

Road Replacement Ballot

Questions and Answers

Why are we looking at replacing the road now?

Last July, the members, at a special meeting, voted to move up to \$596,000 from the Bridge Replacement Funds to the General Funds. The survey we took in March showed that 80% of our members said that roads are our most immediate infrastructure problem facing Raft Island. The Roads Committee has been studying the issue since this vote and presented a Phase I plan to the board that will help determine the cost of a road replacement plan, funding sources and the impact on dues.

What does "Road Replacement" mean?

The existing old pavement will be broken up and crushed stone added to give better support and drainage under the new asphalt. Roads will not be widened but the shoulders will receive new crushed stone.

Why can't we just add pavement on top of what we have?

Most Raft pavement was placed on native soil with minimal gravel base which shortens the life of pavement. In places the road bed drains poorly. That causes earlier cracking. Just adding more pavements on top is temporary and a poor investment.

Do we have a preliminary feel for Road Replacement cost?

In 2002 a civil engineer assessed the roads and estimated replacement costs. Continued wear and drainage changes have occurred. The Road Committee estimates \$1.4 to \$2.0 million covers the range of estimated cost.

Will USDA lend the money we need?

Like bridges, roadways are Community Facilities and can be financed by USDA Rural Development loans. USDA feels RIIA is well-managed and understands our project is worthy. On simple projects (like road rebuilding) they can also provide the short term construction loan. To other lenders, our big bridge loan is a disadvantage (USDA holds "1st mortgage" position.) That clears the way for USDA to make low interest loans to RIIA.

Will the speed bumps be replaced?

The roads committee and board will investigate replacing the existing "speed bumps" with "speed humps". "Speed humps" have evolved over the years from extensive research & testing and are gentler, yet can be effective at limiting speeds.

What Happens at the End of Phase 1?

At the end of Phase 1 the Board will have the project plan, cost estimates and financing options including the availability of a USDA loan. The recent survey made it clear the members do not want to pay for the replacement in a one or two year period. The Board will provide this information to the membership where they will have the final approval by 2/3 majority voting whether to continue with the project.

What About the Water Mains Replacements?

Board will coordinate road replacement timings with Washington Water's replacement of the mains. Washington Water is completing the last of 6 phases and is expected to finish up next year. Note: utilities are allowed to open pavement when necessary but they will be advised of the road replacement plans and on any future utility work will be required to restore the road bed and pavement properly.

How Much Will Dues Go Up?

The Board will have a better estimate of dues after Phase 1 and before they ask for the go-ahead vote. After USDA approves the loans and fixes the interest rate, and after the paving bids come in, we should have a clear estimate for the final dues, prior to the phase 2 vote.

Will All Roads Receive the Same Treatment?

It depends. Roads have different conditions (and even different ownership) depending on where they are on the island. The Board will endeavor to find the best solutions, will consult the full membership and will stay closely in touch with tradeoffs the island faces. Before we replace roads, membership will have a Yes/No vote on the plan the Board presents.