

**City of Spokane
Riverside Avenue Extension at
University District
Briefing Paper**

The City has received \$6.6 million from the federal government, and submitted an application to the State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) requesting \$2 million for the Riverside Avenue Extension project. A total construction cost of \$10-11 million (dependent on right-of-way costs) necessary to construct the first two phases of the extension of Riverside Avenue around the southern border of the University District. The construction of the first phase is expected to begin in late 2007. A third phase of local connectors will be funded by local funds. **The City respectfully requests \$2.4 million from the State of Washington to complete the first two phases of this critical project.**

The City of Spokane's role is to facilitate economic development, including developing and constructing University District infrastructure projects by priority based on the District's Master Plan. The highest priority is the design and construction of an extension to Riverside Avenue that will enable a more contained and campus-like area for students and faculty, and will resolve enhancement and safety concerns.

The first phase of the project will extend Riverside Avenue east from Division Street along the southern border of the campus to the unimproved right-of-way of Sherman Street near the new Trent Avenue Bridge over the Spokane River. The second phase of the project continues Riverside Avenue approximately three-quarters of a mile further east along the south side of the Spokane River to connect with Trent Avenue at Perry Street, eliminating the need for an arterial crossing of the river. In addition, Phase two will improve the air quality at the intersection of Trent Avenue and Hamilton Street, and traffic movement would be modified to create far less congestion at that intersection.

The final phase is a future extension that will connect the northerly portion of the University District (that portion north of the BNSF railroad tracks) to East Sprague, and the southerly portion of the University District. This connection will become more imperative when the University District expands further to the south creating a need to have local connectivity between future student housing opportunities south of Sprague and the University campus.

The anticipated – but subject to revisions -- route of the third and final phase of the Riverside Avenue Extension would travel south on existing Erie Street from the Riverside extension, underneath the existing railroad tracks, and then (a) continue one new leg southwesterly under the existing Keefe Bridge and up an existing embankment to westbound Sprague Avenue, and (b) the main roadway would continue southerly on existing Erie Street, then east on existing 1st Avenue and then north one existing Perry Street to Sprague Avenue, where all movements would be allowed.

The creation of the University District is an important catalyst to spur economic development for the City of Spokane and the Inland Northwest. It is also the nucleus of the State's Innovation Zone strategy in Spokane's planning effort. Spokane's University District will provide important education and training opportunities for citizens, create jobs, enhance research capability and reinvigorate Spokane's downtown core. It is a collaboration of Washington State University, Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, Community Colleges of Spokane, and the Sirti. Some 15,000 students and faculty are anticipated at the downtown campus, along with student and faculty housing, retail and other commercial uses.

The City also successfully worked with the State of Washington Department of Transportation for the successful transfer from state to city ownership of a portion of Trent Avenue (SR 290) through the University District to provide pedestrian enhancements, and has received \$1 million to assist that effort. However, those enhancements cannot be made until the extension to Riverside Avenue is constructed.

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