

City Council Agenda Summary Sheet (Non Purchases)

Agenda No: 2004-0599 - Request to uphold the requirement for constructing an eight-foot wide pathway along the westerly side of Crooks Road between Auburn and the Deerfield Elementary School

Date: July 8, 2004

Prepared By: Paul M. Davis, P.E., City Engineer
Department of Public Services; (248) 841-2486

City File No: E03-007B

Meeting Date: July 21, 2004

PURPOSE:

The purpose for this item is to bring closure to a previously discussed option of whether Council supports constructing a six-foot wide pathway along the westerly side of Crooks between Auburn Road and the Deerfield Elementary School.

DISCUSSION:

The Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC) recently informed Rochester Hills that a change in the Detroit Edison utility relocation is necessary. Currently, Detroit Edison owns an aerial utility pole line within the existing road right-of-way along the west side of Crooks between Auburn Road and the Deerfield Elementary School to service customers.

RCOC coordinated with Detroit Edison to relocate their pole line to an underground installation during the preliminary design phase for the Crooks Road reconstruction. It was estimated that the relocation to an underground installation would cost approximately \$2,000,000.00 and that this cost could be reimbursable by the federal funds being made available to the project. A review of the preliminary plans were required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) since 80% of the total project reconstruction project costs will be funded with federal monies. Unfortunately for Detroit Edison and RCOC, the FHWA determined that public monies will not be approved for covering the Detroit Edison utility relocation since their utility is in the Crooks Road right-of-way by permit and not located within a privately owned easement.

After hearing the FHWA decision, Detroit Edison requested to have their utility relocated at the right-of-way line with a special Hendrix-style aerial pole installation. The cost to relocate in this aerial configuration is purported to be significantly less expensive to Detroit Edison than the underground option. The Hendrix-style utility pole utilizes a diamond pattern for hanging the cables on only one side of the pole. The utility pole will be placed right at the existing right-of-way line with the cables held on the roadway side of the poles. The utility pole with a Hendrix-style type conductor and hanger is approximately three feet in diameter at the base. Furthermore, RCOC estimates that the pole spacing will be approximately 150 feet on center. I believe that the poles will be larger diameter and closer together than the existing poles.

RCOC has indicated that they will support the Detroit Edison request to relocate at the right-of-way line in an above ground aerial installation. However, now the utility pole locations require that the previously planned alignment for the pathway needs to change. The City of Rochester Hills requires a three-foot lateral clearance from fixed objects such as utility poles. Pathway installation that was originally planned for a one-foot offset from the right-of-way line will now be offset approximately five to six feet (depending on the diameter of the utility pole at the ground level). This change will move the pathway closer to the back of curb for Crooks road. An eight-foot wide pathway width will be approximately offset from the back of curb by five feet. Thus, the RCOC has asked the City whether we would rather have a six-foot wide pathway constructed to give an additional two feet of greenbelt and offset from the back of curbing of Crooks Road.

Since the Master Plan for City pathways specify eight-foot wide pathways, I felt that any width variance would require an approval by the City Council. The design plans used for the June 24th public hearing on the Crooks Road project at the City of Rochester Hills were based on an assumed eight-foot wide pathway. I do not recall any objections to the pathway width from any homeowners that attended the meeting. Although the overhead pole line may not be as desired as an underground installation, it does serve to further offset the pathway from some of the existing residences that are close to the right-of-way line.

The RCOC has indicated that their standards require a minimum offset of five feet for a pathway or sidewalk from a back of curb. Thus, the proposed eight-foot pathway width will likely conform to the requirements.

It should also be noted that the six-foot pathway option presents at least two future maintenance disadvantages. The City plows snow from the existing pathway system with maintenance monies from the existing pathway millage. The plows are approximately eight feet wide and the plow blade cannot be angled enough on a six-foot wide pathway to prevent turf from being damaged. The City does own one piece of equipment (nicknamed Moonraker) that could clear a narrower six-foot wide pathway width but this item would need to be separately transported to the pathway section each snowfall.

FISCAL INFORMATION:

There is no impact to the annual operating budget for the pathway width decision. Staff impact for the future operations will be negligible.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council **not** support the construction of a six-foot wide pathway section on the westerly side of Crooks between Auburn Road and the Deerfield Elementary School.

ATTACHMENTS:

8-foot wide pathway alternative drawing from RCOC
6-foot wide pathway alternative drawing from RCOC

Department Authorization: Roger H. Rouse

Reviewed by:

Fiscal: *Jean Farris*

Clerks: *Susan Koliba-Galeczka*

Approved by: *Pat Somerville*

RESOLUTION

NEXT AGENDA ITEM

RETURN TO AGENDA