



Prioritizing Bloomington Streets for Resurfacing

Insight into the City of Bloomington's Decision Process



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"Providing good stewardship of the public infrastructure and equipment safely through competitive services and excellent customer relations."

Updated July 2015

The process of deciding which streets to repair first involves a complex consideration of needs and funding. Historically, funding levels have forced the City to decide which streets – already deemed in need of work – must wait. The City has faced a constant decision: Fix residential streets in dire need of work or fix arterial and collector streets that are in less dire shape but carry substantial traffic loads. The arterial and collector streets have taken priority because of public safety. Being longer and wider, their repair exhausts available funds rapidly, and that leaves little funding for the neighborhood streets.

There are three other strategies for stretching what money we do have. 1. Using asphalt rather than concrete. Durability of our concrete streets has been inconsistent over the past 30 years, and unpredictable durability, combined with high cost, makes Bloomington hesitant to use concrete in most cases. 2. The City strives to create quality, long-term patches to keep roads serviceable. 3. Pavement preservation treatments extend life of asphalt.

Specific Criteria: The list of criteria that follows gives insight into complex decision making required when expending public dollars, especially when funding levels have not historically met perceived need. They show a process of balancing interests – combining location (for example, proximity to a school), traffic volume and the condition of the street surfaces. They demonstrate that every street gets inspected and rated at least once every three years. Streets that appear to be nearing necessary repair get inspected annually, as do arterial streets on a watch list.

Criteria and Methodology for Choosing City Streets to Be Resurfaced.

1. Streets rating activity occurs throughout the year as time allows. Each street is rated once every three years at a minimum.
2. Some of the worst streets are inspected yearly.
3. Street sections found in need of resurfacing are added to an Excel spreadsheet, if not previously documented.
 - i) In general, a street that requires constant City maintenance to remain drivable is considered in need a resurfacing.
 - ii) Severe rutting is a major criterion and is a sign of bad asphalt and/or base failure.
 - iii) Pervasive, deep cracking is also a major criterion, even if potholing has not yet begun.
 - iv) Raveling of the surface of the asphalt is a sign the road will not last much longer.
 - v) Asphalt pavements of 3" or less will often wear away, down to the gravel base, in places and are in need of resurfacing.
4. Variables of each street section are recorded in the spreadsheet. Variables include traffic volume, pavement type, square yardage and cost estimate.
5. Some streets undergo "permanent patching," which entails milling bad areas and roller compacting the milled area with hot asphalt. These streets are delayed for resurfacing and completed patching gets noted on the spreadsheet.
6. As the streets are rated, notes are made. For extremely poor condition residential (low volume) streets, an Engineering Division technician estimates the latest the road can suffice without resurfacing. This aids in prioritization.
7. The year of latest date planned resurfacing is entered into a column in the spreadsheet, going out about 5 years in advance.
8. When the streets slated for the next year's program exceed the expected budget, some streets must be chosen to wait another year.
9. Streets with the higher traffic volumes receive higher priority. Streets near schools and city bus routes are given added consideration as well.
10. Each time a citizen reports a street needs to be resurfaced, the street is inspected and added to the spreadsheet if deemed necessary.
11. Several major arterial roads are placed on a watch list. These streets are re-inspected each year prior to generating a resurfacing list for the coming year.
12. This spreadsheet is used to generate a preliminary resurfacing list based upon the expected budget.
13. All of these preliminary streets are driven to make certain of the extents of the area to be resurfaced and to check if any of the streets have been patched by City crews.
14. A map is made of the streets and printed out and circulated in-office. It also gets sent to the Bloomington Water Department and to other utilities in hopes of preventing conflicting projects. (Example: A street may be put on hold for a year if Public Works learns of a NICOR project that will tear up the street.)
15. This list will be further modified as infrastructure inspections are conducted and reports come back from various City entities and utilities about scheduled construction projects affecting these streets.
16. Finally, projects are let out for bid. Bids are submitted, opened publicly and reviewed. Only then can the City actually decide what streets can fit within budget parameters.