Parking ramp expansion hits a cash bump

**FUNDING:** City may tap the 2012 program to pay the extra $640,000 needed to complete the third level.

By Scott Aust  
Journal staff  
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Adding a third level to the downtown parking ramp hit a snag Monday night after the Rapid City Council learned an extra $640,000 will be needed to pay for the project — an amount that could come from the 2012 program.

A third level would add about 164 spaces to the 323-space, two-level ramp south of the railroad tracks between Fifth and Sixth streets.

The council postponed until Aug. 4 awarding a contract to J. Scull Construction Services to build the ramp expansion for $2,614,100 until the city nails down the funding sources for the project.

The city has 30 days from when bids were opened on July 17 to either award the project or reject all bids.

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PARKING: City council to meet as 2012 committee Aug. 4.

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The city finance office believes that about $2.2 million from bond sale proceeds will be available for the project. However, another $38,000 is needed to cover the cost of construction, including the design cost and extra for contingencies.

The two likeliest places for the city to find additional funds is the 2012 program or the capital improvements reserve fund.

Alderman Tammy Alldredge is concerned about using nearly two-thirds of the $1 million available in the reserve fund on the ramp's expansion.

Money is available in the 2012 fund for the project; the council set aside $2.8 million dedicated for parking when it created the current five-year plan in 2005. However, the city has talked for months about using the money for the Rushmont project, a multi-use building that will include 600 parking spaces, though progress on the building has been slow.

Another $2 million in uncommitted funding could be tapped if projects not ready to move forward soon are pushed back.

Alderman Bill Okrepkie urged the council to consider diverting money from the proposed Rushmont development.

"I would certainly caution us to make sure we don't dilute that," Okrepkie said. "If there's other money in 2012 that we can use for this, I'm all for it. But we need to make sure we keep this $2.8 million set aside so the Rushmont can happen.

Alderman Ron Weifenbach was not happy to learn that revenue from the parking lot area fund — generated from parking fines, meters and space rental — would be not paid for the third level's entire cost.

He also was irritated about the prospect of using more 2012 funds, especially after the