



Ordinance Amending Street Excavations

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

February 24, 2026

PURPOSE OF THIS ORDINANCE

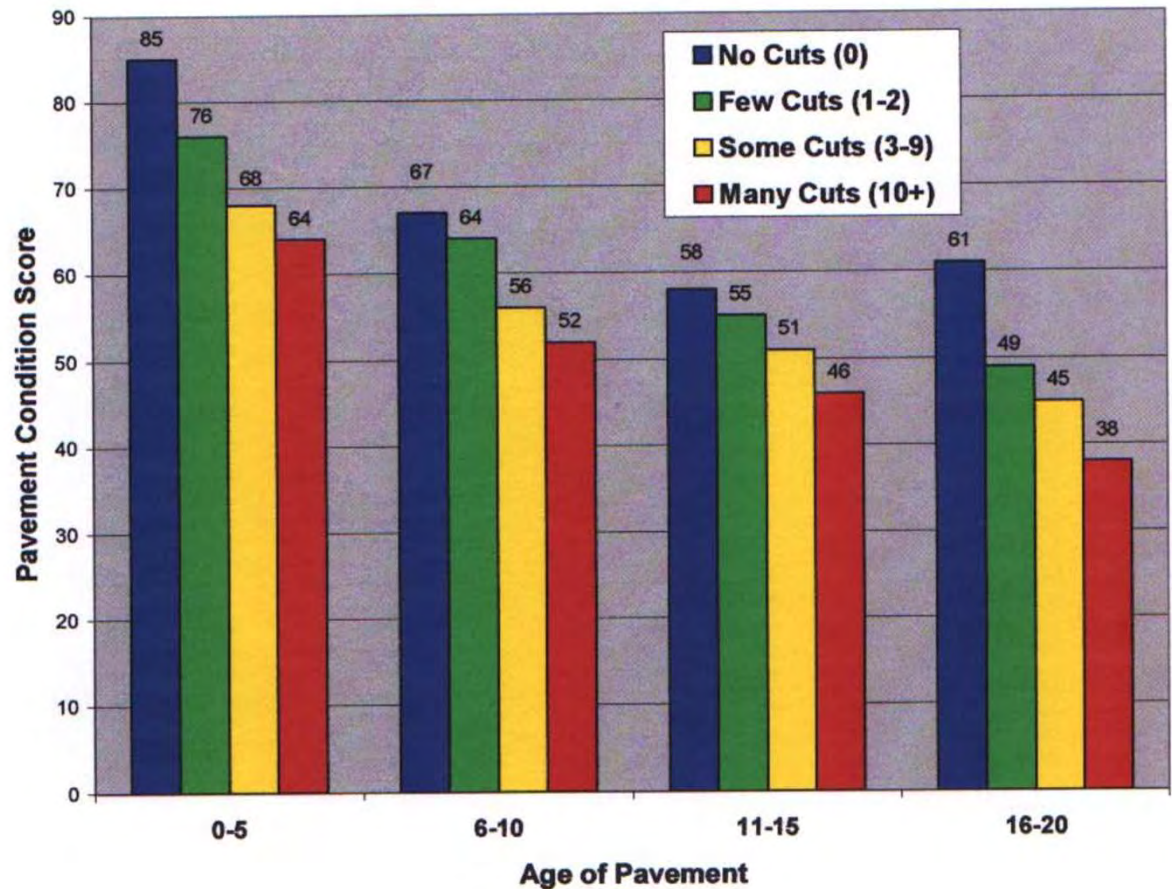
Why Now:

- Watsonville is making significant pavement investments
- Repeated trenching is shortening pavement life
- Current code does not adequately protect newly improved streets
- Regional agencies have already updated their standards

THE CORE PROBLEM

- Street excavations are necessary for utilities and services.
- However:
 - Even properly restored trenches weaken surrounding pavement
 - Repeated cuts accelerate pavement failure
 - Newly improved streets deteriorate sooner than planned
 - Limited pavement funding must stretch further
- Without stronger controls, we undermine our own infrastructure investment.

EFFECTS OF UTILITY CUTS ON PAVEMENT CONDITION



WHAT THIS ORDINANCE DOES

- This ordinance modernizes and strengthens:
 - Permit requirements and oversight
 - Restoration standards and inspections
 - Excavation moratoriums for newly improved streets
 - Utility coordination requirements
- The focus is long-term pavement protection and fiscal responsibility.



LOMA PRIETA AVE.
PAVED FALL 2025

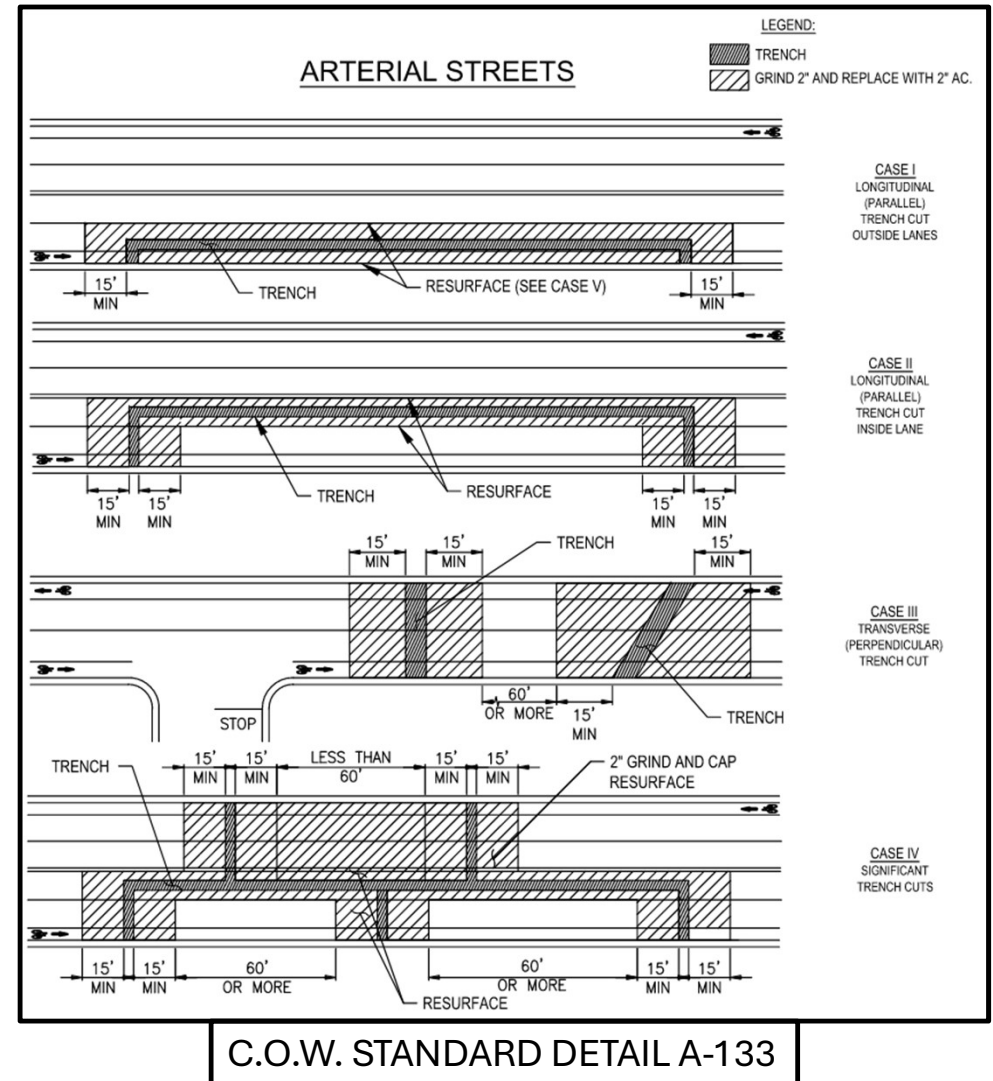
MORATORIUM STRUCTURE

- Establishes clear excavation protection periods:
 - **3-Year Moratorium**
Streets receiving surface treatments ≤ 1 inch
 - **5-Year Moratorium**
Newly constructed or reconstructed streets > 1 inch
- Limited exemptions may be granted when necessary.
- This protects our highest-value pavement investments.



WHEN EXCAVATION IS ALLOWED DURING A MORATORIUM

- If excavation must occur within a protected street:
- Enhanced restoration may be required, including:
 - Full lane resurfacing
 - Surface grinding
 - Base repairs
 - Striping replacement
- Goal: Restore pavement to as close as practical to pre-excavation condition.



UTILITY COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

- Public and private utilities must:
 - Coordinate planned work with Public Works
 - Submit annual two-year work plans
- Purpose:
 - Reduce repeated trenching
 - Align utility work with resurfacing schedules
 - Minimize impacts to newly improved streets
- This shifts us from reactive to proactive coordination.



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IMPACT ON CITY FUNDING & ASSET MANAGEMENT

- Watsonville has limited annual pavement funding.
- A moratorium helps:
 - Protect pavement condition targets
 - Support six-year pavement planning
 - Extend lifecycle of improvements
 - Improve capital efficiency
- Higher costs, if incurred, are visible at project time, instead of hidden later in premature reconstruction cycles.



HARKINS SLOUGH RD.
PAVED FALL 2025

REGIONAL & STATEWIDE PRECEDENT

- Watsonville is not alone.
- Local agencies with similar policies include:
 - Santa Cruz County: 3-year moratorium + lifetime trench warranty
 - City of Santa Cruz: Expanded restoration on recently paved, high-PCI streets
- These policies were adopted after studies showed trenching shortens pavement life, even when properly restored.
- Watsonville's ordinance aligns with established best practices.

CA Cities with Street Excavation Moratoriums	
Agency	Approx. Size
Beaumont	Small
San Anselmo	Small
Norco	Small
Newport Beach	Medium
Cerritos	Medium
Tustin	Medium
Santa Ana	Medium
San Francisco	Large
Sacramento	Large
Oakland	Large
San Jose	Large

WHAT HAPPENS IF COUNCIL DOES NOT ADOPT THIS ORDINANCE

- If the ordinance is not adopted:
 - Newly improved streets remain vulnerable to repeated trenching
 - Pavement life expectancy decreases
 - Reconstruction cycles occur earlier
 - Long-term capital costs increase
 - Limited pavement funding stretches less far
 - More resident complaints about street conditions
- Short-term avoidance of stricter requirements may lead to long-term infrastructure degradation.
- This is fundamentally a policy decision about protecting public investment.



POLICY TRADEOFFS

The policy shifts costs forward to the project that causes the impact, rather than the general taxpayer later.

Short-Term Impacts:

- Higher restoration costs when trenching newly paved streets
- Potential increased costs for utilities or service upgrades
- Greater contractor equipment requirements

Long-Term Benefits:

- Extended pavement life
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Better infrastructure stewardship
- Alignment with regional standards
- Stronger asset management practices



Questions/Comments

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