



Ross Township Road Project Township Wide Special Assessment Informational Questions and Answers

- Question:** Who is responsible for maintaining and fixing the roads in Ross Township?
Answer: In the State of Michigan, Road Commissions have jurisdiction over the majority of roads in counties which includes Townships.
- Question:** Why are the roads in Ross Township in such bad condition and not being repaired?
Answer: Townships in the State of Michigan have no obligation to expend funds on roads. Road Commissions are limited on the funds they are allowed to spend on local roads.
- Ross Township and the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) partner each year in determining where to spend the limited funds available for local roads. Ross Township has never had additional funding measures dedicated directly to roads (Millage or Special Assessment). The bottom line is a lack of money.
- Question:** How much money does Ross Township receive and spend on road projects in any given year?
Answer: Ross Township has received from the RCKC anywhere from \$52,000 to \$66,000 (2017) per year over the past 5-7 years which must be matched for use. Ross Township has typically spent an additional \$100,000 (\$92,000 in 2017) on yearly road projects.
- Question:** How much does it cost to reconstruct a “failed” road like 41st Street or 44th Street?
Answer: Approximately \$300,000 per mile.
- Question:** Where does all the tax dollars Ross Township property owners pay go?
Answer: In reviewing your tax bill you will notice the Township collects 0.65 mills to operate the Township and an additional 0.99 mills to operate the Fire Department. Less than 10% of the property taxes residents pay stay directly in Ross Township. (The remaining dollars go to the County, Schools, Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA), McKay Library, etc.)
- Question:** What are the options for fixing the roads in Ross Township?
Answer: There are basically four options:
1. Do nothing and continue same approach as the last 20+ years
 2. Add a millage to the ballot and hope it passes (approximately 3 mills).
(What does the Township do if it does not pass?)
 3. Individually assess property owners on a street by street basis for the cost of a project with limited Township participation.
 4. Township Board votes to pass a Township Wide Special Assessment where each owner pays the same amount and everyone has “skin in the game”.

Question: How much money in today's dollars is needed to "fix" the roads in Ross Township?
Answer: An estimated \$5.5 million. The longer we wait the more expensive it will become.

Question: What is the proposal being considered by the Ross Township Board?
Answer: The Ross Township Board is considering passing a Township wide Special Assessment similar to Bedford Township (Calhoun County) and Alamo/Texas Townships to raise the money needed to bring all the roads in Ross Township to a "good" condition.

Question: How much is it going to cost me?
Answer: The current project proposal to raise the \$5.5 million would cost an individual property owner who has a "developed" (house, business, etc.) parcel approximately \$2314 plus interest (approximately 3-4%) payable over 15 years (\$195 per year on average). An undeveloped parcel would be assessed at approximately \$1157 plus interest (approximately 3-4%) payable over 15 years (\$98 per year on average). Interest could be avoided by paying the total dollar amount up front.

(The costs above are estimates based on the status of the project as of 4-27-2017 and subject to changes)

Question: Why does the amount include interest?
Answer: In order to complete all the projects in the proposal in a timely fashion (within 3 years) the Township will have to sell bonds to receive the dollars up front. A property owner does have the option of paying all the assessment up front.

Question: Will there be a vote by the residents on this proposal?
Answer: The passage of a Township Wide Special Assessment under Public Act 188 of 1954, as amended, does not require a vote by the residents. The Township Board must pass the initiative by a majority vote.

Question: How do residents receive an opportunity to voice our support (or not support) to the Township Board?
Answer: The Township Board and the RCKC will be holding two Town Hall Meetings to discuss and solicit feedback on the proposal.

- Wednesday May 17th and Thursday June 8th 7:00pm-9:00pm
- Kellogg Biological Station Auditorium – Michigan St University
- 3700 East Gull Lake Drive, Hickory Corners, MI 49060

Question: Is this a "done deal" or do the residents have any say in the proposal?
Answer: The reason for the Town Hall Meetings is to provide information, present the proposal, solicit feedback, and answer questions. At any time before the assessment roll is set the Township Board can halt the Township Wide Special Assessment proposal.

Question: If the Township Board votes to establish the district and confirm the tax roll is there anything a property owner can do to appeal the special assessment.
Answer: At the Public Hearing (date TBD) where the Township Board confirms the assessment tax roll an owner or party in interest, or his or her agent, may appear in person at the hearing to protest the special assessment in writing, or may file his or her appearance and protest by letter before the hearing, and in that event, personal appearance shall not be required. The owners or any person having interest in the real property who protests in writing at or before the hearing may file a written appeal of the special

assessment with the State Tax Tribunal within 30 days after the special assessment roll is confirmed.

Question: Why should I support the proposal?

Answer: The quality of roads in Ross Township is some of the worst in Kalamazoo County and getting worse by the month. This proposal will reverse the trend and provide our Township with some of the best roads in the County. Homes on a “good” asphalt road have a higher selling value of up to 16%. If a property benefits by 16% on asphalt improvement roads then a home valued at \$100,000 (taxable value ½ or \$50,000) benefits by \$8,000. This is a much higher benefit than the cost being paid by homeowners of approximately \$2203 (plus interest).

Question: How do we know the Township Wide Special Assessment money will be spent on roads in Ross Township?

Answer: By law, the money raised under the proposed Township Wide Special Assessment must be spent on the local roads of Ross Township.

Question: When will my road be fixed or reconstructed?

Answer: The project plan is located on the Ross Township web site (www.ross-township.us) and lists every project, estimated time frame and cost. The project plan is also available at the Ross Township office. Projects are prioritized using the RCKC’s Asset Management Plan. This “plan” does not always put the “worst roads first”. The plan incorporates implementing maintenance to prevent roads from becoming “poor” and requiring total reconstruction (\$300,000) per mile.

Question: My road is classified as a State Highway or primary road, how come I have to pay the Township Wide Special Assessment?

Answer: The Board has decided the Special Assessment is a township wide improvement/investment project and all property owners will participate. All residents receive a benefit if the Township has good roads.

Question: What if I sell my property? Does the Township Wide Special Assessment stay with the property or need to be paid off?

Answer: A property owner does have the ability to pay off the remaining balance of the assessment at any time. This could be part of the real estate transaction or the assessment could simply stay with the property.

Question: Does the Township Wide Special Assessment and associated road projects include the Village of Augusta?

Answer: No. The Village of Augusta is a separate entity as it relates to roads. They receive Public Act 51 funds and spend these funds on Village roads accordingly.

Question: Will the gravel roads in Ross Township be part of this plan and be paved?

Answer: No, roads in Ross Township which are currently gravel, will remain gravel.

Question: Will the closed bridges on 43rd Street, for example, be reconstructed?

Answer: No. The reconstruction of the bridges on 43rd Street, for example, is not included in the proposed plan due to the excessive cost. The approximate cost to reconstruct a bridge similar to those on 43rd Street is approximately \$800,000 - \$1,000,000.

Question: How will the roads be funded/maintained after the special assessment investments?
Answer: The roads will be funded/maintained with what/if any project savings, Township general funds, and RCKC local road participation match funds.