



ROCHESTER

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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PRESS RELEASE

Investment Strategies for a Better Street System

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The basic pavement maintenance goal of the Rochester Public Works Department has been to achieve the best surface condition or ride quality by focusing the investment of public dollars in preventative maintenance strategies such as crack sealing, seal coats, and overlays. The ride quality for the entire city street network is good or very good for over 80% of the city streets. However over 31% of city streets are 50 years old or older and have reached the end of their useful service life and need to be reconstructed.

Pavement Maintenance

Roads wear out over time for a variety of reasons. In Minnesota it's primarily due to the cumulative wear and tear on a road from vehicle traffic loads and the effects of weather conditions such as freeze and thaw cycles every spring. The degradation of Rochester's roads is accelerated by the less than ideal aggregates available in the area used to build the roads and the poor soils upon which the roads are constructed.

The three (3) primary pavement maintenance strategies are listed below.

- Pavement Preservation: crack filling, joint sealing, spot curb replacement, sealcoat, fog seal, and patching. Decades of research has shown that investment of dollars during the Preservation Strategy Phase can result in a 6:1 return on investment.
- Pavement Rehabilitation: resurfacing of the street section including curb and gutter construction or replacement.
- Pavement Reconstruction: the complete removal and replacement of the entire street section, including major repairs to public utilities buried under the streets. Reconstruction strategies are significantly more expensive than the other strategies, but are a necessary part of the life of every street.

Funding History & Future Needs

The effectiveness of Public Works' strategies for pavement maintenance is greatly diminished if the funding is not adequate. Ideally the City should be investing \$32 million dollars per year in street maintenance strategies. The current annual investment in Rochester streets is about \$9 million dollars. Over the past 20 years:

- The deficit in available funds for investment in street maintenance strategies has grown from \$3 million in 1997 to a projected \$23 million in 2017, a 750% increase.
- The number of miles of city street has grown from 275 miles in 1997 to 467 miles in 2016, a 70% increase.
- The backlog of unmet Reconstruction Needs has grown from \$19.6 million in 1997 to over \$234.5 million in 2016, a 1,200% increase.

The city street network is comprised of 467 miles of streets and has 204 miles of streets over 30 years of age. There are currently 107 miles of city streets that are over 50 years old that are in need of a street reconstruction projects at a cost of \$234.5 million.

Funding Options

There are only a limited number of options available for the City Council to use to fund the existing deficit and the anticipated future pavement management needs. Those options include an increase in property taxes, increase in special assessments for both rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, and use of dedicated utility franchise fees.

Next Steps

- **Monday, August 08:** The Public Works and Finance Departments will be making a presentation, entitled "Investment Strategies for a Better Street System," to the City Council at the Committee of the Whole meeting.
- **Monday, August 22:** The City Council is scheduled to meet again to discuss the contents of a short-term and long-term set of funding strategies to support maintenance of the city's 467 mile street network.

The Committee of the Whole meetings are held on Mondays in City Hall Conference Room 104 at 3:30 pm.

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