

Dear Middle Islander,

We are pleased to announce that the Middle Island road work will be completed on time, within budget, by the end of this week, March 18th. The roads look fantastic!

However, as fine as the roads look, these are still gravel roads – much stronger and better sloped gravel roads to be sure, with a more consistent surface and fewer low spots collecting high tides and heavy rains, but still gravel roads. We believe the shape and drainage of the roads has been improved, but time will tell whether Barnhill has struck the right balance between getting water off the road to slow the development of potholes and avoiding erosion from runoff.



Ongoing maintenance poses some challenges. Blading the road with the small tractor blade is not terribly effective; in the past this approach has tended to bring up some of the larger stones in the gravel and also create a bit of washboarding without being able to remove the potholes effectively. Adding gravel to potholes and dragging the roads worked better, but is not the best pothole repair. Ideally, gravel roads are periodically bladed with a motor grader. Potholes may require periodic scarification of a damp road to the depth of any potholes using a motor grader followed by blading to maintain a crown – or in the case of our narrow roads, a side to side slope - and perhaps re-rolling the surface to reintegrate loose gravel and compact the road. And of course, the roads need to be treated with calcium chloride each spring.

CHIP SEAL

We have also looked into applying a Chip Seal surface to our new gravel roads. The advantages of Chip Seal include protection of the surface from erosion and the development of potholes, elimination of most dust, and creation of an attractive, finished surface without as much large, loose gravel. Maintenance would be substantially reduced, confined to possible patching from truck damage. Reapplication of a single coat may be necessary every 7-10 years. The unknowns are primarily the risk of substantial damage to the chip seal from truck traffic, particularly the possibility that trucks and articulated loaders turning their wheels while stopped on the pavement would strip the chip seal from the underlying roadbed. Since only one example has been found of Chip Seal used on gravel roads farther inland, the question remains on how well the chip seal will hold up with our sandy soil versus clay found farther inland.

The MIPOA board discussed the advantages of chip seal and decided, since application of the Chip Seal needs to be done in the summer, to re-visit this issue in a couple of months after living with our roads. One thought was to apply Chip Seal to a small section of Cape Creek road to Dogwood Ridge in September, when summer traffic is gone, to see how well it holds up before applying it to all roads.

CALCIUM CHLORIDE

Since Chip Seal will not be done immediately, a calcium chloride application will be done on all Middle Island roads to control dust and to help consolidate the gravel road material.

MIPOA Board of Directors