

COUNCIL WORK SESSION May 15, 2023

Under due call and notice thereof, a Council Work Session of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Council Chambers on May 15, 2023. Mayor Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Peterson, Whitlock, Steiner, and Oachs, City Administrator McCann, Finance Director Ryan, Public Works Director Arnold, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

Belgrade Avenue Reconstruction Options

City Engineer Sarff appeared before Council and reported that the application for federal funding submitted to MnDOT for the 4-lane to 3-lane conversion, related to sidewalk and street lighting improvements along with the City's share of the Trunk Highway (TH) 169/Belgrade Avenue interchange improvement project was successful. The City secured federal funds of approximately \$1,225,000 for the Belgrade Avenue Improvements and the City's anticipated share of the interchange project. Municipal State Aid funding will also be available to utilize on this project.

City Engineer Sarff reported that since being awarded the grant, City staff has been working on refining the roadway layout for the 200 block of Belgrade Avenue. Two layout options were presented in layout 4.1: a 3-lane section with a 4-way stop, parking on the south side only, and bump-outs. The option allows ADA-compliant sidewalks on both sides of the street and slows traffic. The bump-outs would reduce the distance pedestrians walk to get from one side of the street to the other. Layout 5.1 has a 3-lane section with a 4-way stop, parking on both sides, and bump-outs.

Public Works Director Arnold noted that the plans are preliminary and will be refined. Still, staff needs direction to provide the State with information concerning the alignment with traffic coming off the bridge.

Council Member Steiner noted that the main item to decide is if parking will be on both sides of the street. Council Member Peterson requested clarification on if additional public engagement would occur. Staff noted there would be additional public engagement.

Discussion was held concerning the current width of the sidewalks and the proposed width of the sidewalks following reconstruction. City Engineer Sarff noted that the goal would be to have both sidewalks ADA-compliant. Mayor Carlson commented that with layout 5.1, the area would gain approximately 11 parking stalls but lose the ability to add some aesthetics. Mayor Carlson noted that he preferred the potential addition of green space and aesthetics to an additional parking and liked layout 4.1. Council Member Peterson also stated he preferred layout 4.1. Council Member Steiner commented that he preferred layout 5.1 with the additional parking, and there would still be some options for additional aesthetics. Mayor Carlson commented that with the big picture, the City should continue to look for properties to purchase to add additional parking to the downtown area. Council Member Whitlock stated he preferred layout 5.1 and suggested additional options to increase parking. Council Member Oachs commented that providing additional parking spots in front of 300 Belgrade Avenue, Game On Nutrition would be good. They have customers that quickly come in and leave as they pick up their shakes. Council Member Oachs noted she liked the bump-outs as they would place the stop sign closer to the drivers and make them more aware of the stop sign. She also preferred layout 5.1.

A continued discussion was held, and Council recommended moving forward with option 5.1, and staff will bring the option to the public for further comment and review.

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Strategic Planning: Mission, Vision, and Core Values

City Administrator McCann reported that the City's Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Core Values were discussed following the Strategic Planning Sessions. Everyone accepted the City's Mission statement, and it states:

“ Provide a clean, safe, and vibrant community experience by planning for the future in a dynamic and inclusive way.”

The City's Vision statement still needed Council direction. Three options were presented, and Council provided direction to staff.

Council discussed the options and requested that staff move forward with Option 3: “Building a superior place to play, work, live, and thrive.”

City Administrator McCann reported during the Strategic Planning Session that a 50/50 split occurred on keeping the current core values with minor edits (swapped the Leader value for Inclusivity value) versus a CORE acronym. Council decided to go with the new CORE values acronym:

CORE

C: Care for Community

O: Outstanding Service

R: Respect for Resources

E: Equality

City Administrator McCann reported that the choices would be provided to Scott Morrel and included in the Strategic Plan that would be presented to Council later for adoption.

Council Member Oach moved, seconded by Council Member Peterson, to adjourn the Council Work Session at 6:47 pm.

Mayor

City Clerk