In the early 1900’s, each Township Board of Supervisors had authority over the construction, maintenance, and funding of local public roads.

Michigan’s McNitt Act of 1931, supplemented by Public Act 51 of 1951, removed the Township authority and obligation, and required the Road Commission to maintain all public roads outside of incorporated cities and villages.

At that time, the Road Commission was required to classify the roads as either county primary or local.

Today, the Ottawa County Road Commission maintains more than 1,700 miles of county roads.

The main and largest revenue source for the OCRC comes from the State of Michigan through Public Act 51 of 1951.

Michigan PA 51 guides the State in the collection and disbursement of the fuel tax, vehicle registration, and vehicle weight taxes that are deposited in the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF).

The funds the OCRC receives from the MTF are primarily utilized to maintain the county’s state-certified road system.

PA 51 further defines how funds are distributed to and spent by road agencies, and classifies them as either Primary Roads — higher traffic volume roadways that balance mobility and land access — or Local Roads, lower traffic volume roads that provide limited mobility, and provide access to residential areas, businesses, and farms.

In November of 2014, the residents of Ottawa County passed a millage of ½ mil per year for ten years (2015-2024) for the purposes of providing a fund for the reconstruction, resurfacing, and preventative maintenance of roads in Ottawa County.

Countywide road millage funds are focused on the primary road system utilizing an asset management and public involvement process to select projects (See Understanding Asset Management).

The funds the OCRC receives from the MTF are primarily utilized to maintain the county’s state-certified road system.

Road Commission Budget

2020 Anticipated Revenues

MTF = $30,600,000
Road Millage = $7,959,000
Other (Federal/State Grants, Township Contributions, MDOT Maintenance, Other) = $13,450,404
Total Funds = $51,998,450

Budget Targets

Primary Roads = $19,855,320
Local Roads = $15,193,130
Equipment & Facilities = $2,400,000
Operations = $9,450,000
Contingency = $1,000,000
MDOT Maintenance = $4,000,000

http://www.ottawacorc.com/ | 616-842-5400 | info@ottawacorc.com
Public Act 51 of 1951 requires the Road Commission to only spend the MTF funds based on the allocated amounts received for primary and local roads.

The recent and projected increases to the MTF, in addition to the countywide road millage, will certainly help provide some of the needed funds to improve the primary road system.

However, in contrast to primary road funding, local road mileage makes up 75% of the county road system, but only 30-40% of the total MTF funding can be utilized on local roads. It is clear that there’s a shortfall for local road funding.

Prior to 1986, the federal General Revenue Sharing program provided funding for Ottawa County to use for any purpose.

As part of this program in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, the County would provide an initial amount of funds for each Township to be utilized on local roads.

The Road Commission would match the County portion, with the Township and/or residents being responsible for the balance.

Since the termination of the revenue-sharing program, the Townships have been relied upon to assist in funding local road improvement projects.

Since the start of the subdivision resurfacing program in 1987, 100% of the costs associated with the program have been paid for by the townships and/or residents.

Within the limits of the MTF funding allocation, the Road Commission provides a resurfacing and seal coat program for maintaining local paved roads.

However, the costs for local road construction projects have been paid 100 percent by the townships and/or residents.

Township General Fund

A Township Board can appropriate any available balances in its general fund for maintenance and/or improvements to a county road within the Township. If funds are available, they are typically allocated during the yearly budgetary process. The use of these funds is strictly at the discretion of the Township Board.

Special Assessment

Michigan Public Act 188 of 1954 authorizes a Township Board to make improvements to a county road through special assessments against benefited property owners either through the receipt of a valid petition or through a Township Board resolution or motion.

Township Millage

The Township Board can implement a millage for road improvements with a vote of the electors.