

# Transportation Department

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August 1, 2010

Dear County Subdivision Paving Listserv Member,

As you are aware, over the past year, the county has been working hard to develop a program to address the deterioration of our paved roads in unincorporated county subdivisions. I am sending you this letter because you have expressed interest in our efforts to address this problem, and I want to make sure you are aware of recent developments.

At this time, we are proposing the creation of a local improvement district (LID) that would repave and chip seal coat every public paved road in unincorporated county subdivisions. However, the Board of County Commissioners will not create such a LID without first seeing majority support from affected property owners. A ballot asking whether or not you support the proposal will be mailed on Aug. 3 to every potentially affected property owner and the return ballot must be postmarked by August 17, 2010.

This is a difficult issue, and many of you have shared your ideas, opinions, thoughts and perspectives on how we should address this problem. A work group of interested residents was formed 10 months ago to begin addressing these issues, and they provided very helpful insight and suggestions. Since then, I have received hundreds of emails and phone calls expressing both concern and support, attended many homeowner and neighborhood association meetings, and attempted to respond to every question. I have truly appreciated all your input and ideas. The feedback has been very helpful to understanding the magnitude of the problem, how people feel about different solutions and the decision on whether, and how, to move forward in addressing the problem.

I would also like to acknowledge the high level of frustration of many subdivision property owners with the historic policies of the county regarding the rehabilitation of these roads and how they have been communicated.

However, whether you agree or disagree with these past policies, we cannot go back in time and change them. I feel strongly we have a problem that needs solving now. Further delay will only make road conditions worse, their maintenance more difficult and costly, the ultimate solution more expensive, and increase the frustration many of you have expressed about the poor quality of your roads. I hope that, no matter your opinion of past policies, you evaluate whether the proposal we are putting forward fairly addresses the problem of rehabilitation of subdivision roads.

Throughout this process we have received several clear messages that we have tried to incorporate into our proposal.

## **1. There should be a vote by those who are most affected.**

Response: The commissioners will not create an LID without first seeing majority support from affected property owners. All potentially affected property owners will receive a ballot in the mail asking if they support or oppose creation of an LID to address this problem. It is important that you make your voice heard and return your ballot postmarked by the Aug. 17 deadline, as

the commissioners will base their decision on the majority vote of those property owners who send their ballots in by the deadline.

## **2. The proposal must be equitable.**

Response: Several aspects of equity have been raised.

- All roads should receive the same improvements.

The proposed LID provides the same improvements to every road in the proposed district. All roads will be repaved and chip sealed over the 15-year period.

- The general public uses some of these roads, and the county should therefore participate in a meaningful way in addressing this problem.

We have identified three ways in which the county can help reduce the total cost of the program.

If an LID is supported, the county would:

- Take on responsibility for rehabilitation of the collector roads in unincorporated county subdivisions that provide access to major regional destinations, such as schools and churches, and provide key connections that are used by more people than just subdivision residents.

- Provide upfront funding to reduce future costs by loaning money from reserve accounts to the improvement district at a low (3%) interest rate.

- Utilize county personnel and equipment for improvements that can be done more cost effectively than by outside contractors.

## **3. The proposal must be affordable.**

Response: One initial concept discussed was to repave every road over a five year period, at a cost of more than \$400 per property. The feedback we received was that this was too much for many people, and that we should strive to get the cost below \$200 per property per year. The proposal we have developed reduces the annual cost per property to \$130 per year by extending the time frame of the LID from five years to 15 years, and more strategically scheduling the timing and type of improvements.

## **4. The proposal must be cost effective.**

Response: The proposal allows for the most cost effective improvement to be implemented at the right time. We would not be treating a road until it is necessary. The initial phase of the proposed program would be to resurface the poor roads, followed by chip seal coating the roads that are currently in fair and good condition, thus extending their life by 5-7 years. In the second phase, those roads that were initially resurfaced, would receive a chip seal coat, and those roads that were chip sealed would be resurfaced.

## **4. The proposal should be long term:**

Response: The proposal is not a permanent solution; however, it will address the subdivision road rehabilitation needs for the next 15-20 years.

**5. The program needs to start quickly:**

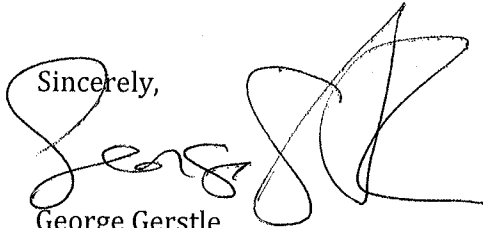
Response: The commissioners have agreed to loan \$3.5 million at a low interest rate to kick-start the effort and address the worst roads quickly.

I recognize that these are difficult times for many people, which makes it important that we work together to address this growing problem now, before it gets worse and more expensive. I believe the proposal you are being asked to consider responds to many of the concerns we have heard, and is fair, affordable, and cost effective.

Below is a summary of the proposal we are asking property owners to vote on.

I would like to thank you again for your thoughtful participation in this effort. No matter the outcome, we will continue to do everything we can to use the resources you entrust to us to operate the county transportation system in the most sustainable, cost effective, safe and efficient way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Gerstle". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping tail.

George Gerstle  
Transportation Director

## **Subdivision Road Paving Local Improvement District Proposal Summary**

**Summary:** The county is considering creating a local improvement district that would repave and chip seal coat each public paved road in unincorporated county subdivisions at a cost per property of \$130 per year for fifteen years.

**What benefit would each property owner receive?** Each paved public road in an unincorporated county subdivision would be repaved and chip sealed over a 15-year period.

**How much would it cost?** The cost to each property in the LID would be \$130 per year for 15 years for a total cost of \$1,950.

**How would payment occur?** The cost of the LID would be reflected in property tax statements and be paid at the same time as property taxes. If a property owner wishes to pay the full cost up front, should they so chose.

**Who would be included?** Properties that use a public paved road in an unincorporated subdivision for any portion of their primary access route would be included in the LID since they would benefit from the improved road. Ballots are being sent to the same address listed on the property tax notice. One ballot may be submitted for each property in the LID. Owners of multiple properties within the LID are allowed to submit a vote for each affected property they own and will receive a separate ballot for each property.

**How many properties would be included in the LID?** Approximately 10,600 properties, with 10,200 individual property owners, are estimated to be included in the LID.

**How would Boulder County contribute?** The county would participate in this effort in three ways, all of which will reduce the total cost of the program. The county would:

- Take on responsibility for rehabilitation of the collector roads in unincorporated county subdivisions that provide access to schools and churches, and provide key connections that are used by more people than just subdivision residents.
- Provide upfront funding to reduce future costs by loaning money from reserve accounts to the improvement district at a low (3%) interest rate.
- Utilize county personnel and equipment for improvements that can be done more cost effectively than by outside contractors.

**What happens if the majority of property owners oppose creation of an LID?** If the majority of ballots returned oppose the creation of an LID for the reconstruction of these roads, current policies would remain in place.

- The county would continue to provide day-to-day maintenance services such as snow plowing and pothole patching as resources and pavement condition allow.
- Each subdivision will remain responsible for rehabilitating its own roads through creation of an individual local improvement district or some other payment structure. To create an LID, individual or groups of subdivisions would need to submit a petition signed by a majority of property owners requesting that the Board of County Commissioners create the LID. Once the LID is created, the commissioners would place on the ballot the question of financing the costs of the LID improvements. If a majority of property owners in the subdivision/s then vote to approve these costs, the commissioners could issue bonds to finance the improvements. Until an LID is created, subdivision roads will continue to deteriorate.