

A brief history of the Greater Loghill Village paving project

Some years after the successful paving of the “Hill Road” (CR 24A and parts of CR 24 and CR 1) in 1996, a neighborhood “Roads Committee” was formed, circa 2003, to investigate the possibility of paving the main, highest traffic, roads in Greater Loghill Village. As with the previous paving project, the committee came up with a plan to create a “Local Improvement District” (LID) to pave the roads and to pay for it with a per lot assessment to fund the sale of bonds.

The LID was chosen because it could be created by a resolution of the Ouray County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and because it could be funded by an assessment, as opposed to a property tax mil levy. The other option, a “Public Improvement District” (PID) has to be created through a petition process. The advantage of a PID is that it has an indefinite life and can be used for additional projects as well as maintenance of infrastructure. By contrast, the LID can only be used for capital improvements, not maintenance, and ceases to exist when the capital improvement project is complete and paid off.

The decision to form the LID began a long process of meetings and negotiations with the BOCC on the scope of the project and responsibilities of the county and the proposed District. Eventually, the BOCC created the District by resolution. At this juncture, the LID could have been “uncreated” if 50% of the property owners in the District formally objected in writing.

That began a long series of legal notices to all property owners in the District and public hearings. There were five public hearings and meetings over many months, both informational and those legally required by state law. The first informational meeting was held in the old Clubhouse meeting room and attendance was standing room only; it remains, to this day, the most well-attended meeting in Greater Loghill Village history.

Opposition to the road paving plan, and the means to pay for it, was strident, however support was considerable. Most residents were tired of dealing with dirt roads that had traffic well beyond the limits that allow for proper maintenance. [After the Hill Road, Ponderosa Drive was and is the next most heavily traveled road of the 200+ miles of county roads; the county spent a lot of resources trying to keep the LHV roads graded and treated with magnesium chloride, to control dust. Given traffic levels, it was a losing battle.]

Under Colorado law, the new LID wasn’t able to raise revenue and undertake capital improvements until the project was approved by District voters. In November 2004 property owners in the District, who were registered Colorado voters, voted on the assessment and a proposal to issue twenty year bonds to fund the road paving project. It passed with a 71% yes vote.

The assessment was \$3073.50 per lot to raise about \$1.4 million. Lot owners had the option to pay the assessment in full by 7 April 2005. Any property owners who didn’t pay in full paid in installments of about \$271 per year. In May 2005 about \$1,085,000 of bonds were sold to cover the project costs for those who elected to pay in installments. The bonds had an interest rate of 5.625% plus a bonding fee of ½%, for a total of 6.125%.

As a courtesy, the bond company offered the bonds to residents first and five residents purchased some of the bonds.

During the summer of 2005, Ouray County Roads and Bridges Department had most of their equipment and personnel working on improving the main roads in the District to prepare them for paving. This caused many complaints from other county residents because their roads were not maintained during that time. The BOCC, however, was aware that once the main roads in Greater Loghill Village were paved, the R&B crews would have more resources to work on other county roads in future years. The county did continue to do snow plowing and sanding of roads in the District but grading and dust treatment were no longer necessary.

In late summer 2005 the paving contractor, United Companies, began the project. To save money, more than a dozen neighborhood residents got state-certified as flaggers and all of the flagging was done by neighborhood volunteers. The three inches of asphalt used was a special high altitude mix that stays flexible in cold temperatures; it is too soft to use in hotter areas, such as Montrose or Grand Junction. The contract was for 8.1 miles of the main roads in the neighborhood to be paved, with the idea of getting as many residents as possible close to a paved road. Most of the cul-de-sacs were not paved because it would have doubled the cost of the project and those lesser traveled roads have fewer maintenance problems than the main roads.

As the roads designated for paving were nearing completion, the project still had untapped contingency funds. United agreed to extend the contract and continue paving additional roads. This was a courtesy to the neighborhood because such things are usually done via a "change order." Since United had bid the project in 2004, paving costs had doubled due to a sharp rise in oil prices. Nevertheless, United not only honored the 2004 contract prices but extended the paving at those contract prices, as opposed to the higher 2005 prices. [Had we waited one more year the cost of the paving project would have doubled — would voters have supported that?]

One of the reasons United gave for extending the contract was that their crews loved working in our neighborhood! It was relatively cool up on the Mesa and they were greeted by smiles and enthusiasm by residents excited to see the roads get paved, at long last, despite the disruption to travel it caused.

We decided to pave a half mile of Bristlecone Drive, the longest and most populated unpaved cul-de-sac, and a half mile of Oak Road, the next longest and populated unpaved road in the District. As before, the goal was to bring as many residents close to a paved road as possible, within our project budget. The next longest road on the list was Piñon Road East but United ran out of time and had to move on to their next project before any of that road could be paved.

The following year, 2006, United returned to improve some turning aprons that were poorly aligned and to widen the sharp curve on Canyon Drive, since residents were cutting the corner on the road shoulder because they weren't slowing down enough. We had \$40,000 remaining in the project budget. At the new higher paving prices that would have only paved 700 feet of Piñon Road East so we decided to use the money to pave the parking area around the new mailbox complex instead, since that would benefit the

entire community. If you have ever wondered why not all of that parking area is paved, it was because that was all the money we had left.

Needless to say, the Greater Loghill Village paving project was considerably more complicated and difficult than this summary suggests, but it gives an idea of what was involved to get the project designed and completed.

[by Dickson Pratt, September 2021]