

Department of Public Works

To: Alderperson Arnett & the Public Works Commission

From: Andrew Beyer, P.E., Director of Public Works

Date: February 19, 2026

Subject: Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Project – Street Lighting Review & Direction

Background

Review and take possible action: Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Project – Street Lighting Review & Direction

At its January 13 meeting, the Public Works Commission requested that City Staff further evaluate street lighting options for the Downtown Main Street Reconstruction Project. Specifically, the Commission asked Staff to review:

1. Whether the existing pedestrian lighting could be reused.
2. Whether a more cost effective decorative light pole option could be identified.

City Staff met in January and February to review the existing system, evaluate vendor options, and assess cost and project schedule considerations. The following summarizes Staff's findings.

Existing Lighting System Evaluation

Staff evaluated the feasibility of reusing or refurbishing the existing downtown lighting system. Based on field review and coordination with vendors, refurbishment is not considered feasible for the following reasons:

- Pole bases appear to be nearing structural fatigue .
- Ballasts, luminaires, and glass components have largely failed and are discontinued. Newly available components do not fit the existing style of light.
- Older fixtures have little to no salvage value.

Some recently purchased fixtures are salvageable and could potentially be reused in another corridor such as Third Street. However, reuse within the Main Street project area is not recommended. Photos are attached as a reference.

Vendor and Light Pole Evaluation

Staff evaluated reputable manufacturers with a target service life of 30 years or greater. Recent regional installations were reviewed for performance and durability.

Two manufacturers were evaluated in greater detail:

- Sternberg Lighting (currently selected luminaire)
- Sun Valley Lighting

Staff compared the Sun Valley pole to the currently selected Sternberg pole and found that overall quality and aesthetics were similar. Shop drawings of each pole are attached. The Sun Valley pole was determined to be high quality, carried a similar aesthetic to the selected Sternberg light pole, and represents a more cost effective option.

Staff recommends retaining functional accessories such as banner arms, GFI outlets, and related pole features to avoid future retrofits and additional maintenance costs.

Preliminary Cost Comparison

Below is a summary of estimated pole quantities and placeholders for cost comparison between the Sternberg and Sun Valley options. Final pricing is subject to updated vendor quotations.

Item	Quantity	Sternberg Option	Sun Valley Option
Decorative Street Light Poles (30')	42	\$ <u>689,514.00</u>	\$ <u>489,562.50</u>
Decorative Pedestrian Light Poles (12')	30	\$ <u>141,930.00</u>	\$ <u>117,075.00</u>
Decorative Street Light for Top of Signal	16	\$ <u>310,144.00</u>	\$ <u>174,240.00</u>
Subtotal		\$<u>1,141,588.00</u>	\$<u>780,877.50</u>
Contractor Overhead & Profit (35%)		\$ <u>399,555.80</u>	\$ <u>273,307.13</u>
15% Contingency		\$ <u>231,171.57</u>	\$ <u>158,127.69</u>
Total Estimated Cost		\$<u>1,772,315.37</u>	\$<u>1,212,312.32</u>

Contractor overhead and profit are estimated at 35 percent. This cost could be reduced if the City were to procure the poles directly and supply them to the contractor for installation. Due to fabrication lead times, this procurement would need to occur in 2027 to support the 2028 construction schedule.

WisDOT Coordination and Project Impacts

Staff requested high level guidance from WisDOT regarding potential impacts of changing the currently approved decorative luminaire.

WisDOT indicated:

- Changes to the appearance of decorative lighting would require revisiting the Section 106 review process, including additional coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office. This process alone could take approximately 30 days, followed by additional documentation updates.
- Project documents including the Design Study Report, plats, real estate acquisition documents, and utility coordination could be delayed a minimum of two months.
- Schedule impacts would likely jeopardize the planned PS&E date and potentially delay the project LET, which could move the project out of the 2028 construction season.
- WisDOT's consultant, AECOM, may need to re-run the lighting analysis to confirm compliance with lighting standards, requiring a contract amendment at City expense.
- Any cost differential above a standard WisDOT lighting system remains the responsibility of the City and would be incorporated into the State/Municipal Financial Agreement update.

WisDOT emphasized that the current schedule is already tight due to earlier Section 106 coordination delays.

Financial Impact

Decorative street lighting is considered a City cost participation item under the State Municipal Financial Agreement. Any cost above a standard WisDOT lighting system is the responsibility of the City.

Based on updated pricing, the estimated total costs are as follows:

Sternberg Option

- Material Cost: \$1,141,588.00
- 35% Contractor Overhead, Profit, and Installation: \$399,555.80
- 15% Contingency: \$231,171.57
- **Total Estimated Cost: \$1,772,315.37**

Sun Valley Option

- Material Cost: \$780,877.50
- 35% Contractor Overhead, Profit, and Installation: \$273,307.13
- 15% Contingency: \$158,127.69
- **Total Estimated Cost: \$1,212,312.32**

The difference between the Sternberg and Sun Valley options is approximately \$560,003.05, with the Sun Valley option representing the lower cost alternative while maintaining comparable quality and aesthetics.

If the City elects to directly procure lighting poles in 2027 for contractor installation, contractor overhead and profit may be reduced, resulting in additional savings. Direct procurement would require advance City funding due to fabrication lead times.

If a substantially different lighting style beyond the currently approved decorative concept is pursued, additional redesign costs would be incurred, along with potential schedule impacts that could delay the project and increase overall project costs.

Recommendation

Based on:

- The infeasibility of reusing the existing lighting system,
- Comparable quality and aesthetics between Sternberg and Sun Valley products,
- The potential cost savings associated with the Sun Valley option, and
- The significant schedule risks associated with pursuing a substantially different lighting concept,

Staff is seeking Commission direction on:

1. Whether to maintain the currently approved decorative lighting concept.
2. Whether to pursue the Sun Valley pole as a cost effective alternative consistent with the approved aesthetic.
3. Whether the City should consider advance procurement of poles in 2027 to reduce contractor overhead and profit.

Staff will continue coordination with WisDOT as directed by the Commission.