

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT
OCTOBER 12, 2011 1:35 PM
City Council Chambers

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

Members Absent: Lyn Hellegaard, Marilyn Marler

Others Present: Steve King, Kevin Slovarp, Doug Harby, Gregg Wood, Jack Stucky, Police Captain Chris Odlin, Bob Wachtel, Amy Hall, Ellen Buchanan

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the minutes of – [September 28, 2011](#) Approved as submitted
- B. Announcements – None
- C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda items – None

II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1. Award the purchase of two 2011 Ford Escape vehicles to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, for a total of \$41,478.00 for two police vehicles. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jack Stucky) (Referred to committee: 10/03/11) **(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)**

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council award the purchase of two 2011 Ford Escape vehicles to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for a total of \$41,478.00 for two police vehicles.

Jack Stucky, Vehicle Maintenance Superintendent, requested the committee approve the purchase of two 2011 Ford Escape vehicles for the Police Department to the low bidder, Bitterroot Motors, for a total of \$41,478.00. This is in compliance with the vehicle replacement schedule, there were no bid bonds.

Pam Walzer made the motion the committee recommend the City Council award the purchase of two 2011 Ford Escape vehicles to Bitterroot Motors of Missoula, Montana for a total of \$41,478.00 for two police vehicles.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

2. Discuss the stretch of roadway on Brooks Street (Hwy 93) from Dore Lane to Buckhouse Bridge. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Renee Mitchell) (Referred to committee: 10/03/11) **(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)**

Renee Mitchell explained that this particular section of Brooks Street (Hwy 93) has seen many traffic and pedestrian fatalities in recent years, she has had citizens in this area express concerns and asked if there was anything that could be done to improve this stretch of roadway such as lower speed limits, adding a traffic light, better street lighting, etc. She wants to initiate some types of changes to make this area safer but is unsure what direction to take.

Steve King, Public Works Director, stated that City Engineer Kevin Slovarp, Police Captain Chris Odlin and Director of Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) Ellen Buchanan were also there to answer questions the committee may have. This portion of Highway 12 is in Urban Renewal 3 and Ellen Buchanan has been working on the infrastructure analysis. US Highway 12 is a Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) right-of-way so any changes or modifications would be approved through MDT. The issues of speed and access management have been ongoing and have manifested itself in very tragic ways; Public Works wants to be responsive to questions and comments. One course of action would be if the Council wanted to request MDT to do a more detailed analysis of the corridor. Another point would be to talk about the behavior of the drivers, some of the characteristics of the accidents, and the Urban renewal district which impacts the whole character of the corridor and is a more comprehensive look at the land use and the transportation systems.

Kevin Slovarp, City Engineer, said Public Works had worked with MDT in the past on a section of this corridor from Buckhouse Bridge to Miller Creek Road and they had asked the State to look at a speed study and to post the speed limit to the current 45 MPH. MDT has worked with Public Works on safety aspects of the road and they have been receptive to our requests and he feels they will continue to do so.

Dick Haines would like to have some type of speed limit transition zone to slow traffic down to make drivers more aware of the slower speed limit; he feels more warnings for drivers of the speed limit change would be beneficial. He would appreciate any follow up with the MDT to see what other methods may be used on this section of Highway 12.

Pam Walzer stated there is a 45 MPH speed limit in place and wanted to know if there was any type of trigger as the community grows and use changes happen, that might encourage a reduction of speed or does it require Council asking for a traffic study to see if it warrants speed reduction. On a corridor as heavily used as this, an additional traffic study does not seem logical. Is there a possibility the State will agree that something needs to be done.

Steve King feels it is important to recognize that drivers doing the speed limit have not had the accidents and problems; his understanding is it has been drivers of excessive speed or intoxication. Understanding that the character of the road such as the width of the road, the openness of the road, and the wide shoulders of the road all add to the perception of what the appropriate speed is. The character of the road more than the posted speed limit contributes to this perception; the physical characteristics have an impact on what the driver perceives and maybe it could be modified through medians, lighting, lane widths or other structures that would alert the driver that it is time to slow down. We don't really have that transition area from the highway to the urban.

Kevin Slovarp replied that the State has conducted corridor speed studies on their own but it would certainly help if Public Works also made a request; he believes they will be receptive to conducting those studies.

Jason Wiener asked if injuries and fatalities were primary criteria for the State to determine where to put investment in roadways. It seems that this would be an additional reason for them to participate in the rehabilitation.

Steve King replied that certainly the accident history and particularly fatalities or serious injury accidents are a factor for investment in the corridor.

Renee Mitchell asked if Public Works would be able to request the State do this study or would they need a resolution or motion of some type. Steve King replied that Public Works can do this. She asked Police Captain Chris Odlin if he had statistical data with him on the number of accidents in this area of the road during the last six to twelve months.

Police Captain Odlin said he did not have the statistics with him but he did know from personal knowledge of the crashes that the last two fatalities involved very excessive speed, and one involved

intoxication on both drivers part; so driver behavior is definitely a big part of it. The speed limit may be good or bad and the Police Department thinks it warrants study.

Bob Jaffe asked if anything else could be done in the interim of asking the State for a study, something the local authority could do as a safety issue. We need something to initiate the transition from the highway to the urban street.

Steve King answered that in the interim we could talk with MDT about the approach to the community, lighting, or signs that may be an intermediate response to alert drivers to the speed changes. With discussions it may be informational more than structural.

Ed Childers asked Public Works to recommend to MDT what the department might find helpful, such as flashing lights, medians, etc.

Renee Mitchell wanted to know if Dore Lane is scheduled for any improvements tied in with Highway 12. Steve King said there was nothing scheduled for Dore Lane.

Jason Wiener removed this item from the agenda with Renee Mitchell's approval.

3. Review of when alternative routes must be provided for closed sidewalks. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Jason Wiener) (Referred to committee: 10/03/11)(**REMOVE FROM AGENDA**)

Jason Wiener stated this referral was in reference to the sidewalk closure on East Broadway in front of McDonald's. The sidewalk was closed for construction and no alternative route was provided. Signs were posted at either side of the block notifying pedestrians the sidewalk was closed but the choices were to go back to the intersection or crossing five lanes of traffic without a signal. This raised questions if the current ordinances and regulations permit closing an arterial sidewalk without providing an alternative and if so what needs to be done to change the ordinance.

Doug Harby, Project Manager said the project met the current specifications as of Friday. On this sidewalk signs were posted at each intersection at Madison and Van Buren. The problem is these signs disappear nightly. The contractor said the signs were posted in the intersections and at the actual closure. In retrospect we could have opened the sidewalk up but we neglected to do that. In these situations we have multi-modes of transportation, bicyclists, pedestrians and vehicles; we try to choose the most effective option. If a temporary sidewalk were put in it would mean closing the driving lane and the bicycle lane so we chose to direct the pedestrians to cross the street at the closest crosswalks. Initially we did not think of Homecoming and in re-evaluation we should have had the contractor move the fence and open the sidewalk up, we do need to be more sensitive to events. The regulation for the central business district requires temporary sidewalks but on the arterial streets we typically want the pedestrians to use the opposite side of the street. The alternative would have been a temporary sidewalk and to close the driving lane and the bicycle lane, this costs about \$1500.00 per day for the flashing arrows, etc. We will make additional effort to try to anticipate unusual use like this during the games.

Jason Wiener asked what the regulation is.

Doug Harby replied there is a standard drawing that states the sidewalk will be fenced off at the actual construction site and signs will be posted at each intersection. There is a series of standard drawings on what to do for pedestrian closures [12.12.200](#). In addition we will try to find a way to make the signs heavier so they cannot be carried away.

Jason Wiener inquired about closing the bicycle and vehicle lanes and why the temporary sidewalk would need to be so wide.

Doug Harby said in short term sidewalk closings, the department generally uses the candles, the delineators with snow fencing on them and they want to have a five foot clearance, the delineators

have approximately a twenty-four inch base, it takes about eleven or twelve feet to get a temporary sidewalk put in; in downtown situations they can use the parking lanes.

Pam Walzer was concerned about pedestrians walking on East Broadway where sidewalks are being constructed by the new apartments, and the path pedestrians use to walk on no longer exists. Is there a construction zone speed reduction posted during this project?

Doug Harby replied that this area is a problem, they did have Silvertip move their fence back to create a walking area and the cones are on the fog line which gives pedestrians about three feet of walk space. This is a difficult situation and the alternative would be to close one driving lane, they are trying to separate the pedestrians but not provide a full width walkway. Work is going to start on the Riverside Rest Home that is a much larger project and will have more intense traffic control; they are relying on this project's traffic control to tie in with this small piece of sidewalk construction for the apartments. It is always a difficult situation to try to improve pedestrian facilities and still maintain the pedestrians and bicycles use. We do use speed reduction on major projects but usually sidewalks do not have the level of traffic control that is used for a complete street closure. Public Works is working on a standards book for contractors to follow. ADA has added numerous specifications for temporary sidewalks that is time consuming and expensive and that is one reason they try to reroute pedestrians to other routes.

Jason Wiener removed this item from the agenda.

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)
7. Discuss the school speed zones. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)
8. Discuss the timing of various traffic lights around the city. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at

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