Mayor
CAROLINE SIMMONS

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
MATTHEW QUIÑONES

Tel: (203) 977-4141
Fax: (203) 977-4723
Email: mquinones@stamfordct.gov

CITY OF STAMFORD

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
P.O. BOX 10152
STAMFORD, CT 06904-2152

TO: Members of the Stamford Board of Representatives and Board of Finance

FROM: Matthew Quinones, Director of Operations

DATE: August 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Stamford Road Restoration Program: Recent History, Policy Evolution, and Future Strategy

---

This memorandum provides the Board of Representatives and Board of Finance with a comprehensive overview of the City's road restoration efforts since 2022 and the evolution of the policies supporting that work. It focuses on three interconnected programs: the City's pre-planned paving program, the restoration of roads affected by utility work, and the administration's approach to unaccepted roads. It also explains how the consolidated Transportation Department and a long-term capital strategy will support the next phase of roadway management.

Executive Summary

When the administration took office in December 2021, it inherited a roadway network with broad, accumulated deterioration. In 2023, an independent city-wide roadway assessment was completed with the goal of determining an objective measure to establish a priority list for paving operations. The city-wide pavement assessment evaluated 1,191 roads. For long-term planning, the Operations Department estimates that approximately 963 roads had an average Pavement Condition Index of 70 or below, demonstrating that Stamford faced a broad network-wide challenge, rather than a limited list of isolated streets that were in poor condition. For context, that means that 81% of Stamford's city-maintained roadway was rated below *Satisfactory*.

City of Stamford Road Conditions Survey Results, 2023

Description	# of Streets	Range of Avg. PCI Score	% of total
Failed	0	0-10	0%
Serious	37	10-25.9	3%
Very Poor	357	26-40.9	30%
Poor	349	40-54.9	29%
Fair	220	55-69.9	18%
Satisfactory	177	70-84.9	15%
Good	51	85-100	4%
TOTAL	1191		100%*

Street conditions are categorized using the ASTM D6433 industry-standard Pavement Condition Index rating scale.

*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

In 2022, the administration launched the Pave Stamford Initiative which included three goals related to paving:

1. Increase the pace of pre-planned paving
2. Reform utility paving and restoration
3. Develop a responsible path for addressing unaccepted roads

The administration moved forward with prioritizing roads previously identified under the prior administration before transitioning to a new, independently assessed top 200 road list.

Between 2022 and 2025, the City paved more than 250 roads, exceeding the original goal of paving 200 roads in four years. The Operations Department also established a dedicated utility paving approach, moved from curb-to-center restoration toward curb-to-curb restoration, and pursued stronger excavation-permit enforcement, administrative fees, and cost recovery.

The next phase of this program will be managed through the newly consolidated Transportation Department, which aligns the full paving program with road maintenance, capital planning and construction, utility coordination, obstruction-permit applications and enforcement. The Operations Department's long-term objective is to maintain at least $8-12 million in annual capital funding for planned paving, supporting a minimum target of paving approximately 50 roads per year, and to leverage a new city-wide assessment in 2028 to establish the next priority roadway list.

Conditions Inherited and the Shift to Condition-Based Management

The condition of Stamford's roads developed over many years and could not be fully addressed through a single paving season. Earlier administrations conducted pavement assessments and established priority road lists, but annual funding levels, utility conflicts, drainage needs, and construction capacity limited the rate at which the City could reduce the backlog.

The prior prioritization methodology considered traffic volume in addition to the physical pavement condition. The current administration determined that this could place low-volume residential streets and dead ends at a structural disadvantage, even when their physical condition was poor. Therefore, the administration committed to a condition-based approach in which a road's need for restoration, not simply the number of vehicles using it, would drive its priority level.

This change did not mean abandoning existing paving commitments. In 2022, the administration began by preserving 43 streets previously identified under the prior administration and then added a second

group of approximately 27 roads through field review and community input. Completing the inherited list was a deliberate matter of continuity and accountability. Residents who had already been told that their road was scheduled to be paved were not sent to the back of the line when administrations changed.

At the same time, the City commissioned IMS, an independent pavement-assessment company, to evaluate the full roadway network and establish an objective baseline. The resulting assessment produced a top 200 list, divided into an initial group of 100 priority roads and a second group numbered 101 through 200.

Pre-Planned Municipal Paving Program

1. **Increased production and measurable results**

   The Pave Stamford Initiative increased the scale of the City's annual paving effort. In 2022, the City paved more than 75 roads, amounting to approximately twice the number paved the prior year. By the end of the 2023 paving season, the administration had paved more than 130 roads. By the end of 2025, the City had paved more than 250 roads, exceeding the original four-year goal.

   The City's paving map demonstrates that this work has been distributed across Stamford, including urban neighborhoods, residential streets, and roads in North Stamford. The program has not been limited to highly traveled corridors or to any single geography.

2. **Developed objective priority with operational flexibility**

   The top 200 road list establishes the condition-based framework for selection, but implementation must account for field conditions. A road may require drainage work, utility work, base repair, milling, reclamation, or other preparation before final paving. The Operations Department must also consider road length and width, contractor capacity, asphalt availability, seasonal conditions, traffic management, and the efficiency of completing adjoining roads through a single mobilization.

   These considerations may impact sequencing but do not displace the underlying commitment to objective condition-based prioritization. Traffic volume will continue to be excluded as a controlling factor so that severely deteriorated residential roads remain eligible based on physical need.

   Road count will remain a clear public measure of progress, but it should be reported alongside mileage, treatment type, and annual investment. Fifty short residential streets and 50 long road segments do not represent the same amount of construction or cost. A more complete reporting framework will allow the Board and the public to understand both the number and scale of projects completed.

Utility Paving, Coordination, and Protection of Public Investment

1. **From curb-to-center to curb-to-curb restoration**

   Historically, utility restoration could leave only the directly affected portion of a street resurfaced, often extending from the curb to the centerline. This left longitudinal seams and inconsistent conditions across the roadway. The administration established a separate utility paving capital approach so utility contributions and City funds could be combined to restore qualifying roads curb-to-curb.

   The City also established an operational objective of completing curb-to-curb restoration within approximately 90 days after the underlying utility work is completed, subject to settlement requirements, weather, coordination, and paving-plant availability. Roads affected by qualifying utility work may therefore be paved even if they are not on the top 200 list. Enforcement of this

policy change has been challenging; however, recent ordinance revisions and the establishment of the Transportation Department provide an opportunity to strengthen implementation and achieve better results.

2. **Stronger excavation and obstruction-permit enforcement**

   The administration's next priority is not only to coordinate utility work, but to enforce permit and restoration requirements more quickly and consistently. Permit enforcement is a core pavement-management function and the City cannot protect a multimillion-dollar paving investment if noncompliant excavations, delayed restorations, or deficient repairs are not addressed promptly.

   In April 2026, the Board of Representatives unanimously approved Ordinance No. 1328, strengthening Chapter 214 of the Code of Ordinances. The ordinance provides for special review of proposed excavations on streets paved within the previous five years, civil fines, administrative fees for City oversight and enforcement, recovery of direct and indirect restoration costs, and escalating permit actions for repeat violations. It also requires permanent roadway restoration to meet the City's Street Opening Restoration Area Guidelines.

   Under the consolidated Transportation Department, the City will align application review, paving schedules, inspections, documentation, enforcement, and cost recovery. The intended practical results include:

   - Fewer newly paved roads reopened for underground work that could reasonably have been coordinated in advance;
   - Faster identification and enforcement of obstruction and excavation-permit violations;
   - Quicker correction of unsafe or deficient temporary restorations;
   - Stronger recovery of public costs when a permit holder fails to meet City standards; and
   - Clearer accountability for utilities, contractors, and other permit holders working within the public right-of-way.

Unaccepted Roads

The issue of unaccepted roads has been a longstanding legal and operational challenge. Unaccepted roads are roadways that have not been formally accepted by the City and therefore are not maintained as public streets in the same manner as accepted roads. At the same time, unaccepted roads are not conventional private driveways; some serve multiple homes, function as public-access routes, or involve City right-of-way interests. This creates a longstanding gray area that dates back at least to the City of Stamford's 1949 consolidation.

Beginning in 2023, the Operations Department worked with the Office of Legal Affairs to identify a legally responsible way to address unsafe conditions without automatically constituting formal acceptance or creating unrestricted long-term maintenance obligations. The Department inspected 122 roads and assigned them to the following four tiers:

Tier	Classification	Roads	Recommended Approach
1	Limited paving or patching remediation needed	19	Seek capital funding for targeted surface restoration focused on safety and access.
2	No immediate paving or patching remediation	46	Include in the 2028 citywide road-condition assessment.

Tier	Classification	Roads	Recommended Approach
3	Small roads without a meaningful public-access function	9	Further evaluate potential treatment as private roads, subject to legal and owner considerations.
4	Private roads or roads outside City jurisdiction	48	No City paving action recommended.

Section 214-39 of the Stamford Code of Ordinances authorizes the Director of Operations to address unsafe conditions and undertake emergency repairs on unaccepted roads when required to protect public safety. The proposed Tier 1 approach uses that authority for targeted paving, patching, or stabilization and not to reconstruct roads to current standards or pursue formal acceptance.

Following the establishment of these criteria, the administration submitted a capital request to begin work on the Tier 1 roads. Although the most recent year request was not funded, the underlying road conditions remain unresolved, and the administration has not abandoned the initiative. Funding will be re-submitted in the next capital budget.

Before implementation, the Tier 1 roads will be re-inspected as needed to confirm current conditions, refine the scope, and prioritize the most urgent safety and access needs. The renewed proposal will continue to distinguish targeted remediation from formal road acceptance and will provide the Board with a transparent road list, scope, cost, and implementation plan. The administration's recommendation for restoration of unaccepted roads is limited to those within Tier 1 and currently does not recommend expending resources to remediate Tiers 2 – 4.

Consolidated Transportation Department

The recent consolidation of the Transportation Department was the next institutional step in the City's road-restoration strategy. The Transportation Department now aligns transportation planning, engineering and construction, road paving, road maintenance, stormwater coordination, capital work, utility coordination, obstruction-permit applications and enforcement.

Together, these functions determine whether a roadway investment is planned effectively, delivered efficiently, and protected after completion. As a result, the Board and community should see:

- One department accountable for the full paving program, from assessment and selection through construction, utility coordination, restoration, and enforcement;
- Fewer newly paved streets reopened because planned utility work was identified too late;
- Faster excavation and obstruction-permit enforcement, with clearer responsibility for inspections and corrective action;
- Unified tracking of planned paving, utility paving, active permits, restoration obligations, and completed work; and
- Improved communication with residents and the Board regarding schedules, changes, delays, utility conflicts, and enforcement status.

Future Plans

1. **Maintain a Sustainable Annual Capital Program**

   The administration's objective is to maintain at least $8-12 million in annual capital funding for the City's pre-planned paving program. At current production levels, this should support a minimum target of paving approximately 50 roads per year, subject to roadway length, width, drainage needs, construction method, market pricing, utility conflicts, and project complexity.

This funding target is intended to convert the recent paving surge into a permanent pavement-management program. Road conditions accumulated over decades cannot be corrected through one four-year initiative; they require sustained investment across future administrations and budget cycles.

Long-term Planning Measure	Estimate
Total roads evaluated in the 2023 assessment	1,191
Roads at or below the Department's planning threshold	Approximately 963
Roads paved between 2022 and 2025	More than 250
Estimated remaining based on baseline backlog	Approximately 715
Minimum annual planned-paving target	50 roads
Illustrative period to address the baseline backlog	Approximately 15 years

Given that 81% of Stamford's city-maintained roadways were rated as at-risk, poor, or very poor in 2022, this 15-year projection is a realistic timeframe for addressing this degree of backlog, while offering a financially feasible annual commitment.

2. **Complete the Top 200 Roads and Reset Priorities in 2028**

   The City will continue working through the original top 200 road list and conduct the next comprehensive city-wide road condition assessment in 2028. The new assessment will measure progress against the 2022 baseline, identify newly deteriorated roads, evaluate the overall roadway network condition, and produce the next priority list.

   The next road list will continue to emphasize physical condition rather than traffic volume, ensuring that a deteriorated residential street remains eligible based on need and that the City's investment is guided by objective data.

Board Partnership and Next Steps

Continued progress will require a sustained partnership between the administration, the Board of Representatives, and the Board of Finance. The administration recommends that the City and the Boards work together around the following priorities:

1. Maintain at least $8-12 million in annual capital funding for the pre-planned municipal paving program, supporting a minimum target of approximately 50 roads per year.
2. Preserve condition-based prioritization and the exclusion of traffic volume as a controlling factor, ensuring fair consideration for deteriorated residential roads.
3. Support full and timely implementation of Ordinance No. 1328, including inspections, administrative fees, cost recovery, corrective action, and escalating permit consequences for repeat violations.
4. Support a renewed capital request for targeted remediation of the highest-priority unaccepted roads.
5. Fund and support the 2028 citywide pavement assessment and use its findings to establish the next objective priority list.
6. Work with the Transportation Department and Board of Representatives on enhancing the communication structure regarding road paving.

Conclusion

Since 2022, the City of Stamford has moved from an annual paving process toward a comprehensive roadway-management policy. The administration honored existing commitments, established an independent condition-based priority system, paved more than 250 roads, created a dedicated utility paving approach, strengthened permit enforcement and cost recovery, developed a tiered strategy for unaccepted roads, and consolidated responsibility for the full paving program within the Transportation Department.

The work completed to date is significant, but the 2023 road assessment confirms that the challenge extends beyond one list or one administration. At a sustained investment of at least $8-12 million and a minimum target of paving approximately 50 roads per year, the City can continue making measurable progress. The Operations Department looks forward to continued partnership with the Board of Representatives and Board of Finance to ensure that Stamford's roadway program remains objective, transparent, accountable, and adequately funded.