

City Council gives green light to Gateway Project

by Bridget Mire | July 25, 2018, 4:39 p.m.

Outdoors



Illustration provided

The original design for East Wenatchee's Gateway Project, intended to serve as a community plaza and entrance to downtown.

EAST WENATCHEE — The Gateway Park Project is moving forward.

The last City Council vote June 12 ended in a tie. On Tuesday, all council members voted to proceed except for Chuck Johnson, who had previously expressed concerns over the cost.

Bids opened in April for the project, but the lower of two offers was \$626,311 — nearly 62 percent more than the engineer's estimate of \$387,525. City Council rejected both bids at its April 24 meeting.

At the council's May 24 workshop, Dan Ireland with engineering firm SCJ Alliance presented members with potential design changes. Even with the adjustments, the estimated construction cost is \$516,821.

Community Development Director Lori Barnett said Tuesday that the state Department of Transportation paid the city \$28,763 when it removed Viewpoint Park at the end of Grant Road to make way for the Highway 28 Bypass. The city could put that money toward Gateway Park, she said.

The council also approved two other motions related to Gateway Park at Tuesday's meeting: one for additional design revisions and the other to rebid the project in the winter. Construction is expected to begin in the spring.

The park will be located at 88 Ninth St. N.E. on property the city purchased in 2015. It will serve as a community plaza and entrance to downtown.

Along with Johnson, Councilmen Harry Raab and John Sterk previously voted against proceeding with the project because of the increased cost.

“We’ve already spent quite a bit of money on it, and the reports from the public stated that they wanted us to do something,” Raab said. “I still don’t like the amount of money we’re spending on it, but it appears like the majority of the council is in favor of it and the majority of the citizens are in favor of it.”

He said it’s now time to move on after much discussion of the project.

For Sterk, the money from the Department of Transportation was a game-changer.

“We have to do something,” he said. “We’re well down the road, and we can’t back out now.”

Johnson, Raab and Sterk all said they hope other sources, like grants or sponsors, can help pay for the park.

Shayne Magdoff, who joined the council last month, said she wrestled with how to vote on the project. Gateway Park will not only welcome people to the city, but also complement the nearby Apple Capital Recreation Loop Trail, she said.

“I couldn’t see going back,” she said. “We made adjustments, we downsized a little bit. We have an opportunity to reach out to the community to possibly have people contribute for certain smaller items, and that actually makes it even more of a community project.”

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