

Five Points face-lift tops list

Council set to move on plan to improve area's streetscape

08/13/03

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Huntsville's historic Five Points could soon get its long-awaited face-lift.

The City Council on Thursday night will consider a measure that would trigger the engineering study for major streetscape improvements. The work is intended to improve looks and make shopping areas more pedestrian-friendly.

City Planning Director Dallas Fanning said the project will include landscaping, adding sidewalks and burying utility lines. The work will be paid with a \$400,000 federal transportation grant matched with \$40,000 in city money.

City Planner Marie Bostick said the initial work will focus on the commercial area at Pratt Avenue and Andrew Jackson Way. Additional grants will be sought for more improvements in the Five Points neighborhood. Bostick said a consultant will seek input from the neighborhood association and affected businesses.

Also Thursday, the council will consider:

Formally accepting a donation of 27 acres from Slyman Construction Co. for the proposed Providence K-8 school off Old Monrovia Road. The school, plus a planned high school off Slaughter Road, will serve the new Providence subdivision and generally all areas of Huntsville north of Interstate 565 and west of a line from Wynn Drive and Jordan Lane extending into Limestone County. The city has cleared the K-8 site. Officials say construction could begin next month.

An agreement on the planned greenway that will run through Providence and the school site. Bostick said construction on the approximately 1-mile greenway should start next year. The project will be financed with \$581,600 in federal money and \$145,400 in state money. Council authorization will start design and engineering work.

An amendment to the city's sick-leave buyback policy. Councilman Glenn Watson wants to increase the city's rate for buying unused sick leave from retiring employees from 50 percent to 75 percent of the accumulated worth. The council can't vote on the measure until its next meeting in two weeks.

Also on the agenda are public hearings on several zoning matters and a measure to revamp the Community Development Citizens Advisory Council. That plan calls for paring the 25-member board to 13 members, with at least eight representing low- to moderate-income areas.