

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mike Geisel, City Administrator

FROM: James Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer 

SUBJECT: Planning & Public Works Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, July 22, 2021



A meeting of the Planning and Public Works Committee of the Chesterfield City Council was held on Thursday, July 22, 2021 in Conference Room 101.

In attendance were: **Chair Mary Monachella** (Ward I), **Councilmember Mary Ann Mastorakos** (Ward II), **Councilmember Dan Hurt** (Ward III), and **Councilmember Tom DeCampi** (Ward IV).

Also in attendance were: Councilmember Aaron Wahl (Ward II); Councilmember Gary Budoor (Ward IV); Planning Commission Chair Merrell Hansen; Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer; and Kathy Juergens, Recording Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

A. Approval of the July 12, 2021 Special Committee Meeting Summary

Councilmember Mastorakos made a motion to approve the Meeting Summary of July 12, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hurt and passed by a voice vote of 3-0 with Councilmember DeCampi abstaining.

II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2021 Wilson Avenue Budget Transfer Request

STAFF PRESENTATION

Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, stated that as discussed at the June 10, 2021 Planning and Public Works Committee meeting, the City previously submitted a grant application for the reconstruction of Wilson Avenue from Wild Horse Creek Road to the recently reconstructed culvert. That grant application was not successful. The Committee then directed Staff to acquire a cost estimate for engineering design services necessary in order to construct a project with limited scope.

Based on the direction from the Planning and Public Works Committee, the following project scope was established:

- Address the deficiencies at the Wilson Avenue and Wild Horse Creek Road intersection.
- Replace the failing culvert within the S-curve and straighten the S-curve.

- The project limits shall extend from Wild Horse Creek Road to a tie-in location south of the S-curve. This will reduce the length of the project from 3,000 feet to approximately 1,400 feet.
- Construct a new asphalt roadway through the entire area including paved shoulders.
- Include an off-street pedestrian/bicycle trail.
- The project will terminate north of the potential Baxter Crossing tie-in, therefore the connection of that roadway shall NOT be considered as part of this project.

Mr. Eckrich stated that he has reviewed the project with a reputable engineering firm, who has provided a design cost estimate of \$320,000. This would include roadway design plans, project specifications, a construction cost estimate, and assistance with the grant application. Ultimately the exact scope and fee would be negotiated with the firm determined to be the most qualified to provide this service, in accordance with Missouri law.

Mr. Eckrich stated that if Council desires to proceed with the project, it will require a supplemental allocation into the capital projects' budget from the General Fund – Fund Reserves.

DISCUSSION

In response to questions, Mr. Eckrich replied that the engineering design would have to be completed even if the City chose to make the improvements without grant funding. He stated that it is his opinion that the City will have a better chance of obtaining a future grant by completing the design because we will be better able to define the scope and reduce estimate contingencies. The proposed project is a smaller and less expensive project than the project contained within the previous grant application.

Councilmember Hurt made a motion to approve a \$320,000 supplemental budgetary allocation from the General Fund-Fund Reserve to the Capital Projects fund in order to fund engineering design services associated with a project to improve Wilson Avenue. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monachella.

Discussion after the Motion

Councilmember DeCampi stated that since the majority of his constituents do not want any improvements to Wilson Avenue, he is opposed to spending \$320,000 for road repairs. He also felt that the estimate was too high. Mr. Eckrich pointed out that the expenditure is for design services associated with a road improvement and reconstruction project, not road repairs. Mr. Eckrich also stated that engineering services are typically around 15% of the total project cost. In this case, that percentage has been reduced due to the relatively large magnitude of this project.

There was further discussion regarding the relocation of the S-curve and safety concerns. Councilmember DeCampi stated that the majority of his constituents are opposed to the relocation of the curve and based upon that alone, he would oppose the budget transfer. He also stated that safety is not an issue as there are few reported accidents in this area. He feels that the S-curve actually prevents accidents because it causes some drivers to avoid the area and forces other drivers to slow down. He believes that if the curve is straightened, drivers will likely drive faster.

Councilmember Hurt pointed out that as the City grows, improvements to Wilson Avenue will eventually need to be made. After being asked his opinion, Mr. Eckrich stated that in his professional opinion, the culvert needs substantial work. If Council decides that they do not want to improve the road as discussed, then the culvert will be reconstructed in its current location.

However, from an engineering standpoint, the current location is not the best place for a culvert. Mr. Eckrich would recommend relocating the culvert to the west and straightening out the S-curve, at least somewhat, by removing the blind curve. Mr. Eckrich stated that he understands the position of those that oppose relocation of the S-Curve, but it is his recommendation, as a professional engineer, that the culvert should be relocated.

Addressing further questions, Mr. Eckrich stated that he was very surprised that Wilson Avenue looked the way it did when he first came to the City nine years ago. At that time the City Administrator explained the history of Wilson Avenue and that it would remain in its current configuration until there was support from residents to improve it. This project was initiated when the City received a letter from the Walnut Hill subdivision requesting road improvements. Mr. Eckrich stated that it is his opinion that Wilson Avenue has reached the point where it should be improved. However, if City Council determines that improvements should not be constructed at this time, they can always be completed at a later date. Any design plans that are created now, will always be useful if the project is pursued in the future.

The Committee debated whether to allow those residents in attendance to speak. Chair Monachella asked for a show of hands as to who supported the project and who did not. Approximately ten residents raised their hands in support of the project. Two residents raised their hands indicating that they opposed the project. A few comments were made by residents in attendance but there was no formal request for the public to speak.

Councilmember DeCampi stated that public safety should be the City's number one priority. He reiterated that accident data does not support that this is a dangerous road. If accident data were high, he would support the project; because it is not, he does not. Councilmember DeCampi stated that the proposed improvements will lead to Wilson Avenue becoming a major cut-through which will lead to more accidents because there will be increased volume and speed, which both contribute to accidents. Councilmember DeCampi stated that this is not an area where substantial future development is anticipated. If he received support from a majority of residents, he might support the project, but that is not the feedback he has received. Councilmember DeCampi stated that there are only a handful of area residents who want the improvements, and that the majority of residents do not.

Chair Monachella called for a vote. The above motion **passed** by a voice vote of 3-1 with Councilmember DeCampi voting nay.

[Please see the attached report prepared by Jim Eckrich, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, for additional information on 2021 Wilson Avenue Budget Transfer Request.]

IV. OTHER

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.