Introduction to County Road Agencies

Michigan House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

March 21, 2017 • Ed Noyola Denise Donohue
County Road Association of Michigan

CRA County Road Association of Michigan

What is a County Road Agency?

78 county road commissions ...

... and 5 county road departments.

P.A. 283 (1909) created county road commissions to:

- Maintain high-quality, cost-efficient roads and bridges for Michigan residents.
- Develop county-wide seamless systems of roads, bridges across the state under local control.
- Manage rights-of-way (ROW) to ensure road integrity, safety.

Michigan County Road Agencies are ...

Responsible for 75% of Michigan's road miles.

= 90,210 miles of roads.

(124,001 total)

27,277 miles of primary roads.

62,933 miles of local roads.

= 5,724 bridges *(11,061 total)*

= and thousands of culverts.

Quick Fact: Michigan has 4th largest system of local roads in US.

Michigan County Road Agencies ...

Maintain highways in 64 counties under 5-year contracts with MDOT.

- Winter Maintenance =
  Snow clearing ... salting
  ... pot hole patching ...
  replacing guardrails.
- Summer Maintenance =
  ... mowing ... vegetation control ...
  pot hole patching... roadside clean-up
  ... tree removal ... ditching ... etc.
- Some counties subcontract
  mowing, other tasks.
- "Whole ball of wax."

Michigan County Road Workers are ...

Public employees ...

- On the job by 7 a.m.;
- On-call 24/7, 365 days;
- First responders in severe weather conditions.

We are public servants with a business attitude.

What are County Road Commissioners?

Boards of Directors for county road commissions are ...

- 3 or 5 members (51 are 3s; 27 are 5s)
- Appointed or elected ...

  44 boards appointed by county government (56%)

  34 boards elected in countywide elections (44%)

- Salary, benefits set by county board of commissioners.
- Responsive to needs of community.

Collaboration is Core Value for County Road Agencies.

83 counties – grassroots, community connections, media oversight.

9 peer-to-peer councils – quarterly.

9 subcommittees.

4 regional associations – biannual meetings.

Multiple neighborhood groups – "frugal 5."

1 statewide association.

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What is the County Road Association of Michigan?

Since 1918 ...

- 83 county members;
- Highway Conference meetings => 750+ attendees;
- 4 special-focus conferences;
- 6 staff, contracted engineer.

CRA's mission:

"To help our members promote and maintain a safe, efficient local road system in rural and urban Michigan including appropriate stewardship of the public's right-of-way."

Protecting the Road Right-of-Way.

An emphasis on roadbeds and bridges leaves out an important part of the road instructure: The right-of-way (ROW).

- ROW created to enhance driver safety and...
- To enhance H2O management (ditches) to protect roads.
- Public utilities added in mid-1930s.
- Increasing: Private business pressure!

ROW has maintenance costs: Brushing, ditching/re-grading, tree removal.

- Used by ORVs, snowmobiles.

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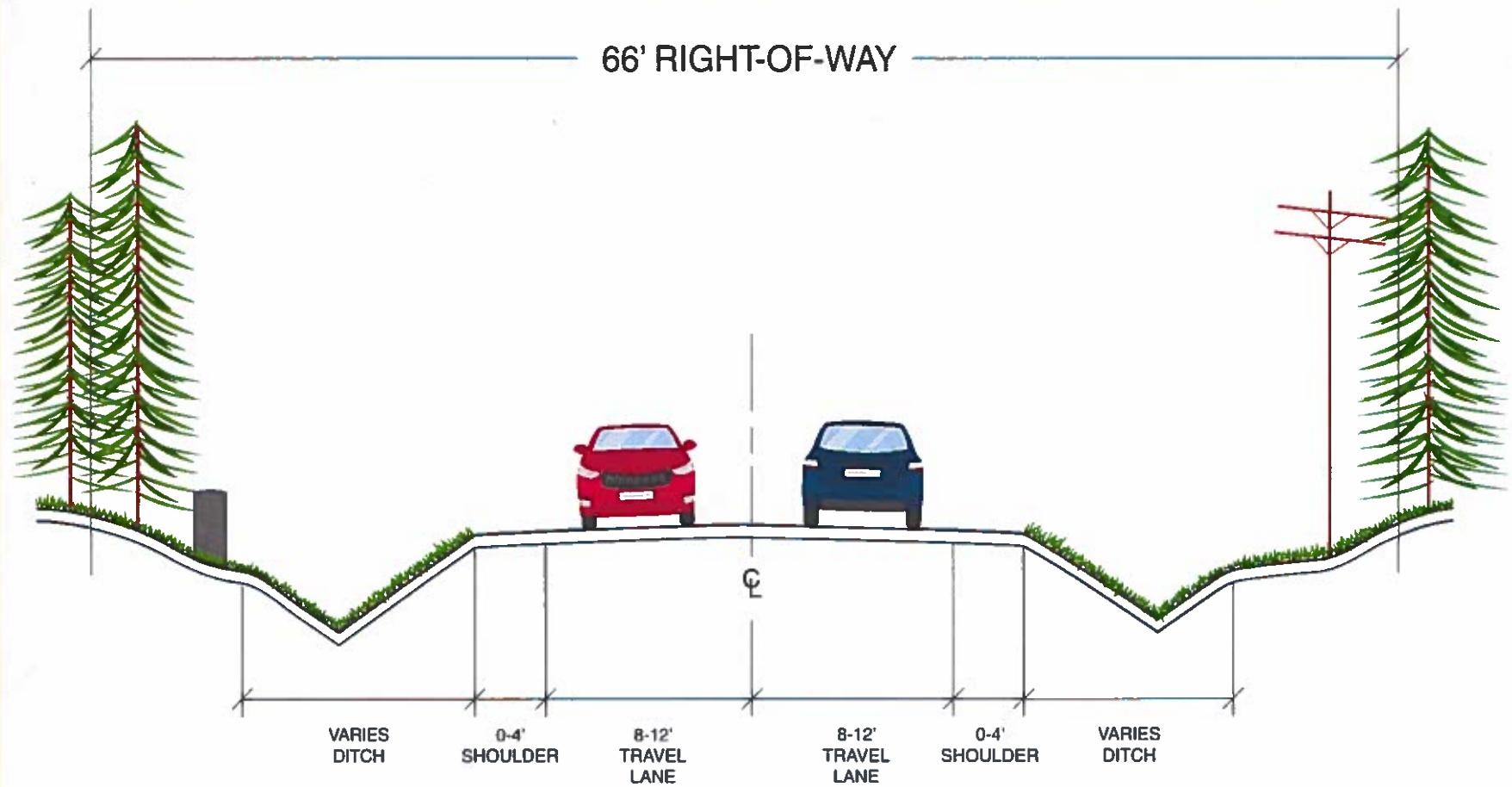
Road Right-of-Way Illustrated.



Innovation is a Core Value for County Road Agencies.

Special-focus task forces:

- Rural Task Force – regional planning.
- Regional/statewide purchasing.
- CRA seasonal weight restriction website.
- Equipment sharing.

Shared engineering specialist:

MDOT grant funds.

CRA/MML benefits.

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Efficiency is a Core Value for County Road Agencies.

County road agencies are models of efficiency.

- Fiscally-constrained culture.
  - Debt and bonds are rare.
- Must have local $ to match federal funds.
- By law, >50% match from locals for any local road improvements.

Efficiency is a Core Value.

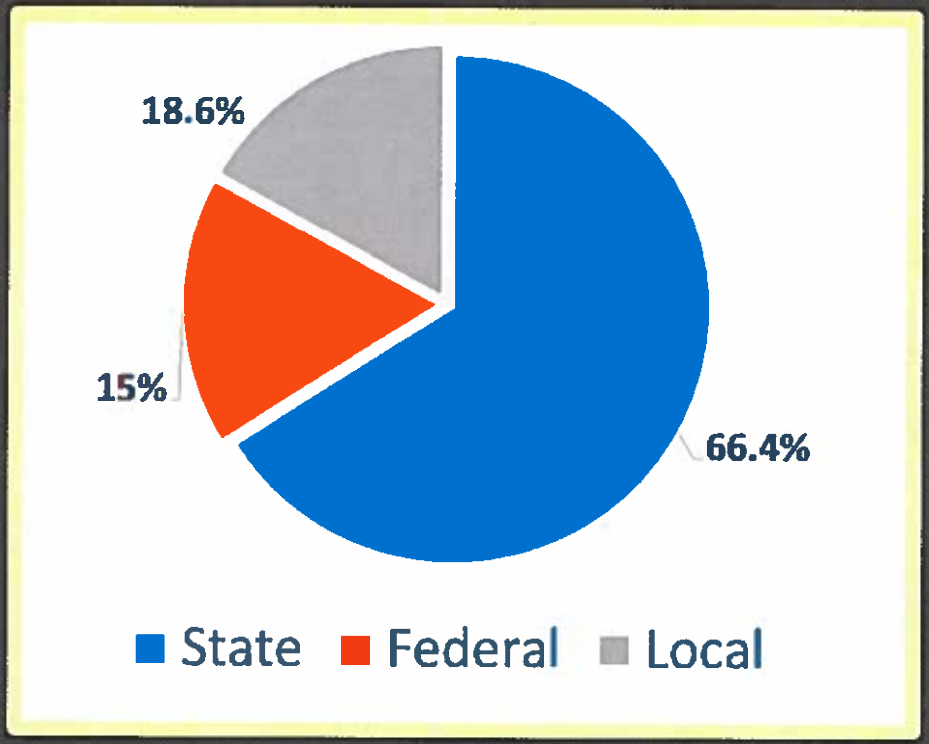
Law permits 10% admin costs for CRCs; we are under that.

Locals have "skin in the game"

- 29 county-wide road millages;
- 100s of township millages; and
- Special assessments for specific road, bridge projects.

Detail on Local Contributions to Roads.

CRCs get state, federal, local $. No taxing, debt-bonding authority.



Source: PA 51 Report. County data only. (2014)

Detail on Local Contributions to Roads.

CRC's PA 51 Local Funds

$192 million from counties, cities, villages, townships.

Additional Local Funds:

$46 million from townships.

$235 million from municipalities.

TOTAL LOCAL CONTRIBUTION = $473 million *(2015)*

County Road Agencies are trusted problem solvers.

Public supports the work of local road commissions!

August 2014, primary results:

- 153 local road millages on ballot.
- 92% passed.
- 72% mean rate of passage.

August 2016, primary results:

- 83 local road millages on ballot.
- 93% passed.

Since 2008, 100% of county-wide millages have been renewed.

Shared Decision Making: County road agencies use asset management principles *(85%+)* and collaborate with townships, cities, villages, counties on project and millage decisions. CRCs also collaborate with businesses, utilities and others.

County Road Agencies are trusted.

Local government partners support county road agencies.

University of Michigan CLOSUP Michigan Public Policy Survey in 2015.

- 78% of local governments have "good" relationships with county road agencies;
- 76% say CRCs provide timely response;
- 68% say CRC decisions are "fair;" and
- 68% approve overall of their county road agency.

The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy

Michigan Public Policy Survey

Michigan local leaders have positive views on relationships with county road agencies, despite some concerns

Key Findings

CLOSUP

NEW! Local Road Warranties.

Required by 2015 Transportation Package.

- Committee working for 1+ year;
- CRCs, MDOT, cities/villages at table;
- Collaborating with industry;
- Will cover concrete, asphalt projects with $2 million paving component;
- Every CRC will adopt same warranty w/in year of language completion.

NEW! Standardized Permits Revised.

CRA's Permit Subcommittee revised 10 recommended permits in 10 months, including standardized fees.

Spring Category

- Seasonal Ag Transportation
- Seasonal Ag Notification Form
- Seasonal Milk Transpo.
- Seasonal Public Utility Transpo.
- Public Utility Notification Form

Standard Transportation Category

- Single Move Transportation
- Annual Move Transportation
- Super Move Transportation
- Mobile Home Single Move
- Mobile Home Annual Move Transportation Permit

One permit remaining.

NEW: Regional adoption underway.

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'15 Transportation Funding: What's Happening?

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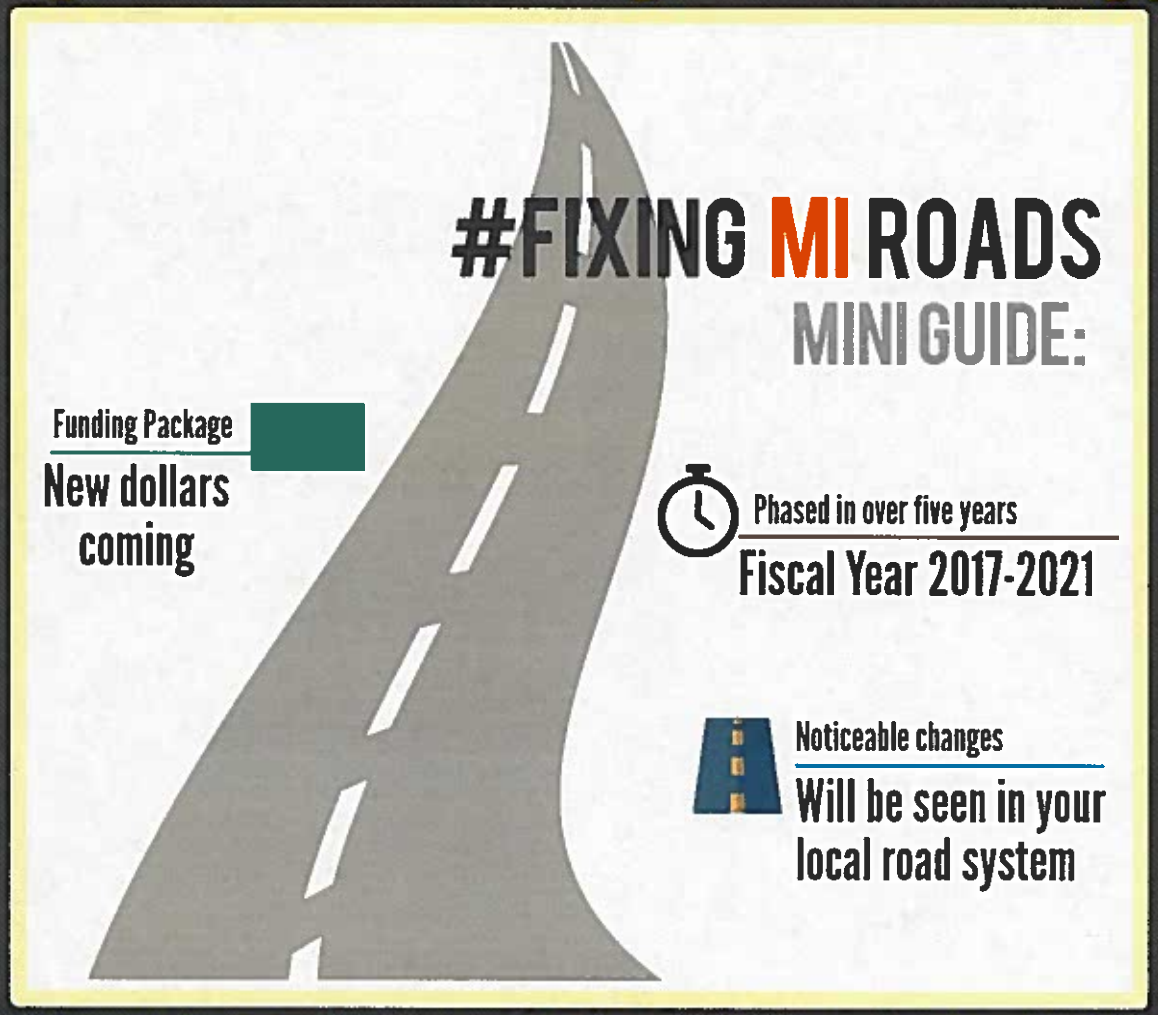

'15 Transportation Funding: What's Happening?

CRA's 2016 survey of county road agencies:

- 95% of CRCs have a 3-5 year project improvement plan list anticipating new funds and are sharing it with their local communities.
- 1/3 of CRCs plan to increase their local matching $ to townships.
- Seven CRCs did "advance construct" projects in 2016.

How long will it take to get to good roads?

- 20% of road agencies said 2026.
  Most said much longer.

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'15 Transportation Funding: What's Happening?

3 Common Road Repairs by County Road Agencies

Road Resurfacing

$106,666 - $200,000

Per Mile

Reconstruction

$415,000 - $2,000,000

Per Mile

Graveling

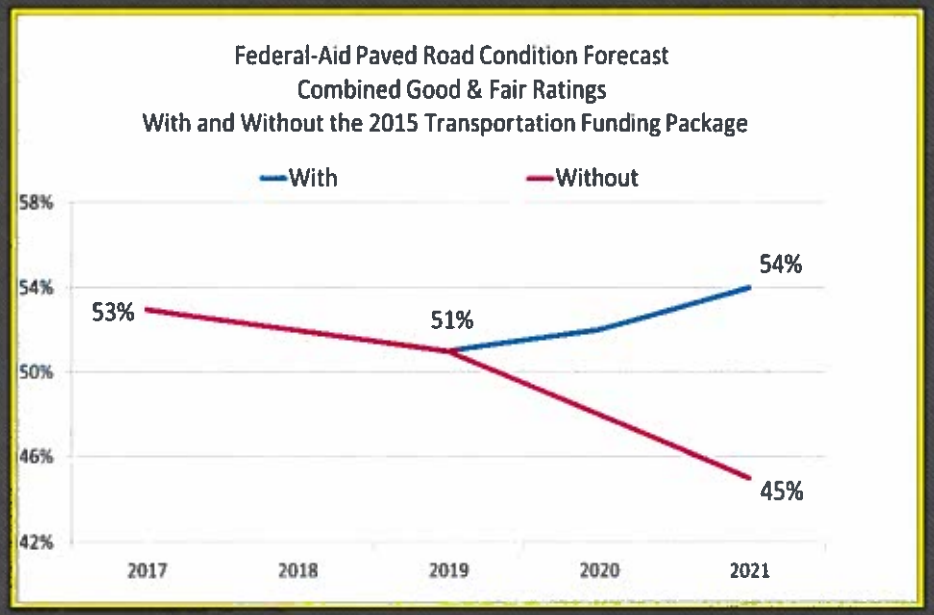
$35,000 - $48,333

Per Mile

'15 Transportation Funding: What's happening?

Currently 18% "Good" rating on local federal-aid system. For non-eligible local roads: Worse.

- 17% of CRCs have weight-restricted bridges. 45 bridges currently closed.
- New $ in 2019 will slow the deterioration of local roads, and we will begin some improvements.



County Road Agencies.

Michigan's 83 county road agencies maintain the majority of Michigan's local and primary roads, and most MDOT roads.

ROW's original purpose is to ensure safety, road integrity.

County road agencies defined by:

- Collaboration;
- Innovation;
- Efficiency;
- Fiscal responsibility.

County Road Association of Michigan

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