

Portland City Council considers new street paving strategies

OUT OF THE MUD

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

The Portland City Council considered new street paving strategies in a work session August 28, and quickly found that not only does one size not fit all, one strategy does not suit the whole city.

The project, originally called Street by Street and later renamed Out of the Mud by Mayor Sam Adams, is looking at more flexible ways to provide some degree of paving for the city's 60 miles of unpaved streets, and especially the 45 miles of small residential streets.

These streets tend to be concentrated in East Portland and the Southwest Hills with smaller concentrations in northeast's Cully and southeast's Brentwood-Darlington and Woodstock neighborhoods, Christine Leon of the Portland Bureau of Transportation told Council.

"We have done tests with streets paved with gravel, and they needed maintenance work a year later," Leon said. "There are complaints about dust from unpaved streets. They don't meet access standards for use by the disabled."

However, Leon said, currently the

City assumes maintenance only for "standard" streets. These are 26 to 28 feet wide and include two travel lanes, two parking lanes seven to eight feet wide, a curb, a planting strip, and a sidewalk at least six feet wide.

These cost an average of \$1,300 to \$1,500 per lineal foot, with a cost to the average property owner of \$70,000 and, under financing currently available, a bill of \$300 per month; the total cost to pave all unimproved streets in this way would be \$1.5 billion, Leon said.

The Bureau of Transportation has been working since 2007 with neighbors and developers "frustrated by the lack of options," Leon said. "There is consensus that doing something is better than doing nothing."

The "something" under consideration includes more flexible standards for streets. For local streets that handle less than 500 vehicle trips per day, this could include streets with pavements only 16 feet wide, no curbs, and gravel shoulders. "People don't park on the street 24/7, and there are other things we can do with the space," Leon said.

One is to plant trees in lieu of parking spaces, narrowing the roadway and causing motorists to drive slower. The cost to property owners could be lowered to as little as \$7,500 apiece, with monthly payments of as



This is an example of one of the many unpaved streets in Southwest Portland. This is located close to 48th Avenue near Woods Park. (Post file photo by Leslie Baird)

little as \$60, Leon said.

Another issue is the way the City deals with developers. They are usually called upon to create standard streets along their frontage. "This results in an orphaned developed street segment that will be orphaned for a very long time," said Leon.

Alternatively, developers can pay a fee toward future street paving. The funds can be used to pave this street, or one where paving is considered a higher priority. The average cost is \$47,000 for a 50-foot frontage,

Leon said. "What we've heard is that given the options, they'd rather build it."

Adams said the City should create incentives to get developers to pay. Commissioner Dan Saltzman disagreed, saying, "Paving would incent other neighbors to follow their example."

Commissioner Nick Fish countered, "If the paving happened piecemeal, it could be very disruptive, and create an enormous amount of

(Continued on Page 6)

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Water work in Hillsdale neighborhood

The **Portland Water Bureau** has begun construction near the Burlingame Water Tank site on SW 10th Avenue, near SW Chestnut Street. Construction will take about 10 months to complete. The work is being done by both a contractor and Water Bureau field crews. Typical work hours will be 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Scheduled to start the week of **October 1, 2012**, crews will install 900 feet of 24-inch diameter mains, which will take about one month to complete. This work will start at SW Chestnut Street and move down SW 10th Avenue to the tanks. Later in the project, more pipe work on SW Chestnut Street will take place, ending near the intersection with SW Burlingame Avenue.

The project will accomplish several important water system goals, including install seismic piping, install altitude valves, and increase the supply mains diameter to meet demand.

Flagger and traffic cones will direct motorists past the work zone. At times, a street may be closed for Local Access Only, and street parking restricted. Delays should be expected. Motorists are encouraged to find alternate routes.

For project updates visit:
portlandoregon.gov/water/swcarolina



Burlingame Tanks

We'd like to meet you!



Please join us for the RIVERDALE Grade School OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, November 7, 2012 - 9:30 - 11:30 am
(Grades 5-8)

Wednesday, November 14, 2012 - 9:30 - 11:30 am
(Grades Preschool-4)

Program begins promptly at 9:30 pm.

Riverdale Grade School provides an exceptional, academically rigorous comprehensive K-8 program. Our engaging faculty, project based learning, integrated arts, and friendly students and parents make this community everything that it is - an exciting energetic place where your child will be challenged intellectually and welcomed for who they are.

RIVERDALE

"Teaching students to be thoughtful in their education,
about each other, and for their community."

503.262.4840 | www.riverdaleschool.com
11733 SW Breyman Ave., Portland, OR 97219