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OWEN COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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Owen County Highway Department Annual Road Maintenance and Improvement Plan

Accepted 2021

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

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 roadway system consisting of approximately 632 miles of roadway.

Our primary emphasis in the 2021 Road Maintenance and Improvement Plan will be our asset management plan. We have established maintenance program areas for hard surface and gravel roads. These programs/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 may 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 for the county. All our systems put in place are very dependent on the weather. Being reactionary has been proven to not be

efficient, therefor, getting back to normal 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. Recently, due to the Corona Virus Pandemic we have relied heavily on social media. Within our community we feel by using social media it has allowed for constructive dialog which strengthens 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 a work order, callback or a visit from one of our team members. Work orders are then analyzed to identify trends which will 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, any issue 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 safety, 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, Ditching, 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 to 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 misplaced from the surface of the road from weather, traffic or snow plowing. It is imperative this material is retrieved from the ditches for proper drainage, shape 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 regain 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 that we can uphold a level of service that encompasses equality in 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 stormwater issues.

Please remember driveway culverts are the responsibility of the homeowner and keeping your driveway culvert clean can help maintain and preserve the over all condition of the road system.

Dust Suppressant

Dust Suppressant operations will generally begin in May depending on the weather. A dust suppressant material 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.

We maintain a list as to the locations of where dust suppressants have been applied. If you did not have dust suppressant applied in 2020, it will not be applied in 2021 unless directed to do so by the designated Commissioner.

Resurfacing

Throughout the year, weather permitting, road base will be applied to roads for maintenance and or improvement purposes. Roads that would qualify for this are roads that have been identified as high traffic, that have been approved to be improved or roads that in their current conditional rating have been deemed as a having a high maintenance cost record.

This year, gravel will be added to a variety of road sections for maintenance needs as it has been done in previous years. We plan to resurface the following gravel roads turning them into a bituminous hard base road.

Commissioner District 1:

- Childers Road: From Limestone Creek Road to Smith Road
- Locust Lake Road: From Bush Road to South Cataract Road

Commissioner District 2:

- West Fall Creek Road: From Rocky Hill Road to Texas Pike

Commissioner District 3:

- Bethsedia Road: From State Road 157 to State Road 157

The roads listed above will be resurfaced this year with millings. Millings are recycled asphalt it is also referred to as RAP. We will use a Pugmill also referred to as cold central plant in order to process material at the highway garage.

We feel it is important to evaluate our roads and place the gravel where it will be 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 roadway to improve the overall condition of the road. This will alleviate problematic areas allowing the conditions of our gravel roads to steadily improve.

II. Hard Surface Maintenance

For hard surface roads spot paving, pothole repair, shouldering overlays and other repairs 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. These units will rotate between all three Commissioner Districts, staying in a district for one week before moving to the next. This will allow us to complete full roadway segments and increase productivity. Again, weather is a dependent factor in all projects planned by the Highway Department. If your hard surface road needs maintenance please contact us directly, we will assess the condition and prioritize.

Asphalt, Cold Mix and Chip and Seal projects are only done once the Commissioners of Owen County has approved the project.

Approved projects for 2021

Maintenance Overlay:

Chip and Seal:

- *South Cataract Road* from the intersection of Cunot Cataract Road to US 231.

Hot Mix:

- *Pearl Street*, Freedom IN
- *Jefferson Street*, Freedom IN

Repairs: Spot pave:

- *Rattlesnake Road* from State Road 46 to Clark Road
- *Dillman Road* from Country Club Road approximately 1,000' to small subdivision entrance.
- *Beech Church Road* from State Road 157 to Denmark Road
- *Cunot Cataract Road* from State Road 42 to the town of Cataract.
- *Franklin Road* from the County Line to Bakers School Road.

Drainage

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 stormwater issues.

Please remember driveway culverts are the responsibility of the homeowner and keeping your driveway culvert clean can help maintain and preserve the over all condition of the road system.

Full Depth Reclamation

Full depth reclamation is new to Owen County. This will be done when a roadways structural integrity has collapsed, and repair is not an option. This reclamation can be used on hard surface roads as well as gravel roads. The practice is cost effective and prepares a road base for future resurface whether it be Chip and Seal, Asphalt or Cold Mix. The Superintendent will propose to the incoming Commissioners a one-mile section in Commissioner Districts 2 and 3 for a full depth reclamation project. A full mile full depth reclamation project was completed in District 1 in 2020. Its performance is currently being monitored weekly. Thus, full depth reclamation projects in Districts 2 and 3 will allow us to monitor this type of project in different topographies in the county.

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 newest completed in 2020. The bridges must stay in compliance with the National Bridge Inventory. The Indiana Department of Transportation oversees the inspection program for 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

Since 2019 drastic improvements have been made to the 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 2021.

- 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 response to each storm may differ.
- Route operators have the responsibility to deal with on the spot conditions.
- The county has been divided in four sections for the purpose of winter weather events.

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 500 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 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 Maintenance, Signage, Traffic Control and Vegetation

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.

Although vegetation control along the county roadway is the responsibility of the property owner per ordinance the Owen County Highway Department operates two mow-trims and two rotary mowers throughout the county, year-round, weather permitting.

VI. Other Projects

Grant Applications

We are always looking at great sources that can be utilized to aid our road system. Future improvement projects are in the planning and engineering phases in preparation for the year 2021.

2021 Commissioner Approved: Community Crossing Road Resurface Request

- Steubenville Road: From Freedom Arney Road to Hauser Road
- Culross Road: From State Road 67 to Jones Road
- Walden Road: From Flatwoods Road to Hardscrabble Road
- Pleasant Bethel Road: From Freedom Arney Road to Coal City Arney Road.

Emergency Logistics

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

Contact Information:
We value your input

Highway Department Office:
812-829-3335
Mon- Fri
8am-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*

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