

# 2021 Citizen Advisory Committee on Capital Improvements

RFI: #001 DATE: 09/01/2021

From: Michael Powers, Committee Member - 7th Ward, assembled questions from CAC committee and community members at-large.

To: Paul Payne, Budget Director; Jamie Wilson, Streets Director

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## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - STREETS DEPARTMENT

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**001.1 - Related to paving and crosswalk prioritization:** *Does the Streets Department use data related to bike, pedestrian and car crashes -- "crash data" -- in determining where road improvements are needed, specifically related to traffic calming.*

Traffic calming requests are a coordinated effort with local Alderpersons, the Board of Public Service (BPS), and the Street Department. Depending on the scale of the area in question, it may be addressed internally with the City departments if small and externally with the aid of on-call traffic consultants if large. Either way, traffic data is analyzed and the appropriate countermeasures are recommended to provide traffic calming.

**001.2 - Related to major corridor paving:** *The presentation called for \$14m for arterial streets. Can Streets and other divisions give an estimate on costs to include more complete upgrades along these corridors -- to include traffic calming, crosswalk upgrades, signage improvements, street light optimization, pedestrian light replacement, median planting, street tree replacements, etc. If this amount were to be increased, what could be done and at what cost? Could be accompanied by a "Major Corridors" plan for the city, recognizing these roads as the front doors to our neighborhoods and city.*

The costs provided for paving also included re-striping the corridors (including crosswalks) and ADA improvements. The remainder of the items are not included. At this time, reoptimizing the signals is not warranted. The City is funded to operate and maintain lighting for the streets, not sidewalks. However, we do provide basic day to day maintenance on pedestrian lighting areas funded and installed initially by others. Landscape plantings were not included in these estimates. Any efforts to reimagine these corridors would require a traffic study to identify the appropriate actions.

**001.3 - Related to LED replacement:** *Can this cost be spread out over a longer period, or potentially partially funded to encourage a funding match from a partner -- like Ameren. Higher crime areas, commercial corridors, parks could be prioritized and other funds made available for other categories focused on Economic Development opportunities.*

If funded through this effort the LED replacements would be over several years. Otherwise the replacements would occur over time through our normal maintenance replacements. I am not aware of any Ameren assistance programs of this nature, but certainly open to the possibilities.

**001.4 - Related to roads chosen for repaving:** *Is there any attention/ consideration given to neighborhood commercial corridors? Tamm and Clayton in Dogtown, Ivory Triangle, Locust, Salisbury, Grand Water Tower -- areas where these improvements can positively impact small, locally-owned businesses. Can the License Collector provide a map of retail licenses or sales tax collection data that can be compared with the paving plan laid out in this CIP?*

The streets we proposed were major arterials. As such, they are the most active and heaviest in terms of average daily traffic - spanning the length of the City from north to south. There are several lower classes of streets that carry subsequently lower traffic volumes including minor arterials, major collectors, minor collectors, and local/neighborhood streets. While all of these streets need attention in terms of paving, the highest priority, most active routes were chosen first. I'm sure a good amount of data is available by others in a number of ways to detail the tax revenue generated along all of the corridors.

**001.5 - Related to street sweeping:** *Is there any capital dollars that can be spent to address litter along major corridors? We currently sweep these commercial corridors that carry most of our traffic at the same frequency as our far-less-traveled residential streets. If we funded an additional street sweeper, would Streets dedicate staff and adjust policy to ensure major corridors are clear(er) of debris? In terms of operational savings, this will reduce the number of special requests coming from CSB for this city service.*

This is something Streets has not prioritized for this funding opportunity, but we may consider what would be needed in terms of operational changes in future discussions.

**001.6 - Related to neighborhood placemaking:** *There are six neighborhoods piloting a neighborhood signage program that utilizes the reverse side of stop signs for hanging identity*

*signs for that neighborhood. If funds were made available for a citywide signage program, would Streets support a policy change that would eliminate the need for liability insurance for these signs?*

This is currently a pilot project and if the Street Department is comfortable with the outcome, we may be open to its expansion.

**001.7 - Related to an Adopt-a-Road program:** *Because litter is an ongoing challenge in the City of St. Louis, has the Streets Division explored an adopt-a-road program to get volunteers to assist on main thoroughfares with participant signage? Also with maintaining planted medians -- south Grand, north Kingshighway. Could funds for a signage program that reduced CFS to Refuse could be a cost savings with this upfront capital expense.*

To my knowledge this concept has not been considered at the City. I am open to new and innovative ways to improve our City and will discuss internally.

**001.8 - Ward capital set aside:** *The neighborhoods have special projects they are working on, some related to capital improvements. Can the CIP include a fund for neighborhood-supported projects allocated to each ward, spent through a participatory budgeting process at the ward level?*

Oftentimes, Ward Aldermen work directly with neighborhood groups to identify potential capital projects and utilize participatory budgeting processes to support prioritization of these projects. Historically, capital funds and project selection have been spearheaded by each Alderman in their respective wards, so any additional funds allocated to each ward could still be managed in this same manner. As to setting aside additional capital funds on an annual basis however, the limitation is in available funding. A total of 54% of the FY22 Capital budget is currently allocated toward existing debt service obligations and this percentage is 90% of CityWide capital, so the ability to set aside additional discretionary funds over and above the existing ward allocations from current capital sources is severely limited.

**001.9 - Street paving inventory:** Can the CAC be provided the results of the most recent review of city streets?

The most recent review was about 7 years ago and the Street Division can provide under separate cover.

**001.10 - Interstate maintenance:** does the city provide any funds for deferred maintenance on our interstate highway system -- particularly, there are exit signs and wayfinding signs on rusted poles; reflector mile-markers that are down; crosswalks that meet city streets need restriping -- can the city leverage state assistance by providing funding for some of these items?

Street Department is not aware of any such funding efforts.

**001.11 - Grand at Forest Park Pkwy:** does the city have plans to eliminate this bridge and return that intersection to at-grade? If so, is funding in this CIP for that?

Yes, the City, in partnership with SLU, has completed a conceptual study to eliminate the Grand bridge over Forest Park Parkway. This \$5M project is identified in the CIP as a "Needed" Project with the City providing \$1M in Local Match to support a federally-funded project.

**001.12 - Goodfellow Federal Center:** does the city have preliminary plans for the redevelopment of this large site and are there capital dollars needed to move this forward?

It is anticipated that the Goodfellow Federal Center will be vacant upon the relocation of the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Lab. This is expected to take a year or two (e.g. 2023) after which the Center is to go through GSA's normal disposition process. SLDC is planning on working with the City to try and acquire the site upon it being deemed surplus property. It would be expected that GSA would remediate any contamination from the site and transfer as "clean as possible", (e.g. asbestos issues, potential ground contamination, etc.). Assuming the GSA will not demolish the buildings and further assuming that the buildings are of no value for redevelopment, then demolition funds would be necessary to redevelop site to its fullest potential. There may be some internal roadway improvements needed as well but these could ultimately be provided by a developer.

**001.13 - Related to Feedback from SLPS:** has SLPS had an opportunity to request improvements around public schools needed for improving safety, calming traffic or other desires? Streets Department has an opportunity to work with SLPS to create standard wayfinding signage, crosswalk signs, etc., for public school safety?

Signage should be standardized already, additional installations may be warranted. Streets is open to meeting with SLPS to review safety needs. Funds outside of the department would be needed for any work other than signage or striping.

**001.14 - Related to Sidewalk Replacement:** the current 50/50 program leaves out LRA-owned properties, yes? Has there been any analysis of sidewalk conditions and is there an opportunity to ensure major corridors have intact sidewalks, regardless of adjacent ownership's willingness or ability to fund half of the improvement cost?

There has not been an analysis to my knowledge of sidewalk conditions at these locations. The 50/50 program is based on citizen's contacting the Citizen's Service Bureau to enter into the program with the assistance of their Alderperson.

**001.15 - Related to City Street Cameras:** *Are the cameras being maintained by the city or is it contracted out? Are they functioning? Is there more information on which wards need what amount of funds to repair / replace cameras?*

Cameras installed by Alderpersons with their ward capital funds are maintained by the Street Department. When repairs are needed, the Street Department does them unless the scope of work is outside their expertise when a contractor is needed.

**001.16 - Related to Sewers:** *Would like to see some of these sewer upgrades to include smart technology to monitor for future issues and increase service life*  
[americancityandcounty.com/2021/02/17/hi-tech-sewers-can-help-safeguard-public-health-environment-and-economies/](http://americancityandcounty.com/2021/02/17/hi-tech-sewers-can-help-safeguard-public-health-environment-and-economies/)

The Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District (MSD) owns and operates sanitary and storm sewers located in the City of St. Louis. Accordingly, capital projects and associated use of "Smart" technology for sewers and associated infrastructure would need to be developed and incorporated by MSD.

**001.17 - Related to Speed Humps:** *The recent policy change means that a traffic study is no longer required for the install of a speed hump on a residential street. How much is the install of a speed hump, on average, and is the only source of funding from Aldermanic ward capital? Does each ward get a set number in the current policy, or just for the wards where the Alder has the funds?*

The average cost of an asphalt speed hump is \$5000 and is solely funded by ward capital through the Alderpersons. There is no set number on installations. The Alderpersons may spend their funds as they see appropriate.

**001.18 - Related to Traffic Studies:** *Traffic studies have been ordered for several city streets to analyze reducing or adjusting lanes or other safety and calming measures. Is there a database of street segments that are being studied that can be shared? What is the cost of a traffic study? What is the expected turnaround time for each?*

BPS has managed the development of multiple traffic studies impacting many Wards in the City. These studies typically involve selected neighborhoods or specific roadway corridors. Depending upon the scope of services, the studies typically cost between \$40,000 to \$60,000 and are funded through ½ Cent Ward Capital at the request of Aldermen. Traffic studies are conducted through our “On-call” traffic consultants on a Task Order basis. The time to complete a study is typically 4 to 8 months depending upon complexity and level of public engagement. At this time, there has not been a comprehensive database developed for City-wide completed traffic studies.

**001.19 - Related to Banner Holders:** Vacant banner holders are found throughout neighborhoods with no plans for their reuse. Does the Streets Division only remove these via CSB request? Without carried insurance, are these a liability?

The Street Department manages the banner permits. If there are abandoned banners observed, please submit to CSB. Typically we don't hear about organizations that have terminated their existence negating the need for the banner.

**001.20 - Related to Litter Barrels:** *Does the city have a reserve of litter barrels-- also known as trash bins -- to replace those that will be damaged? If not, what is the optimal number to have on hand and what does each cost?*

Alley dumpsters and roll carts are funded through the Refuse Division's operating budget. Litter barrels on street are generally funded by local Alderpersons.

**001.21 - Related to Morganford :** *Are the pedestrian upgrades made to the Tower Grove South segment of Morganford a lower-cost-than-a-curb-bulbout model that the City is planning to adopt? What is the cost of this upgraded crosswalk?*

A raised pinned-on concrete bumpout, such as those recently constructed around Tower Grove Park is approximately a similar cost compared to the specialized red-painted bumpout along the northern section of Morganford. However, specific costs are based on final configuration of each particular bumpout.

**001.22 - Related to Downtown :** *As the center of the region, is there a capital fund dedicated to our downtown to match corporate / business leader's investments? The 7th Street plans involve several funding sources, including private dollars, and could be boosted with a commitment of funds annually from the city potentially?*

Currently, the City does not have a dedicated capital fund to improve downtown infrastructure or to match corporate investments.

**001.23 - Related to Technology** : *Does the CIP include funding for technology upgrades? For instance, tracking street sweepers and allowing the public to do so as well, which is offered in Chicago. Or meeting other equipment needs that will improve efficiencies -- including allowing all permitting to occur and be paid for online?*

*The FY22 Capital Improvements budget includes a modest \$100k for Information Systems equipment typically for ITSA to replace systems hardware as necessary. However, the FY22 Operating Budget includes \$126k for GPS units for 300 vehicles of the Street Department for real time tracking of service vehicles. Other on-line type permit and collection activities have been achieved through separate agreements with vendors which receive a portion of funds for providing the service (e.g. building permit system.)*

**001.24 - Related to Summer Youth Employment Opportunities** : *In the 1980s the city hired youth in the summer to assist in maintaining roadways clear of litter. This program was overseen by Operation Brightside. Is there an opportunity to fund capital needs for litter removal and to place young people under the management of the Streets Division through the existing Summer Youth Employment Program?*

*This type of program would be more of an operational budget item as opposed to a capital budget item.*

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## CITY RESPONSE

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**001.1 - Related to paving and crosswalk prioritization:**

**001.2 - Related to major corridor paving:**

**001.3 - Related to LED replacement:**

**001.4 - Related to roads chosen for repaving:**

**001.5 - Related to street sweeping:**

**001.6 - Related to neighborhood placemaking:**

- 001.7 - Related to an Adopt-a-Road program:**
- 001.8 - Ward capital set aside:**
- 001.9 - Street paving inventory:**
- 001.10 - Interstate maintenance:**
- 001.11 - Grand at Forest Park Pkwy:**
- 001.12 - Goodfellow Federal Center:**
- 001.13 - Feedback from SLPS:**
- 001.14 - Sidewalk replacement:**
- 001.15 - Related to City Street Cameras:**
- 001.16 - Related to Sewers:**
- 001.17 - Related to Speed Humps:**
- 001.18 - Related to Traffic Studies:**
- 001.19 - Related to Banner Holders:**
- 001.20 - Related to Litter Barrels:**
- 001.21 - Related to Morganford :**
- 001.22 - Related to Downtown :**
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