

Snow complicates parking lot plans

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An early snowfall might have added \$7,000 to the cost of opening the new St. Joseph Street parking lot in time for Christmas shopping. But more snow could still foil that plan, according to city Public Works Director Leonard Swanson.

Earlier this year the city bought all the land on the south side of St. Joseph Street between Fifth and Sixth streets. City plans call for a combination of leased and metered parking on the land.

The lot won't be completely finished until next summer, but city engineers had hoped to pave it in time for this year's Christmas season.

However, a Nov. 7 snowfall halted construction the day before the lot was to have been paved.

Complicating the problem, moisture seeped into the soil to a depth of at least three inches.

Swanson told the city council's Public Works Committee Wednesday that the contractor would have to scrape off three inches of wet soil and replace it with gravel in order to lay four inches of asphalt.

That will cost an extra \$7,000, Swanson said. (The original plan called for no gravel and five inches of asphalt.)

The Public Works Committee approved the extra expenditure, but Swanson said success of the plan depends on better weather by Monday. More snow will mean no parking.

If the lot is surfaced in time for Christmas it will be opened for free, all day parking.