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2011 Street Reconstruction Millage - Proposed Public Engagement Process

The City of Ann Arbor's Street Reconstruction Millage ("Street Millage") will expire at the end of 2011. Since the 1980s, the Street Millage has provided critical funding - and the ability to leverage matching federal and state dollars - to ensure the quality of Ann Arbor streets. City staff intend to recommend that City Council consider ballot language on August 4th that would authorize the placement of a Street Millage on the November 8th ballot.

This year also marks the conclusion of the multi-year, city-wide sidewalk inspection and repair program. By the end of this summer, all sidewalks that have been marked for repair will have been repaired properly. City staff have received citizen feedback regarding the sidewalk program, indicating that the public interest may be better served if the City of Ann Arbor, rather than property owners, were to assume responsibility for sidewalk repairs on an ongoing basis. This feedback aligns with the City of Ann Arbor's proven commitment to meeting the community's diverse transportation needs and desires. Maintaining the sidewalks in a manner consistent to the way city streets are maintained supports ease of use not only for motorists but also pedestrians and cyclists, people using strollers, and people using walkers or wheelchairs.

If the City were to assume responsibility for sidewalk repairs, a funding stream would need to be identified. Because the sidewalk inspection and repair cycle has been completed, City staff estimate that an ongoing commitment to repairing sidewalks city-wide could be satisfied with approximately \$500,000 per year, or the equivalent of a 0.125-mill tax for property owners. This magnitude of millage translates to approximately \$13.37 for a resident with an average assessed home value of \$107,000 (market value \$214,000). As a point of reference, a 5-ft x 5-ft flag of sidewalk may cost property owners an average of \$125.

One way to achieve this funding stream would be to include sidewalk repairs in the proposed Street Millage by adding ballot language reflecting the inclusion and increasing the level of the millage from 2 mills to 2.125 mills.

In order to support City Council's informed decision-making regarding whether and how to propose a sidewalk repair millage, City staff propose undertaking a public engagement process to explore citizen sentiment regarding the matter; please see the draft schedule below.

Essentially, two city-wide public meetings would be held between June 13 and 21, complemented by an online survey available to all Ann Arbor citizens. The public sessions and the survey would be heavily publicized through media outlets, and the data gathered during this process would then be synthesized and presented to Council in report form in July. In this way, City Council would have an opportunity to consider the public's feedback, and determine the path forward. Ballot language for the November 8th election must be filed in the City Clerk's office by August 16th, so staff proposes that City Council consider the ballot language options at their meeting on August 4th in order to allow time for any desired changes to be incorporated.

Staff welcomes Council's involvement in this process, and Councilmembers are invited to participate in the development and review of the methods and materials to be involved in the public engagement process. All draft materials will be available to Council in a shared directory, and briefing times will be identified during the week of June 6th should Councilmembers wish to meet with staff to review, discuss, and refine the public engagement process or materials. (As always, staff are eager to accommodate Council's scheduling needs; Councilmembers are encouraged to request other or additional sessions at their pleasure.)

Proposed Dates	Suggested Items
June 6	Street Reconstruction Millage information and proposed public engagement process presented to City Council as information item.
Week of June 6	Optional informational briefings for City Council to ask questions, provide feedback, and work with staff to refine draft materials related to proposed public engagement process (survey, fact sheet, presentation). Initial times to meet with staff are: Wed, 6/8/11, 10-11 a.m., 6 th floor conference room and Thurs., 6/9/11, 1:30-2:30 6 th floor conference room. Draft materials will be available for Council viewing on shared drive starting June 7.
June 13-June 21	Two (2) city-wide public meetings (not yet scheduled)
June 13 (noon)	Launch online survey
June 27 (midnight)	Close online survey
July 18	City staff deliver informational presentation to City Council regarding results of public engagement presentation feedback and survey results and staff recommendation on how to proceed. City Council deliberates and indicates desired course of action
August 4	City Council approves ballot language for Street Reconstruction Millage (either in a format similar to previous years or with new language authorizing the inclusion of sidewalk repairs)

(August 15)	(City Council meeting, if requested for additional discussion.)
August 16	Filing deadline in City Clerk's office for ballot language