

Legislation Text

File #: 17-1020, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: September 19, 2017

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: David E. Bennett, Public Works Director/City Engineer.

Update on the Northfield Depot and Transit Hub Access Plans.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council receives an update on the Transit Hub Site Work Plans.

Summary Report:

The City has completed the plans for the site work improvements for the Transit Hub/Depot Site. The site improvement plans are based on input from the stakeholder group (Hiawathaland Transit, Benjamin Bus, and Save the Depot Group). The project preliminary design is complete with the exceptions of cost estimating which is still be finalized. Staff has an updated project cost estimate of \$250,000 for the site work. The site work improvements currently include the following costs: preliminary design, construction design, access road, curbing, and conduit for future lighting.

The project costs currently do not include other expenses such as stairways to the Depot building, finished landscaping, walking/biking trail, pavilion, overhead power line relocation or undergrounding, and parking lot lights. Staff is continuing to work on estimating these expenses, some of which could be optional additions in scope in the future.

The City set aside \$150,000 in funding from TIF 4 to fund the improvement. Knowing of the funding gap and additional intent to pursue a transit station that includes restrooms and a waiting area, staff has reached out to Hiawathaland Transit on options to move forward. Hiawathaland has indicated they could request funding for the transit building and transit hub share of the site work costs in a grant through MnDOT.

As part of the grant process, there is required 20% local match. Hiawathaland has indicated that they do not currently have the local match Capital Funding for this site in their capital plan due to other priorities. However, they could proceed with an application for funding if a local funding match could be secured outside of their own funds. Potentially, the City could consider funding if additional funding could be identified in addition to the TIF 4 \$150,000 that Council has authorized.

If transit grant funds are secured for the site, about half of the site costs would be eligible, along with the building costs. An example of how the costs would work out is below. Please note we are working with Hiawathaland to verify the building cost.

Table 1. Example Cost Scenario

Depot	Transit Hub
Site Work \$125,000	Site Work \$125,000
	Building \$500,000
	Total = \$625,000
	20% City Match = \$125,000
Total Depot and Transit TIF 4 \$250,000	

The \$250,000 of site work must be completed in one project based on the cost estimates and efficiencies in completing the project. Due to matching funds of the roadway, the City financial contribution would be the same if they just do a full site work project without a transit station or not due to the leveraged funds available with this program.

A few things to keep in mind as the project moves forward related to development planning items that would also need to be addressed:

1. Subdivision of the Land.
2. Variance through Zoning Board of Appeals for building setback/orientation, two story height, and possible windows. The variances most likely requested at this time will be the setback/orientation and two-story height.
3. Update development agreement on Depot project.

Staff intends to continue to work on establishing cost estimates on the current site improvements planned, transit station, and other potential additions to project scope not currently including in estimates. Additionally, Finance Director Angelstad and City Administrator Martig will be exploring funding options beyond the dedicated TIF 4 Funds. Lastly, staff will continue to work cooperatively with the Save the Northfield Depot representatives on the depot project and transit station exploration.

Staff welcomes questions, comments or concerns related to the staff further exploration of this project.

Alternative Options:

Staff is open to suggestions or thoughts from the City Council.

Financial Impacts:

Included in background summary.

Tentative Timelines:

- Staff is intending to continue to work on further details to bring back options for the City Council to consider.
- At this time, the soonest any site work could be completed on the project would be 2018.

