2020 Engineering Budget - Discussion Document

Introduction

The City Engineer plans, designs, and manages public infrastructure within the City. The mission of this department is to provide strategically-planned, sustainable infrastructure as cost effectively as possible. The City Engineer works directly with the Administration, Planning, Street, Building, and other departments to plan and coordinate projects, budgets, and activities. The Engineer provides assistance and expertise to these departments as needed.

The City Engineer is an appointed consultant position currently held by Tim Schoonhoven of Widseth Smith Nolting.

Core Duties

- Plan, design, and inspect capital improvement projects
- Manage the City's Municipal State System of streets
- Review site plan submittals
- Prepare and present the Capital Improvement Program
- Schedule and conduct Highway Committee Meetings
- Schedule and conduct Utility Committee Meetings
- Review and comment on land use applications
- Respond to questions and concerns from the general public
- Research and prepare grant applications
- Assist the building department with stormwater compliance issues and provide inspection
- Represent the City at statewide conferences, workshops, and task forces
- Serve on various MnDOT boards and committees on behalf of the City
- Schedule and conduct Stormwater Management Committee meetings
- Coordinate work with ALP and ALASD
- Initiate partnerships/joint projects with townships and other governmental agencies
- Manage and maintain a GIS database of local street conditions
- Create and maintain an ADA compliance transition plan
- Coordinate airport work with the City's airport consultant
- Be available to provide information and expertise to City Council members
- Be available and provide information to local media regarding public works issues
- Attend City Council and planning commission meetings

Many of the duties above are performed as part of Engineering Agreements and projects not funded through the General Fund. Within the General Fund, the City Engineer department exists to fund as needed and special project engineering services not otherwise contemplated in an existing engineering agreement. The City Engineer provides a detailed report to the City annually accounting for billed/unbilled time for this department.

<u>Capital Improvement Projects:</u>
The planning, design and inspection of capital improvement projects is funded separately from the general fund. These projects are funded from a variety of different sources, and often from a combination of sources in an effort to leverage our funds through partnerships. For example, the 8th Avenue Street Reconstruction project was driven by the need to replace the storm sewer because of the proposed Veterans Memorial Park. Because 8th Avenue is on the Municipal State Aid system, state funds are available for the street reconstruction portion of the project. The storm sewer portion of the project is funded from stormwater utility funds, and the sanitary sewer replacement is funded by ALASD through a cost sharing agreement.

Other projects include partnerships with the school district, the county, private developments, and others. In these capital improvement projects, a separate engineering agreement is prepared for approval by the city council. The agreement specifies

the total estimated amount of the project with a breakdown of the various funding sources. The engineering portion of the cost is normally written as a lump sum amount which is prorated to the various funding partners.

General Fund Engineering:

General Fund Engineering time is divided into three main categories; General Engineering, Building Permit Time, and Unbilled time. The total dollars and hours in each of these categories for 2018 is listed below:

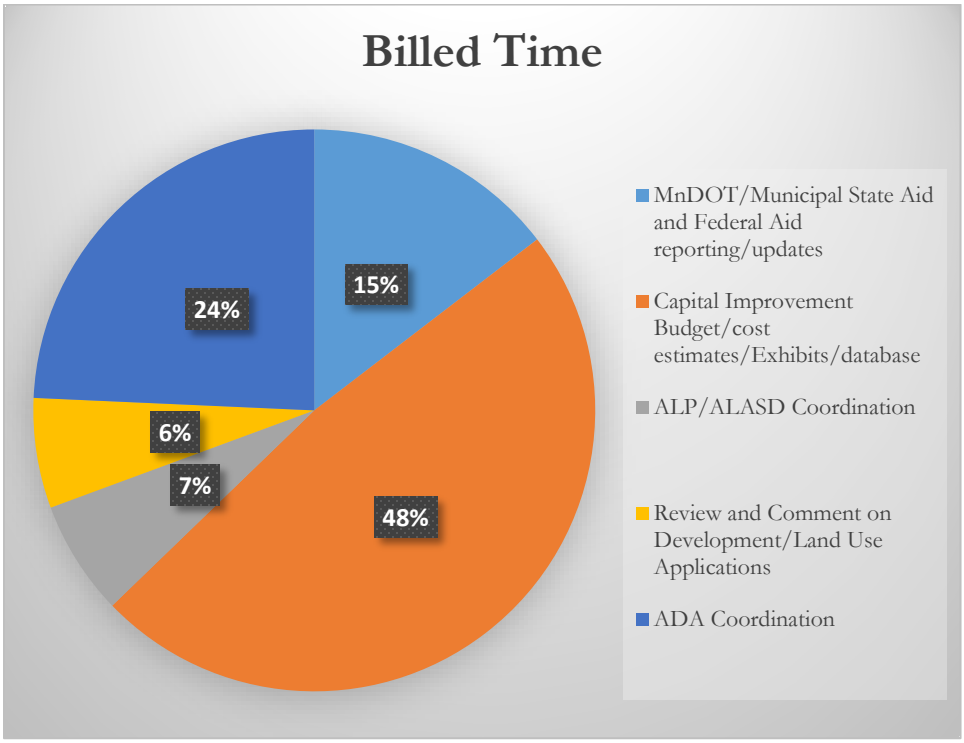
PBB Inventory & Costing Estimate

Program	Approx $/yr	Approx. hrs/yr	%
General Engineering Time	$46,136	303	34
Building Permit Time	$30,803	222	25
Unbilled Time	$67,890	372	41
Total	$144,829	897	100%

General Engineering Time can be divided into five major categories;

1. MnDOT/Municipal State Aid and Federal Aid reporting/updates
2. Capital Improvement Budget/cost estimates/exhibits/database
3. ALP/ALASD coordination
4. Review and Comment on Development/Land Use Applications
5. ADA Coordination

The breakdown of time spent on these major categories is shown on the following graph.



Building Permit Time represents the engineering time spent in reviewing site and drainage plans associated with specific development projects.

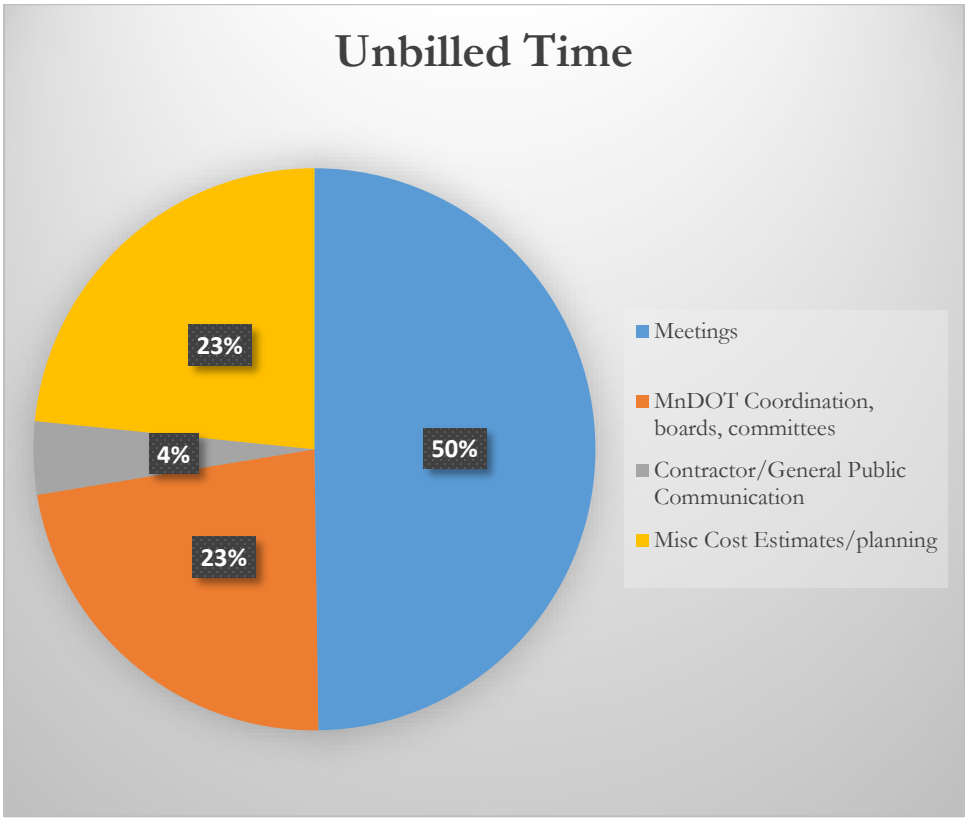
The City Engineer reviews all building permit applications that require engineering review. Time and expense are tracked and reported to the City on an annual basis. The City used to charge a $750 fee that would be paid by a building permit applicant for permit review by the City Engineer. The time was tracked and additional bills sent or a refund paid depending on the amount of time required for review. This proved to be cumbersome and was eliminated in favor of using existing building permit revenue to cover those costs.

In 2018, the total amount of engineering work related to a building or grading permit was approximately $30,803. In 2017, this amount was approximately $23,435. Given this, the proposed 2020 revenue assignment for this department is $35,000.

Unbilled Time is time that WSN spends on City related work but does not bill the City. This time is primarily made up of hours spent attending meetings and time spend on other means of communication. Because communication is so critically important to this relationship, both the City and WSN feel that this time is mutually beneficial. This unbilled time can be divided into five major categories:

1. Meetings
2. Grant Applications
3. MnDOT Coordination, boards, committees
4. Contractor/General Public Communication
5. Misc. Cost Estimates/planning

The breakdown of time spent on these major categories is shown on the following graph.



Budget Narrative:

Revenue and Expenses

The requested budget for this line item has been increased from $75,000 for $85,000 in 2020. The revenue assignment for this department is $35,000 to building permit revenue and $50,000 to the property tax levy.

As proposed in the CIP, the City will undertake several capital improvement projects in **2020**. These projects include a major reclaim project of several streets in the north and northeast areas of the City including the paving portion of Deerwood Drive and Scenic Heights Road. These streets were identified as part of a comprehensive, long-term street overlay and reconstruction plan. The reclaim projects would need to be authorized through Street Reconstruction Bond that will be discussed later in the fall.

We will also have a local street overlay project which is located primarily in the central core of the City. The local street overlay project is funded by a combination of Municipal State Aid Maintenance Funds and Local Street paving levy funds.
The 18th Avenue Extension and Reconstruction project is scheduled for construction in 2021 but design on this project will take place in 2020. This project will be funded primarily by Federal and State Aid Construction funds. The 44th Avenue Extension project will be constructed between the Walmart Frontage Road and South Broadway.

We are also in discussions through our Utility Committee on several joint ALP and ALASD projects. These projects include:

1. Irving Street, 12th Avenue to 15th Avenue (water, sanitary sewer, street, and sidewalk)
2. 8th Avenue, Kenwood Street to Nokomis Street (water, sanitary sewer, street, storm, and sidewalk)
3. Voyager Drive waterline (water and sidewalk)
4. 17th Avenue and Cedar Street (water, sanitary sewer, street, and sidewalk)
5. Darling Avenue and Maple Street (water, sanitary sewer, street, and sidewalk)