



Pavement Preservation

May 2011 – The American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA) supports the use of sound concrete pavement preservation activities. Preservation has become an increasingly important strategy; however, ACPA also advocates addressing the definition of pavement preservation to provide better clarity for agencies and legislators.

Situation Analysis

- The term “pavement preservation” has emerged as an engineering term for minor rehabilitation and preventive maintenance. The current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) definition of what constitutes pavement preservation is narrow in scope, including only techniques that do not add structural capacity (thickness) to a pavement.
- Current draft transportation legislation includes language directing certain funding for the purpose of preserving the nation’s transportation system. The legislator’s view is to preserve the current system without adding additional traffic capacity (lanes). As such, the scope of pavement preservation in the views of legislators and other policymakers may not align with that of agencies and engineers.
- This incongruity runs the risk of impacting how the purpose of future funding may be interpreted and used, and more specifically, may disallow technically- and economically-feasible strategies.

Improved Definitions

- ACPA believes a much broader concept of roadway preservation needs to be promoted to, and adopted by, legislators and other policymakers to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding about the purpose of any funding dedicated to preserving our highway network. *Roadway* preservation means ensuring that the roadway continues to serve its intended purpose, which is to carry traffic. Under this definition, activities that ensure the roadway is in good working order are allowable, but adding traffic capacity or additional lanes to the roadway would not qualify.
- In order to keep the system functioning as intended (preserving what we have), a mix of fixes need to be applied. In some cases, for severely damaged roadways, this involves reconstruction. In other cases, for less severely deteriorated roadways, it means major rehabilitation or concrete overlays. And, in still other instances, for pavements that are in need of minor rehabilitation or preventive maintenance, it involves pavement preservation activities.
- If a broadened definition is not adopted, agencies may be forced to use short-term fixes to address aging roadways, which could accelerate the degradation of infrastructure and may not provide the best option for using technology, or addressing economics, and/or sustainability.
- ACPA will continue to explore and communicate solutions—including regulatory and other policy changes—to ensure that concrete overlays, as well as other restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction strategies are presented fairly and objectively as roadway preservation strategies for agencies.

ACPA Staff Liaison
Leif Wathne, P.E. – 202.638.2272 | lwathne@acpa.org