

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF NOVI
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 1997 - 6:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NOVI CIVIC CENTER - 45175 W. TEN MILE ROAD**

Councilman Mitzel called the meeting to order at 6:37 P.M.

ROLL CALL: Mayor McLallen (arrived 6:39 p.m.), Mayor Pro Tem Crawford (absent/excused), Council Members Clark, Kramer, Mitzel, Mutch, Schmid (absent/excused)

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Ed Kriewall

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - None

PURPOSE OF SPECIAL MEETING: Sidewalk Connection Program

Mayor McLallen stated the goal is to determine design standards, arriving at some cost determinations and the feasibility of putting this issue on the November ballot.

Sidewalk Connection Program - Councilman Mitzel

A. Revision to Design and Construction Standards

Councilman Mitzel stated the first component is a report from the Ordinance Review Committee. He advised he was not a part of the committee, but noted that the Mayor and Councilwoman Mutch were on the committee and attended many of the meetings.

Councilman Mitzel advised Council must consider the design and construction standards of the safety paths. He explained they must decide the width, the material and whether they should make any changes to existing projects. Councilman Mitzel stated they currently require eight foot asphalt along the major roads as shown on the Parks and Recreation Safety Path Master Plan, and noted those paths are scattered throughout the city. Further, he advised they require five foot concrete sidewalks along all the other major roads and on the opposite sides of the roads where the safety paths are. He added that the current standards allow for meandering of these pathways to accommodate natural features.

Councilman Mitzel advised that the Ordinance Review Committee proposed that this be changed to eight feet wide on both sides of all the major roads and within that report, the consultants recommended eight foot wide asphalt on both sides based upon a life cycle cost analysis. Councilman Mitzel believes an eight foot path will provide less conflicts when they have a greater number of users, they will be easier to maintain and it will accommodate more variety of users (i.e., in-line skating, running, jogging, walking, biking, strollers and so forth).

Councilman Mitzel stated the cost analysis indicated that a the total 20 year life cycle of eight feet of asphalt is approximately \$160K compared with \$220K per mile for eight feet of concrete. He added that would include the typical construction and maintenance cost. He noted there may be areas where construction may be more expensive (i.e., wetland areas).

Councilman Mitzel believes the main material issue tends to be about aesthetics in terms of the appearance between asphalt and concrete. Other issues are: asphalt can become rutted whereas concrete blocks can shift; asphalt is a softer material and better suited for runners; concrete has joints whereas asphalt can become patched.

Councilman Mitzel advised Council has the opportunity to reach a consensus on width (consultant recommendation is eight feet), a consensus on material (staff recommendation is asphalt) and they also need to discuss boardwalks to provide direction to staff to make those standards. If there is a consensus to make any changes from current ordinances, then Council must direct staff to change ordinances and standards for formal adoption by Council. Councilman Mitzel brought this forward because it directly impacts the Connection Program which is the next item on the agenda.

Mayor McLallen stated although this has been a long term issue in the community, they have never had as massive a gathering of information to put it forward. The Mayor added that the goal of the city had always been to have the development community construct the sidewalks or safety paths. Mayor McLallen stated although that has happened in many areas, the problem is currently with those areas that it has not happened. She explained there are areas that currently have the highest population or the most significant destination where people are still using the streets or coming across grass and dirt. Mayor McLallen believes the only way connections are going to be made is if the city embraces a city wide program. The Mayor stated although this commitment has some significant financial impacts, it may be a choice the residents want to make.

Mayor McLallen understands there are three basic issues: material, width and boardwalks.

Mr. Kriewall believes the eight foot width may not be feasible in areas where there are subdivisions. He explained eight feet is two thirds of a highway lane and providing grading to accommodate the placement would be necessary. Therefore, the impact for an eight foot lane will probably be almost fifteen feet. Mr. Kriewall would like to stress design and width flexibility for areas like the Nine Mile and Taft area. He explained unless they build the laneage up to the back of the curb in that area, fitting an eight foot path there would not be possible. He added if they do not reduce the width, the impact to the neighborhood will be substantial. Mr. Kriewall added he does not believe eight foot paths will be a problem in the open undeveloped areas, but he restated they will be a problem in a built up area.

Councilman Mitzel reminded Council the current flexibility in the ordinance will remain.

Councilwoman Mutch stated the ordinance currently has certain standards and she does not know if they analyzed it to that detail. She believes a compromise would be to adopt this as a new standard, but still allow for the application of flexibility.

Councilman Clark supports the concept, but he views this plan in the same way he views the nature trails. He explained a lot of staff time, resources and energy were spent on the nature trails and that the homeowners opposed them because they did not want them in their back yards. He said before they consider the details, they should ask themselves if the city can afford this. Further, he noted the estimated \$500,000 for maintenance is in today's dollars. Councilman Clark believes once they assume it is built out, they will be spending double that amount to maintain it. Councilman Clark added he is an avid walker and he can count on one hand an average number of people that he will pass walking or jogging. He believes the people in this community and Northville still travel by automobile and not on foot. He further believes the question is whether it is practical and can they afford it; he does not believe they can. He explained they are increasing financial obligations in this community at an alarming rate and asked how are they going to fund these things in the future. Further, he cited an asphalt area at Taft and Ten Mile Road near the Addington Subdivision that is in serious need of maintenance. He explained if the city cannot maintain what they currently have, he asked where do they think they will get money for future maintenance.

Councilman Mitzel believes the projection for constructing the safety paths stated if the city were to construct the paths as opposed to a developer, the cost would be \$60M. Councilman Mitzel noted his point is that they already require sidewalks and safety paths on all sides of all major roads.

Councilman Clark wondered if he missed the tenor of the report. He understood it to mean that they should move forward and do it all. Councilman Mitzel disagreed and explained there are two parts to the report. He explained the Connection Program was to try to connect areas that they have already developed. The other report asks whether they should keep the existing standard or change the standard for those areas that are undeveloped. He explained when they finally connect the paths, the usage tends to be higher than what they see because there are currently small segments that do not lead anywhere. He added eight foot paths tend to accommodate a greater variety of uses better than a five foot sidewalk. In addition, because there are areas where it is not clear whether eight or five feet is required, they are getting five foot paths next to eight foot paths. He said the intent was that they could make it uniform with an eight foot standard.

Councilman Clark does not disagree, but he is concerned about the maintenance cost. As of right now, Councilman Mitzel stated the city is going to incur that maintenance cost

unless they are willing to change the ordinance to say that no sidewalks be built. He explained they already have that issue and agrees that the material will actually impact the maintenance cost somewhat. However, he added the overall general burden of the maintenance cost is going to be present with the existing standard and the way they have been doing business for the last ten years is as it would be if they changed the standard here. He believes they have not had much pressure to maintain these because the current paths are small scattered segments and people have not been able to use them. In addition, he believes that does not seem to be an issue that stops them from building roads when they have bonds to build new roads and they have to eventually maintain those roads. He believes Councilman Clark is correct in saying that the more safety paths, the more maintenance will be required.

Councilman Clark agreed and that is why he cited the asphalt area near Addington because those areas will also increase the city's liability if someone is hurt on those paths. He believes unless they are willing to make a substantial financial commitment for maintenance, they will face problems in the future in terms of litigation.

Councilman Kramer asked if a major road is the same as an arterial road. Councilman Mitzel agreed.

Councilman Kramer asked if the five foot paths would be for internal subdivision streets and collector roadways. Councilman Mitzel agreed and added they did not discuss any changes for internal subdivisions.

Councilman Kramer believes the increase to eight feet on the major roads is appropriate because not only are they used for walking, but they are also used for biking. Further, Councilman Kramer supports asphalt as the material for the paths because he understands asphalt roads tend to be somewhat continuous whereas concrete has discontinuities.

Councilwoman Mutch advised they noted in Ordinance Review that the construction standards for asphalt are higher than what they were when some of the paths were first constructed.

Mayor McLallen would like to move forward on the initial issues because having a non-motorized transportation plan is no longer an issue. She explained the initiative before them is a plan to make it more effective and usable.

Mayor McLallen advised there is a Council consensus to use asphalt as the material for the new standards because it is more advantageous in terms of cost, design and maintenance.

Mayor McLallen suggested that they work on the language for flexibility in the width for appropriate areas.

Councilman Mitzel believes that could be addressed by trying to write the language or they could just have an eight foot standard all the way to the curb if necessary and allow for variances. Councilman Mitzel believes that writing language that would encompass the many different cases is difficult.

Mayor McLallen believes the language should essentially say that in those areas where there are conditions that require a variance, they can grant the variance provided they meet certain realistic standards.

Councilman Mitzel believes Council can give staff the direction to prepare that.

Mayor McLallen advised there is a Council consensus to have an eight foot standard with flexibility.

Mayor McLallen stated another issue that needs to be addressed is the construction of boardwalks in wetland areas. She believes the attorney's and engineers can develop appropriate language for that issue.

Councilman Mitzel believes that they will address this issue in the eight foot with flexibility language.

Mayor McLallen believes the language also needs to be incorporated into the current ordinance.

Councilman Kramer asked if that would also be incorporated into the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Councilman Mitzel advised the ordinance would no longer refer to that plan if they adopt a uniform eight foot asphalt path with flexibility in all areas.

CM-97-08-277: Moved by Mutch, Seconded by Kramer, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY: To revise the Design and Construction Standards to require eight foot asphalt on both sides of arterials with the flexibility to allow for boardwalks in appropriate areas and direct staff to make the necessary changes for conformity within the ordinance

**Vote on CM-97-08-277: Yeas: McLallen, Clark, Kramer, Mitzel, Mutch
Nay: None**

Councilman Mitzel asked if there is a possibility for Administration to implement the new standards for all the projects that they have approved, but have not begun construction.

Mayor McLallen noted that the representatives from JCK do not have a problem implementing Councilman Mitzel's request.

B. Connection Program

Councilman Mitzel advised this is a proposal for Council consideration of connecting certain areas within the city. Councilman Mitzel provided a slide presentation and explained the highlights of the program is that it be a proposed \$5.5M bond issue for the fall of 1997. He added they would construct approximately 21 miles of asphalt pathways to connect schools, parks, commercial centers, and neighborhoods. Councilman Mitzel stated the paths are proposed to be concentrated in areas where development will not construct future projects. Councilman Mitzel described the areas depicted on the city map road system. He explained the red is park land, the green is concentrated commercial areas and the blue is school sites. He noted motorists can get anywhere in Novi by roads.

Councilman Mitzel then displayed a general schematic of JCK's analysis found in their report. He explained the circles show where there are schools and shopping areas. From this, Councilman Mitzel said they determined that the yellow depicts areas that are more developed and are more concentrated that are considered to be destinations. He added they are also already developed areas where the city would have to retrofit the system. He added the blue are additional areas that are going to be driven by development and construction.

Councilman Mitzel advised the next slide is a general schematic of where sidewalks currently exist. He reported one of the longer segments travels from Eleven Mile to Eight Mile with one gap. Further, there are other sections of approximately one mile on parts of Ten Mile, parts of Novi Road, and from Fourteen Mile to Twelve Mile. Councilman Mitzel noted that the gray area, which includes the Taft Road extension, West Road, Meadowbrook Road and Thirteen Mile Road will be built as a part of the road project. He then pointed out various path gaps.

Councilman Mitzel reported that the Connection Program they have developed would provide a north to south connection on the east side of the city on the entire length of Meadowbrook Road; it would also provide a circuit around the Village Oaks area; it would provide a connection along Nine Mile from Haggerty to Novi Road then use existing sidewalks along Novi and fill the gaps to provide a connection to the school sites. He then pointed out that they would fill several other existing gaps with private development along Section 28. Except for the Sports Park on Napier Road, Councilman Mitzel advised that it would be possible to go anywhere in the city by traveling on this system.

Councilman Mitzel displayed a slide entitled, Connection Segment Detail that summarized a list of areas in the packet. They are:

- ▶ Thirteen Mile Road - Novi Road to Meadowbrook Road on the north side
- ▶ Meadowbrook Road - Eight Mile Road to Ten Mile Road on both sides
- ▶ Ten Mile Road to Twelve Mile Road on the west side
- ▶ Nine Mile Road - Haggerty to Novi Road on both sides
- ▶ Novi Road - Nine Mile Road to Ten Mile Road fills in only the gaps on the east side with 5 foot sidewalks (they proposed that road for widening)
- ▶ Novi Road - Grand River Avenue to Twelve Mile Road both sides
- ▶ Eleven Mile Road to Clark Street to Beck Road on the south
- ▶ Eleven Mile to Beck Road to Wixom Road on the south
- ▶ Ten Mile Road to Novi Road to Orchard Ridge on the south
- ▶ Various others: For example: *Pontiac Trail
*Old Novi Road

Councilman Mitzel explained the intent is also to have some funds set aside for connections that they have not yet identified, but may come forth in the next two years. Councilman Mitzel advised the requested Council action is to finalize the cost and develop ballot language for the August 25, 1997 agenda.

Councilman Kramer stated they have a letter before them dated August 8 and asked if the update is a cost estimate to bring the project total to \$8.4M instead of \$5.5M? Councilman Mitzel replied he neglected to cover that in his presentation. He explained the listing provided by JCK included a pedestrian overpass over I-96 for \$1.2M. He added that they did not include that in their proposal because it would be too expensive and it is possible as the program develops that there may be a better site to cross than right at Novi Road. Further, it is also possible that there should be a shorter bridge length that would be less expensive and they can probably qualify for a grant. It is Councilman Mitzel's understanding that Farmington Hills crossed at Farmington Road with a grant application for approximately \$600,000. Councilman Mitzel added that the figures reflect the concrete costs as opposed asphalt. Not knowing which way the standard would go, Councilman Mitzel explained he adjusted those figures based on 35% less construction costs for asphalt and that is why he thinks it would be important for staff to finalize those figures.

Councilman Kramer does not support the initiative for Meadowbrook Road, Eight Mile to Twelve Mile Roads. He believes this is a very sensitive area and that it is an area where children and bicyclists travel on the narrow shoulder. He added it is also an area where the houses have little setback. Councilman Kramer would support an initiative if they offered a different design. He suggested that they convert the road to curb and gutter, fill the drainage ditch and construct the sidewalk where the drainage ditch is. In that way, the sidewalk does not end up in the front yards.

Councilman Mitzel believes that issue mainly applies to the area between Nine and Ten Mile Roads. Councilman Kramer agreed.

Councilman Kramer added he would not support pedestrian access on Novi Road from Grand River Avenue to Twelve Mile Road because he believes encouraging pedestrian traffic in a commercial area is wrong.

Councilman Kramer supports the various miscellaneous connections. He added that although he has comments about three major areas, he supports the concept and added that he believes it is appropriate to let the voters voice an opinion about whether they want to spend their money on this.

Councilwoman Mutch believes the Meadowbrook Road area so frequently traveled that is it unsafe. She added if she were a homeowner on Meadowbrook Road she would appreciate a better definition of the use of the public right-of-way.

Councilman Kramer added that the traditional low speed limit on Meadowbrook Road would work well with the curb and gutter plan.

Councilman Clark asked if the \$5.5 bond equates to approximately 21 miles. Councilman Mitzel believes that number is accurate.

Councilman Clark asked if that would be the sum and substance of what they would be asking the taxpayers to approve or will they have to ask for additional mills later. Councilman Mitzel replied they asked themselves what they should be looking for and they thought that filling the areas where the city has to construct the paths would be best so that they do not have to bring this back to the voters. He believes this request will provide the main connections in the developed areas and private development will put in paths for those sections that are under development. Councilman Mitzel believes there will be some gaps (i.e., Nine Mile Road between Taft and Novi Road), but he also believes they can make connections elsewhere (traveling on Novi Road to Ten Mile Road). He added that they believe they included the critical connections and if any other projects would be done in the future that they could handle them as small items for grants, but not as major bond issues.

Councilwoman Mutch added those areas that are not green on the schematic are areas to be developed or are currently developed in large enough lots that the demand is probably different. She explained because the density is less, the traffic would be less and therefore, it is less of a hazard. She believes the undeveloped areas will take care of themselves because as development takes place, the developer has the cost, not the city.

As Mr. Kriewall mentioned, Councilman Mitzel added they have begun the practice of addressing these facilities along with the road construction.

**CM-97-08-278: Moved by Mutch, Seconded by Mitzel, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY:
To direct staff to determine the cost for the safety path connection program, taking into consideration the particular design on Meadowbrook Road between Nine and Ten Mile Roads and develop appropriate language for the November ballot by August 25, 1997**

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

As an option, Councilman Mitzel believes they should bring back the cost figure for curb and gutter for the section of Meadowbrook Road between Nine and Ten Mile Roads.

Mayor McLallen added that she supports Councilman Kramer's position in the mall area.

Councilman Mitzel noted that they currently have a sidewalk on Twelve Mile Road that the residents on the north end use the path. Mayor McLallen suggested that they continue to review the pedestrian issue in the mall area.

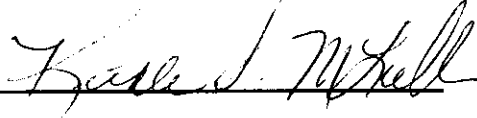
Councilwoman Mutch believes they should keep in mind this is a part of the city's overall public transportation system and that there may be areas where an alternative form of public transportation might be appropriate in a particular area even though it may have originated privately and the private sector would be the greatest beneficiary. She believes they can accomplish this with some other less intensive connection for those who wish to get to an area as described by Councilman Mitzel. She reminded Council that people use it now anyway.

Councilman Kramer stated he would have difficulty supporting that because he believes it is an unsafe area to encourage anybody to walk. Councilwoman Mutch agrees, but noted they are using it now.

**Vote on CM-97-08-278: Yeas: McLallen, Clark, Kramer, Mitzel, Mutch
Nay: None**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 P.M.



Mayor



City Clerk

Transcribed by Barbara Holmes

Date Approved: August 25, 1997