

Scio Township

Spring 2013

COMMUNITY REPORT

BY LEW KIDDER, LOCAL ROADS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Scio Roads

For the past five years, we've periodically used this newsletter to discuss issues regarding the care and maintenance of public roads in Scio Township. Just how many roads are there? Why did they fall into such lousy condition? Why isn't the Road Commission fixing them? Is there anything that can be done?

Along the way, we discovered a few answers as well. For instance: "111.7" – as in the total number of miles of public roads in the Township. And: "not enough money" – as the short (but not so sweet) response to why they have deteriorated over the years and why the Road Commission can't keep up.

We've also taken some preliminary steps to fix them too. Five residential and two business neighborhoods have adopted localized Special Assessment Districts (SADs) over the past five years to raise the money needed to fix their own roads. And three more are set to do the same in 2013.

Even taken in total, however, all of our efforts to date still leaves nearly 100 miles yet to be addressed. So, operating on the theory that a well-maintained system of roads is critical to nearly every facet of life in the Township, the Scio Board of Trustees is now considering a more comprehensive plan.

Some Background

A System In Four Parts

Excluding I-94 & M-14, there are only two formal categories of public roads in Scio Township: County Primary and County Local.

County Primary

Some 50.5 miles fall into this category, including roads like Jackson, Zeeb, Wagner, Scio Church, Parker, Dexter-Ann Arbor, Miller, and Huron River Drive. The Road Commission currently gets about \$10,000/mile/year for these – which, if you remember previous discussions, is just about enough to keep up with a minimum program of regular maintenance. Not a king's ransom, not by a longshot; but enough, at least for now.

County Local – Three Categories

Unfortunately, our 61.2 miles of "local" roads are not funded nearly as well. Right now, the state distribution formula provides roughly \$2,900/mile/year for those – which is about what's needed to just do routine maintenance (like plowing snow, grading gravel, and patching potholes), but leaves nothing in reserve for more major projects. Adding a new course of gravel or limestone to an unpaved road will set us back somewhere around \$80,000/mile, while the bill for resurfacing a mile of paved road starts at \$120,000 and can easily go up to \$300,000. To better understand Scio's "local road"

Scio Roads continued on page 2

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Save The Date
Saturday, July 13, 2013
5TH ANNUAL

For more information, go to
jrcruise.org

Nearly three-quarters of these roads are rated in good or fair condition by both the Scio Road Condition Index (ScioRCI) and the PASER scale.

category, however, the Township has found it useful to divide them into three sub-categories: residential, business, and connector. Here's a brief look at each:

Residential Neighborhoods - 31.0 miles

Primary use is providing access to and from dwellings that either front directly on those streets or must use the streets to reach their property. Some of these roads are hard-surfaced, such as those in subdivisions like The Meadowlands, Scio Hills, Vienna Woods, and The Polo Fields. Others – like Liberty Hills, Buena Vista, and Woodlea Park – are unpaved.

Business Neighborhoods - 4.3 miles

This designation applies to 13 dead-end roads or sets of roads which lie in the Jackson and Baker Road corridor and are included in Scio Township's DDA (Downtown Development Authority). They include Jackson Plaza, Aprill, Parkland Plaza, Little Lake, Eagle Pointe, Haeussler, Jackson Industrial, Interface, North Staebler, Metty, Enterprise, Dino, and Newman. Primary use is providing access to and from businesses in a particular development, though Parkland Plaza/Little Lake/Eagle Pointe serves a mixed neighborhood of residential & business owners.

Local Connectors - 25.9 miles

These roads do provide access to residential properties, but they also serve as important connections to multiple parts of the Township. Examples include The Delhis (East, West, North), Marshall, Streiter, Park, Knight, Scio Ridge, and the portion of Liberty lying west of Zeeb. A few of these streets have hard surfaces (Scio Ridge, most prominently), but most are unpaved.

total in the Residential Neighborhood category were in good or fair condition – and all of those were in the two newest subdivisions: Arbor Pointe (at the northwest corner of Zeeb & Park) and The Gallery at the Polo Fields (off Liberty, just east of Zeeb). The remaining 87.3% were in poor or failed condition in at least one of the two categories (surface quality & drainage), and many in both.

Since roads in residential neighborhoods are almost exclusively used for access to the homes therein, the Township felt it was fair that any rehabilitation on them should be funded by the property owners who would reap the benefit. Thus began Scio's program for local SADs, with some promising results. In the last four years, 7.91 miles of road has been rebuilt by this method in neighborhoods like Scio Hills, Wing Meadows, The Uplands of Scio, and The Polo Fields, which means in turn that the number of miles in good condition has increased from 12.3% of the total to 38.2%. That leaves much still to do, of course, but at least we have a proven system that can be used by any neighborhood willing to assume control of its own destiny.

Business Neighborhoods

When it comes to who should fix a road, Business Neighborhoods are essentially in the same boat as their residential cousins. Six years ago, all but 0.24 miles in this category were in poor or failed condition. The exception was Eagle Pointe Drive, built more recently to accommodate the Lake Stone Apartments. In 2008, Jackson Plaza and Aprill Drive undertook separate SADs to finance an overlay of their roads, and later this summer, Parkland Plaza, Little Lake Drive, Haeussler Court, and Newman Boulevard will be doing the same. That will add an additional 1.7 miles to the positive side of the maintenance cycle, meaning 45% of roads in this category will then be in good condition. That leaves 55% still to go – but again, we have a proven system that can be used by the owners on these roads.

The Orphan Roads –The Connectors

That leaves just the Connector Roads to examine, and here, the news is not quite so rosy. Six years ago, only two tiny segments in this entire 25.9-mile system were good or fair condition: the first 0.5 mile of Staebler lying south of Jackson, which was paved more recently by the developers of a new subdivision (Kirkway of Scio) and a very short (450') stretch of Park that was paved by the developers of Scio Town Center. All of the rest, 25.3 of the 25.9 miles, were in poor or failed condition.

Since then, a couple segments have been improved. One was the paving of a very short (0.2 miles) stretch of Park between Scio Town Center Drive and West Birkdale. This was an expensive project (\$300,000) that was funded by a neighborhood SAD. The second involved a 1.56-mile stretch of North Maple; this unpaved segment got 6" of new material (limestone), plus some additional ditching to improve drainage.

Unfortunately, neither of the two recent projects points to a more comprehensive approach. The Park Road SAD was made possible largely because of an unusually high concentration of homeowners that were totally fed up with the condition of the road and were willing to tolerate significant assessments (as high as \$5,000/parcel) to fix it. Most of the remaining connector roads do not have such density of ownership. And the treated portion of North Maple Road is actually a township line road, with Scio

The ScioRCI is a system designed by the Township's Roads Committee; it rates the quality of both the road surface and drainage on all Township public roads and can be found on the Township's website. The PASER is an industry-wide system (used in this case by the Road Commission) that rates the quality of pavement, but it can not be used on unpaved roads and makes no attempt to assess the quality of drainage.

Here's What Has Worked

As one might infer from our brief discussion of funding levels, the Primary Roads in Scio should be holding their own. And even though things are far from perfect, that turns out to be true. Nearly three-quarters of these roads are rated in good or fair condition by both the Scio Road Condition Index (ScioRCI) and the PASER scale. There are exceptions of course, as anyone who drives the section of Scio Church Road between Wagner and Oak Valley can attest. Same thing for Parker between Scio Church and Jackson, Shield between Baker & Parker, Joy between Zeeb & the Village of Dexter, and Huron River Drive between Dexter Metropark and Mast. But overall, the Road Commission appears to be keeping up with most of the issues presented by the primary roads.

Residential Neighborhoods

The situation is different in the three categories of local roads, however. Four years ago, only 3.94 miles of the 31.0

These are our roads, and every day they are ignored, the problem gets worse

sharing the responsibility and cost with three other townships. No other local road in Scio shares this characteristic.

How bad are the rest of the connector roads? Pretty dismal. For a reality check, you could check out the ScioRCI on the Township's website at:

<http://www.scio.org/boards-commissions/local-roads-advisory-committee/>

Or you could talk to anyone who has to use East Delhi. Or West Delhi. Or Marshall, or Park, or Streiter. Most of these roads are non-paved and badly in need of additional of new material – which they haven't seen for almost 20 years. Unfortunately, because the roads provide connections among multiple communities both in and outside of the Township, the neighborhood SAD process does not provide a viable solution

Where Do We Go from Here?

Good news? We have a system (the neighborhood SAD) that, at least for the near future, responsibly addresses 77% (85.8 miles) of the roads in Scio Township. Our challenge? What to do with the remaining 23% - the "orphan" connector roads. These roads are critical to the future of the Township, providing indispensable links in a comprehensive transportation network. As we noted earlier, there isn't nearly enough money in the current system to address their needs and there is virtually no chance that someone else will ride to our rescue. These are our roads, and every day they are ignored, the problem gets worse on multiple fronts: negatively affecting our quality of life; damaging our vehicles; decreasing the value of our property; negatively affecting business decisions; and escalating future costs.

One Possible Solution

Taking those factors into account, the Township has proposed the establishment of a Township-wide Special Assessment District to fund the following:

1. A three-phase plan to upgrade our connector roads
 - a. Phase 1: Update the majority of the 25+ miles of connector roads as called for in the accompanying list (see page 4). Most will get the basic upgrade: 6" of new material (either road gravel or limestone) over the entire length, plus spot ditching.
 - b. Phase 2: Upgrade North Delhi, from Huron River Drive to Eastgate Drive. With significant traffic now using this segment (much of it from outside the Township) the steep, curvy hill no longer works as a gravel road; whatever material we add is washed down to the Huron River in the next major rain storm. The plan calls for it to be paved.
 - c. Phase 3: The portion of West Liberty that periodically disappears under water. Engineering studies will be needed to determine the solution with the best value.
NOTE: Both Phase 2 and 3 will require detailed planning and therefore will not be undertaken until after Phase 1 is complete.
2. Provide maintenance on the connector roads over the balance of the ten-year SAD.
3. Provide modest cash grants to residential or business



neighborhoods who are willing establish local SADs to upgrade their own roads.

4. Provide regular maintenance over the balance of the ten-year SAD on all roads in residential and business neighborhoods which have updated their internal roads since 2007.
5. Provide modest funding for projects such as crosswalks and safety lighting.

Additional Details:

- A. Cost of the program: expected to be between \$82.00 and \$85.00/parcel/year.
- B. Length of the SAD: 10 years.
- C. How much money will it raise? About \$500,000/year.
- D. Can I pay in advance? Yes: You can pay the assessment up front and be done with it.
- E. What if I choose the "installment plan"? The assessment will come as an line item on your December property tax bill. The annual amount will be between \$82 and \$85 plus applicable interest (if any).
- F. Is it deductible on my income tax? Most experts say it is not a "tax" and is therefore not deductible but check with your tax preparer.
- G. What neighborhoods are currently eligible to receive maintenance on their residential or business roads? Jackson Plaza, Aprill Drive, Wing Meadows, Scio Hills, The Uplands of Scio, and The Polo Fields (excluding the Gallery).
- H. What neighborhoods could attain eligibility for such maintenance? Rose Drive, Parkland Plaza, Newman Blvd, and any other neighborhood that steps forward to fund the upgrade of its internal roads.
- I. What happens after ten years? Presumably, we will ask Township residents if they are happy with the program and want to extend it into the future.

Summary. Strengths Of The Plan

- Brings critical portions of the Township road system up to par ASAP.

Scio Roads continued on page 4

Preventive Maintenance:

Paved roads:

- Crack seal every 5 – 7 yrs
- Chip seal every 10 – 12 yrs
- Asphalt overlay every 20 – 22 yrs

Gravel roads:

- Add'l material as needed
- Add'l ditching as needed

**Public meetings
to discuss the
proposed SAD
June 27
and
September 12**

- Puts in place a mechanism to keep these roads maintained.
- Provides incentives for updating residential & business neighborhoods
- Enjoy immediately, pay over time.
- Everyone pays, amounts are modest.
- Get to spend every dime on ourselves. Send nothing to Lansing or D.C.
- Bend the future cost curve significantly
- Take advantage of historically low interest rates
- Finite “sunset” to the assessment

• Other townships have done it and it is working great

What Happens Next?

The Township Board has scheduled two separate public meetings to discuss the proposed SAD. They will be held at the:

**Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD)
1819 S. Wagner Road, Ann Arbor, 48106
June 27 and September 12
7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.**

Scio Township - Project List, Township-wide SAD for Transportation

Road Segment	Surface	Length	SQ	DQ	Est. Cost				Project	
					SCI Rating Per Mile	Est. Cost	Twp Cost	Year	Total Cost	
East Delhi, HRD to RR Tracks	Pavement	0.47	4	4	16	120,000	56,400	56,400	1	
East Delhi, RR Tracks to Miller	Gravel	1.33	2	2	4	80,000	106,400	106,400	1	
Knight, Scio Church to Liberty	Gravel	1.05	5	4	20	80,000	84,000	84,000	1	
Liberty, Park to Parker	Gravel	1.30	3	3	9	80,000	104,000	104,000	1	
Liberty, Zeeb to Stags Leap	Gravel	0.84	2	2	4	80,000	67,200	67,200	1	
Maple, Stein to Daleview	Gravel	0.73	5	5	25	80,000	58,400	0	1	
Maple, Stein to Township line	Gravel	0.83	5	5	25	80,000	66,400	0	1	
Marshall, Baker to Marshall Lakes Drive	Gravel	0.37	4	4	16	***	22,000	22,000	1	
Marshall, Marshall Lakes to Zeeb	Gravel	1.63	2	2	4	80,000	130,400	130,400	1	
Marshall, Parker to Baker	Gravel	1.05	2	2	4	80,000	84,000	84,000	1	
Park, Scio Village Court to W. Birkdale	Gravel	0.25	10	10	100	1,000,000	250,000	0	1	
Park, W. Birkdale to Parkland Plaza	Gravel	0.89	2	1	2	80,000	71,200	71,200	1	
Park, Zeeb to Liberty	Gravel	2.59	2	2	4	80,000	207,200	207,200	1	
Park, Zeeb to Scio Village Court	Pavement	0.09	5	5	25	7,000	630	630	1	
Peters, Zeeb to Miller	Gravel	1.03	4	3	12	80,000	82,400	82,400	1	
Pratt, Shady Oaks to Wagner***	Gravel	1.11	3	3	9	80,000	88,800	88,800	1	
Railroad, W. Delhi to E. Delhi	Gravel	0.33	5	2	10	80,000	26,400	26,400	1	
Scio, Zeeb to Dexter-AA	Gravel	0.79	4	2	8	80,000	63,200	63,200	1	
Staebler, Jackson south to end of pavement	Pavement	0.51	6	8	48	7,000	3,570	3,570	1	
Staebler, pavement south to Park	Gravel	0.29	2	2	4	80,000	23,200	23,200	1	
Stein, Maple to Township line	Gravel	1.01	1	1	1	80,000	80,800	80,800	1	
Streiter, Liberty to Scio Church	Gravel	1.00	2	2	4	80,000	80,000	80,000	1	
Tubbs, HRD to Stein	Gravel	1.18	1	1	1	80,000	94,400	94,400	1	
West Delhi, Jackson to I94	Gravel	0.13	1	1	1	80,000	10,400	10,400	1	
West Delhi, I94 to DxAA	Gravel	0.40	1	1	1	80,000	32,000	32,000	1	
West Delhi, DxAA to Miller	Gravel	0.91	4	4	16	80,000	72,800	72,800	1	
West Delhi, Miller to Railroad St.	Gravel	1.48	3	1	3	80,000	118,400	118,400	1	1,709,800
North Delhi, HRD to Eastgate	Gravel	0.53	1	1	1	1,000,000	530,000	530,000	2	
Scio Ridge, Liberty to Upland	Pavement	1.11	2	5	10	250,000	277,500	277,500	2	
Upland Drive, Scio Church to Scio Ridge	Pavement	0.20	1	2	2	250,000	50,000	50,000	2	857,500
Liberty, Stags Leap to Park	Gravel	0.88	1	1	1	***	700,000	700,000	3	700,000
TOTAL		26.31					3,642,100	3,267,300		3,267,300

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Get involved in your community

Scio Township Information

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827 North Zeeb Road
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(734) 369-9400; ScioTownship.org

Township Office Hours

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Utility Department Hours:

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Utilities emergency: (734) 651-4770
Utilities Administration: (734) 369-9350

Township Board of Trustees

Spaulding Clark, Supervisor
Nancy Hedberg, Clerk
Donna Palmer, Treasurer
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Christine Green, Trustee
Jack Knowles, Trustee
David Read, Trustee

Scio Township Department Heads

Carl Ferch, Fire Chief
Scott Martin – Utilities Director
James Merte – Assessing

Other Phone Numbers

Emergencies 911
Fire Department Administration (734) 665-6001
Sheriff's Department,
Zeeb Road Sub-Station (734) 994-8105
County Building Inspection Services . . . (734) 222-3900

The Scio Township Community Report

Is published quarterly by the Scio Township Board of Trustees for the residents of Scio Township.

Editor
David Read
Graphic Design
Julie Tanguay
Photographer
David Read

Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Hall. E-mail sent to townshipboard@ScioTownship.org will be forwarded to all members of the township board.

Land Preservation Commissioner Sought

Residents with a strong interest in land preservation and a background in conservation, wildlife, forestry, agriculture, planning or another relevant field should forward a letter of interest and resume to Township Clerk Hedberg.

Save The Date

Saturday June 29, 2013
25th Anniversary of STFD

For more information, go to ScioTownship.org

Washtenaw County Information:

www.ewashtenaw.org

Water Resources Commissioner:

(734) 222-6860; drains@ewashtenaw.org

County Road Commission

(734) 761-1500; wcre@wccroads.org

County Commissioners:

District 1 – Kent Martinez-Kratz
Martinez-KratzK@ewashtenaw.org
(734) 646-8946

State Information:

www.michigan.org

State Representative

District 52 – Gretchen Driskell
(800) 627-5052 ; gretchendriskell@house.mi.gov

State Senator:

District 18 – Rebekah Warren
(517) 373-2406; senwarren@senate.michigan.gov

Governor:

Rick Snyder
(517) 373-3400; rick.snyder@michigan.gov

Federal Information:

www.usa.gov

U.S. Representatives:

District 7 – Tim Walberg
(202) 225-6276; e-mail via www.walberg.house.gov
District 15 – John Dingell
(202) 225-4071;

U.S. Senators:

Debbie Stabenow
(202) 224-4822; senator@stabenow.senate.gov
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We developed a new way of subscribing to the Township's email notification list.

FROM DAVID READ, EDITOR

Sign-up for notifications

Would you like to be notified of Public Meetings, Public Hearings or other important events and news happening within the Township?

Scio Township recently updated its website (ScioTownship.org). Along with our new site, we developed a new way of subscribing to the Township's email notification list. A Quick Link (QL) to the subscription page can be found on any page of our site - just look on the right hand side of the page, under "Quick Links", and click on the "Subscribe to our email list" QL.

We will be using this email list to notify you of Township news and events such as Public Notices, Public Hearings, the newsletter, etc. Previously, we used this list exclusively for notification of the availability of the newsletter but are now expanding its usage to include other Township news. If you are a current subscriber but don't want to be notified of items other than the newsletter, there are links in each of our emails that will enable you to manage your subscription options. If you have previously signed up for email notification but are still receiving the paper newsletter, it could be that your Mail Code was entered incorrectly. With our new system, you will now be able to correct that problem.

If you are a new user, as you subscribe to our notification system you will have the choice of opting out of receiving

the paper newsletter, saving the Township money and resources. In an effort to reduce costs, we will continue to print the paper version of the newsletter in black and white and mail it using bulk rates. This means that it might take up to 7 - 10 days to be delivered through the postal system. However, by subscribing to our email list, you'll be notified immediately of the availability of the color, online version of our newsletter. To date, approximately 500 residents have chosen to stop receiving their paper newsletter. This has saved the Township almost \$10,000 over the last few years. Help us save even more by signing up for electronic delivery and then opting out of the paper newsletter. You will still have the option of printing the newsletter at your convenience.

To opt out of receiving the paper newsletter, you will need your Mail Code, which can be found on the address label of any newsletter. The code is comprised of parts of your Last Name (or Company Name), your address, and your Street Name. For example, the Mail Code for Joe Smith at 12345 Jackson Street would be SMIT1234JACKST. This code enables us to link back to our database and remove your name from the list we use to send the paper newsletters.

So take a few moments to look at our new website, learn about Scio Township, its history, your elected officials, our finances, etc.

Thanks for your help in keeping our records correct.

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK BY DONNA E. PALMER, TREASURER

Beginning The New Tax Year

The 2013 summer tax bills should be in your hands no later than July 15th. If not, please call our office to verify the mailing address and/or request another copy.

Something new

Beginning this year, state law requires a reminder to be

printed on the summer billing if your taxes are delinquent at the County. Please call the Washtenaw County Treasurer, 734 222-6600 or our office, 734 369-9400 for further information if this message is on your bill. Again thanks for your help in keeping our records correct. Everyone have a good summer. I'll see you in September