



Choosing the "Right Road" for Pavement Preservation

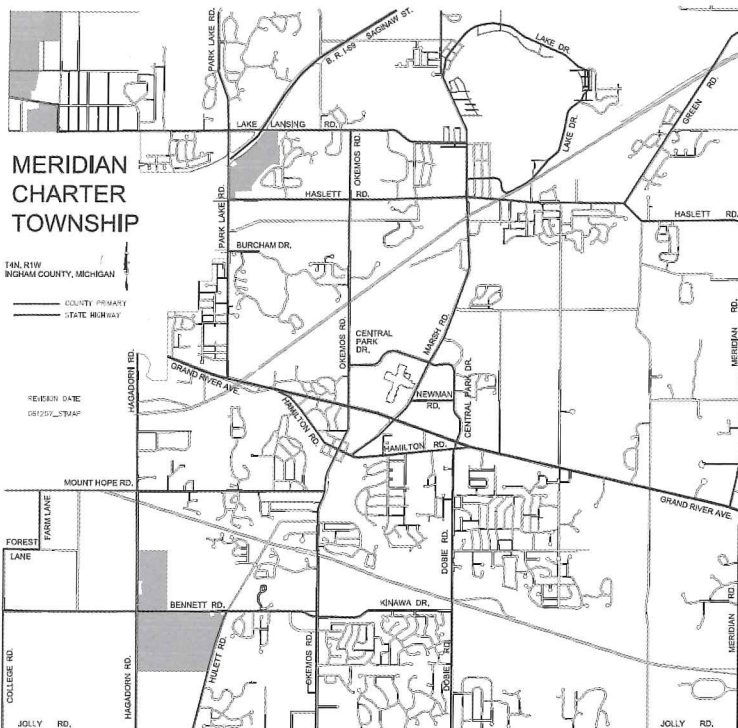
This issue of the *Meridian Monitor* focuses on the question of how best to finance the maintenance and preservation of our township roads.

It's a question that Meridian Township voters will decide on Nov. 6, 2007, when they will determine whether to pay for road maintenance through special assessments, or through a new residential road preservation millage.

How Our Road Repairs are Currently Financed

Meridian Township roadways are under the jurisdiction of the Ingham County Road Commission (ICRC) and the State of Michigan—not the township itself. Which governmental entity is responsible for which roadways—and how maintenance and repairs are funded—is outlined in the amended Michigan Public Act 51 of 1951 (PA 51).

That law also outlines three major classifications of roads: state trunk lines, primary roads and local roads. In Meridian Township, there are 141 miles of paved—and nine miles of gravel—local roads that serve our residential areas. The ICRC is responsible for their maintenance.



All but the roads named on this map are "local roads," subject to the funding formulas outlined in the amended Michigan Public Act 51 of 1951, which provides far less than the amount needed to keep residential roads in good condition.

However, according to the formulas of PA 51, local roads receive the least amount of funding for maintenance and repair. The ICRC typically allocates about \$115,000 annually to resurface our local roads.

Additionally, PA 51 limits the road commission's budget responsibility to no more than 50 percent of residential road repair costs—and it doesn't specify who should pay the rest.

"In recent years, Meridian Township has matched this limited ICRC funding, but the total amount has been far less than what is needed to keep our roads in good shape," says Jerry Richards, township manager. "So, the funds have been used to resurface a small number of the worst roads in our community. This is often called the 'worst first' approach to road maintenance."

How Long Roads Last

A paved road in Michigan is designed to last from 15 to 25 years before it needs to be reconstructed or rehabilitated. When Meridian's 141 miles of paved roads are divided by a 20-year life span, the result is that nearly seven miles of the township roads should be rebuilt each year.

Yet, the annual budget allotted to repair or resurface roadways in our community has only been sufficient to cover an average of two miles annually for the last three years.

To put it another way, due to the inadequate budget allocated in PA 51 to the Ingham County Road Commission for repair of township roads, a road here can be resurfaced only once every 70 years. This shortfall in funds necessitated the "worst first" approach to road maintenance.

"The 'worst first' method is a Band-Aid approach that thwarts any preventive maintenance on streets still rated 'fair' or 'good,'" notes Richards. "Its result is the continued deterioration of our road system, year after year."

The Views of Residents and a Road Expert

According to 68 percent of Meridian residents who responded to citizen surveys conducted by the township in 2003 and 2006, roadways here are in either "fair" or "poor"

Special Road Maintenance Edition

Choosing the "Right Road" continued

condition. The appearance and condition of our roadways, they said, is an important part of the overall quality of life in the township.

A well-maintained road system adds to residential property values, while ensuring a safe and efficient means to move around the township by motor vehicle or bicycle.

In an effort to address public concerns, the Meridian Township Board last spring invited John O'Doherty of the National Center for Pavement Preservation to make a presentation at a board meeting.



John O'Doherty of the NCPP.

O'Doherty, a professional engineer and township resident who worked with the Michigan Department of Transportation for 27 years, is the author of "At the Crossroads: Preserving Our Highway Investment."

In his presentation, O'Doherty outlined how a systematic and proactive preservation program prolongs the lifetime of a roadway, improves motorist safety, and saves public tax dollars.

According to the engineer, the traditional model of waiting until roads fail, then rebuilding them, prolongs unacceptable pavement conditions and requires long-term construction work zones, which cause congestion and longer commuting times. Dollars are spent fixing the worst roads first, rather than on preserving and maintaining roads that are in good condition.

O'Doherty asserts that community roads should be viewed as assets, and be properly maintained so as to safeguard their value. "Pavement preservation," he says, "is a long-term strategy that enhances pavement performance by using an integrated, cost-effective set of practices that extend pavement life, improve safety, and meet motorist expectations."

Pavement Preservation: A New Plan

"Like people, roads are subject to an aging process, and as Meridian Township has matured, the quality of our roads has declined," says Township Supervisor Susan McGillicuddy. "Unfortunately, cosmetics aren't the answer."

The primary culprit leading to pavement deterioration is moisture, which penetrates through the cracks in the road and, during the freeze/thaw cycle, causes the cracks to worsen and form potholes. Heavy truckloads exacerbate the problem.

But it is possible to prolong the service life of a roadway. The key is to apply preventive treatments before the road has deteriorated significantly, or while it is still in "good" condition. This approach requires a system to identify and monitor the condition of roadways through a rating system in order to apply the right treatment at the right time.

Preservation is less expensive and consists of a range of surface treatments designed to address the needs of asphalt and concrete roads. (For information about resurfacing and the various treatments available, link to the NCPP's web page at www.pavementpreservation.org.)

Did You Know?

According to the National Center for Pavement Preservation, driving on poor roads costs U.S. motorists \$67 billion per year (\$333 per motorist) in extra vehicle repairs and operation costs.

About the National Center for Pavement Preservation

Established by Michigan State University with support from the Federal Highway Administration and the Foundation for Pavement Preservation, the National Center for Pavement Preservation (NCPP) leads collaborative efforts among government, industry, and academia for the advancement of pavement preservation. Its purpose is to improve pavement preservation practices through education, research, and outreach. For more information, visit its website at www.pavementpreservation.org

“To manage roads more efficiently and consistently, the township has adopted a preservation plan under which we will look at the road system as a community asset whose value should be protected,” says Township Supervisor Susan McGillicuddy. “Funds spent on residential roads will be used for preventive maintenance and repairs as needed.”

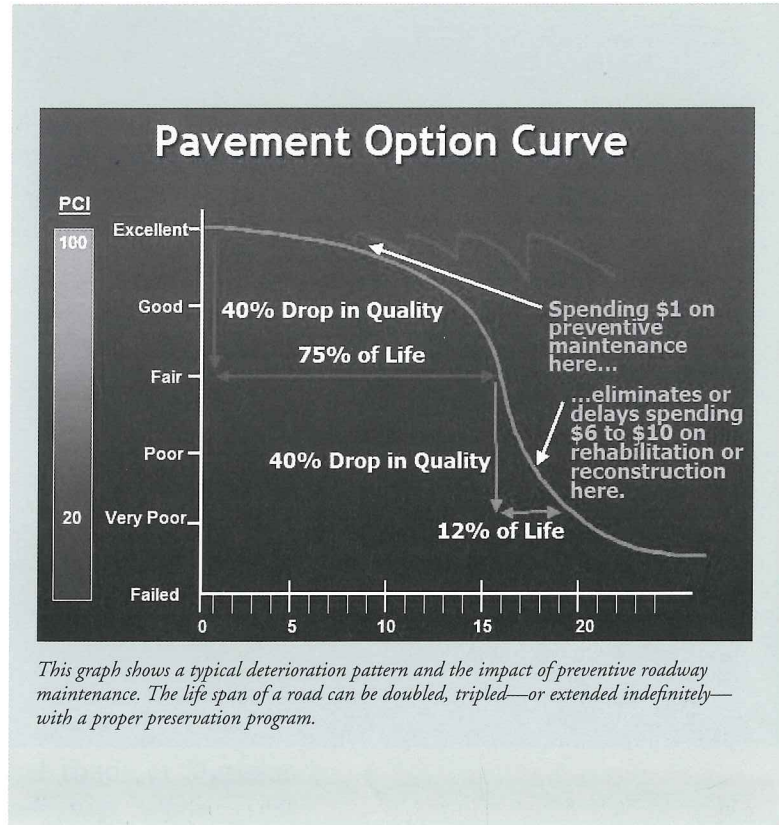
By doing the *right* treatment on the *right* road at the *right* time, as emphasized by the NCPP, township officials believe that the need to reconstruct or rehabilitate seven miles of road annually will eventually be reduced.

How the Preservation Plan will Affect Residents

Starting this year, Meridian Township will annually evaluate all streets using special trucks equipped with computerized cameras and instruments. The Township will then apply preventive maintenance treatments on a relatively large number of residential streets considered in “fair-to-good” condition. This will be a departure from the previous approach, when resources were focused just on reconstructing and rehabilitating a small number of the “worst” roads.

The township intends to use a combination of property tax dollars and other revenues—along with any matching funds from the Ingham County Road Commission—to pay for the long-term preventive maintenance of residential streets.

In order to tackle the current backlog of “worst” roads, Meridian Township residents will choose between two options to fund an annual road program:



This graph shows a typical deterioration pattern and the impact of preventive roadway maintenance. The life span of a road can be doubled, tripled—or extended indefinitely—with a proper preservation program.

Road Preservation Millage

Under this proposed funding option—if it is approved by Meridian Voters at the Nov. 6 election—a community-wide millage would be assessed.

Funds from that millage would be dedicated to repairing and preserving Meridian Township’s residential roadways. Based on current pricing and the estimated backlog of major repair work required over the next eight years, the additional levy would be 0.45 mills and would raise \$758,700 per year for road preservation.

For example, at 45 cents per \$1,000 in taxable value, the owner of a \$200,000 home would pay an extra \$45 per year in taxes, while the owner of a \$400,000 home would pay \$90 per year.

With a Road Preservation Millage, the cost of road repairs would be shared by all of Meridian’s residential and business property owners. Coupled with the existing \$230,000 from the ICRC and Township road budgets the millage would bring total road repair funds to about \$1 million annually for eight years.

Special Assessment Districts

This funding option is already available under Meridian Township’s taxing authority, and would be used if the Road Preservation Millage is rejected by voters on Nov. 6.

Property owners on both sides of a residential street undergoing resurfacing or major repairs would be considered part of a “special assessment district.” As such, they would be assessed 100 percent of the cost of resurfacing or repairs to the road bed. The assessment would apply equally to property owners on each side of the street (50 percent per side), and the liability of individual owners would be based on the road frontage of their property.

For example, if the road is lined with 80-foot-wide, non-corner lots, has a width of 32 feet, and needs a two-inch overlay of asphalt, each resident along the road would be assessed about \$1,000 at 2007 prices. Property owners would be given the option of paying for the improvement over time—such as five years at a 5 percent interest rate. An assessment would be made on per-linear-foot basis, at roughly \$12 per foot for the width of a lot.

Quick Comparison of Funding Options for Road Preservation

	ROAD PRESERVATION MILLAGE	SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS
Who would pay	All Meridian Township property owners	Only the owners of property along Meridian roads requiring repairs
How the payment would be calculated	45 cents per \$1,000 of the property's taxable value	About \$12 per foot width of the property's road frontage
What a "typical" property owner would pay	\$45 per year (\$200,000 home)	\$1,000 (80-foot-wide non-corner lot)
When the payment would apply	Only if voters approve the proposal on Nov. 6.	Only if voters reject the proposal on Nov. 6.

Option One or Two? It's Up to Voters

On Nov. 6, 2007, Meridian Township voters will choose whether or not a Road Preservation Millage should be instituted for the purposes of funding road repair and maintenance. If the millage is approved, that new source of funds will pay for road repair and maintenance. If voters reject the millage question, the township will create Special Assessment Districts to fund road repairs.

Another Option, but for the Future

"Over the longer term, another way to increase our funds for road maintenance would be for Meridian to change its form of government," observes Township Manager Richards. "Right now, the responsibility for roadway maintenance in Meridian Township lies with the Ingham County Road Commission. To receive state tax dollars directly—and shoulder the responsibility for maintaining the current road system—the township would have to become either a city or village."

Based on the formulas outlined in PA 51, Meridian estimates that there would be significantly more funds for road repair and maintenance if the township became a city.

"However, this is not an option that can address our immediate funding needs for roads, since the process of becoming a city would take several years to implement," adds Richards.

He estimates that roughly \$750,000 to \$1 million in additional state tax funds would be available for local road maintenance if the township became a village or city.

What You will See in the Voting Booth

LOCAL STREET MAINTENANCE MILLAGE PROPOSITION

Shall there be an increase of 0.45 mills (\$0.45 on each \$1,000 of taxable value) in excess of the limitation on the amount of taxes that may be assessed on all property in the Charter Township of Meridian, Ingham County, Michigan levied for a period of eight (8) years, 2007 through 2014 inclusive, for the preservation, maintenance and resurfacing of local streets within the Township, raising an estimated \$758,700 in the first year the millage is levied, to be disbursed to the governing road agency?

YES _____ NO _____

Absentee Ballot Applications for the Nov. 6, 2007 Election are available at the Meridian Township Clerk's Office, or you may request an application by calling the Clerk's Office at 517-853-4300.

We Value Your Opinion

Meridian Township officials are eager to hear your opinion about the options for maintaining and preserving our residential road system. Send your questions or comments to us through the township's website at: <http://www.twp.meridian.mi.us>. You may also contact the Ingham County Road Commission at www.inghamcrc.org.

In addition, township officials are available to meet with neighborhood groups to discuss road maintenance planning. Also, a citizens committee to provide input on road preservation issues is being formed. **If you would like to arrange for township speakers at a neighborhood group—or join the citizens committee on road maintenance—contact Township Manager Jerry Richards at 517-853-4258.**

Typical Road-Life Extensions (Years)

TREATMENT	GOOD CONDITION	FAIR CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
Fog seal	1-3	0-1	0
Chip seal	4-10	3-5	0-3
Slurry seal	3-5	1-3	0-1
Micro-surfacing	4-8	3-5	1-4
Thin HMA	4-10	3-7	2-4

This chart shows the number of years that different preservation methods can add to a road's life span, depending on the road's condition when the treatment is applied. For instance, when chip seal is applied to a road in good condition, its life is extended by four to 10 years.

Did You Know?

Local roads in Meridian Township were first paved—and paid for—by developers, or by adjacent land owners if the roadway was originally gravel. They were not built with township or state tax dollars.

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Notice of Wetland Inventory Map

Under the provisions of Part 303 of Act 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, the Charter Township of Meridian is required to notify each recorded owner of property on the property tax roll that the Township has an ordinance regulating wetlands and there have been amendments to the wetland inventory map. Part 303 of Act 451 also requires the Township to advise all owners of property in the Township that their property may be designated as a wetland on the inventory map, and that the inventory map does not necessarily include all of the wetlands within the Township that may be subject to the Wetland Ordinance. Finally, please be advised that the wetland map does not create any legally enforceable presumptions regarding whether property that is or is not included on the inventory map is or is not in fact a wetland. The Wetland Inventory Map is available for inspection during regular business hours in the Department of Community Planning and Development located at the Meridian Municipal Building, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864. Call (517) 853-4568 for more information.

Fall/Winter 2007 Parks & Recreation Calendar of Events

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| Sept. 6 – Police Citizen's Academy | Sept. 29 – Harvest Moon: Tales Around the Campfire | Oct. 27 – Halloween Meridian Style: Halloween Adventures at the Harris Nature Center; Halloween Open House at the Meridian Township Police Department; Meridian Township Fire Department Halloween Tours; Meridian Farmers' Market Day and Meridian Historical Village tours | Nov. 15 – FHM Lecture Series: TBA |
| Sept. 7 – Home School Science Programs-Snake Search | Oct. 5 – Home School Science Programs-Skins and Skulls | Nov. 1 – Fly Away Home Slide Show | Nov. 17 – Webelos Forester Badge |
| Sept. 7 – Euchre | Oct. 5 – Euchre | Nov. 2 – Home School Science Programs-Animals in Motion | Nov. 18 – Sun Dogs |
| Sept. 8 – First Class Dog Training-Basic Obedience Class | Oct. 6 – Meridian Heritage Festival | Nov. 2 – Euchre | Nov. 20 – Yoga Flow with Amy Larsen |
| Sept. 8 – First Class Dog Training-Off Leash Class | Oct. 6 – Harris Nature Center Walking Club at Hillbrook Park | Nov. 3 – Wiikongewin Fall Feast | Dec. 1 – Harris Nature Center Walking Club at North |
| Sept. 8 – Harris Nature Center Walking Club at Harris Nature Center | Oct. 6 – First Class Dog Training-Basic Obedience Class | Nov. 3 – First Class Dog Training-Off Leash Class | Meridian Road Park |
| Sept. 8 – Core Fitness with Amy Larsen | Oct. 6 – First Class Dog Training-Off Leash Class | Nov. 3 – Wood Duck Nest Box Workshop | Dec. 1 – First Class Dog Training-Basic Obedience Class |
| Sept. 8 – Festival Volunteer Workshop | Oct. 6 – Halloween "Teen" Cedar Point Trip | Nov. 4 – Throw Another Log on the Fire and Relax-A Guide to Holiday Etiquette | Dec. 1 – Core Fitness with Amy Larsen |
| Sept. 9 – Meridian Artisans' Market Day | Oct. 7 – Fly Away Home Slide Show | Nov. 7 – Harris Nature Center Walking Club at Williamstown Township Park | Dec. 2 – Christmas in the Village |
| Sept. 9 – W3 5K Run/Walk | Oct. 7 – Howl at the Moon | Nov. 7 – Chipmunk Story Time-It's Fall Truck or Treat | Dec. 2 – Special Christmas Tea in the Village |
| Sept. 15 – Discover Geo-caching | Oct. 12 – Girl Scout Earth Connections Badge | Nov. 9 – Howl at the Moon | Dec. 7 – Home School Science Programs-Habitat Hunt |
| Sept. 16 – Sun Dogs | Oct. 13 – Brownie Water Everywhere Try-It | Nov. 10 – Girl Scout Wildlife Badge | Dec. 7 – Euchre |
| Sept. 17 – Sporties for Shorties Fall I | Oct. 13 – What a Hoot! Campfire | Nov. 10 – Brownie Watching Wildlife Try-It | Dec. 7 – Nokomis Art Exhibit Opening-Artwork by Suzanne Cross |
| Sept. 19 – On Assignment Advanced Photography Class | Oct. 14 – Meridian Artisans' Market Day | Nov. 10 – Etiquette for the Holidays | Dec. 8 – Holiday Hounds Hike |
| Sept. 19 – Sporties for Shorties Fall II | Oct. 16 – Yoga Flow with Amy Larsen | Nov. 10 – Harris Nature Center Walking Club at Williamstown Township Park | Dec. 8 & 9 – Woodland Indian Art Market |
| Sept. 20 – Chipmunk Story Time-Harvest Moon Dance | Oct. 18 – Chipmunk Story Time-It's Fall Truck or Treat | Nov. 15 – Chipmunk Story Time-Going Batty | Dec. 15 – Sledding with Santa-Moonlight Style |
| Sept. 22 – Harris Nature Center Walking Club at Legg Park | Oct. 20 – Webelos Naturalist Badge | | Dec. 20 – Chipmunk Story Time-Welcome Winter & Arrowhawk |
| Sept. 24 – My Cub and I: Nature for Toddlers | Oct. 20 – Harris Nature Center Walking Club at Nancy Moore Park | | |
| Sept. 27 – FHM Lecture Series: Michigan History by John Penn, Ralya Elementary history teacher | Oct. 20 – Core Fitness with Amy Larsen | | Sports Registration Deadlines |
| Sept. 28 – Howl at the Moon | Oct. 21 – Sun Dogs | | Nov. 9 – HYRA/Okemos Basketball 4 th -6 th Grades |
| Sept. 28 – Michigan Indian Day Concert | Oct. 25 – FHM Lecture Series: The Infamous Marble Murders by Michael Cox | | Dec. 7 – HYRA Basketball K-3 rd |
| Sept. 29 – Styrofoam and Boxboard Recycling Event | Oct. 26 – Haunted Teen Tour 2007 | | |

For more information about Meridian Parks & Recreation activities, call 853-4608 or visit online at www.twp.meridian.mi.us

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