

## AM NO. 10-160 (C10)

MEMO TO: City Council

FROM: John Marchione, Mayor

DATE: July 20, 2010

SUBJECT: **ELIMINATE BRICK SIDEWALK BANDING STANDARD IN DOWNTOWN**

### I. RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Endorse staff's recommendation to remove brick banding from Downtown pedestrian system standard details, which will result in City capital projects and private development projects no longer installing brick banding on sidewalks and mid-block pedestrian walkways in Downtown.

### II. DEPARTMENT CONTACTS:

Bill Campbell, Director of Public Works	425-556-2733
Ron Grant, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer	425-556-2742
Joel Pfundt, Principal Planner	425-556-2750

### III. DESCRIPTION:

For many years the City has had standard details that require brick banding on Downtown sidewalks and mid-block pedestrian walkways. The purpose of this streetscape element was to visually connect the existing brick buildings in the heart of Old Town to the street, and also provide a distinctive look that would improve the pedestrian environment and be more interesting for visitors to Downtown. Recently the City has come to the conclusion that implementation of the brick banding standard has been inconsistent and has not resulted in the effect which was originally intended.

The issue of brick banding was raised as the City moves forward with implementing planned improvements in Downtown, including the 161<sup>st</sup> Ave NE Extension, the Downtown Central Square Park, streetscape improvements associated with the one-way couplet conversion and future improvements in the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) right-of-way. This is also an issue for private development, which has a significant role in developing Downtown sidewalks as part of frontage improvements.

City staff from multiple departments has been working together to develop a more unified and pedestrian-friendly urban design approach for Downtown. One conclusion of

this effort is that visual clutter and physical barriers need to be reduced on Downtown sidewalks in order to create more space for the people the City wants in Downtown. Reducing visual clutter and physical barriers also allows for the addition of truly distinctive and interesting art, urban design, and storefronts that can be iconic Downtown elements. One way to significantly reduce visual clutter along downtown streets is by eliminating the requirement for brick banding.

Before a recommendation to eliminate brick banding from the City standard details could move forward, an inventory of the existing conditions of the brick banding was conducted. The results indicated that roughly 35% of Downtown sidewalks have brick banding. The brick banding is sometimes placed at the front and sometimes at the back of the sidewalk. It has been installed using scored bricks, smooth bricks, pavers, stamped-concrete, and grey pavers. Some newer sections of sidewalk in Downtown have been constructed without brick banding. In many cases the brick banding has been implemented piece-meal and comes and goes along a corridor.

All of this information was presented to the Planning and Public Works Committee at their June 3, 2010, meeting.

Based on the results of the inventory of existing conditions, and analysis of the City's current urban design principles, staff is recommending that the brick banding be removed from the City standard details for the following reasons:

- Makes sidewalk look narrower and visually reduces walkable space for pedestrians
- Maintaining and repairing banding is expensive and time consuming. Temporary repairs are unattractive and can remain for long periods of time
- Sections that are not repaired or are ongoing problems can be a hazard
- Simplify look of streetscape and focus on developing interesting art and adjacent land uses that are pedestrian-supportive and create a great place; too many urban design treatments on the street will actually detract from the overall streetscape and can make it too busy
- Inconsistent installation of different materials and different locations of banding in sidewalks have significantly reduced the ability of the brick banding to be a unifying and distinctive Downtown urban design treatment
- Does not significantly relate to Downtown architecture

#### **IV. IMPACT:**

Removing brick banding from sidewalk projects in Downtown will decrease the cost of capital projects and private development projects with no negative impact on Downtown urban design.

For example, using bid information from the Bear Creek Pkwy Extension project paver band cost \$215/square foot and scored concrete sidewalk \$5.55/square foot. Therefore,

eliminating the paver band using this information would save \$4,200 for every 10 linear-feet of sidewalk.

In addition ongoing sidewalk maintenance and repair costs will be reduced by eliminating the installation of additional brick banding.

**V. ALTERNATIVES:**

City Council could choose to direct staff to not change the City's standard detail and therefore keep the brick banding standard as a requirement for all new capital and development projects.

**VI. TIME CONSTRAINTS:**

This standard applies to a number of projects that are currently under construction or in design. Delaying a clear decision on this item will lead to a continued inconsistent application of this urban design treatment on sidewalks in Downtown. This can result in increased design and construction costs for both capital and private development projects.

**VII. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS:**

None.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
William J. Campbell, Director of Public Works

7/9/10  
Date

Approved for Council Agenda \_\_\_\_\_/s/  
John Marchione, Mayor

7/9/10  
Date