



Heavy line outlines the limits of the proposed downtown Public Parking District

City to try again on parking district

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Rapid City will try again to establish a downtown parking district to help finance development of more off-street parking.

But this time the area covered and the property affected will be much smaller than in the past efforts, which failed.

The district and projects being proposed by Mayor Art LaCroix, apparently with the backing of most of the city council, includes the central business district from Ninth to Fourth Streets and from the alley north of Main to the alley south of St. Joseph, or about 10 downtown blocks.

The resolution of necessity establishing the district, however, contains three tracts jutting out on the north side of the district on which parking lots are being proposed. They include property north of the alley facing Mount Rushmore Road, Seventh Street and Sixth Street.

The private property within this area would be assessed on a front footage basis or on a square foot of land only basis. That is to be determined at or following the public hearing Jan. 16.

Through the assessments, the city is proposing to raise \$500,000 toward a total cost of \$1.1 million. The remaining money will come from federal and local funds. City funds will amount to \$30,500 for the parking lot and area fund or about 3 percent of the total. Federal funds considered for the project amount to \$581,638 in urban renewal money transferred to the Community Development Program budget.

The resolution lists the six projects to be developed within the district.

Project I is called the Sears lot north and the Sears lot south. It calls for the acquisition of property from Sixth Street to the Sears Roebuck store, including the buildings at the corner, and the property north of the alley from Sixth to the Sears warehouse, including the bus depot.

The bus depot and buildings at Sixth and Main streets are to be torn down and a 128-car parking lot built. This would be 78 more parking spaces than exist in lots there now.

Council members, however, don't all agree the frame buildings at Sixth and Main should come down.

Richard Goschke, while praising the total plan, said he will vote against it as long as it includes tearing down those buildings. He gave no reason for his opposition.

Robb Swanson also opposed tearing down the buildings but is willing to compromise to the extent of acquiring and removing the Crown Clothing building.

Norma Thomsen also opposes removing the buildings but gives no reason.

The mayor says the extent of proposed acquisition can be reduced following the hearing, but it cannot expand.

He strongly favors removing the buildings, not only to provide additional parking spaces but also to remove downtown eyesores.

Estimated cost of this project is \$500,000 and would be 100 percent funded from the assessment.

Project II calls for the removal of meters, a new surface and stripes at the city-owned lot on St. Joseph east of the Stockgrower Building, at a cost of \$5,000.

Project III calls for the removal of

meters, repair of the surface and painting new stripes at the city-owned lot at Sixth and St. Joseph, at a cost of about \$3,500.

Project IV entails acquisition of a vacant lot at Mount Rushmore Road and Main, known as the Patton lot, and making a hard-surface lot with space for 56 cars. Estimated cost of this project is \$189,000.

Projects V and VI would be built by successful bidders on the urban renewal land in the 600 and 700 blocks on the north side of Main. The parking districts, however, would provide money to buy the buildings and land. Total estimated cost of the land acquisition is nearly \$415,000.

Project V is the Rushmore Road and Main lot north of the alley providing space for 78 cars.

Project VI is the Seventh and Main lot north of the alley with space for 58 cars.

If all projects are approved and the parking district is established, it will add 214 parking spaces.

While the resolution does mention removal of meters from two city-owned lots, which will permit free off-street parking, it does not mention another proposal by LaCroix.

If the district is established, he intends to remove all parking meters from streets outside the district, including the library parking lot. The only curb meters would be along Main and St. Joseph and the cross streets within the district.

A snag might be that property for Projects V and VI has not been acquired by the city nor has the city authorized condemnation. If legal problems develop, they could delay plans for these two lots.