



The Kirk Avenue Saga

Project: Years ago Linn County and the City of Brownsville talked about improving Kirk Avenue. The length of the project was to be from Hunter Street to Main Street. The scope of the project included stormwater drainage, utility connections, sidewalks and pavement improvements. The County would have had to obtain large pieces of right-of-way due to the narrow right-of-way owned by the City of Brownsville.

Summary: Below is the history of the Kirk Avenue discussions that have transpired over the last sixteen years. Council determined the final outcome to proceed with such a project would be to assess each property owner abutting the road. The costs associated with such an improvement would be high. Linn County developed a Transportation Plan that ultimately eliminated Kirk Avenue from the County's consideration. You can learn more about Linn County's Transportation Plan at <http://linncountytsp.org/>.

2017

Linn County Transportation System Plan – From 07.25.2017: Councilor Gerber and I attended a public meeting regarding the Linn County Transportation System Plan (TSP). Council may recall the County has hired a consulting firm to review possible capital improvements projects that fall within County responsibility. The County has also included State projects. The County is trying to ready themselves for current and future funding possibilities. One mention was the intersection of OR 20 and OR 226 which is the site of many fatal accidents.

Basically, the County has categorized projects into seven general categories: 1) Walking & Biking, 2) Bridges, 3) Corridor Improvements, 4) Rural Modernization, 5) Spot Improvements, 6) Future Sites, & 7) Systemic Safety Improvements. The County has criteria for improvements to assist in ranking priorities. Factors include use, safety, traffic fatalities, and overall impact to name a few.

In short, Kirk Avenue will only have a chance to be funded if the City and the residents decide to improve the street through the LID process or other funding mechanism **perhaps** in partnership with Linn County. Kirk Avenue is not a priority for Linn County transportation based on the developed criteria.



2001 - 2016

Linn County & Kirk Avenue – From February 2016: I had an extensive conversation with Linn County Road Master Darrin Lane recently. Mr. Lane gave a brief history of the Kirk Avenue concept, to which I have added a little research, which is as follows:



Mr. Darrin Lane

March 5th, 2001: Kirk Avenue is initially discussed at Council meeting with Mr. Lane and the County Commissioners. County must determine how to a City street a County road in order to expend funds for the proposed improvements.

Spring 2002: The County indicates to the City that it is possible for the County to deem Kirk Avenue a County interest based on McKercher Road and tying Main Street into an official Linn County traffic loop. The City starts planning for drainage projects.

October 2006: The City completes the Galbraith Street storm sewer project.

February 28th, 2008: Linn County Road Master Darrin Lane discusses the logistics of Kirk Avenue with Council. Survey crews are sent to town shortly thereafter to work on a rough design. There are several rules and requirements and multiple property issues that are cause for concern for any proposed

construction project.

Meanwhile, County Staff is working on developing the Gateway project in conjunction with the Oregon Department of Transportation. City Staff is focusing on the multimillion dollar Wastewater project. The Economy starts falling apart. The Veterans Hospital is announced in Lebanon. Linn County Commissioners move a whopping \$19,000,000 out of the Road Department's funds to assist with the development. The Commissioners have also taken a \$2,000,000 from the Road Department to assist the Sheriff's Office funding issues. The Road Department is not as financially stable as it was in 2001 or even 2007 for that matter.

2009-2010: Several update conversations.

January 2011: Council asks for an update. The County indicates that they will not start a new project until the Gateway project is complete.

June 2012: Council decides to scale back the project to an overlay.

June 22nd, 2012: Staff meets with Mr. Lane who felt that the first block from Main to Averill could be done with curbs and sidewalks. The rest of Kirk Avenue could be an overlay. Mr. Lane projected the cost to be between \$600,000 & \$800,000. Lane indicated that in the next year or two the County would probably be able to get this project. Lane also indicated at that time that the City would not need to financially participate, if we could be patient.

Mr. Lane indicated that his Department is currently overloaded with Federal bridge projects. The County is still interested in helping the City but timing is difficult.

Outcome

If the City is in a hurry to get this project completed, they can set up a local improvements district (LID) and assess the costs to the affected properties or the City can wait until it is budgeted in Linn County's budget.

What does Council want to see on Kirk Avenue? Overlay or reconstruction?

From the September 4th, 2012 meeting: Darrin Lane stopped for a visit on August 7th and indicated that County Engineer Chuck Knoll is working on the subsurface investigations.