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## Downtown beautification project should move soon

Approval, this week, of a downtown parking district by the Rapid City Common Council brought more adequate core area parking closer to reality.

Unless opposition develops through a referendum or a petition by the owners of half of the property within the district, the project appears to be in a "go" position.

It took a compromise to swing the required 7 votes from the common council behind a condemnation resolution which is an integral part of the parking proposal.

Some members of the council were opposed to condemning buildings at the northeast corner of Sixth and Main streets. This put them at odds with some downtown businessmen who felt a parking lot on that corner was imperative. There were indications that support for the parking district from the downtown area would be diluted unless the buildings were razed to create a parking lot.

The conflict was resolved when the condemnation resolution was amended to provide for appropriate landscaping at the Sixth and Main site.

We think the compromise helps address two of the problems confronting the downtown area. It will provide more parking and make that corner more attractive from an aesthetic standpoint.

While the condemnation resolution speaks to landscaping of the Sixth and Main corner, we think consideration must be given to the aesthetics of other parking areas in the downtown area.

We understand that is encompassed in the downtown beautification plan for which funds are earmarked. The project is in a "hold" position right now since it involves not only parking lots but development of the 600 and 700 blocks on the north side of Main Street, the memorial park south of the Civic Center, the Sixth Street connecting link between the civic center and downtown and development of a new sign ordinance.

The components must be pulled together soon so that the downtown beautification plan can be implemented during the next construction season. If progress hinges on a joint effort of city officials and downtown property owners and businesses, steps to forge that alliance and move the project forward should be taken quickly.