

**URBAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 17, 2015**

Present

Councilor Zachariah Baker, Chair
Councilor Roen Hogg
Councilor Penny York

Visitors

Seth Bernstein
David Brooks
Jim Day, *Corvallis Gazette-Times*
Lyle Ellis
Helen Ellis
Marilyn Koenitzer
Stewart Wershow

Staff

Mark Shepard, City Manager
Mary Steckel, Public Works Director
Greg Gescher, City Engineer
Robyn Bassett, Public Works Project
Manager
Emely Day, City Manager's Office

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

	Agenda Item	Recommendations
	<i>Chair to call for corrections, if any, to November 17, 2015, USC Minutes</i>	
	Call to Order	5:00 pm
	Visitors' Comments • Unimproved Street Maintenance	Information
I.	Transportation System Plan Update Process	Information
II.	Unimproved Streets Policy Discussion	Information: staff to provide additional information
III.	Other Business A. Pending Issues	
	Adjournment	5:56 pm
	Next Meeting	January 5, 2016 – 6:00 pm

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

Visitors' Comments

David Brooks represented the Skyline West Neighborhood Association (SWNA) Road Committee, members of which previously spoke to the Council and the Sustainable Budget Task Force (SBTF), reviewed the staff report to Urban Services Committee (USC) regarding a street maintenance policy, and developed responses to the questions posed in the staff report:

1. *Should the City have alternate street standards that provide flexibility in areas where the traditional pattern of urban standard street improvements with development has not occurred?*

The SWNA Road Committee believed the City should have additional standards for roads appropriate for circumstances such as the Skyline West and other neighborhoods. SWNA

described their roads as "legacy rural roads" – the roads were built to Benton County's standards and later annexed into the City Limits but were not re-built to the City's Local Street standards. The SWNA Road Committee believed the City should have one or two additional categories for streets considered built to standards appropriate for a rural neighborhood.

2. *Does the current Public Works policy on maintaining streets need to change?*

The SWNA Road Committee believed the City's policy must change and expressed several concerns:

- The current approach left a significant portion of City streets without adequate maintenance, so the policy could not be continued.
- Changing the policy regarding unimproved streets was an essential part of a necessary change but only part of a larger issue regarding the City's approach to street infrastructure.
- Public Works Department's memorandum to the Sustainable Budget Task Force described the problems from the City's current approach to maintaining City streets.
- There was a significant backlog of street maintenance, particularly for local streets. The full extent and urgency of required street maintenance was unavailable, especially for local streets, whether they were improved or unimproved.
- The City lacked financial resources for annual street maintenance.
- The referenced memorandum indicated that only initial steps were taken toward implementation of a systematic assessment of street maintenance management.
- Staff identified a need for an additional \$3.4 million per year to perform additional maintenance, including maintenance of unimproved streets and maintenance of improved local streets. That amount did not include what would be needed to reconstruct unimproved streets that were not maintained for more than 20 years.
- Based upon the potential of the "run to failure" model for maintenance, particularly regarding unimproved streets, \$3.4 million might not be enough but was twice the amount currently spent to maintain City streets.

3. *Should parts of the street maintenance policy be captured in a Council-level document (Municipal Code, Council Policy, etc.)?*

The SWNA Road Committee urged development of a Council-level policy regarding street maintenance, recognizing the City's responsibility to maintain all City streets and including unimproved streets that would be improved to a different standard. The City's policy should demonstrate a commitment to street maintenance, set standards for adequate maintenance, and commit to meeting the standards within an explicit timeframe. The SWNA Road Committee urged that the policy ensure fair funding mechanisms and allocation of maintenance. Skyline West residents paid the City's Transportation Maintenance Fee (TMF), but the Municipal Code did not allow the fee to be spent maintaining Skyline West's streets. The SBTF discussed increasing the TMF to generate revenue for maintenance; but application of the fees should be corrected concurrent with a TMF increase. The policy should direct Public Works staff to identify maintenance priorities

based upon a system-wide assessment and should maintain streets to standards appropriate to neighborhoods. The SWNA Road Committee believed the proposed timeline for development of a street maintenance policy seemed reasonable.

Mr. Brooks submitted written testimony supporting his testimony (Attachment A).

Helen Ellis, a resident near SW Willamette Avenue and SW Longhill Street at the base of "Country Club Hill," said many property owners in her neighborhood would oppose street improvements because of the expenses. Her neighbors liked the lack of sidewalks in their area. The streets were in relatively good condition with occasional potholes. Her neighborhood was developed to Benton County's standards, and she did not believe the area would be appropriate for typical urban streets because of its topography.

Ms. Ellis said the issue of unimproved streets was presented to the Council approximately 20 years ago, and many of her neighbors opposed the plan then. She acknowledged that re-building streets in a hilly area would be expensive. Many of her neighbors could not afford the costs of street improvements.

Councilor York acknowledged that many people in the "Country Club Hill" area appreciated the rural character of their streets. The Committee was considering the issue of street standards and whether there should be a means of neighborhood residents increasing the standards of their streets to current City standards or to an intermediate standard. The greater issue involved street maintenance, as the City was not providing the same level of maintenance to improved and unimproved streets.

Seth Bernstein described his neighborhood on the east side of "Witham Hill," with houses dating to 1903 and a narrow street that was probably constructed during the same era. His neighbors discussed the proposed policy and would like their street re-paved. He said the street sections in the best condition had been excavated to access underground utilities and then patched; the remainder of the street was cracked, potholed, and deteriorating. His neighbors felt they were paying City taxes that supported street maintenance but did not include their street. Neighborhood residents could not afford to hire street maintenance; and it seemed unfair for them to do so, since they were paying the City for street maintenance. Homeowners were not warned when they purchased their properties that the City would not maintain the adjacent street.

Mr. Bernstein said his neighborhood street was so narrow that, with sidewalks, there would be enough available street width for a bicycle path or a one-lane street without curbside parking. He believed the street provided character, but it would be fundamentally impossible to re-build the street without cutting into yards and houses. The neighbors would appreciate the street being re-paved to create a reasonable surface.

In response to Chair Baker's inquiry, Mr. Bernstein said the neighbors gathered informally a couple times each year. He offered to serve as a contact between the City and his neighborhood.

Stewart Wershow noted that the TMF was developed to pay for work on the City's worst streets. City staff toured the City's streets and determined which were in the worst condition; TMF funds were allocated to repair those streets. He acknowledged that all of the City's streets were deteriorating. All utility customers were paying into the TMF Fund but were not receiving direct benefits from the Fund. When the Council reduced the City's budget during 2003, it eliminated funds for street maintenance; maintenance then was focused on arterial and collector streets.

During his 1989-1990 service on the Council, the Council directed that the City should not use bond funds for street maintenance. Property owners paid for the improvements on their streets when they purchased their properties. Asking them to also pay for a bond would equate to them paying twice for City infrastructure.

I. Transportation System Plan Update Process

Public Works Project Manager Bassett distributed and reviewed written information regarding the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and Transportation Development Plan (TDP) recent and planned efforts (Attachment B).

Staff completed public outreach regarding the project goals and objectives. A bicycling tour of Corvallis on October 30 enabled the project consultant to see many areas of the community.

Public Works Director Steckel added that many governmental entities in the region were updating their TSPs, including Oregon Department of Transportation's involvement with Linn County, Millersburg, Lebanon, Benton County, and Philomath. The concurrent updates would enable an overview of how people traveled between Benton and Linn Counties.

Chair Baker asked whether City staff would attend the upcoming health and transportation workshop and whether doing so would assist with developing the TSP.

Ms. Bassett confirmed that TSP/TDP Steering Committee members were invited to attend the December 8 community forum, and the Technical Advisory Committee members were invited to attend the December 9 training session. The project consultant team would also attend the December 9 training. Ms. Steckel added that the TSP/TDP Steering Committee included a public health representative.

This issue was presented for information only.

II. Unimproved Streets Policy Discussion

City Engineer Gescher said the staff report to the Committee proposed a process for discussing the City's street maintenance policy. Staff sought Committee feedback regarding the major issues that should be explored, including alternate street standards, applying alternate street standards, amending the street maintenance policy, budgetary

impacts, and documenting the appropriate way to memorialize street maintenance policies and procedures. He reviewed the timeline proposed in the staff report.

Councilor York posed several questions regarding the TMF:

1. Who paid the TMF?
2. What streets were maintained by the TMF Fund?
3. Were any streets excluded from maintenance under the TMF Fund because they did not meet City standards?
4. How were decisions made regarding spending the TMF Fund?

Ms. Steckel clarified that the City's Street Fund paid for street maintenance. The TMF was paid by developed properties via City services bills. Corvallis Municipal Code restricted use of the TMF to local, arterial, or collector streets built to City standards, as selected from a pavement management system. Staff prioritized street maintenance, currently based upon a Pavement Condition Index (PCI). The street surface was inspected; and street segments were assigned scores from 0 to 100, with lower scores indicating poorer street conditions. She explained that water was the most detrimental element to streets; cracks enabled water to penetrate the street surface and sub-surface levels, leading to development of potholes. Based upon the cost of a full re-construction versus street maintenance, it may be more financially appropriate, per industry standard practices, to allow a street to deteriorate until it must be re-constructed. In those instances, surface maintenance would not extend the life of the street. The City's local streets averaged a score of 72, collector streets averaged a slightly higher score, and collector streets averaged a score of approximately 75. Scores of 75 to 80 were considered good conditions by industry standards.

Councilor Hogg suggested that staff develop a process for how property owners' interests in street improvements would be gauged.

Referencing the possibility of developing alternative standards for a "City-standard street," Chair Baker asked about the life-cycle analysis of a road (not just the pavement condition), environmental impacts, and other factors of a holistic approach to upgrading streets. He would like a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of building streets.

Ms. Steckel responded that staff periodically assessed streets to establish the PCI. She told the SBTF that staff was seeking funds within the current fiscal year budget to implement a formal pavement maintenance system, which would consider more factors, including surface and sub-surface issues, when prioritizing streets for repair.

Committee members discussed the questions posed in the staff report to the Committee.

1. *Should the City have alternate street standards that provide flexibility in areas where the traditional pattern of urban standard street improvements with development has not occurred?*

Councilor York: Yes. There might be reasons for neighbors on one street to want a higher standard than currently existed. She had not discerned a reason for having only one street standard. An intermediate standard might be appropriate if maintenance of a slightly higher standard would be more cost effective. Having an option seemed valuable and would not compel anyone to a specific action.

Chair Baker: An alternate standard was worth considering, but he wanted to understand all aspects of an alternate standard before committing to one. He supported staff exploring alternate standards.

Councilor Hogg: He supported staff conducting more investigation and presenting more information before he expressed a preference regarding any of the questions posed in the staff report. Councilor York and Chair Baker represented City Wards with unimproved streets; Councilor Hogg had less familiarity with the issue, as Ward 2 had few unimproved streets.

2. *If alternative improvement standards are identified, what process should be in place for their consideration in specific locations?*

Councilor York: She would want to see options before she could answer the question.

Committee members agreed that they needed more information before they could address the question.

3. *Does the current Public Works policy on maintaining streets need to change?*

Councilor York: The Public Works Department's street maintenance policy established decision-making criteria regarding maintenance of public streets. The current policy did not require Council approval, undergo the standard policy-review process, or provide opportunity for public input concerning its content. She believed the policy should be approved by the Council, with opportunity for public comment; and the Council should decide in public meetings which party would pay what costs. That decision related to the Council's role as final approver of the City's budget.

Councilor Hogg: He questioned whether staff should present an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of making the street maintenance policy a Council policy (rather than a department policy), subject to Council reviews and approvals.

Councilor York: She requested City Manager guidance regarding what policy elements represented Council policy and what elements represented staff administratively managing street management processes. Issues with financial impacts on residents should be addressed in Council policies; issues that were administrative in nature were appropriate to document in administrative policies.

Chair Baker: He had not taken a position on this question.

City Manager Shepard: The last question posed in the staff report involved whether elements of the street maintenance policy should be documented in the Municipal Code, a Council Policy, or other directive guidance.

4. *What are the budgetary impacts from modifying current policies and practices and how will they be funded?*

Councilor York: She would like information separated into issues regarding street improvement and issues regarding maintenance. Maintenance was an urgent and continuing issue. Choice of street improvement was important for residents directly impacted by improvement costs.

Councilor Hogg: The staff report to the Committee concluded with the statements, " In recent years, local street maintenance has been minimized in favor of maintaining the arterial and collector street network because of financial constraints. In practice, improved local streets have not been maintained much differently than unimproved streets." He questioned whether the Committee wanted budget information regarding improving all streets, maintaining all streets, or maintaining unimproved streets.

Councilor York: If the City found a way to begin improving street maintenance, residents along "rural" streets did not want to be excluded from the improved maintenance. If the City began funding maintenance of local neighborhood streets, that maintenance should include "rural" streets. The issue should include maintenance of all City streets, regardless whether they were improved to City standards.

Committee members agreed to ask staff to provide financial information with a breakdown of maintenance versus improvements.

5. *Should parts of the street maintenance policy be captured in a Council-level document (Municipal Code, Council Policy, etc.)?*

Staff would provide information for the Committee's review and discussion.

Councilor Hogg suggested developing a process for involving neighborhoods in gathering input regarding their interests for their neighborhood streets and whether street improvements were desired. He believed staff's proposed timeline was reasonable.

Councilor York referenced staff's proposed February 2016 action of staff providing alternative urban street standards. She expected that residents would want to give input about street improvements and maintenance. She did not want proposals and discussions limited to street improvements. She presumed that the March-April 2016 action reference to "SW Whiteside Drive and connecting streets" included more area streets than those that connected directly to SW Whiteside Drive, such as SW DeArmond Drive and SW Fairmont Drive; staff confirmed.

Councilor York referenced the March-April 2016 action of "outreach of these alternatives to owners of properties on unimproved public streets" and asked that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board have opportunity to address issues such as bicyclist and pedestrian safety and access for bicyclists, pedestrians, and disabled people.

Councilor Hogg asked that Mr. Bernstein's neighborhood be included in future discussions.

This issue was presented for information only.

V. Other Business

A. Urban Services Committee meetings scheduled for December were canceled.

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Skyline West Neighborhood Association Road Committee

Responses to the questions posed in the Public Works memo to USC (2 Nov. 2015):

YES: the City should have additional standards that are appropriate for circumstances such as legacy rural streets. The process of defining these standards and identifying the neighborhoods where they are applicable should be based on collaboration between City staff and residents of those neighborhoods.

YES: the current policy on maintaining streets must change. The current approach leaves a significant part of the City's streets without adequate maintenance and cannot be sustained.

Information prepared by Public Works for the Sustainable Budget Task Force describes the problems:

- 1) an increasing backlog of deferred street maintenance—for all streets, and especially local streets;
- 2) an absence of full information on the location, extent and urgency of maintenance required;
- 3) a significant shortfall in financial resources needed to do adequate maintenance; and
- 4) the fact that only initial steps have been taken toward implementation of systematic assessment and management of road system maintenance.

Regarding the possible budgetary impacts: The estimate provided to the SBTF is a partial answer to the question: \$3.4 million additional expenditure per year is needed, half of which is needed to maintain or reconstruct local roads. This does not include an estimate of the cost to reconstruct the City's unimproved roads that have had little or no maintenance for decades.

Regarding City policy toward street maintenance: we advocate a Council-level policy that:

- 1) recognizes the City's responsibility to maintain all City streets;
- 2) sets standards for adequate maintenance and commits to meeting them in an explicit time frame;
- 3) ensures that funding mechanisms and the allocation of maintenance funds are fair;
- 4) directs Public Works to identify maintenance priorities based on a system-wide assessment; and
- 5) maintains streets to standards appropriate to neighborhoods.

Regarding the process: The steps and timing outlined in the memo seem reasonable.

Corvallis TSP/TDP USC Meeting Update (11/17/2015)

Recent Efforts:

- A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) kick-off meeting was held August 19, 2015. This meeting was used to introduce the committee members to their roles and responsibilities and to update them on recent and future events.
- The project goals and objectives were accepted by City Council on October 5th, 2015.
- Supplemental fieldwork and consultant/staff meetings were conducted on October 30, 2015, to better inform the assessment of conditions for pedestrian and bicycle travel. This included a biking tour of the city.

What's next?

- The project team is working on the next deliverable (Technical Memorandum #6) that will align potential performance measures with the current project goals and objectives.
- The second TAC meeting will be held in December. The focus will be a discussion about Technical Memorandum #6 and what performance measures may be most appropriate considering the project goals and objectives.
- The performance measures selected will be used to help characterize the existing and future baseline analysis.
- A meeting will be held on November 30, 2015 with a group of business owners to talk about interests/concerns related to motor vehicle and freight mobility.

TO: Urban Services Committee for November 17, 2015
FROM: Mary Steckel, Public Works Director *MS*
DATE: November 2, 2015
THROUGH: Mark W. Shepard, P.E., City Manager *MWS*
SUBJECT: Street Maintenance Policy



Action Requested:

Staff requests that USC review the information provided below and provide comment on the proposed process to consider potential changes to the Public Works policy on maintaining public streets.

Discussion:

At its September 22, 2015 meeting, the USC asked staff to quantify the cost of bringing unimproved streets to City standards. There are approximately 14 miles of unimproved arterial, collector and local streets, including alleys within the current Corvallis City Limits. Fully reconstructing these streets to City standards is estimated at \$33 million. This is a very conservative estimate and assumes a complete roadway reconstruction and the installation of landscape strips, sidewalks, and piped drainage infrastructure. In practice, existing street structure would be salvaged when possible, and local street widths could be narrowed consistent with provisions contained in the Transportation Master Plan and Land Development Code when natural features dictate such consideration.

USC has indicated a desire to further evaluate how the City should address unimproved city streets. Staff has identified the following questions to investigate as part of our ongoing consideration of street maintenance:

- Should the City have alternate street standards that provide flexibility in areas where the traditional pattern of urban standard street improvements with development has not occurred?
- If alternative improvement standards are identified, what process should be in place for their consideration in specific locations?
- Does the current Public Works policy on maintaining streets need to change?
- What are the budgetary impacts from modifying current policies and practices and how will they be funded?
- Should parts of the street maintenance policy be captured in a Council-level document (Municipal Code, Council Policy, etc.)?

The following outreach process and timeline is proposed for bringing information to the USC as it considers these questions:

February, 2016. Staff provides alternative urban street standards for consideration.

March – April, 2016. Staff undertakes an outreach of these alternatives to owners of properties on unimproved public streets. Outreach will focus on neighborhoods with a significant amount of such streets, e.g. Skyline West, Whiteside Drive and connecting streets, and select South Corvallis neighborhoods.

May – June, 2016. Staff will bring all information gathered during the outreach process back to the USC for discussion.

The Council Goal for a sustainable budget includes exploration of funding needs and options for all public street maintenance needs. In recent years, local street maintenance has been minimized in favor of maintaining the arterial and collector street network because of financial constraints. In practice, improved local streets have not been maintained much differently than unimproved streets. While the policy for maintaining unimproved streets may be changed to align with improved streets, the current funding levels will not allow for a significant change in the actual level of maintenance for either.

Budget Impact:

There is no budget impact as a result of the public outreach process proposed above.