



City Neighborhood Council

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District Councils:

Ballard
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Delridge Neighborhoods
Downtown
First Hill/Capitol Hill/
Madison Park/
Yesler Terrace
Greater Duwamish
Lake Union
Magnolia/Queen Anne
North
Northeast
Northwest
Southeast
Southwest

August 15, 2001

Dear Mayor Schell and Members of the City Council:

With the biennial budget now in preparation, the City Neighborhood Council requests a greater priority for the resurfacing of neighborhood streets than has been shown in recent City spending.

With CNC support, much progress has been made in the last few years in devoting more resources to resurfacing or reconstructing Seattle's arterial streets, which number 1600 lane miles. However, recent budgets have assigned very few funds to resurfacing or reconstructing Seattle's 2400 lane-miles of non-arterial streets. Most of the non-arterial resurfacing funds (\$795,000) go into chip-seal surfaces rather than into regular asphalt or concrete non-arterial streets. The resurfacing funds going into asphalt (\$235,000) and concrete (\$249,000) non-arterial streets are being spent almost exclusively on the few non-arterial streets that have any Metro bus traffic.

Non-arterial streets are important to Seattle's total transportation network. They are extensively used (sometimes on high-speed emergencies) by fire and police department vehicles and ambulances. Other important public services are carried out on non-arterial streets by school buses, dial-a-ride vans, and trucks that pick up trash and recycling and clean out storm drains. With more in-fill development, construction traffic on these streets has greatly increased. Delivery trucks and vans are also important users of non-arterial streets. The few lane-miles of non-arterial streets that are used by Metro buses are not necessarily those that receive heavy use from the other purposes just listed.

Seattle's increases in population density and in employment and retail activity have increased the demands on our non-arterial streets, and have also increased the rate at which these streets are wearing out. Research by the federal government and by SEATRAN indicates that just one heavy truck, bus, or other heavy vehicle will do as much damage as thousands of cars. The Washington State Department of Transportation judges that solid waste collection trucks do more damage to streets than any other class of vehicle.

Seattle began its recent progress in resurfacing or rebuilding arterial streets when in the early 1990s a citywide survey was conducted that assigned each arterial segment into one of the following categories: excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, very poor, and fail. However, this survey was done only for the City's arterial streets, leaving unsurveyed the non-arterial streets, which are more extensive. This lack of knowledge should be rectified.

Non-arterial streets are just as subject as arterial streets to the need for preventive maintenance. The analysis of pavement management on SEATRAN's web site states the principle clearly: "The best maintenance practice is to resurface a street when it is still in Good or Fair condition. Engineers recommend resurfacing asphalt streets every 15 to 20

years, depending on the amount and type of traffic using the street. If a street is not properly maintained and it deteriorates until it is rated Poor or Failed, more costly repairs are needed to the subgrade of the street. The damage could be so extensive that the street can't be resurfaced, and needs to be totally reconstructed."

In the interest of spending the taxpayers' dollars wisely, it is important for the City to act now to prevent non-arterial streets that are in need of resurfacing from deteriorating to the point of needing more expensive reconstruction. We suggest that the City immediately conduct a pavement condition survey and develop a priority list for resurfacing projects similar to the priority list which has been so successful in arterial resurfacing. This letter was authorized at the July 30 meeting of the City Neighborhood Council.

Sincerely,

Charlie Cunniff (by sb)

Charlie Cunniff
Chair
City Neighborhood Council