

Chris Taggart

From: Gary Beadle <gbeadle56@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 7:13 AM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] De-Paving of County Roads

Dear Commissioners:

As a Ravalli County property owner whose property is bordering Upper Burnt Fork School Road along its entire eastern boundary and as the president of the Sagebrush Flats HOA, I request advance notice prior to any decision being made on whether or not to de-pave the above mentioned county road.

I attended the most recent public meeting you had on March 30th which I thought was most informative. The issue is clear but the solutions not necessity so. Based upon what I have recently learned the issue is primarily lack of funding. The solution, in my opinion, is multi-faceted requiring immediate, mid-term and long-term solutions. During the March 30th meeting the consensus among your constituents appeared to be against regressive de-paving the county roads. Given the presented facts that:

1. on average an asphalt road has a useful live of approximately 20 years,
2. the County has approximately 300 miles of asphalt roads,
3. the County's Road and Bridge Department budget allows for the resurfacing of 5 - 7 miles of asphalt roads per budget year,
4. resurfacing costs are approximately \$90,000 per mile,

on this current Road and Bridge budget path the majority of the County's asphalt roads will be de-paved and returned to gravel at the rate of 8 - 10 miles per year. Clearly this is not an acceptable path based upon public reaction at the March 30th meeting. Some thoughts on possible solutions most of which I am sure you have considered are:

1. **Educating your constituents** throughout the County (which you have already begun as part of an immediate solution).
2. **Consider floating a bond issue** or some sort of immediate financing as part of an immediate solution. At March 30 I heard a commissioner comment that a large portion of the 300 miles of asphalt roads were paved 20 - 25 years ago. As a result there is an immediate large bubble of roads needed re-surfacing now, i.e. an immediately large funding need.
3. **Increase the "road fund" levy** to a) service the road bond issue, and b) to properly fund the Road and Bridge department's budget for maintenance and planned resurfacing of the County asphalt road system (mid-term solution).
4. **Seek out other financing sources** such as NFS, State and other Federal funding support. as part of a long-term funding solution.

Before any decision is made to de-pave a County road I believe the Commissioners should overlay the County's projected 20-year growth map over the County's 300 mile asphalt road system. This will help mitigate the risk of de-paving a County road currently having a low trip count when in fact that particular road is projected sometime over the next 20 years to have a trip count deserving an asphalt surface. I really do not have any experience in public finance, only in private financing. But It seems to me that some sort of capital reserve should be considered to provide funding for not only resurfacing the current 300 miles of County asphalt roads but to plan for the continued growth of Ravalli County's road system.

This issue deserves some some long-term (20-year) financial planning and I am offering the above thoughts as a concerned Ravalli County resident. In closing, before any decision is made on Upper Burnt Fork Road please me with some advance notice.

Regards,

Gary Beadle

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