

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

March 2, 2011 1:55 PM

City Council Chambers

Members Present: Jason Wiener (chair), Ed Childers, Lyn Hellegaard, Bob Jaffe, Renee Mitchell, Dave Strohmaier, Pam Walzer, Jon Wilkins, Cynthia Wolken

Members Absent: Dick Haines, Marilyn Marler, Stacy Rye

Others Present: Steve King, Kevin Slovarp, Doug Harby, Phil Smith, Dan Jordan, Gregg Wood, Jerry Ballas, Bob Wachtel, Harold Hoem, Jeff Smith, Robin Spaziani, Mike Way, Bob Giordano, Jim Hausauer, Nancy Wilson, Michael Tree

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the minutes of – [February 16, 2011](#) Approved as submitted
- B. Announcements – [Commercial Low Voltage Permit proposal](#) update on the March 9, 2011 agenda
- C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda items – None

II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. Approve the CTEP agreement for project 10-020 University of Montana Crosswalk Improvements. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Doug Harby) (Referred to committee: 02/28/11) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council approve the MDT/CTEP agreement for Project 10-020, University of Montana Crosswalk Improvements.

Doug Harby, Construction Project Manager, said the University of Montana requested funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for four crosswalk improvements at University and Arthur Avenues, Beckwith and Maurice Avenues, South and Gerald Avenues, and Eddy and Arthur Avenues, ([Campus Street Crossings](#)). These intersections were identified by the University as areas of high pedestrian-vehicular interactions. It is anticipated that these crossings will be constructed with stamped colored concrete or pavers with lighting improvements. Bicycle use will also be an important part of these improvements. The total project budget is \$300,000.00 with \$259,740.00 in Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds and the University of Montana will provide the local match of \$40,260.00.

Ed Childers asked why there were not any improvements planned for Beckwith and Arthur Avenues.

Dough Harby said because there is a traffic signal at that intersection and there are no traffic signals at the other intersections.

Jason Wiener asked if the project for 5th/6th and Arthur would have similar treatments for any of those intersections and when will these come back.

Doug Harby said there would be no raised crosswalks because the state does not want those on a state primary route; however Public Works is considering different ways to visually enhance those crosswalks with a combination of increased visibility for pedestrians and a visual signal for the vehicles. He said he hoped to start construction in May 2011. He said some off street construction would start as soon as school is out.

Dave Strohmaier made the motion that the committee recommends the City Council approve the MDT/CTEP agreement for Project 10-020, University of Montana Crosswalk Improvements.

Jason Wiener asked if the construction portion had been awarded. Doug Harby said they are hoping to have it bid this year but this project has to go through a higher level of state review than most CTEP projects and it would depend on how long it takes the state engineers to review it; realistically they are hoping for an early Spring bid next year (2012).

The motion was passed unanimously.

2. Approve a resolution vacating all that portion of a public utility easement retained by the vacation of Bank Street by Resolution No. 2540 dated 07/12/1965 and a portion of a public utility easement retained by the vacation of Bank Street by Resolution No. 3546 dated 06/28/1976 over and across Lot 12a of the amended plat of original townsite, Block 6, Lots 12 through 16. (memo)—Regular Agenda (Dan Jordan) (Referred to committee: 02/28/11) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council adopt a Resolution vacating all that portion of a public utility easement retained by the vacation of Bank Street by Resolution No. 2540 and a portion of an easement retained by the vacation of Bank Street by Resolution No. 3546 over and across Lot 12a of the amended plat of Original Townsite, Block 6, Lots 12 through 16 with the condition that Qwest Corporation and Northwestern Energy, LLC abandon their utility lines in the public utility easements and relocate them to the easement to the south recorded in Book 872 Micro Page 296 within 90 days of the adoption of the resolution.

Dan Jordan, GIS Manager, requested approval of a resolution to vacate public utility easements on Bank Street with the condition that Qwest Corporation and Northwestern Energy, LLC relocate their utility lines within ninety days of the adoption of the resolution. This is the site for the new parking structure and the current location of the utilities would interfere with the location of the structure. He gave a presentation showing the location of the easements.

John Wilkins made the motion the committee recommends the City Council adopt a Resolution vacating all that portion of a public utility easement retained by the vacation of Bank Street by Resolution No. 2540 and a portion of an easement retained by the vacation of Bank Street by Resolution No. 3546 over and across Lot 12a of the amended plat of Original Townsite, Block 6, Lots 12 through 16 with the condition that Qwest Corporation and Northwestern Energy, LLC abandon their utility lines in the public utility easements and relocate them to the easement to the south recorded in Book 872 Micro Page 296 within 90 days of the adoption of the resolution.

The motion was passed unanimously.

III. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion with Bike-Ped Board. (memo)—Regular Agenda (Jason Wiener) (Referred to committee: 02/28/11) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Bob Wachtel from the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board read the three recommendations ([memo](#)) they had submitted to the City Council on February 14, 2011. These were 1.) Bike System Inventory, 2.) Sidewalk Funding Committee and 3.) 5th 6th Street Reconfiguration.

Jason Wiener said the committee would take them sequentially for discussion and ask staff what is currently in place and if they agree there are deficiencies that need to be redressed.

Steve King, City Public Works Director, addressed the first recommendation of a Bike System Inventory saying that Public Works has a graphic inventory of our bike lane and bike route systems in our Bike Map

that is produced through coordination with the bike/pedestrian program. Additionally the Parks Department has a map with both bike lanes and trail systems and park access features. These resources have been given to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board; his understanding is the Bike-Ped Board's interest is much more detailed about the qualities of each portion of the bike lane as far as lane width, lane striping, road width, road character, etc. and we do not have that information in our geographic information. We do not have an immediate need for that type of detail because we do not use that for building roads so this is not a work effort that staff would recommend supporting. He said the Public Works Department has years of backlog of work and they do not have staff resources to create a new data base that would require hundreds of hours of field time and dozens of hours of computer time to compile the data base as described; it is not a realistic priority with the limited available staff. When building roads or doing major maintenance projects we look at each of those projects in the field in detail and use that information on each project. An example is the Brooks Street project that was a complete reconstruction from the ground up. We inventoried everything including existing conditions, parking, bike lanes, drainage, soil profiles, utilities, etc. and is part of our planned development. We do a field inventory and check of all the dimensions of all the structures. A field review is done prior for any type of maintenance project. We have asked the Bike-Ped Board and other interested citizens as we put out projects to make recommendations for changes and this is done on a year to year basis and project to project basis, that is why this type of a comprehensive inventory would not have a practical application or a daily prosecution of work and projects in the Engineering Division. We do things with a different method that would make this a data base of interest but not of importance to our progress with work.

Pam Walzer said the Urban Forestry wants to inventory all the urban forest and they were able to acquire funds to start the actual framework for the data base, using the concept that as projects came together and you do the field inventory then that data could be entered. Would you see that as a potential? She said there no framework at all and the data acquired for these projects is scattered and not in a central location.

Steve King said they do not have the data that has been recommended. We have a Geographic Information System (GIS), and that data base has block by block graphics for property with street attributes, where the storm drains are, the sewers are, where the utilities we control are plus great parcel information. What we don't have is the physical attributes of the roadway, where the curbs are, what streets have boulevard verses curbs and sidewalks. We do have a sidewalk inventory but it has not been audited, we do not have the condition of each block of sidewalks, the condition of the curbs, the boulevards or the streetscape. If we did an inventory of the streets the physical attributes would be the first level of inventory and second would be the markings of bike lane widths, the center line location, the shoulder widths, etc. as well as signings and symbols. Without having the full framework it is hard to select thirty miles of bike lanes and say we will have detailed information for bike lanes and not the physical attributes. That is the foundation for prioritizing construction projects.

Pam Walzer said the sidewalk inventory is not complete, but when a sidewalk project is done is the sidewalk inventory updated with that information.

Steve King said yes, the data base is inventoried parcel by parcel for both the existence and condition of sidewalks and curbs, walkups and driveways. This is the information included in these projects to quantify the work to bring potential sidewalk orders to the council.

Dave Strohmaier asked Steve King if staff time were not an issue is there some utility to having an inventory in place as proposed by the Bike-Ped Board and secondly could the tasks associated with gathering the information and creating a data base be done by volunteers and/or the Bike-Ped Board.

Steve King said he would like to have all information on all rights-of-way and the bike lane system is one large component that is of interest and if money and resources were of no object certainly to have this information would be of interest but it is of limited use for practical application for their project development. We have talked with the Bike-Ped Board about a volunteer crew and we would need to be sure the field data was verified. The maintenance of this data base would need to be done yearly.

Bob Jaffe asked Bob Wachtel to explain what the Bike-Ped Board sees as the interest in the utility of compiling all this data and how it would be used next spring.

Bob Wachtel said one of the issues that prompted this was the epoxy paint issue when several of the board members opted to voluntarily look at some of the bike lanes that were proposed to be painted with epoxy in 2010; we discovered that there were a number of bike lanes that were significantly under the five foot American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards. Volunteers measured the proposed bike lanes and then measured many of the existing bike lanes throughout the city and developed an extensive inventory of the existing bike lanes. The primary motivation the Bike-Ped Board sees is to have an official record of the existing bike lanes. There doesn't seem to be an accurate and authorized record that is an official description of these bike lanes. The maps from the Parks Department contains a number of errors and inaccuracies where bike lanes are delineated, some are missing, some are indicating bike lanes where they aren't any. An official detailed listing of the bike lanes would help in preparation of those kinds of maps in other departments. Another issue we became aware of was on Spruce Street between the railroad and Nora with some other work being done as an urban development project performed through a building permit process, this project resulted in removing a bike lane on the north side of Spruce Street in that section. It appears there is no method of official public or council review of how that bike lane was authorized to be removed. As a beginning point the data base could begin with a listing, he said he has some examples of inventories from other cities. This could be a work in progress, starting with a simple listing and then developed further to indicate the quality of the bike lane, when it needs repainting, etc.

Jason Wiener said he can see the value to critiquing the resources for accuracy and that is a good starting point. In terms of the dedication of staff resources for this, they need to think about how the council interacts with city staff action. It is like a new request in the budget to allocate specific resources to it, and we are coming up on a new budget cycle. He said he is not optimistic about the prospects for any new requests. People in council have heard about the scope of the request and he said if there is someone who wants to craft the request to get it in the budget that would seem to be the appropriate way in the terms of the exact recommendation we have been given.

Bob Wachtel commented on Steve King's comment about volunteer efforts, he said he is sure with the active bicycle community we have, we could generate a strong crew to develop accurate numbers to use in the data system.

Phil Smith said it is absolutely striking that here we are in a community that is developing bicycle facilities, now we are past the point of saying we have to have bike facilities to the point of saying are the bike lanes and inch or two from what they ought to be. Very few communities in the country have progressed to that degree of detail. Thanks to the Bike-Ped Board and others who have pointed out when bike lanes are not quite as wide as they should be. Whenever we do bike lane painting the Street Department has to measure anyway, even if the information is on a computer it is still of limited use because the crew still has to measure them.

Public Comment:

Harold Hoem, from the Rattlesnake area said that as they were developing their Rattlesnake Transportation Plan they looked into facts on the ground to establish a base line and a record of progress so they can see where they had made improvements or lack of improvements. He said this area has a lot of subpar streets which includes lack of sidewalks, curbs and gutters. The value of this information lets us know which direction to go.

John Wolverton, Board member of Bike/Walk Alliance for Missoula read for the record a [letter](#) addressing all three of the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board recommendations. The specific intent of this is to provide some guidance as to the priority that they think you should consider with the potential projects.

Robin Spaziani, Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board, said she wanted to address Phil Smith's comments about this not being very useful because they go out and measure anyway. She said that is not the intent to tell people where to put lanes where they already exist, it is more of what do we have, do we want to grow the system; if we do not have some sort of inventory we don't know what we need. When the Bike-Ped Board has looked at different instances of how to recommend where to put a new bike lane or route, we have to personally drive around the city or ride our bikes and to say where the bike lanes begin or end. We have no resource, it seems like a colossal waste of time if that's the way the city is doing it as well.

Bob Giordano, Missoula Institute for Sustainable Transportation, said he has measured bike lanes and is willing to continue to do that and give feedback and input to Public Works. A data base has a lot of utility that would also be of use to track bike/car crashes. The bonus of this is if our travel lanes were marginally narrowed it would naturally slow down drivers. We want to contribute to help the city to be able to set our roads up for the benefit of everyone in the community.

Bob Jaffe asked what is involved in creating a data base as a layer to the existing GIS data base using volunteers to supply the data.

Steve King said we have the foundation hardware/software for maintaining this data base if information is submitted in a format that could be integrated into our GIS system and it would be very little work for our GIS technician to create a layer. It is the annual maintenance perpetually that is the burden. He said he works for the Mayor and the CAO and the work plans and priorities that are set come from the city administration so if this is something the council would want to advocate for administration to create into our work plans then that would be the avenue to get it to staff.

Jon Wilkins wanted to say that if we used volunteers and someone was injured that would be a liability to the city. This would need to involve the city attorney.

Jason Wiener said it seems if the information were collected into a spreadsheet it could be formatted and integrated into the system and he could support that level of cooperation.

2. Sidewalk Funding Committee. Jason Wiener said the Active Transportation Plan draft has just been released and it has a recommendation for that funding as well. He asked the Bike-Ped Board to discuss their recommendation and how it interacts with the OPG transportation plans.

Robin Spaziani, she has attended these transportation meetings and one of the concerns is the issue of sidewalk funding. It was suggested the Bike-Ped Board be the committee to research recommendations for funding sidewalks but they felt it needed to consist of a broader group of citizens. The Bike-Ped Board recommends the city form this committee because it is a big issue citywide.

Dave Strohmaier said this is paramount and he asked the Bike-Ped Board if they could spearhead forming a committee. He is also interested in Public Works perspective on their roll in this.

Robin Spaziani said she could not speak for the Bike-Ped Board about the forming the committee but they had discussed the issues and if this wasn't approved, the Board would continue to work in some way to explore this. She did not know what level the Board would want to accept but they would want to be involved.

Steve King said this is a paramount proposal for community direction and putting together a cooperative team with elected officials, citizen interests- both concerned citizens as well as advocates makes good sense. He said it would be a good idea to have a dedicated and focused group to move ahead with this type of debate. How it would be administered would be something he would need to defer to his bosses, the effort and recommendation is very sound as far as Public Works support.

Ed Childers said he has had some people tell him they have already paid for their sidewalks and why should they pay for other peoples sidewalks. He said it seems there are two real options for change, one

is to redistribute the cost burden among Missoulians and the other is to bring money in from outside the city. The question that comes up when we start to talk about redistributing the cost, is how to take into consideration the people who have already paid for their own sidewalk, and what to do about sidewalk and curb maintenance, what about people that live on corners that spend more money on their sidewalks than someone else. If a group could address sidewalk funding that would be great. He said one proposal that has been made is to off load the cost from property owners to automobile drivers but that would require state legislative action.

Phil Smith, Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator, said several months ago he had asked the Bike-Bed Board to find a method of funding sidewalks other than property owners. He said a group could be charged to come back in six months with some proposals and conduct hearings in the public forum with the City Council, and try to come to some conclusion about adding existing strategies and ways to help people build sidewalks. It is time to move forward to do something to create a study body that would be accountable to the committee for some types of recommendations. He said he has offered to the Bike-Ped Board and again to the committee that with Steve King's approval, he would work with that process in whatever way is appropriate.

Public Comment:

Harold Hoem said we should make an active effort to change a system that has been in place for many years. In his neighborhood it is part rural and part urban and some people would be charged with a huge bill for sidewalks. Maybe we could start on our corridors first because those are the streets that are used by everyone going to and from town and work. Alternative funding is necessary and this would definitely be discussed in their neighborhood group.

John Solmonson (sp ?) from the Franklin neighborhood said he is hopeful that sidewalks would be the highest priority of the three recommendations. He said a starting point would be to get the public and government active in supporting a committee to come up with recommendations.

Jim Hausauer said we need a change because there is no schedule that is going to accomplish what needs to be done with sidewalks. At the Bike-Ped Board meeting this week MRA had a great presentation on what they are doing; there was well over a million dollars spent this last fiscal year to get sidewalks built. He said some people will get free sidewalks in these urban renewal districts and he has no problem with that but others outside those districts want to know why they don't get sidewalks for free; we have a serious imbalance and we need to find a way to have a fair balance for everyone. We need to resolve the funding issue.

Michael Tree with Mountain Line, said sidewalks are very important; in February they carried approximately eighty one thousand rides on the Mountain Line system. Prior to getting on and off the bus, their customers are pedestrians and bicyclists who need a good and safe environment. He wanted to convey that building a safe infrastructure benefits those citizens that ride Mountain Line as well.

Bob Giordano said this is such a fundamental issue for the city to have safe and accessible walking. He hopes this council can take some leadership in forming a committee to find a balance to make the funding for sidewalks fair for everyone.

Mike Wong wants to urge the committee to consider a moratorium on new sidewalk SID's and projects until these recommendations are in place and have been acted on. He said there are approximately sixty six people that have just had a resolution passed on 3rd Street for them to pay for their own sidewalks under the old standard way of doing things.

Bob Jaffe said it seems appropriate to set up a subcommittee from Public Works to try to organize what the options are and bring back some proposals.

Jason Wiener said he agrees and would appoint a subcommittee to do this, someone to chair that committee and to have a work plan to address the scope of items. He said subject to Steve King's approval Phil Smith would lead this subcommittee. He said they would ask the Administrative Leadership Team (ALT) to discuss what resources the administration is willing to dedicate to a council subcommittee to address the sidewalk completion issues. This is not just a question of funding it is also a question of priority and the scope of the system.

Pam Walzer said the general public needs to be involved because without community support this won't go anywhere. We need funding sources.

Dave Strohmaier said it is critical that this subcommittee be diverse not just Public Works or council members.

Jason Wiener said he would contact ALT to see if this could be discussed at their next meeting. He asked the committee to think about people that would like to serve on the committee.

3. Reconfiguration of 5TH Street/6th Street: Bob Wachtel said the Bike-Ped Board's perspective is that it would bring this section of Missoula streets into compliance with the Complete Streets Resolution. He said the implementation of this proposal would provide a traffic calming measure and it would create an east-west bicycle arterial. It would improve the flow of vehicular traffic. He said this proposal has already generated strong citizen support.

Steve King wanted to go on record as saying that Public Works supports bringing this forward for consideration in the Long Range Transportation Plan. He is not advocating that we go ahead with the project; he is advocating that this be considered as part of the universal projects in our Long Range Transportation Plan and it be brought forward as a public recommendation. We have already responded to the Bike-Ped Board that we are supportive.

Jason Wiener asked what the time frame for that planning process would be.

Steve King said that Ann Cundy in the OPG Transportation Office said it was their next big work effort. He said this is probably out there for the next eighteen months to two years.

Bob Wachtel said this time frame seemed reasonable.

Jason Wiener said that Stacy Rye was unable to be here today and as the representative of this ward wanted Jason to share her sentiment that she has yet to be convinced of the wisdom of this project.

Lynn Hellegaard said it was good to take this into the Long Range Transportation Plan because we are talking about a state road that would require MDT's approval first.

Bob Jaffe said he was in favor of this proposal in particular for the sections that don't require MDT approval.

Public Comment: Bob Giordano said he is talking with the neighborhood and he said they have taken out the sections of roads that are MDT roads and they are looking at the less traffic areas. He has been checking the Police reports and in the last fifteen days there have been several wrecks, he said we see this project as benefiting everyone.

John Wolverton said that he uses 5th and 6th Streets a lot. He said at intersections there is a lot of queuing and sometimes a bicyclist will block motor vehicles and if there were delineated bike lanes it would be helpful to bicyclists and motorist.

Jason Wiener said they would include this in universal projects to be evaluated with the Long Range Transportation Plan and work it into the technical analysis.

III. 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. 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)
3. T4 America partner support ([memo](#)) – Regular Agenda (Stacy Rye) (Referred to committee: (Referred to committee: 08/16/10)
4. Presentation from Public Works staff regarding proposed process for finding contractors and awarding bids for reconstruction of Russell Street. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 11/15/2010)
5. Resolution to change the speed limit on Reserve Street between Brooks and 39th Street. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Wayne Gravatt) (Referred to committee: 01/24/11)
6. Consider an ordinance amending Missoula Municipal Code Chapter 15.32 Entitled “Building Permits,” Providing for Low Voltage Permits. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Don Verrue) (Referred to committee: 02/07/11)
7. Consider an ordinance amending Missoula Municipal Code Chapter 15.32 Entitled “Building Permits,” Providing for Low Voltage Permits. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Don Verrue) (Referred to committee: 02/07/11)

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Peggy Diamond, Program Specialist
City Public Works Department