Mix Types: Thin Overlay Mix (TOM)

As we continue to look at the various mix types used in Texas, this month we will look at the typical use and advantages of Thin Overlay Mix (TOM).

Thin Overlay Mix (TOM) are excellent pavement preservation treatments that are between ½” and 1 ¾” thick and are used to extend the existing pavements life. Thin overlays should be used on existing pavements before appreciable distresses have accumulated, especially fatigue cracking and rutting originating deep in the pavement. While TOM mixtures are crack resistant, they will not fix the underlying pavement layers nor substantially increase the load carrying capacity of the pavement. In those cases, rehabilitation will be needed.

Here are some advantages of Thin Overlay Mixtures:

- Flexible, crack resistant and rut resistant
- High skid values – beneficial in terms of wet weather traction
- Reduces noise levels by up to 10dB from preexisting pavement
- Ride quality improvements are typically 25-35% better than preexisting ride
- The Austin District showed approximately a 30% savings over typical 2-inch, conventional, dense-graded mixes.

Additional Information:

- TOM should not be placed directly on a flushed pavement.
- TOM should never be used directly on flexible base.

Good and Bad Candidates for TOM