

City Council Work Session

5:50 p.m.
Council Chambers
March 21, 2011

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) Hanel, Ronquillo, Gaghen, Cimmino, Pitman, McFadden, Ruegamer, Ulledalen, McCall, Astle, Clark.

ADJOURN TIME: 7:55 p.m.

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Inner Belt Loop Alternative
PRESENTER	Dave Mumford
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Friday packet included a summary of alternative plan. Route is doable through Airport but FAA has concerns that may take six months to resolve.
- Suggest for CIP moving forward with Rimrock Road, Zimmerman Trail, and first phase of IBL between Wickes Lane and Alkali Creek Road at a cost of about \$3 million. Could acquire from State and Airport. The rest of IBL would be a logical next project for Federal Urban Funds when Bench is complete.
- Also allow section of Poly and 32nd Street to be built by 2016.
- Will allow City to continue routes listed in CIP.
- CM Pitman had asked if used Arterial Fee only for IBL, could it be built in five years, but Dave's calculations showed it would be about \$4-5 million short.
- Ronquillo: How much spent in Heights last couple of years? Dave: Not sure exact amount, but half of Arterial has been used.
- McFadden: When will 32nd to be finished? Dave: In the next 5 years. Clark: Please let us know traffic count.
- Ruegamer: There is perception Heights not getting adequate share of funding, with people mentioning King Avenue, the Heights pool and Shiloh Road. Dave: Have spent significant amount of money, but no area thinks they are getting all funds should. Ruegamer: Needs to be clear the perception isn't true.
- Ulledalen: Issue at Airport of placement of road relative to the end of the runway? Dave: Can be below 50-to-1 approach, may be problem with being in the area at all. But moving out would significantly increase costs because of deep ravines, and would need to look at original route. There are some options in which land needs to be acquired for another runway – may be able to help with that.

- Mayor: Shows list of projects by ward. Green area is Ward II. Not saying project cost, but identifies projects.
- Pitman: Thanks for meeting last week. Looking at every way possible to move project forward. Heard concerns about debt financing. Also have keep in perspective Heights is one of areas of phenomenal growth in last 5-7 years. If looked back 20 years, would see spending where growth was needed, without reference to what wards receive. Do you have a cost estimate of using Airport alignment? Dave: If we had to build outside the proposed corridor, costs will escalate quickly and savings would start to become questionable.
- Ruegamer: How many phases? Dave: Two. Ruegamer: Former CM Stevens has worked with FAA in placing facilities at airports, and would be glad to help.
- Ulledalen: How far west before we encroach into Rod and Gun Club land? Dave: If get close to original route, we might be. Ulledalen: Rod and Gun Club would be glad to meet with the City.
- Pitman: CM Steven's e-mail referred to fact she has been able to put things inside Airport fence. Binford has said other things have been put into side and perimeter, but it is a problem when the road would be in runway path, as this was.
- Ronquillo: Heights hasn't lost anything compared to south side. Ward 1 has lost Gazebo, Athletic Pool, Wading Pool, are some of things lost, south side should get back some of the things they are lost.
- Cimmino: If we go with alternate route, what would be the purchase price of land west of Airport? Binford: Appraisals are in the neighborhood of \$500,000. Cimmino: if look at list from the Mayor, Zoo Drive signal light was \$500,000 and St. Andrews light was \$115,000. Heights projects were waiting for many years, and Ward II still is part of the city, need to work together. Whatever plan is completed, it is a City-wide project. Asks that future lists of projects please include costs. Dave: Was asked for a projects list, hopes CIP is 5-year plan and addresses highest needs of City as whole. Asks Council to direct which CIP plan to use? Ulledalen: Go with Plan B and if takes six months, okay. Wicks to Alkali Creek would help with traffic at Skyview High School. Dave: Would keep the project in progress. Clark: Could make changes at meeting on CIP? Dave: Can't make major changes without possibility of losing \$\$\$.
- Pitman: Wicks to Alkali is part of either project, so makes sense to put in and investigate other options. Gives community signal moving forward, and progressing positively.
- McFadden: Supports Inner Belt Loop. Affects West End as well, by allowing Heights residents to use businesses there.
- Ulledalen: Leaves room for maintaining road stock with Federal dollars tighter. How do we finance? Gives option for future road GO bonds for several projects as in past.
- Mayor: Thanks staff for working on this.
- Public comment: Alice Lahren, 108 Sky Ranch Road, representing Sky Ranch Homeowners Association. Oppose dumping road onto Hwy 3 at their entrance, "jake brakes" and other noise pollution that could come from alternate route.
- Ulledalen: Not likely to be on Girl Scout Road.
- Roger Peterson, 105 Sky Ranch Road. Owners of 12 homes there concerned that even if roundabout, trucks would need to brake, be like dumping all of Main Street into the Council's driveways.

- Joe White, Big 5 Motel: Keep growing, potential for it being there, should combine look at Rims with falling rocks and try to obtain a major study on rimrocks because bypass would put stress on area already crumbling. City, county and state should participate before any decisions made.
- Elaine Kinnard, 106 Sky Ranch Road, says safety is concern.

TOPIC #2	American Medical Response Presentation
PRESENTER	Melody Westmoreland, Operations Manager, AMR
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Ambulance provider with a national corporation and local operating unit that can create customized services for residents.
- Calls are about 72% medical, including hospital and nursing home runs; 28% traumatic, such as auto accidents or falls.
- Paramedic level ambulance service is available 24-7. Employees meet EMT standards, and have to recertify bi-annually. Each ambulance is stocked with \$70k of supplies. Just added a bariatric ambulance to transport patients up to 1600 pounds, with devices to allow patients to be moved safely for both patients and providers and with dignity. It is used primarily for scheduled patients.
- Gaghen: Number of ambulances in service? Melody: 15 ambulances and 1 wheelchair van. Mayor: Staff? Melody: 75 employees with five units at peak and 3 units other times. Mayor: Where are ambulances stationed? Melody: Main station on 4th Ave, also at 5th and Cook; 24th and Grand; and four (4) other locations where ambulances can be placed. Move around during day, such as one in Heights during late afternoon. Clark: AMR often comes to talk at EMS Committee, and he often sees them at grocery parking lots, etc., to handle calls.
- McCall: She is sorry she couldn't meet individually with Ms. Westmoreland. Does AMR have a partnership with the College Of Technology? Melody: COT has accredited program and they ride with AMR. McCall: Hard to maintain skilled, qualified staff? Melody: Her third year here and AMR has been fully staffed since she arrived.
- Cimmino: Said it was heartwarming to know AMR doesn't refuse service regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Melody: AMR averages \$3 million charity care a year.
- Pitman: AMR schedules transports as well as being ER staff, as he learned in previous year.
- Gaghen: Thanks Melody and staff for meeting with CMs. How do non-emergency patients access services? What is Ms. Westmoreland's background? Melody: Local hospitals, nursing homes, long-distance transfers are scheduled when people need to be transported without lights and siren. She started her career in EMS in 1977, moved to AMR in 1979, and been with company since for all but two years when worked with State of Washington.
- Ruegamer: Transported when in hospital, amazed at service, they were professional and knew their business. Melody: Training for staff is equivalent of two years of medical school.
- Melody introduces Randy Strozyk, NW Great Lakes Regional CEO. Clark says be surprised how many times outside AMR staff comes to EMS meetings.

There was no public comment.

TOPIC #3	Snow Removal
PRESENTER	Dave Mumford
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Snow has been more frequent last two years and residents have more expectations. Staff has stepped up work last two years for arterial and connector streets. Looking at some form of residential plowing for snow removal.
- Plow arterials and connectors, fire stations one and four, entrances to hospitals and multi-use trails also arterials and collectors. Sand and de-ice downtown, hills, controlled intersections and school crossings. Over last two years stepped up hauling off of major roads. Only have 35 line staff and 3 graders/motor patrols. Managers have worked hard to avoid overtime but come up with good plowing. Half crews work 12 hours – 8 regular and 4 OT, then shift. Weekends all OT, as are emergencies.
- Budget was \$750,000 plus road repair money moved into budget. 6,355 hours of OT for Streets/Traffic this year only covers snow removal. Pitman: Cost? Dave: Mostly comp time, but have \$50k set aside for payment. Creates issue of paying out comp when people want to take time in the summer.
- Taking care of 512 miles of paved roads and 1,133 lane miles to plow. Plow about 500 lane miles with Airport Road and Shiloh. Residential streets would add 319 miles or 650 lane miles. Since 2000, increased 33 % or 281 lane miles.
- If plowed snow to curb in neighborhoods, would not haul in neighborhoods. Ruegamer: Hard to remove plowed snow from driveways. Dave: Depends on when do it, but would have to be done in about three days and only when more than four (4) inches. Looked at average seven (7) storms, including two back-to-back 12 inch storms. With freezing rain, asphalt came up with ice. Snow blower being added, since old one used hard for short periods and has no auger. To do work in 3-4 days, would need four (4) crews of two (2) each; for City to do self would have to buy eight (8) graders and hire eight (8) more employees for more than \$\$2.1 million, while existing employees work on remaining route. Looked at leasing \$2,300-\$2,400 each per week, total cost \$931,200; worked with other firms with their own supervisors would cost \$540,000 per year.
- Gaghen: Need to do something to relieve existing staff who are putting in 4.5 weeks OT beyond regular work. Dave: Also worried about supervisors.
- Other recommended changes: Add \$60,000 contract for snow hauling because we don't have big trucks for City people to do; want to add two (2) new employees at \$110,000 and \$30,000 for fuel, sand and repairs in 2012 budget. Talking to Downtown Partnership about alternating no parking on opposite sides of street at night to handle plowing there.
- Residential rate changes in house would increase 48% with new equipment versus 21% increase with leased equipment; arterial would be an additional 5% and the contracted work 12%.
- If went for 17% increase needed, average house paying \$64 for street maintenance would see \$10.88 per year increase. Would like to have budget set up so unused funds for

contracting would go back into summer maintenance program, rather than building up reserves. Far behind 15- to 20-year replacement plan, now at 35 years. McCall leaves.

- Pitman: Good timing, as people will forget issues by July. Need to work on ordinances mandating car removal from streets. Mayor: By calls and e-mails, thought it would cost a lot more to add these services, interested in hearing from public. Dave: Allowed by contracting, goes up as we add staff and equipment. Ulledalen: People interested in bidding? What was response, and would firms respond in future? Dave: Got good response when asked three (3) contractors (Riverside, Knife River and CMG) to haul and provide sites. Going residential, two (2) of firms said they would bring in crews and equipment. Big contractors carry best equipment operators through season and smaller haulers offered to work. Clark: are some of the trucks too big? Dave: Could use 35-yard trucks but had to drop pups because of turn-around issues. Clark: Other departments have workers could be trained to use equipment to cut down on OT? Dave: Used utilities and solid waste crews on weekends, but have to be using CDLs, bought plows to maximize equipment. Pitman: Costs are residential only but if big storm, would be available for arterials? Dave: yes.
- Ruegamer: Plow in residential driveways? Dave: yes. Eliminate on-street parking? Dave: no. Ruegamer: Doing good job, but old folks get stuck, if get some on sidewalks, snow is heavy. Dave: Plowing on driveways depends on size of lots. If larger lots can hold now past driveways, but not in close neighborhoods. Ulledalen: Issue of plowed in cars, too. Streets where it would make sense to plow to center? Dave: Could look at option, but leaves right-in, right-out only. Clark: What happens if only on street parking? Dave: Would need to figure out what to do around Custer, for example.
- Mayor: No perfect answer, proposal good for consideration.
- Ulledalen: Three responses to him on snow issues: Just like '70s, no big problem; newer residents couldn't believe; those who lived in areas plowed wanted plowing here. Question is define expected service levels, haven't figured out, need to determine. Dave: Survey said needing more, trying to figure out how to do it.
- Pitman: He has a parking lot, plow after two (2) inches. How get four (4) inches? Dave: What point end up with ruts don't come out until Chinook. Couldn't move and expectations is we were going to and in worse state.
- Gaghen: Hauling by private contractors doesn't lock in if unpalatable as would be if hired. Don't see how we can continue and not affect staff.
- Ronquillo: Where will you put the snow? Can't put it by river. Dave: Only haul arterials to one (1) of three (3) sites and contractors had pits they could use. Yeagen's and others would allow storage on non-crop areas. Ugly when melts so trying to find places not visible.
- Clark: When do we start residential sweeping? Dave: Been doing arterials, and now starting on residential. Hard to sweep leaves, but may come back with bio-degradable bags to see if can replace leaf pick-up. Have to pick up to keep out of storm drains, but may not be able to continue in city.
- Ronquillo: Where is green recycling? Dave: Have by end of summer in all sections.

- Public comment: Lisa Harmon, Downtown Billings Partnership: Appreciate staff's work with downtown on snow removal. Would work on snow removal, leaves, educating owners on snow routes.

TOPIC #4	Integrated Water Plan
PRESENTER	Dave Mumford
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Project manager ill, unable to present.
- Most cities work on integrated water plan – wastewater, drinking water, storm water under drought conditions.
- Billings's staff started looking at how to do this in long-run. Use reclamation for irrigation or industrial reuse? Inject treated wastewater back into ground for use later. Build satellite plants for sewer water? How to reduce watering in residential area? Produce 18 million gallons water in winter but 50-60 in summer. Use ditches for irrigation long-term rather than let them be abandoned?
- Ronquillo: How would floating islands work in the system? Dave: Would use at Shiloh and King. Experimenting now at Rehberg Ranch and main treatment plant.
- Ulledalen: Ditch companies have exemptions that would not carry over to City with ditches? Dave: Not aware. Own several ditches now, unaware any problems.
- Clark: Problems for downstream users if stop putting wastewater back into rivers? Dave: Unclear in discussions with water master how Billings would respond to call from other cities for water.
- Dave: Went into plan because storm water TMDLs being dictated by State DEQ, and dealing with storm water. Dealing with water rights in adjudication. Proposed west end water plant would cost \$35 million but be used only in summer; use other sources such as wastewater for irrigation. Seasonal wastewater limits would allow only five (5) years to do improvements and within 20 years only be able to put drinking water into river.
- Had stakeholders from ditch companies, environmental groups, engineer in three (3) workshops and survey. MSU-B did survey, which acknowledged that future systems are big priority for people. Reuse water was acceptable, even when explained wastewater or ditch water.
- Sampled groups and found sustainability highest priority, water conservation, cost and constructability were four (4) highest priorities.
- Six (6) options ranging from what we are doing now, cheapest in short term, like building big plant. Also looked at up to never discharging into river again. Took off both as not being best options. Would provide report. No single option is perfect, will mix and match to do best for community. Considerations would be deferring west end WTP construction, reducing storm water handling and treatment costs, extend water rights, and being good stewards of resources.
- There will be a 13% increase in wastewater costs next year, then levels off.
- Ronquillo: Still working with Laurel? Dave: Work for siting to benefit both. If summer plant, BBWA has more water rights than use. Could use those. If year-round, need to go back to river. Looking at reservation rights to store water and wastewater. Looking at

injecting water into ground by running plant at higher capacity in winter and storing, and other options.

- Ulledalen: Cody has untreated water system from river, how would Billings do without creating new system? Dave: Would have to create system, but could install smaller treatment plants with subdivisions. Putting in new pipes, could leave old pipes for storm water or wastewater distribution systems. To get rid of it, could buy hay fields outlying and use for irrigation. Could go into some areas with big lots who would be able to put in shallow pipes and use.
- Ulledalen: With wastewater discharge, implementing Federal water act was initiated when? Al Towleron: 1972 with amendments in later years. Ulledalen: Where sit in comparison with others? Dave: Moving toward issues everywhere. Ulledalen: Why not do act of Congress to stretch out compliance? Dave: Florida lawsuit results in federal courts saying EPA is too lenient up to now. Working on 20-year window, but short window for government. Ulledalen: Unfunded Federal mandate at time of issues—Federal government needs to fund. Al: In past, Federal government funded plants. Dave: DEQ trying to work with us, trying at Legislature to give breathing room to small cities. Frustrating that aren't counting non-point sources. If community shows it uses resources wisely, industries will expect us grow. Can use water more wisely to achieve an easier solution long-term. Council will see this in CIP, but first rate increase is 13% increase proposed in 2012 to wastewater plant. Billings is one of only two cities without permeable membrane plants.
- McFadden: EPA or Congressional standards? Dave: EPA driven but science coming to numbers. Al: Move to put numbers to enact original intent of Clean Water Act. McFadden: Saying took own initiative without Congressional oversight? Dave: Not sure I can answer how EPA and Congress relationship works. Also applies to storm water. Al: One of many water quality standards to enact Clean Water Act.
- Pitman: Whole change in policy and philosophy on how the City looks? Need changes in our ordinances? Dave: Spent last year working on technical issues, now need to work with Planning on how deal with street, sub dividers and others. Administrative and ordinance part in is years to come.
- Ulledalen: Going to cost more? Small-scale developers going to have problems, while big developers have capacity to fund plants. Dave: Not easy, but doing it one way or another, developments will pay for it by having their own plants. Mayor: Developers aware and going to have to be working with us.
- Public Comment: None

Additional Information:

No public comment.