



For Roadsoft help, visit  
the Roadsoft Manual at  
<http://roadsoft.org/help>

## Roadsoft Best Practices & Support Change

### Best Practices for IRT Submission

Act 51 agencies in Michigan are required by state law to submit project data including costs on their road and bridge projects to the IRT annually. In preparation for the 2016 project season, the Michigan Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) and the Center for Shared Solutions (CSS) remind local agencies of the best practices for entering road projects and their associated data into Roadsoft databases.

The Center for Technology & Training (CTT) works cohesively with the CSS to provide integration between Roadsoft and the TAMC Investment Reporting Tool (IRT), thereby making project data entry as seamless as possible. Integration between Roadsoft and the IRT allows agencies to submit project data entered into Roadsoft directly to the IRT as part of the annual submission process. For local agencies that are already using Roadsoft for roadway asset management, using the existing data in Roadsoft makes more sense than entering the data a second time into the IRT.

### Best Practice 1 – Roadsoft Updates

The key to a successful transfer between Roadsoft and the IRT starts with having the current version of Roadsoft (7.10.x) with the current framework (FW16). Agencies with Roadsoft versions prior to 7.10.0 must update Roadsoft before submitting their 2016 annual reporting to the IRT. The latest version of Roadsoft is always available at [www.roadsoft.org/downloads](http://www.roadsoft.org/downloads). Dave Jennett, Project Manager and IRT Coordinator at the CSS is on the data receiving end of the IRT process. He highlights the importance of updating to the current version, noting that, “the IRT expects the newest framework and Roadsoft export file structure. Older versions may have differences that can interfere with the upload process and be very challenging to troubleshoot with the local agency and support staff.” Updating Roadsoft is the first best practice to a trouble-free submission to the IRT.

### Best Practice 2 – Treatment Mapping

Data entry plays a vital role to the IRT submission process. Data must be entered correctly, and using the right tools in Roadsoft alleviates common submission frustrations such as missing Project IDs or missing treatment mapping.

Treatment mapping is a process of matching any standard or custom treatments used in Roadsoft to a pre-defined list of treatments established by the TAMC. Treatment mapping (matching) gets completed in the Surface Definition form within Roadsoft. By default, the Surface Definition form in Roadsoft comes with seven asphalt-standard treatments such as Crack Seal, Sealcoat, and Reconstructions – 6” base, 3” top. Agencies often enter their own custom treatments in the Surface Definition form for a more accurate description of the treatments they are applying in the field than the standard out-of-the-box treatments. Since custom treatments can vary widely from agency to agency, the TAMC established the pre-defined treatment list not only for a smooth data transition into the IRT, but to ensure apples-to-apples data comparisons.

Surface Definition										
Surface Type:										
Surface	Subtype	Abbreviation	Surface Width	Left Shoulder Width	Right Shoulder Width	Curve	Archived			
Asphalt										
Asphalt-Standard		Asp	22.00	2.00	2.00	Asphalt Curve	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Treatment: (Position cursor on splitter line above this text to adjust data shown.)										
Treatment	Type	Min Trigger	Max Trigger	Reset	New Surf	Surface (\$/Sq Yd)	Shoulder (\$/Sq Yd)	Cost (\$/LaneMile)	TAMC Project Class	TAMC Treatment
Crack Seal	PM (CPM)	6	8	8	No	\$0.20	\$0.00	\$1,290.67	MCPM	Overband Crack F
Fog Seal								67	MCPM	Fog Seal

Figure 1: Example of treatment mapping in Roadsoft

Whether standard treatments are used or whether agencies add their own custom treatments, agencies must map the treatments used to the corresponding TAMC Project Classes and TAMC Treatments. As a best practice, agencies should map any newly added treatments and double check their existing treatment mapping prior to transferring data to the IRT.

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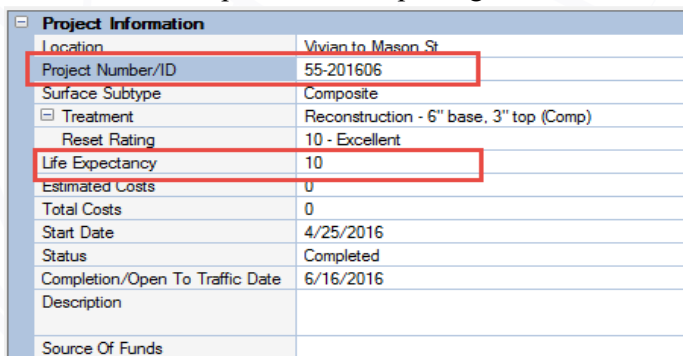
There is no right or wrong way to map treatments. Local agencies are encouraged to map the standard or custom treatments to the TAMC treatment that is most similar. Expanding on the topic of treatment mapping, Jennett says that “in cases where a custom treatment involved two treatments, map to the costlier of the two, and make sure to include comments describing the project.” The added comments will be helpful during the financial reporting data entry into the Act 51 Distribution and Reporting System (ADARS) where the total project costs are ultimately entered.

Completing treatment mapping in Roadsoft prior to attempting IRT submission is a best practice that will save agencies frustration at the time of reporting.

### Best Practice 3 – Project Builder

Historically, treatments were entered in Roadsoft through the Road Module; however, as TAMC reporting needs changed, the Project Builder was added into Roadsoft in 2008 to support reporting compliance while saving time and effort by local agencies entering their project data.

To readily identify the data coming into the TAMC and CSS from local agencies, the TAMC and CSS implemented the Project ID requirement in 2015. Project ID values help the TAMC and CSS align data submitted to both the IRT and the Act 51 Distribution and Reporting System (ADARS). The Project Builder includes both required data fields (Project ID and Life Expectancy). Entering these values once in the project builder saves significant effort for local agencies later when it comes time to complete annual reporting.



Project Information	
Location	Vivian to Mason St
Project Number/ID	55-201606
Surface Subtype	Composite
<input type="checkbox"/> Treatment	Reconstruction - 6" base, 3" top (Comp)
Reset Rating	10 - Excellent
Life Expectancy	10
Estimated Costs	0
Total Costs	0
Start Date	4/25/2016
Status	Completed
Completion/Open To Traffic Date	6/16/2016
Description	
Source Of Funds	

Figure 2: Example of entering the Project Number/ID and Life Expectancy in the Roadsoft Project Builder

Using the Project Builder to enter project data is not only a best practice, but “the way” to enter project data for successful Roadsoft to IRT reporting, according to Mary Crane who is a software engineer at the CTT. Crane has worked extensively with CSS and our customers to provide the most seamless data transmission as possible between the two systems. Crane elaborates, “the Project ID is now used as the key between systems (Roadsoft, IRT, ADARS). The Project Builder was designed to tie road segments together with project details using that Project ID. If the Project ID and the road segments aren’t tied together initially using the Project Builder, the Project ID must get entered on a segment-by-segment basis prior to transferring the data to the IRT; and, that is a cumbersome process.” By starting with the Project Builder, local agencies can save time and effort during the reporting process. The CTT talked to Heather Boyd, from Hillsdale County Road Commission, about her experience using the Project Builder. Up until recently, Boyd had been entering all of her project information, one segment at a time. She said, “[entering IRT information] was time consuming and tedious. It wasn’t until I recently found out about the Project Builder, then my life got so much easier! For example, you can select multiple segments at a time and create the scheduled projects. Also, if you have a large subdivision project, you can select all the necessary segments of roads, and add them as one individual project. Using the Project Builder in Roadsoft is much more efficient, and a better use of my time.” Saving time and effort is a huge win for any process. Using the project builder as a best practice for project data entry will make IRT submission easier.

Another best practice regarding the Project Builder is having good communication between the people who enter project data in Roadsoft and those Act 51 specialists entering project-related data into ADARS. Boyd also commented on this best practice, saying that “taking the time to associate project numbers that make sense between Engineering and Finance is very important too.” Prior to entering Project ID values in Project Builder, the parties involved in data entry should develop an easily identifiable Project ID value convention that makes sense for the agency.

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## Best Practice 4 – Double Check & Status Completion

Once annual reporting is submitted to the IRT from Roadsoft (either by direct upload or by file import), agencies must indicate report completion via the 'status' page in the IRT. Double checking the transferred or uploaded data to make sure all expected projects are present prior to completing the status page step is a best practice for local agencies. Terry Flower, who is with the City of Escanaba, commented that he “always” double checks his data to make sure it was received successfully in the IRT and “that it is correct.”

The IRT will exclude projects from being transferred or uploaded from Roadsoft if the agency does not “own” road segments in the project. Segment ownership issues can occur on border roads, or when a county does a project on a village road. Jennett explains, “In some cases, agencies can enter projects that did not transfer due to ownership issues directly in the IRT. In other cases, the road-owning agency must enter the project instead. So, in the example of a county completing a project on a village road, the village must enter and submit the project to the IRT, even though the county did the actual work.” Double checking the data prior to final submission will help prevent some potential submission pitfalls.

Agencies that do not have projects for the current reporting year must still update their status page to ‘complete.’

## Best Practice 5 - Utilize Resources

Both the CTT and the TAMC have resources available for guiding agencies through the reporting process. Local agencies are encouraged to use these resources as part of their best practices. Documentation published by the CTT on [Exporting Roadsoft Project Data to TAMC's Investment Reporting Tool](#) provides a step-by-step walk through of the data submission process from Roadsoft to the IRT. Local agencies may find the [Investment Reporting 101 & Key Points on ADARS Integration](#) documentation published by the TAMC helpful for answering questions like how to determine which projects to include. The TAMC also has video resources available on [Updating Your Completion Status](#) and video content on [submitting to the IRT for agencies using Roadsoft](#). Both the CTT and CSS provide one-on-one support for local agencies working through the

reporting processes. For Roadsoft questions, email [roadsoft@mtu.edu](mailto:roadsoft@mtu.edu) or call 906-487-2102. For IRT questions, email [CSS-TAMC@michigan.gov](mailto:CSS-TAMC@michigan.gov) or call 517-373-7910 and ask for the TAMC Helpdesk.

## Microsoft Changes Impact Roadsoft

Microsoft has announced that its product, Windows Vista, is reaching the end of its life cycle in April of 2017.

Because of Microsoft's termination of support announcement, the Center for Technology & Training (CTT) is ending support for Roadsoft, Laptop Data Collector (LDC), and MERL on Windows Vista as of January 1, 2017.

The decision to discontinue support on Windows Vista is a necessary step to ensure the safety of the systems that operate our software and to retain the integrity of your Roadsoft, LDC, and MERL data.

Microsoft is stopping support for their Windows Vista operating system on April 11, 2017. Computers still running Windows Vista after that time are vulnerable to security risks and viruses. Customers should plan to update their Vista operating systems prior to January 1, 2017.

After January 1, 2017, it will not be possible to install or update Roadsoft, LDC, or MERL on Windows Vista. Existing installations will run but will not be updated.

## Supported Windows Versions

The CTT is continuing support for windows operating systems: Windows 7, 8, and 10.

**Save the Date!**

*Roadsoft User Group Meeting*

August 2, 2016

9:00am - 11:00am