



MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: February 3, 2015

REGULAR

ITEM # 13

AGENDA ITEM: 5th Street Landscaping and Lighting Presentation

SUBMITTED BY: Kyle Klatt, Community Development Director

THROUGH: Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

REVIEWED BY: Planning Commission
Nick Johnson, City Planner
Jack Griffin, City Engineer
Stephen Mastey, Landscape Architect

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of ItemCommunity Development Director
- Report/Presentation.....Community Development Director
- Questions from Council to Staff Mayor Facilitates
- Discussion Mayor & City Council

POLICY RECCOMENDER: Staff has been working with the City’s Landscape Architect consultant to develop a final landscape design for the 5th Street minor collector road that is presently under construction within some of the initial subdivisions that have been approved in the I-94 Corridor planning area. This work takes into account the feedback that the City has been receiving from project developers who have been working on finalizing their plans for this road. Staff would like to present the proposed landscape design to the Council before developers are asked to incorporate the design into their plans for 5th Street.

FISCAL IMPACT: No initial City costs up front, but the City will be responsible for the maintenance of the road, trails, sidewalk, and landscaping within the right-of-way once the public improvements are accepted by the City. The final landscape design and the construction/installation of all improvements within 5th Street will be the responsibility of private developers. The overall design has been proposed to help minimize long-term maintenance costs for the City.

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: Staff is asking that the City Council review the proposed final landscape and lighting plan for 5th Street prior to the City’s final approval of

individual construction projects along this roadway. The plans and materials attached to this report include the general landscape concept plan for 5th Street, photographs of the trees, shrubs, and plantings that have been proposed, and a photograph of the street lights that will be used for both the local residential streets and the minor collector routes. Staff will then be asking that the landscape plans for projects that include any segment of 5th Street incorporate the general 5th Street concept plan into these plans.

There is no suggested motion to since this is an informational/discussion item.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY/PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT: After completing the Lake Elmo theming study within the past couple of years, the City hired Damon Farber associates to create a very generalize plan for 5th Street in order to help identify a unified vision for the entire length of this corridor. This led to the creation of a standard cross section for this road (also attached), which will include divided, one-lane travel lanes in both directions with a center median, turn lanes at all intersections, a 6-foot sidewalk within the northern boulevard, a 10-foot bituminous trail on the south side of the road, street trees, and other amenities. The proposed road design was seen as the minimal needed to provide for the regional transportation needs, and to also help provide for the regional pedestrian and trail amenities that are supported in the Comprehensive Plan.

As individual projects have come forward that include segments of 5th Street, Staff has been working with individual developers to implement the vision of the theming study through the specific landscape plans for each project. In addition, City Staff has been working with the City's landscape architect to create a unified plan for the corridor that places a high level of importance on minimizing long-term maintenance costs for the City while still promoting an attractive landscaping that is consistent with the City's past theming work. Throughout this process, there has been a lot of back and forth discussions concerning the cost implications of the theming study and landscaping as proposed by the City's landscape architect. Staff has been working to complete a final design for the road keeping all of these considerations in mind, and the plan being presented to the City Council represents the culmination of this process.

Staff will spend some time reviewing the plan with the City Council at the meeting, but would like to generally note that the plan focuses on the center median within 5th Street as a native planting and landscape area, while the portion of the boulevard between the road and sidewalk/trail will be planted with turf in order to maintain appropriate clear zones from the road and to help minimize overall project costs. Where there is additional room on the outside parts of the 5th Street right-of-way, the plan proposed native prairie plantings that can blend in with the adjacent development. This layout should promote the center median as an attractive, low-maintenance amenity while integrating turf grass where appropriate.

The final design element that Staff would like to share with the Council is the lighting elements that are proposed both along the local streets and 5th Street Minor Collector road. In both cases, the City will be leasing fixtures from Xcel Energy, with developers paying for the full installation costs to include street lights within new subdivisions. Because the City will be leasing from Xcel, the street light options available are limited to those offered through Xcel.

For the residential streets, Staff has recommended the “California Acorn” style lighting that was used for the Lake Elmo Avenue downtown demonstration project (these fixtures are presently installed in front of the Lake Elmo Inn). For the minor collector road, Staff is recommending that the “Evans” overhead lighting fixture be used, which was recommended in the Damon Farber 5th Street plan. At one point Staff was looking into a combination of less expensive overhead lights at main intersections with the residential decorative lighting in between, but found that it would actually be somewhat less expensive to use only the higher, more decorative Evans fixture along the corridor since the spacing between fixtures would be increased in this scenario (and hence would require fewer fixtures overall). Photographs of both the California Acorn and Evans fixtures are included as attachments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (SWOT):

Strengths: The proposed landscape design strikes a balance between creating a nice, attractive, and low-maintenance boulevard and overall project costs. Leasing street lights from Xcel helps minimize the up-front City costs for building new roads.

Weaknesses: The City will assume responsibility for future maintenance of the public boulevard areas.

Opportunities: The proposed landscape design will help implement many of the recommendations from the Damon Farber theming study.

Threats: The City will be assuming additional maintenance costs for the landscaping and trails within the right-of-way. The streets lights include a monthly leasing cost.

RECOMMENDATION: The City Council is being asked to review the 5th Street landscape design and plans and provide any feedback to Staff concerning the plan.

There is no suggested motion to since this is an informational/discussion item.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 5th Street General Landscape Design Concept
2. Proposed Plant Materials
3. 5th Street Collector Design Guidelines
4. Lighting Fixture Photographs:
 - a. Evans
 - b. California Acorn