

Re-Surfacing: What Does It Really Mean?

By Chris R. Laird

Paving contractors are often asked by property managers and owners to resurface asphalt areas such as parking lots. What does that really mean? Does it mean a complete asphalt re-construction or an asphalt overlay or simply some asphalt repairs along with a sealcoat? This article will hopefully answer these questions while providing some competent information for owners and property managers to base their important financial decisions on.

Here's a brief breakdown of the three re-surfacing scenarios.

1) Your asphalt parking lot or area has the following conditions:

- Cracked or "alligatored" areas that have what appears to be a white dusty material coming out of them.
- Cracked and "alligatored" areas that cover the majority of your asphalt lot.
- A significant amount of potholes.
- A large amount of rock debris that has come off of the parking lot and is collected throughout the lot.

If these conditions exist, plan on an asphalt re-construction of your parking lot. This involves the complete removal of the existing asphalt down to the base course. Sometimes even the base course will need to be re-conditioned along with new base course and re-compacted to maximum density. Then paved with hot asphalt and compacted for a new parking lot. Out of the three options listed above, asphalt re-construction tends to cost the most, but it gives the owner the best long-term solution and in a lot of cases does not have too much of a cost differential from the other options.



2) Your asphalt parking lot has the following conditions:

- Asphalt is in decent shape but has a lot of loose rock and debris on it from wear and tear.
- Small amounts of cracking and "alligatored" areas exist but are a small percentage of the total lot area.

Your lot may be a candidate for an asphalt overlay. Basically, the existing asphalt surface will be cleaned off of all loose debris and dirt, then tack coat or SS-1H will be uniformly applied to help with the bonding of the old surface to the new one. After this is done, the new layer of asphalt will be paved and compacted in place. Asphalt overlay is a cheaper way to get a new surface look and feel, but owners must be aware that an overlay can change the original flow of water and cause ponding where it did not exist before. Plus, there will be a change in height elevation of the new surface.

3) Your asphalt parking lot has the following conditions:

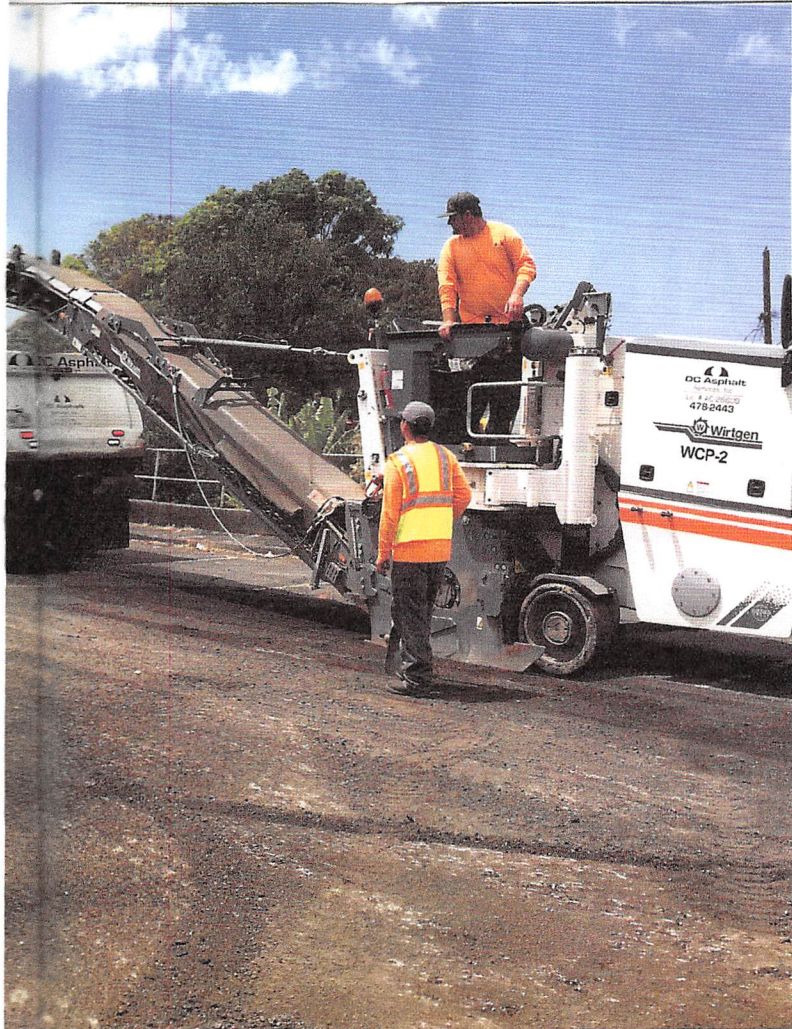
- Asphalt is in good shape and has minimal wear and tear.

- Small amounts of asphalt areas need repair.

Then your lot is a good candidate for a sealcoat. Sealcoating helps preserve your asphalt and stretch out its life by giving it a new wearable surface and "lock-in" rock from being turned out by vehicles and heavy traffic. We always recommend it within a year of a new paving job to help it last as long as it possibly can. When seal coating is done on a regular maintained schedule, the results and longevity of the asphalt is significantly increased.

Now is the part of the article for property managers and owners where they really need to internalize the following information. What will you get when you tell three bidders (asphalt contractors) to bid on re-surfacing your parking lot? If you are not specific, we can guarantee you will get a mixture of all three of these scenarios. It has become very common for us to see this happen and the wrong application ends up being done to the property because the most inexpensive (cheapest) contractor gets the job but does not have the correct equipment or knowledge to





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do the project and bids it based upon what they can only do instead of giving the customer what is the right application. It is imperative for property managers and owners to be crystal clear about what they want and ask the correct questions, such as:

- What is the scope of work you plan on implementing? Compare all bids based on scope.
- Ask why each contractor has a different solution to the re-surfacing!
- Do you have the proper equipment to do the project?
- How much experience does your company have doing this?
- Is your company licensed for this type of work?
- Provide a timeline for the project along with a schedule.
- How long will this last?
- What do you recommend for proper maintenance?

Armed with this knowledge, property managers and owners can get more detailed answers to a broad request and in turn make a much more informed decision that will benefit their assets.

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