Permit Officer, a copy is provided to the property owner and the Township.
4. If the issued Permit requires that a driveway culvert pipe be installed, the property owner will be given a list of Permitted Contractors which is updated annually through a sealed Request for Proposal of Interest. The List of Permitted Contractors can be found at <https://www.vbcrc.org/drivewaypermits>.

5. A property owner may install the driveway culvert required by the Permit on their own property provided they review, understand, and sign a Hold Harmless Agreement. The property owner may utilize the list of “Places to Purchase a Driveway Culvert Pipe” to secure the pipe designated in the Permit. Both the Hold Harmless Agreement and the list of Places to Purchase a Driveway Culvert Pipe can be found at <https://www.vbcrc.org/drivewaypermits>.

Commercial or Other Than Residential Driveway Permit Applications. All requests regarding access to the roadways for a Commercial or Other Than Residential Driveway Permit Application shall include a separate application package for each site. The Road Commission will accept and review only one application for each such site. The application package shall include all applicable documents as set forth in the Driveway (Curb Cut) Permit Application Review Procedures. <https://www.vbcrc.org/drivewaypermits>.

Appendix O – Request for Work on Non-Certified Roads

Snowplowing, Sealcoat, Gravel Road Maintenance, etc. MTF funds and county-wide road millage funds cannot be spent on non-certified roads. All requested work on non-certified roads must be funded by the property owners through a property tax assessment (Special Assessment District) and paid to the Road Commission through the township. It is recommended by the Road Commission that private subcontractors be hired for this purpose without involving the Road Commission as this allows the Road Commission to focus solely on roads within its jurisdiction. All work performed on roads not certified by the Van Buren County Road Commission shall be invoiced to cover all costs incurred, including fringe benefits and overhead expenses.

Street Signs. In order to assist the County 911 emergency calling service the Road Commission will work with the townships regarding signing non-certified roadways. This program must be funded by the residents requesting the street signs and/or by the township. A special maintenance program sheet must be completed by the township authorizing the Road Commission to furnish and erect the specific sign(s), and the township is billed accordingly. All work performed on roads not certified by the Van Buren County Road Commission shall be invoiced to cover all costs incurred, including fringe benefits and overhead expenses.

At their meeting on December 7, 2017, the Board of County Road Commissioners decided to request that each township in Van Buren County consider a private road ordinance, policy, or requirement for their respective township that sets forth minimum required signage where non-certified roads connect to the certified road system, such as a stop sign, street name sign, no outlet sign, etc.



WILL YOU MAINTAIN MY ROAD?

The Van Buren County Road Commission is statutorily limited to using Road Commission dollars to maintain certified roads. Non-certified roads cannot be maintained by the Road Commission unless the property owner(s) petition the Township for a special assessment district and pay for any maintenance and/or improvements. Roads are certified through a process involving the Road Commission, Township and Property Owners as described below:

CERTIFICATION PROCESS:

1. Property owners may petition a township to request that the Road Commission certify a roadway, roadway segment, or plat.
2. The roadway(s) must meet current Road Commission standards as published in the Road Development Policy found at vbrc.org/policies.
3. All expenses to perform roadway upgrades are to be paid for by the township and/or the adjacent property owners through the creation of a special assessment district (SAD).
4. The Road Commission must acquire sufficient right of way, if it is not already in the Road Commission's possession.
5. The Township shall provide the Road Commission with approval of the proposed certification in the form of a Resolution.
6. Final acceptance of the road or plat by the Board of County Road Commissioners is contingent upon satisfactorily meeting the requirements and provisions set forth in the Road Development Policy. Found at vbrc.org/policies.
7. The fee for certification of a new or existing road or plat is paid for by the Township or the adjacent property owners as set forth in the Road Commission's Fee Schedule Policy.

VBCRC.ORG

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269-674-8011

Appendix P – Certification of Roads (Continued)

The following is a sample resolution a Township Board can utilize to support certification of a roadway.

RESOLUTION

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of * Township recommends that the roadway(s) (situated in * Subdivision; **-OR-** beginning at * and ending at *), in * Township, Van Buren County, Michigan be considered for certification by the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be served on the Van Buren County Road Commission for consideration by its Board.

AYES: _____

NAYS: _____

RESOLUTION ADOPTED/NOT ADOPTED.

Signed by: _____ (Print Name)

* Township _____ (Office Held)

Appendix Q – Abandonment of Right-Of-Way

In accordance with the Road Commission's Fee Schedule Policy, as amended, the fee for abandoning a public road right-of-way is \$350.00, plus costs. The Road Commission may also require that a Resolution accompany a Township's request to abandon the road right-of-way. In accordance with Act 283 of 1909, MCL 224.18, the following are required activities for processing a request:

Preliminary Guide for Abandonment of a County Road

The Van Buren County Road Commission has authority, pursuant to MCL 224.18, to abandon all or part of a county road. The following are required activities for processing a request:

1. A written request must be provided to the VBCRC along with the appropriate fee to begin the petition process. Please note any additional expenses necessary to research an abandonment will be applied to the individual making the request.
2. Once the written request is reviewed, VBCRC will review requirements with the petitioner.
3. A petition must be signed by seven (7) or more freeholders (land title holders) of a township in which the abandonment is being sought. The petition must also be accompanied by a true and correct list of the names and mailing addresses of the occupants of each parcel of land abutting the portion of right of way which they seek to be abandoned.
4. If the petition for abandonment DOES contain the signatures of all the abutting landowners, the VBCRC may determine without a public hearing the advisability of such abandonment within twenty (20) days after receiving the petition. However, the VBCRC can require a public hearing if deemed in the best interest of the public.
5. Where there is water access, township and DNR have the right to timely notification and decision to maintain the road as a public access site.
6. If the petition for abandonment does NOT contain the signatures of all the abutting landowners, or the right of way has a building upon it, the Road Commission will:
 - a) Appoint a time and place for a public hearing within twenty (20) days of receiving the petition.
 - b) Serve notice, by first class mail, on all abutting landowners and township officials at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing and post a notice of said hearing in three (3) public places within the township.
 - c) Publish notice of hearing in a local newspaper on two (2) consecutive days prior to said hearing.

The Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County must determine, at the time of passage of any resolution abandoning a right of way, if the abandonment is in the best interest of the public. The VBCRC may reserve an easement for public utility purposes. If abandonment is determined to be in the best interest of the public, the resolution will be recorded at the Register of Deeds. The determination will also be published in a local newspaper, once for each week for three successive weeks. Within thirty (30) days of making their decision, the VBCRC must also file a record with the State Department of Transportation.

Notes on ownership: When the public right of way consists of a Statutory Easement (unplatted) only, and the land is held privately in fee, the title will remain with the property owner to the title line (usually the centerline) of the road involved. Only the public right to the use of the land will be eliminated.

In recorded subdivisions or platted areas, the VBCRC can only relinquish jurisdiction of the right of way to the township. The VBCRC does not hold title; it only holds the right of way in "the public trust". Once relinquished by the VBCRC, jurisdiction of the right of way returns to the township that can then pass a resolution to abandon its interest. It then becomes a private road. In order to terminate the private road right of way and claim ownership of the property right of way, the abutting property owners must go through Circuit Court to amend the plat. This is done at the owner's expense. Person's seeking this action should consult an attorney.

Public right of way which was acquired in fee title by the VBCRC by purchase or condemnation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The VBCRC and prospective recipients should act under the guidance of their respective attorneys.

This is meant as a preliminary guide only, for additional information please refer to: PUBLIC HIGHWAY AND PUBLIC ROADS Act 283 of 1909 Website: www.legislature.mi.gov

Appendix R – Traffic Control Orders for Speed and Parking Restrictions

Traffic Control Orders for Speed and Parking Restrictions

The Michigan State Police (MSP), Traffic Services Section, is responsible for making joint investigations together with the Van Buren County Road Commission and to make recommendations concerning reasonable and safe speed limits and parking restrictions. These joint investigations take substantial Road Commission staff time for field reviews and office time which are charged directly to a township’s “Routine Maintenance” budget for traffic services, which is derived from MTF thus reducing a township’s available maintenance dollars.

Speed Controls

Because of the staff time involved in a MSP joint investigation for the establishment or review of a speed zone, Road Commission **Policy 2008-03** requires the Township’s approval in the form of a Resolution.

POLICY ON REQUESTS FOR SPEED STUDIES

Policy No. 2008-03

The following Policy on Requests for Speed Studies is hereby adopted by the Van Buren County Road Commission this 6th day of November 2008, to be effective immediately:

The Van Buren County Road Commission will consider a request to conduct a speed study upon the Road Commission's receipt of a Resolution from a Township Board as follows:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the traffic on _____ from _____ to _____ has steadily increased over the past ____ years due to the development and growth of the Township of _____; and,

WHEREAS, the development and growth of _____ Township, more specifically _____, from _____ to _____, has caused a steady increase of the number of vehicles traveling upon said roadway; and,

WHEREAS, it has become increasingly difficult for residents to negotiate turns, or move into and out of the flow of traffic safely due to the increased volume of traffic.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of _____ is formally requesting that the Van Buren County Road Commission conduct a speed study on _____ from _____ to _____.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that _____ Township understands that the Van Buren County Road Commission will use the engineering data gathered in the speed study to make a decision which could do one of the following: 1) raise the speed limit; 2) lower the speed limit; or, 3) keep the speed limit as it currently exists.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that _____ Township will abide by the decision made by the Van Buren County Road Commission and the Michigan State Police as a result of this speed study.

The Van Buren County Road Commission shall supply the requesting Township with a copy of the above Resolution. Upon the Road Commission's receipt of the Certified Resolution, the Road Commission shall consider the Township's request.

* * *

After receipt of the Township's Resolution, the joint investigation, or speed survey, is taken during times that represent normal free-flow traffic. Since modified speed limits are the maximum allowable speeds, roadway conditions must be close to ideal. The primary basis for establishing a proper, realistic speed limit is the nationally recognized method of using the 85th percentile speed. This is the speed at which or below which 85% of the traffic moves. Studies have shown that changing the posted speed limit does not significantly change the 85th percentile speed. The driving environment, including other traffic on the roadway, roadway conditions, pedestrian traffic, etc., is a significant factor which influences the prevailing speed.

Use of the 85th percentile speed acknowledges that 15% of the drivers are traveling above a speed that is reasonable and proper. It is to this 15% that enforcement action is directed. Studies have shown that these are the drivers who cause many of the crashes and have the worst driving records.

Engineering data gathered in a speed study will do one of the following:

1. Raise the speed limit; or,
2. Lower the speed limit; or,
3. Keep the speed limit as it currently exists.

Parking Restrictions

The primary function of a roadway is to provide for the safe and efficient movement of vehicles operating on that roadway system. Generally, outside of cities and villages, stopping, standing, and parking is prohibited on the main traveled portion of the roadway by the Michigan Vehicle Code. However, the demands of the land use adjacent to the roadway may require that parking be allowed within the right of way.

Overly restrictive prohibitions of parking that are not based on a genuine need cause widespread non-compliance and are unenforceable. Overly permissive parking situations lead to decreased capacities, traffic crashes, and a dysfunctional transportation system. Parking restrictions must reflect a narrow band between these two extremes. In all cases, however, the rights and safety of the driver take precedence over the demands of adjacent landowners.

The basis for taking action in parking situations is stated in Section 257.675 (4) of the Michigan Vehicle Code. The section states:

"The state transportation commission with respect to state trunkline highways and the board of county road commissioners with respect to county roads, acting jointly with the director of the department of state police, may place signs prohibiting or restricting the stopping, standing, or parking of vehicles on a highway where in the opinion of the officials as determined by an engineering study the stopping, standing, or parking is dangerous to those using the highway or where the stopping, standing, or parking of vehicles would unduly interfere with the free movement of traffic on the highway or street"

Recommendations for parking restrictions may be made on highways when: 1) there have been crashes involving cars parked or entering or leaving parked positions; 2) cars are continually stopped on the highway because of roadside interests; 3) parked cars will not permit the continuous free movement of traffic on the main traveled portion of the highway; 4) parked cars are creating vision obstructions or other hazardous situations for traffic utilizing the highway; or 5) parked cars obstruct, hinder, or interfere with the general maintenance of the highway.

The parking investigation is much like a speed investigation. The survey team (consisting of an engineer from the VBCRC and an MSP officer) makes a visual inspection of the area under study noting conditions that exist, such as roadway width and condition, shoulder width and condition, adjoining land use, vehicle traffic volumes, speed limit, and the availability of off-street parking. This data is then analyzed for its effects on the capacity of the roadway and safety to drivers and pedestrians. The survey party then makes a recommendation regarding any parking restrictions. These restrictions become effective when the signs are posted, and a Traffic Control Order has been signed by both parties and filed with the county clerk.

Appendix S – Policy 2021-02 Regarding Encroachments Within the County Highway Right-of-Ways

POLICY REGARDING ENCROACHMENTS WITHIN THE COUNTY HIGHWAY RIGHT-OF-WAYS

The Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) has identified numerous encroachments originating from private properties onto county highway right-of-ways. The VBCRC has legal authority to control public right-of-ways within its jurisdiction. Per MCL 221.20, the statutory width of a Michigan highway right-of-way is 66 feet (33 feet on either side of the center line of the road). Highway right-of-ways may be wider but are seldom narrower.

A paramount concern for the VBCRC is that its roadways are reasonably safe for public travel and suitable for public use. Accordingly, Michigan law prohibits the placement of any object within a county road right-of-way other than traffic control devices, public utilities, and authorized mailboxes that meet the standards of the VBCRC and the United States Postal Service. Any non-approved objects, which can include things like fences, landscaping, and crops or other vegetation, located within a highway right-of-way are considered encroachments. Therefore, the VBCRC will remove any encroachment that interferes with the VBCRC's duty to keep roadways reasonably safe for public travel and suitable for public use.

The VBCRC acknowledges that in many instances there is no intent to jeopardize public safety or interfere with the public's use of a highway. Nevertheless, encroachments on VBCRC right-of-ways can pose a hazard to the public because they hinder the VBCRC's ability to fulfill its statutory obligation to maintain and repair the right-of-ways so that they are reasonably safe for public travel and use. Such concerns include but are not limited to: performing proper maintenance of the roadways; ensuring proper road drainage; and permitting adequate space for the construction and maintenance of utilities located within the right-of-way. Furthermore, certain encroachments have the potential of causing structural damage to the roads, like crop roots or fencing that destabilize the roadbed. Per MCL 230.7, the VBCRC may recover treble damages equivalent to three times the amount of the injury caused to a public road. Although the VBCRC strives to resolve all encroachment issues amicably, the VBCRC will enforce the full effect of this statute if it becomes necessary to do so.

In accordance with the foregoing, please be advised that is the VBCRC policy to immediately remove any encroachments that pose an imminent threat to public safety. Moreover, any encroachments that interfere with the Road Commission's day-to-day maintenance activities may be destroyed by those activities. The Road Commission assumes no liability for any such losses. Finally, the VBCRC may order the person responsible for any encroachment to remove the encroachment per MCL 247.171, even if such encroachment is not immediately interfering with VBCRC operations. Upon such an order, the person notified will have 30 days to remove the encroachment. If the notified party fails to remove the encroachment within 30 days, the VBCRC will take additional enforcement actions, which could include removing the encroachment and billing the violating party for the time and expense in the removal. Any unpaid invoices for encroachment removal are assessed by the township and levied as property taxes upon the adjacent parcel. In addition, the violating party could be ordered to pay a monetary fine for each day the encroachment remains beyond 30 days from the date of the letter.