

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT
January 20, 2010, 2:05 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present: Jason Wiener (chair), Ed Childers, Lyn Hellegaard, Roy Houseman, Bob Jaffe, Marilyn Marler, Renee Mitchell, Pam Walzer, Jon Wilkins, Dave Strohmaier

Members Absent: Dick Haines

Others Present: Bob Giordano, Kevin Slovarp, Monte Sipe, Steve King, Tod Gass, Bob Wachtel, Jed Taylor, Ethel MacDonald, John Wolverton, Ray Aten

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the minutes of [December 9, 2009](#) (January 13, 2010 minutes forthcoming) – Approved as submitted.
- B. Announcements – None.
- C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda items – None.

II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. Resolution to order curb and sidewalk improvements adjacent to miscellaneous parcels. (Monte Sipe) (Referred to committee: 1/11/10) (memo).—Regular Agenda (Monte Sipe) (Referred to committee: 01/11/10) **REMOVE FROM AGENDA**

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council approve the resolution to order curb and sidewalk improvements adjacent to miscellaneous parcels in Project 09-001.

Monte Sipe, Construction Project Coordinator, stated that the parcels consisted primarily of voluntary installation of curb and sidewalk. This is a single order resolution, and the work has already been completed. Assessment agreements have been signed and recorded and the property owners have elected their assessment terms. There are 54 parcels within the order, the majority of them within two condo developments.

Ms. Walzer made the motion to adopt the resolution.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. Interlocal Agreement between the City of Missoula and the County of Missoula related to the Reserve Street / Mullan Road Intersection Improvements Project. (memo) Regular Agenda (Gregg Wood) (Referred to committee: 01/11/10) **HELD IN COMMITTEE**

Mr. King stated that they had been working with the County, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and the public to formulate a double left-turn lane northbound on Reserve to west on Mullan Rd. The entire project must be done with local money and within the curb lines. The County has been collecting money for traffic mitigation from developments west of Reserve Street. MDT has been cooperative in allowing the project. They have been working to develop plans and specifications. The proposed improvements will be an incremental change to the intersection, and is not a fix for all of Reserve Street or the intersection in a substantial way. They will be adding a left turn lane, and Reserve Street will still be over capacity. The total project budget is between \$300,000 and \$350,000 for striping, traffic signal changes, and modifications to the raised medians. The county is providing the funds. They hope to get the agreement back from the County this week so they can present it to the committee.

Mr. Slovarp stated that they have approved the MDT design, which was done in-house by MDT, and includes pavement markings, signal-head locations, bike lanes, and median islands. Other design is view of existing lanes and striping.

Mr. Childers asked where the two lanes of traffic west on Mullan would go. Mr. King stated that the inside lane would be a left-turn lane into Wal-Mart, and the outside lane would be the through lane. It is 1300 feet from the intersection to the lane drop. Most evening users will probably want to be in the outside lane, while Saturday drivers will probably mostly be turning into Wal-Mart.

Mr. Jaffe asked if the second turn lane was the only change. Mr. King stated they would also remove an island to facilitate a right-turning movement.

Mr. Wilkins stated that he was concerned about bicyclist and pedestrian safety. He drives through the intersection every day and is often backed up to 3rd Street. He doesn't see any enhancements for bicyclists on the plans, and it is harder when they remove an island. He asked what they were doing to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety. Mr. King stated they worked with MDT, and the plan would improve vehicular capacity and safety, reducing rear-end collisions due to the traffic jams. They will also change the phasing of the signal for a more controlled approach for turning movements and through movements. They worked to preserve the five-foot bike lanes in and around the intersection. The plan is as good as they can get within the existing curb line and budget. Tens of thousands of vehicles go through the intersection daily, and they will benefit from the changes.

Ms. Marler asked which island was being removed and if there was a bike lane southbound on Reserve Street. She stated that the bike lanes feel huge during the day, but it is a wide street for pedestrians to cross without a refuge. Mr. King stated the island on the northwest corner of the intersection was being removed. The southbound bike lane picks up after the right-hand turn into Wal-Mart. There are currently no bike lanes westbound on Mullan, and that won't change. There was no way to keep the island and still allow trucks enough space to turn. Ms. Marler stated that it was also an air quality issue and there were more problems with the intersection than just a few minutes delay.

Ms. Walzer stated that the intersection and North Reserve are problematic. She had concerns with the right-turn bay in the southeast corner where right-turn vehicles were crossing into the bike lane. She stated there were inadequate markings to tell vehicles there was a bike lane there and would like better striping and signage.

John Wolverton of the Bike/Walk Alliance for Missoula (BWAM) stated that there had five bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities on Highway 93 in the last two years between the Wye and Brooks Street. He objected to the removal of a pedestrian safety refuge and the long crossing distances.

Jed Taylor stated that he was attending as a member of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board and as a private citizen. He goes through the intersection on a bike or car on a daily basis and see challenges for cars, bikes, and pedestrians. He stated that they would shift the traffic to Mullan and have a bottleneck there. The change may help some commuters during evening rush hour for a couple of hours, but they were imposing a 24/7 solution on the problem. He suggested they add an additional left-turn cycle at the end of the north-south cycle to flush the lane again. He stated that he just found out about the plans at a city forum in early December and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board could have participated in a meaningful way earlier.

Bob Wachtel of BWAM and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board read a [letter from BWAM](#) into the record. It stated that the intersection was already bad for bikes and pedestrians and the addition of a left turn lane will make it more deadly. They opposed the removal of the pedestrian island and bike lanes and encouraged a study for a trail under the bridge if necessary.

Bob Giordano of the Missoula Institute for Sustainable Transportation (MIST) stated that he had studied the intersection and the pedestrian island was well-used. The crossing distance to the island is 78 feet, and the distance will increase to 101 feet if it is removed.

Ethel MacDonald of BWAM stated that it appeared there had been a bike accident on Saturday, and she thought someone had turned into a parking lot and not been watching for bikes. She stated that the road was built for cars and that BWAM wrote a letter six months ago opposing the second left-turn lane. She did not understand why they had to remove the island, which offers safety to pedestrians and bikes.

Mr. Jaffe asked how far along the process they were and whether MDT had approved designs preserving the island. Mr. King stated that they had the plans and specifications approved by MDT and ready to bid. The interlocal agreement must be approved before they can move forward with the project. Removing the island is necessary because trucks are not able to make the corner otherwise. They tried a number of refuge options, and MDT would not approve the project with an island.

Mr. Wiener asked what truck length the turning calculations were based on. Mr. King stated he could get those numbers.

Mr. Wilkins stated that he could not support the project. He asked if they had lengthened the time on the light. He stated that if they made small changes to the intersection, it would be a long time before MDT did anything to improve the road. Mr. King stated that they did lengthen the signal time to allow for the increased crossing time.

MDT does not have any plans to fix Reserve Street, and if the City denies this agreement, MDT will do nothing. They have no money for Highway 93 in town for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Houseman asked if the City or County had traffic counts for Mullan Road to the east and west of Clark Fork Road and on Reserve Street northbound and southbound. He also asked if they could create a raised ramp where the island currently exists. Mr. King stated that OPG had traffic counts on their website. They have discussed rollover islands in other locations with MDT and it was decided that pedestrians could think they were on a safe refuge when they were not.

Mr. Houseman asked who paid into the County's traffic mitigation fund. Mr. King stated that the fund was set up by the County Commissioners for the Mullan/Reserve intersection and the Mullan/Flynn intersection. They collect fees from private owners building west of Reserve Street.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the intersection had been inadequate for many years. She also thought there would be a problem with traffic on Mullan. Mr. King stated that in their judgment, Mullan Road was the better place for traffic accommodation than at the high-speed, high-volume areas on Reserve Street. Kevin Slovark, City Engineer, stated that they did not believe the left-turn signal time would be long enough to fill up the queue on Mullan Road.

Ms. Walzer stated that her constituents want to see an improvement there and asked whether there was money from impact fees to remove the curb out and widen the road enough to accommodate the turning radius. Mr. King stated that traffic impact fees are collected at the time of a building permit at half the rate of the impact for a projected housing development. There is a variety of capital projects and fund revenue is down. They would have to pull out the curbs and acquire additional right-of-way, adding several hundreds of thousands of dollars to the project.

Ms. Hellegaard stated they had discussed the project in the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee many times. She stated that TTAC would not allow MDT to ignore Reserve Street and they were pushing for a study from Brooks to I90, at a cost of about a million dollars. When Reserve Street was modeled, it was assumed that Russell Street was a five-lane road to Broadway. She stated that at a later time, staff could inform Council what would happen if they did nothing and how many more cars could get through with the double-left turn lane versus the suggestion of adding an addition left turn arrow at the end of the light cycle.

2. Approve the agreement for engineering services for SID 548 – 5th / 6th / Arthur Intersection safety improvements (memo).—Regular Agenda (Gregg Wood) (Referred to committee: 12/14/09) **HELD IN COMMITTEE**

Mr. King stated the agreement was not ready, and they were in the negotiation phase for design services with WGM. They are in consultation with UM to make sure they are in agreement on the scope and costs.

Mr. Wiener asked what provisions were in the contract for public comment. Mr. King stated that the interlocal agreement and the WGM contract both included public comment requirements, but he was not sure when or how those would take place.

Jed Taylor stated that the documents on the memo link were not informative, and they should link the information when it becomes available.

3. Discussion on the Missoula Redevelopment Agency Sidewalk Projects – URD II & URD III (memo) (presentation).—Regular Agenda (Tod Gass) (Referred to committee: 01/11/10) **REMOVE FROM AGENDA**

Tod Gass of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) stated that the sidewalk projects were included in the last CIP process. In Urban Renewal District (URD) II they have the Catlin/Wyoming Street project, which is currently out to bid. They are also doing sidewalks in the Brooks Street corridor from Mount to McDonald. In URD III, there is a residential curb and sidewalk project. The majority of the work will take place in Ward 6, but the Brooks Street project also includes Wards 3, 4, and 5. The Parks Department will be extending the Milwaukee Trail, and MRA will construct the trail crossing on Catlin as part of this project. The Brooks Street corridor project will take place in two phases, and they are in negotiations with property owners for sidewalk easements in places where the right-of-way is not wide enough. Phase 1 is out to bid, and phase 2 will most likely be next year. In URD III they are doing a residential curb and sidewalk project. It will be four phases over four years. There are some fences encroaching into the ROW on this project, and they will give those property owners the opportunity to move their fences.

Ms. Mitchell asked if the properties on Mary Street were already connected to sewer or if they would have to dig up sidewalks to connect. Mr. Gass stated the area had sewer available and he was not sure if all parcels were connected. Mr. King stated that most of the sewers in that neighborhood were in the alleys, not off the street, and sewer had been installed since the mid 1990s, so property owners had had lots of time to connect.

Mr. Jaffe asked if the cost was covered 100% by MRA. Mr. Gass stated that it was fully covered by tax increment funds from the two URDs. Mr. Jaffe asked if they could pay for only part of the sidewalks in each area and spread the money around further. Mr. King stated that MRA's goal was to do all streets and sidewalks within each URD. MRA is also paying the Street Division for the portion of the work they do on sidewalk projects, which benefits the City's general fund. Mr. Gass stated that without MRA installing sidewalks in the URD, it would not happen, and that was the benefit of being in a URD.

Ms. Marler stated she was excited about the projects and that they were taking place in the low-income part of Ward 6.

Mr. Wilkins stated that Catlin and 3rd was a problem and asked if anything was being done on that crossing. Mr. Gass stated that sidewalks would go as far as 3rd street, but not across it.

John Wolverton of the Franklin to the Fort neighborhood and BWAM stated that he didn't live in the URD, but wanted to extend his appreciation to MRA. The neighbors have been able to talk to consultants, but were not being told why the project was good. People were concerned about losing parking spots and objecting to the project even though they don't have to pay for it. He encouraged them to have the consultant emphasize why sidewalks were important.

IV. HELD AND ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion on the sizes of grease interceptors for the restaurant industry ([Grease Interceptor PowerPoint](#)) ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Stacy Rye and Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 04/21/08)
2. Consider restructuring the city's Sewer Loan Program along the lines of the recently approved change to the Sidewalk & Curb Loan Fund.—Regular Agenda ([Chapter 3.16 – Sidewalk & Curb Loan](#)) ([Chapter 3.18 Sewer Loan](#)) ([Ordinance 3344](#)) (Ed Childers) (Referred to committee: 06/26/06)
3. Information item to present the City's Master Sidewalk Plan. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Doug Harby) (**Bring back on 1/27/10**)
4. Approve the agreement between the City of Missoula and Lloyd A. Twite Family Partnership related to sanitary sewer extension and upsizing for the South Missoula Area ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Monte Sipe) (Referred to committee: 11/09/09) (**Bring back on 1/27/10**)

V. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica S. Miller
Office Manager
City Public Works Department