

ITEM 6. UPTOWN CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION

DC# 14-103 – Uptown Corridor Beautification

Mr. Hautzinger explained that the Uptown Corridor Beautification project is currently under review by Village Staff, and Staff is looking for preliminary feedback from the commissioners tonight. This is a corridor study for the areas of Rand Road/Arlington Heights Road/Palatine Road, and include Southpoint Shopping Center, Town & Country Mall, Northpoint Shopping Center and Arlington Plaza. The study will look at enhancing the corridors throughout this area and create a sense of a shopping district, with the intent to call it Uptown. The Village of Arlington Heights has hired Teska Associates as the consultant to kick-off this corridor study, which will be part of a long range plan to help guide future planning for this area.

Mr. Hautzinger began a slide presentation of the project. It included an aerial of the Corridor Study Area, Proposed Overall Corridor Landscape Improvements, Corridor Gateway and Banner Locations, TIF 5 Corridor Landscape Improvements, Intersection Improvements at Palatine/Rand Road and Palatine/Arlington Heights Road, Intersection Improvements Visualization for Palatine/Rand Road, District Gateway Signage, Perimeter Landscape Character at Palatine Road, at Arlington Heights Road, and at Rand Road, Internal Pedestrian Access, Public Streetscape Materials, Landscape Materials/Trees, and Landscape Materials Shrubs and Perennials.

Chair Eckhardt questioned the appropriateness of the amount of time and money being invested in creating improved crosswalks at these 3 intersections, which in fact have very little pedestrian traffic and are actually very dangerous to cross. He was in favor of improving aesthetics, but to create the wonderful, tightly urban design elements shown in the presentation, in what is really a super highway area, seemed questionable, particularly at the Palatine/Rand Road intersection. **Mr. Hautzinger** explained that Staff is aware of the low amount of pedestrian traffic at these intersections; however, the improvements will make the areas safer as well as look nicer.

With regards to District Gateway Signage, **Chair Eckhardt** supported a gateway structure of some design; however he felt that the core 10 steel design shown in Option #2 resembled Scottsdale, Arizona, which he was not in favor of. **Commissioner Kubow** agreed with the similarity to Scottsdale, Arizona. **Chair Eckhardt** preferred the direction of Option #1 with enhancements being made such as kinetics, something moving or LED lights that change color. He referred to the cool but subtle LED sign in Park Ridge visible from I-90 for Valspar Paint. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** said his only preference was for Option #1. **Commissioner Fasolo** liked the simplicity of Option #2. **Chair Eckhardt** did not like the graphics shown in Option #2, and he also questioned the appropriateness of the 'Uptown' branding name chosen for this neighborhood. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** did not understand the need to have 6 gateway signs. He felt this was too many signs for this area, since there would also be signs on the poles and banners. **Chair Eckhardt** agreed and suggested having a pole sign to identify the area, one central gateway sign on the ground, and one gateway sign at the center of the Uptown area.

Commissioner Kubow said the only gateway sign he liked was the circular sign shown in Option #3.

The commissioners were all in support of uplighting median trees as shown in the presentation. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** felt that the uplighting would indicate a presence of arriving somewhere without having to say it on a sign. The other commissioners agreed. **Chair Eckhardt** commented that he hoped to see similar improvements in the proposed Hickory/Kensington Area redevelopment. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** had no concerns with the landscape materials (trees) being presented.

Mr. Hautzinger also presented photographs of existing conditions at the various gateways in the Uptown area, existing conditions at the intersections, and existing conditions at the Rand Road corridor. The commissioners all agreed there was plenty of opportunity for improvements in these areas and they reiterated their concerns about safety and the small amount of pedestrian traffic at these intersections. **Chair Eckhardt** was concerned about too many parkway trees blocking the view of businesses from the street. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** reiterated that he could not support 6 gateways signs in the Uptown area, and felt that one gateway sign on Arlington Heights Road near Palatine Road was enough. He preferred softer instead of more sculptural hardscape, and he referenced Deer Park as a good example of a town center concept done tastefully with signage to show you have arrived somewhere. **Chair Eckhardt** agreed and reiterated that it was a good idea to brand the neighborhood; however, it should be subtle.

There was no further discussion.