

# STAFF REPORT



To: Bedford Town Council  
From: S. Daly, Town Manager  
Date: Mar 25, 2014  
Re: **TIF DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS ENGINEERING DESIGN**  
Prepared By: J. Stanford, Public Works Director

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## **TOWN MANAGER COMMENTS – RECOMMENDATION**

I concur with the recommendation that the Council endorse the proposed design for the reasons stated in this report, subject to the availability of sufficient funds to proceed with construction.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2010 the Bedford Town Council adopted RSA 162-K and the South River Road Tax Financing Increment District Development Program and Financing Plan, hereinafter called the "TIF Plan".

The approved TIF Plan included a broad project scope (widen Route 3, repaving, sidewalk enhancements, intersection improvements, landscaping) and an estimated project cost of \$4.2 million with revenue anticipated from TIF payments and bond revenue. In March 2011, voters approved a bond of \$4.1 million, of which \$3.6 million was estimated specifically for construction. On February 12, 2014, the Town Council amended the TIF plan with a minor district/extent change, inclusion of additional revenue sources and revised the project construction budget to \$5,024,673.

Since establishment of the TIF Plan, survey and design of the improvements has been ongoing with several iterations and design alternatives reviewed to meet overall objectives. As shown on the attached draft design plan, a dual use lane along South River Road has been added from Park Drive to the approximate end of improvements at the Manchester Town Line. This combined with alignment/turning lanes and traffic signal upgrades to Colby Court and Palomino/Washington Place intersections will improve traffic flow and safety. Along with upgrading curbing and the existing sidewalks, a new sidewalk on the western side of South River Road will provide accessible routes throughout the area.

In 2013, we also investigated incorporating additional landscaping features including decorative street lighting, gateway streetscape enhancements, placing utilities underground and widening the roadway to provide a full bike lane. Cost considerations (over \$1.5 million for landscaping features and \$2 million for undergrounding utilities) as well as significant abutter impacts, precluded incorporating these into the final design. We do have some limited landscaping features for aesthetics and a widened shoulder that will allow improved bicycle use within the area. In addition to the major upgrades, the design also includes an overlay of South River Road from CVS to the Route 101 bridge/overpass and reclaim/overlay of the adjacent local roads in the district.

Of significant note with this design plan, closing the existing entrance to Beaudoin Street from South River Road and providing a connection between Beaudoin Street and Washington Place has been incorporated into the improvements. Currently, uncontrolled access in and out of Beaudoin Street is an existing safety problem that cannot be corrected without these modifications. Furthermore, allowing the condition to exist unchanged, would negate much of the traffic flow and safety enhancements gained by the TIF Plan in that area. While the original TIF Plan did not contemplate such a change to Beaudoin Street, the modifications will provide access through a signalized intersection and is consistent with other approved plans in the South River Road corridor.

The modifications to Beaudoin Street will require acquisition of 1 parcel with demolition of the existing house. The impacted property is in trust with the family members of the original home owner who is recently deceased. Town Engineer Jeff Foote has begun discussions with the family members to acquire the property, but it is not clear at this point if they are willing to sell the property. In addition to this parcel of land, there are many other small property easement acquisitions, permanent and temporary, as well as utility relocations that will be required along South River Road. Jeff is currently working with impacted property owners and utility companies to accommodate the improvements.

We also requested utility companies review existing connections and customers along the district. There is a 3-year road cut moratorium in Town regulations that prohibits road pavement cuts for three years after road paving. As such, it is imperative that abutters obtain new or expanded connections prior to this project. In addition to discussions with the utility companies, we will prepare/send out notification to project abutters informing them of the moratorium and urging them to contact utility companies to obtain new connections and/or upgrades service to accommodate any future development plans that they may have.

Until there is a known cost of construction and sufficient revenue to cover these costs, the improvements cannot move forward. As such, the project has been publically advertised with a bid date of Friday, March 28th.

The TIF Advisory Committee has endorsed the draft plan. In addition, the Planning Board and Highway Safety Committee have been given a presentation and provided input on the design.

## **DISCUSSION**

The design is consistent with the objectives of the TIF Plan. While site and budget constraints limit the amount of aesthetic improvements, the design incorporates several major key elements including safety enhancements, improved traffic flow and expanded pedestrian access.

Once we have bids, a determination of adequate funding can be made and a project schedule developed. Should bid costs exceed the amended budget and/or there is insufficient revenue, it may be necessary to scale back some of the proposed improvements or possibly delay the project until enough added value in the TIF District be achieved.

In anticipation of moving forward with the improvements, there are other considerations that will need Town Council approval and guidance including; endorsing the submitted design, authorizing proceeding with property acquisitions/easements, and implementing expansion of the road cut moratorium to 5-years.

### **COST and FUNDING**

Total cost of the project as designed is estimated at just over \$5,000,000. Primary funding of the TIF is through the \$4,100,000 bond authorization approved by voters in 2011. The bond funds combined with other funding sources, including approximately \$100,000 in Signal Improvement Capital Reserve and \$900,000 in Town Infrastructure Bond funds, were approved by the Town Council on February 12, 2014 for use on this project.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Town Council endorse the draft design plan with the proposed property/easement acquisitions as presented. If endorsed, the Town Engineer can then begin formal negotiations with the property abutters. We also recommend increasing the road cut moratorium to 5 years because it will help increase the life span of the improvements and the appearance of the district.

### **RECOMMENDED MOTION FOR THE COUNCIL**

I MOVE THAT the Bedford Town Council formally endorse the TIF design plan as presented, including implementing a 5-year moratorium on road cuts, and authorize the Town Manager to pursue easements and land acquisitions as necessary to implement the improvements.

ATTACHED:

Draft TIF Design Plan

Jessie Levine Memo – TIF District Updated 12-31-13