

Engineering Division of the Public Works Department

To: Chairperson Davis

From: Nathan R. Williams, Civil Engineer I

Date: August 20, 2026

Subject: Public Safety and Welfare Meeting of August 26, 2026

Review and take possible action: S. Seventh 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. S. Eighth Street was reviewed on August 5th, 2026. Continuing west, Seventh Street, between Western Avenue and Jefferson Street, is under review. Letters were sent to property owners on August 12, 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

Seventh Street between Western Avenue and Jefferson Street is 32' wide FOC to FOC (face of curb to face of curb), 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. Between Jefferson Street and Market Street, Seventh Street is 32' wide and operating with two-way traffic and parking on the west side only. A street width of 32' appears to be a functional width for two-way traffic, as it provides two 7' parking lanes and two 9' travel lanes. 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 Seventh Street is as follows:

"7th Street: All blocks south of Main Street have a width of 32 feet and would operate as two-way with minimum 9-foot travel lanes in each direction and parking on both sides. The block between Main Street and Madison Street has a width of 29 feet. Parking restriction on one side of the street could be considered, or it can operate with limited opposing side-by-side traffic and parking on both sides."

There are currently no signs noting that the traffic pattern changes at Jefferson Street. There is a double-yellow marked centerline on S Seventh Street between Main Street and Jefferson Street.

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 the street be converted with reconstruction, financial impact would be limited to impacts associated with any widening beyond city standards. It is anticipated, without completing design, that the street would be designed to the city minimum subdivision standard of 34' FOC to FOC. As the project would be driven primarily by aging infrastructure, costs associated with one-way to two-way traffic conversion are expected to be negligible.

Recommendation

The Engineering Division recommends converting S Seventh 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 Seventh Street from Jefferson Street to Western Avenue in the month of May 2027, no later than May 31st.
- Convert S Seventh 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 east side of S Seventh Street.
- Hold conversion of S Seventh Street until such a time that it can be reconstructed and widened to standard city width for two-way traffic and parking on both sides of the street. S Seventh Street is not planned for reconstruction in the near future, and it was last reconstructed in 1994.

Attachments:

- Site Map
- Letter to Property Owners