

ITEM: Consider approving a landscaping plan for Keats Avenue (County 19) from I-94 to Lake Elmo Regional Park Reserve

REQUESTED BY: Wayne Sandberg, Washington County

SUBMITTED BY: Susan Hoyt, City Administrator

REVIEWED BY: Sherri Buss, Landscape Architect, TKDA
Kathleen Widin, City Forester
Jack Griffin, City Engineer
Wayne Sandberg, Washington County
Tom Bouthilet, Finance Director
Mike Bouthilet, Public Works Superintendent
Kelli Matzek, Planner
Anne Smith, Councilmember

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: The city council is being asked to consider approving a landscape plan for the median and trail edge along Keats Avenue (County 19) to the Lake Elmo Regional Park. The landscaping concept emerged from the city council's request to the see some landscaping along with Washington County's plan to add traffic signals at I-94 and County 19 and to re-do the trail along Keats (County 19) from I-94 to 10th Street (Attachment 1 – map). In order to accomplish this goal, the city and county staff met to determine how to proceed. The result is a proposed landscaping plan for the corridor designed by Sherri Buss with input from several staff members including the city forester, Kathy Widin. The plan is designed to enhance the prairie landscaping done in the median by the county and to maintain the rural character of the roadway. It is recommended that the project cost be shared between the city and the county, which is consistent with all local landscaping projects in the amount of \$12,000 for option 1 or \$16,800 for option 2 (the preferred option by the committee). The city has funds for this project through its capital funds. The road project is scheduled to begin this August with landscaping being part of the contract for work.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- This is a key entry for the city from the south. It is also an entry for the Lake Elmo Regional Park.
- The proposed planting project will be maintained by the county through a contract for two years. After the two years, the city will be responsible for maintaining the trees, but not the prairie area, which the county regularly maintains through burning. This maintenance arrangement is typical of projects where cities want to have landscaping on county roads. It will require planning for the future maintenance services of the city.
- The Lake Elmo sign on the median was built by the Boy Scouts many years ago. If interested in creating a more prominent presence for the cities identify, the city might consider asking the Jaycees to consider a new sign for the site.
- The cost of \$42,000, proposed a distribution of the project charges the county for the new landscaping along the trail, which the county is replacing at \$25,200. The city's share is for the upgrade to the prairie area already planted and maintained by the county for \$ 16,800.

The second, less expensive option, costs \$30,000 with the city paying \$12,000 and the county paying \$18,000.

RECOMMENDATION

The landscaping project meets both the city goal of creating an attractive entry to the city and a more attractive trail for trail users. It also creates an opportunity for the city and the county to jointly improve the county road. Establishing a collaborative relationship on these types of local improvements is important for future projects that the city and county may wish to jointly undertake such as the Highway 5 – should the highway be turned over to the county from the state, which currently owns it.

The more expensive option, option 1, is being recommended because this was the preferred design and the most colorful and it is a long term investment for the city and co.

SUGGESTED MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION

Move to approve the Keats Avenue (County 19) landscaping plan option 2 to Tenth Street in the amount of \$42,000 with the city's share at \$16,800.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Introduction	Susan Hoyt, City Administrator
Presentation/report	Sherri Buss, TKDA, Landscape Architect (Wayne Sandberg, Washington County Deputy Physical Development Director, available For questions
Questions to the presenter	Mayor and Council members
Questions from the public, if any (3 minute maximum)	Mayor facilitates
Call for a motion (to move ahead, does not signify approval)	Mayor facilitates
Discussion	Mayor and Council members
Action	City Council

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1 Memo from landscape architect
- 2 Map of corridor
- 3 Landscaping plan
- 4 Email from Kathy Widin
- 5 Plant sample photos