



## **COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

### **Bass Lake Road Streetscape Design Update**

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**FROM: John Sutter, Community Development Director**

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**DATE: July 13, 2017**

**TO: Anne Norris, City Manager (for July 18 work session )**

**SUBJECT: Bass Lake Road streetscape Project Design Update**

On June 22, staff and our design consultant had a design workshop at the Becker Park building to gather input on the first draft of the Bass Lake Road streetscape concept. Since then the concept has been updated (11x17 attachment). At the July 18 work session staff would like to get Council feedback on the updated concept.

The public response has been more positive than negative but there have been some recurring questions. These are listed below along with staff's responses which may be useful to you when discussing this in the community:

*On-street parking was removed in 1985, so how can it work now?*

- The proposed parallel parking is different from the pre-1985 angled parking.
- When this idea emerged from the station area planning process, city staff was surprised when the county said they'd be open to adding on-street parallel parking.
- There is similar parking on Excelsior Blvd east of Quentin Avenue in St. Louis Park where there is more traffic and a higher speed limit than Bass Lake Road.

*Why is the city spending money on a streetscape when the buildings are run-down?*

- The streetscape is 30 years old and wearing out, so we need to do something.
- Repairing the existing streetscape doesn't make sense because we know the current design doesn't work.
- The adjacent shops look like a single strip mall but it's actually ten structurally separate buildings with four different owners.
- The city hopes that its investment will lead to private investment in the adjacent buildings, but we cannot force that to happen.

*There's less need for retail so these buildings will never be viable anyway.*

- It's true that big-box retail is hurting across the country, but demand for small spaces is not so weak.
- These buildings provide relatively affordable space for small businesses to get started.

- We want a streetscape that will encourage private investment in these buildings.
- If we're wrong and these buildings don't become more viable, then the streetscape will help set the stage for demolition and new development on the site.

Staff intends to bring a "final" concept design back to the Council on August 15 before we proceed with detailed design and plans & specs for bidding. At that time, we will also have a better sense of whether it is realistic to try bidding for fall 2017 construction start or wait until spring 2018.

The following items are attached:

1. June 22 workshop - text posters
2. June 22 workshop - existing conditions
3. June 22 workshop - proposed streetscape
4. SEH memo summarizing results of workshop
5. Updated streetscape concept plan (11x17)