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### MSR President's Message

We live in a wonderful place—MSR has great schools nearby, beautiful recreation areas, and is located only a few minutes from Canyon Lake. Despite a pandemic, we've seen many neighbors helping each other.

As we close on 2020 and look forward to 2021, there is still much to be done in MSR. The previous Board, committees, and volunteers have made our neighborhood a well sought after place to live. People from all over the nation are moving to MSR. We've seen continuous, well controlled growth which has increased the value of our homes quite significantly. Going forward, the new Board, committees, and volunteers will aim to keep that momentum. Our three main goals are:

1. Preserve, protect and enhance the value of the community and its assets.
2. Enhance the lifestyle of the residents.
3. Provide for a harmonious atmosphere within the community.

Every community is better together as one, which is why we are calling on you, our neighbors to volunteer by selecting a committee to work on or run for one of the two Board positions that are opening up in March.

Our MSR events could not happen without the great work of volunteers. The 2020 Dumpster Day was successful with property owners experiencing joy in getting rid of those nagging items that were stuffed in different corners of their garages, attics, and bedrooms. Another great event was the Garage Sale. The turnout was higher than expected and it was a great to recycle items to others.

The Board will continue working hard in 2021. We will put

into motion the ideas pitched by residents at the annual meeting. These ideas include re-vamping our website as well as bringing covenants and ACC documents up to current needs including preventative measures against oak wilt and addressing drainage issues in the gated communities. 2021 will also be the year to address maintenance issues of roads, and painting the pool complex and fences.

We sincerely thank our outgoing Board members. You took on your duties with dedication, passion, and patience. It has been clear to everyone you love MSR by volunteering your time and doing what's right. As we look back over these last few months, the new Board knows our accomplishments would not have been possible without you at the helm. Although you all deserve a break, we still need you! Please continue sharing your wisdom and experience. Thank you from everyone at MSR.

In addition, thank you to DAMC, current board members, and property owners. The future is bright as we all continue to do our part in making MSR a great place to live!

## Dark Sky Lighting Committee

Mountain Springs Ranch was developed with Dark Sky lighting as a goal. Two key criteria are fixtures that do not shine out or up and light color of 3000K or less. The Kelvin Color Temperature for Light Fixtures 2000K-3000K, gives off a warm white/yellow glow. Check out [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org) for more details on protecting our beautiful night sky.

Existing homes built before 2017 with non-compliant fixtures are not required to update them. What is still a compliance requirement is to use 3000K or less light color. It is also expected that lights be utilized only as needed and not left on all night. The concern is overall light pollution and lights shining on other owners' property or in their windows, infringing on their ability to enjoy the dark sky.



It is recognized many homes have flood lights, and the Board, ACC and Dark Sky Lighting Committee understand the desire to have them. Many of these are non-compliant fixtures that shine outward. Repositioning them to aim downward is suggested. Motion activated lights should be set for being on five minutes or less. This will allow them to be active, but off, unless motion is detected. It is also encouraged that lights only be on when needed.

## Landscaping Committee

You may have noticed MSR recently changed landscaping maintenance companies to Terra Vista Landscaping. We put a bid out to numerous vendors and were able to reduce cost. In addition, they're also maintaining our irrigation systems. They will regularly audit the systems, optimize watering, and keep us compliant with annual restrictions. In the past, homeowners have volunteered their time to upkeep the Estates and the Ridge areas. Those areas are now included in the landscape contract. In January, we'll be trimming trees to get ready for spring. If you have concerns or questions about landscaping, irrigation, or lighting at the entrances or pool complex, please contact Dwayne Scates.

### MSR Board Communication

In addition to the NoReply@damctx.com E-Blasts you receive about community announcements, the same messages are posted on the MSR website and used to be posted on the bulletin boards by the mailboxes. As technology evolves and communication preferences change, the bulletin boards are being abandoned for official announcements but still serve the community as a place for local businesses to leave their contact information.

In addition, E-Blast messages are also posted on MSR NextDoor to reach a wider audience. **Please note that these messages are for information only. Comments will not be monitored and therefore, questions might remain unanswered.**



## Pool Committee

Things at the pool have quieted down substantially with the cooler weather. To take advantage of the break in swimming activity, we have minor and major maintenance projects in the works with the goal of completion no later than Spring Break. The pool complex will be closed for the month of January to complete pressure washing, repairs and painting of the pavilion, bathrooms and fence painting.



## Compliance Committee

In 2014, the MSR Board chartered a Compliance Committee, separate from the ACC, for the purpose of enforcing the [covenants and restrictions](#) that apply to existing, post-construction homes and property owners. While the Diamond Association Management (DAMC) regularly drives our neighborhood and notes potential covenant violations, the Board only wants DAMC to send a violation letter when one is truly warranted. To this end, the Compliance Committee has been doing a follow-up drive a few days later to verify the issues noted by DAMC. What we tend to see is at least half the issues have already been resolved. Doing this allows us to forego sending letters prematurely. For example, if Diamond notes an RV on your property during a week-day drive, we'd hate for you to get a violation letter when you had moved it by the weekend.

Additionally, the Compliance Committee exists to help neighbors peacefully deal with issues that might be causing discontent. These are the instances when one neighbor's continued failure (or perceived failure) to abide by a covenant is proving problematic for another resident. We'd like to stress that your first line of action is to talk to your neighbor in person. If your neighbor is violating a county ordinance, we'd also ask you contact the sheriff's office first.

For instances where these remedies are not possible or have been unfruitful, you should enlist the help of the Compliance Committee by contacting the Board or DAMC using the [Contact Us](#) page on the MSR website. Our process is outlined in the [Compliance Committee Charter](#). The wonderful reality is that the vast majority of MSR homeowners make every effort to cooperate with community standards, both written and implied. Our residents act as good neighbors through small acts of cooperation daily. We've all had that neighbor who graciously delivered an errant piece of mail, or we've been thankful when a passing motorist gave us extra breathing room as we walked along Comal Springs.

In addition, the Compliance Committee needs more volunteers. Duties include attending Zoom board meetings, following up on potential issues noted by DAMC, and meeting virtually with homeowners to help resolve issues (partnered with another committee member). If you're interested, please email the Board.

## Welcome Committee



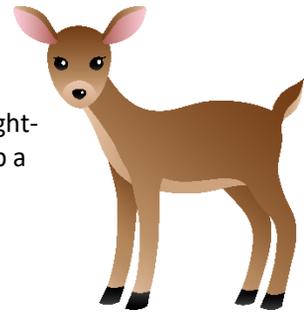
For 2020, the Welcome Committee visited 48 new neighbors—28 of these were resales and 20 were new construction. Due to COVID, many of the welcome bags were dropped off.

If you own a business and would like your business card to be part of our welcome packet, please let us know and we'll arrange to have it included. Be safe and have a Happy 2021!

## Dead Animal Removal

In the interest of protecting the health and safety of citizens in the county, the Road Department provides removal of deceased wild animals from the public right-of-way throughout the unincorporated area of Comal County. In order to pick up a dead animal, call 830-643-3763. They will need to know:

- An accurate location (including address, intersection or landmarks)
- Whether it is on the road, the right-of-way, or on private property
- Type of animal



In addition to dead animal removal from the public right-of-way, the Road Department also picks up animals that have died on private property, in some situations. Removal of deceased animal from private property is solely at the discretion of Comal County. The property owner must be present at the time of pick up in order to sign a release form.

## Trash/Recycle Services

With the rapid growth in Comal County, more and more companies provide trash and recycle services. The result is an increase in almost daily traffic of heavy trash trucks into our neighborhood. Having an exclusive agreement with only one Waste Company servicing MSR is not where this article is going. We all like to have options. What the Board is proposing is to have 2 or 3 preferred companies to reduce trash days to 2-3 per week instead of 5. Why?

1. The most important one is Safety. Right now, trash cans are out almost every day of the week and school children, walkers/joggers have to weave around them.
2. Road deterioration: Asphalt conditions in the gated communities are currently being evaluated by R&B engineering for repair (we have to maintain/pay for these roads ourselves). Heavy truck traffic is a contributing factor to asphalt deterioration so in the long run, fewer trucks will help save money.

We researched the various service providers cost and found they differ substantially in cost and service (see chart below).

Company	Headquarter Location	Trash Cost (quarterly)	Trash & Recycle Cost (quarterly)	Pick Up Day (s)	Notes
Best Waste	Locally owned	\$ 48.00	\$ 80.00	Thursdays	Recycle includes glass
Hill Country Waste	Locally owned	\$ 49.69	\$ 79.57	Mondays	Recycle includes glass
Tiger Sanitation	Locally owned	\$ 99.00	\$ 126.00	Fridays (trash) Wednesdays (recycle)	Recycle does NOT take glass
Waste Connections	Canada	\$ 45.00	N/A	Tuesdays	NO Recycle available in our area

We hope this helps in your decision-making process and makes MSR safer for pedestrians and vehicle traffic alike.

Love Thy Neighbor? Why don't you discuss with your neighbor to share the cost of the recycle service? Your trash can will be less full but your wallet will be fuller.

## Nature Preserve Committee

My wife and I never tire of walking the MSR Nature Preserve trails. We love we can “feel” the woods within a half mile from our doorstep and see something new in the preserve no matter how many times we travel through it. Sometimes though, we want a change of scenery without having to go too far.

A bit more than a year ago, I retired from a 37+ year career at Texas Parks & Wildlife. Seven of those years were spent as park manager at Guadalupe River State Park. For those of you who want to wander through nature’s beauty but don’t want to travel too far from home, Guadalupe River State Park is just a 30-minute drive from MSR. The main entrance to the park, off Hwy. 46, provides easy access to a beautiful expanse of the Guadalupe River in addition to several nice trails of varying lengths.

Our favorite trails are on the much less visited north side of the river, known as the park’s Bauer Unit. This parcel has been open to public access for less than 10 years and it was my great pleasure to have plotted, walked, and flagged what would become the majority of the Bauer Unit’s trails. The Bauer Unit is less popular because it is less known and harder to get to (find it by Google mapping “Bauer Unit Acker Road”). Don’t be daunted by the “Private Property” signs as you turn off of Spring Branch Road (the road is public but the land on either side is private). Also, be aware that the gates on Acker Road are kept closed for ranging cattle control (be sure to close them behind you) and accessing Acker Road from Hwy. 281 involves a low water crossing at Curry Creek (don’t go after heavy rains when creeks are up). Finally, note that many of the Bauer Unit’s trails are a bit more primitive and rugged, and there are no restrooms. For us, the draw of uncrowded trails – we’ve seldom seen more than 6 to 8 cars in the parking lot at one time on weekdays – and more interesting and varied flora, geography and remnants of the historic Bauer family homestead makes this side of the park a hidden gem that draws us back time and time again. The Hofheinz Trail, adding a brief walk to the terminus of the Bauer trail at a beautiful spot on the river, is my favorite, followed closely by the Bamberger and Curry Creek Overlook trails. You can walk a Hofheinz/Bauer trail loop one day and a Bamberger/Curry Creek Overlook loop another day, covering the approximately 3 miles of each loop easily enough to drive back to civilization and restrooms.

**Before going:** Check the park website for park alerts. If it has rained recently, call the park to check on trail conditions (to minimize erosion trails are often closed for a time after 1” of more of rain).

As Robert Frost said in one of my favorite nature strolling pieces:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference

Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig  
Mountain Springs Ranch Property Owner

## Meet Your Board of Directors

### President

Ted Zimmerhanzel has lived in MSR for 5 years with his wife Tiffani, and their children Mason, Drew and Harper. Originally from San Antonio, they chose to raise their family in the beautiful Texas Hill Country.

Ted worked in construction his entire career, which allowed him to see much of the beautiful country. His wife is an elementary school teacher. Their two boys play baseball year round and their daughter is finding her path, more on the theatrical side of things. She is only four years old, but is very vibrant and dramatic!

In 2020, Ted was appointed the President of the Mountain Springs Property Association. He'd volunteered to run for the Board because he wanted to serve the community that has been so good to his family. He also wanted to help ensure the neighborhood he's come to know and love will continue to grow and thrive as one of the Hill Country's most sought after places to live, visit, and raise a family.



### Vice President



Paul DiTullio grew up in the Boston area and attended college in western Massachusetts, where he participated in the Air Force ROTC program. After five years in the Air Force, he transitioned to a civilian position at Lackland Air Force Base, and later at Randolph Air Force Base.

As moving around the country because of his wife's military career, Paul worked for both the Army and Navy before returning to graduate school and completing a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology. After this last degree, he worked in academia and as a government contractor, and eventually returned to Federal civil

service. He held various personnel research positions with the US Office of Personnel Management, the Army, and the Air Force before retiring in 2012 at Randolph Air Force Base.

Paul and his wife Kathy Johnson have been married for 40 years. They have three daughters, two grandchildren, four dogs, and four cats. They lived on 83 acres in rural Bexar County before moving to MSR in 2018 and now feel like they're living in the big city. They both like to work outside, read, travel, walk dogs (and sometimes their cats), do volunteer work, and exercise.

### Treasurer

Deena Clausen is a Certified Public Accountant with Ernst and Young, LLP with 30 years of professional experience. She and her husband Ray have been residents of Mountain Springs Ranch for over 14 years. Deena accepted reappointment to the Board of Directors in 2018 and was reelected for a two-year term in 2019. She is also a Commissioner on the Comal County Emergency Services District No. 4, the district that serves Mountain Springs Ranch.



## Meet Your Board of Directors (continued)

### Secretary



Petra Wagner is a Chemical Engineer, avid reader, lover of nature, wine and four legged furry friends. Known for her desire to master sourdough bread baking and an occasional foul mouth.

She grew up in a small German village of 750 people where everybody knew each other. When she was sixteen years old, she moved away from home to attend a boarding school (nothing fancy folks, this was state run). She became self-sufficient and moved even further away from home to attend college, get her first job, and eventually immigrated to the United States and became a citizen. Due to her work in the Oil & Gas industry, she lived in a bunch of places—Oregon, Arizona, Kentucky, Ohio, California, Texas, Korea, and Russia.

While on assignment in Kazakhstan almost three years ago, Petra and her husband, Rori decided to retire and bring home a stray cat. Ardi joined them in moving permanently to Mountain Springs Ranch, where they had bought a house in 2013.

Since retiring, she has travelled, taken on a large landscape project with Rori, practiced yoga, tried to be more spontaneous, and gotten to know their wonderful neighbors. Coming from a small village, she believes that understanding, respecting, and supporting your neighbors is the cornerstone of a happy community.

Petra volunteered to be on the Board to give back and help build that community. She hopes to be the Ms. Roger's of MSR, but you should know that she's wearing boots and not loafers. In addition to her position of Secretary on the MSR Board, she's currently responsible for the Painting Project as well as the Asphalt Project.

### Member at Large

Dwayne Scates is married with five children and has served in multiple capacities on the board of Braun Willow 2 & 4 HOA. He and his wife Darla purchased their lot in August of 2016 and began a two-year building process in the Hills. Dwayne is a Department of the Air Force Civilian and a former high school teacher. He taught for twelve years at MacArthur and Reagan High Schools. He's also a Navy Reserve Officer.

His goal for being on the Board is to help guide a body where we protect property values and abide by those rules we all signed in the least intrusive way possible... in other words if there's a problem with a neighbor please speak to them directly in the spirit of cooperative coexistence first no matter how uncomfortable that conversation may be. His sincere hope is we remember why we moved here and that we strive to create a friendly and respectful community.

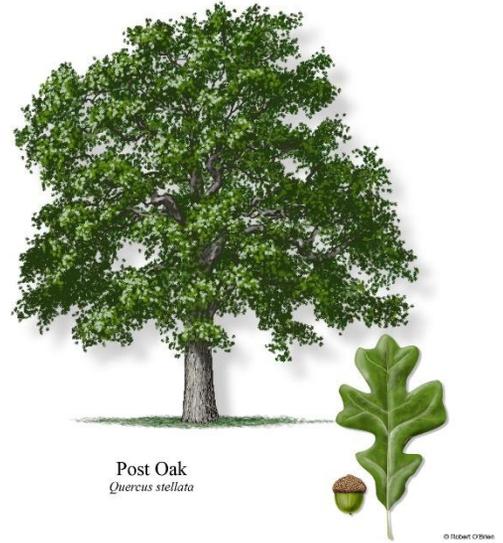


## Oak Wilt, Why Do We Care?

Why do we care about oak wilt? Simple, because we want to preserve our oaks and oak wilt is an infectious fungal disease that attacks all oaks.

Red oaks are the most susceptible to the disease. The leaves on the tree will start showing fall-like colors in the spring, summer or very early fall, and all infected trees will die in a matter of weeks.

Live oaks, our most common oak trees, are somewhat less susceptible to oak wilt than red oaks, but are seriously impacted because the roots of a single tree are interconnected with the roots of nearby trees. If a live oak tree is infected, it will transmit the disease to surrounding trees through the roots (sometimes as far as 200ft away). Venial necrosis of the leaves is a sign of infection; the area of the veins in the leaves is brown, red, or yellow, and the area in between is green.



Trees in the white oak family are the least susceptible to oak wilt but can also die from it.

Oak wilt disease is transmitted long distances by a sap beetle. The beetle feeds on a fungal mat formed in a diseased red oak tree, then, attracted to the sap coming out of a wound on a healthy tree, carries the fungus and infects the healthy tree. Interconnected roots will also transmit oak wilt in live oaks and sometimes white oaks.

Oak wilt is easy to prevent but very difficult to treat. A few basic steps are crucial for prevention:



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1. Regardless of season, seal wounds immediately after pruning or any other damage to an oak tree. Paint the wound, any paint will work. All wounds to branches, trunks, and roots should be painted. Stumps

of freshly-cut live oaks should also be painted because of the interconnected roots.

2. Never prune your oak trees during the Spring, Feb, 1 to June, 30, unless absolutely necessary. Best time to prune is the coldest days of winter and extended hot periods in mid to late summer.
3. Sanitize/sterilize equipment used for pruning.
4. Don't buy/transport unseasoned (1 year) firewood because it could have fungal mats that could be the cause of spreading the disease.
5. Remove all red oaks that are dying or dead from oak wilt. Bury, chip or burn the wood because it can have fungal mats that play a big part in the spread of the disease. As an option, the wood can be totally enclosed in plastic.

For further information, [www.texasoakwilt.org](http://www.texasoakwilt.org) is one of many good sources.

Let's take care of our oaks and they will reward us with beautiful yards and shade for years to come!

## Asphalt 101

Do you know how many miles of roads MSR owns? Take a guess.

Do you know what a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is and how it helps us decide when to perform asphalt repair/maintenance work? I did not before I started on the MSR Asphalt Project.

Interested in finding out how expensive it is to maintain the private MSR roads and the various mailbox/parking areas into perpetuity? Yeah, me too!

### Background

In case you missed it, back in September the MSR Board selected Red & Black Engineering Group to develop a Pavement Management Strategy for all asphalt areas/roads that are owned by the POA. This includes the private roads in The Ridge, The Hills and The Vistas, all main mailbox parking areas, as well as the Nature Preserve parking areas and the Pool Complex parking. The project included an inventory and inspection, assessment and development of existing pavement conditions (PCI). We also asked Tony with R&B to develop a pavement maintenance/rehabilitation plan.

### The Findings

The POA's street network currently has an overall "Satisfactory" Pavement Condition Rating and a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score of 83.75 on a scale of 0 to 100. The POA's parking area network currently has an overall "Fair" Pavement Condition Rating and a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) score of 63. Here are the findings by areas:

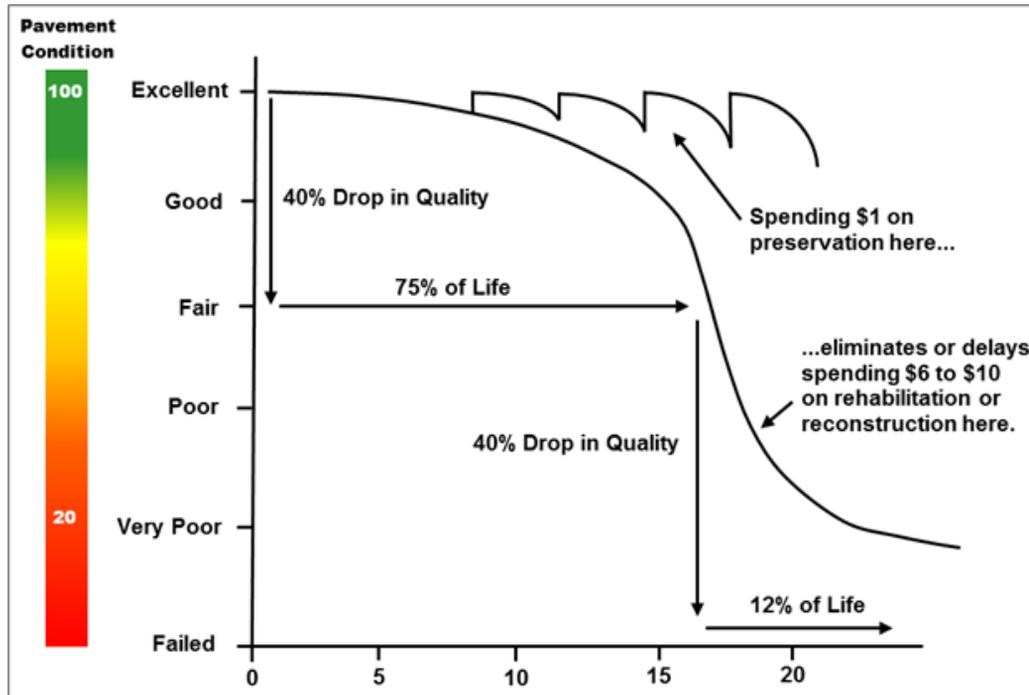
<b>MOUNTAIN SPRINGS PAVEMENT INVENTORY &amp; PCI</b>				
<b>The Ridge</b>				
Street Name	Length (LF)	Area (SF)	Area (SY)	PCI
Red Cloud Peak	3,403	96,738	10,749	82
<b>The Vistas</b>				
Split Mountain	5,585	146,934	16,326	88
The Vistas Mailbox Area	N/A	1,036	115	74
<b>The Vistas Total</b>	<b>5,585</b>	<b>147,970</b>	<b>16,441</b>	
<b>The Hills</b>				
Moonlight Drive	3,300	82,554	9,173	78
Wilderness Creek	1,280	33,213	3,690	84
<b>The Hills Total</b>	<b>4,580</b>	<b>115,767</b>	<b>12,863</b>	
<b>Mountain Springs POA Areas</b>				
Comal Springs @ 311 Mailbox Area	N/A	6,780	753	72
Pool Parking Area & Mailbox Area	N/A	20,393	2,266	88
Nature Preserve Area	N/A	9,222	1,025	40
Nature Preserve Parking Opposite of Pool	N/A	9,607	1,067	33
<b>Mountain Springs POA Areas Total</b>		<b>46,002</b>	<b>5,111</b>	
<b>Mountain Springs Total</b>	<b>23,733</b>	<b>405,441</b>	<b>45,049</b>	

## Asphalt 101 (continued)

### So how does the Pavement Condition Index help us optimize maintenance to minimize cost?

The PCI model identifies street maintenance requirements and optimizes the timing of projects to maintain a Pavement Condition Index of 90 or higher for the next ten years. The objective is to reach a PCI score which will allow our roads and parking areas to be perpetually maintained in lieu of total reconstruction, thereby minimizing the annual cost of maintenance and traffic disruptions.

The graph shows that after a slow decline of a road over 15 years the asphalt rapidly deteriorates if no maintenance is performed. The lower the PCI the higher the cost and labor intensity to repair the road.



Tony ran the following scenarios:

- 1) If we do nothing now, in 2030 we would need to spend an estimated cost of \$ 955,456 in today's dollars to get back to good conditions.
- 2) If we perform all work in 2020 and bring our roads and parking areas to an excellent rating, funding of \$276,656 is required and no other planned preventive maintenance projects will be needed in the next 10 years, while still maintaining the entire network an average PCI of 81 at Year 2030.
- 3) If we optimize the timing of projects, funding of \$218,722 in Year 2020, funding of \$11,466 in Year 2022 and funding of \$ 53,197 in Year 2024, the PCI will avg 84 for streets and 83 for the parking areas at Year 2030 and funding can be distributed between years 2020, 2022 & 2024.

These estimates are based on bid proposals for similar type work. The next steps in the Asphalt Project are to prepare a bid package (including specifications, a scope of work and payment terms), go out to bid, evaluate proposals and select a contractor to perform the work.

If you are interested in working on the Asphalt Project or want to see the entire 35-page report, send a note to [msrpetrawagner@gmail.com](mailto:msrpetrawagner@gmail.com).