

The Year Ahead

By Dave Earling

Happy New Year! I hope you had a good holiday season. It is a time during which we have an opportunity to pause, reflect and re-energize. Hopefully you had time to visit family and friends. I spent Christmas visiting my daughter in Arizona.

Over the coming weeks, I thought it would be good to bring you up-to-date on important projects and new programs the city will be undertaking this year. At times you may see a column from me, from one of the City's Directors, or from a guest columnist who is in charge of a project or program.

My first column will focus on a challenge we are all aware of, the sadly deteriorated condition of our streets.

As many of you know, five years ago because of the recession, the council decided money traditionally used to repave our streets should be shifted to balance the general fund budget. I believe the decision at the time was intended to be a one year decision, assuming the downturn in the economy would turn upward and the repaving program could be implemented a year later; Of course the economic downturn worsened and the recovery began only last year.....five years later.

As part of my budget, I proposed we begin the street resurfacing program anew, allocating \$1.2 Million for the program. The council agreed, and so for the first time in five years you will see various streets around town being resurfaced. \$1.2 million may seem like a large amount of money, but that amount of money (or more) will be needed over each of the next five years to begin to catch up. Unless we find a new source of funding, on a year-by-year basis, we will have to decide the amount of dollars to be allocated for this purpose.

We all know of streets which need to be addressed FIRST!! Truth is, there are many streets which need to be addressed FIRST, but that simply cannot be done! Staff is working on a prioritized list which will be the basis of this program. We will use two methods of resurfacing; overlay and chip-seal. Overlaying will be used on busier streets and chip-seal will be used on neighborhood streets. Chip-seal is a little less expensive and works well on less traveled streets.

One closing piece of information regarding our streets, some of them are in bad enough disrepair that we cannot just overlay or chip seal them. If the sub-surface has failed, the entire street must be torn out and rebuilt – obviously a much larger and costlier effort! Situations like that will drain the \$1.2 million more quickly.

While we will all have to endure the inconvenience of this work as it begins, in the end we will all benefit when it is completed.

On other fronts, over the next couple of years, Edmonds will see major changes as Swedish-Edmonds begins an extensive expansion. Initial improvements will include a new parking garage, followed quickly by a two-story 77,000 square foot expansion of their medical facilities to include a new emergency care center. I will invite Swedish Chief Executive David Jaffe to author a column in the coming weeks to explain this major undertaking.

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And in waterfront news, the Port of Edmonds has secured a long lease with major tenant Jacobsen Marine. A long-time icon of Ballard, and more recently West Seattle, Jacobsen Marine will provide considerable improvements in the delivery of complete marine services. I will invite Bob McChesney, Port CEO, to author a column describing the benefits and improvements Jacobsen will bring to Edmonds and the Port.

Stay tuned as we bring you more information in the weeks ahead... we hope it is helpful to you!