

City Council studying parking ramp options

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Now that they've decided where to build a new city hall, members of the Rapid City Common Council must decide where to build a downtown parking ramp.

Last month, the council voted to locate the ramp between Fifth and Sixth streets and St. Joseph and Kansas City streets. The council's Parking Ramp Steering Committee Monday looked at eight options for that block outlined by representatives of Dunham Associates, the city's engineer.

Since only three of the committee's five members were at the meeting, they decided to go over the ramp options at a meeting of the Public Works Committee Tuesday afternoon before making a recommendation to the council. The ramp also will be discussed at the full council's next meeting Monday night.

Five of the options would put the ramp along St. Joseph Street. Another would locate it along Fifth Street between St. Joseph and Kansas City, and the two others would put it partially above Sixth Street.

The St. Joseph Street options could be built to leave much of the ground-level space for commercial development.

Cost estimates for all eight options exceed the original proposed budget of \$1 million. The estimates include the cost of acquiring private land needed to build the ramp. One additional parking level could be added to nearly all the options.

The first St. Joseph Street option is a three-level ramp stretching from the city-owned parking lot at Sixth and St. Joe to the Rapid Theater. The ramp would have about 315 parking spaces, and would cost about \$1.7 million. If ground level were left as commercial space, the cost estimate would increase about \$300,000.

The second option is a two-level ramp with a capacity of 290 cars built the length of the block along St. Joe between Fifth and Sixth streets, at a cost of

\$1.8 million. Commercial space on ground level would raise the price about \$400,000.

The third St. Joseph Street possibility would be a ramp from Fifth Street to the city-owned parking lot, costing about \$1.9 million and holding 285 cars. The city parking lot could be sold as commercial land for about \$125,000. Commercial space under the ramp would add \$300,000 to the cost.

The fourth option would be a three-level, 240-space structure including the city-owned lot and stretching to the Schneider Music Co. building. It would cost about \$1.3 million, with ground level commercial space adding \$270,000 to that.

And the fifth St. Joseph Street option is a four-level, 240-space ramp that would include the city-owned lot and the first three buildings east along St. Joe. That would cost an estimated \$1.3 million, with commercial space adding about \$200,000 to the cost.

All the St. Joseph Street options would require relocation of Duhamel Broadcasting's antennas, which are located in the middle of that block. William Duhamel said his company would be willing to relocate the antennas.

The other three options do not involve moving the KOTA antennas.

A three-level, 315-space ramp could be built along Fifth Street between St. Joe and Kansas City streets at a cost of about \$1.9 million.

A four-level ramp could be built over the city-owned lot and over Sixth Street to the east face of Braun's clothing store. The ramp would hold about 250 cars and would cost an estimated \$1.5 million.

A four-level ramp holding about 335 cars could be built by extending the ramp over Sixth Street two lots further east. That ramp would cost about \$2 million.

Both the ramps over Sixth Street would be about 60 feet high or higher and could overshadow the downtown area, the engineers said.