



COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE – NOVEMBER 2006

By the time you read this, the first part of our Lakeshore Road repaving (from the eastern edge of town to Normandy) should be completed. We've had a number of well-justified complaints regarding the execution of this work, and I'd like to apologize and assure you that this was a lesson learned.

The Town administration has many things to accomplish at the moment, so the contractor's offer of a turnkey repaving job, including all planning and communication, seemed like a good idea. While the job was underway, we encountered a number of communication problems, exacerbated by scheduling delays due to bad weather.

Any maintenance of a major thoroughfare creates inconveniences, but we will look for a better way of planning and communication the next time.

You may wonder why we've chosen the wide concrete curb with a curved edge and an asphalt pathway, rather than a conventional curb and sidewalk. We've also chosen to repave the road using a new high-strength asphalt instead of excavating about three feet of roadbed and replacing it.

The decision was made after considering many factors.

Paving

- When the road was redone to a depth of 3-4 feet approximately 25 years ago, the work was supposed to provide a stable bed and a life in excess of 25 years. In practice, the new roadbed began shifting almost immediately and required repaving within 12 years. The soil in this area is soft, the water table is high and the drainage poor.
- At that time, the town decided to repave using high-strength compounds. The result lasted another 10 years, and was relatively inexpensive, so it was paid out of current budget, without borrowing.
- New types of high-strength asphalt are available. We are using one of the best, and expect the road to last at least another 10 years, perhaps more as we are improving the drainage along the pathway and the new broad cement curb will help stabilize the north side of the road.

Drainage

- The gravel strip beside the pathway was designed to carry water deep beneath the road, below the frost line. It worked properly for a number of years, then the surface became clogged with fine material, requiring constant maintenance.
- The gravel was often scattered by passing buses and cars, and so regular sweeping was necessary.
- During the merger with Montreal, gas supply lines were installed beneath the gravel and pathway. These gas pipes are fairly close to the surface, so installation of a conventional curb would require moving and re-burying them, and significant disturbance of the roadbed.
- We've chosen a wide, shallow curb that can be installed without extensive excavation. Drainage sewers at regular intervals are designed to take water down below the frost line.

Pathway

- The pathway has become uneven, and is regularly damaged by buses when they stop to pick up passengers.
- The original pathway was lowered in many places during the gas line installation, and is now little higher than the road.
- A conventional cement sidewalk would require excavation, affecting the gas lines and many of the trees beside the path.
- We have chosen to restore the path to its original surface condition and level. We expect the new drainage to both support the path and reduce frost heaving, increasing its life.

This year, we have completed the section in most urgent need of repair. This strategy allows us to avoid borrowing, and to assess how well the new drainage and improved path work. If all is satisfactory, we will extend the system westward.

Chuck Colomb
Councillor