

Municipal Moments – Week 1



03/19/2017 - The City of Kerrville conducted a community wide survey of citizens at the end of last year and has received some very valuable data as a result. Residents were asked to evaluate a number of city services and the overall quality of life here in Kerrville. The responses we received indicate the City of Kerrville is excelling in a number of areas, but as with anything, there are also several areas where we can improve.

Through this weekly column, I hope to address the areas of concern those survey results highlighted, and keep you up to date on some of our newest initiatives. For this first column, I will focus on one area that seems to be of particular interest to our residents: city streets and their condition.

Before I delve into the specifics of our current street maintenance program, I think it's important to note that many of the major roadways in Kerrville and Kerr County (i.e. Junction Highway, Sidney Baker St. and Thompson Dr.) are owned and maintained by TxDOT, which has its own repair timeline and priorities. The city works closely with our local TxDOT partners on the regular maintenance of these roadways, but they are not within the city's direct control.

With regard to the streets the city does control and maintain, in 2015, the city hired Fugro Roadware, Inc., an independent third party firm, to objectively assess the condition of each one of the city's streets. Fugro's Automatic Road Analyzer vehicle (ARAN) was used to scientifically collect roadway distress information for all 170 miles of the local road network. The ARAN system uses high resolution cameras and other sensors to scan and detect changes in road structure, including material thickness, changes in material and changes in material conditions (potholes, 'alligator cracking,' ruts, etc.). Based on this data, the company was able to definitively rank all the streets in town, block by block, from the worst condition to the best. Each street section is then assigned a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) grade, from 1 to 100, with 100 being the best. Any street with a PCI above 70 is considered to be in good or very good condition.



Fugro submitted their findings to the City in February 2016 and the City Council subsequently authorized a five year street maintenance and repair priority schedule, along with enhanced funding for these repairs, including \$778,000 in Fiscal Year 2015; \$1,106,000 in Fiscal Year 2016; \$1,250,000 in Fiscal Year 2017; and \$1,250,000 in Fiscal Year 2018.

Overall the City Council has authorized a 60 percent increase in annual roadway maintenance funding to help improve the quality of locally maintained streets and preserve their condition in hopes of avoiding costly rebuilds in the future.

The City Council's goal is to have 62% Kerrville's streets rank 70 PCI or better by 2020, and 74% of Kerrville's roads rank 70 PCI or better by 2025. The city's current street maintenance program and a projected schedule of maintenance and repairs for the year can be found on the city's website, at <http://kerrvilletx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/25186>.



When discussing the condition of our roads and street maintenance there is another important factor to consider: storm water drainage. Nearly two-thirds of the city streets identified in response to a recent KDT question of the week, "What is Kerr County's worst roadway?" have underlying storm drainage issues. They are all roadways which convey a significant amount of storm water when our community gets rain. Unfortunately, Kerrville does not have an adequate system of underground drainage infrastructure like many other communities. Instead,

Kerrville's founders designed the city's infrastructure in a way that directs storm water drainage down city streets, which can often cause travel issues during storms and certainly damages the roadway surface in the process.

The city has experienced difficulty funding large-scale drainage projects in the past because flooding in our community is usually short lived. It's often hard to justify spending millions of dollars to fix a few hours. The bigger issue is the damage flooding causes to our local roads.

Staff and Council will be discussing this issue and alternative ways to correct it during budget deliberations. Drainage will also be a component of a new Comprehensive Plan, which will be undertaken in the near future.

- Don Davis
Interim City Manager, Kerrville