



Special Assessment Projects

City of Eugene residents who are interested in improving their neighborhoods may be able to do so through special assessment improvement projects. Special assessment projects are improvement projects in the public rights-of-way paid for by the abutting and served property owners. These projects may include constructing or improving the streets, alleys, stormwater systems, wastewater systems, and sidewalks in an area. Improvement projects are initiated through two processes: petitions from owners of properties that will bear more than 50 percent of the costs of the proposed improvement or by the City Council. If you are interested in initiating or participating in a special assessment improvement project for your area, the following information will be helpful.

Types of Improvement Projects

All special assessment projects are constructed to current City standards. Listed below are typical projects.

Streets and Alleys

Property owners who are interested in improving their asphalt or gravel street or alleys must bring them up to City standards. City standards include paving streets with asphalt or concrete, constructing curbs and gutters, and installing the necessary drainage improvements. An improved alley is constructed of concrete. Once a street or alley is improved, the City is responsible for its maintenance.

Stormwater Systems

Stormwater systems are usually required as part of new subdivisions and development projects; however, owners of developed property can petition for stormwater systems. Each request is analyzed for its appropriateness as an assessment project.

Wastewater Systems

Installing a public wastewater sewer system within a street area or public easement is considered an assessment project, and includes constructing the main lines in the street or easement and the public service lines that extend from the main line to the individual property lines. The private service lines that connect a house or building to the public service lines are not a part of the assessment project. Each request is evaluated on need, availability of City funds, and the amount of City participation required. A wastewater sewer project may also be initiated when necessary for public health and safety or orderly development of public improvements.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks can be constructed as an assessment project. For projects less than a block in length, it is usually less expensive for property owners to have the sidewalks constructed privately. If you decide to begin a sidewalk project yourself, you will need to obtain a permit from the City of Eugene Permit and Information Center, 99 W. 10th Avenue.

The Petition Process

The first step in beginning a petition project is to contact the Public Works Engineering staff at 541-682-5291. You will be put in contact with the right person to help you determine the scope of the project, provide information regarding the poll petition process, and give you an initial cost estimate for your specific project.

On residential street and alley paving projects and on sidewalk projects, a successful petition will have support from property owners that represent at least 50 percent of the cost to be assessed.

Engineering staff will determine an estimate of the improvement project and can poll the abutting properties to determine the level of support.

PLEASE NOTE: Property owners signing the petition need to understand that they will be charged for their portion of the improvement cost.

Ownership of any given piece of property should be represented by the signature of all the legal owners. All names must be signed and printed to ensure clarity.

Staff will check the number of signatures and will verify ownership. If the signatures represent 50 percent or more of the estimated assessable costs, the project will be submitted to the City Engineer for consideration. If approved, affected property owners will be notified, and Engineering staff will prepare plans and specifications for the work and will put the project out to bid.

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Irrevocable Petitions

When property abutting an unimproved street or alley is subdivided or partitioned or a change of use is proposed, the property owner is required to grade and pave the adjacent street(s). There are times when it is impractical or inefficient to improve the street at the time of development and the applicant is required to sign an irrevocable petition for improvements. This petition obligates the property to participate in improvement of the street or alley in the future and pay appropriate assessments. When checking petitions, a property with an irrevocable petition is considered in favor of the project. Irrevocable petitions are filed with the Lane County Recorder.

Contract Award

Before the project is constructed, a pre-award public hearing is held before a hearings officer. Each affected property owner is notified of the hearing and given an opportunity to speak. Affected property owners also may submit written remonstrances (objections) to the City Engineer prior to the hearing. The hearings officer will then make a recommendation and report the findings to the City Council. Owners of properties with an irrevocable petition cannot officially remonstrate against the project, but may give testimony at the hearing.

At a regular meeting, the City Council will review the hearing officer's recommendations. If owners of more than 50 percent of the assessable property have submitted written remonstrances, the Council will hold an additional public hearing before voting on the project. If the project is approved, the contract will be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder and construction will begin.

The Assessment

Once the project is completed, affected property owners will receive a notice of their proposed assessment charge, and an assessment hearing will be scheduled. If you wish to present an argument to the hearings officer, contact Public Works Engineering at (541) 682-5291, and they will add your name to the agenda for the assessment hearing. If we do not receive notice from property owners, the hearing will be cancelled. Please call Engineering staff to discuss any concerns you may have about the assessment.

Income Subsidy Program

During the construction process but prior to Council adopting the assessment, property owners will be notified about the low-to-moderate income subsidy program. This program is available to assist local property owners with payment of their assessment for street and alley paving on designated projects. The City will pick up a portion of the assessable costs of a project for qualifying property owners who occupy a single-family home or duplex.

Payment of Assessments

When the assessment is adopted by the City Council, property owners have 10 days to pay the assessment in full or sign a Notice of Assessment to pay the assessment in monthly or semi-annual installments, including administrative fees and interest, over a ten year period. Owner shall pay an interim interest rate until the interest rate on the long-term debt is known. Both the interest rate and administrative fees are subject to change. In addition, when a property owner finances with the City, a lien is placed against their property. The assessment balance may be paid in full at any time without penalty.

Deferrals or Extensions

If a property owner meets certain qualifications, the Eugene City Code (sections 7.193 - 7.197) allows a deferral of an assessment or an extension of payments. Eligibility for these programs primarily includes property owners who occupy a single family home or duplex, and may also be based on income, total assets, age, and/or family size.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Assessment Project Questions

Public Works Engineering
99 E. Broadway, Ste. 400
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 682-5291

Assessment Payment & Financing Questions

City of Eugene Finance Office
Downtown Library
100 West 10th Avenue, Suite 400
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 682-5022

www.eugene-or.gov