

MT. LEBANON, PENNSYLVANIA

Brick Street Reconstruction Policy

Adopted: September 12, 2023

Background

Mt. Lebanon, like a number of other older communities, has been discussing the question of how to preserve its brick streets as part of its overall street infrastructure maintenance programs. Mt. Lebanon has 4,400 properties contained within a National Historic Register District. The way our neighborhoods were laid out and developed is indicative of early car-driven suburbs. Mt. Lebanon's brick streets are part of its heritage and contributed strongly to its National Historic Register designation and are a key historic and aesthetic feature of our community. Brick streets can also present certain challenges for maintenance and restoration that asphalt does not. Most of our brick streets are between 60 and 100 years old and require repair, and in some cases, would need to be completely rebuilt in order to be retained. Original bricks as a street material have historically been more durable than alternatives such as asphalt or concrete. However, brick manufacturing and winter treatments such as the use of rock salt have changed over the last half-century. New street brick has not been installed for a long enough period since these changes to validate a similar useful life as the original brick. Repair and/or reconstruction of brick streets is a costly undertaking (considerably more costly than asphalt at the reconstruction stage). Some residents (including both those who live on brick streets and those who do not) have expressed the desire to keep our brick streets, but there is a question of how much more they may be willing to pay to do so.

For the past several years, the Mt. Lebanon Historic Preservation Board (the "HPB") has worked to develop a preservation policy for our brick streets. To be successful, such a policy must be cognizant of the issue of costs. In implementing such a policy that aims to preserve brick streets in the historic district and in neighborhoods of connected brick streets.

In the course of that project, the HPB received the benefit of organizational efforts from a committee of Mt. Lebanon residents who identified as brick street advocates as well as a white paper authored by researchers at Carnegie Mellon University in 2021 called *Preserving Brick Streets with Data – a Mt. Lebanon, PA Case Study* (the "Brick Streets White Paper").¹ The Brick Streets White Paper included the results of a survey of Mt. Lebanon residents seeking to ascertain their views on the Municipality's brick streets, including their appetite for additional expenditures to preserve them. Of the residents surveyed, results suggest a strong level of public support for brick streets. The HPB has also engaged in extensive discussions with the Mt. Lebanon Department of Public Works, the Municipality's municipal engineer, brick manufacturing firms, and public works departments of other communities that are also engaged in the preservation of brick streets. This Brick Street Preservation Policy (this "Policy") incorporates the insights drawn by the HPB from those various discussions and analyses, and in addition to the efforts of the HPB, reflects the efforts of those local residents. The HPB strongly advocates that Mt. Lebanon preserve its brick streets to the greatest extent reasonably possible.

¹ See *Preserving Brick Streets with Data – a Mt. Lebanon, PA Case Study*, February 1, 2021, Carnegie Mellon University, <https://www.cmu.edu/news/stories/archives/2021/february/images/preserving-brick-streets-data-visualization-study.pdf>

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a systematic and consistent approach during the decision-making process when it has been determined that a municipal street, which is currently constructed of brick, should be reconstructed in brick. Brick streets provide a feeling of historical significance to residential neighborhoods. The policy will be used as a guide when determining whether the street should be reconstructed of brick pavers or if some other method or material should be used to reconstruct the street surface. The goal is to preserve Mt Lebanon's brick street infrastructure where feasible, particularly within the Historic District.

Brick Street Policy Statement:

This policy will act as a guide to determine the method of construction to be used when a street that is currently constructed of brick is in need of full-depth reconstruction. The Commission and staff will consider brick streets as part of the overall street reconstruction program. Brick streets will be reconstructed according to the normal procedures of municipal street reconstruction, taking the Pavement Condition Index (or other relevant metrics) into account in keeping with the overall goals of the adopted Comprehensive Plan related to mobility and street conditions.

Objectives:

This policy will establish guidelines for discussion when a brick street needs to be reconstructed, Attachment A includes a recommended classification of brick streets that takes into account the following factors:

- The location of the street in respect to the Mt Lebanon Historic District.
- The surrounding streets in the neighborhood to determine if the brick street was part of a larger network of brick streets.
- The impact on safety due to grades, slopes, turns, precipitation, winter operations, amount of daily use, or other variables. The cost of restoring a street to the original brick surface as compared to the cost of using asphalt, concrete or other construction materials.
- Life cycle costs of maintaining the street as a brick street as compared to asphalt or construction materials other than brick. New materials and the quality of existing materials on the market will be evaluated by the Public Works Department and municipal engineer.

Overall, the objectives related to the final construction method should consider all relevant facts and circumstances, including but not limited to those analyzed as part of Attachment A.

Procedures:

This section of the policy covers the steps the Municipality will take when prioritizing street reconstruction projects.

1) Brick streets at the end of their useful life:

- a) When a brick street is deemed to have reached the end of its useful life, it will be included on the Commission's list for potential street reconstruction projects.

- b) Streets classified as “Preserve” will be reconstructed with brick if cost and other relevant considerations are met. Brick streets may be evaluated via separate bidding processes than asphalt streets. Bid specifications may include add-alternate costs for restoration utilizing existing street bricks, where possible, or for replacement with new bricks or a combination thereof.
- c) Brick streets classified as “Replace with other materials” will be assessed by municipal staff and engineers for the best materials to reconstruct the street.
- d) Residents on the affected streets will be notified by letter or other formal communication as soon as the Commission awards a contract for street reconstruction and follow-up information will be shared on the municipal website.

2) Brick streets not at end of useful life:

- a) Brick streets not appearing on the list for street reconstruction will be prioritized for repairs under the Brick Street maintenance program. The Brick Street maintenance program will focus primarily on streets designated in Attachment A as “Preserve.”
- b) Any brick street in need of utility or other infrastructure work will be repaired with brick removed to make the repair, or brick of a similar color where feasible, as reviewed and approved by the Public Works Director.
- c) When utility or other infrastructure work occurs on streets classified as “Replace with other materials,” the municipality may assess the street and determine the best course of action.

3) Budgeting:

- a) During the annual budget process for the street repair program, the Commission, Municipal Engineer, staff, and the Municipal Manager will consider the Policy and street repair needs when deciding what funds to budget for repair, reconstruction, and/or deposit into a reserve fund for future brick street-related costs.

4) Communications:

- a) The municipal staff will ensure that residents on brick streets that are to be repaired, reconstructed, or will be impacted by emergency repairs are notified by letter or other formal communication.

Exemptions:

The Commission may receive advice from the Municipal Engineer, the Director of Public Works, the Chief of Police, the Fire Chief, or any of their designees regarding potential exemptions from the processes outlined in this Policy due to considerations under their respective purview. The Commission shall consider exemptions from this Policy when the use of brick to reconstruct a street would create public safety risks for motorists and other users.

General:

The Municipality has the right to amend or terminate this policy at any time and for any reason, in whole or in part. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Municipality may eliminate or disregard the policy with respect to a particular street, a particular year, or entirely. Nothing herein will prevent the Municipality from altering any public street in its discretion.

The purpose of this Policy is to assist the Commission in evaluating, selecting, and implementing options relative to streets by outlining the underlying philosophies and processes to be followed by the Commission. It is intended that this Policy provide a meaningful framework to accomplish these objectives while remaining flexible to allow the Commission to be responsive to future changes in the economic environment, budgets, traffic, contractor costs, materials, as well as the overall direction and the competing needs of residents, the community and the Municipality. Accordingly, the Commission may adjust or disregard one or more of the provisions listed herein, or employ other considerations not listed herein, where the Commission has determined that such action is desirable in its discretion. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Commission may require funding or additional funding from residents regardless of anything contained herein to the contrary. The decision to proceed or not to proceed with any street project is always within the discretion of the Commission, is subject to any conditions the Commission may choose to attach to any decision, and no decision to proceed with one street will serve as precedent for any other street. This Policy may be discontinued at any time and for any reason and remains subject at all times to having available funds, which the Commission is under no obligation to provide or to allocate to any particular street.

ATTACHMENT A – Street Classification List

Preserve as Brick

ADELINE AVENUE
ALLENDALE PLACE
ALTOONA PLACE
ARDEN ROAD
ATLANTA DRIVE
AUDUBON AVENUE
BAYWOOD AVENUE
BEVERLY ROAD
BIRCH AVENUE (Hilf to Spruceton)
BROADMOOR AVENUE
BUCHANAN PLACE
CARNEGIE DRIVE
CENTRAL SQUARE
CHEROKEE PLACE
CIRCLE DRIVE
CONNECTING ROAD
COUNTRY CLUB DRIVE
CRYSTAL DRIVE (partial)
DAN DRIVE
DIXON AVENUE
DUQUESNE DRIVE
HIGHLAND ROAD
HOODRIDGE DRIVE
JAYSON AVENUE
KENILWORTH DRIVE
KEWANNA AVENUE
LANSDALE PLACE
LAWNCROFT AVENUE
LEBANON HILLS DRIVE
MAIN ENTRANCE DRIVE
MARTHA AVENUE
MCCANN PLACE
MIDWAY ROAD
MOHICAN DRIVE
MORRISON DRIVE
NAVAHOE DRIVE (Mohican to Terrace)
NAVATO PLACE
NEULON AVENUE
NORTH MEADOWCROFT AVENUE
OLD ORCHARD ROAD
OUTLOOK DRIVE
OVERLOOK DRIVE
PARK ENTRANCE DRIVE
PARKER DRIVE
PARKWAY DRIVE
PUEBLO DRIVE
RIDGEFIELD AVENUE
ROCKWOOD AVENUE

ROSELAWN AVENUE
ROYCE AVENUE
SAGE DRIVE
SEMINOLE DRIVE
SERPENTINE DRIVE
SHADOWLAWN AVENUE
WISTERIA AVENUE

Replace at End of Useful Life

ACADEMY PLACE
BARTH AVENUE
BIRCH AVENUE (Hilf to dead end)
CRAIG COURT
CRYSTAL DRIVE (lower Gypsy to Castle Shannon Blvd)
EARLSWOOD AVENUE
HILF STREET
IROQUOIS DRIVE
LINCOLN WAY
MCCULLY STREET (Royce to Cochran)
NAKOMA DRIVE
NAVAHOE DRIVE (Mohican to dead end)
PENNSYLVANIA BOULEVARD
POPLAR DRIVE
ROYCE AVENUE (Cochran to McCully)
ROSS WAY
SAVANNAH AVENUE
SHOT WAY
SOUTH MEADOWCROFT AVENUE
VIRGINIA WAY
WASSON PLACE