

Engineering Division of the Public Works Department

To: Chairperson Davis

From: Nathan R. Williams, Civil Engineer I

Date: September 30, 2026

Subject: Public Safety and Welfare Meeting of October 7, 2026

Review and take possible action: S. Sixth Street One-Way to Two-Way Conversion

Background

The Public Safety and Welfare Committee has asked to review one one-way street at each monthly meeting. This is to evaluate each street in detail, as they were generally evaluated in the Downtown One-Way to Two-Way Street Conversion Study, prepared by engineering consultant raSmith. This month, Sixth Street, between Western Avenue and Jefferson Street, is under review. Letters were sent to property owners on September 23, 2026, informing them of the upcoming meeting and welcoming feedback regarding the proposed change.

Below is an excerpt from the raSmith study, regarding the pros and cons of street conversion:

One-Way

- + Higher vehicular capacity
- Faster travel speeds (less desirable in urban downtown setting)
- + Shorter travel times
- Potential for wrong-way movements
- + Simplified pedestrian crossings (cross one travel direction at a time)

Two-Way

- + Slower travel speeds
- Longer travel times
- + Simplified circulation for motorists
- + Improved business visibility
- + Fewer street signs
- + Improved conditions for vulnerable users with slower motor vehicle speeds

Sixth Street between Milwaukee Street and Jefferson Street is 34' wide FOC to FOC (face of curb to face of curb), one-way with parking on both sides. Between Western Avenue and Milwaukee Street, Sixth Street is 27' wide at most, one-way with parking on both sides. As per the report prepared by raSmith, a minimum width of 28' FOC to FOC is acceptable for two-way traffic with parking on both sides in local, residential areas. To note, city subdivision standards require a minimum width of 34' FOC to FOC when parking is provided on both sides.

raSmith's analysis of Sixth Street is as follows:

"6th Street: All but one block has a width of 32 feet or greater and would operate as two-way with minimum 9-foot travel lanes in each direction and parking on both sides. The block between Western Avenue and Milwaukee Street has a width of 27 feet. Parking restrictions on one side of the street should be considered, or it would operate with no side-by-side opposing traffic (with traffic waiting for the opposing direction to clear) and parking on both sides."

There is a double-yellow marked centerline on S Sixth Street between Main Street and Jefferson Street, and the width in this area is also 34' wide FOC to FOC, with parking on both sides.

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

Should the street be converted without reconstruction, financial impact will be negligible and require only signage changes.

Should S Sixth Street between Western Avenue and Milwaukee Street be converted with reconstruction (initiated for the sole purpose of widening this block of street to standard city width for two-way traffic and parking on both sides of the street), costs are anticipated to be approximately \$75,000. This cost includes only new pavement and curb and gutter, and any improvements needed for storm, sanitary, and water could increase the overall cost to the city budget significantly. This block was last reconstructed in 2001.

Recommendation

The Engineering Division recommends converting S Sixth Street from one-way to two-way traffic. The following are suggested options for motions to send the conversion to Common Council for review:

- Convert S Sixth Street from Jefferson Street to Western Avenue in the month of May 2027, no later than May 31st, with a recommendation to remove parking on the west side of S Sixth Street between Milwaukee Street and Western Avenue.
- Convert S Sixth Street from Jefferson Street to Milwaukee Street in the month of May 2027, no later than May 31st, and maintain one-way traffic operations between Milwaukee Street and Western Avenue until such a time that S Sixth Street from Milwaukee Street to Western Avenue can be reconstructed and widened to standard city width for two-way traffic and parking on both sides of the street.
- Hold conversion of S Sixth Street from Jefferson Street to Western Avenue until such a time that S Sixth Street from Western Avenue to Milwaukee Street can be reconstructed and widened to standard city width for two-way traffic and parking on both sides of the street.

Attachments:

- Site Map
- Letter to Property Owners