

Olive Branch hires Civil Link for roadway and maintenance plan

By
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Mayor Ken Adams explained how the study will help the city prioritize its roads.

Olive Branch has engaged Civil-Link Engineering Services to analyze the condition of its roads in order to help guide where the city spends its street repair money.

The Board of Aldermen accepted Mayor Ken Adams' request to spend \$63,500 to have the engineering firm drive the city's streets to compile a condition list of which ones are in the most need of repair.

Adams said the results are much more scientific and data-driven than just eyeballing them.

“Sometimes people think their street is in the worst shape and needs to be repaired, when it really doesn’t. And sometimes I eyeball a street and think it needs to be done now, but in reality it isn’t as bad as I thought,” Adams said. “This takes a video images of every foot of the roadway and it might come up with a different conclusion and tell you that you can get a few more years out of one road and that it can be done later or ones I think look good, the image may say we need to do it now or pay more if you wait two more years.”

Adams said the city hired the firm five years ago to evaluate the roads and worked off of that list to resurface the ones that were at the top of the list. Now they are renewing the contract for another analysis that will give them a fresh set of road conditions.

“It’s going to give us a new list of conditions because obviously weather and time, they have deteriorated some more,” Adams said. “It lets us know where to focus as opposed to politically saying I want this street or that street. It gives us an engineering analysis of where to focus.”

Engineers drive over every city street in a vehicle with mounted cameras, sensors , and laser beams that shoot down to the road surface and captures inch-by-inch information about the surface condition of every single mile of every single street in the city. The data is then used to assign a score based on the condition.

Olive Branch has 300 miles of city streets.

Adams said the program is a very cost effective approach to get the most out of its road resurfacing dollars. Olive Branch has \$5 million budgeted for street repairs this year.

“Previously cities and counties just used the human eye and ranked them,” Adams said. “But this is true analytics. It stores a video image of every inch of the roadway. My engineering team can go back months later and pull up any roadways and see if they have alligator cracks in them or excessive potholes that have been repaired, that kind of thing.”

Adams said the data from five years ago was very helpful in deciding which roads to fix first.

“We absolutely used it,” Adams said. “We concentrated last time on the arterial larger road ways with heavier traffic. This go around we’re going to concentrate on getting into our subdivisions.”

City Engineer Andy Swims told the Board that whatever data is collected from this go-around will be rolled over into the current list of streets slated to be resurfaced.



City Engineer Andy Swims told the Board of Aldermen the new list will be rolled over into the previous study from five years ago.

"Anything that gets paved will end up getting the highest ranking," Swims said. "That will all be incorporated into it."

Swims noted that the new road study is only costing \$2,000 more than the one from five years ago.

"It's a pretty good deal for the city," Swims said. "And it will give us a good tool for us to look at all of our city streets again and see what condition they are in and give us recommendations that can assist us in helping to pick out roads."

Adams said Civil-Link is expected to have its analysis complete by April.

"That's when the asphalt plants are open for the spring and we want to be moving on it," Adams said.

Adams said he is excited to see the results.

"This is good money spent," Adams said. "We have \$5 million to spend on our roads. You always want to do more, but that's a good start."

In other business:

Leighanne Soden, President of West Cancer Foundation in DeSoto County appeared before the Board of Alderman and presented their mission and shared information about free, no-cost programs and support for DeSoto County cancer patients.



Leighanne Soden addressed the Board about the health care services West Cancer Foundation offers.

“I had the privilege of meeting Ms. Soden and other team members a couple weeks ago for a very positive program for our community and for cancer patients,” Adams said.

Adams stated that when meeting with Soden, he felt the Board of Aldermen, as well as residents in the community, would find it informative to know about the services offered in their area.

Soden her purpose of the meeting is to provide awareness to the community.

“We want to spread the word about all the services we provide,” said Soden.

West Cancer Foundation providers cover multiple counties, including DeSoto. While people may first think of the West Clinic in Memphis, Soden states that they work with all providers.

“Our mission is to break barriers to cancer care,” said Soden.

She said one barrier to getting treatment is lack of insurance, and that many people don’t have health insurance or are underinsured.

“We don’t think there should be barriers. And your zip code should not dictate what kind of care you can receive,” said Soden.

Funded by donations and grants, Soden said patients don’t receive bills from West Cancer Foundation. They also offer multiple services. One of their biggest services is their transportation program. Soden reported that last year, they provided almost 7,000 rides to patients.

“These are life-saving rides. If you’re in active treatment, you can’t miss a single treatment because it does affect your outcomes,” said Soden.

They also provide a breast cancer screening program. Soden said the Foundation is working on making sure people know that they provide the screenings and transportation to the screenings. She brought attention to women over forty and how important those screenings can be.

“Breast cancer has some of the highest mortality rates,” stated Soden.

They offer post-mastectomy services, which will help women get fitted for prostheses and special undergarments to help them through their physical loss, and lymphedema compression garments for patients who develop lymphedema, a chronic condition characterized by swelling, usually in the arms or legs, caused by protein-rich fluid buildup due to damaged or impaired lymphatic systems, usually experienced due to cancer treatments.

Soden said they also offer prostate screenings for men and said that it is a simple blood draw, and free mental health counseling services for patients and their caregivers, with Soden stating that nobody else in the area offers all of these programs at once.

Finally, Soden said they also have “Sweet Wig Beauty Boutique.” Women who have cancer can come in and pick up to three wigs, scarves, or hats.

“This is wonderful to see them come in because they're scared or don't feel well,” said Soden. “By the time they leave they're so happy. It's a different person than the one who walked through the door.”

Since opening in 2021, Soden said West Cancer Foundation has provided over 24,000 patient services - all funded through grants, fundraising events, and donations.

“It's a very positive program and we want to help push this information out,” said Adams.

Mark Randall contributed to this report.