

GRAVEL STREET RENOVATION POLICY

City of The Dalles

I Introduction

The Dalles maintains a number of rights-of-way within the community that are currently gravel surfaces. These areas typically also lack curb or sidewalks. While multi-frontage relief may be available for some, full right-of-way reconstruction can present a significant financial burden for adjacent property owners who wish to improve their neighborhoods. For some rights-of-way, a minimum to moderate amount of effort by the City and a small to moderate investment by adjacent property owners can result in a right-of-way improvement which enhances the community.

It is the City's desire that, whenever possible, full reconstruction of rights-of-way should occur. This desire is consistent with past practice and recognizes the contribution to the community past reconstruction projects have provided. The City also recognizes the need to begin the process of improvements to neighborhoods which is both reasonable and affordable. In order to accommodate a request to pave an existing gravel-surface right-of-way, the following policy has been developed which will define conditions under which improvements can be conducted.

II Process

The Gravel Street Renovation Policy has been developed as an expeditious and cost effective alternative to the process of forming a Local Improvement District (LID). The improvement of a street or alley under the Gravel Street Renovation Policy requires consent of all property owners who would be financially contributing to the project. The Policy can be used for both citizen-initiated and City-initiated projects. To initiate the process, citizens need only to submit a written request to the City Public Works Department showing the support of all residents along the street proposed to be paved who would be financially contributing to the project (multi-frontage relief may provide a project to some residents without a financial contribution).

For the City to initiate a project under this Policy, it would first complete a design and cost estimate for the proposed improvements. Meetings with affected property owners would then be held to review the project and estimated costs. If the project receives consent from all property owners who would be financially contributing to the project, the project can proceed.

All projects proposed under this Policy will be handled through a site team approach. This process allows multiple agencies to review and comment on the proposal. Thus, the requirements and needs of all affected agencies and utilities can be identified and addressed rather than accidentally missed as could occur without a defined process. The site team process will also provide the opportunity to be consistent in our review process for any improvement being considered.

The criteria to be considered regarding a proposed improvement will include: 1) the length and width of the area to be improved, 2) the number and types of existing structures (curb and sidewalk) within the area, 3) the condition of underground utilities and the resources of the City to upgrade those systems prior to paving, 4) the minimum work to be considered which will improve the area but not result in negative impacts in other locations or unsafe conditions, and 5) a methodology for local residents to either pay for an improvement in its entirety or contribute a reasonable share towards the improvement with allowance for multi-frontage relief for same-kind improvements. The criteria will anticipate that any street improvements to be constructed will be installed consistent with current City development standards to the extent possible with minimal disturbance to existing public and private improvements. At a minimum, improvements will be designed to produce a safe and functional street width depending on the location of the request, the current use or potential use of the street, the right-of-way width available for the improvement to be placed, and topography.

The Department has completed the identification of streets and rights-of-way (ROW) that would fall under this program. The list was gleaned from the work of the RARE planner, Darren Wyss, and information from the 1999 Draft Transportation System Master Plan right-of-way inventory. The list will provide a good starting place for the program but will need to be reviewed to verify the structures in place including underground utilities and to identify any gaps in the information. The following plan outlines the process for identifying locations falling under the program, categorizing each location as to the type of surface treatment to be required, identifying any underground considerations prior to any surface improvements, estimating the time and material costs for the work, and finally, outlining a prioritized list of improvements for consideration.

III Alleys

By and large, alleys within the community are unimproved gravel surfaces. These corridors provide local access to the backs of adjacent properties as well as secondary corridors for foot, bicycle, and vehicular traffic. The City has the following program for the paving of alley ROWs within the community.

In areas where the City can remove an annual grading responsibility, where existing and future drainage problems will not be created or where existing problems can be resolved, where underground utilities are in an acceptable condition, and where the amount of effort to rebuild the existing base surface is minor (2-3 days labor), the City has allowed neighbors adjacent to the alley to set up an account through one of the two asphalt suppliers to pay for the cost of the asphalt and the City then places the material. These alleys are typically one panel of asphalt in width (approximately 12 feet) and are paved in a single pass. This type of program has allowed the City to grade and pave an alley within a two to three day period, from start to finish. No underground work is required. No additional drainage is needed.

IV Unimproved or Gravel Rights-of-way

The majority of gravel surfaces within the community are local street networks. A total of 16,336 feet of gravel streets (approximately 3.1 miles) was identified in the 1999 report. Additional footage has been added through the efforts of Darren Wyss. The locations are attached and show the unimproved or gravel rights-of-way to be considered under the program. These rights-of-way include undeveloped gravel streets with no improvements, gravel streets with partial improvements, and gravel or failed surfaces with little to no improvements. As additional items are identified in the community, they can be categorized and added to the list. Likewise, as surfaces are improved, they can be removed.

Gravel streets typically serve as neighborhood connections. The evaluations which are to be conducted related to these types of streets involve the following types of questions:

1. Are other street-associated improvements (curbs/sidewalks) in place? If not, is the use of the road heavy enough to warrant their placement?
2. Is the road base adequate to prepare the surface for final paving?
3. What is the effective ROW in the area and what will be the ultimate use of the street?
4. Are there any encroachments which will affect the operation of the street?
5. Are there access issues which need to be addressed?
6. With curbs installed, is an underground storm water collection system needed?
7. What is the location of nearest storm line and do catch basins need to be installed?
8. What is the prioritization method if multiple requests are received or a list developed? How does this low use gravel road compare with a failed or poor, higher level of surface chip sealed road?
9. What is the condition of existing underground utilities and do they need to be upgraded prior to paving?
10. Are the existing underground utilities sized to handle the development potential of the area?
11. How does the replacement of these utilities in the area of a request compare with other potentially higher priorities?
12. Are the topographical issues or challenges related to the potential improvement of a gravel street?

Within the context of the overarching concepts outlined above, the following specific issues are to be considered related to the potential paving of an alley or gravel street.

Alleys:

- Is the condition of underground utilities such as to allow for asphalt surfaces to remain uncut for a period of 10 years?
- Will stormwater drainage be adversely impacted by improving the alley surface?
- Can alley accesses and grades be maintained so as not to create an unacceptable ingress/egress condition?
- Does the alley in question present a maintenance challenge annually?

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- Can the work be readily accommodated within a 2 - 3 day window by City forces?

Gravel streets:

- Is the condition of underground utilities such as to allow for asphalt surfaces to remain uncut for a period of 10 years?
- Is an underground storm system available or can surface flow be directed reasonably into collection systems downstream? Will stormwater drainage be adversely significantly affected to alter historic flow patterns in the area?
- Can street accesses and grades be maintained so as not to create an unacceptable ingress/egress condition?
- At a minimum, curbs on both sides of the street shall be installed for any gravel road improvements. Are any curbs existing?
- Does the street function as a corridor for pedestrians traveling to or from schools or commercial centers?
- Are sidewalks present and does pedestrian traffic warrant their consideration?

V Cost Estimates for Projects

Based upon the results of the evaluations completed for each proposed project, City engineering staff will develop a design for the project that outlines the improvements that are proposed to be constructed. That design will then serve as the basis for development of an Engineer's Estimated Cost of Construction. The best information available will be used in the development of the cost estimate for the project and may include:

- Quotes from suppliers and contractors for materials and services
- City experience related to the costs of similar projects that were recently completed
- Cost adjustments for inflation

VI Decision criteria

The following decision paths are presented for consideration when responding to community requests for improvements. The decision path is presented for two areas: alleys and gravel roads. As requests are received and evaluated, there may be a need to blend the two sets of criteria to suit the proposed improvement.

For Alleys: If an asphalt surface can be readily installed (within a 2-3 day window) and will not alter historic storm water flows which will result in a drainage issue, neighbors can set up an account with the local asphalt supplier to pay for the material. The work by City crews will then be scheduled into existing Department priorities and needs. No drainage additions are required. Underground piping is considered to be in good enough condition to last for a period of ten years or greater and is adequate to handle near term development requirements.

For gravel streets: A minimum of curb line placement will be required for all gravel street improvements. Existing sidewalks will be upgraded to provide ADA (wheelchair) ramps. An

evaluation will be completed to determine whether sidewalks and drive approaches should also be installed for pedestrian access and to prevent gravel from driveways spilling out onto the new asphalt surfaces. If sidewalks are not required to be installed, an asphalt pad behind the depressed curb line at the drive approach may be installed until such time as the sidewalk is installed. Storm drainage will need to be accommodated so as not to create flow or drainage problems downstream of the improvement.

VII Project Funding

Projects completed under this Policy will be funded by a partnership between the City and adjacent property owners. The City will provide:

- Engineering services for the design of the improvement and inspections during construction.
- All costs associated with the upgrade of any City-owned underground utilities necessary for the project.
- The labor, equipment, and tools to haul and place asphalt for paving within the ROW.
- Project costs associated with multi-frontage relief.

Property owners adjacent to the street to be paved are responsible to pay the cost of the following project elements, assessed on a frontage foot basis and subject to multi-frontage relief for in-kind improvements:

- All costs associated with concrete or block work including curbs, sidewalks, retaining walls, etc. For each project, the decision will be made whether the property owners or the City hires the contractors.
- Costs associated with the purchase of asphalt for the project.
- The costs of any out-sourced surveying necessary for the project.

The City will offer a payment plan option for property owners who have a financial responsibility under this policy. That plan allows property owners to pay their share of the project over a period of up to 10 years, with an interest rate of 10% per year, and payments due every six months.