# The Demands on Public Works

**The roads that connect us to our families, vital medical services and the commercial activities of modern society are arguably one of the most important assets a public works department maintains.** However, with widespread budget cuts, rising costs and labor shortages, they are unfortunately one of the first targets eliminated. How can public works officials possibly keep up with never ending road repairs when they are working with limited financial and human resources? It's clear that greater efficiencies are needed to ensure roads meet their maximum design life and that maintenance budgets stretch further.

## But how?

## Imagine, if you will, the “road of the future.”

This road is smart, efficient and only needs to be repaved every 30 years. And the best part is that this road is built to last 50+ years and it only cost 25% more to build than the roads being built in your community now. This road of the future probably seems far-fetched, especially if you’re having to repave roads every other year. However, there are communities just like yours that are using data and design to extend pavement life, reduce maintenance budgets and reap greater resiliency benefits in the process.

REPAVE EVERY **30** YEARS

BUILT TO LAST **50+** YEARS

COST **25%** MORE TO BUILD

# The Importance of Data

Without accurate data, public works departments are working in the dark. Collecting and sharing data is essential to reaching long term goals for two important reasons:

- **Educating policymakers:** Many policymakers, especially in smaller communities, may not be experts in road design or maintenance, and are forced to make tough decisions when budgets are tight. Those who are in charge of setting or eliminating budgets and programs need to understand the long-term ramifications of those decisions. Having accurate data readily available makes this process much easier when those crucial decisions need to be made.

- **Knowing where to invest efficiently:** According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, 43% of our public roadways are in poor to mediocre condition with a backlog of over $435 billion of existing roads currently needing repair. As the graph below shows, investing in pavement preservation while the pavement is in excellent to fair condition is far more cost effective than waiting for it to drop below this critical point. Instead of making short-sighted budget cuts, communities should think strategically about investing in their pavement maintenance.