

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

May 26, 2010, 2:05 PM

City Council Chambers

Members Present: Jason Wiener (chair), Ed Childers, Dick Haines, Roy Houseman, Bob Jaffe, Renee Mitchell, Dave Strohmaier, Pam Walzer

Members Absent: Lyn Hellegaard, Marilyn Marler, Jon Wilkins

Others Present: Steve King, Kevin Slovarp, Phil Smith, Doug Harby, Bob Giordano, Al Price, Ethel MacDonald, Ellen Buchanan, Mary Werner, Christy Hager, Claire Urban, Bill Dicus

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Approval of the minutes of [May 19, 2010](#)– Approved as submitted.

B. Announcements – None.

C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda items – None.

II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Ratify bid award for sidewalk ramp improvement project 09-029 – Missoula ARRA 8199(88). ([memo](#)) (Doug Harby)
REMOVE FROM AGENDA

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council ratify the bid award for Project 09-029, Sidewalk Ramps - Missoula Improvements to Patterson Enterprises, Inc. for the base bid of \$177,421.86 and bid alternates 1-4 for \$179,853.03 with a total sum of \$357,274.89.

Doug Harby, Construction Project Manager, stated that they did not have a resolution for the Mayor to sign for this project as they did with the other American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects because it was designed in-house. They have received concurrence from the state on the bid award. They are installing curb ramps on South Avenue, Bancroft, South Higgins, and Arthur. The low bidder was Patterson Construction. The project is entirely funded by ARRA.

Mr. Childers made the motion to suspend the rules to consider the item. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Strohmaier made the motion to ratify the bid award. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approve an exception to MMC 9.30 Noise Control during construction of Project #05-033, Miller Creek Road Improvements ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Kevin Slovarp) (Referred to committee: 05/24/10) **REMOVE FROM AGENDA**

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council approve an exception to MMC-Chapter 9.30, Noise Control, for LS Jensen which will permit relief from the specified noise levels during construction of the Miller Creek Road Improvements Project - 05-033.

Mr. Slovarp stated that the contractor would like to do night work the week of June 7 to install some sewer main piping in the intersection of Briggs and at the intersection of Upper and Lower Miller Creek Roads. The second occurrence would be toward the end of the project for about a week in August or September. The night work would benefit the majority of the users of the road to move users through the area while constructions is ongoing.

Ms. Mitchell asked if doing the work at night would decrease the amount of time the road was hampered by construction. She asked if that was the week the road would be closed. Mr. Slovarp stated that it would, but they would still do road work during the day. The contractor will not close Upper Miller Creek Road until school is out, so they are not simultaneous.

Ms. Mitchell made the motion to approve the exception.

Mr. Jaffe stated that his concern is the people who are directly affected and he would like to know that they've been informed already. Mr. Slovarp stated that they have not gone door-to-door yet.

Mr. Haines stated that it would be worthwhile to send a postcard notifying the residents, because they would hate to have them find out at 4:00 AM that they are working. Mr. Slovarp stated that the contractor, engineer, and City have a good working relationship with the property owners, so they can go door to door to let them know.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve and authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation for \$43,000 in federal Safe Routes to School funds to be used for non-infrastructure activities in FY2011 ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Phil Smith) (Referred to committee: 05/24/10) **REMOVE FROM AGENDA**

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation for \$43,000 in federal Safe Routes to School funds to be used for non-infrastructure activities in FY2011.

Phil Smith, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager, stated that this is the fourth year in a row they have applied for and received federal funds for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. This item is for the non-infrastructure award. They have also received an infrastructure award, which will be forthcoming in a month or two. The grant supports leadership at the schools, which design activities. There is \$10,000 in the budget to buy additional police overtime. Community-wide education is important. Item 4 is the K-5 school curriculum for kids walking and biking which needs to be refreshed. Money budgeted for a bicycle trailer was deleted by the State.

Ms. Walzer made the motion.

Mr. Jaffe stated that it was unclear what was being covered. Mr. Wiener stated that it was in the second appendix.

Ms. Walzer stated that she was impressed with citizen involvement at SRTS meetings. It is a valuable use of money.

Mr. Jaffe asked if the ad in the paper was part of it and whether any of that was funded by the paper. Mr. Smith stated that it was part of the current year's grant and that the typical price for those ads was \$3,000 per page, but he gets five of them for \$5,000.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

4. Discuss back-in angle parking on Spruce Street ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Steve King) (Referred to committee: 05/24/10) ([Presentation](#)) ([Public Comments Submitted](#)) **HELD IN COMMITTEE**

Steve King, Public Works Director, stated that Spruce Street was striped in the summer of 2009 to allow for the new back-in parking configuration. Spruce Street is classified as a collector and has 5,600 trips per day. They want to evaluate the street's operation and receive comment before the paint is refreshed this summer. At the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board on May 13, they discussed the project and the character of the road. The board's goals are to encourage people to walk and bike downtown. There were discussions on metering the parking, and they did acknowledge the value of the additional parking. Another key point they discussed was that the parking fills up the street and reduces the illusion of an open street that is easy to drive down quickly. The board did not make a specific recommendation, but the discussion was the current configuration was better and they would not encourage returning to the original configuration. Public Works has also received concerns and letters from property owners and managers about the character of the road and parking operations. They have received comments of support from users, particularly cyclists and people working downtown.

Mr. Slovarp stated that they striped the road on August 17, 2009 and passed an ordinance to allow the back-in parking, in Missoula Municipal Code 10.22.110. Public Works and the Parking Commission are using the Spruce Street back-in parking as an experimental treatment to increase safety to bikes and motorists on the road. It is easier for drivers to pull forward into the driving lane and get a clear view of oncoming traffic. Pull-in parking creates a difficult movement to see oncoming vehicles. It is safer for bicyclists because drivers are less likely to pull out and hit bikes. Typically everyone is using the spaces as back-in now, not pulling in forward first as they did early on. Children are directed to the sidewalk and shielded from traffic by the doors. It is easier to load and unload and to maneuver into a space with fewer steps than parallel parking. They pulled the accident history from Higgins to Jefferson from 2004 to present. Since 2004 there were a total of 40 accidents, all prior to the reconfiguration. Since August 17, 2009, they have not had any reported accidents. There was an average of seven accidents per year for the prior six years. Wayne Gravatt, Traffic Services Coordinator, stated that 21 of those 40 reported accidents were T-bone and rear-end

accidents, which are more severe. Spruce Street by Ryman had 24 accidents during that same period, 12 of which were related to the pull-in parking there. Mr. Slovarp stated that in traffic counts done on April 20 and 21, 2010, westbound vehicular speeds average 22.6 mph, and the 85th percentile was 29.3 mph. Eastbound speeds were 25.3 mph average and the 85th percentile was 29.4 mph. Mr. Gravatt added that for westbound traffic 89% of drivers were compliant and 92% of eastbound drivers were compliant. Mr. Slovarp stated that they did not conduct a speed study before the reconfiguration, but they will try to do that with all their projects in the future. They did not conduct speed studies west of Jefferson due to the North Higgins construction, which may have skewed the numbers. Public Works thinks the project has been successful and would like to keep it as it is. Their opinion is that speeds have been reduced. There are potential adjustments in lane locations, and they have room to shift the center lane and get more room for bike lanes next to the parallel parking. They would like to institute back-in angle parking on the south side of East Spruce between Higgins and Pattee.

Mr. Strohmaier stated that the accident history and traffic calming data were less robust than he would like. Not having accidents is not necessarily the result of a change in lane configuration; correlation does not equal causation. He would have liked baseline data regarding vehicle speeds. The majority of public concern is from the 400 block, the residential end of the street, and he would like to hear their initial reaction to transitioning back to parallel parking on the 400 and 500 blocks. Mr. King stated they were open to suggestions. Shifting to wider lanes or having a large shoulder could be done but would probably not be staff's recommendation.

Mr. Wiener stated that objection seemed to be limited to a couple of properties with headlights shining in and that the 500 block of Spruce on the north side was an industrial site. He asked if it would be confusing to move back and forth between configurations. Mr. King stated he would not recommend multiple transitions. Mr. Wiener stated that he bikes that route daily and favors the current configuration over the other.

Christy Hager, a resident of the 400 block of Spruce, stated that she lives in a residentially zone neighborhood and the parking looks like a used car lot. It changes the nature of the neighborhood and she is afraid of what it will do to her property value. She hasn't noticed a difference in speeds. She has had two cases of vandalism on her car since the change. The neighborhood looks different. The bike lane on the south side of the eastbound lanes is worn, showing that people drive on the bike lanes. They are being asked to provide free parking.

Lavender Laurie stated that she has been verbally accosted throughout the day as she tries to park. She doesn't remember a public comment period and has lived there since October. People don't know how to park that way in Missoula. She is tired of being yelled at because she is stopping traffic like she would in a parallel parking situation. She stated that when Salt Lake became crowded, they pulled the cars into the middle of the street. Education is paramount and the signs were not there when it first started.

Mary Werner of 418 East Spruce stated that she has lived there 20 years and rides her bicycle to work on the street every day. There is something wrong or unsafe every day. In front of the Children's Center, she has to slow down because of people unloading and opening doors into the bike lane. Cars go as fast now as they did before. A fire truck had to slow down to wait for a car to back-in angle park and at the end of the day, cars make u-turns out of the spaces. On weekends during Griz games and the farmers market, people park incorrectly. More people are coming to park in their neighborhood. They have headlights shining in their windows for 10-15 minutes in mornings and evenings.

Claire Urban, a former homeowner on E Spruce stated that all users should be equal, with no greater consideration for council or staff. She encouraged Public Works to work with facts and hard data, and would like to know what data the bike/ped board based their support on. On the south side near Washington the structure of the road was not amenable to back-in parking, because tailgates are down low. The visibility of the car depends on the size of the car. She asked what variables were assessed in the accident data.

[Unidentified] stated that he is extremely cautious when walking or driving. You have to get much farther into the street before you can see what's coming or not coming when crossing the street.

Bill Dicus stated that he has lived on the 300 block of East Spruce 40 years. The centerline has been moved in their direction and made it hard to back out of the driveway, so they went through the process to widen it. There are different nuances for every block. It works great on the 200 block where there are fewer residences. For the first time in many years, he finds a place to park when returning home after 4:00. Having parking availability is a relief. The placement for the traffic count and speed at Jefferson was wrong; they should do a count at Washington. He has watched bikes on the street and hasn't seen issues. The 300 and 400 blocks are employees of downtown parking. With some minor adjustments and more enforcement, it should remain how it is.

Cindy Winchell of the Parking Commission stated she was apprehensive at first, but after watching and discussing it with people who use it, she thinks it is one of the safest things the city has done for drivers and bikes. People pay more attention to how to drive and park. Once or twice a day she has to ticket someone outside the lines, and in other parking areas she has to do it a lot. The parking is forcing people to be more considerate and thoughtful with parking.

Mr. Wiener asked about the schedule on restriping. Mr. Slovarp stated they could do it at any time.

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. 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)
4. Review infrastructure conditions at the locations of serious and fatal traffic accidents: 2007-2009 ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Jason Wiener) (Referred to committee: 01/25/10)
5. Resolution to restore vacated Inez Street at South 2nd Street to the public trust and public use, and vacate a public access easement that was a condition of the vacation ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Carla Krause) (Referred to committee: 04/26/2010)

V. ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica S. Miller
Office Manager
City Public Works Department