

To: Sandra Tripp-Jones, City Manager

From: Commissioner Steve Rideout

Date: November 12, 2016

Re: Street Paving

I would like to have city council direct staff to determine the cost for and what services a paving consultant would be able to provide to assist city staff in developing short and long range goals for surfacing and resurfacing city streets and assisting city council in how to fund the work adequately. Mr. Wheeler provided a memo in August 2016 about street paving needs and the expected life of an asphalt street. In his memo Mr. Wheeler indicated the following:

There are approximately 70 miles of City maintained streets within the municipal boundaries of Cambridge. The expected service life on an asphalt Street is about 20 years. In order to maintain a 20-year cycle on resurfacing all our streets, we need to be paving approximately 3.5 miles per year. Due to budget constraints, we have averaged approximately 1.6 miles of resurfacing per year over the past 10 years. Based on current paving prices and the amount budgeted in FY 2017 for resurfacing, we again expect to resurface about 1.6 miles of streets.

It occurred to me, however, that our streets have different levels of usage – more cars or more trucks than cars on different streets. There are main city streets such as Maryland, Pine, High, Poplar, Race, Water, Hambrooks, and others that have heavier traffic and probably need resurfacing sooner than every 20 years simply because of their high use.

There are also streets that are not used nearly as much that might need resurfacing over a longer period of time or, depending on their current condition, could be covered less expensively with Bituminous Surface Treatments (BST) or other less costly surface coatings. There are also streets where resurfacing to some extent might be needed because of underlying problems such as water or sewer main breaks or other needed repairs.

I am not aware of any program management software that can help identify what streets might need repair and what their level of use is so that a strategic plan can be developed for this task. I do know, however, that there are consultants that have that expertise. Having an experienced consultant test and inspect our streets might provide us with different and less costly ideas for our street maintenance.

Based on my investigation I believe that the City through an independent contractor can develop a plan to help extend the life of our streets and fix the less used streets at less cost. I have spoken with an experienced representative of the State Highway Administration who agrees with me.

Identifying the streets with higher and heavier usage and determining the relationship of those miles to the total mileage of streets in the city (70) would give us a better idea of what streets needed to be ground down and new asphalt applied (as is now done for all of our streets) and what streets could avoid that more costly treatment, at least for a while. Mr. Wheeler indicates that city streets need to be ground down in order to keep the pavement below the curb edge in order to contain water runoff within the curb. In looking at the height of some of our streets compared to the curb line, it does not appear that all streets in the city need to be ground down in order to remain below the curb line.

My thought is that we look at the road resurfacing challenge in this different way by determining the mileage within the city of the high use roads where asphalt resurfacing might have to occur sooner and lower use roads where other low cost resurfacing could be used for the short term with asphalt paving being done over some longer period of time. Additionally we could establish a review process either by staff or outside consultant that identifies early problems on a street that can be fixed less expensively while lengthening the life of the streets.

It seems to me that a reallocation of potential work might mitigate the number of miles that need to be fully repaved each year to result in us spending as much or less and receiving a greater benefit. We might even find that if we were to spend

more now that would result in an even longer life for more of the streets and an overall reduced cost for this task. Would having a consultant who knows more paving companies with newer and less expensive processes find the city a better deal?

I would ask that we direct city staff to do some research on this issue to determine the potential cost of a consultant and what data it might be able to provide to help consider options other than our current process. After a report from staff on this issue, the city has impact fees related to streets that could be used to fund the hiring of such a consultant.

If we do not look at this issue differently to try to find a better solution, the city will never have enough money to keep up with repair of the streets. Your August 2016 letter to the county about street paving indicated we are on a schedule of fixing streets every 50 years. That will just make it someone else's problem and at a greater cost. I do not see our job as being the group that kicks the problem down the road for others to fix.



City of Cambridge

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MEMO

Date: November 18, 2016
TO: Mayor and City Council
cc: Sandra Tripp-Jones, City Manager
FROM: George Hyde, City Engineer *GH*
RE: Review of the City's Street Maintenance & Sidewalk Programs

It is my understanding that Council may wish to have a consultant assess the condition of City streets and make a recommendation regarding short term and long term maintenance and repairs. In addition, Council may wish staff to research and provide a report on other municipalities' policies regarding sidewalk repairs, replacement and new construction.

Prior to developing a request for proposals for a street maintenance study, we should probably contact a couple of consultants that do that type of work to get a ballpark estimate of what a study is likely to cost. If a source of funding is identified, we can then proceed with developing a request for proposal (RFP) and hiring the consultant. I am estimating approximately one week of an engineer's time to contact consultants, develop the RFP and make an award recommendation to Council. I would likely assume the lead in this.

Note that impact fees funds cannot be used for this purpose as they can only be used for new facilities, such as new roads or sidewalks or water or sewer services.

In regards to researching and providing a report on other municipalities' policies regarding sidewalk repairs, replacement and new construction, I think that could be completed in approximately one week as well. I would anticipate contacting 6 to 10 municipalities to see how they deal with sidewalks and preparing a brief report which summarizes our findings. Brent Jett would likely take the lead in completing this.

Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please let me know.