

## Engineering Division of the Public Works Department

To: Chairperson Davis

From: Nathan R. Williams, Civil Engineer I

Date: July 30, 2026

Subject: Public Safety and Welfare Meeting of August 5, 2026

Review and take possible action: Eighth Street Two-Way Conversion

### Background

In 2025, the one-way street network was evaluated. The report was presented in a Committee of the Whole meeting and was well received. The report recommended further evaluation of each street, the development of a conversion plan with a scope of work, and stakeholder engagement. The intent, starting with this meeting, is to review one street per monthly Public Safety and Welfare meeting. Notices were mailed to property owners along this corridor informing them of this topic on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Eighth Street, between Main Street and Western Avenue, is being evaluated for conversion. The first block, between Main Street and Market Street, was referred back to committee at the July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Common Council meeting. This block is under reconstruction and has been widened to accommodate two-way traffic operation. Eighth Street, between Market Street and Western Avenue, is at least 27 feet wide face-of-curb to face-of-curb (FOC to FOC), and has parking allowed only on the west side of the street. Upon conversion to two-way traffic, this existing parking restriction will allow for adequate two-way operation. The new street cross section would have two 10-foot-wide travel lanes and a 7-foot-wide parking lane on the west side of the street. This would function similar to Dewey Ave before the reconstruction.

Historically, the Watertown High School and YMCA operated between Dodge Street and Wisconsin Street. Since these facilities have moved elsewhere, traffic volumes have decreased in the area. A parking restriction, "No Parking This Side Except Sundays", is found on the east side of the road between Market Street and Eighth Street. This is believed to be in place due to the Advent Christian Church in this area. Should the roadway be converted to two-way traffic, this restriction will need to be revisited. As part of the reconstruction of Eighth Street between Main Street and Market Street, parking was added on the east side of the roadway and could serve as a replacement for the additional capacity needed on Sundays in this area.

One of the challenges with converting traffic flow from one-way to two-way is to ensure that the public is informed of the change to prevent traffic incidents. A few measures are planned. The first is to distribute notices to property owners at least two-weeks in advance of the traffic change. The second measure is to post press releases to the city website and social media prior to the change. The third measure is to install temporary signs demarcating the area as a two-way traffic zone. This temporary signage plan is attached to this memo for reference.

## Budget Goal

1. Create a community where all can feel safe and strive for economic success.
4. Involve those who are impacted before making decisions.

## Financial Impact

All temporary signage required has been purchased previously and will be reused for this conversion.

## Recommendation

The Engineering Division recommends converting Eighth Street from one-way to two-way traffic. Three options for the conversion, if desired, are as follows:

1. Pass a resolution to convert Eighth Street between Main Street and Western Avenue as a standalone project as soon as practicable.
2. Pass a resolution to convert Eighth Street between Main Street and Western Avenue at a future specified date. The intent would be to use this date for all other streets that can be converted, as evaluated at future Public Safety and Welfare meetings.
3. Hold conversion of all streets until each segment identified in the downtown one-way to two-way street conversion study can be evaluated. The intent would be to pass a resolution in the future with all of these evaluated segments, for conversion as soon as practicable.

Should more than one street be converted at the same time, additional temporary signs will need to be purchased.

Attachments:

- Conversion Signage Plan
- Letter to Property Owners