

City prepares to move ahead with reconstruction project

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Five neighborhoods to receive new sidewalks, curbs

Staff from the City of Gallup and DePauli Engineering and Surveying held a neighborhood meeting Sept. 16 in which they addressed questions and comments about the Whole Block Reconstruction Project.

During the meeting, Gallup Public Works Director Stanley Henderson, said the current project in District 3 is the second part of the overall projection, and indicates five neighborhoods.

The Dist. 3 reconstruction includes Linda Drive and Nizhoni Boulevard, stretching between Sophie Avenue and Red Rock Drive. The project consists of removing soil, concrete, and landscape, and installing new curbs, gutters, and ADA-compliant sidewalks, according to a flyer from the City of Gallup.

Henderson said the project has been in development for about five years now, and the current phase, including research and design and then construction, cost about \$1.6 million.

The Whole Block Reconstruction Project started in 2016, and each leg of the project received one year of planning time, followed by one year of construction time.

“We bring our recommendations to the city council based on the [project] budget and the council selects the areas for construction,” Henderson said.

The neighborhoods selected by the city council are ones that tend to have schools in them, Henderson explained.

“That’s where the kids are, those streets have no existing sidewalks,” he said.

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A resident of Linda Drive, Chelsea Kettering, attended the meeting to ask the city staff about the public drainage easement that would address concerns about flooding nearby homes.

Kettering explained that one of her neighbors damaged a drainage pipe while performing maintenance work in his yard. He did not ask permission from the city to make any changes to the pipe prior to the incident. After that happened, Kettering told city staff, that the City of Gallup had marked it for private maintenance and was refusing to maintain it.

The reconstruction project means the city would go back to maintaining the drainage system in the neighborhood.

“We are excited to have sidewalks because we want the water to be drained [from Linda Drive] properly,” Kettering said.

Ed Gonzales, of DePauli Engineering and Surveying, said the plan layout should get water in the street flowing from Nizhoni Boulevard to the drainage on Linda Drive. As is, the street water on Nizhoni still creates a hazard for drivers, he added.

“If there is funding available, we can [extend it],” Gonzales said when asked if there are plans to expand on the drainage route.

Gonzales also voiced his appreciation for the work done by the city council on the project.

“They are getting us enough money to make a difference in these neighborhoods,” he said.

The second leg of the Whole Block Reconstruction Project is slated to start Sept. 27, and is scheduled to be finished in about 26 days, Gonzales said.

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As far as road closures are concerned, Gonzales said the plan is to keep one lane open for traffic.

Henderson said the road issues in local neighborhoods have created a lot of inconveniences in the past, but after completing the first leg of the project, he said the city has heard nothing but praise about neighborhood road conditions.

“It’s now just a matter of getting to that point with other neighborhoods,” Henderson said.

Dist. 3 Councilor Yogash Kumar said he had been pushing for a project like this for a long time, when the city had to rebuild sidewalks one section at a time, depending on their budget.

“The Whole Block Reconstruction Project is more cost effective [than rebuilding one section] and it looks better at the end of the day,” Kumar said.

Kettering also voiced her appreciation for what the city is prepared to do with the project.

“I’m really thankful for the work that you are pushing to get this done,” she said. “My family dreamed of having sidewalks when we purchased our home, so I’m glad it’s happening.”

Kumar said he would like to hold another meeting about the next stages of the project, but no future meetings are currently scheduled.

By Cody Begaye
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