



Tar and Chip/Chip Seal Surface Treatment

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The purpose of this pamphlet is to answer some recent questions received by the Township after the recent road resurfacing works.

Township of Georgian Bay's paved roads are primarily surfaced with tar and chip (chip seal) as opposed to hot asphalt. Across North America this process is regularly used on rural roads with low to medium volumes of traffic as a more cost effective and durable alternative to asphalt paving.

The Township attempts to re-surface these roads every seven to ten years. The frequency of resurfacing or reconstruction is driven by the quality of the road base and volume of traffic and budgetary restrictions.

What is Tar and Chip (Chip Seal) versus Hot Asphalt?

Although hot asphalt and tar and chip roads can look the same there are some differences.

Hot Asphalt

Hot asphalt roads, such as the Hwy 400 and some District of Muskoka Roads are constructed using hot asphalt that has already been mixed with aggregate at the paving plant which is then spread on the road base and compacted. This type of paving can be cost prohibitive to smaller rural municipalities such as the Township of Georgian Bay. In addition, as it is less flexible than tar and chip it may not be as forgiving to road base movements over the spring and winter seasons which results in additional maintenance efforts and the need for resurfacing well before the typical expiry of the useful life of the hot asphalt surface.



Tar and Chip (Chip Seal)

Tar and Chip pavement is laid by applying hot asphaltic cement tar onto the road base or existing hard surface followed by a layer of angular stones which are then rolled and compacted into place. If the road was in poor condition the existing surface may first be ground up and additional stone added to the road base prior to applying the tar and chip.

After placement of the tar and chip excess stone is left on the surface. This excess material is further worked into the road surface over time by vehicular traffic and results in a much stronger and safer road surface. As such the road will have loose crushed stone on the top of the road surface until it has either been worked into the road by traffic, pushed off the road by traffic, pushed off the road by winter snow clearing operations, or removed during road sweeping operations in the spring.

Typically, two years after the placement of tar and chip on a road a slurry seal is applied. This is done to seal any cracks that may have formed in the road. This is needed to minimize the amount of water that infiltrates the road surface as the water can either weaken the gravel base below the road or can freeze and break up the road surface. The slurry seal also results in the road appearing to have been paved with hot asphalt.

The Township asks that residents do not remove the loose gravel from newly resurfaced roads. Also the gravel left on the road surface can cause dust so please slow down when driving.



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