

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT
SEPTEMBER 28, 2011 1:05 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present: Jason Wiener (chair), Ed Childers, Dick Haines, Lyn Hellegaard, Bob Jaffe, Marilyn Marler, Renee Mitchell, Pam Walzer, Jon Wilkins, Cynthia Wolken

Members Absent: Dave Strohmaier

Others Present: Steve King, Kevin Slovarp, Jack Stucky, Wayne Gravatt, Rick Larsen, Gregg Wood, Phil Smith, Stacy Rye, John Wolverton, Ben Simpson

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the minutes of – September 21, 2011 Approved as submitted
- B. Announcements – None
- C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda items – None

II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Award the purchase of three 2011 Ford Escape vehicles to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for a total of \$60,739.00 for all three Building Inspection vehicles. (memo)—Regular Agenda (Jack Stucky) (Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council award the purchase of three 2011 Ford Escape vehicles to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for a total of \$60,739.00 for all three Building Inspection vehicles and return all bid bonds.

Jack Stucky, Vehicle Maintenance Superintendent, asked the committee to approve the purchase of three 2011 Ford Escape vehicles for the Building Inspection Department for a total of \$60,739.00 to the low bidder, Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana; and return all bid bonds.

Pam Walzer made the motion the committee recommend the City Council award the purchase of three 2011 Ford Escape vehicles to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for a total of \$60,739.00 for all three Building Inspection vehicles and return all bid bonds.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Award the purchase of one 2012 Ford Transit Connect Utility Van to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for \$21,353.70 for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. (memo)—Regular Agenda (Jack Stucky) (Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Recommended Motion: The committee recommends the City Council award the purchase of one 2012 Ford Transit Connect Utility Van to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for \$21,353.70 for the Waste Water Treatment Plant and return all bid bonds.

Jack Stucky, Vehicle Maintenance Superintendent, asked the committee to approve the purchase of one 2012 Ford Transit Connect Utility Van for the Waste Water Treatment Plant for \$21,353.70; to the low bidder, Bitterroot Motors, Missoula, Montana; and return all bid bonds.

Jon Wilkins made the motion the committee recommend the City Council award the purchase of one 2012 Ford Transit Connect Utility Van to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for \$21,353.70 for the Waste Water Treatment Plant and return all bid bonds.

The motion passed unanimously.

II. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

1. Presentation from the Bicycle Ambassadors about their 2011 work season. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Phil Smith) (Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)([REMOVE FROM AGENDA](#))

Phil Smith, Bicycle/Pedestrian Program Manager, introduced Bicycle Ambassador Ben Simpson, and explained that Bicycle Ambassador Kirsten Stewart was ill and unable to attend. This was the tenth year of the Bicycle Ambassador program and he handed out two of the brochures the Bike Ambassadors used and the [2011 Summer Report](#).

Ben Simpson stated that the goal they tried to accomplish was to make Missoula safer for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians with the main focus being on street interactions including talking to people and handing out information to educate the public about Missoula's bike laws. Another objective was to ensure the correct use of the new North Higgins cycle tracks by explaining the correct direction to ride and to inform pedestrians not to walk in them, by the summer's end there was considerable improvement. A lot of time was spent with the Parks and Recreation staff, the Boys and Girls Club, youth homes and day camps providing information and teaching safe bicycle skills to more than one hundred children. As a result they saw many of these children around town sporting their helmets or biking with their parents on the trails. They helped supply helmets, bike laws, and bike lights to hundreds of Missoulians with the help of St. Patricks Hospital and Missoula in Motion. They also spent time at the mall and the downtown parking garages to educate drivers on how they could help improve the safety of our roads too. By the end of the 2011 program the Bicycle Ambassadors had talked to over two thousand citizens and helped make Missoula's streets and trails safer for everyone in the community.

Jon Wilkins asked what type of outreach the Bicycle Ambassadors used for the University students. He asked Phil if they had tried to put any bicycle information concerning the safety and roads in the packets given to new students.

Ben Simpson replied that they tried to attend all new student orientations and inform the students of the bike laws, give them bike lights, and explain where the bike lanes and trails were. They spent a lot of time at the 5th and 6th Street intersection to educate them on the correct use of the two way bike lanes and to hand out brochures.

Phil Smith said several years ago he tried to get information into the packet for the new students and was told there was such a volume of information in it that it would be a waste of time. He said they can keep trying to include bicycle information in those packets.

Marilyn Marler said the university also has bike ambassadors and commented that sometimes there are fliers placed on the bikes at the university and maybe instead of putting this information in all of the undergrad packets and with permission from the university's Public Safety Department a literature drop a few times a year to the people you know are riding bikes, would be a good option to try.

Dick Haines asked about clarification with the State law that says you can ride bicycles on sidewalks, yet the City law says you cannot ride on the sidewalks.

Phil Smith explained that State law overrides City law, and unless the City provides posted notice that says no riding on sidewalks, we cannot enforce the local ordinance. The City Attorney's opinion is that it would have to be posted sufficiently and frequently so any bicyclist that is stopped would have seen the signs. The City's position has been not to enforce the prohibition of riding on the sidewalk. We do

not want bicyclists on the sidewalks because they are predominantly for pedestrians and would be in conflict between moving bicycles and much slower moving pedestrians. He also explained that bicycles on City streets are subject to the same laws as vehicles; if the bicyclist has dismounted he is then treated as a pedestrian.

Jason Wiener asked how much it cost for the Bicycle Ambassador program, and Phil Smith said just under \$10,000.00.

3. Discuss the intersection of Higgins, Hill, and Beckwith. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe)
(Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Bob Jaffe explained the problem with the approach on the corner of Beckwith and Hill. At the stop sign on Beckwith it is difficult to tell when it is safe to proceed because the visibility on Hill is very limited and it is hard to tell if a car is going to use the roundabout or continue south on Higgins and come out on Hill. He feels the best solution would be to remove a parking space from the northwest corner of Hill to improve the visibility.

Stacy Rye commented there is a problem with the curb, it is too tall and the ramp that goes into the street causes pedestrians to drop down about eight inches. This is a Safe Route to School and children walking and biking to school cannot see beyond the first parked car. There is no crosswalk painted and a crosswalk would definitely help the motorists; in addition to a painted crosswalk a "No Parking" sign at the first parking space would be beneficial because in the winter the painted area would not be visible. She also feels the stop sign at Beckwith is unsafe and not fully functional because it is set too far back and drivers have to pull past the stop sign to make a left turn onto Hill.

Steve King, Public Works Director, said this is a challenging intersection both with the proximity to the roundabout and as a Safe Routes to School. This is a painted crosswalk and it is posted as a Safe Routes to School. Wayne Gravatt, Traffic Services Department Coordinator, has had his crews remove one parking space and have extended the yellow zone on Hill and Beckwith. Obviously the concern still persists and Public Works wants to be responsive to those concerns by providing some additional alternatives for enhancing the crossing. Part of the initial design propose by the Department of Transportation was to make Beckwith and Hill a right in, right out only and this would severally channelize the traffic. The City asked the State to consider not putting those restrictions in and the City would continue to monitor this and evaluate it as needed. Public Works can provide some proposals for the ward representatives to describe what we can do for some additional safety measures.

Bob Jaffe suggested having some type of neighborhood polling to better understand what the neighborhoods think, how much of an issue they consider this to be, and any solutions they might have. He also suggested feedback from Public Works.

Steve King stated Public Works would definitely work with the committee on those issues. It is a local issue and also a neighborhood intersection. He would like to improve the intersection with the ward representatives and the neighborhood.

Wayne Gravatt stated that maybe more emphasis on educating drivers in the correct way to use roundabout would be beneficial. When cars enter a roundabout they are supposed to signal when they exit the roundabout but few cars do this.

Public Comment:

John Wolverton, with Bike Walk Alliance for Missoula, would like for everyone to consider the speed of the motor vehicles and the width of the exit lane of the roundabout onto Hill and the likely hood of vehicles speeding out of the roundabout. At the other end of Hill, vehicles coming onto to Hill from Mount are cutting the corner; the painted stripe is already wearing out from this. There is a lot of speeding going on in this area and he would like for the City to consider putting in curb extensions between the roundabout and Beckwith on Hill, this would help calm the traffic down and give the drivers on Beckwith more time.

4. Discuss the school speed zones. (memo)—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 09/26/2011) (HELD IN COMMITTEE)

Bob Jaffe would like to discuss the process for establishing speed zones for schools and identify where it would be necessary to change the school zone speed limits.

Steve King stated there is a process for this and cited the example of Public Works working through the process with the Montana Department of Transportation to lower the speed limit by C.S. Porter School. The process is an open public and City Council process to initiate speed zones using the State law. Most of Missoula's schools have 25 MPH speed zones or they have an existing speed zone. He asked for more direction from the council on what their interests are, is it for citywide analysis or for specific locations or specific school zones. If it is a citywide analysis, he explained that Public Works has been working on the Safe Routes to School and with the Police Department on supporting enforcement by targeting school zones and the Safe Routes to School.

Kevin Slovarp, City Engineer referred to minutes from the June 15, 2011 Public Works Committee meeting that contained items the committee had asked Public Works for information on and they were remiss in following up with those requests. The requests were to provide the speed limits for each school and to see if signs for school zones could say the fines would be doubled for speeders. Public Works would like to gather that information and bring it back to the committee.

Stacy Rye stated it would be her preference to look at best practices for speed limits in school zones, not per Montana Department of Transportation but per each school zone. She has lived in areas where the school zone speed limits are 15 or 20 MPH and are heavily enforced. They are only for specific hours with signs to reflect that (ex. 8:00AM -9:30AM and 2:00PM -4:30PM). Lower speeds are safer and all school zones could be standardized for speed limits not just certain schools.

Phil Smith added that changing speed limits were only as good as enforcement is. He would like to encourage the committee to invite representatives from the Police Department to share what would be involved with adding additional enforcement. With Safe Routes to School, Federal grant money is used and each year we contract a grant for the Police Department to increase their enforcement. There may be more money needed than the amount of the supplement from the Safe Routes to School.

Bob Jaffe said he just sent an email with a list of all the schools and the frontages of each school, almost all of them are on streets with significant traffic. The question is how we want to handle this? As an example he used Hawthorne school located in the County on 3rd Street that has a sign with the hours the reduced speed limit is in effect and specifically states that fines double in school zones, this does slow traffic, and there is an End of School Zone sign at the end of the area. He is in favor of using something like this. We need to decide on the speed limit and decide if we want all the frontages of each school addressed or just focus on the primary frontage of the school.

Jon Wilkins said he agrees with the previous comments on the school zones. He also asked what was being done about speed limits in other areas of town such as Mullan Road.

Kevin Slovarp said the City has a hardware problem and they are waiting to receive some traffic boxes from the County to do the traffic counts and to determine the speeds and the eighty five percentile on a given roadway. We need that speed data and cannot issue the engineering report on the speed studies without the data; new traffic boxes are being purchased for the City to prevent this problem from reoccurring.

Steve King said if this referral was held in committee, Public Works would have a report available in few weeks.

Jason Wiener held this item in the Held and Ongoing Agenda Items.

5. Discuss the timing of various traffic lights around the city. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe)
(Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)(HELD IN COMMITTEE)

Bob Jaffe would like an update on the timing of traffic lights in the City. It would be helpful to understand the process of how the lights are timed and what data is used to set them. It would be useful to receive a report on all the lights and that process and then after becoming educated about this process we may want to make changes as appropriate.

Steve King said Rick Larson is the Public Works Communications Specialist that deals with traffic signals and he has been working with Kevin Slovarp and the Montana Department of Transportation on the traffic signal optimization project which is part of a larger community greenhouse gas reduction project. There is a Missoula greenhouse emission inventory and analysis that compared increases in greenhouse gas production. One of the largest greenhouse gas producers is the transportation system; the vehicles and the actual operation of the street lights and traffic signals. By working with the Metropolitan Planning Organization we received Federal funding to use for changing the incandescent light bulbs on traffic signals to LED's, this was Federally funded and the power savings are already being realized. We do not have quantified reductions but we know the return is significant and there will be thousands of dollars per year in power savings. This project is directly related to another project - how we make the system work better for the community. We have been responsive to individual signals trying to balance the needs of the local access with the time available at a traffic light. We asked the State to analyze the existing corridors and not the individual intersections and then to use this information with the most advanced software available to optimize the information for the greatest good for the most users by reduced idling time, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and reduced gasoline consumption. Rick Larson has been working with MDT on this process for the last six months. The system is in place now and the measurement was taken last week after school was back in session, a report from the State and from the consultant should be ready in a few weeks with the quantity of change.

Bob Jaffe would like a report for each intersection, how they are timed (if some type of formula is used), what the time was, what it was changed to, and why it was changed.

Rick Larson, Communications Superintendent, said that information on each specific intersection was gathered and then entered into a computer model that looks at the corridor flow not the specific intersection flow. The intersection information enters into how the corridor performs. He said he could provide this information to the committee.

Stacy Rye requested the before and after data among some of the key streets and the timing before and after, the actual times not the averages; goals are different for each location.

Ed Childers asked if there is a maximum wait time factored into the system.

Rick Larsen said it depends on the cycling of each intersection, Reserve Street has the longest cycle of 180 seconds but most of the cycles range from 90 to 110 seconds.

Bob Jaffe inquired about the interaction of the walk buttons at intersections, what do they actually do.

Steve King answered that in some locations the length of time for the pedestrian to cross is a controlling factor in the signal.

Rick Larson explained that the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) changed the pedestrian clearance interval from 4 feet per second to 3 1/2 feet per second, which lengthened the cycle, this was a mandatory change the City had to make.

Stacy Rye said some of the walk signals are broken. Rick Larson said his department was not aware of this problem and if she would let him know those locations his department would take care of them immediately.

Jason Wiener held this referral in the Held and Ongoing Agenda Items.

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. 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)
5. Approve the agreement for consultant services with Eli & Associates, Inc. on Project 10-034 England Boulevard right turn lane improvements. ([memo](#)) - Regular Agenda (Kevin Slovarp) (Referred to committee 05/16/2011)
6. Infrastructure condition inventory and maintenance requirements. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Ed Childers) (Referred to committee: 07/11/11)

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 PM

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