



## Oak Street Improvement Project FAQ's

### **Is there an opportunity for me to get involved in the process/discussion?**

Yes, please contact: Matt Eggen, City Engineer at 970-871-8273 or [meggen@steamboatsprings.net](mailto:meggen@steamboatsprings.net)

### **Why is the City moving forward with Oak Street sidewalk improvements?**

In an effort to improve safety, mobility, connectivity, and economic vitality, the plan to invest in downtown infrastructure has been a vision for the Community of Steamboat Springs dating back to the 1970's. **The Steamboat Springs Mobility and Circulation Plan** (developed in 1997) advocates a multimodal approach to improving mobility in Steamboat Springs, and states that: "*...the cornerstone ...is pedestrian facility improvements. Virtually all trips begin and end as pedestrian trips, and it is the intent of this Plan to encourage and allow more trips to be completed as pedestrian trips in their entirety. Part of the decision to make a trip as a pedestrian (and to leave one's automobile parked) is governed by the proximity of the destination and the availability of safe and convenient facilities...*"

City Council has to fund improvements within the downtown urban core of Steamboat Springs. Council has directed staff to move forward with projects for Oak and Yampa streets beginning in spring 2016.

### **How will sidewalks improve safety?**

The City of Steamboat Springs is committed to improving pedestrian **safety** for all residents and visitors. By separating pedestrians from the travel lanes, safety will be improved for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), "*Roadways without sidewalks are more than twice as likely to have pedestrian crashes as sites with sidewalks on both sides of the street.*" In addition the FHWA states, "*Accessible sidewalks or pathways should be provided and maintained along both sides of streets and highways in urban areas, particularly near school zones and transit locations, and where there is frequent pedestrian activity.*"

### **How will this project improve connectivity and mobility?**

With mixed land uses and consistent traffic volumes, Oak Street is considered a major collector roadway. This designation refers to streets that assemble traffic from the interior of an urban area and deliver it to the closest arterial street. These streets provide for both mobility and land access to properties. Sidewalks and connectivity improvements are vital to the function and accessibility of collector streets.

### **What gives City Council the authority to implement this improvement project?**

Authority - **Municipal Code Section 20-34** - Whenever the city council by ordinance determines that any sidewalk should be constructed, reconstructed or repaired, the council may order that the sidewalk be constructed, reconstructed or repaired by the owners of the property fronting on the sidewalk.

## **Who has been involved with the design of these improvements?**

For decades now, residents, business owners, and City representatives have recognized the need for improved safety, connectivity, and walkability in our downtown core. In 1997, the Steamboat Springs Mobility and Circulation Plan advocated a multi-model approach to improving mobility in Steamboat Springs. Furthermore, In 1999 The Mountain Town Sub-Area plan identified downtown Steamboat Springs as lacking a safe, high-quality pedestrian environment. In 2006, the Steamboat Springs Sidewalk Master Plan was developed to provide guidelines for pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist facility improvements. One of the primary recommendations of these community plans included sidewalks and on-street bike lanes for Oak Street. These improvements have been supported by the Area community plan which identified the community's desire for increased investment in our core downtown. In a collaborative effort with The City of Steamboat Springs, the citizens of Steamboat Springs, and the Steamboat Springs Mainstreet Group, the Britina Design Group produced the Downtown Design Guidelines in 2009. Finally, the Vision 2020 included involvement from community members and City officials within Routt County and recommended the following: "Create a multimodal transportation system of corridors, highways and pathways that will relieve congestion and move people throughout the Yampa Valley in an efficient, environmentally sound, affordable and appealing manner."

## **What is the scope of work for the improvements project?**

The Oak Street project has been designed to include drainage, landscaping, and sidewalk improvements. Curb and gutter will be installed along Oak with additional storm sewer and drainage upgrades. Between the curb and gutter and sidewalk, we plan to install a landscaped buffer zone to increase pedestrian safety and to provide a separation between motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The sidewalk will be a 6 foot wide standard concrete walkway. Finally, there will be some asphalt patch work in order to complete the project scope of work.

## **Who will be responsible for the cost of these improvements?**

The Steamboat Springs City Council has committed significant funding for completing improvement projects downtown. Property owners will be responsible for a cost share approach on only the sidewalk scope of work. Property owners will be responsible for 75% of the sidewalk cost, while the City will cover the remaining 25%. The cost to property owners will be interest free, and can be paid back over 5 years through annual property tax assessments. The City will cover all construction costs relative to drainage improvements, asphalt work, lighting, and landscaping.

## **Who is responsible for maintaining sidewalks?**

Sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the owner or occupant of the property.

**Municipal Code Section 20-5.(a)** - *Generally. The owner, occupant or agent of the owner of any building, property or vacant lot is required to maintain the sidewalks, the parking area and the curbs (the area from the property line to the gutter) adjoining the building, property or vacant lot in a clean condition and to remove snow and ice from adjoining sidewalks immediately after every snowfall. The snow removal shall occur on at least a daily basis during the time period from November 20 through April 15 of each year.*

## Who is responsible for future repairs or replacement?

Following the warranty period for the new construction improvements, property owners or occupants will be responsible for repairs and replacement, if necessary.

**Municipal Code Section 20-33.(a)** - *All sidewalks in the city shall be constructed, reconstructed and kept in repair by the owners of property fronting upon the sidewalks, at their own expense. If the city manager finds that any portion of a sidewalk does not meet the following standards, upon inspection prior to August 1 of each year, the manager may require that the owner of the sidewalk or property adjacent to the sidewalk repair or replace the non-complying portion to bring it into conformity with any city standards:*

## Are there liabilities associated with the sidewalk improvements?

Property owners and/or occupants will be responsible for adequately maintaining sidewalks, and completing required repairs when necessary. In the event of personal injury on the sidewalk, property owners are responsible for civil liability.

**Municipal Code Section 20-5, (c)** - *Civil liability imposed. Any person who controls, owns or occupies property that abuts or adjoins any sidewalk, parking area and curbs (the area from the property line to the gutter) open to the public owes a duty to all persons using such sidewalk, parking area and curbs to comply with the provisions of [section 20-5](#). Any person injured by the breach of such duty shall have a cause of action for damages against the person who failed to comply with such duty, it being the express intent of this paragraph (c) to impose civil liability on private property owners for injuries incurred on public sidewalks, parking areas and curbs within the city as a result of a failure by any such private property owner to comply with [section 20-5](#).*

## What is the timeline for this improvement project, and how can I participate in the process?

City Council has held scheduled hearings to discuss the proposed ordinance relative to the Downtown Improvement projects. The City will send letters to all property owners and city staff will be available for one on one meetings to identify site specific details, challenges, and opportunities for design and construction. It is the City's goal to encourage a partnership between the City, property owner, occupant, engineer, and the construction team. Construction is planned to begin during the 2016 construction season.

## What are some of the details of the design developed by Britina Design Group?

In addition to sidewalk installation, the downtown design guidelines (completed by the Britina Design Group), include drainage and landscape improvements. The project will allow for storm sewer and curb and gutter connectivity, as well as a setback sidewalk with a landscaped buffer zone.

## Will this project impact my trees and landscaping?

Through the design process we will work with property owners to minimize impacts to landscaping. There will be opportunities to discuss individual property details and challenges. The scope of work will include additional trees and landscaping, where necessary.