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Road Funding Information

At a recent homeowner association meeting there was a great deal of discussion concerning the maintenance of private and public subdivision roads. The following is offered to clarify private and public road maintenance responsibilities.

When a subdivision is constructed, who pays for the construction of the subdivision roads?

Subdivision roads are constructed at the expense of the developer. The cost of roads and other subdivision infrastructure (sewer, water, sidewalks, pools and parks) is passed along to builders who purchase the lots, and then finally to homebuyers. So, in essence, a new home purchaser has paid for the infrastructure necessary to service their home and subdivision.

Who decides if the subdivision roads are public or private?

The developer makes that decision. In either case, the roads are constructed to Wayne County standards. If the developer wants to make the roads public, Wayne County has to accept them (by law they must do so if the roads are created as part of a platted subdivision and meet their standards).

What about condominium roads?

They are always private.

Who pays for the maintenance of private subdivision roads?

Private subdivision roads typically are maintained by homeowner associations utilizing yearly association fees. These funds are also used for winter maintenance (snow removal).

Do homeowners in private road subdivisions pay twice for road maintenance....once through County taxes and a second time through association fees?

County property tax revenue is not utilized for road maintenance. Wayne County utilizes its share of the State of Michigan gas tax to maintain the County road system. Homeowner associations with private roads assess their homeowners a fee to maintain the subdivision's roads.

How much maintenance does Wayne County do on public subdivision roads?

Very little. Wayne County receives very little revenue from the State of Michigan gas tax to maintain subdivision roads. Wayne County's efforts are limited, for the most part, to the County primary and secondary road system.

What about snow removal by the County on public subdivision roads?

In extremely rare situations does Wayne County provide any winter maintenance on public subdivision roads. The County provides winter maintenance on a priority basis...first I-275 (state contract), Michigan roads (state contract), County primary roads, County secondary roads, and then subdivisions. Wayne County recently reduced the number of road employees and indicated that service levels may change in the event of back-to-back snowfalls. Canton pays Wayne County approximately \$50,000 per year to receive winter road maintenance on 17 miles of Canton secondary roads.

Is it true that most Canton homeowner associations assess their residents for snow removal?

Yes, it is true. For over 30 years, Canton homeowner associations have assessed their members, through their annual association fee, for snow removal. This approach was embraced when it became obvious that Wayne County was not going to provide timely snow removal from public subdivision streets. There are three benefits to this approach; (1) The association provides this service (through contractors) for less than what government would charge (2) If the service is unsatisfactory, the contractor can be fired (3) If government provided the service, a limited amount of equipment and manpower would be available to address any snow situation. Some subdivisions would have to wait an extended period of time before snow would be removed. By utilizing small private snow removal contractors, scores of them can be working simultaneously throughout the community.

Questions and comments can be sent to Tom Yack, Supervisor, at 394-5185 or tyack@canton-mi.org.