

RIVERFRONT DRIVE LIGHTING AND STREETSCAPE PROJECT

Project Feasibility Report
City Project Number 11140

March 10, 2025

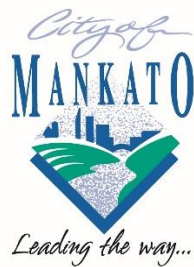


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II. PROJECT CONTACTS

This report and feasibility study was prepared by Bolton & Menk, Inc. in close coordination with Susan Arntz, City Manager and Karl Keel, Interim Public Works Director.

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overhead, highway-style lighting, installed with the 2024 Riverfront Drive Reconstruction Project, does not match the character and existing light pole design in the City Center and Old Town District. The 2024 Riverfront Drive Reconstruction Project also did not include any streetscape or beautification elements such as hanging baskets or benches which were anticipated to be installed at a later date. These elements are important to support the character and sense of place in the Old Town District. A planning effort between the City and the Old Town Association has resulted in proposed improvements in the Old Town area of Riverfront Drive.

As part of the City's ongoing street light replacement program, a Riverfront Drive lighting improvement project is planned for 2025 from Lafayette Street to approximately 200' north of the Good Counsel Drive intersection. The purpose of that project is to replace the aging roadway lights in this area.

A study was conducted to determine how to pair these two projects together for cost efficiencies and to accomplish goals for historic style lighting and benches in the Old Town District. Representatives from Old Town engaged with city staff to determine the proposed improvements as presented. Based on the feasibility analysis and Old Town engagement, the recommendation is to:

- Remove the highway-style lighting from Main Street to Madison Avenue and replace with historic-style roadway/pedestrian lighting. The lighting will include brackets for hanging flower baskets which will be purchased separately from this project.
- Install the highway-style lighting removed from Old Town (plus an additional 8 lights) in the 2025 planned Riverfront Drive lighting improvement area from Lafayette Street to approximately 200' north of the Good Counsel Drive intersection.
- Add benches on both sides of Riverfront Drive between Plum Street and Rock Street

The estimated cost of these improvements is \$742,000. The project can be accomplished in 2025 by letting competitive bids for the work. It is recommended the council accept this project feasibility report and direct staff to prepare final plans, specifications, and authorize bids.

IV. PROJECT BACKGROUND

This project is a follow-up to the recently completed reconstruction of Riverfront Drive in 2024. The 2024 project included the complete replacement of the existing four-lane roadway with a new three-lane roadway, new municipal utilities, expanded sidewalks, new traffic control signals and new roadway lighting. No additional streetscaping or aesthetic improvements were included in this project.

The Old Town Association represents the commercial core on Riverfront Drive between Plum Street and Madison Avenue. As construction neared completion in 2024, concern was raised by

Old Town businesses regarding the highway style lighting being installed and lack of streetscape amenities provided by the roadway project. The city initiated a feasibility study and worked closely with members of the Old Town Association to address concerns and develop improvements that could be implemented as soon as possible within the boundaries and constraints of the recently completed project.

V. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed project will use the recently completed Riverfront Drive roadway reconstruction as a base for Streetscape Amenities and Lighting Project. The proposed improvements will include three (3) zones of improvements to enhance the Old Town District and continue the City's ongoing roadway lighting replacement program along Riverfront Drive. The zones of improvements include.

- Zone 1 – Streetscape Amenity improvements including benches and bike racks (in public parking lots) between Plum Street and Rock Street and reinstallation of the Old Town District Monument
- Zone 2 – Old Town District historic style roadway/pedestrian lighting installation between Main Street and Madison Ave
- Zone 3 – Highway-style lighting replacements between Lafayette St and North of Good Counsel Drive.
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Zone 1 Considerations for Improvements

The goal of Zone 1 improvements is to provide streetscape enhancements in the Old Town District that will directly support and enhance the patron experience. The design team worked directly with the city staff and Old Town District representatives to identify the zone extents relative to the active pedestrian commercial zone and available right-of-way suitable for amenities. The proposed design utilizes three design amenities as selected by the representatives:

- **Benches** - Each bench is strategically positioned based on city and Old Town District representatives' in-depth knowledge of the high use locations and available spaces.
- **Bike racks** - Public use bike racks are intentionally located in adjacent city owned parking lots situated to fit within one parking stall. It is the intent to allow individual business owners to request bike racks to be installed within the public right-of-way if the business use is such that will support the bike rack use.
- **Old Town District Monument** – the monument was removed during the Riverfront Drive roadway reconstruction and stored within the public works facilities. It will be cleaned and restored to its original location in the median south of the Plum Street intersection. A section of concrete within the median will be removed to accommodate the installation.

Zone 2 Considerations for Improvements

The goal of Zone 2 improvements is to acknowledge the historic character of the Old Town District with the reintroduction of roadway lighting that matches the historic style in downtown Mankato. The goal of this feasibility analysis was to utilize existing light pole spacing and electrical circuits to minimize construction needs and additional cost. The design team worked with a lighting manufacturer to determine adequate lighting levels along the corridor for vehicles and pedestrians can be accommodated with a double acorn light fixture on historic-style 15-foot light poles at the spacing of existing 30-foot highway-style poles. Each of these new historic-style poles will be designed with anchor bolt spacing to match existing footings requiring no changes to the footing or electrical circuitry. Each new pole will be structurally suitable to accommodate the addition of decorative elements including banners, flags, hanging baskets, and winter light decorations.

Zone 3 Considerations for Improvements

The area of Zone 3 is north of the Old Town District and is part of the City's ongoing streetlight replacement project. The highway-style roadway lighting salvaged from Zone 2 will be reinstalled and will replace the aging existing lights in Zone 3. All existing footings and circuitry are to be protected and reused during this replacement project. The salvaged poles from Zone 2 have been selected specifically by the City of Mankato to match the bolt spacing of the existing system to allow for efficient pole replacement. The existing poles in Zone 3 will be removed and legally disposed of. An additional eight highway-style light poles will be required to be purchased new in order to fulfill the extents of Zone 3 light pole quantity. The project includes considerations for damaged/rusted anchor bolts and/or compromised footings that if found, will require replacement for a structurally suitable reinstallation of the light pole. In preparation for the unknown, the design team has established unit price bid items that can be utilized if necessary for these situations.

VI. COSTS

Total project costs are identified below for Old Town District Streetscape and City Streetlight replacement.

Old Town District Lighting and Amenities

Lighting Improvements	_____	\$454,000
Amenities	_____	\$75,500
Subtotal	_____	\$529,500

North Riverfront Streetlight Replacement

Salvage & Reinstall	_____	\$131,500
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New Light Poles _____ \$81,000
Subtotal _____ \$212,500

Project Estimated Total _____ \$742,000

Note: Mobilization, traffic control, and contingency is divided equally to each line item above

VII. FUNDING

This project, with a total cost of \$742,000, has two primary funding components:

1. The 2025 Street Light Operations Fund allocated \$205,000 (\$120,000 poles/fixtures and \$85,000 installation) for streetlight replacement on North Riverfront.
2. The second budgeted component includes allocating \$537,000 of levy supported one-time energy payoff payments from Debt Service (budgeted \$540,000), used towards the front end of the annual energy saving payments due from the Street Light Operations Fund. This allows for a reduction in the street light fund expense, to which will be re-allocated towards the annual payments to the Riverfront Drive Street Lighting Lighting and Streetscape construction fund until paid in full.

Ultimately, the execution of this funding strategy will allow for a \$3,000 surplus compared to the 2025 budget.

VII. SCHEDULE

March 30, 2025	Completion of plans, specifications and bid documents.
April 2025	Project Bidding
September 2025	Begin Construction – It may take up to 6 months to order street lights and other materials.
November 15, 2025	Construction complete

IX. RECOMMENDATION

The overhead, highway-style lighting, installed with the 2024 Riverfront Drive Reconstruction Project, does not match the character and existing light pole design in the City Center and Old Town District. The 2024 Riverfront Drive Reconstruction Project also did not include any

streetscape or beautification elements such as hanging baskets or benches. These elements are important to support the character and sense of place in the Old Town District.

A Riverfront Drive lighting improvement project is planned for 2025 from Lafayette Street to approximately 200' north of the Good Counsel Drive intersection. The purpose of that project is to replace the aging roadway lights in this area.

A feasibility study was conducted to determine how to pair these two projects together for cost efficiencies and to accomplish Old Town business desires for historic style lighting and benches. Representatives from Old Town were engaged with city staff to determine the proposed improvements as presented. Based on the feasibility analysis and Old Town engagement, the recommendation is to:

- Remove the highway-style lighting from Main Street to Madison Avenue and replace with historic-style roadway/pedestrian lighting. The new lighting maintains safe lighting levels for both motorists and pedestrians on the sidewalk. The lighting will include brackets for hanging flower baskets which will be purchased separately from this project.
- Install the highway-style lighting removed from Old Town in the 2025 planned Riverfront Drive lighting improvement area from Lafayette Street to approximately 200' north of the Good Counsel Drive intersection. The highway-style lighting is similar in look and scale to the lighting that exists in this area today. This style of lighting is appropriate for the character of the roadway and surrounding land uses in this area.
- Add benches on both sides of Riverfront Drive between Plum Street and Rock Street
- Preserve design plans for future installation of trash cans, sidewalk planters, and sidewalk bike racks if an Old Town Special Services District were established at some point in the future. Due to cost and maintenance responsibilities, these items are not included in the current project.

We recommend the Council accept this project feasibility report and order the Public Works Director to prepare final plans and specifications and instruct the City Manager to advertise for bids in accordance with the requirement of the law.

X. APPENDIX

- Riverfront Streetscape Amenities and Lighting Plan