

# Proposal: Pave the dirt roads in Aspen Mesa Estates

The topic of paving roads in our subdivision was raised at the 2022 AMEHOA annual meeting and a committee was formed to explore the effort and current rates. This white paper represents a high-level summary of their work and circulating community opinions to facilitate discussion at the 2024 AMEHOA annual meeting. The topic will then be put to a vote.

**Scope:** Grading and 4" compacted asphalt surface, including driveway tie-ins and water valve boxes, on Sierra Vista, Escalante, Alto, Pinon, Paseo, Vaquero, Vega, Caballo, and Palo Verde

**Cost Estimate\*:** \$1.75M over 105 properties ~ \$16.7K per property  
Alpine Bank offered fixed 10-year loan at 6.75%, \$2,297/yr or \$192/mo  
\*Figures subject to change per market/inflation fluctuations and HOA participation



## Argument For

- Smoother ride
- Eliminates most dust and mud
- Cleaner garages and cars
- Ice and snow melt quicker
- Improves road drainage
- Easier for the county to maintain, they'd still plow and would repair potholes at no cost to HOA
- Asphalt is recyclable and lasts 25-30 yrs with minimal treatments
- Even surface reduces trip/fall hazard for walking/jogging

## Argument Against

- Very expensive obligation of all homeowners for an unnecessary, cosmetic change
- Higher traffic speeds
- Traction issues in icy/snowy conditions
- Shifted water runoff may pool in driveways or contribute to property flooding issues
- Utility repairs/maintenance cost will increase; water lines are under the roads and HOA is responsible for these costs
- Hot asphalt increases ambient temperature, emits PM<sub>2.5</sub> air pollutants, and burns dog paws
- Hard surface increases risk of joint injury for walking/jogging
- Dirt roads are part of our rural vibe

Aspen Mesa Estates Homeowners 2/13/2024  
Paving Committee Report

**Paving Committee:**

Larry Aleamoni  
Stuart Edgerly  
Steve Pfeiffer  
Chuck Leavitt

Issue: Exploring the possibility of paving the roads in the AMEHOA subdivision  
Report: revised and complete

Asphalt paving provides a higher quality road surface that requires less continuous maintenance, reduced vehicle wear, better drainage, lower dust levels of PM 10 and a major reduction of mud tracking. At present new subdivisions are not likely to receive approvals without providing paved roads.

2022 bids:

- Range \$1,422,712 to \$1,948,056
- Grand River Construction bid of \$1,619,248 was decided as the most appropriate
- Since then, it has been updated twice and presently comes in at **\$1,750,000**

Direct cost to each homeowner is **\$16,667**

For those that would prefer financing through AMEHOA

- 10-year term loan @6.75%
  - \$192 monthly/ \$2,297 yearly.
- 15-year term @6.75%
  - \$148 monthly/ \$1,770 yearly.

In simple terms the proposal includes:

- 24 ft wide paved surface 4 inches thick
- 1 ft. wide shoulders
- 3-inch thick driveway tie in's
- 18 valve boxes
- 4 manholes
- 6% contingency

Eagle County will complete the necessary repairs and replacement of County road culverts and roadside ditches as well as 3-4 inches of structural road base graded and compacted prior to paving. Upon paving completion, they will continue to assume all maintenance and plowing responsibilities. They have a preference for maintaining and plowing paved roads.

Individual homeowners are responsible for driveway culverts and underground utility upgrades. There will be additional costs for future repair or construction road cuts to patch the asphalt.

Aspen Mesa Estates Homeowners 2/13/2024  
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This becomes the obligation of the responsible party. A ballpark number would be around \$3,000 – \$5,000.

The committee would like to address some of the misinformation presented in the anonymous “Should we pave our roads” flyer that was distributed to our homeowners in early 2022.

First, the quotes and opinions that were attributed to John Harris, Director of Eagle County Roads, were taken out of context and he felt they did not paint an accurate picture of what he said or meant.

Second, the “Environmental/Health” section is really stretching the truth since those studies cited were done in primarily urban areas. It also ignored the fact that running and/or walking on unpaved roads can lead to falls and broken bones. Also, according to John Harris, the water runoff and replenishment of groundwater supplies is not affected by paving the roads.

Third, the “Property Value” section is no different for paved or unpaved roads except that property values would definitely increase with paved roads, but that does not necessarily mean that the property taxes would therefore increase. Third, “The Rural Character of the Neighborhood” is not defined by whether or not the roads are paved.

Based on the above information and proposal should we pave the roads in our Aspen Mesa Estates Subdivision?

Yes

No



## Replies to comments stating items in our flyer were misinformation

The comments made stating the 2022 flyer contained untruths, information taken out of context, or stretching the truth are in blue *italics*.

The answers to those comments are in black

*the quotes and opinions that were attributed to John Harris, Director of Eagle County Roads, were taken out of context and he felt they did not paint an accurate picture of what he said or meant.*

(Entire quote with nothing deleted or taken out of context written to me from John Harris):

my question

4. Can you think of any other negatives to paving other than cost and character?

Traffic speeds will increase, along with the traffic noise. During the winter paved roads can provide less traction. The main concern for the County is the cost of maintenance / replacement is much more than gravel roads.

*the "Environmental/Health" section is really stretching the truth since those studies cited were done in primarily urban areas.*

Yes, most of the studies were done in more urban areas, but that does not negate the findings. It just means it's less concentrated here, but it still has an effect. That would be like saying drinking only a little bit of poison won't make a difference because it's only a little bit.

*It also ignored the fact that running and/or walking on unpaved roads can lead to falls and broken bones.*

If you're not paying attention to what you're doing, you can fall regardless of what surface you're on. I've fallen a few times walking at Whitecloud on black ice because I wasn't paying attention.

*Also, according to John Harris, the water runoff and replenishment of groundwater supplies is not affected by paving the roads.*

John Harris is an expert on roads and bridges, not on groundwater replenishment and the water cycle. See handout on water replenishment.

*the "Property Value" section is no different for paved or unpaved roads except that property values would definitely increase with paved roads, but that does not necessarily mean that the property taxes would therefore increase.*

This just makes no sense at all, either in rational logic or in mathematical logic. The comment states the values would increase. If the property values increase, the assessed values increase, and we all know the property tax is based on that assessed value.

*"The Rural Character of the Neighborhood" is not defined by whether or not the roads are paved.*

It is not specifically defined in the Eagle County Land Use Regulations, but it is in many literary descriptions of rural vs urban writings, and definitely in the minds of both the many with whom I've spoken and me.

*When the paving is completed and accepted by Eagle County, they will be responsible for road maintenance.* This is only a clarification of this comment and has nothing to do with the 2022 flyer.

Eagle County will be responsible for regular maintenance such as plowing and fixing normal wear and tear, but the HOA will be responsible to pay for digging up and repaving any community water line problems, which have and will continue to happen. That's at our cost in possible rises in dues or assessments. Any individual homeowners who have a water line problem going to their homes from the main line will have to cover that cost themselves.

## Reasons why we should NOT pave the roads

All of the following has been researched. If you would like the references used in researching each item for more information, please see the more detailed Paving Flyer. John Harris from Eagle County Road and Bridge sent #1 and #2 in quotes verbatim in an email.

1. **Traffic speeds and safety** – “Traffic speeds will increase along with traffic noise,” and possibly there will be more volume along Paseo. “During the **winter** paved roads can provide less traction.” This increases the possibility of a sliding into a ditch, another vehicle, animal, or person.
2. **County concern** – “The main concern for the County is the cost of maintenance / replacement is much more than gravel roads.” This will affect #10 below.
3. **Ground water** - Paving may alter the replenishment of **ground water**.
4. **Heat** - Asphalt absorbs up to 90% of the sun’s radiation, contributing to warmer surrounding air. Summer walks will be hotter, and most people don’t have home air conditioning.
5. **Running** - Hard surface running may be a risk for injuries.
6. **Walking** - Hard surfaces can lead to knee and ankle injuries.
7. **Pets** - Pavement becomes extremely hot in summer, causing blisters or burns on their paws.
8. **Air pollution** - Asphalt releases compounds which in turn, form tiny particles called PM2.5, one of the most dangerous types of air pollution for human health.
9. **Property value** – Paving may raise property value, thus raising taxes, hurting those who want to be here long term.
10. **Waterline breaks** - Higher cost to repair may cause dues and/or assessments to rise.
11. **Rural character of our neighborhood** - Dirt roads contribute to the **rural character of our neighborhood**, which is why many of us moved here.
12. **COST** - The estimate was **\$18,500** per lot owner in 2023 according to cost submitted to the board by the committee. The cost will increase this year and in the future if not this year. This is an unnecessary financial burden on many residents.