“Building A Stronger Community TOGETHER”

INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE REPORT

September 18, 2006
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Infrastructure Task Force Report
Introduction

The City of Shelton Commission desired citizen involvement addressing the challenges, issues and projects to improve, repair or replace the City's aging infrastructure. The Task Force's purpose was to develop a comprehensive report and assist the City in the creation of a long-term plan including priorities, schedules and financing infrastructure upgrades. The Task Force would create these recommendations through a process of discussion, education, brainstorming and then the forming of consensus. City Staff proposed the process to recruit six to eight citizens as members of an Infrastructure Task Force, at the February 27, 2006, Commission meeting.

The Commission authorized the formation of a volunteer citizen's Infrastructure Task Force on May 22, 2006, to examine the City's stormwater, water, sewer utilities, in addition to the Regional Project and solutions to fix City streets. Task Force membership would be comprised of Sheltonians, business owners in Shelton, and others who have a vested interest in the City of Shelton. Members would bring their experience, background and points of view to thoughtfully, creatively and collaboratively generate a viable long-term infrastructure plan, for consideration by the City Commission.

The Commission authorized six citizens to volunteer as members of the Task Force, with the expressed purpose of examining, evaluating and recommending key points in the creation of a long-term infrastructure plan. The motion also stated the Task Force would be disbanded upon delivery of their recommendations to the City Commission.

The volunteer Citizen's Infrastructure Task Force from left to right is: Dave Thacher, Rose Swier, Richard Beckman, Russ Denney (Chair), Jim Pharris, and Mark Kamin.

The first Task Force meeting was held May 25, 2006, at which members introduced themselves to one another, elected a chair (Russ Denney), and agreed upon and signed a charter. This charter outlined the Task Force's purpose, tasks and responsibilities, deliverables (recommendations to the Commission) and ground rules for the conduct of meetings (including respect between Task Force members and City staff). The charter
included a sunset provision disbanding the group after presentation of its recommendations to the Commission.

The Task Force met a total of thirteen times from May through September. Originally, the Task Force’s focus was the examination of stormwater, water, sewer streets, streets and the Regional Project issues. The Commission later asked the members to review and make recommendations regarding the City’s infill development frontage improvement requirements, which was enthusiastically accepted.

City staff made presentations and provided information to Task Force members, including facts, challenges, funding issues and future needs. Staff assisted with the facilitation of meetings by listing issues and formulating recommendations after thorough discussion, brainstorming and generally thoughtful interaction by Task Force members. Additionally, City staff arranged for meeting locations in the Civic Center and refreshments.

The Task Force labored through the summer to develop sound recommendations for stormwater, water, sewer, streets, the Region Project, and the infill development standards. Task Force members and City staff worked together diligently to develop these recommendations into this report.

Over the course of our efforts, we laughed, we cried and we even disagreed, but in the end found common ground. The recommendations in this report are the consensus of the Infrastructure Task Force. We hope the City Commission will accept this report and its recommendations in whole, and that this report is promptly acted upon, rather than “shelved” and forgotten over time.

We, the City of Shelton Infrastructure Task Force, believe we have accomplished our Commission-approved mission, and have formulated a viable report that will greatly assist the City (long-term) to maintain and repair existing facilities, while addressing new infrastructure needs as a result of growth. Finally, we wish to thank the Commission for the opportunity to be part of this effort.
The Task Force respectfully submits this report for City of Shelton Commission consideration.

Russ Denney, Chair

Richard Beckman

Mark Kamin

Jim Pharris

Rose Swier

Dave Thacher

Signature
Executive Summary

The volunteer citizen’s Infrastructure Task Force recommendations to the City Commission are discussed in detail and divided into subject areas of stormwater, water, wastewater & sewer, streets and infill development standards. The Regional Project was discussed, but it is not a separate topic. It is rapidly becoming integrated into the City’s sewer and water utilities as the various phases begin construction.

The following pages of the report go into the details of each infrastructure subject. Each infrastructure subject includes an introduction, history, current infrastructure inventory, resources, challenges, and key issues. These items provide individual discussions and recommendations. This summary will address reoccurring themes the Task Force developed as it completed its assigned task from the City Commission.

The Task Force acknowledges that repairing and replacing infrastructure is expensive. The City should approach its need for financing maintenance, operations and repairs in incremental increases to lessen impacts upon current ratepayers. Large lump-sum increases can be challenging for fixed or low-income citizens to meet. The City should aggressively work to ensure the Save Our Sheltonians (SOS) fund is viable and a resource for those in need. Additionally, the Task Force believes that growth should pay for growth. All necessary new capacity charges such as General Facility Charges (GFCs) should be increased immediately so that current ratepayers will not shoulder these costs. The upcoming Transportation Impact and Sidewalk Improvement Fees should also be properly levied, to ensure (once again) growth pays for growth. Finally, the Task Force believes that the City should conduct a utility rate study for the upcoming years of 2009 through 2011, utilizing accurate growth rates, to ensure rates are appropriately and incrementally increased, as necessary.

It is of paramount importance the City creates and implements a comprehensive public education program. The need for reliable, up-to-date information about the City’s infrastructure activities is critical to facilitate good communications. This will increase public understanding, acceptance and positive relations between the City and its citizens.

Comprehensive plans are vitally necessary for all of the City’s utilities, and the development of a plausible strategic plan. Currently, only the water department has a thorough and well-written plan on file. These comprehensive plans are essentially the “road maps” to the future, and are necessary for the City’s efficient prioritization of needed system improvements and replacements. By updating and implementing these plans, the City is actively protecting its infrastructure. All the time and money committed to this purpose is a solid investment by the City of Shelton.

The four phases of the Regional Project are critical to Shelton’s regional economic growth. The project has begun design and is building the Satellite Water Reclamation Plant in 2007. Effort needs to be focused at designing and building the extension of
sewer and water lines to the Port of Shelton's Johns Prairie Industrial Park. The Regional Project will enable City, County and Port of Shelton staff to manage current infrastructure, while promoting growth and development. Implementation of the Regional Project is logical and a practical way of involving partnerships, and resolving intergovernmental discord. Finally, the Regional Project could be the momentum needed for all the local jurisdictions, and various stakeholders, to foster harmonious relationships and closer intergovernmental cooperation.

The Task Force believes the City should be very focused on complying with current regulatory agency orders, including sewer line replacement in the downtown district, removing exposed sewer mains along the bottom of Goldsborough Creek and making upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. These projects need to be the highest priorities, as the City has fallen behind in meeting State requirements. State directed moratoriums, or other directives, could be catastrophic to the business and development communities.

City streets have been an issue for citizens for the past couple of years. As this is an expensive undertaking, the City should ask voters to approve the creation of a transportation benefit district and property tax increase. This will provide funding to maintain and repair City streets. By asking citizens to vote on these two measures, each citizen will be given an opportunity to decide and help pay for street improvements. The Task Force believes these measures (both of which require 60% voter approval) will equally spread the cost and impact of funding these repairs.

Finally, the City Commission asked the Task Force to review and make recommendations concerning infill development standards. The Task Force believes curb-gutter-sidewalk requirements are not necessary throughout the City. The creation of a sidewalk master plan that is used as the guide for infill frontage requirements is a viable option. This approach, coupled with a sidewalk improvement fee, will bring back the pendulum of infill development standards to the center. City staff and developers will better understand requirements in advance of submission of plans and permits.

The details, discussion and recommendations for the entire report are enclosed in the following pages. This report is the result of hours of hard work by the Task Force and City staff and is complete, thorough and fulfills the mission given by the City Commission.
Stormwater Utility

Introduction

The City’s stormwater utility was formed without the needed resources for adequate revenue to fund repairs and capital improvements. The City, together with the community and the Chamber of Commerce (who conducted a survey of its membership), collectively problem-solved the stormwater issue. Their findings resulted in rate increases that fairly address how stormwater charges are applied, the implementation of the appeals process, and discounts for low-income or senior citizens.

Their solutions of utilizing rate increases with computations based on square footage of impervious surfaces, resulted in the generation of sufficient revenue to remove utility debt and fund the true costs of operating and maintaining the utility. The new rates also enabled the accumulation of reserves, necessary to begin capital improvement projects in the near future.

History

The stormwater infrastructure was initially installed as a matter of necessity to drain water away from the blossoming town of Shelton in the late 1800s and into the 20th Century. This installation was completed without any true master plan. When the trees were cut and brush cleared away, drainage presented a problem that was resolved as quickly and inexpensively as possible. Limited consideration was given to rain water flows and water quality. In recent years, stormwater has become a hot topic due to contamination carried by stormwater entering local waters, such as Goldsborough Creek and Oakland Bay.
Infrastructure

The physical make up of the City’s stormwater system includes:

- 1,450 Catch Basins
- 155,064 Lineal Feet of Storm Line (29 miles)
- 43,000 Lineal Feet of Open Ditches (8 miles)
- 8,601 Lineal Feet of Culvert (191 culverts)
- 156 Drywells
- 6 Detention Ponds
- 30 Outfalls

Resources

Staff: The City has the equivalent of two full-time employees dedicated to the stormwater utility. Routine maintenance includes; clearing ditches, cleaning catch basins and stormwater pipes, and, repairing and replacing stormwater facilities (such as storm grates and storm basins). Approximately 375 labor hours per year are dedicated to cleaning streets, which lessens the accumulation of sand, debris and trash that could enter the stormwater system.

Equipment: Major equipment used by the City to maintain the stormwater system includes the vactor and camera trucks. The vactor truck is essentially an industrial-sized vacuum capable of collecting debris from hard to reach places (i.e. catch basins, culverts, and pipes). Additionally, the camera truck enables staff to check stormwater pipes for damage or obstructions. This, along with the periodic cleaning and inspections, has significantly reduced flooding, especially in the downtown area; however, localized flooding does still occur, especially around dry wells that are clogged and no longer drain properly. The City also utilizes other equipment such as; backhoe, front loader and dump truck. This equipment is used to clear ditches and detention ponds, ensuring proper drainage and the conveyance of stormwater.

Funding: Prior to implementing the current rate structure that is based on the total impervious surface area, the flat rate for both residential and commercial rate payers was $5 a month. This rate was inadequate to cover annual operating and maintenance costs, as well as fund emergency repairs. The shortfall in funding resulted in the need for the City to borrow money from other dedicated funds in order to pay for the operation of the stormwater utility. State law requires that utilities operate as a business and be self-sustaining through customer rates. Conversely, revenue from customer rates can only be used for that specific utility and not applied to other purposes (such as streets, police or general administration).
As a result of the new stormwater rate structure, the utility now supports itself, is capable of funding emergency repairs and long-term capital improvement projects. As part of the implementation of the new rate structure, based on impervious surface, the City Commission promised to pay the storm drainage loans from general tax dollars. By doing this the fund can now operate in the “black” and focus on capital projects that are long overdue.

Below are current stormwater rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential-Single Family and Duplexes</th>
<th>Monthly Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$8.50</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Multi-Family, Government, Hotels, Commercial &amp; Industrial</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impervious Surface</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
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<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Large</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jumbo</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Challenges**

*Growth:* With the recent submission of plans for several new housing developments, and the sale of the more than 600 acre Kneeland property along U.S. Highway 101, the City will be forced to implement and maintain a larger modernized stormwater system. The City does not currently have either adequate staffing or the technical expertise to facilitate this need. Additional requirements will force the City to add staff dedicated to maintaining and possibly collecting and testing stormwater. Finally, the City will have to ensure future stormwater projects include not just collection and conveyance of stormwater, but built-in treatment that will increase the costs of these projects.

*Decrepit Infrastructure:* The City currently has an antiquated stormwater system that is prone to failure. This problem is likely to accelerate as time passes.
Key Issues

**Issue:** Development Standards for Stormwater Infrastructure  
**Discussion:** The City’s Development Standards should list no more than five stormwater designs that developers are required to build, and that can be maintained easily by existing City equipment. As an incentive the City should offer developers, who incorporate one of the approved designs, a discount in fees (or other costs) associated with the development of these properties. It is recommended the preferred stormwater designs be “better” or “top of the line” systems, as this will assist the City in ease of operating and maintaining these stormwater systems installed by developers. The City should select designs from the Department of Ecology’s current manual for stormwater conveyance and treatment, which will communicate to the state and other stakeholders that the City is progressive and proactive in stormwater management.  
**Recommendation:** Implement a financial incentive-based development standard for stormwater systems designed and installed by developers. It is important to standardize stormwater design in order to facilitate operation and maintenance by City crews.

**Issue:** Document Failing Infrastructure  
**Discussion:** It is necessary for the City to set as a primary goal the photographing (via pipeline cameras) and evaluation of all existing stormwater conveyance lines. Top priority should be placed on the downtown core area, which has the oldest pipes in the City. Once the evaluation is completed, establishment of the replacement and repair schedule can be incorporated into the stormwater comprehensive plan. It is important that every effort be made to complete this evaluation in a timely manner, to ensure the stormwater lines are listed for replacement or repair based on an evaluated urgency of need, and the schedule is developed at the same time as the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). It is recommended this inspection be performed prior to the onset of the autumnal 2006 rainy season.  
**Recommendation:** The inspection of all stormwater lines should be the highest priority and completed as soon as practical. The inspection results can be used to prioritize the repair and replacement schedule of existing stormwater lines and listed in the updated CIP for systematic implementation.

**Issue:** Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)  
**Discussion:** With the stormwater fund solvent, the City needs to update the 1993 master plan into a comprehensive plan, including a CIP to address the long-term, systemic approach to stormwater management and compliance with state mandates, such as water quality. The comprehensive plan should also address the development standards recommendation, environmental regulations, future permitting with population increases expected in the next few years, preventative maintenance, staffing, and a public relations and education program. Finally, the Comprehensive Plan should address the need for the City to use, if not adopt the State’s latest stormwater manual. The Comprehensive Plan could address the process for the City to implement the new manual in order to be proactive in stormwater management, practices and engineering.
**Recommendation:** Update the master plan into a comprehensive plan with a CIP as soon as practical. The City should develop this long-term plan to facilitate implementation of capital improvement projects.

**Issue:** Stormwater Utility Rates  
**Discussion:** The City needs to conduct an updated utility rate study to ensure that current fees and rates will continue to support the utility’s operation and maintenance expenses, in addition to funding necessary capital improvements and financial preparedness for emergency failures and repairs. Issues to be addressed in the stormwater utility rate study are the financial incentive associated with developer built stormwater systems and a General Facility Charge or impact fees setting.  
**Recommendation:** Create a comprehensive plan followed by a CIP and a rate study. This will ensure the stormwater utility remains solvent and can fund long overdue improvements, cost increases, and emergency needs. The City should develop a long-term rate structure for the stormwater utility, with rate increases taking effect in 2008 at the latest.

**Conclusion**

The City’s approach to stormwater management must be proactive. As the City surpasses the 10,000-population threshold, Ecology may increase its scrutiny of the City’s stormwater utility. Ultimately Ecology may require the City to become permitted to comply with standards for stormwater conveyance and treatment. Adopting Ecology’s latest stormwater manual in the near future will further communicate to the State the City’s efforts to be proactive. The City should endeavor to implement reasonable stormwater rate increases that incrementally charge current ratepayers for utility operation, maintenance and upgrades and avoid large increases that will adversely impact the pocketbook of ratepayers. The City must ensure that growth pays for growth, with incentives to developers for helping the City implement a larger, modern and standardized stormwater system that will maximize operations and maintenance efficiencies while minimizing costs.
Water Utility

Introduction

The City of Shelton is a public water system purveyor that provides water service within the existing City boundaries and the designated Urban Growth Area. The City’s Department of Health Water System Identification Number is 78170N. The purpose of the City’s water utility is to provide the municipal supply of clean, safe drinking water to its customers and adequate hydrant flow for fire suppression.

Shelton draws its water from deep wells located in the northeast area of the City, in a designated watershed area within Wallace Kneeland Boulevard, Shelton Springs and Brockdale Roads. Shelton Springs, which is a shallow spring that feeds into Shelton Creek, is not in service due to the State’s Department of Health (DOH) order, which concerned contamination of shallow water sources.

The City has water rights for the three deep wells and Shelton Springs. A portion of the water rights includes the amount of water the City can produce, which averages 2 million gallons per day, with a maximum day demand that can be as much as 10.7 million gallons. Maximum pumping capacity of the three wells is just over 5 million gallons per day. Current average demand is about 1.15 million gallons per day. Water consumption varies based on seasonal demands (i.e. increased usage in the summer). Water from the wells is being chlorinated and the water system is in good operating condition, with four pressure zones providing water service to City customers. The DOH has assessed all three wells as having a low susceptibility to potential contamination.

History

The City of Shelton has traditionally supplied its customers with water from Shelton Springs. The Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the Springs in the late 1930’s and early 1940’s; however, the exact date of construction is unknown. The water right application was filed for Shelton Springs in 1927. The exact flow rate is not known, but the current estimate is that the Springs produce on average 3.2 million gallons per day (variances are based upon seasonal rains). A directive from the DOH issued on April 21, 2000, required disinfection of the Springs, due its classification as a shallow water source and concerns of contamination. Since that time, the Springs were taken off line from the water system.
The City has three deep wells. Well No. 1 is 745-feet deep. It was drilled, developed and placed into service in 1948. It can pump up to two million gallons per day, but it is currently used for “on demand” status only, due to low levels of hydrogen sulfide and iron. Though not hazardous to human health, this well water is blended with the other sources to meet customer expectations for taste and odor. Well No. 2 is 285-feet deep. It was drilled, developed and placed into service in 2005. It can pump 1.23 million gallons per day. Well No. 3 is 278-feet deep. It was drilled, developed and placed into service in 1993, and pumps in excess of 1.5 million gallons per day.

Prior to 2003, the City’s water sources were not chlorinated; however, in April and October of 2003, fecal coliform was detected in the City’s distribution system during routine testing. The distribution system and four reservoirs were cleaned, but the source of the contamination was never identified. In November 2003, the City began disinfecting its three wells with sodium hypochlorite to comply with the DOH requirements.

Over time, the Shelton water system has been installed, upgraded and expanded to meet customer demands. The system is adequate for the delivery of safe, clean drinking water upon demand. Replacements and upgrades to the system have been ongoing, but the infrastructure needs are increasing in order to maintain customer demands, fire flow expectations, and address anticipated growth.

**Infrastructure**

The physical make-up of the City’s water system includes:

- Shelton Springs (not in service)
- Wells Nos. 1, 2, & 3
- Four storage reservoirs (total of 1.82 million gallons of storage capacity)
- Three pump stations
- 50 miles of transmission piping
- Four pressure zones (Angleside, Capitol Hill, Mountain View and High School)
Resources

**Staff:** The City has five, full-time employees dedicated to the water system. The City staff includes a Water Purveyor (Rich Crump), which is a state required position. The purveyor has been trained and certified by the DOH to manage and operate the City’s water system. The purveyor supervises a water quality specialist whose primary responsibility is the collection, testing and periodic reporting of the City’s water quality to the customers, state, and City staff. Three operators conduct routine maintenance and repairs, small capital improvement projects, and customer meter readings. A member of the water crew is always on standby to respond to after-hours calls for water emergencies (line breaks, etc.) and water activations or shut off orders.

**Equipment:** The water crew uses jack hammers, meter reading computers (hand held devises to record water consumption figures for utility billing), water line locators, specialized tools such as wrenches for pump and valve maintenance, a backhoe, front loader, concrete saws and dump truck to excavate water lines and valves. Finally, the water quality analyst uses limited laboratory tools and supplies to collect and test routine water samples.

**Funding:** Customer water rates pay for the operation and maintenance of the water system. The water rates will also fund additional capital improvement projects and debt service on current loans and bonds. In 2005, the average customer water bill was $23 a month. The Commission approved a nine percent increase of the water rate for 2006, which results in an average increase of $2.07 per month for each customer. This increase was in response to operational and maintenance expansion, funding for water line extensions, and upgrades to waterlines. The water fund is in compliance with state law and has appropriate fund balances and reserves to complete planned projects and maintenance.

**Challenges**

The City’s water utility is in adequate condition both physically and financially. However, the current condition does not provide for anticipated growth in and around the City. Population growth will place demands upon the current system and will require added infrastructure and an increased pace of repair, replacement and facilities upgrade projects.
The City water system has a comprehensive plan that addresses capital improvement projects, funding, water conservation, and wellhead protection for water purity. This comprehensive plan will need to be updated in 2008; state law requires the update of water comprehensive plans every six years.

The Shelton Area Regional Water and Sewer Plan is designed to address growth issues for local jurisdictions and state agencies and is commonly referred to as the Regional Project. Portions of the Regional Project include extending water service to the correctional facility, State Patrol Academy, Johns Prairie Industrial Park, and the Kneeland Property. Original plans called for the extension of water service sooner, but updated plans and the needs of some of these jurisdictions have pushed back this timeline. The extension of water service to these areas will be based on availability of funding and future need.

Regardless of the Regional Project, Shelton is facing growth within the City limits that will require securing additional water rights and construction of two or three water reservoirs and additional conveyance piping within the next five years. The challenge will be to find funding for these facilities, as well as the hiring, training and equipping of additional staff to operate and maintain the system.

**Key Issues**

**Issue:** General Facility Charges (GFC)

**Discussion:** The City conducted a utility rate study in 2003, and it concluded implementation of GFCs was warranted. GFCs are fees that are collected from developers to fund a portion of the cost to maintain and expand the public water system. The GFC adopted by Commission at that time was $1,000. An additional rate study conducted in 2005 suggested the GFC be increased to $2,800.

**Recommendation:** Increase water GFCs to the utility rate study recommended maximum of $2,800 as soon as practical. This is in keeping with the philosophy of “growth pays for growth,” so that current ratepayers are not shouldering the burden of growth.
**Issue:** Public Education

**Discussion:** The City must be proactive and continual in its efforts to inform and educate the public about the water utility. Public information will help citizens understand City Commission decisions about capital projects, conservation efforts and rate increases that are necessary for the City to deliver clean, safe drinking water and adequate hydrant flow for fire suppression.

**Recommendation:** Using a variety of multimedia tools available to City staff, highlight and emphasize the water system’s conservation efforts, water quality, and cost incurred in order to sustain and maintain the system.

**Issue:** Rates

**Discussion:** The 2005 rate study projected, based on cost increases to operate and maintain the water system coupled with planned capital improvement projects, the need to increase water rates by nine percent in 2006 and an additional four percent increase in both 2007 and 2008. These increases are necessary, and would be incremental for ratepayers to adjust and absorb the cost increase for water service.

**Recommendation:** Implement four percent rates increases for both 2007 and 2008.

**Issue:** Preventative Maintenance (PM) Program

**Discussion:** After fecal coliform bacteria were detected in the water system in 2003, the City began (under the direction of the DOH) to chlorinate its water sources, and commitments were made to implement a full PM program. The PM program stems from the knowledge that injecting chlorine into the pipes will increase corrosion and rusting, which will decrease water quality. A fully developed PM program has not yet been implemented, although system flushing is done periodically which removes solid matter (such as rust) from the water system. Additionally, a valve turning or exercise program must be implemented as part of the PM program. The Capitol Hill water tank was taken off line in 2005 in order to paint the interior. With the tank off line, a defective pressure relief valve failure compounded pressure problems for Capitol Hill customers, and resulted in the need to implement a valve and pump PM program as soon as reasonably feasible. The 2006 utility rate increase provides funding needed for additional staff and equipment.

**Recommendation:** Develop and implement a complete PM program utilizing the suggestions from the 2002 Water Comprehensive Plan. Hire and equip additional water operators. This is budgeted in the 2006 rate increase.

**Issue:** Implement the water Capital Improvement Projects.

**Discussion:** The 2002 Water Comprehensive Plan is a document that outlines six- and twenty-year improvements to the water system. The City must fund and construct these projects to ensure the efficient functioning of the whole system. A primary concern is the need for additional water storage facilities, and the necessary piping and drilling of a new well to ensure adequate water supply for anticipated growth over the next few years.

**Recommendation:** The City must secure funding via rate increases, grants, and loans to ensure the needed projects are phased and constructed in order to meet increased demand. Priority should be placed upon the building of additional water storage facilities and new water sources. Complete the required update to the comprehensive plan in 2008.
Conclusion

The City is prepared to be, as stated in the Regional Project, the entire south Mason County area provider of water. The City currently enjoys adequate water rights and sufficient water sources, but must be proactive in seeking approval for, and the development of, additional water sources to meet future growth. The City must also move forward capital improvement projects to upgrade and replace its aging infrastructure in a timely manner so as to not allow the current water system to fall into a state of disrepair. The hiring and equipping of additional staff to help fully implement a complete PM program will further enable the City to maintain its commitment of providing clean, safe drinking water and sufficient hydrant flow for fire protection to its citizens and customers.
Wastewater

Introduction

The City collects and conveys household and industrial wastewater through four pump stations and 52 miles of sewer lines. Shelton also operates and maintains its own wastewater treatment plant located at 1700 Fairmont Ave. The City provides secondary treatment, with an average flow of more than 2.2 million gallons per day. This protects both public health and the environment by treating wastewater to high standards and by meeting strict state directed permits limits. The plant, built in 1979, was designed to provide required treatment until the year 2000.

The current plant was designed to treat a high-flow of four million gallons per day, and annually averages about 2.2 million gallons daily. During the winter season, daily flow can exceed ten million gallons per day due to infiltration and inflow. Infiltration occurs when groundwater enters the sewer system through cracks, holes, faulty connections or other openings. Inflow occurs when surface water, such as stormwater, enters the sewer system through roof downspouts, connections, holes in manhole covers, illegal plumbing connections, or other defects. These situations can overwhelm the wastewater treatment plant.

The plant discharges highly treated wastewater, called effluent, into Oakland Bay through an outfall that extends 1,250-feet into the bay. The discharge pipe is 45-feet below mean sea level to ensure adequate dispersal of the effluent.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has delegated authority to the State’s Department of Ecology (Ecology) to regulate and issue a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The City's NPDES permit expires in 2007. It is expected the renewal will require upgrades and additional wastewater treatment measures.

History

The first sewer pipes were installed in the City in the 1910s. The concrete pipes were placed into the ground in sections, probably without sealant. The sewer pipes conveyed untreated sewage into Oakland Bay until 1950, when the first treatment
plant was built. This plant was designed for primary treatment only. Primary treatment is simply the physical settling of the sewage, which enables the separation (or settling) of inorganic solid material from the water. The water was discharged into Oakland Bay near the current Shelton Yacht Club location. Shelton’s first treatment plant can still be seen as one drives northbound along State Route 3 on the outskirts of town. Additional historic treatment of sewage can be found on the east side of Oakland Bay, near the current wastewater treatment plant. Treatment was done by an Imhof tank, which also performed a kind of physical settling. In the past, farmers commonly used Imhof tanks to treat animal waste. This tank probably serviced the Hillcrest/Angleside areas of the City, although the City has limited records.

The primary treatment plant was decommissioned in 1979 when the current wastewater treatment plant was built to comply with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments (the Clean Water Act of 1972 and 1979) and the state receiving-waters quality standards. The cost to build the City’s new wastewater treatment plant was five million dollars. Seventy-five percent of the funding was provided by the EPA and fifteen percent by Ecology. The City’s share of the remaining ten percent was financed through the sale of revenue bonds and operating rates.

**Infrastructure**

The physical make-up of the City’s wastewater system includes:

- 52 miles of collection piping
- 4 pump stations
- 1 secondary wastewater treatment plant

**Resources**

*Staff:* The City has 5.5 full-time equivalent employees working in the wastewater department. Five of these employees are dedicated, while the half-time employee is shared between the sewer and stormwater utility funds. The plant operator (John Ozga), which is a state required position, has been trained and certified by Ecology to manage and operate the City’s wastewater treatment plant. He supervises an assistant plant operator and a certified operator—both of these staff are trained and certified by the state. The other 2.5 full-time equivalent employees are general operators, who assist in the maintenance of the sewer pipes and plant. Staff’s duties include ensuring the City meets and does not exceed or violate the wastewater treatment or discharge permit. Staff performs routine, daily, and specific testing of the wastewater and effluent to ensure the City meets permit requirements.
**Equipment:** The City uses three pick up trucks, two vactor (vacuum and water jetting) trucks, two 3,500-gallon tanker trucks (to transport the plant’s biosolids to the land application site), one camera van, and a fully equipped water quality laboratory.

**Funding:** Sewer rates pay for the operation and maintenance of the wastewater collection and treatment system. The sewer rates also pay for capital improvement projects and debt on current loans and bonds. In 2005, the average sewer bill was $40.16 a month. The Commission approved an eight percent increase of the sewer rate for 2006, resulting in a projected average increase of $3.21 per month. The primary reason for the rate increase is to build reserves necessary to fund the City’s portion of capital improvement projects, namely the wastewater plant upgrade. The upgrade is scheduled for design in 2007 and construction in 2008. Currently, the City has secured $8.7 million (in the form of federal loans and grants) of the fifteen million dollars required to fund this project. The sewer fund is in compliance with state law.

**Challenges**

Installation, maintenance, and operation of wastewater collection pipes, pump stations, the treatment plant, and the treatment of sewage is expensive. Increasing regulation and environmental concerns for the health of Puget Sound heightens the demand and urgency to treat wastewater to ever-increasing standards. These factors directly affect sewage treatment costs and customer rates.

City crews work diligently to keep our four pump stations, conveyance lines, and the wastewater treatment plant running as smoothly and economically as possible; however, the antiquated and worn conditions of our sewer infrastructure has become overwhelming for our innovative and hard working crews. One example of the City’s commitment to treating wastewater to the high standards is showcased by the DOH’s reduction of the shellfish “No Harvest Zone” in Hammersley Inlet and Oakland Bay.

The City faces several challenges in an effort to reduce infiltration and inflow (I/I) of ground and stormwater into the sewer system. These include the removal of the Goldsborough Creek sewer mains and replacement of sewer pipes in Basins 2 and 3. The City has been successful securing non-ratepayer dollars to assist with the partial financing of these projects through grants and loan applications.

The City also faces a challenge in recruiting and retaining qualified, certified wastewater operators. Over the years, workers have not been recruited to replace the diminishing ranks of retiring “Baby Boomers.” As a proactive measure, the City should be looking at the creation of a master plan to find new and creative ways (such as with internships and apprenticeship programs) to attract, train, and retain future wastewater operators. While
at first glance the sewer operator career field may not seem interesting, it is indeed a
dynamic field that includes such disciplines as science, engineering, and mathematics.
An additional draw is the ever-increasing awareness and appreciation of our natural
resources and the need to protect them, as well as the public health.

Plans are underway, as part of the Regional Project, to upgrade the City's treatment plant
at a cost of $15 million. Improvements include several state-of-the-art treatment systems
and the implementation of an advanced secondary treatment process that will remove
nitrogen from the effluent. Nitrogen promotes algae growth in salt or marine waters,
which depletes dissolved oxygen necessary for the survival of fish and shellfish.

Key Issues

Issue: Reconstruction of sewer Basins 2 and 3, removal of sewer main from
Goldsborough Creek, and upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, in order
to comply with regulatory agency orders or upcoming permit criteria.
Discussion: The City is under an Ecology administrative order to correct
the I/I of groundwater and stormwater
into Basins 1 and 2. This was to be completed by the year 2000. Additionally, the
administrative order directs the City continue these corrections on other basins (the City
has eight sewer basins). Reconstruction of Basin 1 is complete and Basin 2 is scheduled
to begin construction in early 2007.

The City signed an agreement with State Department of Fish and Wildlife to remove,
bridge-over, and/or dig deeper under the force and gravity sewer mains that are now
exposed on the bottom of Goldsborough Creek. Failure of one or both pipes will result in
significant raw sewage spilling into the creek, which empties directly into Oakland Bay.
The resulting pollution would impact the fish and shellfish industries on a severe to
catastrophic level. This agreement included a completion date of November 2005;
unfortunately lack of funding and staff has resulted in delayed construction. The removal
and bridging of the two mains is now scheduled for mid-2007.

The City's NPDES permit will expire in 2007. It is expected that the renewal will require
upgrades and additional wastewater treatment measures, at a planned cost of $15 million.
Failure to complete these corrections and upgrades, and in some cases overdue projects,
could result in moratoriums from the state against future development.
Recommendation: The City of Shelton should begin construction of Basin 2, initiate the
removal of the sewer mains from Goldsborough Creek, begin preliminary design of Basin
3, and begin the wastewater treatment plant upgrades as soon as possible, in order to
become compliant.
**Issue:** General Facility Charges (GFCs)

**Discussion:** The City conducted utility rate studies in 2003 and 2005. The Commission adopted GFCs of $2,000 in 2003. In 2005 the City conducted an additional rate study that recommended GFCs to the maximum of $7,240. In 2006, the Commission approved a $1,500 increase, bringing the GFC to $3,500.

**Recommendation:** Increase wastewater GFCs to the recommended utility rate study maximum of $7,240 as soon as practical. This is in keeping with the philosophy of “growth pays for growth,” so that current ratepayers are not shouldering the burden of growth.

**Issue:** Create a sewer comprehensive plan, incorporating a rate study.

**Discussion:** A variety of historical documents, such as the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and the 1997 Inflow and Infiltration Project, support the four phases of the Regional Project. A need to incorporate an updated capital improvement plan, in addition to the preliminary information, is necessary to meet state requirements. This includes public education and information, infrastructure inventory and capabilities, staff requirements and maintenance programs, capital improvement projects, treatment standards and rates beyond 2008. Specifics for a rate study would include updating current and reasonable growth rates, in addition to needed capital costs for 2009 through 2011. A sewer comprehensive plan would become the Public Works Department and City’s road map for future capital improvements, operations and maintenance, and public education.

**Recommendation:** Create a sewer comprehensive plan in 2007, including a rate study with updated projected growth rates.

**Issue:** Public Education

**Discussion:** The City must be proactive and consistent in its efforts to inform and educate the public about the sewer utility. Public information will help citizens understand City Commission decisions about capital projects, treatment methods, state mandates and compliance requirements and rate increases that are necessary for the City to protect public health and the environment.

**Recommendation:** Utilizing a variety of multi-media tools available to City staff, highlight and emphasize the wastewater system programs, methods of treatment, and the cost associated to self-sustain and maintain the sewer utility.

**Issue:** Expedient Implementation of the Shelton Area Regional Water and Wastewater Plan (Regional Project)

**Discussion:** The Regional Project is comprised of four phases. **Phase One** is referred to as the Satellite Water Reclamation Plant Project, and is fully funded by the project partners (City, Washington State Department of Corrections and Washington State Patrol Academy) and a mix of grants and loans. Design of this project is ongoing and construction is scheduled to commence in 2007.

**Phase Two** is known as the Kneeland Water System Expansion Project and will build the water facilities on the Kneeland property area, south of the airport and west of the Wallace Kneeland Boulevard/U.S. Highway 101 interchange. This phase is slated to
begin in response to property development and the need for water services. It is expected that the City’s share of this project will be primarily funded by development and growth directly associated with the Kneeland property, which is designated for both commercial and residential land use.

**Phase Three**, referred to as the Johns Prairie Utility Extension Project, includes laying water, sewer, and now, *reclaimed water* lines to the Port of Shelton—Johns Prairie Industrial Park and other industrial customers along the route. It is the intention of the project to promote planned commercial and industrial growth, while minimizing negative impacts to the environment. This project should be considered by both business and government entities as a high priority, focusing on the promotion of economic development for the Shelton area.

**Phase Four**, or the Shelton Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Project is projected to cost $15 million and design is expected to start in 2007. Plant upgrades will include the replacement of the effluent disinfection process from the current chlorine method (which is both dangerous and labor intensive) to the more cost effective and safer method utilizing ultraviolet light. The ultraviolet treatment method is as effective in the elimination of remaining pathogens (unhealthy bacteria or viruses) left in the treated effluent. Included is replacement of the current Class B biosolids process with a Class A biosolids treatment system, which is safer for human contact and environmentally friendly in its use and disposal. Class A biosolids have numerous beneficial uses, including fertilizing and amending soils. Another changes will be the addition of a slack tank for better dilution of discharge to the bay and the removal of the nitrogen process.

The Regional Project is saving Shelton ratepayers millions of dollars with partners leveraging an additional $7 million in federal and state loans. The City will need to secure the remaining $8 million, which could come from customers' rates. The City will continue to look for future grant and loan opportunities in an effort to reduce the reliance on ratepayers for funding. A portion of the 2006-2008 wastewater rate increases will be earmarked for construction, which is anticipated to begin during the second half of 2008. **Recommendation:** Construction of the Regional Project should begin as soon as practical. This will help spur economic development in the Shelton area and prove that through partnerships, local governments can cooperate with one another, which is in the best interest of citizens and ratepayers.

**Issue:** Current Relationship with Port of Shelton.

**Discussion:** The Port of Shelton and the City have a strained relationship. It is nuts not to get along. Government jurisdictions must work together and cooperate. The City and Port must settle their differences for the benefit and in the best interest of all citizens, ratepayers, and customers served in south Mason County. Resolving differences and working together will have huge positive impacts in the eyes of the community and create a welcoming environment for new business to the greater Shelton area.

**Recommendation:** City and Port Commissioners should meet immediately to resolve their differences. The overarching goal of this meeting should be “what is best for the community.”
Conclusion

Wastewater treatment is complicated and expensive, and is carefully regulated by state agencies. The impact of projected growth upon the environment and the need to replace aging infrastructure with new facilities increases the costs of wastewater conveyance and treatment. Partnerships greatly assist in securing grants and loans, but current ratepayers and new growth continue to shoulder the burden of maintaining and expanding the City's sewer utility. The utilization of increased GFCs will empower the concept of "growth paying for growth." Finally, the City and Port of Shelton must find common ground and work in harmony to benefit its citizens, ratepayers, and customers. Improved relations will foster cost efficiency, boost the ability to overcome utility and growth challenges, and promote planned economic development that will benefit the entire region.
Streets

Introduction

The City’s streets are generally in poor condition, and are in serious need of significant repair and rebuilding. Past City policy has not established reserves to address these need for road maintenance and the probability of age related deterioration. Consequently, street conditions have worsened, as routine and timely repairs have not been regularly completed. City crews provide the best service available, but are limited by lack of funds. Currently, crews employ a combination of chip seal and hot patch for potholes to keep the streets drivable.

History

Because of its proximity to navigable salt water, Shelton became the natural hub for nearby logging activity; for several decades steamboat and rail provided the chief means of transport in Mason County. With the arrival of the 20th century and with Washington’s statehood and Shelton’s incorporation (1889) becoming a distant memory, a thriving Shelton cityscape developed featuring hotels, restaurants, shops, schools, a newspaper, and a funeral home.

As the automobile became an increasingly convenient alternative to rail and steamboat travel, Shelton streets developed. The new streets were based on commercial and business locations along the existing “skid roads,” which were originally used for transporting logs to the mills. During the 20th century, additional streets were built and maintained as the City grew and prospered.
The City found that by the 1980s and 1990s, adequate resources to maintain the streets in good condition, had not been secured. In 1997, a street bond measure was put before City voters, but failed (by a small amount) to obtain the necessary sixty percent “yes” votes. An additional factor compounding the lack of funding to maintain streets was an initiative to reduce the license tab excise fee. This fee allocated by the state to local governments partially funded street maintenance. Initiative 695, passed in 1999, resulted in significant reductions in streets funding. Additional initiatives such as I-747 limited other funding sources. The loss of revenue, combined with increased population and traffic, has resulted in the continual “wear and tear” and age related deterioration of the streets. This has been a constant source of concern and complaint with citizens, as highlighted in a 2002 citizens survey, with respondents listing streets as their biggest complaint. A 2005 survey confirmed these results.

Recent efforts to secure additional funding for street repair and maintenance have included grant and loan applications. These efforts have yielded more than two million dollars in grants in the last few years, but sadly this is far too little to remedy the street situation. The possibility of a small property tax increase, that would create $260,000 additional annual funding for streets, has been discussed; however, this measure has not yet been put on the ballot.

City staff estimate repairs and rebuilding of the existing streets to be a one-time cost of $34 million. It is estimated that funding, in excess of $1 million dollars annually, would be required to halt the deterioration of and maintain streets in their current condition.

**Infrastructure**

The physical make up of the City’s streets includes:

- 62.21 miles of streets
- 41.7 miles of paved streets
- 4.7 miles of gravel streets
- 12.9 miles of Bituminous Surface (Chip Seal)
- 2.2 mile of concrete
- .7 mile of unimproved streets
- 9 traffic lights
- State Route 3 travels through the City
- U.S. Highway 101 skirts the northwestern boundary of the City
Resources

Staff: The City has five full-time equivalent employees working in the Streets Department. The crew leader is Chuck Roy, who also oversees stormwater with two additional employees. He oversees operators who work chip sealing, mowing, patching potholes, street sweeping and catch basin cleaning during summer months. Tasks during the winter months and rainy season include snow removal, and responding to street flooding and other winter weather tasks.

Equipment: The crew uses three pick up trucks, four dump trucks, two backhoes, one front scoop loader, one street sweeper, one road side mower, a jackhammer, as well as other specialized tools and equipment needed for maintenance.

Funding: The street budget provides resources for two purposes only—operations and capital construction. The street fund receives approximately $180,000 a year in revenue from the motor vehicle fuel taxes, commonly known as the “gas tax.” This translates to $.23 per gallon paid at the gas pump. The state collects this tax, and distributes the some of revenue to local government; the City receives 10.7 percent of the total tax collected within city limits. This funding has also diminished with conservation efforts due to increasing gas prices imposed on citizens. The City also collects REET2 (real estate sales tax), which is dedicated to streets funding.

The general fund of the City pays the street fund approximately $500,000 to $850,000 a year for operating, maintenance and construction costs. Competition for general fund monies is fierce, with emergency services (police and fire) being the highest priorities, and all other general government functions vying for remaining funds.

Total operating revenue for the street fund is approximately $800,000. This revenue funds street sweeping, sign repair, street reset and replacement, pothole repair, paint for crosswalks, guard rails and curb, sand, and overtime pay for snow and ice removal.
Electricity costs for the Streets Department are approximately $170,000 annually for streetlight and traffic signals. Capital costs vary depending upon grants and loans obtained, and the amount of associated matching funds from City revenues. In 2004, the City was able to secure $2.5 million in grants.

Challenges

The most significant challenge faced by the Streets Department is securing adequate funds for street repairs and rebuilding. Staff estimates that in order to stop current deterioration, implement maintenance and begin a 20-year rebuilding program that it will cost more than a million dollars per year in new funding. Ever increasing petroleum product costs will contribute to the annual price necessary to repair the City’s streets.

By creating the possibility of implementing impact fees, growth may provide some relief to the condition of the City’s streets. This new source of revenue would pay for upgrades to existing streets, based on higher volume of vehicle traffic.

Unlike the sewer or water utilities, no regulatory agency oversees and demands timely upkeep and maintenance of the City’s streets. The “regulatory agency” overseeing streets are the citizens of Shelton; however, it remains to be seen whether they are willing to commit, through the ballot process, the necessary revenue to fund repairs for the City’s streets.

Key Issues

Issue: Dedicate new funding for streets
Discussion: Regardless of whatever type of new revenue is secured, such as voter approved property tax increase or funds from the creation of a transportation benefit district, it must be entirely dedicated to the street fund. A resolution signed by the City Commissioners stating all new funding will go directly to the streets fund and only be used for repairing and rebuilding City streets is imperative. In essence, this would be the City’s “promise” to utilize these specific funds for street repairs and rebuilding only. Once a resolution is in place, diverting this funding to other items would require breaking the “promise.”
Recommendation: City Commission declares, by resolution, that all new funding for streets will be used solely for street construction, repair and rebuilding.
**Issue:** Create a Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

**Discussion:** The creation of a TBD is a new, and sometimes misunderstood, method to collect revenue via fees and taxes. Voters must approve (by sixty percent or greater) the creation of a district. Since this is a different way of collecting revenue than previously utilized, it would be advisable for the City to invest in consultant services to assist in working through the details. Once the district is proposed and defined with expected revenue and clearly defined projects, interested groups and supportive citizens must come together to form a campaign, convincing voters to approve the measure. The City must clearly define the use of this revenue to finance street preservation efforts, in the form of asphalt overlays of busy arterial streets that are not otherwise candidates for grants and loans for street reconstruction and chip sealing of residential streets. The measure should be placed on the ballot as soon as practical (2007) to begin collecting revenue for street preservation efforts. If the measure does not pass the first time, the City must resubmit the measure again in future elections for voter approval.

**Recommendation:** Create and define a City-wide Transportation Benefit District with revenues used for street preservation asphalt overlay projects.

**Issue:** Property Tax Levy Lid Lift Measure

**Discussion:** The City should place a measure on the ballot for voters to approve a permanent levy lid lift that would raise property taxes from the current $3.33 per $1,000 of property value to the maximum allowed $3.60 per $1,000 of property value. This increase of $.27 per $1,000 in property value is expected to raise $260,000 in revenue per year. Voters must approve this measure with a sixty percent or greater margin. Once the levy lid lift measure is announced and placed on the ballot, interest groups and supportive citizens must come together to form a campaign convincing voters to approve the measure. The City must clearly define application of the revenue to finance street preservation efforts, in the form of chip sealing all, or most, residential streets as part of an economical plan (chip seal is about one-third of the cost of asphalt) for areas that are not otherwise candidates for grants and loans. Staff would create a residential chip seal program that would address the deteriorating conditions of residential streets. The measure should be placed on the ballot as soon as practical (2007) to begin collecting revenue for street preservation efforts. If the measure does not pass the first time, the City must resubmit the measure again in future elections for voter approval.

**Recommendation:** Create a levy lid lift property tax measure for voter approval with increased property tax revenues dedicated to a residential street chip seal program.

**Issue:** Hire a Grant Writer

**Discussion:** Hiring a Grant Writer will enable the City to accomplish a three-step strategy to repair and rebuild the streets. The first step is to secure voter approval for the creation of a Transportation Benefit District, dedicating this funding to street preservation with asphalt overlays. The second step is a voter approved property tax increase, with this funding dedicated for residential chip sealing. The third step is hiring a grant writer, whose primary responsibility and duty is to apply for and secure funds from state and federal sources.

**Recommendation:** Create a Grant Writer job classification and then hire the position as soon as possible.
**Issue:** Public Education

**Discussion:** The City must be proactive and consistent in its efforts to inform and educate the public about abilities to repair the City’s streets. Public information enhances citizens’ understanding of City Commission decisions regarding capital projects, street maintenance priorities, state mandates, compliance requirements and the ever-increasing costs associated with repairing and rebuilding City streets. Staff could annually present accomplishments and upcoming projects, as a means to ensure the public is well informed and up-to-date on City activities. Staff could use large posters and billboards to inform citizens during projects about its cost, funding sources, and timeline for completion. This effort will help inform and educate everyone on the high, but necessary, costs required to repair the City’s streets.

**Recommendation:** Utilizing a variety of multimedia tools available to City staff, highlight and emphasize the efforts of the City to maintain, fix and rebuild streets, and address needed funding.

**Issue:** Ask Mason County for a Percentage of the Sales Tax

**Discussion:** Currently, the County receives 0.15 percent of sales tax collected inside the City. This revenue can exceed $300,000 annually. It is suggested that the City ask the County to refrain from collecting this percentage of sales tax; however, the Task Force understands the County also needs this revenue source to fund its own priorities. If the City never asks, it will never know the County’s response. Finally, this is another opportunity for governments (City and County) to work together to address this issue.

**Recommendation:** The City Commission should formally ask Mason County to transfer to the City the percentage of sale tax collected by the County inside City limits and designate these funds for the purposes of repairing and maintaining streets.

**Issue:** Implement Transportation Impact Fees (TIFs)

**Discussion:** The anticipated and planned growth within the City and its urban growth area will require an evaluation and assessment of the existing transportation system and its ability to accommodate the projected population increase. One potential outcome of this assessment would be the adoption of a TIF program, which is a common method used by jurisdictions to collect reasonable and fair contributions from new developments. Specific benefits of the program include:

- Identification of transportation system improvements within the City that will benefit all users.
- Formulation of a fee structure that is commensurate with the impacts created by new development. Each new development would be treated equally, with no one project forced to carry the burden of the others. The fee structure would be a
fixed cost, determined by the development type (i.e. residential, commercial, etc), and would create a predictable cost for the development community.

- Improvement of the City's ability to leverage state/federal grant dollars, needed to build the infrastructure (i.e. impact fees used as local match and contributions for various grant programs).

The City is poised to see significant growth with the completed sale and expected development of the Kneeland property and four large housing developments totaling more than one thousand single-family homes. Although development will not occur overnight, the City has an opportunity to capture development impacts upon existing streets with TIFs. Implementing TIFs for new developments and growth is keeping in the spirit of having “growth pay for growth.” City staff should use a consulting expert to help develop TIFs.

**Recommendation:** Move forward with implementing TIFs as soon as practical, in order to charge developers for impacts upon the City existing streets.

**Conclusion**

The condition of City streets is an important subject to citizens. For various reasons in past years, necessary resources were not allocated for maintaining or improving City streets. The Task Force recommends spreading the impact of new taxes/fees equally as the best way for all concerned to complete necessary street repairs. Citizens will have the opportunity to vote and declare their intentions regarding street repairs and maintenance. Citizens groups are the key to successfully gaining new sources of needed revenue—we are hopeful all citizens will become actively involved and assist their community in this task. Discussions have noted that all sizes of municipalities (including Seattle and now Tacoma) have great difficulty securing adequate funding for street maintenance and repair. The City's approach is to implement TIFs, enabling growth to pay for growth; the dedication of an employee whose focus would be grant applications; and seek voter approvals for tax increases, which will generate additional revenue for the preservation asphalt overlays and application of economical chip seal.
Infill Development Standards

Introduction

The City Commission asked if the Task Force would be willing to review and make recommendations for Infill Development Standards. This relates to frontage improvements for plotted residential lots being developed (i.e. single family residents, duplexes, triplexes). The Task Force agreed to review the standards. The origin of need is due to developers’ outcries regarding recently approved design standards. These standards outlined the requirement of mandatory curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements, regardless of whether such improvements presently exist on either side of the lot being developed. Local developers and others have termed this requirement as building “sidewalks to nowhere.”

Approximately 200 platted lots are available to be developed into single, double or triple family residents inside the City. Over the years, the easier more viable lots have been developed. What remains today are the harder to build, hence more expensive to develop lots. Last year, 16 single lot residential homes were built. So far this year, 14 single residential lots have been developed, with six more in the permitting process.

History

Before 2005, frontage improvement requirements were administrative and not part of formal City policy. These were inconsistently applied by City staff based on the location of the lot, which resulted in frustrated developers. These mounting tensions resulted in a “Developers Summit,” that was held in 2005. The message from developers was for the City to create standards, versus the practice of site review meetings outlining the required improvement for individual developments and to have consistent requirements.

In the fall of 2005 the City Commission approved, by ordinance, the adoption of development standards requiring curb, gutter and sidewalk for all frontage improvement for all types of infill lot development. Developers have complained about the standards as being unfair and not appropriate when the surrounding areas do not always have curb, gutter and sidewalks. Although these standards are now consistent, developers are saying that a “one size fits all” approach does not work.
Key Issues

**Issue:** Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan

**Discussion:** The development of a sidewalk master plan can help the City by designating several City streets as pathways for pedestrians. Not all streets will get sidewalks in the foreseeable future due to funding, but the City can create a plan that will earmark limited dollars for the "connector" sidwalked streets, which would enable citizens to safely walk along a sidewalk to any location in the City. This plan can also define areas in the City not requiring sidewalk or curb frontage improvements.

**Recommendation:** Create and refine a sidewalk master plan and use this as the baseline reference document in applying frontage improvement requirements.

**Issue:** Create a Sidewalk Improvement Fee

**Discussion:** As with Transportation Impact Fees (TIFs), hiring a consultant to develop an improvement fee schedule for developments built in the City will foster the concept of "growth paying for growth." The City is on the verge of hiring a consulting engineering firm to begin the TIF process and could easily retain the same firm to incorporate sidewalk improvement fees, in addition to the sidewalk master plan. Fees obtained from growth for building sidewalks would be dedicated to building sidewalks along the "connector" streets identified in the sidewalk master plan.

**Recommendation:** Create a sidewalk improvement fee as part of the TIF process.

**Issue:** Defined frontage improvements for infill lots

**Discussion:** Defined frontage improvements for residential infill lots should be:

- Short Plats and Subdivisions build all currently defined standard curb, gutter and sidewalks. (A Short Plat is defined as four or less lots and a Subdivision is five or more lots.)
- Infill lots along "connector streets" (as listed in the City’s yet to be developed sidewalk master plan) require curb, gutter and sidewalk. Additionally, engineering for curb, gutter and sidewalk for the entire block must be accomplished and given to the City for future sidewalk construction. Given this is expensive, the builder may pay the sidewalk improvement fee instead of building the frontage improvement and conducting the block-long engineer design.
- Infill lots next to existing sidewalks will be constructed. Depending upon the condition and construction of the existing sidewalk, curb, gutter, or stormwater may or may not be necessary. Construction of these frontage improvements will be done to complete the "missing tooth of the smile" regardless of whether or not this street is listed as sidewalk "connector" street.
• Infill lots where there are no existing sidewalks and the street is not a master plan listed “connector” street will not require curb or sidewalks. Stormwater mitigation/infrastructure may be required, depending upon the street front and lot’s sloop, grade and need for a catch basin or other stormwater management needs, for example. Finally, the developer will be required to pay the sidewalk improvement fee.

• Stop requiring “half street” improvements on gravel streets. Since the residential streets will soon be chip sealed, this requirement is no longer necessary. Developers will still be required to replace or upgrade street surfaces along already paved streets.

Recommendation: Update the development standards with the above listed changes.

Issue: Public Education.
Discussion: The City must be proactive and consistent in its efforts to inform and educate the public about efforts to build sidewalks. Public information will help citizens understand City Commission decisions about funding and priorities associated with building City sidewalks.

Recommendation: Highlight and emphasize the efforts of the City to build sidewalks using the yet to developed and finalized sidewalk master plan for safe walking paths plus infill lot development standards, utilizing a variety of multi-media tools available to City staff.

Issue: Recommended New Standards Implementation.
Discussion: As a way to alleviate the current frustration by developers building sidewalks and other frontage improvements on infill lots where none exists, implement the recommended new standards on an interim basis until these recommended changes are permanently and formally approved.

Recommendation: Implement interim new standards as soon as practical.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, the small local developers have become conditioned to bargain and negotiate frontage improvements in past years because of the lack of approved standards and the subjective application by staff. In 2005, standards were implemented that were thorough and consistent, yet not always logical when applied to single lot development within the City. The Task Force believes that swinging the pendulum back to the center between the extremes of no standards and strict standards will help everyone. Implementing the recommended standards, with a formalized sidewalk master plan and sidewalk improvement fees to build “connector” street sidewalks will improve the appearance of the City and help pedestrians safely walk in the City. Though not perfect, the recommended residential infill development standards will stop the building of “sidewalks to nowhere,” and enable developers to understand the City’s long-term plans for streetscape and pedestrian pathways, while applying common sense and directing developers to build needed frontage improvements.