

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Debra Musgrove
 Councilmember Chelsee Howell
 Councilmember Chris Riley

Also Present: City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby
 Assistant City Engineer Joe Feriancek
 Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Musgrove called the regular meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Chairperson Musgrove suggested to move Item 6.02 and 6.03 to follow Item 5.03. She also requested to add an Item, Trail Gap Update, to occur prior to Item 5.01 as Item 5.A.

Motion by Councilmember Howell, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to approve the agenda, as amended.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Musgrove, Councilmembers Howell and Riley. Voting No: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve August 20, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Musgrove commented that she believes there is information missing from the minutes under Item 5.01 related to the intent of the policy to be internal to staff and the direction for that to move forward. She asked that the minutes be reviewed and brought back to the next meeting.

Motion by Councilmember Howell, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to direct staff to review the minutes and bring them back to the next meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Musgrove and Councilmembers Howell. Voting No: None. Abstain: Councilmember Riley.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.A Trail Gap Update

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that late last winter the committee provided direction to staff to move up the Highway 47 trail gap project. He stated that the plans and specifications have been completed and the City was able to secure the two remaining easements on the undeveloped properties, therefore the City now has trail easements along the entirety of the corridor. He stated that the cost estimates for the project were also completed and the total projected would be \$135,000. He stated that they are ready to go, and the project could move forward as early as spring of 2025. He stated that MnDOT may be amenable to consider the same trail proposed by the City to be combined with their 2028 Highway 47 overlay project. He recognized that would mean delaying the project from 2025 to 2028. He stated that there is a sidewalk along Xkimo Street, which was installed as part of the road reconstruction project this summer.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if the \$135,000 includes the two sections from the businesses that came in.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that would be the total estimated cost. He noted that one of the properties had already paid park dedication fees when the property was established, but there was a trail fee contribution from one property which is low for a commercial property, at about \$1,500.

Chairperson Musgrove asked the budget that had been set for this trail.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that the budget for this trail had been earmarked at \$80,000 in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Councilmember Riley referenced the comment that MnDOT “may” agree to the trail construction, or contribute funding. He stated that while improving existing pedestrian facilities would seem likely, it would seem less likely that MnDOT would agree to put in a trail that does not yet exist.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that on a previous call with MnDOT representatives, there did seem to be interest in constructing pedestrian improvements as part of the project.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that MnDOT is now looking to close gaps in local trail corridors as part of their projects to keep people off the shoulders of highways.

Councilmember Riley commented that it would be absolutely desirable to have MnDOT fund and construct the trail gap. He asked when it would be known if MnDOT were amenable to doing that,

as he would not want to wait additional years to be in the same situation where the City needs to fund and construct the trail.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if MnDOT would be willing to contribute funds if the City were to move forward with constructing the trail earlier.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that staff can have those discussions to determine whether they would contribute to the funding for the trail, or include the trail in their project. He did not think it would be likely that MnDOT would contribute to a local City project outside of the scope of their larger project in 2028.

Chairperson Musgrove asked that staff also gather information on potential funding the City could use, in the case that the City moves forward with the trail on its own.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that if there is not funding from MnDOT, the City would propose to use the park trust fund. He stated that if MnDOT were willing to fund the project in 2028, that would allow the park trust fund to be used for another project.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that she would prefer to keep moving forward towards 2025 construction and not wait until 2028.

Councilmember Howell agreed.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that he would anticipate that they would have an answer from MnDOT by the November meeting, which would still leave sufficient time for the City to go out for bids for 2025 construction.

David Strobush, 5409 149th Lane NW, commented that when he moved to Ramsey in 2008, he noticed that section of trail was missing, and it is still missing. He stated that he plans to use the new auto repair business and would like to be able to walk from his home to the auto repair business. He noted that the connection would also provide a direct path for residents to reach the retail node. He stated people do not know the trail ends on the Holiday property and end up walking along Highway 47, which is unsafe.

The Committee members thanked Mr. Strobush for his input.

5.01: Trail Maintenance Policy

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood presented the staff report and stated that staff requests direction on the next steps pertaining to the Trail Maintenance Policy.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that this is an improvement from the last review. She recommended removing all pictures with the exception of the cover photo. She stated that staff are already familiar with the parks and removing the photos would reduce the page count and printing costs, should it need to be printed. Next, in Section 1, Introduction, she recommends striking all text starting with “trails” and proceeding through “therefore”, and moving the last

sentence of the first paragraph to the end of the section. She stated that would make it simpler and clearer. She stated that the rest of the information is found within the body of the policy and/or in other communications. In Section 2, General Policy Statement, she would recommend striking, “as a general matter”. In Section 3, General Maintenance Goals and Intent, she would recommend moving the financial information to Section 8, Funding, if it is not duplicative, to keep this section focused on the goals and intent.

Councilmember Riley commented that would not leave anything in Section 3.

Chairperson Musgrove stated that there is information on moving from an informal to a formal policy. She commented that the funding could then be addressed in the funding section.

Chairperson Musgrove stated she likes the information presented on page 5 of Section 4.

Councilmember Riley asked if there is a place within the policy that addresses opportunities that arise to complete trail improvements along with pavement management projects, similar to the trail reconstructed along Ute Street recently.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood believed that is addressed within the policy.

Chairperson Musgrove stated that the GIS system is mentioned, and she was unclear on what that is or whether that could be used for trails. She noted that it was mentioned in the sewer policy.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that GIS is used by staff for mapping and administering the pavement management program. He confirmed that staff has sidewalk and trail data that can be used by the GIS system but agreed that data should continue to be developed.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if there would be a way to use that system then to match up opportunities that may arise to match a trail project with a street project.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that there are many ways that those opportunities could be identified and provided some examples.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek provided details on the review process that staff does when preparing for pavement management projects, which sometimes impact trails.

Councilmember Howell referenced Section 5 and suggested changing “The preponderance of the City’s trail system” to “Most of the City’s trail system”. She referenced the second paragraph under boardwalks and suggested removing “It may be stated here, that some of” and just starting the sentence with “The inherent appeal...”.

Chairperson Musgrove referenced page 6, and asked if there is a header missing at the top of page 6, such as “Asphalt Trail”.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that is an introduction to the categories.

Chairperson Musgrove suggested that be shortened down and condensed to be more informational as a policy. She provided examples of information that should be found under each of the categories to provide direction to staff on when those things should be done. She suggested more of a bulleted format than a descriptive paragraph. She was also unsure that the RFP is necessary to be included in the appendix, other than a statement on when RFPs would be appropriate.

Councilmember Howell commented that it was nice to have all the content to review and agreed with some of the suggestions by Chairperson Musgrove to simplify some language and avoid the use of larger words to make it easier to understand.

Chairperson Musgrove provided direction to staff to make the revisions as discussed and bring it back to the October committee meeting, with the intent to then go forward to Council in November.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that there is an appendix at the end which includes the frequency of different activities.

Chairperson Musgrove suggested that there be a statement on how often the policy is reviewed as well.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that the Stormwater Facilities Maintenance Policy, which he is drafting, is a work in progress and is intended to be a starter policy that will be actively worked on, enhanced, and built upon over the next few years. He assumes they will do the same with this policy, as they will find things that can be tweaked as they begin to use it. He stated that once they get through that initial period, less work and review would be necessary. He agreed that staff will be aware of when revisions are needed and will take the lead on that.

5.02: Consider Recommendation to City Council to Adopt Stormwater Management Facilities Maintenance Policy

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby presented the staff report and stated that staff recommends providing a recommendation to the City Council to adopt the Stormwater Management Facilities Maintenance Policy.

Councilmember Riley commented that page numbers would help. He referenced the City responsibility portion and asked for clarification on the paragraph beginning on the next page related to agreements and the need to dissolve agreements before working on these ponds.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that the City has a number of stormwater maintenance agreements with various properties/businesses. He stated that typically the property owner is responsible for the maintenance of those ponds and if the City were to take on the maintenance, the agreement would need to be dissolved. He agreed that dissolve may not be the best word and that amending these agreements may be preferable.

Councilmember Riley referenced the language related to County ditches and the City's ability to access that. He stated that if the maintenance were the City's responsibility, he would question why the City would not have access to it.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that some of the ponds are older, some are fenced in, and some may not have easements in place. He recognized that the City does now require easements for ponds, but many of the ponds have been in place for longer than that practice existed. He commented that this language is very general in nature and would be reviewed by the City Attorney before moving to the City Council.

Councilmember Riley asked why the City would maintain a County ditch.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied there are some ditches that the City has acquired maintenance obligations on over the years, such as Ditch 66. He confirmed that the City funds the maintenance responsibility for those ditches.

Councilmember Riley referenced section 7, inspections, and noted that inspecting five percent each year would mean it would take 20 years to fully complete inspections.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby confirmed that is accurate. He stated staff wanted to begin conservatively because of the scope of work that may be needed and the cost to dredge a pond and dispose of the material as the dredged material is considered to be contaminated. He reiterated that staff would continue to see how the policy operates and whether amendments would be needed in the future, which could include increasing that percentage once staff better understands the scope of the work that may be necessary and the related costs. He explained that inspections are related to surveying and acknowledged that they could increase that percentage if that is found to be feasible.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek explained that they would not want to survey/inspect too far ahead of the improvement to be completed as the conditions would change.

Chairperson Musgrove stated that some of the ponds are newer and would have data, which would decrease the overall number that would need to be inspected and most likely have work completed. She appreciated the work that has been done, noting that this will benefit the city and that taxpayers have been paying taxes into the stormwater fund for this purpose so we need to start this work. She also appreciates that estimated costs are being developed to help understand future needs and potential funding sources.

Motion by Councilmember Howell, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to recommend that the City Council adopt the Stormwater Management Facilities Maintenance Policy, contingent upon review by the City Attorney and taking into account the comments made the committee tonight.

Further discussion: Councilmember Riley asked if staff is comfortable moving this forward or wanted more time. City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby confirmed that he is ready to move forward and acknowledged that staff will continue to bring revisions forward as they use the policy.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Musgrove, Councilmembers Howell and Riley. Voting No: None.

5.03: Consider Recommendation to City Council to Accept Bids and Award Contract for Improvement Project #25-01, Rivers Bend Regional Stormwater Improvements

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the staff report and stated that staff recommends providing a recommendation to the City Council to accept bids and award a contract for construction of Improvement Project #25-01, Rivers Bend Regional Stormwater Improvements.

Councilmember Riley asked if the municipal well in that area is being abandoned and whether the pond will remain within the drinking water supply management area (DWSMA).

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied there are two municipal wells in this area, noting that well no. 1 will continue to be utilized although it would not be treated by the water treatment plant. He stated the pond will therefore remain within the DWSMA. He confirmed that the second well is only used for irrigation of Rivers Bend park.

Chairperson Musgrove referenced the grant dollars from the watershed, noting that those are legacy fund dollars allocated by the State. She explained that the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization (LRRWMO), Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization (URRWMO) and Anoka Conservation District worked together to develop a plan to allocate those dollars within the boundaries of both WMOs. She stated significant dollars were allocated towards this water quality improvement project and she was happy to see this project moving forward.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that Ramsey received an allocation, and Anoka has passed on the \$40,000 they were allocated, which allows Ramsey to request those funds which would increase the total grant contribution to around \$290,000. He stated that the remaining funding would come from stormwater management funds.

Motion by Councilmember Howell, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to recommend that the City Council accept bids and award a contract for construction of Improvement Project #25-01, Rivers Bend Regional Stormwater Improvements.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Musgrove, Councilmembers Howell and Riley. Voting No: None.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

6.01: Consider Recommending City Council Order Request for Proposals for Sunwood Drive Concrete Pedestrian Crossing Replacement Topographic Survey

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek reviewed the staff report and stated that staff recommends that the Committee recommend the City Council order request for proposals for Sunwood Drive concrete pedestrian crossing replacement topographic survey.

Councilmember Howell asked if there is a difference in the cost and longevity of plain concrete versus colored concrete.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that generally colored concrete is slightly more expensive. He stated that while he believes that the issues with the quality of colored concrete have been resolved, the City has had poor experience in the past.

Councilmember Riley commented that years ago this was a great idea, but it did not work as it was supposed to. He stated that while he likes the look of it, he would not want to put that back in without a better feeling that it would last the length of the street lifespan. He stated that if the improvement could be delayed to 2029, he would suggest doing that. Regarding the Center Street parking lane improvements, he would prefer adding a bike rack to deter vehicle access.

Chairperson Musgrove asked when Sunwood is planned to be redone, and it was confirmed that is scheduled for 2029. She asked if the colored concrete were installed would that then be ripped up in 2029.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that staff proposes to split that project into two years, noting that in 2025 they would focus on the crosswalks as the concrete is deteriorating and poses a tripping hazard. He stated that there are other options that provide the aesthetics of colored concrete without coloring it and provided examples. He stated that the material could also simply be replaced with concrete and thermoplastic.

Councilmember Howell stated that she would be fine with the plain concrete as she did not believe the examples would add visual benefit, especially if they are more expensive with a lesser lifespan. She stated she likes the current black crosswalks.

Councilmember Riley asked if the crosswalks done in 2025 would be replaced again in 2029.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that the 2029 project would be concrete repairs and would not require replacement of the crosswalks.

Chairperson Musgrove stated that while she likes the look of the black crosswalks, it would be hard to support that option without having the cost and therefore would support plain concrete.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek stated that the action tonight is just to authorize the topographic survey work, and he could bring back additional information on the costs and anticipated longevity of alternative crosswalk design options.

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Howell, to recommend that the City Council order requests for proposals for Sunwood Drive concrete pedestrian crossing replacement topographic survey.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Musgrove, Councilmembers Riley and Howell. Voting No: None.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek stated that this would most likely come back in November or December.

6.02: Consider Recommendation to City Council to Submit Application for 2024 MnDOT Metro Standalone Noise Barrier Program

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the staff report stating that over the years, staff has received requests to construct a sound wall between Highway 10 and the properties abutting Beatty Avenue and Collins Drive. In 2022, MnDOT completed a study through their Metro Standalone Noise Barrier Program that showed this area ranked 135th out of 172 project areas and was found not to be cost-effective to construct sound wall improvements. He provided additional details on City costs and the application process.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if a noise study was completed.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that MnDOT completes a study, to determine the benefit to residents that would be provided. He noted that when Riverstone South went in a noise study was completed as part of the EAW.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if that formula used by MnDOT has changed from 2022 to 2024.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that the formula has not changed although the cost would have changed. He confirmed that this request was made by one resident.

Chairperson Musgrove commented that she would tend not to support this request because of the cost.

Councilmember Howell commented that this would seem to continue to rank low on the list and therefore would not recommend spending the time and resources to apply.

Chairperson Musgrove confirmed the consensus of the committee to not submit an application.

6.03: Update on Pavement Management Program

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek provided an update on the Pavement Management Program.

Councilmember Riley asked the range for the road ratings.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied there are a couple roads rated at 2 and a fair amount of 3's. He stated that many of the streets proposed for overlays or reconstructions over the next four to five years are rated at 3 or less. He noted that the dirt roads would be rated as zero but explained that those are not rated.

Councilmember Howell asked the rating of 167th before it was redone.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that he believed that road was rated as a 5 a few years before it was reconstructed and then deteriorated to a 1 or 2 by the time it was reconstructed. He provided details on some of the road improvements done on better quality roads, such as sealcoating, which do not provide benefit to roads in poor condition. He acknowledged that at a certain point there is nothing that can be done beyond some crack filling/patching before the reconstruction is completed. He reviewed the proposed road CIP, highlighting changes that are proposed.

Councilmember Riley stated that the order proposed makes sense, as the worst streets would need to get done first.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek explained that it a combination of addressing the worst streets as well as the available funding. He provided a summary of the road improvement projects proposed for the next ten years as well as potential projects that could arise. He provided details on the funding available as well as anticipated funding needs.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if the PIR fund is included in the road financing.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that the intent is to show the different funds used to fund the pavement management fund, noting that the PIR fund is a separate fund that is sometimes used for road projects.

Councilmember Riley commented that the pavement management fund did not exist prior to the establishment of the franchise fee when there was dedicated funding.

Chairperson Musgrove referenced the proposed growth shown and asked for clarification.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that in years 2023 and earlier those are actual dollars collected whereas the future years would be projected growth.

Chairperson Musgrove asked if the project 2024 interest earnings are an estimate.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek confirmed that those future years are estimates as those numbers are not actually known yet.

Chairperson Musgrove appreciated the information and updates and asked if an action is requested tonight.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek stated that he was asked to provide an update on what has been done and what is proposed for the future and therefore the draft CIP is not requested to be approved. He stated that this was simply meant to be an update, and any direction could be provided.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that this was meant to be informative but there could be additional discussion on this information if desired. He commented that the balance would go negative at some point and direction could be provided if the committee would like additional information in a future case.

Councilmember Riley stated that this is important as it shows the funding is sufficient for the next few years and then they will need to make decisions before the funds are gone. He stated that this allows several years to look and plan for what they will need to do in order to continue to repair roads. He recognized the increased cost per year to reconstruct and maintain roads compared to the figure that was previously provided and asked for clarification.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that they now have a lot of data and numbers to base their estimates on. He stated that when he began this work in 2013, a lot of the estimates were based on what existed in the industry as the City did not have recent project history as it does now and therefore the numbers provided today are more accurate.

Councilmember Riley referenced sealcoating, which was the standard for decades, recognizing that has been placed on hold for additional study, and asked if something will take the place of that maintenance activity.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that the pavement rejuvenation seems to be doing a good job taking the place of sealcoating.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek agreed that the pavement rejuvenation has been working well and is an established practice in other areas of the country that has been done for over 50 years, explaining that it is a more recent improvement in this area of the country.

Councilmember Howell commented that she is glad to see the work that has been put into planning for the future to address the roads. She stated that it would be helpful to begin to plan for future funding to avoid that deficit.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that he would assume that the plan would not be to bond again for millions of dollars.

Councilmember Riley confirmed that he believed that the intent was for the bond to be a one-time fix to get ahead of the bubble and find a better long-term answer.

Chairperson Musgrove stated that perhaps they could look at the more accurate costs and then determine the percentage of increase that would be needed for the levy. She stated that perhaps it would be helpful to have some of those projected needs and how that could be funded through the levy. She stated that if the intent was to have five percent of the levy, but the full levy is not collected and the full five percent is not received, that has an impact.

Councilmember Riley commented that while everyone may not pay their taxes on time, the money is eventually received. He believed that there would be benefit in reviewing this information, in a more brief format, with the full City Council.

6.04: Receive Updates on Improvement Projects, Studies, and Items of Interest

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided an update on current and proposed City, County, and MnDOT improvement projects and studies, and on other items of interest to the Committee.

6.05: Review Future Topics Calendar

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed some of the topics that will soon be removed from the list and other items that are planned to come forward to upcoming committee meetings.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Howell, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to adjourn the Public Works Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Westby
City Engineer/Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.