

## Summit County to consider increasing vehicle registration fees by \$5 for roads, bridges

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Summit County will consider raising vehicle registration fees to help pay for such projects as the High Level

Bridge  
connecting Akron  
and Cuyahoga  
Falls, which is  
being studied by  
the engineer's  
office for removal  
in 2027, at an  
estimated \$39  
million. (Summit  
County Engineer)

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**By Jennifer Conn, Akron reporter, cleveland.com,**  
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AKRON, Ohio - Summit County Council will consider a proposal by the county engineer's office to increase county motor registration fees by \$5. Over the next two weeks, county officials will host public hearings to listen to input and view a presentation from the engineer's office on the higher fee.

This would be the third vehicle registration fee increase since the late 1960s, and, if approved by council, would go into effect in January 2019.

Summit County residents currently pay \$15 or \$20 for the motor vehicle tax depending on their municipality. That's in addition to state fees, which for cars now run \$34.50.

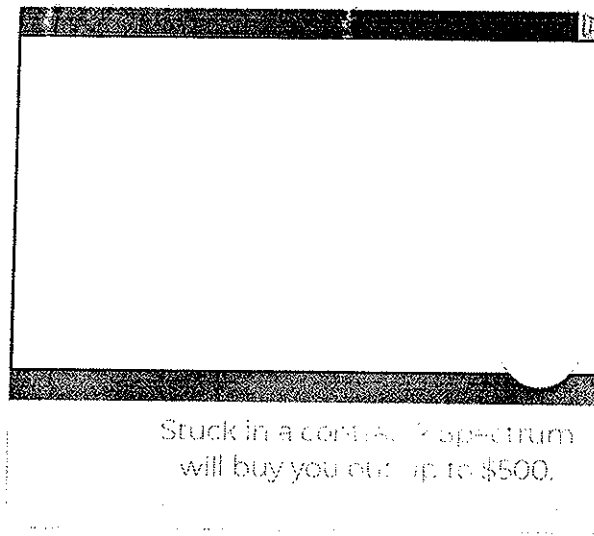
Other types of vehicles, such as motorcycles, trucks and motor homes, pay varying state rates.

The new \$5 fee would generate an additional \$2.6 million for the engineer's office and would go toward construction and maintenance of county roads and bridges, said Heidi Swindell, spokeswoman for the county engineer.

Revenue for county roads and bridge projects have been stagnant, and some years declined, since the Great Recession in 2008, as fewer cars are sold and fewer people drive, she said.

In the meantime, construction costs and materials have escalated since the last county license increase in 1987. Key construction materials that increased from 2005 to 2016 include:

- **steel** -- increased from 81 cents to \$1.09 per pound
- **hot-mix asphalt** -- increased from \$ 89.05 to \$140.49 per cubic yard
- **concrete** -- increased from \$65.32 \$71.87 per square yard



If the rate hike is approved, the engineer's office will work with Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro's office to develop a competitive grant program that will extend to all cities, villages and townships in Summit County.

Under the new the program, officials would set aside \$250,000, which localities could apply for to complete various road and bridge projects, Swindell said. The projects do not have to focus on county roads and bridges, but would have to meet certain criteria and generate or retain jobs in Summit County. Each year, officials would select 35 projects to receive the grants.

Public hearings on the license fee increase will be Monday, Jan. 22, and Monday, Jan. 29, at 4:30 p.m. in Summit County Council Chambers, 175 S. Main St. 7th floor, in downtown Akron.

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