

Planning Policy Commission
5-25-17

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
PLANNING POLICY COMMISSION
MINUTES**

May 25, 2017

City Hall South
Council Chambers

135 E. Sunset Way
Issaquah, WA 98027

PPC MEMBERS PRESENT

Joan Probala, Chair
Ron Faul
Victoria Hunt, Alt.
AJ McGauley, Alt.
Jon Stob
Troy Rahmig
Lindsey Walsh

STAFF PRESENT

Trish Heinonen, Long-Range Planning Manager
Kurt Seemann, Transportation Manager

CALL TO ORDER

PROBALA, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

PROPOSED 2018-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Seemann made staff's presentation. He gave some basic information about the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program), including why the City does this; the state statute requiring that jurisdictions prepare a TIP; the importance of the TIP to the City for funding eligibility purposes; and the role of the TIP in helping the City set priorities for transportation funding.

He continued that this year, as opposed to past approaches in developing the TIP, the TIP is part of the citywide Capital Improvement Program. He displayed the proposed TIP document and explained how it is organized. He said the TIP is included in the larger CIP on which the Council is currently holding public workshops. He said the TIP includes a wide variety of projects that vary in complexity, cost, and details, and said he has selected 12 or so that the City is planning to do very soon that he would like to discuss tonight. He explained how the projects were assigned a ranking in the six-year plan. The projects he discussed included:

- Newport Way: Maple Street to West Sunset Way (\$22.9 million)
- Newport Way: SR 900 to SE 54th St. (\$21.1 million)
- Providence Point—Intersection Realignment & Signalization (\$6.2 million)
- NW Gilman Blvd. Improvements (\$235,000)
- Complete Streets (\$5.4 million)

McGAULEY asked what is the difference between the Complete Streets project and other street improvement projects in the TIP. Seemann said that's a great question, and he will address it after his presentation, and continued with the following projects:

- Front Street and I-90 Interchange Reconfiguration (\$46.3 million)
- SE 62nd Street Extension (\$42.5 million)
- 12th Ave. SR 900/17th Ave. Improvements (\$5.4 million)
- Central Park Traffic Signal (\$1.3 million)
- 2nd Avenue SE (\$780,000)
- 221st Place SE Improvements (\$6.7 million)

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- 11th/12th Ave. NW I-90 Crossing (\$75 million)
- SE Black Nugget Road—Retaining Wall Repair (\$2.3 million)

PROBALA noted that PPC sees the TIP list every year, and asked are there any projects on this list that will be completed in the next two years. Seemann replied yes. He referred to non-motorized projects within the Complete Streets program, and said the City completed four or five of those last year and will be doing another four or five this year. He added that the East Lake Sammamish improvements project was completed last year. In the next two years, he continued, the City will complete the 62nd SE project, and will move into the design phase on the Newport Way improvements from Maple to Sunset. The Newport to SR 900 project will begin preliminary design, and the City will begin design for improvement projects on Gilman. He said there are a lot of projects in motion, some in construction and some in other phases. PROBALA said if PPC members compared last year's TIP with this year's, they could see changes, and some projects would no longer be listed because they have been completed. Seemann replied yes. PROBALA said she would like PPC members to have last year's plan so they can compare. She would like a chart showing what projects have been complete in the last two years, and what projects are slated for completion in the next two years. Staff made a note of it.

PROBALA asked about work being done at the SE 221st intersection. Seemann showed it on a diagram. WALSH noted the intersection is affected because of work at SE 62nd. Seemann gave details about how construction is affecting SE 62nd, SE 221st, and adjacent roadways.

FAUL asked for clarification of how projects are described in the matrix, such as "desirable," and how the scores were derived. Seemann replied the TIP is part of the City's overall CIP, and the format used is applied to all city projects across the board. The terms used have meaning for the budget as a whole, as do the scores and indications of priority. McGAULEY noted it would be useful to have a better understanding of the methodology used to determine scoring. Seemann said he will get PPC members that information about scoring and priority.

FAUL asked is there a reason why project #61, Three Trails Crossing Improvements, is not listed until 2022, and is there any way it could be done sooner. Seemann replied the Three Trails Crossing project is somewhat of an outlier because it has been planned and budgeted for some time. He continued a signal will be going in there, and the pedestrian crossing moved from the west to that intersection. The developer will pay for most of the costs, and the City will pay the remainder. He gave more details about what the developer will build and what will remain for the City to do. FAUL asked so is it being listed here as a placeholder. Seemann replied that is correct.

PROBALA added that some of these projects haven't had environmental studies done yet, and all of them will change in some way before they are under actual construction. Seemann agreed, and said until funding is secured to do the preliminary studies and design work, we don't have all the answers and can't be specific. He said the project list includes a lot of assumptions about funding, grant availability, when the work can proceed, and so on.

FAUL said on project #72, Newport Way--Maple to Sunset, how committed is the City to doing a full build-out of that road, rather than just a new asphalt top. He said he has heard that the roadway underneath may be wearing out. Seemann said the scope of the project is what is in the plan. McGAULEY noted the footprint will nearly double the right-of-way with the addition of sidewalks, bike lanes, and so on. He asked for clarification of the southbound lanes that will result from the project, which was included in the failed levy last fall. Seemann replied there will be a total of three southbound lanes, one existing and two new southbound lanes, the length of which will be revisited.

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FAUL noted the chart shows the budget for the Newport Way—Maple to Sunset project is about \$1.1 million in 2018, \$400,000 in 2019, and \$2 million in 2020. What kind of work is included in those costs, he asked. Seemann replied the first three years of costs are for design work, including preliminary design and environmental studies, and right-of-way acquisition. The construction portion of the project would follow. FAUL asked has any funding for the project already been secured. Seemann replied yes; the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has indicated that \$1.7 million is available in grant money for the initial design work. The City currently has not identified the remaining funding.

PROBALA expressed concern that if studies are done and grant funds are not found to continue into construction, a project in the TIP just sits on a shelf. Then when money does become available, the studies are outdated and have to be redone. Seemann said the City is constantly looking for opportunities for funding, and doesn't just wait until design is over to actively seek out grants. However, he continued, it is a balancing act. We wouldn't have the answers needed to get grants for construction without doing the studies. PROBALA said her concern is that each year a project plan sits on a shelf, the further it gets out of compliance, so we don't want to get out too far ahead. Seemann agreed.

FAUL said the improvement project on Newport, which voters did not approve last November's levy vote, is not going to do much to alleviate traffic, and is more of a beautification project. McGAULEY disagreed, and said his impression is that the work to be done on Sunset is more aesthetic, but the work on Newport will add new lanes. Seemann said he would not characterize the work on Sunset as aesthetic; the non-motorized components are going to strengthen ways of getting around other than cars. They will also improve safety and mobility by providing sidewalks, bike lanes, and improved access to transit service. The result will be more options for people than driving vehicles, he said, which will add capacity, as will the new two southbound lanes on Newport Way. Capacity isn't just more lanes, he continued, but also improving intersections, such as the roundabout at Juniper and Newport. No single project will solve all of our traffic problems on its own, and has to be viewed as part of a system of traffic improvement projects, he concluded.

Seemann replied to McGAULEY's earlier question about Complete Streets. He said it can be puzzling about which projects go into the Complete Streets program and which are stand-alone projects, but it will become more clear as changes to the Complete Streets program are made. He added the result will be more individual projects and fewer projects in the umbrella of Complete Streets. McGAULEY asked if more of the small-dollar projects will be in the Complete Streets program. Seemann replied that is correct.

WALSH asked about the roundabout at Target and the Front Street streetscape, both of which were recently addressed by the City Council. Seemann said the roundabout at Target was initially a much larger project in scale, but is now embedded in the Complete Streets program and so is included in the TIP. WALSH noted the timing of the Front Street streetscape project was recently shifted up by the City Council.

HUNT asked about the project at Front Street and I-90 Intersection, and said the matrix indicates that no funding has been allocated from 2018-2023. Is that because of the need to study the best way to do it, she asked. Seemann replied the biggest reason is because the City has not yet done a justification study, as required by the state. It will also require a major funding source, most likely from the state. He noted the projects in the TIP are not necessarily those for which the City has identified funding, but rather are projects that the Administration feels would be valuable for the City to undertake.

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McGAULEY said he would recommend the City put some funding in this six-year time frame toward identifying where the City will locate light rail station(s) when Sound Transit brings light rail to Issaquah. That decision would inform other decisions, including transportation projects, he added. He said he also favors the City undertaking a parking study to determine whether a parking structure is appropriate for Olde Town before considering a parking structure.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Heinonen noted that Mary Lynch, 2690 Oakcrest Drive, Issaquah, has submitted written comments that were distributed to Commissioners prior to the meeting. Among her comments were the following: *“The TIP does not show an improvement project for Newport Way west of S-54 to Lakemont Blvd. There is no plan to build a center turning lane all along Newport Way, and CIP concurrence is based on having a center lane in place. Newport Way is also part of the Mountains to Sound Greenway trail. This TIP does not include a safe walking pathway or public transportation along the Newport Way corridor, as TIPs for the past 30 years have. The City needs more policies, engineering design standards, education and enforcement to make Issaquah a more pedestrian/bike friendly City. The City is missing the “middle modes” for housing, and needs to make changes in its code, as has been done in Olympia, WA.”*

OTHER/ADJOURN

With no additional business to conduct, PROBALA adjourned the meeting at 5:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowe
Recording Secretary

(Note: Alternate Members did not vote at tonight’s meeting as there was a quorum of Regular Members present.)