

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)
FOR CITY OF MEDICINE LAKE CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN STUDY

February 24, 2021

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Question:

Could the road project include a sidewalk or bike path?

Answer:

It certainly could if residents and the City Council feel that is an important improvement to add to the roadway. There would definitely be some challenges for installing either a concrete sidewalk or asphalt trail for walkers and/or bikers. Some of the challenges with adding pedestrian or bike facilities include but are not limited to: available right of way, tree impacts, drainage impacts, driveway impacts both grade and alignment, and safety measures. The level of detail needed to add sidewalks and/or bike trails is beyond the scope of the current planning study. These facilities would need to be investigated in more detail during the detailed design phase and any impacts would vary depending on if the sidewalk or trail was separated from the existing road surface or an extension of the existing paved surface (widen the pavement). We would also propose to complete a traffic study to evaluate existing traffic volumes and speeds, existing pedestrian and bicycle usage and alternatives to implement a multi modal corridor to accommodate all three users – vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Question:

What else, besides a sidewalk or widened lane, can help improve pedestrian safety?

Answer:

The City of Medicine Lake has a 20 MPH speed limit, which is not proposed to change. If adhered to, this should be a generally safe speed to accommodate vehicles and pedestrians. There are several other actions the City could take to address safety of pedestrians and bicyclists such as

- An in-depth traffic/pedestrian study should be conducted to determine how to accommodate all modes – vehicles, pedestrians, bikes – and determine the most appropriate solution for the City.
- Consider increasing law enforcement and public awareness on speeding. Speed control is achieved best when all three E's are used – Education, Enforcement and Engineering.
- Consider increasing pedestrian awareness to motorists by the use of high visible, smart technology signage and lighting
- Consider digital speed indicators that inform drivers of their current speed.
- Consider installing speed humps or other traffic calming devices like those on South Shore Drive.

ROAD

Question: The current road meanders and is not centered on the setbacks. Will the new road be adjusted to the center of all the setbacks?

Answer: The general plan is to install the new road in the same location as the current road. There are no plans to “recenter” on setbacks. Installing the road at its current location will minimize impact to intersecting driveways and other landscaping attractions. It is hoped that the road can be reconstructed within the existing public right of way, but if during design, it is determined that additional room is needed for any of the improvements (such as sidewalks) additional right of way or easements may need to be obtained from the property owners. This will be determined during the detailed design phase of a project.

Question:

Will the road project include putting asphalt in the parking areas around Jevne Park?

Answer:

Currently, the parking areas are gravel around the park. The current project budget does not include money to install asphalt in these parking areas. However, this is a worthy idea, and we will review the scope of this as we finalize the road-planning budgets.

We need to factor the additional hardcover impact this creates around Jevne Park. The engineering phase of the project will help us determine if the additional hardcover creates new pressures on stormwater control.

Regardless of the road paving decision, the city will make certain these areas are maintained with winter snowplowing so that parking is available year-round.

JEVNE PARK**Question:**

What efforts are being made within the City to address stormwater flooding around Jevne Park and waterflow into the lake?

Answer:

The projects in the CIP endeavors to make slight improvements to stormwater management, with the understanding that there are limited options in the low lying areas of our City. The engineering phase of road design will include careful consideration of waterflow into the Jevne park area. While we have limited options, the following actions are proposed to help the situation:

1. During the engineering design phase, we may need to raise the elevation of the road in areas that are too low and also adjust the crown or pitch of the road in areas which would help improve drainage slow the stormwater flow to Jevne park
2. We plan to excavate the existing retention pond at the "fork" of Peninsula Road at the entrance of Jevne Park. This will clean out the sediment that has deposited over time in the existing retention pond and enable it to function better as was originally designed. This is a common maintenance activity for stormwater retention ponds. We are not intending to expand the size of the retention pond or make other mitigations.
3. All culverts throughout the city will be replaced as we install the new roadway. This will address the collapse of some culverts currently taking place.
4. The major watershed project proposed by BWCA is not considered in scope or under consideration for the CIP. The excavating of the Jevne Park retention pond does not negate the larger project at a future date.
5. Separate from our capital projects, but just as important are maintenance activities. The City is investigating additional ways to improve stormwater quality prior to the water entering the lake. Best management practices could include items such as minimizing road salts or sediment from entering the storm system, increase the level and frequency of street cleaning, potentially including sediment removal devices in our storm system, etc. These techniques will make a marked improvement to the amount of sediment that flows into our retention area and ultimately to the lake.

Question:

Can the financing program include money to upgrade the playground equipment?

Answer: Yes, we plan to include \$125,000 of budget for upgrading playground equipment. This does not suggest that there is approval to spend this money on playground equipment and that needs to be voted upon. But we will include this in the budget planning.

Replacing all the playground equipment is likely to cost more than \$125,000 and this project would rely on donations as well.

UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

Question:

If underground utilities end up being in-scope for the CIP, can the project include the hookup to each home, instead of having each homeowner do this on their own?

Answer:

Yes, this can be taken into consideration. There are challenges with this as the city does not get involved in homeowner projects. We will research this to explore our options. It would require the use of private electricians to make the hook ups rather than Xcel crews who will install the main line undergrounding.

We agree that having all the household hookups done at the same time would eliminate the need for any telephone poles throughout the City, which is deemed favorable. If the underground utilities project ends up having a chance for being in-scope, we will research having Have we factored the phone and internet lines into the project as well?

WATER SYSTEM

Question:

Have we considered directional boring as an alternative installation method?

Answer:

Yes, directional drilling will be considered as an alternative water main installation method. If the watermain is to be installed at the same time as the road work is done, there would be some efficiencies of scale to use the open cut buried pipe method of installing it with the street. To install curb stops and services out to each home lot line, it would be advantages to use buried pipe installation over directional drilling. The specifics of the watermain design and installation methods are beyond the scope of the current planning phase and will be addressed in the design phase, at which time more analysis would be completed with recommendations come forward to City Council from the design team.

Question:

Have we considered creating a full-loop system down Peninsula Road?

Answer:

Looping the system with a single street in and out is difficult and expensive. As part of the watermain design phase, our consultants recommend running a water model to determine the pressure at the end of the line at Jevne Park. If the model indicates low water pressure is an issue due to the long run of dead-end pipe, options can be looked to increase the pressure such as a booster station, increase the pipe size (decreasing pressure loss) and installing a 2nd parallel main from Jevne Park to Kaiser Ave intersection. This level of detail is beyond the scope of the current planning study and will be further evaluated during the design phase of the water main.

Question:

Have we considered the impact on traffic if fire hoses go across the road or driveways?

Answer:

We have not decided upon the specific location of the fire hydrants and this will be determined during the engineering phase. Generally, most cities would space fire hydrants every 400-500 feet, which is the typical spacing for hose lengths to reach between hydrants. We would work with the fire chief to site hydrants in the appropriate location and spacing.

We envision the hydrants will stagger on opposite sides of the road so that there are hydrants on both sides – enabling the fire department to avoid running a hose across the street if so desired. In this case, there will be situations where a hydrant across the street might be in closer proximity than a hydrant farther down the street but on the same side as the house fire. The fire department will have the option of choosing which hydrant is best for each situation.

Even if using a hydrant on the same side of the street as the housefire, it is unavoidable that a fire hose will need to run across the driveways from the hydrant to the location of the housefire.

Question:

Is Plymouth in support of adding Medicine Lake to their water source?

Answer:

Yes, Plymouth is aware and generally supportive of our intentions to link the City of Medicine Lake water system into the Plymouth mainline system. They would request the flow modeling be run on the impacts to their systems and of course any agreements on use, maintenance and financial arrangement would be negotiated between the two cities.

Question:

Do we have a way to monitor the usage of water to pay Plymouth and what would that cost?

Answer:

This will be defined during the engineering phase of the project in conjunction with Plymouth. Generally a meter is installed where the two systems interconnect to monitor our city's water usage and that will be added as part of installing the water system.

We do not yet have estimates on the cost of water from Plymouth. For the project's initial purpose of providing water supply for fire protection, the amount of water used will be negligible and generally related to annual hydrant flushing and fire response use. Prior to any Medicine Lake homes being allowed to hook up to City water, further discussion will need to be initiated with Plymouth on the method of billing and collecting for individual water usage.

Question:

What is the annual maintenance fee for the water system? Would this add costs to the city budget?

Answer:

We do not have specific estimates on the maintenance of our water system, but it will be a small amount that will be covered by current public works budgets.

Question:

Are there any risks that once we have a water system that the state would require us to move to city water vs. our own well? We do not have a regulation now, but if we have city water, is this a concern?

Answer:

We are not aware of any regulations that will require a homeowner to switch to city water if the homeowner has a properly functioning well.

The more relevant scenario is a homeowner whose well becomes disabled either through malfunction or needs to be relocated due to construction. If the homeowner's property does not readily accommodate the setback requirements for a new well, there may be regulations that require the homeowner to connect with the city water.

Question:

How much does it cost to repair/replace a private well?

Answer:

We do not have estimates for this but it could range from \$10,000-20,000 due to a number of variables regarding private well installation requirements.

SEWER LATERALS

Question:

In most cities, the lateral is the responsibility of the homeowner. Why are we taking a different approach and including the relining of the laterals as a city-side project?

Answer:

It is accurate that the lateral connections into a mainline sewer are generally considered to be the responsibility of the homeowner. In the City of Medicine Lake, nearly all the lateral connections into the mainline sewer are from the original sewer installation. Most homeowners that have done new/remodel construction have linked into the line of the old lateral further up the line from the “wye” connection. Thus, our assessment is that the vast majority of the city’s laterals are aged, and we can redo all of them as a city-wide project vs. having each person do their own. It would be more efficient to do all of them at once as a City wide project than for each homeowner to do their own. Plus, it is important that the sewer laterals under the new street be “new” and not subject to any future collapses or clogs that would result in digging up the new street.

Question:

Do we have an idea of how much I&I is remaining? What are the costs to the city for the current I&I problem? Is there a ROI calculation to show that fixing the laterals has a financial benefit to the city?

Answer:

We do not have a specific study completed to identify the cost of the remaining I&I. When our city did the relining of our mainline sewer, the camera images showed I&I leakage from the mainline and the laterals.

Our lateral connections are aged beyond the standard life of a sewer system. Ignoring the leakages from our laterals is inviting more issues in the future. Fixing individual leakages is very expensive. Rather than wait for lateral connections to worsen or break, the city is proposing that we proactively reline all laterals now, as part of CIP. This will provide the city with a repair that will last 60-75 years.

Question:

Why is the lateral project costing more than the relining of the mainline?

Answer:

Relining each lateral is a much more labor-intensive project than relining the mainline. When relining the mainline, the contractors inserted equipment and lining material into each manhole and fed the lining down the sewer to the next manhole – a straight shot.

With lateral relining, the contractor needs to locate equipment at the entrance of each lateral connection. Although the materials are essentially the same, the precision to reline each lateral connection is more complicated.

PUBLIC INPUT INTO PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Question:

What is the City's public engagement plan to enable residents to have input into the design details of the project, such as water service locations, driveway changes, roadway design, stormwater management, street lighting, hydrant location, construction impacts and staging, etc.

Answer

It is important to keep in mind the process. Currently we are in the capital planning stage of the total scope of our infrastructure improvements. At this stage, we are taking a high level look at the costs of all of our needs, developing financing strategies to pay for those and laying out a 5-year plan to implement the improvements. This study started last fall and is expected to be completed in April, 2021. There has been several open public engagement meetings to gather input into the Capital Improvement Plan and some good comments have come out of those meetings, as compiled in this FAQ document.

Once the City Council adopts the 5-year CIP, we would use that to budget each project and implement them over time in a particular year. When a project is initiated, there would be multiple neighborhood meetings to gather input and feedback into the project design details and construction impacts. The process to take a project from initiation to construction is usually 9-12 months long and during that period we would propose to have several of these neighborhood open house meetings where our engineers could share the design details and display plans to the residents for comment and feedback. We would also continue to use all other forms of public engagement such as City Council broadcasted meetings, our web site, social media and even mailed flyers or updates if necessary. It is important to get public buy in for every project we advance.

The first project that is targeted is the replacement of our sanitary sewer lift station. This project may get done in 2021 based on its' age and condition. Other projects are programmed out over the next 3-5 years as outlined in the draft CIP, which is available for citizen review and comment.

VIABILITY OF OUR CITY AND MLFD

Question:

Do we have concerns about the long-term viability of MLFD?

Answer:

There are no currently identified concerns about the viability of MLFD. However, MLFD is highly dependent on having enough volunteer fire fighters and having the proper firefighting equipment.

We believe that adding city water helps improve the viability of MLFD and strengthens our ability to receive assistance from neighboring fire departments.

Question:

Do we have concerns about the long-term viability of the city? Would we be better off joining Plymouth than doing this project on our own?

Answer:

Perhaps the biggest threat to our city's viability is our ability to self-fund our existence. The CIP is addressing the biggest risk factor – our aging infrastructure. With the current financing plan that is being proposed, the City of Medicine Lake will be addressing all currently known major infrastructure issues. We are doing a 30-year financing program to fix/upgrade infrastructure with method that should provide 50+ years of utility.

Thus, while there are no guarantees that other financial challenges in the future might threaten the city's financial viability, we feel the CIP is actually providing significant optimism to our city's long-term and self-sustaining viability.