



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Edward L. Roberge, PE, City Engineer

DATE: September 6, 2016

SUBJECT: Report from the City Engineer on the status on the underground utility project in conjunction with the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project (CIP 460).

Recommendation

Provide staff with Council's direction as to whether to a) proceed with the undergrounding of utilities from Thompson to Concord Streets and b) whether to use existing appropriated dollars as outlined in this report to fund that work.

Background

At its meeting on April 11, 2016, City Council appropriated funds to include the relocation of overhead utilities to underground locations within a portion of the South Main Street project area. The scope of work included relocations from Pleasant Street to Thompson Street.

Discussion

City Council appropriated \$2,000,000 to relocate overhead utilities along South Main Street from a location just south of Pleasant Street to the intersection of Thompson Street. The appropriated amount was based on initial estimates to complete the installation of the underground conduit, manhole, and pull box infrastructure, and force account contracts with Unutil, Fairpoint, Comcast, as well as Concord Fire Alarm and several private telecommunication utilities. While the project area extends southerly to Concord Street, the additional block to complete the relocation of overhead utilities from Thompson Street to Concord Street was estimated at an additional \$1,000,000.

Utility coordination and design began immediately following Council authorization and construction began in late May 2016. Based on refinement of the design and close coordination with the utilities, total funds expended and encumbered to date to complete the relocation work to Thompson Street are \$1,650,000, leaving an available fund balance of about \$350,000.

Understanding there was a desire to complete the undergrounding of utilities on South Main Street to Concord Street, staff coordinated further design and review with the utilities. Estimates to complete the additional work from Thompson to Concord Street have been reduced to about \$600,000. One of the principal drivers of this reduced cost is the fact that the utility crews are now very familiar with the work site and are already mobilized. Therefore, this estimate is predicated on these same utility crews continuing on to the section from Thompson to Concord Street concurrently with their present work. Every effort will be made to complete the work by the project deadline of mid-November.

Should City Council wish to consider the burial of the overhead utilities from Thompson to Concord Street using *existing appropriated dollars*, it would be possible but it would impact other possible uses for those funds. One suggested funding formula could be:

Savings from Pleasant to Thompson St. Undergrounding	\$350,000
Remaining appropriated project dollars (including contingency) that won't be spent by project's end	\$ 50,000
Portion of uplighting appropriation	\$200,000

If Council chose to use the projected funding sources noted above, it would leave a balance of approximately \$100,000 in remaining uplighting funds. For Council's reference, several of the uplighting options last reviewed in 2015 included:

Warm, white uplighting (58 tree locations)	\$200,000
Programmable, colored uplighting (58 tree locations)	\$330,000
Warren Street (Historic lantern street lights; new wall mounted lighting at stair tower; acorn street lights; tree floodlights)	\$30,000
Bicentennial Square (Historic lanterns at covered pathway; historic lantern street lights; twinkle lights in trees)	\$30,000
Capital Commons Plaza (bollards at theater path entrance; illuminated planters at outdoor eating area; tree floodlights)	\$15,000

Recommendation

Staff is seeking Council's direction as to whether to a) proceed with the undergrounding of utilities from Thompson to Concord Streets and b) whether to use existing appropriated dollars as outlined in this report to fund that work.

With the utility crews already mobilized on-site, if Council wishes to pursue the undergrounding of the utilities from Thompson to Concord Streets, the decision to do so should be made at the September Council meeting to lock in the revised estimate. Every effort would be made to complete the additional work by the project completion date. Staff would apprise Council of the progress of the work.