

Updates

A Community Newsletter
Summer 2013

of Washington County's Department of Land Use and Transportation

Special Edition: Officials Proactively Addressing Road Maintenance Challenges

A local vehicle registration fee is being considered to maintain roads and improve traffic flow

ROAD
WORK
AHEAD?

Roads are essential to the health of our economy and quality of life. They transport goods and get us to work, school, entertainment, shopping, and visits with family and friends. It is important that roads are not allowed to deteriorate to the point that costly repair or reconstruction is needed. But how do we make sure our roads are maintained now so they will not cost more in the future?

The challenge

Washington County maintains 1,300 miles of roads. We strive to be efficient and effective with our road maintenance funds, but we face a double challenge. Material costs are escalating rapidly. Liquid asphalt is critical for maintaining our roads. From 2004 to 2012, it almost tripled from \$200 to nearly \$600 per ton. At the same time, people are driving less and switching to more fuel efficient vehicles. As a result, **county roads are deteriorating because current gas taxes are not enough to pay for all current maintenance needs.** Many road agencies are facing this challenge.

"I've served on the Urban Road Maintenance District (URMD) Advisory and Budget Committees. Washington County operates in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner. A supplement to the gas tax is needed to keep our roads maintained, which is significantly cheaper than rebuilding after deterioration."

Bonnie Hadley, Chair of the citizen Urban Road Maintenance District Advisory Committee



has dropped over 10 points in the past decade and is projected to drop at least another 10 points over the next decade with current funding sources.

We can't afford to fall behind

Cost-effective preventive maintenance avoids costly future repairs. **Treating roads at the right time saves taxpayers money over the long term—potentially tens of millions of dollars over the next 20 to 30 years.**

"I applaud our county and city leaders for taking action now to stabilize road maintenance funding. I've seen other jurisdictions wait until streets are in terrible condition before fixing them. That's like not brushing your teeth regularly and needing a root canal later. We can't afford that kind of short-sighted thinking."

Pam Treece, Executive Director of Westside Economic Alliance

Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is an industry standard for describing road conditions on a scale from 0 (not usable) to 100 (brand new). **Once roads go below 65, major repairs are likely to be needed, which can cost 5 to 10 times more than preventive maintenance. The current overall PCI in the Washington County system is 76. It**



What's the solution?

County and city officials are considering a **countywide vehicle registration fee with funds dedicated to maintaining and improving existing roads.** By state law, 40% of the funds must be shared with cities to maintain or improve roads. Officials are considering a fee of either \$43 (maximum allowed by state) or \$22 per year (half the maximum).



Implementing the fee now will support timely preventive maintenance of existing roads—avoiding higher costs to repair them in the future. At \$22 per year, we anticipate preventing further significant decline in the condition of the county road system for 15 to 20 years. At \$43 per year, we anticipate being able to bring most county roads up to adopted maintenance standards and keep them there for 15 to 20 years. A portion of the fee could also help pay for updating technology to improve traffic flow throughout our countywide road system. There's more information on the next page.

Residents support cost-effective road maintenance

Recent public opinion surveys on transportation priorities in Washington County emphasize the same conclusion: **Maintain our roads and avoid future costs.** One respondent echoed many others by putting it this way: *"As a car owner, I am using the roads in Washington County. Therefore I should help pay to maintain them."*

More information

Please visit www.co.washington.or.us/vrf to learn more about the proposed countywide vehicle registration fee dedicated to maintaining and improving our roads. Share your thoughts and let us know what roads in your area need attention.

"With road maintenance, we can pay a little bit now or pay a lot more later. I believe our residents want us to take a smart, proactive and cost-effective approach. I'm convinced we need to take action on this issue to maintain the quality of life our residents expect."

Andy Duyck, Chairman of the Washington County Board of Commissioners



To find the Updates newsletter on the county web site: www.co.washington.or.us/News/Newsletters

On The Road Again: To review current capital projects visit www.wc-roads.com and click on "Construction Projects" or call 846-7800.

Join Westside Voices and share your opinions on important community issues: www.joinwestsidevoices.org

How do we maintain our roads?

Cost-effective preventive treatments:

Roads deteriorate when exposed to the elements. Preventive treatments protect and extend the life of our roads, typically at less than one-quarter the cost of a traditional pavement overlay. **Additional maintenance funding will allow us to use these cost-effective preventive treatments on more roads more quickly—saving taxpayers tens of millions over the long term.**

Microsurfacing is a mix of liquid asphalt, polymers, and fine aggregates that seals and protects the surface and corrects minor defects. Portions of **Butner Road** in Cedar Hills and **Shaw Street** in Aloha are being microsurfaced this summer.

Chip seal also seals and protects the road surface using liquid asphalt and fine rock chips. **Roy, Scholls-Sherwood, and Laurelwood Roads** were recently chip sealed.

Pavement repairs and overlays:

When preventive maintenance is not an option, more costly measures are needed:

Pavement patching repairs isolated damage. We recently patched **Scholls Ferry Road** west of Roy Rogers Road. While more expensive than preventive treatments, patching is more cost-effective than traditional pavement overlay.



Pavement overlay is effective when a heavily travelled road has significant deterioration. **River Road** between Scholls Ferry and Farmington Roads has a current PCI of 70, but portions are worse. With current funding limitations, an overlay is planned in 2024 or later. With additional funding available, we could accelerate that by as much as six years, saving taxpayers money by halting further deterioration.

How can we improve traffic flow?

Funds from the fee could also be used to upgrade traffic signals with technology that improves traffic flow:

- Flashing Yellow Arrows reduce delays by allowing left turns during gaps in oncoming traffic.
- Advanced traffic signal technology coordinates signals and allows them to adapt to changing traffic conditions in real time.



Updates

Washington County
Department of Land Use and Transportation
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Articles with this icon have additional information on the web. Click on the title of the article to check it out!

Citizen Involvement Calendar

Board of County Commissioners

meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 10 a.m.
meets 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
Auditorium, Public Services Building
155 N First Ave, Hillsboro
Contact: Philip Bransford, 846-8685

Planning Commission

meets 1st Wednesday at 2 p.m.
meets 3rd Wednesday at 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Public Services Building
155 N First Ave, Hillsboro
Contact: Connie McCracken, 846-3519

Rural Roads Operations and Maintenance Advisory Committee (RRMAC)

meets 3rd Thursday at 7:30 a.m.
Training Room 1, Walnut Street Center
1400 SW Walnut St, Hillsboro
Contact: Stacia Sheelar, 846-7623

Urban Road Maintenance District Advisory Committee (URMDAC)

meets 3rd Wednesday at 4 p.m.
Training Room 1, Walnut Street Center
1400 SW Walnut St, Hillsboro
Contact: Stacia Sheelar, 846-7623

Citizen Participation Organizations (CPOs)

There are 15 CPOs in the County, organized geographically. Most meet regularly. To find out more, visit <http://www.co.washington.or.us/CPO>

Washington County Board of Commissioners

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Directory of LUT's Divisions and Services (all area codes are 503)

Main Line 846-4530

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• Capital Project Management 846-7800

• Engineering 846-7900

• Right-of-Way 846-7870

• Surveying 846-8723

• Traffic Engineering 846-7950

Planning and Development Services

• Current Planning 846-8761

• Building Services 846-3470

• Long Range Planning 846-3519

Operations and Maintenance 846-7623

• Road Maintenance 846-ROAD

• Adopt-A-Road 846-7619

• Service District for Lighting 846-7626

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