

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROPOSED ROAD MILLAGE (updated 8-15-18)

The deteriorating condition of local roads is readily apparent to every resident and many who travel through our community. The State funding mechanisms for maintenance, repair, and replacement of local roads is inadequate. Simply put, the local roads continue to get worse and the cumulative cost to remedy the conditions increases. Failing to maintain and/or improve the condition of the roads will negatively impact property values, public safety, and the quality of life in our community.

The purpose of Linden's Road Improvement Plan is to preserve and maintain safe neighborhoods in an effort to sustain the quality of life Linden residents expect and is part of a long-term solution aimed at the systematic maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of City roads. Stabilizing Linden's financial condition and dedicating funding for road improvements will help all City functions and assist in maintaining the expected quality of service. In addition to millage dollars, the Road Plan will be supplemented by Act 51 funds, general fund contributions, Special Assessment contributions, and grant funds. Once funding is secured, the Plan can be implemented, and the City can then return its focus to the long-range planning necessary to ensure the expected quality of life.

Where is all the tax money going that the City already gets to maintain the roads?

Currently, the only funds the City receives for road maintenance comes from the State as a pass through of the gas tax (Act 51). Linden receives approximately \$19,500 per mile of Major Road, and \$8,000 per mile of Local Road, per year. These funds are barely enough to cover general maintenance such as snowplowing, salting, pothole patching, crack sealing, wages, insurance, equipment maintenance, fuel, etc. . . .

Keep in mind that not all of the funds we receive from the State can be spent directly on road maintenance due to administrative fees and payments required for previously financed projects.

Additionally, while the City collects tax dollars for the City, Schools, County, and State, it then distributes the money to the appropriate entities. The City does not, and cannot, use the other taxing jurisdictions' money to fund the City budget. For example, your tax bill includes millages for Mott Community College, Animal Control, MSU Extension Program, Bishop Airport, the Genesee District Library, and MTA to name a few.

What is the difference between a Major Road and a Local Road, and who makes the determination on the classification?

A Major Road, as defined by the State, is one that provides an extension to a State Route or a County Primary Road to facilitate through traffic; one that provides an integral network to service traffic demands created by industrial, commercial, educational or other traffic generating centers; roads that provide circulation in and around the central business district; roads that are designated truck routes; OR roads that collect traffic from an area served by an extensive network of local roads. All other public roads within the City are classified as a Local Road.

Major Roads must meet certain design criteria and are recommended for designation by the City, but they must be approved by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

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What is the average life of a road?

A typical road constructed of asphalt has an average life of 20 years, often with some level of restorative work performed at about 12 years. The vast majority of our roads, particularly local roads, were constructed more than 20 years ago.

Why is asphalt used for roads instead of concrete?

The initial cost of asphalt has traditionally been more affordable than concrete. The City is committed to watching the costs of these products and will respond by using the paving method that we feel is the best choice for our roads considering available funding resources.

Why are some roads repaved when they are in good condition while others in worse condition are not?

The roads that are in worse condition typically require total reconstruction, which will cost upwards of four times as much as a mill and resurfacing project. This being said, often times roads that aren't in the worst condition receive rehabilitative work to lengthen the life of the that road.

What is the difference between reconstruction and milling and resurfacing?

When a road undergoes a reconstruction, it refers to the removal and replacement of the gravel base and asphalt pavement. This becomes necessary when the pavement reaches a level of deterioration that does not allow the pavement structure to be rehabilitated. A milling and resurfacing is a rehabilitation method whereby the top layer of pavement is ground off and a new pavement surface is applied.

Are there any grant funds available to improve our roads?

There are no grant funds available for Local Roads. There are some grants available for Major Roads, but not enough to satisfy all of the needed improvements. The grants that are received typically require a 20% match from the City. For example, the City is taking advantage of a grant for the rehabilitation of Bridge St. this year.

Why is a road millage being proposed?

A road millage is being proposed because a majority of the City's roads are in need of some level of improvement, and the current State funding resources for roads are grossly inadequate to address these needs. Revenues from property taxes and State revenue sharing have declined. Even with cuts to the budget and changes to the way we do business, we cannot maintain and repair the roads as necessary without restoring some of the revenue we have lost. As time goes on the roads will continue to deteriorate and will become even more costly to repair.

How much could a millage cost?

Each mill (\$1 per \$1,000 of taxable property value) would raise just over \$100,000. If a millage is 5 mills, that would mean additional revenue of over \$500,000 per year. For example, if a home is valued at \$150,000, with a taxable value of \$75,000, the millage would cost \$375 per year for 10 years, or very little over a \$1 a day. Every spring a notice regarding the taxable value of each property is mailed out and can be used to calculate your individual cost. The dollars collected from the millage can only be used towards repaving existing roads. No dollars will be used to pave gravel roads.

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What happens if the millage proposal fails?

The City's Road Improvement Plan is contingent upon passage of the millage proposal. If the road millage fails, the Road Improvement will not go forward. City Council could consider special assessments on properties abutting the roads chosen for improvement on an annual basis or if petitioned by property owners. An SAD is a special financing district set up to fund the capital costs of a public improvement that provides special benefits to property owners in a subdivision or a defined neighborhood. The legal theory behind SAD's is that the owners' share of the cost assessed against their property will be offset by a reasonably proportionate increase in the value of the property resulting from the improvement. The City of Linden's SAD Procedures identify the share the City as well as residents would pay to fund road improvements. The cost of the improvement for residents would be spread only among the property owners along the improved roads, based on feet of road frontage.

Overall, I think the City roads are in good condition, why is it felt that they need to be redone?

The recent PASER rating of the roads, the method of which is recognized as acceptable by the Michigan Department of Transportation, indicates that the majority of our roads are rated at or below a 5 on a 10 scale, which is indicative of the need for restoration or reconstruction.

How will the City determine which roads will be improved?

In 2015, the City implemented a PASER program to rate the quality of the road system. Over time, this will help the City Administration determine the rate of deterioration of the roads, enable the City to target improvements at optimum times, and determine which roads should be worked on first, second, etc . . . based upon funding availability. Currently, the PASER ratings are utilized by the City determine the level of improvements needed. This rating, along with other factors such as traffic volumes and patterns, infrastructure needs, accident history, available grant funding (for Major Roads), and frequency of maintenance needs, are utilized to determine which roads will be improved in a given year. However, no revenues from the current millage proposal would be used for the paving of gravel roads, which are not rated through the PASER program.

My road is fairly new; why should I vote for the millage?

Although your road is currently in good condition, eventually it will need to be repaired. We all drive on roads other than the one that is in front of our property, so it is important that these roads are maintained. Roads in poor condition can contribute to a higher rate of wear and tear on your vehicle leading to higher repair/maintenance costs. Additionally, good roads contribute to the quality of life in the City and help maintain property values.

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How can I be guaranteed that this money won't be used for anything but road improvements?

The ballot language clearly establishes what the funds can be used for, such for the purposes of rehabilitating, resurfacing, and restoring public roads.

Road Millage Ballot Proposal

Shall the City of Linden levy a new millage of 5.0 mills (\$5.00 per \$1,000 of taxable value) for a 10-year term (2019 through 2028 inclusive), for purposes of improving, replacing, resurfacing and reconstructing roads in the City, including drainage improvements and curbs and gutters, together with necessary rights-of-way, appurtenances and attachments, pursuant to the Road Improvement Plan that is available for inspection at Linden City Hall? It is estimated that the levy will generate \$520,000 in the first year.

YES

NO

Will any of this money be used for routine maintenance?

Funds raised through the road millage will not be used for routine maintenance, but only for improving, replacing, resurfacing, and reconstructing roads. However, the City's Road Improvement Plan provides for additional road maintenance over the next ten years to help preserve our road infrastructure. This additional maintenance will be funded through general fund contributions as well as ACT 51 funds received through the State motor fuel (gas) tax. All millage funds collected will be spent directly on road improvement projects as described in the plan, and not on routine maintenance, such as crack sealing, pothole patching, or winter clearing.

I don't have water or sewer in my road, is new infrastructure included in this millage?

No, new infrastructure is not included in this millage. However, it is the City's practice to have all underground infrastructure in good condition prior to repairing a road. If water and/or sanitary sewer are not in good condition, then the City will assess the condition of utilities prior to any road improvement being done.