

# 2020 Public Input Survey Results

Kent County Road Commission

January 8, 2021





**PUBLIC SECTOR  
CONSULTANTS**

*Prepared by*

Public Sector Consultants  
[www.publicsectorconsultants.com](http://www.publicsectorconsultants.com)

*Prepared for*

Kent County Road Commission  
[www.kentcountyroads.net](http://www.kentcountyroads.net)

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# Survey Results

## Background

The Kent County Road Commission (KCRC) partnered with Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to field an electronic survey to gauge the public's perceptions of the work of the road commission. The survey follows a year of work to finalize the 2021 Strategic Plan.

The survey was fielded between December 7 and 21, 2020. KCRC promoted the survey on their website, through social media, and using their list serv and other communication tools.

A total of 74 individuals completed the survey.

## Survey Responses

**Question 1: Please tell us in what township, city, or village of Kent County do you reside? If you do not live in Kent County, please select "Non-Kent County resident."**

Responses were received from individuals residing across the county. The following table breaks down the stated residence of each response.

### EXHIBIT 1. Stated Residence of Respondents

Residence	Number of Respondent
Ada, Township of	1
Algoma, Township of	2
Bowne, Township of	1
Byron, Township of	3
Caledonia, Township of	6
Cannon, Township of	3
Cascade, Township of	10
Cedar Springs, City of	1
Courtland, Township of	2
Gaines, Township of	1
Grand Rapids, City of	10
Grand Rapids, Township of	6
Grandville, City of	2
Grattan, Township of	3
Kentwood, City of	4

<b>Residence</b>	<b>Number of Respondent</b>
Lowell, Township of	1
Non-Kent County resident	4
Plainfield, Township of	6
Solon, Township of	1
Sparta, Township of	1
Tyrone, Township of	1
Vergennes, Township of	3
Walker, City of	2

**Question 2: Please indicate what percentage you use each of the following modes of travel in a typical week.**

Respondents overwhelmingly chose traditional transportation (car/truck/motorcycle) as their most frequently utilized mode of transportation, with 58 respondents stating they utilize it 90 percent or more of the time. Of note, more than half of the respondents indicated that they utilize nonmotorized transit at least some of the time. A breakdown of utilization is included below.

**EXHIBIT 2. Modes of Transportation**

<b>Percentage of Time Utilized</b>	<b>Number of Respondents for Mode of Transportation</b>			
	<b>Car/ truck/ motorcycle</b>	<b>Public transit</b>	<b>Nonmotorized Transit</b>	<b>Commercial fleet</b>
100%	27			
90–99%	31		1	
80–89%	5			
70–79%	4		1	3
60–69%				
50–59%	1			1
40–49%	1			1
30–39%	1		1	1
20–29%	3		3	1
10–19%	1		10	1
0.5–9%		5	26	3
0%		69	32	63

**Question 3: Please select up to five county roads that you commonly travel, exclusive of neighborhood streets.**

As expected, a large number of roads were chosen by respondents. Roads that had at least two people select them are indicated below, as well as the number of people who selected each.

**EXHIBIT 3. Frequently Traveled Roads**

Road	Number of Respondents
Cascade Road	17
84th Street	15
10 Mile Road	14
Thornapple River Drive	14
68th Street	11
Knapp Street	11
4 Mile Road	10
Alpine Avenue	9
Leonard Street	9
West River Drive	9
76th Street	8
Lincoln Lake Avenue NE	7
Northland Drive	7
100th Street	6
5 Mile Road	6
Ada Drive	6
Belding Road	6
Fruit Ridge Avenue	6
Kraft Avenue	6
17 Mile Road	5
Whitneyville Avenue	5
14 Mile Road	4
Algoma Avenue	4
Burton Street	4
Byron Center Avenue	4
East Paris Avenue	4
Kalamazoo Avenue	4
Lake Michigan Drive	4

Road	Number of Respondents
Leffingwell Avenue	4
Patterson Avenue	4
13 Mile Road	3
Alaska Avenue	3
Alden Nash Avenue NE	3
Alden Nash Avenue SE	3
Buttrick Avenue	3
Crahen Avenue	3
Jupiter Avenue	3
Michigan Street	3
Myers Lake Avenue	3
Pine Island Drive	3
11 Mile Road	2
15 Mile Road	2
33rd Street	2
48th Street	2
64th Street	2
7 Mile Road	2
Bailey Drive NE	2
Belmont Avenue	2
Burlingame Avenue	2
Cherry Valley Avenue	2
Grand River Drive NE	2
Honey Creek Avenue NE	2
Laraway Lake Drive	2
Parnell Avenue NE	2
Post Drive	2
Wilson Avenue SW	2

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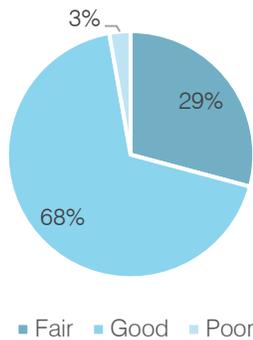
**Question 4: Based on the roads on the previous page, please rate the following, using the following scale: *poor, fair, good, excellent***

The majority of respondents rated KCRC as “good” for all of the categories (road surface conditions, winter storm response, traffic flow, and roadside conditions). The following charts break down the percentage of each response.

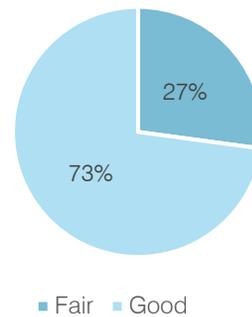
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**EXHIBIT 4. Perception of KCRC Routine Maintenance**

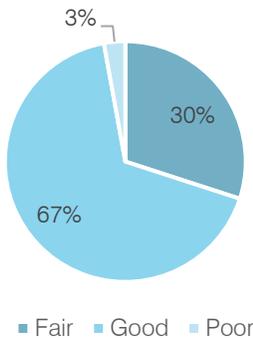
**Road Surface Conditions**



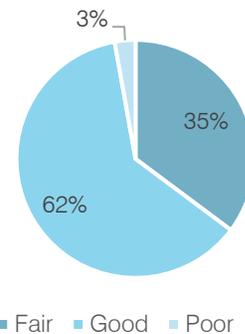
**Winter Storm Response**



**Traffic Flow**



**Roadside Condition**

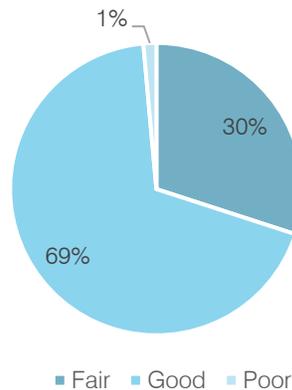


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**Question 5: Overall, how would you rate the condition of the county road network (exclusive of roads under city, village, or state jurisdiction)?**

Similar to the previous question, a majority of the respondents ranked the condition of the county road network as “good”.

**EXHIBIT 5. Overall Rating of the Condition of County Road Network**

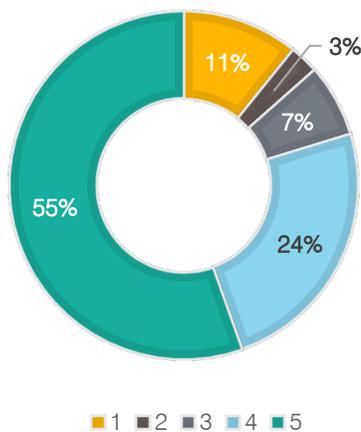


**Question 6: The following are five objectives highlighted in the KCRC Strategic Plan. Page numbers are provided after each objective so you may refer to the corresponding sections of the strategic plan. Please rate the importance of each to you as a network user from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).**

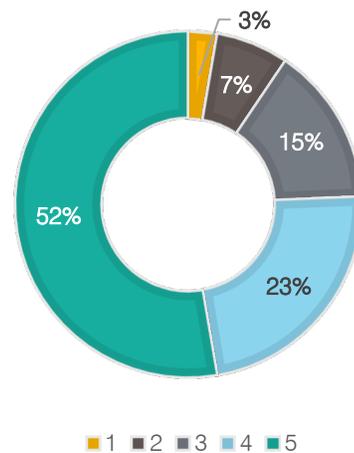
A majority of the respondents rated preserving existing roads and bridges and reconstructing existing roads in poor condition as “very important” to them. Respondents were split on the level of importance in assisting other local units of governments with grant applications and the engineering and design of nonmotorized transportation options (e.g., trails).

**EXHIBIT 6. Importance of Strategic Plan Objectives**

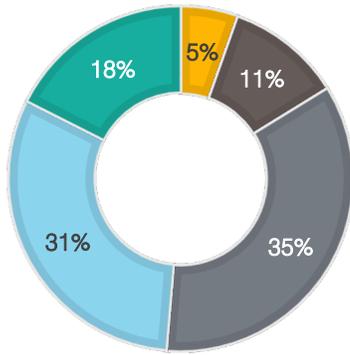
**Preserve Existing Roads and Bridges**



**Reconstruct Existing Roads in Poor Conditions**

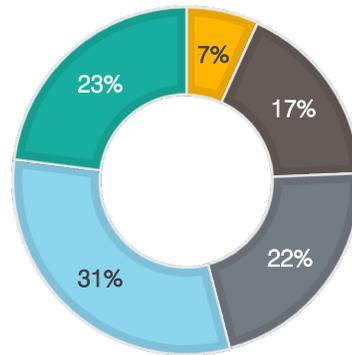


### Reduce Congestion and Delays



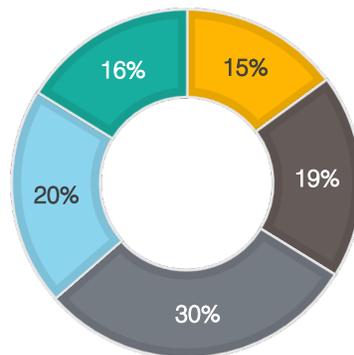
1 2 3 4 5

### Integration of New Technologies



1 2 3 4 5

### Assist Agencies Who Own, Construct, and Maintain Nonmotorized Facilities



1 2 3 4 5

**Question 7: The strategic plan includes sections regarding KCRC's routine maintenance and winter maintenance, which consist of ongoing work completed on the roads, roadside, and bridges to keep them in good repair and functioning properly. These efforts also help prolong the life of a road or bridge by preventing premature deterioration. Please rate the importance of the following to you as a network user from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).**

According to the survey respondents, ensuring regular maintenance of road surface condition and the conditions of roads during winter storm events were the most important maintenance activities. A number of respondents also ranked maintaining drainage as important to them. The least important

activity (though over 50 percent of the respondents ranked it as important or very important) was maintaining traffic control devices.

**EXHIBIT 7. Importance of Different Routine Maintenance Services to the Public**

Maintenance	Percentage of Respondents Who Indicated the Level of Importance				
	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)
Road surface conditions	5%	1%	5%	30%	56%
Road conditions during a winter storm event	3%	1%	18%	29%	49%
Drainage (e.g., culverts, ditches, backslopes) to keep water off the roadway	3%	8%	21%	47%	22%
Roadside conditions (e.g., vegetation control, tree work)	3%	8%	41%	36%	12%
Traffic control devices (e.g., signs, signals, pavement markings)	5%	10%	22%	30%	32%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

**Question 8: KCRC understands that effective and responsive communication is essential. That is why the organization strives to engage the community through multiple platforms of outreach to reach more members of the community. Please indicate which of the following is your preferred method(s) of interaction with the Kent County Road Commission. Select all that apply.**

Most respondents preferred electronic communications over in-person or mail communication methods. The following table shows the breakdown in responses.

**EXHIBIT 8. Preferred Communication Method**

Communication Method	Number of Respondents
In person/face-to-face	21
Telephone	25
Email	51
Mail/fax	6
Website online forms	33
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	29
Information meetings	23
Board meetings	6

## Comments

There were multiple areas where the survey allowed respondents to provide additional comments, which are included in Appendix A. The comments were generally positive toward KCRC and supported the work KCRC does to keep the community traveling safely.

# Appendix A: Public Comments

## General Comments

- Continue to partner with Kent Conservation District to remove invasive plant species along the roadways in Kent County.
- Coordination among jurisdictions for consistency of the transportation systems across community lines is very important. Expansion of transit services to reach further into the suburban areas of the county to reach jobs, grocery, services, etc. is very important.
- Doing a great job!
- Every worker I have ever encountered has been pleasant and respectful. Safety should always be 1st. Lights, worker warning signs are important. Bring back the "Give them a Brake" safety campaign.
- great strategic plan - very well prepared
- How can KCRC reduce its carbon footprint? Adopt LEED standards for new Walker facility and other capital improvements. Transition to EVs in fleet (esp cars and small trucks). Facilitate EV use, carpooling, transit and non-motorized transportation by staff & the public.
- I think in general KCRC does a really good job. It seems like it is thankless work, and someone will always be complaining. The snow plow drivers do a great job and I want them to know that they are appreciated the important and dangerous work that they do. Our side street usually takes a while to get plowed but I understand because the more traveled roads take priority. It would be awesome if there was some kind of realtime app that showed what has been plowed recently. It would help people to make decisions on if they should travel and which route to take.
- I think overall KCRC does an excellent job. I appreciate the service they provide and I am realistic about their limitations.
- I think the KCRC does a great job of prioritizing plowing during snow events. We do live on a short public dead end and the plows can be late to arrive but that is completely understandable as the main roads need attention first. One minor complaint with living on a public cul-de-sac is the contractor selected to clean up the cul-de-sacs are rarely seen and there are many snow event where they don't show up at all. Causes some issues with the mail/UPS/Amazon deliveries and trash haulers turning around in the cul-de-sac. I know they are private contract help but not sure the KCRC is getting the full service they are likely paying for.
- It is important to make sure roads are designed to match their desired speed limit. Many roads are widened and with paved shoulders which signal to the driver, its safe to go fast on this road yet that makes the road significantly more dangerous. The additional width and paved shoulders also make the road more expensive to maintain. Please work to not overbuild roads making the road system fiscally unsustainable to maintain and operate. Thank you
- Just some of the bad stretches on 84th street there is a lot of traffic on 84th these days
- KCRC does a great job. They are always improvements that can be done. Input from local residents should be considered highly. Sometimes an improvement can be done if the local residents are heard.
- Keep load limits, heavy trucks damage road conditions. Find environmental methods of de-icing roadways.
- keep on trucking and thank you to the crews who will take the time to talk to us when working in close proximity to us
- Keep up the great work. I think this team is a leader in MI

- My biggest concern is the bike/pedestrian crossing on Thornapple River Drive and Fase St. some work was done but there needs to be a flashing light sign both at the crossing and also before reaching the overpass to alert drivers to slow down. It is a hazardous crossing for people and drivers just blow by that crossing
- One comment referenced road work being in tune with local land use planning. Road improvements can impact urban sprawl which is not desired.
- One of the things that bother me as a citizen is dead animals left upon the roadway or next to the roadway, especially for long periods of time. Maybe in your public outreach efforts remind people of how to report these poor, gross, deceased creatures. Keep up the good work!
- Please do not remove weight restrictions on commercial vehicles, it is not economically worth the price we pay for fixing the damage.
- Really need walking/bike paths on every road. I need to walk or ride my bike. There is no shoulder on our road. 2 lane road with double yellow lines, hills. Traffic going over 60.
- Side streets are neglected for days sometimes during snow events and the snow becomes so piled up at the ends of the road where they meet the main road that people can't get out.
- Since the goal is to change frost law roads to All Season Roads at a rate of 3 miles per year, I vote KCRC continue to convert Fruit Ridge Ave first. I'm glad to hear KCRC is debt-free. As I mentioned earlier, KCRC has the best road network of the surrounding counties, and I'd say being debt-free is cause for that.
- Stop signs need to be added on Patterson at 108th. Stop signs at Patterson and 92nd don't meet warrants and should be removed. 108th needs to be raised just west of Duncan Lake Drain due to repetitive flooding issues over road. Why does preventative maintenance drop drastically in 2023-25 in the surface treatment plan? Wayne Harrall is a great asset to Kent County.
- The more I've learned about county road commissions over the decades, the more I participate, the more I read and study strategic plans, the more I appreciate everyone, every single person who makes the Kent Co Road Commission so successful. Thank you.
- We've been deceived by our local government of Caledonia in what was to happen on Buttrick Ave. in Alaska before our housing development was created and where we are today:( Any consideration from KCRC would be appreciated.
- while traveling all over in different states, you can't help but notice are road conditions compared to other states and municipalities. I believe our standards in road construction and safety are top notch!

## Communication with the Public and Stakeholders

- Appreciate website
- Better clear cut communication
- I am a big Twitter user and rely on getting a lot of information from it. When I have contacted KCRC through Twitter they have usually been very responsive, and the KCRC tweets are informative.
- I follow on Facebook and think KCRC does a good job there.
- I like the email communications I receive regarding road projects, etc. Can't stand social media.
- Oh my, I'm one of those government nerds who likes to interact with you in a variety of ways. I truly appreciate the online forms and I regularly send requests and THANKS via email. But I must say, the very very best thing KCRC has done is to actively use your Facebook page. I LOVE IT and \*regularly\* share updates, esp in winter, to my community FB pages. Great information, timely, informative, you've done a really nice job! Thanks!

- Over all KCRC does a good job I think
- Road crew did a great job taking care of the vegetation and the crumbling road on house st NE this last fall. It took many reports to get to that point of repair and I believe my neighbors also made reports. So, thank you for widening the road to where it existed
- Zoom or other virtual meetings could be an option as well.

## Strategic Plan Objectives

- Address current infrastructure first.
- Agencies that construct and maintain nonmotorized trails for example have millage funds to do so.
- How is KCRC looking at equity along with asset management when investing time, resources?
- I believe all of these aspects are keys to well traveled system.
- I like bike trails, but not at the expense of fixing poor condition roads. I think KCRC does a good job of assisting with other agencies to help maintain nonmotorized facilities.
- I would like to be able to track County snow plows online

## Conditions of Frequently Traveled County Roads

- I am a regular cyclist using roadways in the County network. I appreciate the continued commitment to incorporate paved shoulders as improvements are made to network roadways, especially the 2 lane roads with higher speeds. This improves safety in an age of increasing distracted driving.
- 3 Mile Road wasn't available on the drop down to choose. There is a Drainage issue at 3 Mile and Leffingwell. Light rains and the Catch Basins are surcharging above the rim. Heavier rain the SW quadrant floods with ponding reaching out into the travel lane on Leffingwell. Not a new issue and low speed traffic so not a significant hazard.
- 4 Mile Rd NE east of Fallasburg Park Dr has developed an area where a spring has caused constant road erosion. Repeated grading and material being added to area has not taken care of problem. Alden Nash north of Foreman constant patches are terrible
- 68th street the only exception to above conditions but I understand repairs to be made throughout the village of Alaska in 2021.
- A lot of potholes
- Always in good shape in spring, summer, winter, fall !
- Areas with shade deteriorate quickly
- Bristol between 7 and 8 Mile Rds is in poor condition.
- Buttrick Ave from Thornapple River Drive is in bad shape. The surface is not level and full of patches that are not to slope or grade, it seems too narrow, the left turn lane at Grand River Drive is not safe and the drainage ditches need upkeep. Also, several trees need trimming for visibility and power line clearance.
- first winter in the area
- Fruit Ridge between 18 mile and 20 mile needs resurfacing. 13 mile between Pine Island and Algoma needs resurfacing
- I couldn't select Fulton street, probably because of it being a state road, but I am very concerned about the safety of the intersection of Bridgestone and Fulton. There was just a fatal accident there last week. There have been many homes built back in the neighborhood of the Hamptons and West Hampton over the past ten years and there is a lot more traffic utilizing this intersection, and there

have been numerous accidents. It's very dangerous to turn either direction onto Fulton because of speeding cars and increased traffic. We have lived in this neighborhood for 10 years now and it is getting more and more dangerous and really needs a stoplight, especially now after the fatal accident. The person who died lived in our neighborhood, had just moved in in the spring. There are a lot of children who will be coming to driving age over the next few years as well.

- Kraft needs to have stoplights or designated turning lanes by the Caledonia High School Complex (Kraft/92nd). It is a HOT MESS during drop-off & pick-up. The High School really needs a separate bus entrance, that avoids the student & the parent drop lots.
- Leonard St seems to be icy first thing in the morning. We drop kids off at the FHPS campus and it is dicey up and down the hills by the school Love that Grand River was redone by Alden Nash, however, were it connects to the old road at Snow, the crews left a very noticeable dip
- Most are generally great.
- most of the road surfaces are fine, some of them are pretty rough
- need far better non-motorized facilities on all these streets.
- Need walking and bike paths along every road--please, PLEASE. Need for a shoulder. Have seen drivers passing over double yellow lines.
- No problems mostly, Ramsdell has a bit of a drainage problem northbound south of Kreuter causing a pot hole to appear at times but the KCRC fills it.
- Patterson and 100th are taking a pounding from local gravel hauling. 108th and Patterson is very dangerous - numerous bad accidents, should be 4 way stop.
- So very much appreciate the white lines on the side of Thornapple between 60th and 68th; has made a HUGE difference in visibility at night and during rain events. I say that bc after I moved to Alaska in 2011 and politely requested lines the next time the street was resurfaced, I got an email back that "no lines will be painted in future bc there have not been lines in the past" along with a Google maps photo of no lines. Thank you for the white lines.
- Spaulding (between Burton & Cascade) was resurfaced a few years ago, but there is still no true shoulder on the road; traffic has increased dramatically in the last 3 years on this stretch of Spaulding. Speeds have increased, too.
- Speeds are excessive on many county roads; shoulders too narrow or in some cases non-existent. As a person who travels by bicycle most often for both transportation and recreation purposes, I have seen conditions degrade. Some of the roadside trails created by townships are poorly designed with bad sight lines, haphazard maintenance especially in the winter, and peter out at intersections leaving riders hanging. There are roads I used to use on a bike like Vergennes, Egypt Valley, etc. that I simply don't anymore because of the lack of even a small shoulder on each side, excessive driver speeds. Please plow the Kent Trails in the winter to provide through safe access for people on foot or on bike. The conditions become treacherous and I have known people who have even crashed while trying to commute to/from work on mountain and fat bikes because the icing is so bad on the trails. Thankfully the City just changed Market Ave with new bike lanes but ensuring the trails are also clear mean that people can still get to/from work safely as well as be able to use these areas for winter enjoyment as well. I appreciate these are KC Parks but the lack of maintenance affects transportation for people in Kent County.
- Vehicles drive to fast, way over the posted speed limits.

## Network Conditions

- Country roads are often in much better shape than township.
- 84th street is not in good shape to the southeast
- Always responsive to issues.
- As a truck driver, Kent County has a better county road network than surrounding counties. Allegan County would be a close second.
- Corner of Indian Lakes and Sparta ave needs attention. Rough patches on Indian Lakes to Rogue river.
- Drainage and pot holes are a constant problem on Cascade rd.
- Great communications when I called on plugged colvert
- I am not sure the average person will know what you mean by network conditions. I think they are fine with just some peak hour congestion that should be expected given region's growth and the penchant for people here to want to all travel at the same time. Network connectivity for bicycling is still haphazard both facility wise as well as year round maintenance. Transit connectivity is too limited because of the way transit is funded in the region. There are key destinations just outside the transit millage communities that create barriers to access to basic services like grocery, jobs, etc.
- I believe we are making great headway in road preservation and with more townships actively using these preservation programs will make travel on county our county road systems even better!
- i think KCRC does a great job of maintaining the road network both with keeping roads in good condition and winter maintenance.
- Impressed with all the road commission does.
- Light needed at Lincoln Lake and Belding rd. Lincoln Lake rd improvements are wonderful. Grattan Center-old Belding rd. needs road water repair. Ditches need to be dug out and new colverts added. Keep up the good work.
- Most are good; Sections of Leffingwell (County & City) and Ada Drive are in need of better pavt.
- Potholes and construction seem to be constant everywhere
- Progress is being made with additional funding.
- road condition may be good, but shoulders are too narrow and non-motorized options are non-existent
- The center portions hold together well. The edges of the roadway seem to fail at a much higher rate. Is that a drainage or stabilization issue?
- The County network is easily accessible and most roads are in good condition that I use.
- The roads I travel in the Caledonia/Cascade area well cared for. However, I see MUCH needed repairs in other township such as Bowen and Gaines. I understand the funding struggles from your side as well as the townships and sometimes I feel like the residents get caught in the middle.
- Tree work needs to be done in order to keep roads in good condition
- Very pleased with the County road network. Cannon Township has excellent roads and schedules resurfacing timely.
- we live in Michigan, roads are constantly going to be attacked by our climate. It would be impossible to keep all roads in pristine condition.
- We moved from Kentwood, where the roads were much better. The ice/snow out here isn't good.
- Wish we could get partial paving done on Buttrick ave between 68th and just north of Buttrick Ridge Trail as we were told in 2018

## Routine or Winter Maintenance

- All of these items are important. They are often not exciting to fund, no ribbon cuttings, and press opportunities but they are important to every type of traveler.
- All very important.
- Also need to include funds for treatment and removal done correctly of invasive plant species like Japanese Knotweed. Mowing down Japanese Knotweed just makes the invasive plant species grow more vigorously. The Kent County Road Commission needs to be part of the solution when it comes to removing and preventing destructive non-native invasive species
- Due to the detrimental effects of salt to water tables, wildlife, and lawns, trees, and shrubs, I would like to County to minimize application of road salt and move to more use of sand. I have seen freshly sanded / salted roads have a plow come by and throw all this material back in the ditch or yards of residents.
- Good job on winter conditions
- I see a lot being done. Very proud of the KCRC team. Seems very well run
- I'm grateful I drive a SUV so I am higher than the grass growing on country corners in June/July. It must be difficult trying to get the entire county mowed while the grass is growing so vigorously. I noticed a lot of brush cut back this fall -- thank you, but there continue to be perennial problems with brush overgrowth, ie NE corner of Thornapple at 36th (sumac on steroids) as well as east and west side of Thornapple between Air Cargo Dr and 36th (but then again, maybe the overgrown brush helps stop wind/ice in the winter).
- I'm not thrilled with them coming through and hacking up a tree near the road with no warning, we could have had a pruning company come in and deal with it without risking the health of the tree. Luckily it didn't die, causing a greater problem to deal with.
- Keep load limits!
- Keeping the trees at bay is important as my rig is 13'6" high. Plus, sometimes trees get in the way when I'm trying to pull out from a side road or a customer's driveway. I love the standard KCRC uses for traffic signal installations. Reflective backplates and the lower wire to keep the signals from bouncing around is wonderful! No complaints about snow removal, as I typically move across several counties in a single day. It's Michigan... snow happens.
- Many traffic signals should have their flash mode times reviewed. Many times there is no traffic but the signal is still in normal mode causing unneeded delay at night.
- More energy needs to be placed on tree work as climate change causes more severe storms. As vegetation is cut along roadways, more attention needs to be taken on growth towards roadways in a vertical sense. Some road signs cannot be seen until your on top of them
- Our signs seem to get replaced unnecessarily frequently. Choose quality materials, extend the lifespan, and use some of those monies for drainage improvement and vegetation clearing - and I don't mean grass mowing. Have an annual sign auction of the ones that require replacement.
- People do not know what to do at the childsdale / house st NE location because there isn't any traffic sign to keep the traffic flowing. People stop when there isn't a stop sign
- Prompt Return phone calls would be great Occasionally feel like calls are useless



**PUBLIC SECTOR  
CONSULTANTS**

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230 N. Washington Square  
Suite 300  
Lansing, MI 48933