

City moves ahead on Downtown-Old Town 'streetscape' planning

The City of Auburn is pushing forward with its ambitious plan for a scenic design corridor connecting Old Town with the Downtown area.

The city council, sitting as the redevelopment agency's governing board, this week authorized a \$121,880 contract with Foothill Associates of Rocklin to prepare a master plan for the project, which will be developed along High Street from Elm Avenue to Central Square and then down Lincoln Way to Old Town.

Most of the 4,832-foot length of

the corridor is in Caltrans right-of-way because it's part of State Highway 49.

City Manager Robert Richardson said the project's goals are to create a distinctive link between Downtown and Old Town; continue to define Auburn's identity and "sense of place"; improve and add "wayfinding tools" (presumably location and direction signs); contribute to economic revitalization efforts; create more quality walking experiences; improve infrastructure; and design a corridor

where people will want to "stop, stroll, shop and stay."

Richardson said Foothill Associates was selected for the master planning job by the city economic commission (EDC), which received nine responses to its request for proposals.

Foothills Associates will work with the EDC and representatives of the arts commission, the Old Town and Downtown business associations and the chamber of commerce. The planning should be completed by next March.

In another matters, the council was warm to Mayor Mike Holmes's idea of establishing an Auburn youth advisory commission. The city staff

was directed to study the proposal and draft the resolution the council will need to formally set up such a body.

In support of his suggestion, Holmes said, "The youth of this community do not have a vehicle to present its views to the city and other agencies. It's something that's long overdue."

Councilman Keith Nesbitt expressed his willingness to okay the commission and "give it a try for six months." Councilwoman Bridget Powers suggested that a teacher or counselor serve as an advisor to the commission. And Councilman Kevin Hanley said the commission will only be successful if it has a "prime mover," which council ob-

servers interpreted as a hint that Holmes should stick close to it.

City Finance Chief Andy Heath gave the council a quarterly report of the city's investments, noting that as of the end of September the portfolio was worth \$10.1 million, a decrease of \$3 million from the total on June 30.

Heath explained the drop by pointing out the money was needed for what he called "unprecedented capital expenditure levels," the annual "dry period financing," and debt service requirements.

Come next January, he said, the city treasury will receive about \$4 million in tax revenue, mostly from property taxes.