

# MINUTES

City Council  
McNutt Room—Eugene City Hall  
777 Pearl Street—Eugene, Oregon

April 14, 2010  
Noon

PRESENT: Alan Zelenka, Mike Clark, Betty Taylor, Andrea Ortiz, Jennifer Solomon, George Poling, Chris Pryor, George Brown, members.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the April 14, 2010, work session of the Eugene City Council to order. She announced she had attended the sneak peak of *Wicked* that occurred earlier that morning and noted that season ticket sales were in progress. She also reminded citizens to turn in their census forms and emphasized the difference the accurate count made in funding City services.

**A. WORK SESSION: Beltline Highway - River Road to Coburg Road - Oregon Department of Transportation Facility Plan Update**

The council was joined by Project Manager Chris Henry of the Eugene Public Works Department and Savannah Crawford, Area 5 Planner for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Project Manager for the Beltline Facility Plan. Ms. Crawford provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Beltline Facility Plan: River Road to Coburg Road*. The presentation provided information on the Beltline project planning process and illustrated the design options currently under consideration. Councilors asked questions clarifying the details of the options.

Mayor Piercy asked Ms. Crawford what major issues were coming up in discussion. Ms. Crawford said that ODOT was receiving a range of comments, ranging from concern about the footprint of the bridge to concerns about the need for improvements. The public seemed to favor the middle- to high-build options with auxiliary lanes. People also seemed to realize that there were tradeoffs that would occur through the process. Mr. Henry indicated that people were concerned about access from River and Division avenues for business purposes, the signal operation at River Avenue and River Road, and the interchange operation at Delta Highway and Beltline. Ms. Crawford said many people wanted ODOT to close Division and River avenues but ODOT had found that if Division Avenue was closed, all the traffic now using that road went to River Road, and Division Avenue was a heavily traveled route.

Asked for comment by Mayor Piercy, Ms. Ortiz, a member of the ODOT Beltline Plan Steering Committee, commended the comprehensiveness of the presentation. She observed she had been surprised by how many people used Beltline. Mr. Clark, also a member, was impressed by the thoroughness of the options presented. He said, at this point, a majority of committee members believed that the split-diamond and collector-distributor had the best chances of solving the problems that existed on Beltline.

Mayor Piercy solicited general questions and comments from the council.

Responding to a question from Ms. Ortiz, Ms. Crawford indicated that ODOT heard considerable opposition to a bridge south of the Beltline near the Valley River Center area, while others indicated they wanted ODOT to revisit the question. However, that was outside the study area.

Mr. Clark observed that he had initially favored the flyover option but it would have required that ODOT fill in about half the Delta Ponds, which was not an option.

Ms. Ortiz said that she heard that whatever the council supported collectively could go forward. She felt a strong commitment to the project and believed the council had a role in securing funding. She thought the council also needed to be supportive of whatever the collective agreement was and move forward with it.

Mr. Brown asked if there was to be another public presentation and if larger maps were available to members of the public. Ms. Crawford said ODOT had no plans for more open houses for this stage of the process, but there would be several comment opportunities associated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phase of the project. She recalled that large maps had been available at the forum that occurred on March 14, and indicated whatever recommendation was forwarded by the steering committee would be represented on large maps that would be presented to the community.

Mr. Henry referred Mr. Brown to both Attachment B, which included color maps, and to the project site for more maps at [www.beltlineplan.com](http://www.beltlineplan.com).

Mr. Brown said he did not drive on Beltline very often but he acknowledged that there appeared to be a congestion problem.

Mr. Poling arrived.

Mr. Pryor was pleased to be having the conversation. He anticipated that the council would have to work with its partners to secure sufficient project funding. He commended the collaborative planning process. He was appreciative of the discussion of need to balance capacity improvements against cost. Mr. Pryor did not think that transportation demand management (TDM) alone would solve the problems that existed on Beltline, and wanted to ensure that proposed improvements adequately addressed those problems. He believed they would, and believed the right people were involved.

Ms. Solomon liked the idea of having a bridge just north of the Beltline for those who wished to travel between Green Acres and the residential area north of Division Avenue. She determined from Ms. Crawford that the intersection at Delta Highway and Green Acres would be a full movement intersection under the scenarios presented.

Mr. Zelenka was also pleased to be having the conversation. He asked if ODOT had a sense of the costs involved with the options under discussion. Ms. Crawford indicated that ODOT would produce a range of costs for the planning phase but would not do a detailed analysis until the NEPA stage. Mr. Henry suggested that the council consider the costs of the Beltline/ I-5 interchange as a way to estimate the costs.

Mr. Zelenka wanted to see TDM and Transportation System Management (TSM) techniques maximized to the degree possible, followed by the build option. He wanted to see a solution to the weaving problem that existed when vehicles traveled northbound on the Delta Highway. He appreciated that all the options seemed to address the major congestion points that existed now.

Ms. Taylor determined from Ms. Crawford that the existing bridge would be replaced under all the options under discussion. Ms. Taylor suggested that would involve a lot of disruption.

Mr. Clark thanked Ms. Crawford and ODOT staff for working to involve the community in the process. He recalled the fatality suffered at a ramp on Delta Highway and emphasized the importance of addressing safety issues in that area. Fire Station 9 staff responded to traffic accidents in the area everyday. He believed that the

City needed to do what it could in terms of TDM, but he was looking for solutions that solved the problems that existed and created safer conditions and lessened congestion.

Mayor Piercy anticipated that the council would hear conflicting concerns about the size of the bridge footprint, greenhouse gas emissions, and safer travel that it would need to balance as it considered the options.

Mayor Piercy did not see any indication in the evaluation criteria that the project was attempting to meet State greenhouse emissions goals. Ms. Crawford said that ODOT had no methodology or metrics in place to address that issue and instead used two proxies: 1) modeling vehicle hours of delay (VHD) and, 2) modeling vehicle miles traveled (VMT). ODOT found that outside the low-build concepts, the high-build concepts reduced VHD and VMT increased slightly, depending on the alternative. She anticipated that the NEPA phase would address the issue as well. She said that ODOT planned to have something in place in regard to greenhouse gases within the next two years.

Mayor Piercy emphasized nearby residents' interest in safer travel as well as retention of their quality of life.

Mr. Zelenka asked if the existing bridge had pylons that entered the river. Mr. Henry believed the current bridge was a simple span. Mr. Zelenka said he did not want to see any pylons in the river.

Mayor Piercy thanked Ms. Crawford.

Ms. Solomon left the meeting.

**B. WORK SESSION:**  
**Review of 2009 Implementation of Bond Measure to Fix Streets**

The council was joined by Public Works Director Kurt Corey, who provided an update regarding the implementation of the 2009 bond measure for street maintenance. He recalled that along with the projects identified for funding, the measure stipulated that the council would contract with an outside auditor to verify the use of the funds. The manager had committed to the appointment of a Street Repair Review Panel to advise him on the expenditure of the funds and provide a separate report regarding the use of the bond proceeds. A copy of that report and the auditor's report was included in the council packet.

Mr. Corey reminded the council of its tour of 2009 projects and enumerated several of the projects viewed by councilors. He quoted from the auditor's report, which indicated the bond proceeds were used appropriately in the restrictions set out by the council.

Mr. Corey reviewed the membership of the Street Repair Review Panel, which included Paul Adkins, John Barofsky, Howie Bonnett, Dan Brown, Janet Calvert, Paul Holbo, Bob Kline, Steve Lee, Bruce Mulligan, Clayton Walker, Jim Wilcox, and Gary Wildish. He noted the panel also reached the conclusion, stated in its report, that the bond proceeds were appropriately spent. The panel also encouraged the acceleration of projects to the extent possible to take advantage of favorable bid prices and urged continued public education on the topic.

Mr. Corey previewed some of the projects to be constructed in 2010 using bond proceeds. He distributed copies of a press release the City would issue the following day regarding the projects to be funded using local gas tax revenues and federal economic stimulus funding.

Mr. Corey spoke to the issue of street maintenance funding in general, noting the expiration of the bond and the need to consider how to sustain the funding. He expressed cautious optimism about funding for operations and maintenance in the near term.

City Manager Ruiz commended the work done by Mr. Corey and his staff and called the bond a good example of promises made and kept. He termed the bond the big success story from the last 12-18 months and suggested the community would be pleased with the results.

Mayor Piercy thanked the Street Repair Review Panel members present and asked them if they wished to comment. Member Paul Holbo noted the long time he and other community members had been working on the issue of street maintenance funding and spoke to past committee efforts and his pleasure at finally seeing some results, citing in particular the work planned for 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He believed that would produce many positive reactions. He recommended the City do outreach to residents living along Harlow Road and solicit their input into street improvements planned for that road. Member Janet Calvert spoke of the need to educate citizens about the topic, as they were frequently unaware they lived on an unimproved street and why unimproved streets had not been improved.

Mayor Piercy agreed with Ms. Calvert about the importance of community education. She noted the many constituent contacts she received about conditions on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and agreed with Mr. Holbo the project would make a difference.

Mr. Pryor was encouraged by the process the City made in street maintenance and acknowledged the long time the problem had existed. He thought the City was about to “turn the corner” and might be able to get its operations and maintenance issues under control. However, that did not address the backlog in maintenance, which still existed and needed to be addressed. He also received many calls about 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He was proud the council had made as much progress as it had.

Mr. Poling thanked the review panel and also thanked the voters for approving the bond measure and reminded the voters it was coming due in three years with the potential of renewal. He hoped that reports such as the one the council was hearing would help to encourage support. He also agreed about the need to educate residents about the difference between improved and unimproved streets.

Mr. Poling was glad to see Harlow Road on the project list and said he received a number of contacts about the change in road conditions when residents left Springfield and entered Eugene.

Mr. Zelenka also thanked the committee and the voters. He was happy about the work the council had done in regard to the bond. He considered it a good start but agreed the City still had a problem in the form of its gigantic backlog of work. Mr. Corey estimated the cost of that backlog at \$150 million. He noted that the City had recently received favorable bids and was also able to determine some streets did not need a complete reconstruct.

Mr. Zelenka asked for a status update on what he considered to be the most equitable funding option, a street utility fee. Mr. Corey indicated that staff had no specific timeframe for bringing that fee back to the council. He said that a critical element of such a fee was the billing system, which would require cooperation from the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB). Mr. Zelenka asked about the status of the conversations with EWEB. City Manager Ruiz said that outgoing General Manager Randy Berggren was deferring those conversations to his successor.

Mr. Zelenka agreed resident education was very important as he frequently received questions about why some roads were fixed while others were not. He was pleased to see the projects planned for 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Patterson Street and thanked Mr. Corey for his good work.

Mr. Clark recalled the council’s past discussion about the difference between improved and unimproved roads. Many were roads without curbs and gutters that were formerly under County jurisdiction. He requested staff

provide information about the number of miles of unimproved roads in Eugene and what it would cost to do a two-inch overlay on all such roads. Mr. Corey indicated he could provide that information, although he did not think the council would want to take that approach given the other options that existed. He said as a result of the enhanced pothole program, the City had made some progress in that regard at minimal cost. He hoped to be able to continue that in the future.

Mr. Clark said while it was true the council had always felt those living on unimproved roads were responsible for the costs of improving their streets, he thought the City also had some responsibility because it had assumed responsibility for such streets from the County without having a plan to improve them. He wanted to see such a plan for bringing unimproved roads to improved status, pointing out there were large potholes in many well-traveled roads. Mr. Corey suggested the council committee charged to review street assessments might take up the topic.

Acknowledging that it might take a while before such streets could be brought to ideal standards, Mayor Piercy suggested that Mr. Corey be prepared to discuss what kind of strategy the City could employ in such an effort.

Speaking to Mr. Clark's request about what an overlay approach would look like, Ms. Ortiz asked Mr. Corey to take a tiered approach to that subject using different levels of improvements, for example, gravel versus asphalt.

At the request of Mr. Zelenka, Mr. Corey discussed the range of improvements completed on Riverview Avenue.

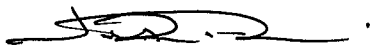
Mr. Zelenka asked when the City chose concrete over asphalt. Mr. Corey said that construction of a new concrete street was significantly more expensive up front although maintenance costs were less. Asphalt was the maintenance material of choice for existing asphalt streets. He acknowledged the tradeoffs involved. He said that Springfield had a favorable experience with concrete streets, but Eugene was trying to stretch its limited resources as far as possible while continuing to look for opportunities where a large investment made sense.

Mr. Zelenka asked about a pothole patrol. Mr. Corey did not anticipate a dedicated crew but the response would be the same. Residents could call 682-4800 to report pot holes or visit the Public Works Department home page.

Mr. Pryor believed the council discussion was pointing toward an additional, more robust council discussion of future options, including different street types and what treatment they warrant.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the work session at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Ruiz,  
City Manager

*(Recorded by Kimberly Young)*