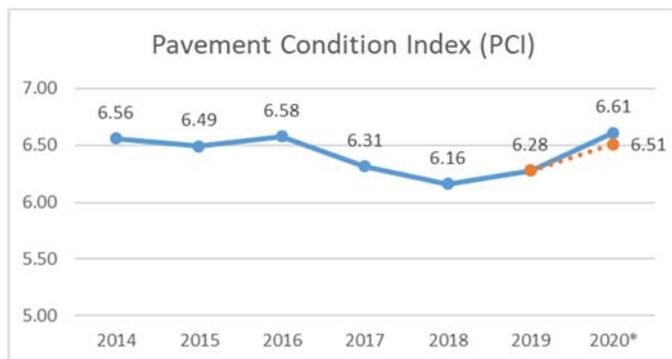
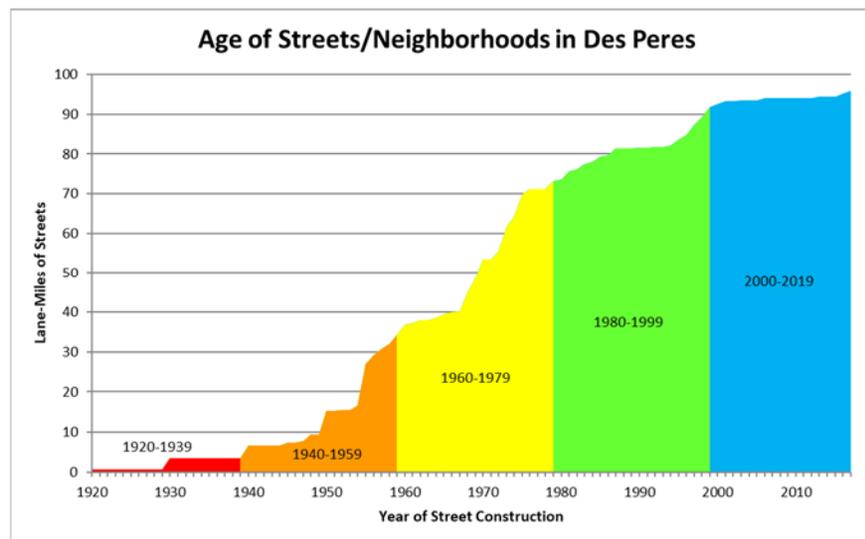


Turning the Corner and Building Momentum

Steve Meyer, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Last fall, I had my first “major” surgery, to repair my knee. I have been forced to recognize that our bodies start to breakdown after we reach the age of 40 (which happened earlier in the year). Similarly, infrastructure requires very little maintenance in its youth, but starts to fall apart over time. You have probably heard about America’s aging infrastructure in the news. Every four years, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) grades America’s infrastructure. In 2017, the U.S. scored a D+ overall. Missouri fared only slightly better, scoring a C- in 2018. This is actually impressive, considering Missouri has the 7th largest highway system in the U.S., but ranks 48th in revenue per mile. That’s why MoDOT keeps asking for increases in funding (which keep getting voted down). Much of our national and state infrastructure was built during the post-war period, and is nearing the end of its useful life, requiring major reconstruction.

Des Peres has gone through several bursts of growth, first in the 50s, a bigger jump in the 70s and a smaller jump in the late 90s. As you think about the age of your home, your whole subdivision is likely about that age (unless it’s an infill house). Those streets built in the 1970s are now approaching 50 years old, and are showing their age.



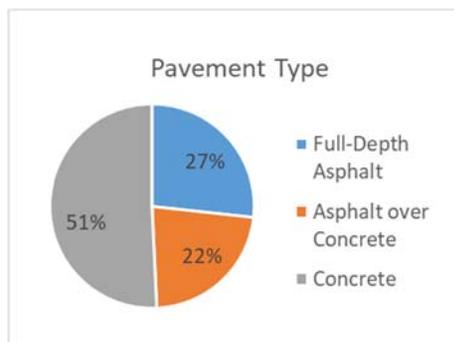
Towards the end of each year, trained City staff performs a survey of every street maintained by the City of Des Peres. Not just a sample or every few years, like most cities; every street, every year. The current ratings map is available at www.desperesmo.org/1329/Pavement-Management.

As our streets have aged, we have seen the composite rating drop off. At the same time, citizen surveys in both 2014 and 2017 identified street maintenance as a top priority. In response, the Board of Aldermen increased funding in recent years. Given the sheer volume of streets in the City, there was a downward momentum in their condition, but we appear to have turned the corner. Given the large projects planned for 2020, we projected our next score to be over 6.6.

Unfortunately, our largest planned project, the reconstruction of Fairroyal Drive from East Royal to Barrett Station, has been postponed. This was based upon decreased revenues, the result of COVID-19, which has reduced the sales taxes supporting the Capital Improvement Fund. The City of Des Peres does not receive any funding from property taxes. The postponement of that project changes our projected PCI to 6.51 for 2020. We also anticipate funding limitations in the future, given the rise of internet sales and less money being spent locally. Which is why we always encourage everyone to Shop Des Peres First!

When a street is first built, it is a “10”, but over time its score will drop. If nothing is done to maintain or repair streets, they will ultimately get worse, resulting in more reds and oranges. We want to get rid of those reds and oranges, which are not an acceptable condition. We want to “grow the greens” and build momentum for the future.

But it’s not just a matter of laying a fresh coat of asphalt and walking away. Different streets require different types of upkeep. With concrete streets, we have three options: overlay with asphalt, replace select slabs, or reconstruct the entire street. If only a few slabs have gone bad, we can simply replace them. If the slabs are structurally in decent condition with some flaws, we can use that concrete as a solid base, and prolong pavement life with an asphalt overlay. But if many of the slabs have failed structurally, reconstruction is the only option. It also happens to be the most inconvenient and expensive option.



With asphalt streets, we again have to determine whether the degradation is in the surface or in the underlying structure. Quite often, we can’t tell until we’ve removed the top layer (≈2”) of asphalt. Only then can we see the underlying concrete or asphalt base, and take appropriate action. It may be quicker and simpler to just cover up the bad areas, but the City will end up having to fix those problems in future years. So we take the time to fix it right, even if that delays the project.

There are old sayings like “a stitch, in time, saves nine” and “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”. Whichever you prefer, that is what we are trying to do with our annual cracksealing project. Each year, we crackseal approximately half the city (east in even years, west in odd years). This cracksealing keeps moisture out of the pavement and is the simplest, most cost-effective way to extend pavement life.

As mentioned earlier, the City of Des Peres has significantly increased its funding of Street and Bridge Projects in recent years. This is depicted in the graph below. But like everyone else, we have budget constraints and must stay within funding limits. The City has offset many of these expenditures by capturing grant funding. For projects related to collector and arterial streets or bridges, federal grants have been secured to reimburse 80% of projects costs. While the City spent \$2.9M on bridges in the past ten years, we received reimbursement of \$2.32M. Similarly, we have four more major projects coming up, each with 80% federal funding.

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Construction Year</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>Reimbursement</u>	<u>Net Cost to City</u>
Bopp Road Resurfacing	2020	\$522k	\$418k	\$104k
Manchester Road Improvements	2021-2022	\$421k	\$336k	\$85k
Des Peres Road Roundabout	2022	\$1.6M	\$1.27M	\$330k
Lindemann Road Resurfacing	2024	\$400k	\$320k	\$80k

For more information about these projects and others, please visit www.desperesmo.org/projects

