

MINUTES
Special Streets Sustainability Committee Meeting
Meeting #2: 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 11, 2021

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members:

1. Lance Beck - *absent*
2. Cal Coblentz
3. Robin DeRuew
4. Tom Dingus
5. Kyle England - *absent*
6. Matt Ewers
7. Mike Frucci
8. Kelly Fukai
9. Jesse Granado - *absent*
10. Todd Henry
11. Chris Moan
12. Karl Otterstrom
13. Kevin Person
14. Greg Repetti
15. Melanie Rose
16. Ben Small
17. Cheryl Stewart
18. Frank Tombari
19. Joe Tortorelli
20. Kevin Wallace
21. Diana Wilhite - *absent*
22. Kathe Williams - *absent*

Internal Staff:

1. John Hohman, Deputy City Manager
2. Adam Jackson, Planning/Grants Engineer
3. Bill Helbig, City Engineer
4. Chelsie Taylor, Finance Director
5. Taylor Dillard, Administrative Assistant
6. Chris Bainbridge, City Clerk

External Staff:

1. Joy York, Whitworth University, Moderator
2. Linda Pierce, NCE Engineering, Consulting Engineer

1. Introduction & Overview – Joy York

Ms. York welcomed everyone to the meeting and went over the overall focus of today's meeting, including expectations for streets, and options for pavement goals, treatments, and repair. She said there will be a recorded main and breakout sessions; said the breakout sessions will last about ten minutes and one person in each group will be asked to report back on the discussion, and she reminded everyone to be present and respectful of colleagues in discussion.

2. Video Recap – Brief review of content – Adam Jackson

Mr. Jackson gave a recap of the video content and purpose, and the survey results of the three separate videos; he noted we received sixteen SurveyMonkey survey responses from March 26 through April 7, and he went over the initial conclusions of the poll; he said the cost impacts are \$16 million to maintain the pavement management program; and he noted the local streets are suffering as a limited amount of funding is applied to them, and that he is hopeful everyone had the opportunity to watch the three videos.

3. Committee member questions from Videos 1, 2, 3

Committee member questions and comments included the idea that the some of the questions could be deemed a bit vague as citizens are being asked to make decisions without knowing the cost; suggestions included informing the public in generalized terms such as what would it cost for an excellent road and what am I citizen, willing to pay for an excellent cost; that it might be helpful to know how much Spokane City and Spokane County allocate for their program or maybe have some comparisons with other cities in Washington as well as Idaho. After a brief discussion on chip seals or other surface treatments, Mr. Jackson

noted consultant or city scoring is very subjective, but the important factor is, are we going to make roads better, maintain them, or are we comfortable with having the roads decline, and he suggested thinking in those terms rather than thinking about points. There was also some mention about state roads and Mr. Hohman explained that the State Department of Transportation is responsibility for state highways, but there is a cooperative effort to keep the roadways clear of such things as snow and ice, and for signal maintenance.

Other comments included a need for absoluteness, as what cost would citizens be faced with for making the roads better, maintaining them, or leaving them in their current condition; what do we get for the money, and at what annual level. A question arose about the life expectancy of a normal road with or without repairs, and Mr. Jackson said the life expectancy varies based on the intensity of the treatment; that it could last from three to eight to ten years based on the road condition, the quality of the work and other factors such as the harshness of the seasons; he stated that it is rare to go beyond ten years for surface treatments.

4. Breakout Discussion #1: Pavement Condition Goals

Ms. York explained that the questions for breakout discussion group one include: how should the City prioritize arterials versus local access streets, and on a scale from 1-10, how important should pavement management be for the City. Mr. Jackson said it is difficult to have absolutes, and he asked if there is a better way to message that moving forward; he said the actual score of our streets is 76 and the \$16 million a year keeps us there. Committee members moved into the breakout discussion groups and Ms. York explained that once the full committee re-joins, she will go to a point person from each group to discuss their overview.

Group 1: Robin DeRuew said the video generated more questions, such as what would be involved in the budget and would it include things like sidewalks, signs, bike routes, and stormwater; would it affect transportation along the road and is that maintained in those funds or separate. She noted the group's overall rating of importance was 7.

Group 2: Frank Tombari said the arterials are good and they like the City's approach; they are not as concerned that other streets had to be the same level but they want them maintained; they also assumed sidewalks, sewer, and stormwater were included; said the cost per person with the roads in good shape won't be as expensive to maintain versus waiting 20 years; said maybe people don't recognize the roads are not in bad shape and haven't thought about setting funds aside for the future. Mike Frucci said it is a very high priority in order to protect the investment.

Group 3: Cheryl Stewart said they agreed to aim for maintaining the roads in good condition as it might not be practical to aim for excellence; they agree the arterials need to be prioritized but it would be good to hear more from city residents for further feedback; said it is always good to have local access, and the priority of importance is about a 6 or 7; she also suggested maybe an idea would be to change that verbiage on how important are the roads compared to everything else.

Group 4: Cal Coblenz said they don't want things to get worse; questioned if perhaps residential streets have a more aggressive plan since we are not devoting enough funds toward those roads; said the status quo is good, or about 76; said the priorities are arterials and the group is happy they are in good shape; and they would like to know how much of that commitment would take away from something else.

Group 5: Ben Small said his group settled to try to make the streets better; that increasing the investment and making streets better might resonate better with the public; they ranked the importance high, similar to public safety; said there are some perceptions about roads and lack of sidewalks and whether that is something to consider here; and they asked if sidewalk improvements go along with street improvements.

Group 6: Melanie Rose said that her group didn't like the question and had conversations about what it means; said you can't answer the question if you don't know the cost; said there is a need to maintain what we have especially on arterials and suggested not spending less, but there is no strong impetus to improve local access roads, and overall, what will it cost the average citizen.

5. Breakout Discussion #2: Treatment or Repair Methods

Ms. York said the questions for breakout discussion group 2 concern treatment and/or repair methods, should the city continue with pavement overlays and reconstruction projects only, add surface treatments to the city's toolbox, and which types of surface treatments should be considered and what pavement treatments or repairs are acceptable.

Group 1: Karl Otterstrom stated that his group feels that the use of chip seals might pose a problem for bikes, but they did not rule out chip seals on roads with lower speed limits; said there is a need to apply the right tool to the right situation; mentioned the idea of pilot projects or to look at other jurisdictions in the region within our performance goals.

Group 2: Tom Dingus said his group suggested not limiting options but let the professionals determine which options are best; perhaps do a cost benefit of surface treatments; said some roads could have multiple surface treatments and if that is the case, how would each surface treatment be determined for which community.

Group 3: Chris Moan said his group agrees with the first two groups; that having more tools is a great option; would like to hear the pros and cons of chip sealing or maybe only use that in certain locations.

Group 4: Joe Tortorelli stated that his group agreed chip seals are not readily acceptable, especially in neighborhoods; that they are effective on climbing hills or roads with shoulders for bike riders; said there wasn't a lot of opinion on using fog seals or slurry seals as that takes specialized equipment, but maybe take a look at those options.

Group 5: Greg Repetti said his group agreed it would be foolish not to use all the tools available; that not every street is the same or requires the same type of surface and not every street has a designated bike lane; questioned how to sell it to the public and suggested maybe a per mile cost of a couple different options.

6. Breakout Discussion #3: Public Engagement

Moving to discussion group three, Ms. York explained that the questions for this group discussion include how to engage the public on this topic, how to go beyond the City's typical public input process, and what would you do to maximize public engagement.

Group 1: Todd Henry said his group felt social media would be the means for engaging the public; he also mentioned the Spokane Valley newspaper; said the message needs to be clear and included in a positive package stated with other improvements; and that marketing and communications needs to be right-on.

Group 2: Mike Frucci said his group feels we need to do more to get more to attend virtual workshops; said one can't understate the importance to make sure the public has the information; to know the target audience and what the financial impact would be; also to consider a sunset clause if asking for increased funding to prove we know what we are doing with this program.

Group 3: Kevin Wallace said they mentioned the importance of social media and the electronic world and suggested a virtual open-house trying to go where the people are; said it is difficult to draw people into the old traditional meetings and we don't get a lot of time so the message needs to be concise; also mentioned there are different ways to do surveys and collect information.

Group 4: Ben Small said his least favorite method would be with social media and suggested not using it for a broader understanding of the situation, but he added that this is coming from someone not on Facebook; said the question is how to bring the process to a larger group of people and engage them in conversation; that there are thought-exchange types of on-line meetings where ideas flow back and forth among citizens, and we need to figure out how to get people to pay attention to something they usually don't pay attention to; that we need to get people to think about that and that will be key in the messaging piece.

Group 5: Matt Ewers said most people don't care about roads, they just want to get where they are going; he suggested if we want to be successful we should do what Ben Small did with the school issues; which were brought out to the public early and often, and to include businesses as they too will be interested in the cost benefit as well as the financial impact; said it will be difficult to get them engaged as they are generally not aware of the issue.

7. Questions & Considerations Moving Forward

Ms. York thanked everyone for their thoughtful small group discussions and she opened the floor for further questions. Ideas and comments included appreciation for these thoughtful and challenging forums; and the question of who will develop the message for the public outreach. Mr. Hohman explained that we are not experts in this and it will be developed as we go, with the committee taking a big part; said he will talk to City Manager Mark Calhoun and asked if anyone knows of a good consultant to help focus this, to please let us know and more information will be developed over the next several weeks. Mr. Small said he feels there needs to be a balance between the virtual and the in-person world and that we need some options for people to come see and touch; said WSDOT does a good job with that sort of approach; that we have to engage people face-to-face where possible and where allowed; that we will never get the perfect survey questions, but feels we are moving in that direction.

8. Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 8, 2021, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Committee members were reminded to review videos 4 and 5, and Ms. York thanked everyone for their time and thoughtful discussions, and also extended thanks to the community observers.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Bainbridge
Spokane Valley City Clerk