



**CITY OF URBANA, ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

ADMINISTRATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Laurel Lunt Prussing and Members of the City Council

FROM: William R. Gray, Public Works Director

DATE: June 21, 2007

RE: *Philo Road Beautification Plan*

INTRODUCTION

Based on discussions with the Mayor and members of the City Council last fall, staff has been asked to develop a comprehensive beautification plan for the south Philo Road area between Florida Avenue and Windsor Road. The intent of this memorandum is to suggest a range of ideas that can be explored to help identify what directions the City Council would like staff to pursue.

BACKGROUND

On January 24, 2005 the City Council approved the Philo Road Business District Revitalization Action Plan. This plan identified several recommendations that were subsequently implemented. They include:

1. In 2006 the Public Works Department completed a \$1,200,000 street improvement project on Philo Road between Colorado Avenue and Windsor Road.
2. In 2006 Colorado Avenue was widened and a bikepath was installed east of Philo Road to Prairie Winds Drive for a cost just under \$400,000.
3. In 2007 four new ornamental trash receptacles were purchased and located adjacent to bus stops in the Sunnycrest shopping area.
4. In 2005 the Philo Road Business District signage was installed and Urbana banners were installed on area streetlight poles.
5. In 2005 the Public Works Department Arbor Division installed attractive flower beds with irrigation in the right-of-way between Florida Avenue and Colorado Avenue to beautify the area.
6. Staff has made efforts to encourage area businesses to pick up litter and keep turf areas looking well groomed.

List of Ideas:

Staff has met and has come up with a list of additional actions' items that can be further pursued pending City Council direction and funding:

1. Convert four lanes striping on Philo Road between Florida Avenue and Colorado Avenue to three lanes with possible inclusion of bike lanes to promote a more pedestrian friendly and safer environment. Restriping, signage, and median removal work - \$50,000. (Resurfacing this stretch of Philo Road is budgeted in 2012 in the CIP at \$100,000)
2. Professionally design new banner art work to be installed on existing streetlight poles. New decorative type poles with banners could be added to the side opposite the streetlight poles along Philo Road to add symmetry. Estimated new banners cost \$10,000 - \$20,000. Add opposite existing streetlight poles 40 new poles with brackets at \$2000 each = \$80,000.
3. Identify a location, possibly acquire an easement, design, and build a mini-park that would incorporate landscaping, seating area, lighting, trash receptacles, art piece, etc. Estimated cost \$50,000 - \$100,000.
4. Establish a 50/50 parking lot landscape grant and challenge adjacent private property owners to convert the solid areas of concrete and asphalt with landscaped islands and borders. Program parameters would need to be established which would determine budget. Minimum estimated city share cost \$100,000.
5. Landscape and irrigate the parkways (area between the back of curb and sidewalk) between Colorado Avenue and Windsor Road similar to what was done north of Colorado Avenue or adopt more of a prairie landscaping theme. Estimated cost \$100,000 plus identify resources for annual maintenance.
6. Identify nodes within this area for beautification and art on private property/city right-of-way. Need to define specifics in order to establish a budget estimate of cost.
7. Score the concrete sidewalk and/or consider brick sidewalk accents along this corridor. Estimated cost \$25,000.
8. Establish a Special Service Area to provide one or more of the following: trash/litter removal, turf management (mowing, edging, weed control, fertilizing, etc.), sidewalk snow removal, etc. Expenses would be borne by adjacent/benefiting property owners.

A few of the identified suggestions will require the resources of a professional landscape architect/streetscape consultant to assist staff in developing more specific details. A budget estimate for consulting assistance would begin at \$20,000. Depending on the program(s) identified, additional funding would be required to proceed with design and construction assistance.

FISCAL IMPACT

A funding source would need to be identified to pursue and implement any of these or other ideas. Currently, no funding has been identified in the recently approved FY 07/08 budget.

RECOMMENDATION

By motion, provide staff direction on what ideas should be further explored.

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WRG:klf