4 Ways Rising Construction Costs and Deferred Pavement Maintenance Impact Central Valley Commercial Properties

Discover how rising construction costs and deferred pavement maintenance impact Central Valley commercial properties. Learn key preventive strategies.

VISALIA, CA, UNITED STATES, September 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Commercial property owners and asset managers across California's Central Valley are facing a familiar infrastructure challenge: maintaining large, paved areas while construction costs, traffic demands and environmental stresses place pressure on maintenance budgets.

Recent federal data show that producer prices for paving mixtures and blocks have continued to increase. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a 7.0% year-over-year increase in the Producer Price Index for paving mixtures and blocks in August 2026. The figure is a national producer-price measure and does not represent the cost of every asphalt project or contractor bid in the Central Valley.



Official company logo for Denny McCowan General Engineering Inc., highlighting grading, paving, and excavating services.

For commercial properties with parking lots, loading areas, access roads and industrial yards, the cost of postponing needed pavement work can nevertheless become significant when relatively minor surface distress progresses into deeper structural problems.

THE COST OF DELAYED PAVEMENT MAINTENANCE

Asphalt pavement is a layered structural system consisting of asphalt mixtures over aggregate base and subgrade materials. Its performance depends on factors including pavement thickness,

materials, drainage, traffic loading, construction quality and the characteristics of the underlying soil.

As asphalt binder ages, oxidation causes it to become stiffer and more brittle. The Federal Highway Administration has documented the role of oxidative aging in changing the mechanical properties of asphalt pavement.

Cracks can allow water to enter the pavement structure. Excess moisture can accelerate pavement deterioration and, under the right conditions, contribute to weakening of base and subgrade materials.

The result is that pavement problems that initially appear to be limited to the surface can eventually require more extensive rehabilitation.
However, the progression is not governed by a universal timetable. A pavement's service life varies according to its design, traffic, drainage, climate, materials and underlying soil conditions.



commercial-asphalt-paving-parking-lot.jpg



Heavy machinery performing land grading and site preparation for a commercial construction project.

HEAVY TRAFFIC AND CENTRAL VALLEY CONDITIONS

Central Valley commercial and industrial properties can experience substantial truck traffic associated with agricultural production, distribution, warehousing and regional transportation.

Heavy repeated wheel loads are an established contributor to pavement fatigue. The Federal Highway Administration identifies repeated heavy loading, pavement structure, temperature and moisture among the factors affecting asphalt pavement performance.

High summer temperatures can also affect pavement behavior. Warmer asphalt becomes more susceptible to deformation, while aging can change the binder's stiffness and cracking characteristics.

Moisture presents another concern. Poor drainage or water entering pavement cracks can weaken supporting materials and accelerate deterioration. In areas where underlying soils are susceptible to moisture-related volume changes, pavement performance can be particularly dependent on proper site preparation, drainage and pavement design.



Construction crew operating heavy machinery and an asphalt paver during a commercial paving project.

These factors do not mean that every Central Valley commercial pavement will experience premature structural failure. Rather, they reinforce the importance of evaluating individual pavement systems based on their actual condition and site characteristics.

FROM COSMETIC REPAIRS TO PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT

> Commercial property owners should think about asphalt as a structural system rather than simply a surface"
>
> *Denny McCowan*

Preventive maintenance can be an effective component of pavement management when applied to pavement that remains structurally suitable for preservation treatments.

Federal Highway Administration guidance identifies treatments such as crack sealing, chip seals, micro surfacing and thin asphalt overlays as preservation techniques that can extend pavement service life when appropriately selected and incorporated into a cost-effective pavement preservation strategy.

Once significant structural distress has developed, however, a simple surface treatment may no longer be appropriate. Alligator cracking, for example, is a form of interconnected fatigue cracking that can be associated with excessive pavement deflection, repeated loading, unstable or saturated base/subgrade conditions and other structural problems.

Consequently, the appropriate repair depends on the cause and severity of the distress. Depending on site conditions, rehabilitation may involve localized repairs, structural overlays, removal and replacement of pavement sections, recycling or full-depth reconstruction.

DATA-DRIVEN SITE MANAGEMENT

For commercial property owners, a pavement management strategy can begin with regular visual inspections and documented pavement-condition assessments.

Additional engineering evaluation can be appropriate where there is significant rutting, widespread cracking, settlement, drainage problems or evidence of base or subgrade distress.



Heavy industrial asphalt roller compacting freshly laid asphalt on a commercial project.

Maintenance decisions should be based on the condition of the pavement rather than on a fixed age-based schedule. Early identification of cracking, drainage deficiencies and localized structural problems can provide property owners with more options than waiting until extensive structural deterioration occurs.

Modern construction technologies, including GPS and automated machine-control systems, can also improve grading and construction accuracy on appropriate projects. These technologies are tools used during design and construction, rather than requirements for pavement management itself.

EXPERT MARKET PERSPECTIVE

"Commercial property owners should think about asphalt as a structural system rather than simply a surface," said Denny McCowan, a third-generation contractor with Denny McCowan General Engineering Inc. in Visalia.

"When cracks, drainage problems or other distress are identified early, there may be more treatment options available. Once structural deterioration becomes extensive, the required repair can become substantially more involved. The right approach is to evaluate the pavement and determine what is happening below the surface rather than assuming that a surface treatment will solve every problem."

McCowan added that the appropriate maintenance strategy depends on pavement condition, traffic, drainage and the underlying site conditions.
"Preventive maintenance makes the most sense when the pavement is still a candidate for preservation," he said. "When there is widespread structural distress, the property owner needs to understand the underlying cause before deciding whether an overlay, localized reconstruction or a deeper rehabilitation is appropriate."

ABOUT DENNY MCCOWAN GENERAL ENGINEERING INC.

Denny McCowan General Engineering Inc. is a family-owned general engineering contractor based in Visalia, California. The company was founded in 2001 and states that it serves residential and commercial clients throughout Tulare, Kings, Fresno and Kern counties. Its services include asphalt paving, grading, excavation and related site-development work.

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