



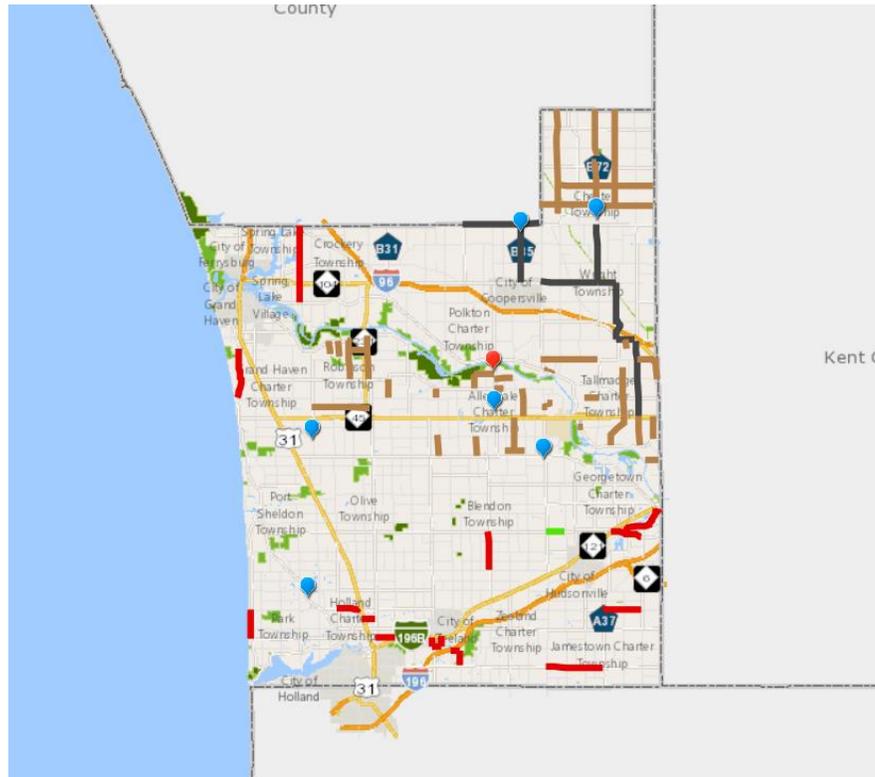
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## A preview of summer 2020 road construction

Spring is nearly here and we're inching closer to construction season in Ottawa County.

Primary road improvements in 2020 will mainly consist of resurfacing projects, with one reconstruction project -- Port Sheldon Street between 48th to 40th avenues.

The Road Commission has nearly 20 miles of primary roads slated for improvement in 2020. These roads are longer distance, higher volume roadways connecting centers of population and employment, and providing access to the state's highway network.



***[You can view all the improvements planned for the 2020 construction season on our website.](#)***

Local roads are shorter distance, two-lane collector roads and residential streets. Improvements include funds from townships as well as general transportation funds. Work will primarily include resurfacing of select local roads, and subdivision streets in the townships.

Road crews will also be busy conducting preventative maintenance projects this summer, including more than 67 miles of seal coat (chip seal) surfacing, and over 22 miles of cape seal surfacing.

Preventative maintenance projects are cost-effective solutions that extend the life of a road. You can learn more about the process and benefit of preventative maintenance by watching our Roads 101 videos on our website.

## **Planned drainage improvements**

Another project of note will be the rehabilitation of the 68th Avenue bridge over the Grand River in Allendale/Polkton townships.

Stay tuned as this project draws closer to get information about detours and to get project progress updates.

In addition to the bridge work on 68th Avenue, we're also planning six culvert replacement projects around the county.

Like the road construction projects, these drainage and bridge projects can be viewed on our website.

## **Staying informed**

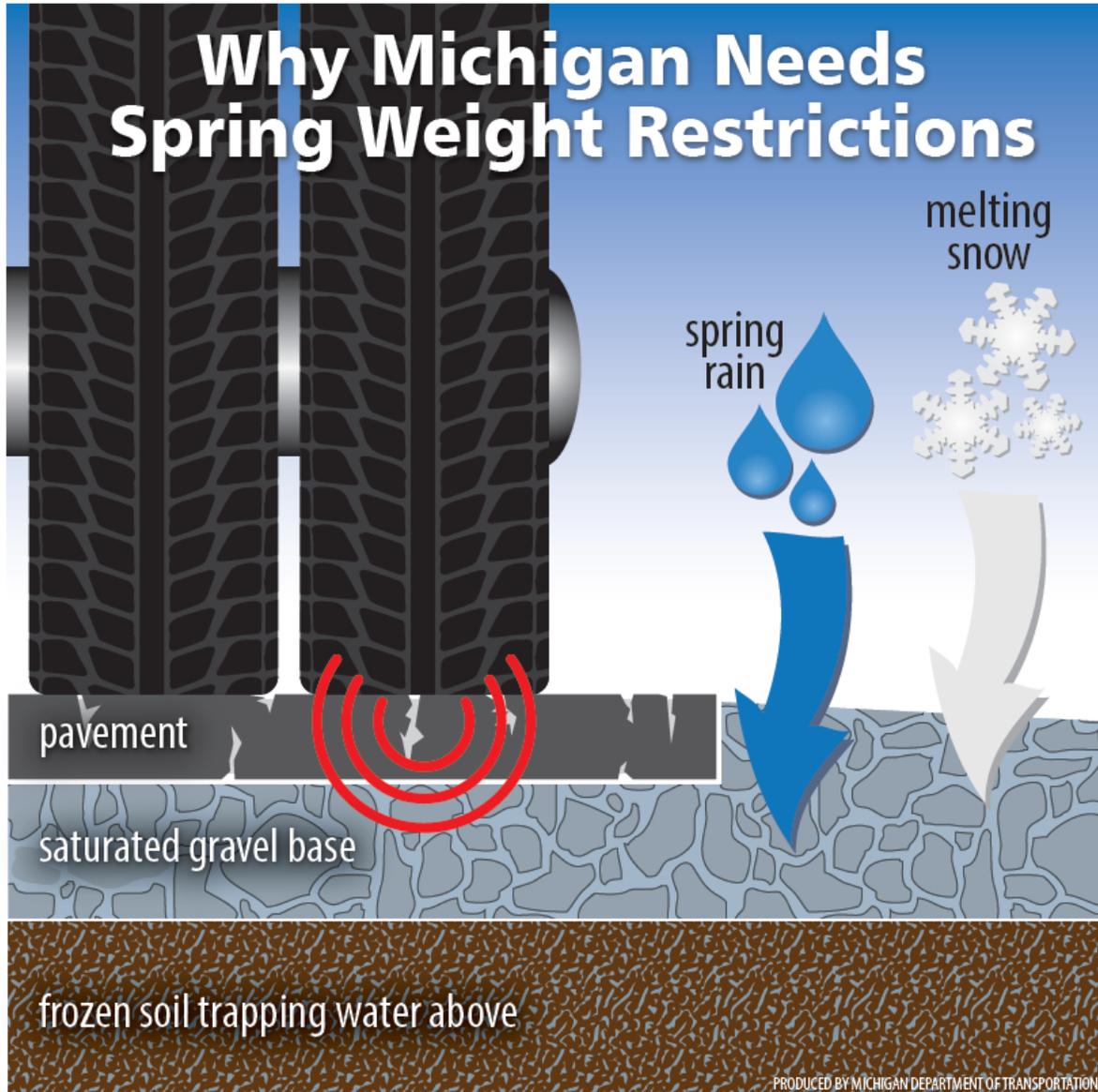
While construction season can be a temporary inconvenience, it does bring long-term benefits.

To make construction season easier on everyone, we will inform residents about projects prior to and during their progress. You can find information on our website and on our various social media platforms about these projects.

Make sure you also [subscribe to our email newsletters](#) so that you can get the latest OCRC news and construction updates delivered straight to your inbox.

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## **Understanding seasonal weight restrictions**



This time of year, the Ottawa County Road Commission and other road agencies around the state implement seasonal weight restrictions on roads under their jurisdiction.

Weight restrictions are enforced to minimize the damage caused during Michigan's seasonal freeze/thaw cycle.

As the ground thaws during the spring months, water is forced toward the surface and exerts pressure on roads. This can cause them to buckle and become more prone to damage. The heavier the vehicle traveling over these roads, the greater the possible damage is to the roads.

During the weight restriction period, trucks traveling on "posted" roads must carry lighter loads and travel at slower speeds.

Weight restrictions lower axle-loading limits and reduce maximum travel speeds for certain vehicles. The Road Commission must strike a balance between “business as usual” and protecting the roads when it implements seasonal weight restrictions.

By law, road agencies can enact weight restrictions on any roads not designed as “all season” roads.

“All season” roads are much thicker and designed to allow trucking year-round. The Road Commission employs weighmasters for enforcement of seasonal weight restrictions on county roads.

Most of the roads in Ottawa County are seasonally restricted. Efforts are made to coordinate restrictions with neighboring counties.

For the latest updates on seasonal weight restrictions, [visit our website](#). For a statewide list of current weight restrictions, [visit the County Road Association of Michigan’s seasonal weight restriction information page](#).

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## Understanding gravel roads in the spring time

Springtime weather conditions can have a severe impact on the condition of gravel roads.

The effect of frost leaving the ground is compounded by large amounts of rain and/or snow melt.

The fines (silt and clay) in the gravel that are needed to

bind the sand and gravel together under normal conditions now become oversaturated and weak. The fines also hinder the excess moisture from draining through the gravel.

What was once a frozen and solid road turns soft, unstable and muddy. The best cure for these “muddy” gravel roads is warm, dry temperatures and a good wind.



Attempts to grade and/or place gravel on top of this “muddy” condition can turn the road into a bigger mess.

There is a saying, “Adding a bucket of gravel to a bucket of mud just gets you a bigger bucket of mud”.

There is much truth to this quip, as adding sand or gravel with heavy equipment to a “muddy” road worsens conditions by disturbing the saturated soils even deeper, and thus taking longer for the road to dry out and stabilize.

The Road Commission monitors the gravel roads, and once conditions warrant, we will grade and reshape them as necessary.

Until then, motorists are advised to use caution while traversing on “muddy” gravel roads.

**Important Dates:**

**Friday, March 13, 2020 | 9 a.m. | Board Meeting**

**Thursday, March 26, 2020 | 9 a.m. | Board Meeting**



14110 Lakeshore Drive | Grand Haven, Michigan | 49417  
616-842-5400 Office Hours: Monday-Friday; 7:30AM-4PM

**The Ottawa County Road Commissioners:**

Tom Bird | Tom Elhart | Betty Gajewski | Tim Grifhorst | Jim Miedema

**Managing Director**

Brett Laughlin