

OWEN COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT ANNUAL ROAD MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

ACCEPTED 2024

MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE OWEN COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT IS TO PLAN AND USE OUR RESOURCES WISELY, WORKING WITHIN OUR BUDGET TO PROVIDE SAFE AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES THROUGH MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT. WE WILL STRIVE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS MISSION WITH THE SPIRIT OF TEAMWORK, BY ALLOWING OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH A TRUE SENSE OF DEDICATION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR COMMUNITY.

PRINCIPLES

- To provide a safe reliable transportation system, one that is the most efficient with available funding.
- To provide quality customer service by striving to provide maintenance levels necessary to achieve public satisfaction.
- Ensure that projects provide the most functional economic benefit through responsible expenditure of funds and quality.

INTRODUCTION

In 2020 Owen County introduced the **Road Maintenance and Improvement Plan**. The plan established the guiding principles and methodologies for maintaining and improving our road system consisting of approximately 632 miles of roadway.

Our primary emphasis in the 2024 Road Maintenance and Improvement plan will be our Asset Management Plan. We have established maintenance program areas for hard surface and gravel roads. These program/project areas are designed to ensure Asset preservation and the best level of service possible with the available resources. We have also established measurement tools within each program/project area that will allow us to track performance and use real data to assist in guiding our services, weather permitting. The Superintendent will review past and present condition levels, work orders and performance so we can continually improve the management of our road inventory. The highway department will contract projects where it is deemed suitable to provide the best economic value to our County. All our systems put in place are very dependent on the weather. Being reactionary has proven to not be efficient. Therefore, getting back to routine maintenance as soon as possible will be the goal after any weather event or emergency.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

We have had great success in the past discussing projects with many of our county residents. These discussions have been in some type of public forum, and we rely on social media within our community. We feel the use of social media has allowed for constructive dialog which has strengthened our working relationship with the residents.

Feedback from the community is important to us. We have a protocol at the office on how calls are to be logged. Once the calls are logged into our system, we strive to ensure that every issue is responded to by either work order, call back or a visit from one of our team members. Work orders are then analyzed to identify trends which allow us to adjust our services to better serve the public.

The Superintendent would like to encourage homeowner associations and subdivisions that are part of the County Road inventory, to designate a transportation system representative to regularly communicate with us regarding any issues that may arise.

ANNUAL ROAD MAINTENANCE PLAN

This year the Maintenance Plan will be focused on scheduled Preservation Projects. All projects have been prioritized and scheduled to optimize weather equipment, personnel, materials and budget. By using a systematic plan, we believe we can uphold cost effective service levels while optimizing the life span of all assets.

I. Gravel Road Maintenance

Gravel Road Maintenance consists of four programs. Route grading, drainage, dust suppressant and resurfacing. Our goal is to have routine maintenance on each gravel road in our inventory.

Weather is the largest factor and challenge for gravel road maintenance. We are continuously adjusting to conditions and at times must react to major weather events. This makes it challenging to hold a consistent maintenance cycle. If your road needs maintenance, please contact us to see when it can be scheduled. We will then assess the condition and prioritize.

Route Grading

Each gravel road within our inventory will be maintained as needed. These roads will be broken into three routes which represent the Commissioners districts. Graders will perform berming and ditching operations during the spring and early summer months to utilize moisture for compaction on as many of the gravel roads as possible. Materials are often displaced from the surface of the road due to weather, traffic or snow plowing. It is imperative this material be retrieved from the ditches for proper drainage, shade and elevation of the road surface.

Residents should be advised that during ditching operations, usable material located within the ditches will be relocated back onto the roadway. This retrieved material will then be used to repair the proper profile of the road. While ditching the surface of the roadway may seem rough and loose until the material is compacted by traffic, this is a necessary step in improving the overall quality and structure of the roadway.

Once moisture is lost, we will then focus on surface maintenance.

Graders **will not** deviate from their route cycles, unless there is a safety concern or emergency. By enforcing this, we feel we can uphold a level of service throughout the county. Graders will not be redirected from their routes for service requests.

Drainage

Drainage operations on gravel roads will focus on regrading ditches that have been damaged by winter operations, cleaning out clogged culverts, as well as installing rip rap and catch basins to slow water and silt mitigation.

Drainage will be prioritized by safety concerns, erosion/stormwater concerns, structural integrity of the roadway and classification. Crews will maintain and install culverts, as needed, mitigating and repairing erosion and stormwater issues.

(PLEASE **REMEMBER** driveway culverts are the responsibility of the homeowner. Keeping your driveway culvert clean can help maintain and preserve the overall condition of the road system.)

Dust Suppressant

Dust Suppressant operations will generally begin in May, depending on the weather. A dust suppressant will be applied to gravel roads that have residents with qualifying health conditions.

The highway department **will not** apply dust suppressant unless directed to do so by the Commissioner within the district where the request is being made.

The highway department maintains a list as to the locations of where dust suppressants have been applied. If you did not have dust suppressants applied in 2023, it will not be applied in 2024 unless we are directed to do so by the designated Commissioner.

Resurfacing

Throughout the year, weather permitting, road base will be applied to the roads for maintenance and/or improvement purposes. Roads that would qualify for this are:

- roads that have been identified as high traffic by various data resources.
- roads that have been approved by the Board of Commissioners to be improved.
- roads that, in their current conditional rating, have been deemed as having high maintenance cost records.

This year, as it has been done in previous years, gravel will be added to a variety of road sections for maintenance needs. We plan to resurface the following gravel roads and/or chip seal the roads that have lost total road base integrity. Turning them into, or back into, a bituminous hard base road.

Commissioner District 1:

Marley Road: From S.R. 67 to Romona.

Commissioner District 2:

Stogsdill Road: From S.R. 43 to Monroe County Line.

Commissioner District 3:

Oberholtzer Road: From Smithville Road to Orman Road.

Otterbein Church Road: From County Line Road to Smithville Road.

THE ROADS LISTED ABOVE will be surfaced with cold mix. Cold mix is a bitumen emulsion, a form of aggregate, water and binder. This product is known as "cold mix" because it does not need heat for the application process, unlike HMA asphalt. A Pugmill, also referred to as a cold central plant, is used to process the material.

This year we will process the material at the Rogers Oard Road Quarry. Processing the material at the quarry removes the jobsite material step, which allows us to haul material directly to the paver. This is a substantial cost savings change to the county.

We feel it is important to evaluate our roads, and place gravel where it is most beneficial. If a roadway is acceptable for a mile and has a section in the middle that is unacceptable, we are going to put our efforts into the unacceptable section of the road. This will alleviate problematic areas by using this strategy, and in doing so, the conditions of our gravel roads will steadily improve.

II. HARD SURFACE MAINTENANCE

For hard surface, roads spot paving, pothole repair, shouldering, overlays, and other repairs, will typically occur April through October. Our goal is to have routine maintenance on every hard surface road in our inventory. Road segments presenting safety hazards will take priority. The highway department currently possesses three high pressure injection hole patchers, as well as two hot boxes. These units will rotate between all three Commissioner districts, staying in one district for one week before moving on to the next. This will allow us to complete full road segments and increase productivity. Again, weather is a dependent factor in all projects planned by the highway department. If your hard surface road is in need of maintenance, please contact us directly. We will assess the condition and prioritize.

ASPHALT, COLD MIX AND CHIP/SEAL PROJECTS ARE DONE ONCE THE COMMISSIONERS OF OWEN COUNTY HAVE APPROVED THE PROJECTS.

APPROVED PROJECTS FOR 2024

MAINTENANCE OVERLAY: To include the following roads, based on budgetary constraints.

Chip/Seal:

Commissioner District 1:

McFarren Road: From Fidler Road to Childers Road.

Smith Road: From Jones Road to Childers Road.

Commissioner District 2:

Shepherd Patrick Road: From Texas Pike Road to Rattlesnake Road.

Commissioner District 3:

Stockton Road: From Beech Church Road to Dalton Road.

Bethsedia Road: From S.R. 157 to SR 157.

NOTE: UP TO 12 miles of milling and/or cold mix overlays that were completed in the years 2022 and 2023, as well as CCMG roads completed in 2018.

Hot Mix (HMA):

Commissioner District 2:

Farmers Road (carry over from 2023)

Freeman Road. Funded by The American Rescue Plan (ARPA)

Repairs: Spot Pave:

Commissioner District 1:

Cunot Cataract Road from S.R. 42 to the town of Cataract.

Commissioner District 2:

Pea Ridge Road from Pottersville Road to Timber Ridge Road.

Commissioner District 3:

Egenolf Road from Wall Road to Jackson Road.

Stockton Road from Steubenville Road to Lick Creek Road.

FULL DEPTH RECLAMATION

Full Depth Reclamation is relatively new to Owen County. A pilot program was started in 2020 with great success. Full Depth Reclamation was used heavily in 2023 and will be used again in 2024 in the same manner. Full Depth Reclamation will be done when a roadways structural integrity has collapsed, and repair is not an option. The reclamation can be used on both hard surfaces and gravel roads. The practice is cost effective and prepares a road base for the future resurface, whether it be chip/seal, cold mix or hot mix. The Superintendent will propose Full Depth Reclamation Projects to the Board of Commissioners a calendar year in advance.

III. BRIDGE MAINTENANCE

Owen County has a total of 113 bridges within our road system inventory with the oldest bridge being built in 1889 and the newest completed in 2024. The bridges must stay in compliance with the National Bridge Inventory. The Indiana Department of Transportation oversees the inspection program for county bridges by using a contracted bridge inspection consulting agency. Owen County currently uses United Consulting of Indianapolis, Indiana as their consulting firm. The bridges are inspected bi-annually. Once the bridges have been inspected, INDOT uses the data report to prepare a maintenance program, in which Owen County adheres to and is financially responsible for.

IV. WINTER MAINTENANCE

PLOWING/ICE CONTROL

In 2019 drastic improvements were made to snow removal operations. These improvements have been implemented to enhance the speed and efficiency of our snow removal efforts. We feel confident that we can not only uphold but also improve these service levels for the service year of 2024.

- Pretreat will be applied when weather forecast is for freezing rain, sleet, and/or snow. Pretreating will occur in problem areas that have been determined by the Highway Superintendent, Owen County Commissioners, Owen County EMS, Owen County Sheriff's Department, fire departments, Owen County Emergency Management, as well as the two school districts in the county. If precipitation prior to freezing rain occurs as heavy rain, the pretreatment will be washed away from the roadway.
- In and out snowplow service clearing ALL county-maintained roads within 24 hours of the snow fall stopping.
- Application of Anti-Skid material to the roadways as needed.
- Plan each individual storm event to provide the best service possible with the current resources. Every storm is different so the response to each storm may differ.
- Route operators have the responsibility to deal with on-the-spot conditions.
- The county has been divided into four sections for the purpose of winter weather events.
- **NOTE:** Salt: Once temperatures have fallen below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, road salt becomes nearly ineffective. For this reason, the Highway Department uses a salt and sand mixture that provides traction until the temperature rises and the melt begins.

Snow Plowing is an essential and necessary service to provide to our citizens and we are committed to giving the highest level of service possible with our available resources. Below are a few tips that you can follow to make your winter travels as safe as possible.

- Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained for winter travel. Ensuring that you have good wiper blades, washer fluids and proper tires for the conditions you will be traveling in.
- Keep a distance of roughly 200 feet when following a plow truck so they can utilize the spreaders on the back of the truck properly. This will also help alleviate windshield accidents.
- Refrain from passing snowplows.
- Prepare for the conditions you may be driving in. Even though plows are operating there will be areas of snow and ice that present hazards. **Expect the unexpected.**
- For the safety of all residents please refrain from sledding and playing in the roadways.
- Refrain from plowing snow from private property into the county roadway. If you must do this, you should ensure that there are no ridges or snow left on the travel surface. You are then assuming all responsibility of any/all damage claims if you plow over a county right of way.

V. RIGHT OF WAY, SIGNAGE AND TRAFFIC CONTROL

Prior to road improvement projects, it is often necessary to identify the public right of way so that the extent of the right of way can be utilized, if necessary, to construct a proper roadway with drainage. This is a time-consuming process and often needs to happen months if not years in advance of a project. Crews will place markers, if need be, to designate the right of way once found. We may ask residents to locate and mark their property lines so that everyone knows where the right of way and private property boundary is in lieu of a dispute. Crews will place or replace traffic control devices, regulatory signage and informational signage within the right of way.

VI. OTHER PROJECTS

We are always looking for resources that can be utilized to aid our road system. Future Improvement Projects are in the planning and engineering phases, in preparation for the year 2024.

2024 Commissioner approved: Community Crossing Road (CCMG) Road Resurface requests.

Commission District 1:

Jones Road: From Quincy Road to Culross Road.

Truesdel Road: From Stone Mountain Road to Jones Road.

Commissioner District 2:

Pottersville Road: From Freeman Road to Stultz Road.

Franklin Street (Freedom): From S.R. 67 to Limestone Street.

Methodist Church Street (Freedom): From S.R. 67 to Indiana Southern Railroad.

Commissioner District 3:

Splinter Ridge Road: From Patricksburg Road to Stutz Road.

Pleasant Hill Road: From Splinter Ridge Road to Owen County Bridge 101.

2024 Commissioner Approved: American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Road Resurface requests.

Commissioner District 2:

Freeman Road: From Veteran's Bridge to S.R. 43.

EMERGENCY LOGISTICS

During emergency situations, we will provide support when requested by the Owen County Sheriff's Department, Health Department, Owen County Emergency Medical Service and Office of Emergency Management. This support will include equipment and personnel.

Contact Information – We value your input.

Owen County Highway Department Office

812-829-3335

Monday – Friday

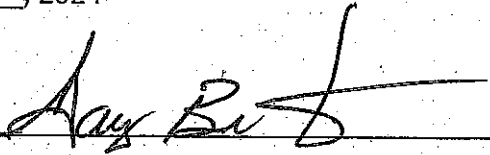
8:00am-3:30pm


Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OCINHighwayDept>

You may also access information by going to: <https://www.owencounty.in.gov/highway>.

Approved by Owen County Board of Commissioners

DATE: February 7, 2024

Gary Burton, President 

Bob Curry, Vice President 

Joel Lowe, Commissioner 

ATTESTED TO:

Sheila Reeves, Auditor 

AUTHORED 2024

BY GREG MELTON

OWEN COUNTY HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT