

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CONCRETE STREETS & INTERSECTIONS



### **What's the main advantage that concrete streets offer?**

***Much less maintenance.** Concrete streets represent excellent long-term economic value because of longer life expectancies and minimal maintenance requirements. General funds can be devoted to pressing municipal needs instead of repetitive pavement repairs.*

### **How much more do they cost?**

***Very little.** The initial cost of concrete streets in the Northwest has varied from 0 to 22% more than asphalt alternatives, depending on the project, while concrete offers more than twice, often three times, the life expectancy. This results in lower life-cycle costs. The net result is a lower total cost of the life of the pavement. Look closely at recent concrete paving projects completed in Wilsonville, Hillsboro, Albany, Kalispell, Seattle, Corvallis, Eugene, Spokane, SeaTac, Redmond, Bellevue, Missoula, Boise, Le Grande, etc.*

### **Is it necessary to wait weeks before allowing traffic on a new concrete street?**

***No.** Spokane's new concrete intersections & those in Tri-Cities demonstrate that traffic can be allowed on the new pavement in three days. The decision is expedited by determining strength gain through use of a maturity meter.*

### **What changes should we make to contract plans?**

***There are three essentials for good concrete pavement design:** 1.) Mix Design, 2.) Thickness, and 3.) Joint Design. Unfortunately, many paving contracts incorporate the first two and leave out the latter. Proper joint placement is crucial to successful long-term performance of concrete streets. Without a joint design in the plans, the placement of joints will typically be left to the sawing contractor after the concrete has been placed. Unless he is very skilled in understanding joint design, the joints will not end up in the proper location and early cracking in the pavement may result.*

### **What should my city do if staff is not experienced with concrete pavements?**

***Call ACPA** at (360)570-8601. Public works departments are always welcome to contact a local chapter of the American Concrete Pavement Association (ACPA) for project guidance, technical assistance or in-house training. The Northwest Chapter of ACPA is headquartered in Olympia, Washington. It's staff includes a former chief construction engineer (retired) of WSDOT and a former regional pavements engineer for FHWA who also taught pavement classes for the National Highway Institute.*

### **What other environmental or safety advantages are there with concrete streets?**

***Several.** Streets constructed with portland cement concrete provide much better light reflectance which makes night time driving safer & it's easier for drivers to see pedestrians. Concrete uses only a third of the aggregates that asphalt requires over a half century. That makes concrete a contributor to sustainability. Concrete city streets made to last decades avoid delays, detours & air pollution caused by repetitive asphalt street maintenance.*