
2020 BUDGET HEARING – WRITTEN RESPONSES TO COUNCIL QUESTIONS

Budget Hearing #2: August 7, 2019 Department of Public Works

Unanswered Council Questions

Why did Traffic Calming increase but Light Up South Bend and Curbs and Sidewalks stay flat?

There has been a tremendous demand for traffic calming in neighborhoods throughout the City, and the engineering division has a backlog of projects that they do not have funding for. Although the capital funding for Light Up SB has remained at the 2019 level, the operating budget for streetlight tariffs has increased each year to meet the demands of the additional lights. The City operating costs for 2019 is \$133,000 per month compared to \$124,000 per month in 2018. The funding request for the 2020 C&S program is the same as 2019, however, the City will be reconstructing Bendix from Lathrop to the Toll Road, Olive from SR23 to Tucker, and Ironwood, Rockne, and Corby intersection. Each of these projects has a significant amount of new sidewalk in 2020.

How many streetlights total in the City? City maintained – 3,015
AEP maintained – 9,518

How did we get a mixed (City/AEP) system? We believe that it's due to allowing design preference in the different neighborhoods and areas. We do not have a definitive answer, but most of the decorative lights are City owned and maintained.

How do Council members ensure that they know how to help residents report out streetlights? Residents should contact 311 to report streetlight outages. There is information on the City webpage on how to report to 311. There is also a link to an AEP Outage Report form that they may use if it's an AEP light that they wish to report. The City webpage also gives tips to help identify whether the light is City-owned or AEP-owned.

Do we take it for granted that AEP is repairing the streetlights when they need to? Yes.

What is the timing of the County's Douglas Road widening project? Construction/Letting is December of 2020.

Is there a way to get funding for the lift station relocation? Not at present.

What are we doing about potholes in business alleys? Grading and/or patching. Call 311 to report any specific areas that need patched.

Can you give us the total capital projects supported by TIF and the ending TIF balances? This question is best answered by DCI.

Can you give us the total capital projects supported by Fund 642 and the ending balance? \$6,250,000 with \$114,691 as the ending balance

Downtown cross streets - \$1.5 million. At what point will we move away from downtown? As part of the master planning for the Downtown Conversion of Main Street and MLK back in 2014-15, cross-streets were contemplated and discussed with the public as the next phase.

Water meter replacement. \$800,000 Is the cost being incurred by the City?

This cost is built into the water rates and charges. The City purchases meters through the water budget, from revenue generated by monthly rates and charges to users. When a meter is damaged (for instance because building is without heat) or lost, the customer is responsible for replacement costs. Any routine failure or normal replacement is covered within the monthly rates and charges.

Can you clarify the participation metric for yard waste?

The metrics come from Naviline. The percentage of utility customers (est. 39,000) that are being charged for yard waste. In 2018 it was 51% and so far in 2019 we are at 61%.

Where is the trash transfer station located?

Green Tech Transfer Station (Republic) 2500 Green Tech Drive, BETW Ewing & Eckman behind Ball Park, South Bend, IN.

The mayor himself acknowledged in his State of the City Address this year that we are not on a sustainable roads cycle. For the administration to then budget \$1MM less for roads in 2020 than in 2019 is in direct contradiction to the mayor's own statement AND the citywide survey which indicated that roads and infrastructure is a top priority.

Road funding is a top priority for the City, and the allocation of the annual amount is \$550,000 less than what was budgeted in the 2019 operating budget. In addition, the Council appropriated an additional \$500,000 in supplemental road funding in 2019. However, this is not inclusive of all of the road funding going into South Bend streets in 2020. The other component of road funding comes through Federal Aid Grants. The City has successfully requested funding for 3 LPA projects that will start in 2020; Bendix Avenue Replacement from Lathrop to the Indiana Toll Road, Corby/Ironwood/Rockne Intersection Improvement, and the Olive Street Replacement from SR23 to Tucker Drive. The total estimated cost for the 3 additional projects is \$12,000,000.

Eric said 1/15th of the water meters are replaced every year because they have about a 15 year lifespan. What is the lifespan of a road and why don't we take a similar approach?

The lifespan of a road varies depending on the wearing surface (i.e. asphalt or concrete) and on other considerations such as drainage, soil conditions, subbase conditions, type and amount of traffic... On average, a general assumption is 15-25 years for an asphalt road and 20-40 years for a concrete road. The City has funds designated for road maintenance and replacement from two funds: Motor Vehicle Highway and Local Road & Street. These are primarily funded by gas tax and vehicle registrations. The City does not control the amount of funding that comes into these funds, so we use the allocation as best we can to meet the most urgent road demands in the City.

The public works budget is raising the wages for two positions that, in Eric's words have been open for "quite some time." If we have been operating sufficiently without those positions for that long, do we really need to fill them let alone raise the salary? We are being presented with a total budget that spends \$10MM less than last year but still has a \$10MM deficit. We can't keep spending down reserves and the best way to control spending is to look at our salaries and wages which again the mayor mentioned that we are on a soft hiring freeze?

Both positions are necessary for normal operations of the water distribution system. The position that has been open since December of 2018 is the Distribution System Operations Manager. We are requesting to change the title and wages due to the high level of responsibility. This is the position in the City that is responsible for maintaining all of the City's Water lines, valves, hydrants, meters, service requests, backflow testing, water line locates, and service line repair program. The Distribution Operations Manager (Director) is critical to sustainable administrative, managerial/supervisor roles within the Utility and it's unionized workforce. This is a 24/7 responsible position. The distribution manager is located at the Olive Road well field, at a remote site not connected to the Water Treatment plants or the Customer Service and billing staff. All the more reason why we need the position. We currently have other staff members trying to fulfill some of these duties while we look for a candidate. It is not a great arrangement. The union staff has been restless. They want their needs met. There is no way we would want this to continue on. One of the reasons for the position not being filled is low wages for the level of responsibilities for this position. This is a very demanding position which requires 100's of after hour emergency calls. Water is necessary to life, health and safety of the City. We have to have a responsible person ensuring the daily 24/7 needs are being met.

The second position being adjusted is due to a recent retirement. The Distribution Records Drafter title is a dated description of the skills and demands of this position. This is due to a 25+ year employee being in this position, and not sufficiently upgrading the job title, duties, and salary to reflect the needs of the organization 25+ years later. There are many fewer positions in the water division than there were even 10 years ago, and as a result many positions have taken on greater responsibilities. The person in position is one of two that handled new tap permits for connections to the water system, document these on water maps, and provide inventory and purchasing controls for the distribution system needs, in addition to other duties and responsibilities.

Yard waste nowhere near pays for itself. Can we move yard waste to every other week pickup? What would that save? We could calculate the savings from eliminating 2 positions and some modest savings on gas costs. However, it is more difficult to estimate the extra burden on the crew that does extra pick-ups, the trash crew or the crew picking up illegal dumping

because the waste will end up somewhere in the system. If we go to every other week, we believe that the yard waste extra pick-ups will increase significantly. We do not charge for the extra pick-ups, but we would need to add staff back to handle this increase unless we also eliminate the extra pick-ups.

I don't understand how we are using SSDA TIF funds for the Prairie Ave. water main which is well outside the SSDA. Some clarification on that would be great. The new Prairie Avenue water main will close a crucial loop in the City's distribution system. In this area, the loop will provide reliability and redundancy to the south pressure zone which serves the SSDA TIF area, and which is fed by the South Well Field located in the SSDA.

Questions from the Public

Why do temp speed humps cost more than permanent? A recent quote for temporary speed humps was higher than the cost of permanent speed humps; however, the temporary speed humps will be able to be removed and replaced in multiple locations for temporary demonstrations as needed.

Why are they removing the bathroom in Walker Field Park? What is the plan for bathrooms in neighborhood parks? This question is more appropriately directed towards VPA.

Cost vs. benefit of taking side streets back to brick roads? We looked at the benefits vs. costs for rebricking a portion of LaSalle (because some of the bricks were still intact) and the benefit/cost ratio for the asphalt street was much greater than the b/c for redoing the brick. Typically the capital cost for installing a brick street is 5-10 times more than resurfacing with asphalt.

Why are there so many areas where we spend down? (red ink) There are times that we purposely spend cash reserves to meet operational, maintenance, or capital demands. All funds will retain positive balances.

Is Olive Street designed for trucks with steel coils? Yes, Olive is a truck route.

Curbs - paved right over the curbs; there is no curb, hence there is no water drainage, is there going to be remediation? Please provide specifics. Tell residents to call 311 with drainage concerns.

Filtration - her water smells like pool water?

Chlorine is added to drinking water to meet safe drinking water standards, and to make sure it is safe when it arrives to people's homes. The amount added to drinking water is much less than what is maintained in pools, but some people may be more sensitive to the chlorine smell than others. For any water quality concern, including concern about a chlorine smell, we encourage residents to contact our Water Quality staff at 574-235-9670. We can arrange a visit, and also discuss ways that the situation may be improved.

What % of sewers are cleaned now? Approximately 11%. We have a five year rotation for cleaning the sewer lines in most need.

Pilot program - scan roads for potholes; what happened with these? Need additional clarification on the question.

Has there been an increase in minority contractors? This question is best directed to the Office of Diversity & Inclusion.

How many bonds are on the horizon? Other than potential equipment lease bonds, Public Works does not have any bonds anticipated for 2020.

Renovation of bathrooms

Opioid crisis means a lot of people doing drugs in parks, would be nice to have sharps containers in bathrooms

Will there be charging stations for phones? These questions are best answered by VPA Department.

Sustainability - 50 buildings in the city, study all the City roofs - can we improve insulation, have solar panels, green roofs, etc. The Sustainability Office does not have an engineering or capital budget, but each time a department requests a roof project, it is evaluated for sustainability opportunities. These opportunities must typically be funded outside the capital request for

the roof – namely through grants or via private projects, and very few grants have been available for sustainability upgrades to municipal buildings.

However, there are three city facilities with operable solar arrays (Century Center, SBF D Station 4, and SBF D Station 9), and two in the works (SBF D Central Fire and Howard Park). There is one City facility with a green roof (Potawatomi Greenhouse entrance).

Breakdown of professional services - who is getting these projects? This is public information that can be retrieved from the City's website: <http://docs.southbendin.gov/weblink/Browse.aspx?dbid=0&startid=96984&row=1&cr=1>. Each fiscal year has a folder for Agreements/Contracts/Proposals.

Backflows that would help with flooding - where are we on this? If this is asking about the basement backflow valve prevention program, The City continues to offer this program at a 50% reimbursement to residents. Kieran Fahey is the contact for this project.

What projects have had cost overruns that were underfunded? This is also public information that can be retrieved from the City's website: <http://docs.southbendin.gov/weblink/Browse.aspx?dbid=0&startid=96984&row=1&cr=1>. Each fiscal year has a folder for Change Orders.

In light of the decision to cut the stormwater funding, the amount of the stormwater funding is too small, why are we spending on Boomer instead of stormwater? Stormwater funding was not cut for 2020. Internal accounting policies require a 25% cash reserve. Stormwater funds were not used to pay for Boomer.

The guardrail in North Shore triangle is still down. Will it be reinstated? When? Guardrails must be repaired/installed by certified personnel, and we do not have any on staff. Repair/replacement will have to be contracted out.

Has money been allocated to address the impact of ND and Holy Cross activities on the hill? How much? This is a question for ND and/or Holy Cross. The City continues to work with them on a resolution. Any work will likely be done in conjunction with the Coal Line trail project that will be crossing this property and creating a boundary between the hill and the residential property.

Has money been allocated to complete all LFA recommendations in 2020?

See recommendations below in italic and the response to each of the recommendations in the LFA study:

1. *Evaluate the current design criteria for determining sewer capacity and stormwater storage.*

City is implementing a new standard for this requiring new designs meet a 25-year, 24 hour event. This is up from a ten-year, six hour event.

2. *Continue to offer residents the Basement Valve Program*

The City continues to offer this program. Since the event there were 21 applications for the BVP from the NST. All applications received were approved. Six applicants abandoned their applications, despite being approved. 15 (of the 21) completed the program at a total cost of \$36,458. The city reimbursed 50% of that amount, \$18,229.

3. *Place particular emphasis on the neighborhoods featured in this report for sewer cleaning cctv'ing etc.*

In the near aftermath of the event, between March and July of 2018 the Sewer Department videoed, and where necessary, cleaned almost 30,000 feet (>5.5 miles) of sanitary and storm sewer in the NST. Undertaking this required four staff members.

4. *Research the possibility of a notification system along multiple media platforms to provide residents with notification and information during flood events.*

With assistance and expert guidance from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Geological society this project has commenced and is in a data gathering and modelling phase. The tool will be known as a "flood inundation mapper" and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2020. Work completed so far included the installation of a river depth gauge. The gauge is connected to the internet and is freely available to the public. It is accessible online at the following address and shows the river height in feet: https://waterdata.usgs.gov/in/nwis/uv/?site_no=04101225&PARAMeter_cd=00065.00060.62614.00010. I would also like to point out that if you go to the website you can click on the WaterAlert link underneath the graph:

https://water.usgs.gov/wateralert/subscribe2/?site_no=04101225&parm=00065. This will allow you to sign up to receive email or text alerts when the river gage reaches a certain height. This can give individuals advance notice of potential flooding events.

5. *In certain circumstances FEMA provides grant assistance for the purchase of homes that are within particular flood zones. The City should research these FEMA requirements and ascertain their applicability to South Bend.*

City did not research this. This FEMA program would mean the razing of homes; so it is important that this only be further studied if there is a residential interest in doing so, and the city has not received notice of such interest.

6. *Evaluate the 12-inch throttle pipe in the Riverside Drive (South of Bartlett) area to see if it could be increased to allow more flow to leave the area quicker. The effect on the downstream system should be evaluated along with the actual impact on the Riverside area.*

This has and is still being studied. Two possibilities have been identified and are being considered in the City's long-term sewer plans.

7. *Further research to determine that the 10-inch sewer along Angela is appropriately sized for the sanitary flow it conveys (due to the larger pipes flowing into the 10-inch pipe).*

Assessment of locally gathered sewer data did not indicate a bottleneck at this specific location.

8. *Discuss options to control runoff with the private landowner(s) of the 40-acres that is contributing stormwater runoff to the area north of Angela near Iroquois and Marquette.*

The city has been in discussion with this property owner, the University of Notre Dame. An update from the University as to their plans will be the most appropriate action. The University has been in discussions with a private utility (AEP) regarding improvements that they, AEP, may be making there. City staff hasn't been privy to those discussions. For that reason, an update from the University regarding their privately held property would be most appropriate. The land is privately owned and is not within the city.

9. *Install backflow prevention measures on the stormwater outlets to the St. Joseph River within the Northshore Triangle.*

Currently being designed by Abonmarche. Construction likely to be spring/summer 2020.