



# STAFF REPORT

## CITY OF GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FLORIDA

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**TO:** City Council Regular Session **MEETING DATE:** March 7, 2023  
**FROM:** Mike Null  
**SUBJECT:** Update on design of roadway, utility, pedestrian and streetscape improvements on Walnut St from Palmetto Ave to the River. *Mike Null*

### BACKGROUND

At the May 3, 2022 City Council meeting, Council authorized a task order to WGI to design improvements to Walnut Street based on a presentation at the March 15, 2022 City Council Meeting. At the March 15, 2022 meeting, staff presented, and council approved, a design concept for Walnut Street that incorporated design elements of several recently-completed studies in the downtown area. Following is the background information from that March 15, 2022 staff report:

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#### **START BACKGROUND FROM MARCH 15, 2022 MEETING**

Over the last several months, staff has completed a Walnut Street Design project and a Downtown Parking Study. We are in the midst of completing a Downtown Master Plan and a US17 Corridor Study. We have two development projects in the Central Business District that are in different stages of approval. We have funding available from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the regular CIP budget and a tentative EPA 319 Grant.

Staff is working to bring all of these puzzle pieces together and develop a construction project for the downtown area that will address elements of the Walnut Street streetscape, parking, and redevelopment. The idea is to address all elements of a block of roadway at one time. For example, when we design the 300 block of Walnut Street, we will consider:

- Potable Water
- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Electric
- Roadway Surface
- Parking
- Sidewalks
- Landscape
- Bike Lanes
- Pedestrian and Vehicular movement and interaction.

Attached to this staff report, you will find excerpted pages from the Walnut Street Design Study (Pages 1-11) and one sheet that resulted from the 5-day charette associated with the Downtown Master Plan

(Page 12). Based on all the public, stakeholder, professional and Council input from the previously mentioned studies, staff is moving forward with design as follows:

1. The 400 Block of Walnut Street (Palmetto to Orange) – Proposed Option 1 on page 5 of the attached excerpted sheets. This option offers the best combination of bike and pedestrian mobility, retention of some on-street parking and maximization of sidewalk space for outdoor sales or dining.
2. The 300 and 200 Block of Walnut Street (Orange to the River) – Following Page 12 from the design charette, we will move forward with the assumption that the ultimate goal is to line the streets with buildings while maximizing on-street parking. Proposed Option 1 will be the basis for design and be adapted as appropriate.
3. The roadway surface will be real brick from Palmetto to Magnolia. Beyond those areas, the surface of Walnut Street will be stamped asphalt to be re-painted regularly. Intersections will vary. The surface of side streets will be determined based on the life-cycle costs of those streets along with aesthetics.
4. The sidewalks will be concrete with brick inlay bands.
5. The other design concepts and considerations in the attached pages will be included in the project as appropriate including but not limited to:
  - a. The mid-block crossing with planting beds and removable bollards shown on page 4
  - b. Proposed improvements to the pedestrian connection
  - c. Landscaping and lighting improvements.

The next steps will be to reach out to one of our continuing services engineers to design the project. Staff will discuss with the engineer the most economical way to review and design the area that is bounded by Palmetto Ave on the west, Center Street on the north, the River on the east and Cove Street on the south. The intent is that the first phase of construction will include total permanent construction of the Walnut Street right-of-way from Palmetto to the River, to the extent practical. Staff will also include cosmetic and surface parking improvements throughout the design area to the extent practical while minimizing sunk costs when permanent construction does occur.

**(END BACKGROUND FROM MARCH 15 MEETING)**

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Included in the backup materials this evening are selected sheets from the current plan set that show the proposed roadway, hardscape and landscape improvements.

The design portion of the project is behind schedule for two reasons. First, about two months into the design, the project manager from WGI left the company and there was no communication through the transition. This led to a significant learning curve for the new project manager. Second, the engineer's cost estimate came in significantly over budget, so the City and engineering team have been working continuously over the last few months on value engineering options to reduce the estimated cost without sacrificing the desired project elements. Following is the anticipated schedule as of this writing:

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Date</u>
Submit SJRWMD permit for parking lot	March 3, 2023
Update Council with options for value-engineering	March 7, 2023
Public Update Workshop	March 23, 2023
100% plans completed	April 1, 2023
Receive SJRWMD construction permit	April 28, 2023
Advertise Project for bid	May 4, 2023
Bids due	June 1, 2023
Council Award bid	June 20, 2023
Notice to Proceed (Construction Begins)	July 3, 2023
Construction Complete (9 months)	March 30, 2024

This update is being provided to Council this evening to answer any questions prior to bid advertisement. Staff will conduct a workshop on March 23 at 6:30 PM to provide an update to the public, with special emphasis on the affected property owners immediately adjacent to the project. Once the plans are complete and the SJRWMD permit is issued, we will advertise the project for bid and bring back to Council for an award recommendation.

### FISCAL IMPACT

The funding available for this project includes:

- FY 22 Public Works CIP – Streetscape Design - \$25,000
- FY 22 Public Works Brick Street Repair Budget - \$200,000
- ARPA funds designated by Council - \$1,100,000
- FDEP 319 Grant funds (high confidence of funding) - \$400,000

The total available for this phase of the project is \$1,725,000. This design task order will be funded from the ARPA funds that have been designated for this project.

### RECOMMENDATION

Receive the update. No motion required.