

Information Item

Date: March 19, 2018

To: The City Manager

From: Evan Raleigh, Director of Business Inclusion and Advancement

Subject: Options for the Redevelopment of the Patterson/Glenn/Greenway Commercial Corridor

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Vitality and Diversity

Strategic Objective: Promote Commercial Development in Economically Disadvantaged Areas

Strategic Plan Action Item: No

Key Work Item: No



In an effort to address the blighted commercial properties located at the highly visible and heavily traveled intersection of Patterson, Glenn, and Greenway Avenues, city staff is exploring several options to improve the physical appearance of this major intersection. The options currently under consideration are outlined below.

The first option proposes a façade improvement and streetscape enhancement project on the properties fronting Patterson Avenue. Proposed streetscape enhancements in the public right-of-way could include new on-street parking, a new pedestrian sidewalk, granite curbing, pedestrian level lighting, and landscaped bump outs for tree planting. Potential façade improvements to the privately owned buildings include multi-tone painted storefronts, awnings, and architectural cladding.

An architect conducting preliminary work for the project estimates a total project cost of approximately \$334,000. This includes approximately \$306,000 for construction costs and the balance of \$28,000 for design. Of the construction cost estimate, approximately \$129,000 is for the streetscape enhancements in the public right-of-way and \$177,000 is for façade improvement related items.

All of the work to the structures proposed under this option is limited to addressing the aesthetics of the subject properties. Any items pertaining to building code compliance required for occupancy of the buildings are not included in the scope of this project. One of the buildings currently has an operating business. Given the age and current condition of many of the buildings, it would likely require substantial additional investment for the buildings to meet occupancy requirements.

Funds to support the proposed project would come primarily from Revitalizing Urban Commercial Areas (RUCA) and would be supplemented by other sources. Of the \$2 million

approved for RUCA as part of the 2014 general obligation bonds, 10% (\$200,000) was designated for infrastructure improvements within eligible areas. To date, none of these funds have been allocated to a project. Remaining funding for the project would come from matching grant funds awarded to the city by the Appalachian Regional Commission that were designated for expenditure in this particular area and from economic development bond funds.

Should the Mayor and City Council elect to move forward with the project, staff will work with the architect to finalize drawings and the scope of work. Once drawings and the scope are completed and approved by the City/County Inspections division, the construction would be put out for bid pursuant to the city's standard bidding processes. In anticipation of a potential project, staff has secured signed release forms and waivers of liability from all impacted property owners granting staff, contractors, and agents of the city access to their properties for the purpose of further assessment, repair, and/or construction related to the proposed project.

A second option to remedy the existing conditions would involve the Mayor and City Council pursuing actions as prescribed by the "Unsafe Nonresidential Buildings or Structures" section under Chapter 10, Article II of the City Code. Per the ordinance, the city's building inspector declares unsafe any nonresidential building or structure that meets certain criteria. Prior to the declaration of a building or structure as unsafe pursuant to the provisions of the ordinance, the building inspector is required to prepare for City Council's consideration a map depicting the boundaries of the area targeted for redevelopment and a report that: (i) contains exterior pictures of the building or structures; (ii) indicates the approximate age of the buildings or structures in the area to be so designated ; (iii) generally describes any unsafe or unsanitary conditions, the deterioration or dilapidation of the buildings or structures; (iv) describes the impact or potential impact of the buildings or structures on the community surrounding the area to be so designated and (v) provides, if available, a general description of the area's history in terms of policy and fire service calls.

After an area has been designated by the Mayor and City Council and the proper documentation obtained by the building inspector on the building(s) or structure(s) deemed unsafe, an order is sent to the property owners to repair the conditions or demolish and remove the structure. If the owner or owners fail or refuse to abide by said order within the prescribed time directed by the building inspector or by the City Council in the event of an appeal of the inspector's decision, the City Council may order the building(s) or structure(s) to be repaired or demolished and removed or take such other action as it may find necessary to suppress and abate the nuisance and remove the unsafe conditions found to exist and assess the cost and expense of doing such work against the lot or parcel of land on which the building(s) or structure(s) is located.

A final option would be negotiating the acquisition of the subject properties with the intent to demolish. A preliminary review of the tax records shows that the value of the land and commercial structures located within the area bounded by Patterson, Glenn and Greenways Avenues totals approximately \$145,000. The cost to demolish the properties is not currently known but given the age and size of the structures, costs would be significant.

Based upon feedback from the Mayor and City Council, staff will work to identify and pursue the preferred course of action.