

Street Improvement District No. 525
Frequently Asked Question

1. Who determines what pavement needs to be removed and replaced, what pavement needs to be resurfaced and what pavement requires only patching and sealing? On what basis is that determination made?

The City of Bismarck's Engineering Department uses advanced computer aided software programs that calculate and forecast road deteriorations of both the surface and subsurface. Additionally, City staff conducts visual evaluations to confirm the extent of the deterioration. These determinations indicate which streets need to be rebuilt, resurfaced, or patched.

2. Why is the City reconstructing some asphalt streets (i.e. removing all pavement, adding subbase and placing new asphalt)?

Many roads requiring reconstruction have reached the end of their life cycle and the asphalt has deteriorated beyond a point where it can be salvaged by milling and overlaying. In other areas, the supportive subgrade soils beneath the pavement may have become soft as a result of being saturated repeatedly over a period of time. There may be significant evidence of pavement failure even where no potholes currently exist. The Public Works Department may have done some temporary patching to ensure that the streets are usable and safe, but surface patching does not address the saturated subgrade beneath the asphalt pavement. In some areas of this project we may install perforated pipe underdrains along the curb and construct a drainable aggregate subbase for the roadway. Both will help to channel the underground water from beneath the pavement, providing a firmer foundation for the new asphalt pavement.

3. Who determines what concrete needs to be removed and replaced? On what basis is that determination made?

The City of Bismarck's Engineering Department, through the use of visual evaluations, survey profiles, and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) specifications determine which concrete items need to be replaced. After the areas are selected, the curb, gutters, and driveways are evaluated for settlements that could hold or pond excessive water. Concrete items that have excessive cracking may also qualify as substandard and may warrant removal and replacement.

4. Are there other improvements planned with this project?

Some units on this project may also have ground water issue that will be addressed. Specified areas will have an edge drain system installed during the street reconstruction. The edge drain system is a 6-inch perforated pipe, placed on top of a geotextile fabric, and surrounded by drainage aggregate. This is installed at a specific depth and tied into the existing storm water facilities. Along with the installation of the 6-inch perforated pipe, stub outs are installed under the curb and gutter to give the property owner the opportunity to tie sump pumps directly into the storm sewer.

5. How does the City select the contractor for improvement projects? Is there a public bidding process?

Yes, there is a public bidding process that determines how a project is awarded to a contractor. The general steps of this process are as follows: Proposed improvements are identified and designed (the project), the project is advertised publicly, the City receives bids from qualified contractors, the bids are reviewed and the lowest qualified bidder is awarded the project.

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6. Are property owners paying for all of the project cost?

No, the City will subsidize all assessments in this district utilizing sales tax revenue.

Additionally, for residential properties located on collector streets where the street is wider and the pavement depth is thicker, the City funds the cost of the extra width and depth of the pavement as compared to a standard local residential street.

7. Why are the improvements paid by special assessments instead of using property taxes?

Special assessments are used to fund street improvement projects so that the benefitting properties pay for the cost of the improvements. If property taxes would be used, the cost of the improvement would be shared with all tax paying property owners in Bismarck. All tax paying property owners in Bismarck would fund the project and would ultimately increase property taxes.

8. Are special assessments based on the value of my property?

No, the amount of your special assessment is based on the total project cost which is allocated to the benefitting properties. The allocation for residential properties is per each residential parcel. For commercial properties, the allocation is based on parcel square footage.

9. Why does the contractor start and stop construction so many times? Can't they finish it all at once?

Completion of this work would be much costlier if the general or prime contractor was not allowed some flexibility to get the various types of work done. The general contractor also has numerous subcontractors, such as construction traffic signing, concrete replacement, joint sealing, asphalt milling, trucking companies, and chip sealing. The typical process is described below:

- City marks concrete items for replacement.
- Contractor or subcontractor installs No Parking signs for a minimum of 24 hours before construction starts. The No Parking signs may be removed or left in place during the duration of the construction activities.
- Concrete subcontractor removes and replaces marked concrete curb, gutter, driveways, and storm inlet castings as required. Intersection walking ramps and street valley gutter crossing replacements are coordinated with the paving crew. These items may be replaced either at this stage or later. Detours may be needed for some work during this process. A homeowner may request additional concrete improvements to be done at the same time, such as a driveway widening.
- Once concrete improvements are completed the paving contractor either places temporary gravel or an asphalt patch in front of the concrete replacement sites. After new concrete cures for at least 4 to 7 days, black dirt is placed behind the curb. Seeding and mulching usually takes place much later in the process when many sites can be done at once.
- Representatives of the City's Engineering department marks the streets for patching and milling (grinding off about 1 to 2 inches of old asphalt).

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- Paving contractor completes the asphalt patching and crack seals open joints.
- Paving contractor places thin leveling course on patched or non-milled streets where dips, humps or other pavement irregularities are pronounced.
- Paving contractor mills pavement, sweeps loose material, and may come back later to remove pavement around manholes or valve box covers.
- Paving contractor adjusts tops of manhole and valve box castings to match the new pavement surface.
- If street is being rebuilt, Paving contractor removes old asphalt pavement. Once removed the contractor rebuilds the subgrade material (area where asphalt is placed). This subgrade area may need to cure for a minimum of 3 days.
- If street is getting edge drain, a 6-inch perforated pipe is installed in specified areas.
- Contractor and representatives from the City's Engineering Department inspect the subgrade area.
- Paving contractor places new pavement on the milled and rebuilt streets.
- Paving contractor or subcontractor places seal oil and chips on pavements when temperatures are expected to be 70° F or warmer for several consecutive days.
- Chip seal is allowed about four days of cure time before loose chips are swept off street.

Coordinating all these different types of construction activities would make it difficult to maintain workforce efficiencies. Scheduling and moving each specialized work crew from one project to another can be impacted by unforeseen circumstances like weather, poor soil conditions or added work. Delays related to weather or construction difficulties may cause the time interval between any of these tasks to be considerable.

10. Why do No Parking signs have to be up when there is no work occurring?

The city ordinance requires a minimum of a 24-hour notification period of parking restrictions prior to the beginning of work. The contractor must keep daily records which include which streets are signed and during what time period the signs were posted. If a vehicle is parked after the 24-hour time period is up, the police can be notified to help us locate the owner to move the vehicle or to arrange towing.

11. Concrete work was done in front of my property and there is either damage to the existing sprinkler system or the grading of the finish top soil is incorrect. Who do I contact to have repairs scheduled?

When concrete repairs are performed, one to two feet of soil behind the concrete being removed will be disturbed. This can impact both the grass and sprinkler lines and heads buried below. Any obvious damage to existing sprinkler lines and heads will be made at the time the concrete repair is complete. Similarly, the topsoil will be replaced, seeded and mulched usually within 1 or 2 weeks of the repair. If there are any issues with the sprinklers or grading, the General Contractor may be contacted within 1 year from substantial completion of the project. Contact the engineering department at 701.355.1505 so we can make arrangements with the contractor to address these issues.