

Repaving roads now will cut rebuilding costs later, city says

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Spending \$2.7 million now to repave 21 kilometres of city streets will save the city about \$15 million over the next decade, the city's engineering commissioner says.

It's the difference between repaving sections of streets now in mid-life, instead of waiting for them to fall apart in old age, Ed Kovacs told city council this week. The city has been working for three years to get a clear picture of the condition of its streets. Now, a computer program ranks the streets according to repair needs.

The city plans to resurface 70 sections of road based on the condition of the asphalt, not the age of the street, Kovacs said. Almost all of the money will come from provincial grants.

"This will give you the best bang for the buck," he said.

Mayor Doug Craig wondered why only one section of Queen Street West in Hespeler -- between Shepherd and Rooshill avenues -- is up for work.

Kovacs said Queen Street is scheduled to be rebuilt in 2009 between Hespeler Road to Shepherd Avenue and Winston Boulevard to Schoefield Street.

Coun. Linda Whetham wondered why the repaving plan included Mohawk Road, north of the Toyota plant. Kovacs said the rural road will get a less-expensive tar-and-chip treatment.

And Coun. Ben Tucci wondered whether the provincial grants free up money in the city's capital budget.

All they do is allow the city to get at a multi-million backlog of road work sooner, Kovacs said.

In all, Cambridge expects to receive \$3.3 million in road grants this year from the province. Council had budgeted \$1.7 million to rebuild Ballantyne Avenue and McKay Street this year, partly covered by \$979,000 in federal gas tax money. The city received a provincial grant for the full amount earlier this month.

Queen's Park also allocated \$1.6 million to Cambridge for road-and-bridge repairs in 2008.

Council approved taking the gas tax, most of the provincial roads grant, along with \$227,000 in local tax money left over from the Ballantyne-McKay project to pay for the \$2.7 million road-repaving plan.

The last \$500,000 from the Ballantyne-McKay project is to be held in reserve, for future projects.

The remaining \$125,000 from the provincial roads-and-bridges grant will pay for the design of the Queen Street project.

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