



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

ALD. ROBERT BAUMAN, CHAIR

**Ald. Nik Kovac, Ald. Michael Murphy, Ghassan Korban,
Martin Matson, Mark Nicolini, and Mariano Schifalacqua**

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Wednesday, March 2, 2016

9:00 AM

City Hall, Room 301-B

Meeting convened: 9:04 A.M.

All members present (Ald. Kovac arrived at 9:07 A.M.)

1. Review and approval of the minutes from the January 20th meeting.

Mr. Froh moved, seconded by Mr. Nicolini, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections (Ald. Kovac excused)

2. Presentation of the Bridges Condition Report.

Mr. Craig Liberto discussed the City's bridges. He said the City has 135 fixed bridges the majority of which are over rivers. He said there are 20 pedestrian bridges, 12 viaducts and 21 movable bridges. He said the department has developed bridge inspection program in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration and the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation (WisDOT) standards. It is conducted by certified city staff. Certification requires an 80 hour class. Every bridge in the city is inspected at least once every 24 months. Movable bridges and structurally deficient bridges are inspected annually. The City has 32 fracture critical bridges. Mr. Liberto said that in 2015 the department performed 103 bridges inspections. The results were compiled in a standardized report and submitted to WisDOT, which enters them into its database. The bridge inspection reports are public records.

Mr. Liberto said WisDOT generates a sufficiency rating (SR) which is a measure of the service condition of the bridge. The SR scale is from 0 to 100. The SR allows for uniformity of evaluation and standardization for funding. Three aspects are used to determine the sufficiency rating; structural adequacy (55 pts), serviceability (30 pts), and essentiality for public use (15 pts). The SR is based on current design standards. Mr. Nicolini asked if lanes are often added to bridges to meet function or serviceability goals. Mr. Liberto said generally no. He said more often, the addition of bike lanes will decrease the number of lanes or lane widths. Mr. Liberto said a low SR doesn't necessarily mean that a bridge is unsafe. He said the SR calculations were developed in 1995 and have not been updated since. Bridges with a SR of 50 or less are eligible for funding for rehabilitation or replacement projects. Mr. Liberto said that 95.5% of the City's bridges have a SR greater than 50. He said that over the last 20 years the number of bridges with a SR less than 50 has decreased.

Mr. Froh asked how bridges were counted and if all bridges in the inventory are weighted equally. Mr. Liberto said that each unique structure is counted as a bridge. He said the 6th Street viaduct is counted as 5 bridges; 2 bascules, 2 cable stay bridges and an approach span. The 16th Street viaduct is actually 3 bridges; a unique ramp, the viaduct itself and a bascule. The 27th Street viaduct is counted as a single bridge because it is a single structure. Mr. Froh asked if there was any other method of measuring the bridges. He suggested using the total square feet of deck or the traffic volume. Mr. Liberto said the state does that to some extent when they allocate funding.

Mr. Liberto said the department has been tracking the number and percentage of bridges that are structurally deficient. In 2008, approximately 25% of the City's bridges were structurally deficient. In 2015 it is down to about 15.4%. He said the nationwide average is 9.5% and the Wisconsin average is 9.1%.

Mr. Liberto described the programming process. He said that in January the SRs are compiled. The department identifies which bridges the City will seek federal funds for and which will be done with the local funds. He said the federal /state funding program is a competitive statewide process. The program has been funded at \$32.9 million per year since 1997. Funding is applied for on a two year cycle. In July 2015, the department submitted 6 projects with a value of \$12.6 million. The City was notified in November that it did not receive any federal funds. Milwaukee County and Waukesha County also did not receive any funds. He said 201 projects were submitted statewide and 97 were selected for funding. In addition to ranking, the state determines entitlement balances when allocating project funding. Milwaukee had a negative entitlement balance. Mr. Liberto said that the Kilbourn Bridge affect the City's funding allocation. He said that even though the construction was completed several years ago, the state only recently closed out the project and the project's expenditures affected the City's entitlement balance. Ald. Kovac asked if the entitlement process had changed recently. Mr. Liberto said no. He said the process is governed by state statute. He said he believed a better method for allocating funding would be to evaluate the bridges that are structurally deficient – not just bridges that have a SR less than 50. Mr. Korban said there has also been an increase in completion from projects across the state. Mr. Liberto agreed.

Mr. Froh asked why inspection reports for railroad bridges are not public. Mr. Liberto said that recent legislation allows municipalities to make a request to the Federal Railroad Administration to get copies of bridge inspection reports from the railroads. He said legislation is being phased in and it is not known what form the reports will take.

Mr. Nicolini asked what determines whether movable bridge projects can be delayed or need to be accelerated. Mr. Liberto said the biggest factor is the extent of corrosion caused by road salt falling through the open grating. Mr. Korban said there is a City-wide directive to not salt open grate bridges; however, he said it is impossible to eliminate residual salt and vehicle tracking. Mr. Liberto said that on some moveable bridges it is possible to construct a solid surface. He said the Wisconsin Avenue, the Juneau Avenue and the St. Paul bridges have a solid lightweight deck that protects the understructure. He said state historic preservation rules require the City to maintain open grating on some bridges. He also said that the City now specifies that any new steel will be hot dip galvanized and then painted to provide additional corrosion protection. It cost more but there is greater durability and less maintenance.

3. Presentation of the Streets and Alleys Condition Report.

Mr. Jeff Polenske discussed the City's streets. H said the department now uses a more definitive 2 year program instead of a 6 year program. He said the department

evaluates pavement condition on an annual basis. He said there are 1,200 miles of city maintained streets. He said the department uses the pavement quality index (PQI), visual inspections, street maintenance experience, and input from citizens and elected officials to identify and prioritize projects. Mr. Polenske said that the department hired Stantech in 2013-2014 to evaluate streets with sensors and cameras. The company created a comprehensive database of the street system. The ratings take into account the severity of cracking, potholes, joint failure, and rutting. He said the computer modeling of the system will give an indication of how the quality changes over time. He said the highest condition rating is 100. He said a score between 70 and 90 is good, between 45 and 70 is fair and between 20 and 45 is poor. Mr. Polenske said the City is required to submit the condition rating for its streets to the state every year. He said the department uses the PQI to fulfill that requirement. He said the City receives transportation aid that can be used for local paving projects because it reports to the state.

Mr. Polenske discussed potholes and the High Impact program. He said that super crews have been successful over the last couple of years. He said there is a greater emphasis on cleaning out the hole and properly rolling the material. Mr. Polenske said the actual length of roadway segments repaired by super crew varies. Mr. Nicolini asked if it was possible to get a before and after condition report on segments repaired by super crews. Mr. Polenske said that the department tracks where the super crews have done work, but that the PQI isn't adjusted for pothole filling. Mr. Nicolini asked if the implementation of the super crews is dependent on having transitional jobs available. Mr. Korban said yes. Mr. Nicolini suggested including staffing levels that would allow the continued use of super crews as part of the budget process. Mr. Polenske said that pothole complaints in 2015 and 2016 are down from the high levels that occurred in 2014. He said the average response time to a pothole complaint is two days. Mr. Nicolini agreed that the complaint data seems to be trending in a good direction. Mr. Polenske said that pothole complaint data includes citizen calls and potholes identified internally. He said that since 2012, the department has made an effort to count unique potholes and locations. Ald. Kovac asked about the correlation between weather and pothole complaints. Mr. Korban said that fluctuations in temperature are the key variable. He said there is no doubt that the High Impact program has significantly reduced the number of pothole calls. Mr. Nicolini asked if condition information was available for road segments before and after High Impact work. Mr. Korban said absolutely. Mr. Korban said the department is proactively crack filling high impact projects to enhance longevity. Mr. Polenske acknowledged that cracks will show through earlier on High Impact projects because the asphalt overlay is thinner. Mr. Polenske said that in 2016 two neighborhoods will have several residential street projects with the high impact treatment. The department will evaluate the outcome. He said that the High Impact treatment may be more effective on residential streets because traffic volume and loading is less. Mr. Matson said that the High Impact program appears promising but that may be too early in the program to make a definitive cost benefit analysis. Mr. Korban said it was important to remember that the High Impact program focuses only the roadway and does not address the condition of sidewalk or curbs. Mr. Polenske said the High Impact program is a short term solution and the department hopes to extend pavement life by five to ten years. He said it is worthwhile to continue the program at a high level for another year. He said that at some point the City will need to bring the reconstruction program back up to a higher level.

Mr. Polenske discussed the Major Street Program. He said funding for major streets has traditionally, come from the state's Surface Transportation Program (STP). In the past, the STP was an entitlement program based on the percentage of lane miles. In the 2015 – 2018 cycle there was a shift to condition related criteria. In the 2015-2018 cycle, more than \$80 million allocated for the region. The City received 50% of that, an amount approximately three times what the City would typically receive. He said the state is back on a two year cycle and that the City was also successful for the

2019-2020 allocation.

Mr. Polenske discussed street condition. He said that when the Stantech survey was done 27% of roadways were in poor condition. After the 2014 and 2015 improvements were made, the percentage of lane miles within the "failed" and the "poor" categories had come down. He said that for High Impact improvements, the PQI is reset at 90 because the improvements are not captured as easily in the model as traditional reconstruction. He said the department plans to do visual inspections to verify that the modeled PQI reflects actual condition.

Mr. Polenske discussed alleys. He said that there are a little over 4,000 paved alleys with over 400 miles of pavement. He said approximately 30 alleys were paved in 2015. He said the department is trying to establish green alleys and better utilize the alley surface to capture water and direct it to the storm sewers. Mr. Korban said the incremental funding for the increased cost of green infrastructure comes from another source of funding, not the alley budget.

Ald. Bohl asked if long range funding was considered. Mr. Nicolini said that the Budget Office developed a draft six year capital improvements plan as part of the capital request process. He said the draft is based on the 2016 adopted Budget, prior requests and prior plans. He said that pressure from the City Hall foundation project creates a need to commit to higher debt service levies or to reduce some of the other standard program for a few years. He said the Budget Office considers the out years seriously, especially for the programs that are regular core infrastructure. He said that more attention could be paid to the out years in the budget process.

Ald. Bohl asked about tar in the roadways that had been pulled up by snowplows. He said he has received several complaints. Ald. Kovac said he had also received complaints. Mr. Polenske said the department is evaluating why that occurred. Mr. Korban said the department is implementing a crack filling technique which removes the lip on the edge of the tar and reduces the possibility of it being dragged by the snowplows. Ald. Bohl suggested that the department do a comprehensive pothole survey in early to mid-spring using Sanitation workers. He said the information could be used to assign work crews more systematically and effectively. He also said that the reduction of the assessment rate from 90% to its current level means that the City does not have adequate funding for an effective alley paving program. Regarding his amendment to eliminate alley funding from the 2016 he said that the proposed amount would have funded only about 5 alleys. He also said that concrete prices were expected to be exceptionally high in 2016.

Meeting adjourned: 10:18 A.M.

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety through the City's Legislative Research Center at <http://milwaukee.legistar.com/calendar>.