

FIXING ROADS STARTS WITH PASER STUDIES

A PASER study has become an invaluable tool used as a practical, no-nonsense component for Pavement Asset Management Plans.

Next month Indiana towns and cities will start submitting their PASER, an acronym for Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System, to help secure road funding in 2021. The data collected is incorporated into a Pavement Asset Management Plan which is a requirement for funding from the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) program.

“We would not be open to getting any of these match monies if we weren’t doing these PASERs,” says Joe Leszek, North Judson’s Town superintendent. “It’s a great tool to help us grade our roads and it gives us a good visual of the roads that are in the red that need to be fixed immediately.”

A PASER involves evaluating every street in the community and rating the surface condition of each road. The University of Wisconsin-Madison Transportation Information Center developed the guidelines.

The PASER, which must be updated every other year, is an unbiased, objective and technical evaluation of road conditions. It visually rates the condition of the pavement surface from a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being a pavement in a failed condition and 10 being a pavement in excellent condition.

Ratings: By The Numbers		
10,9,8	7,6,5	4,3,2,1
New – Very Good Preventative Maintenance	Good – Fair Rehabilitation	Poor – Failed Reconstruction
Estimated Costs \$0-\$3,000 per mile	Estimated Costs \$5,000-\$100,000 per mile	Estimated Costs \$130,000-\$500,000 per mile

“One person could run over a road and say, ‘This road is bad’ and another person can ride over the same road and say it’s not,” Leszek added. “The PASER takes all the guesswork and politics out of the equation for us.

“The Town Council loves them. It puts them on the frontline and gives them another tool to look at.”

WHAT IS A PASER STUDY?

A PASER study is a visual inspection, that when assessed correctly, provides communities with the basis for comparing the condition of each roadway segment. The ratings directly correspond to the expected remaining service life.

Based on the condition that is determined, the appropriate maintenance activities are recommended. With the data from the PASER study incorporated into the five-year Pavement Asset

Management Plan, communities will be able to prioritize which roads need attention first, and the priority in which they should be maintained. This helps communities get the “best bang for their buck,” when it comes to infrastructure improvements.

The Pavement Asset Management Plan also defines the schedule of the roadwork focusing first on the major roads. Other data to be considered are the analysis of residential complaints about roads, traffic, congestion, and drainage and other underground utility issues that would be considered in the overall priorities.

The PASER study defines typical courses of action to maintain the desired road conditions. Preventative maintenance is typically appropriate for newer roads from very good (8) to good condition (6). Timely preventative maintenance such as crack seals, joint seals, and surface treatments will lengthen the service life of structurally sound pavement and save a community a substantial amount of money in the long run.

Road rehabilitation may be necessary for roads in fair (4-5) and poor (3) condition. Rehabilitation may include localized full depth pavement and base removal or rehabilitation such as mill and overlay or other methods such as pulverizing, regrading and overlay. The engineer will help to determine the appropriate methods and related budgets for the work.

A rating of 1 or 2 means the road surface is in a failed condition with no more useful service life, and full reconstruction with extensive base repair is likely needed. The rate in which pavement deteriorates depends on the environment, traffic and type of traffic such as trucks, proper drainage, quality of original construction, and interim maintenance procedures.

COORDINATE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS WITH OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The Pavement Asset Management Plan is not only a great tool for assessing and prioritizing your road projects, it can serve as a launching pad to coordinate and prioritize related infrastructure projects. For example, if a full road reconstruction is needed, it would be the right time to complete drainage, water main, sanitary sewer, or sidewalk replacements.

Fleis & VandenBrink recently assisted the Town of North Judson with a Pavement Asset Management Plan and PASER rating and applications for three Community Crossings grants including one to coincide with a much-needed stormwater improvement project.

“We’re always looking at the big picture,” Leszek said. “We’re looking for opportunities to tie-in projects. There’s no sense getting a road paved and then have to come back in a couple of years and tear it up for a stormwater project.”

If you would like more information today regarding PASER studies, Pavement Asset Management Plan, or to brainstorm how to fund roadway improvements, please contact F&V’s Troy Stahl at tstahl@fveng.com or at 800.494.5202.

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- Joe Leszek, North Judson Town Superintendent

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