



Office of the City Administrator

To: Mayor Welch, Common Council Members
From: Al Hulick, City Administrator
Date: February 17, 2016
Subject: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Options for Merchant Row Infrastructure Upgrades.

Summary

Upon completion of the Parkview Drive resurfacing project in 2015, the City realized a savings of approximately \$60,000. At their September 15, 2015 meeting, the City Council agreed to hold those savings over into 2016 to be utilized for potential infrastructure improvements along Merchant Row.

Recently, the City received preliminary estimates to potentially complete a variety of infrastructure improvements along Merchant Row (see attached). The estimates for these improvements have been broken into two projects (Southern Merchant Row and Northern Merchant Row). These estimates have been further divided into options which range from \$38,000 to \$493,000 depending on the level of improvement desired.

At this time, the City Administration is seeking direction from the City Council to begin some pre-construction engineering on the preferred options for the Merchant Row improvements as well direction to explore additional funding opportunities for public improvements along Merchant Row.

Background

In October 2015, the City Council adopted the Junction Square Downtown Plan. That plan outlines a number of public improvements that will increase traffic circulation and parking as well as make streetscape improvements to the area. Then, in September 2015, the City Council set aside \$60,000 to begin implementing some of these improvements.

In early 2016, the City worked with Baxter & Woodman to develop rough cost estimates for various alternative improvements along Merchant Row (see attachment). These quotes were taken to a public meeting with various stakeholders along Merchant Row on February 4, 2016. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the various options, help stakeholders understand the potential process and timeline for construction, and to help set priorities for improvements.



Analysis

The attached cost estimates range from \$35,000 to \$493,000 (combined). The estimates vary from a simple repaving to a widening and reconfiguration of both the north and south lot.

Based on the feedback received from the stake holders discussion, the City will likely look to address the issues presented in the northern parking lot which could potentially add 8-12 stalls while cleaning up one of the more unsightly areas in the downtown. This improvement could be implemented with the funds left over from 2015 (\$35,000).

However, the stakeholders and the Administration do not feel it would be in everyone's best interest to simply end there. Although the stakeholders understand that not all improvements can be made in 2016, they would like to see additional improvements made in the area commensurate with the Junction Square Plan.

Therefore, it will be imperative for the City Administration to develop a funding source that could adequately address these improvement needs without resorting to additional borrowing.

Action

Therefore, the City Administration asks for the Council's direction to begin some pre-construction engineering (\$6,000) on the preferred options for the Merchant Row improvements as well direction to explore additional funding opportunities for additional public improvements along Merchant Row.