

Road Study and Funding

The 2017 Road Study & funding for roads has been a topic of discussion in the last few newsletters. In addition, over the past month, City Council has held a series of Open Houses to discuss this topic. If you haven't had the chance to attend an Open House yet, there is one more scheduled on May 4 at 7:00 at Ridgeline Elementary School. This meeting is designed for those who live west of Alpine Highway & north of S.R. 92, however anyone is welcome to come. In addition, the information will be available at our City Open House on Thursday, May 11 from 5:00-8:00 at City Hall & is available at <http://bit.ly/HC-roads>.

Unlike previous studies that were largely based on computer models, this study was based on visual assessment, core samples, & subsurface testing of roads. This allowed the City to identify the cost-effective maintenance or repair strategy, timeline, & prepare cost estimates. Based on the results of the study, 45% of our roads are in poor or failing condition.

The City spends about \$450,000 on road maintenance. This money comes from funds that are collected as part of the gas tax. The study showed that this \$500,000 is the proper amount to spend on road maintenance for only those roads that are not failing. This is within the current City Budget.

Additional money is needed for the rehabilitation of poor & failing roads & future maintenance of these improved roads. In order to rehabilitate all these roads, \$7,140,510 is needed or \$1,000,000 per year. Of the \$7,140,510, \$5,623,000 needs to go toward pavement repair & \$1,517,510 toward curb/gutter, drainage issues, etc.

We are faced with two choices: 1) increase funding & begin repairing & maintaining the roads properly or 2) continue with the status quo, allowing our failing roads to continue to deteriorate, thereby significantly increasing the costs in the future. The study estimated that postponing these necessary repairs would increase the cost by 83% as roads fall to the next level of repair.

After much deliberation, City Council has decided that raising additional funds is the fiscally responsible solution. The Council is deciding between two options: 1) Property Tax Increase or 2) Road Fee & is requesting your input.

If City Council were to approve a property tax increase, the average Highland Home, which is market valued at \$466,900, would see a \$20.31 increase per month or \$243.74 per year on their property tax bill. Each homeowner's total change would be based on their home value.

If City Council were to approve a road fee, each Highland home would be charged \$18.50 per month on their utility bill starting in July. City Council is currently scheduled to discuss & vote on this at the May 16 Council meeting.

In depth information on the study, these options, & more is available at <http://bit.ly/HC-roads>. We encourage you to stay informed & let City Council know what you think as they weigh this decision. Please continue to read the newsletter each month, watch City Council agendas, follow us on Facebook & Twitter, or stop by at City Hall. If you have any questions or comments, please reach out to City staff or the Mayor & Council.