

STAFF REPORT

Date: January 8, 2025

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

Subject: Staff Report (For Possible Action): Case No. ABN24-00003 (Stevenson Street Abandonment) - Request for the abandonment of the right-of-way totaling ±32,000 square feet of Stevenson Street located between West First Street and West Second Street. The proposed abandonment area is bordered by Mixed-Use Downtown Powning District (MD-PD) zoning with a Master Plan land use designation of Downtown Mixed-Use (DT-MU).

From: Leah Piccotti, Associate Planner

Department: Development Services - Planning

Summary:

The applicant is requesting the abandonment of a ±32,000 square foot portion of Stevenson Street, between West First Street and West Second Street (**Exhibit A & B**). If abandoned, the site will be redeveloped into a private parking area with one-way through access, providing sixty-eight (68) parking spaces for both public and private use (**Exhibit C**). The applicant will fund all improvements to the street including signage, landscaping, islands, trees, and amenities. All improvements will be completed prior to recording the order of abandonment and the improvements will be bound in perpetuity by the recommended conditions of approval.

Abandonment of this block will increase the number of public parking spaces, improve the streetscape environment, and enhance safety and connectivity in the area near Wingfield Park. Staff analysis focused on traffic, access, and circulation; public parking; landscaping; public services; public benefit; utilities; and financial and legal implications. Staff recommends approval of the abandonment subject to conditions.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- Economic and Community Development

Previous Council Action:

A similar request for the abandonment of Stevenson Street was heard by the Reno City Council on September 13, 2020 (ABN21-00002). The item was continued, and the application was

closed in 2022 due to no activity. The meeting minutes are included in **Exhibit D**.

This request was heard by the Reno City Council on October 23, 2024. At that meeting, Council continued the item and directed Staff to work with the applicant and review options such as a lease agreement, a development agreement, or using redevelopment funds for the project. A development agreement would tie the abandonment to a specific development and a timeline for that project. At the time of this staff report, the applicant did not want to move forward with a development or lease agreement. Recommended conditions of approval require implementation of all project improvements prior to recordation of the abandonment. All improvements must occur within 18 months of an affirmative Council decision.

If Council elects to move forward with the Stevenson Street improvements as a City project, funding would need to be reserved either as a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) project or as a Redevelopment funded project. The project is located within the RDA 1 boundary, which currently has no funding for CIP projects. The current design includes ±978 square feet of privately owned land from the west side of the street that would have to be acquired. Further discussion of City funding for Stevenson Street improvements would need to be evaluated at a future time.

Background:

Stevenson Street was offered to the city through dedication with Tract Map No. 91, recorded April 10, 1891, pursuant to Official Records of Washoe County, Nevada.

Discussion:

Records indicate that Stevenson Street was dedicated to the city and held in easement, not in fee. If abandoned, this area would revert to the adjacent property owners with no associated fee. Upon abandonment the petitioners will be responsible for all maintenance of the subject area.

ECI Riviera 1, LLC (APN 011-025-09) shall be responsible for 19.375 % of the costs.
Renhaven Partners, LLC (011-025-10) shall be responsible for 30.625 % of the costs.
Riverwalk 155 LLC (APN 011-024-18) shall be responsible for 50% of the costs. Prior to recording the order of abandonment, a mandatory property owners association or similar entity shall own and be responsible for the maintenance of the property. Signage shall be installed at the entrance to the property indicating that the block is privately maintained. Contact information for the subsequent entity shall be provided on the signage. Such documents shall be reviewed and approved by the City Attorney to ensure conformance to this and applicable city regulations (**Condition No. 5**).

The adjacent Mixed-Use Downtown Powning District (MD-PD) zoning designation will be applied to the requested abandonment area once vacated.

Analysis:

This request has been processed in accordance with RMC 18.08.707 (Abandonment), which requires a proposed abandonment, other than such involving a sewer or storm drain easement, to be heard by Council. Approval of the request requires Council to determine the public will not be materially injured by the proposed abandonment.

Traffic, Access, and Circulation:

Currently Stevenson Street is a two-way street with eleven (11) metered parallel public parking spaces. The proposed abandonment shall maintain through vehicular access by creating a one-way twenty-six (26) foot wide vehicular access easement through the center of the property **(Condition No. 6)**. Thirty-four (34) ninety-degree parking spaces shall be developed on both sides of the street, for a total of sixty-eight (68) parking spaces. The applicant submitted a traffic study demonstrating minimal impact on the adjacent intersections. The traffic study was reviewed by City of Reno Engineering and Public Works. Staff concurs that the abandonment will have minimal impact on the level of service at the intersection of West First Street/Stevenson Street and West Second Street/Stevenson Street.

Pedestrian access shall be provided throughout the property with a blanket pedestrian access easement **(Condition No. 7)**. Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of the parking area **(Condition No. 8)**. Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters shall be developed in accordance with Reno Municipal Code (RMC) 18.04.502. The existing five-foot wide landscaped parkway and five-foot wide sidewalk on the east side of the property will be maintained in perpetuity **(Condition No. 9)**.

Parking:

Sixty-eight (68) parking spaces shall be developed, maintained, and managed by the applicants or subsequent entity **(Exhibit E)**. All sixty-eight (68) parking spaces will be available to the public and will comply with the current City parking meter rate of \$2.00 per hour, as amended **(Condition No. 10)**. Twenty-two (22) of the parking spaces will be dedicated for public use in perpetuity and will also comply with the current City parking meter times; Monday through Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. **(Condition No. 11)**. The remaining forty-six (46) parking spaces will comply with the City parking meter rate of \$2.00 per hour, as amended, but will charge for parking all day, every day. All parking spaces will be managed through a parking application where the public will be able to reserve parking spaces via a QR code.

When the parcel to the west is developed, development may result in driveway cuts for access. The number of parking spaces on the west side may be reduced accordingly. The city will be party to this in the design and approval process **(Condition No. 12)**.

Landscaping:

The east side of the street has been improved and currently has a five-foot wide landscaped parkway and a five-foot wide sidewalk (**Exhibit F**). Minimum RMC 18.04.804(e) Parking Area Landscaping and Screening Requirements, requires a minimum 15% of the total area of the surface of the parking lot (4,800 square feet required), a minimum of one interior landscaped island per twelve parking spaces (four interior islands required), and no parking space shall be further than 75 feet from a shade tree. The proposed plan exceeds base code and includes ±4,890 square feet of landscaping, ten (10) interior islands, each with one shade tree plus shrubs, ground cover, or grasses, and no parking space shall be more than thirty-five (35) feet from a shade tree. Additionally, two (2) large trash bins and two public benches shall be installed onsite (**Exhibit G**). A final landscape plan stamped by a licensed landscape architect shall be submitted and approved prior to the issuance of any development permit (**Condition No. 13**).

Utilities:

There are no sanitary sewer facilities within the proposed abandonment area. There are water and gas facilities. If the abandonment is approved, the applicant shall coordinate any and all utility relocations to the approval of the servicing utility company prior to issuance of the order of abandonment. The order of abandonment will reserve public utility easements for all existing utilities, including traffic control infrastructure, unless they are relocated prior to the order of abandonment (**Conditions No. 4**).

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) reviewed the proposal and expressed concern about the location of the trees in proximity to the water mains and other infrastructure, stating “the potential for root intrusion may cause difficulty in accessing the main for maintenance and/or repair, and possible damage to the tree. In the event of a tree being blown down or knocked down by other means (weather, auto accident) it could dislodge the main potentially causing water quality and disruption issues to our customers.” The plan was revised accordingly resulting in no trees within ten (10) feet of the existing water main and fire hydrants; and four (4) feet from existing laterals, backflows, and meters (**Condition No. 14**). TMWA reviewed the revised plan, and the concern has been resolved (**Exhibit H**).

Public Safety:

No noted concerns were received from either the Reno Fire Department (RFD) or Reno Police Department (RPD) regarding this request.

Master Plan Conformance:

The subject site has a Downtown Mixed-Use (DT-MU) Master Plan land use designation, located in the Powning District, and in a Mixed-Use Area per the Structure Plan framework of the Master Plan. The proposed abandonment will improve the function and utilization of existing public parking. The streetscape will be enhanced and, with the additional parking, access to the Truckee River and nearby parks will be improved. As proposed and with the recommended conditions, the abandonment appears to be consistent with the following applicable Reno Master Plan policies:

- Policy 2.2A: Priority Locations for Infill and Development
- Policy 3.2C: Pedestrian Realm
- Policy 3.2D: Truckee River
- Policy 3.4B: Parking
- Area Specific Policy Downtown Regional Center – Powning District.4: Connectivity and Public Rights-Of-Way

Public and Stakeholder Engagement:

Agency comments received have been incorporated into the discussion as applicable. The applicant attended the Ward 1 Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB). Concerns raised during the NAB meeting included the loss of public parking; future maintenance of the street, trees, and landscaping; and privatizing public resources. Courtesy notices were sent out to surrounding property owners. Five public comments have been received with two in support, one letter of concern, and two letters of opposition (**Exhibit I**) with the same concerns expressed by the NAB. Any future comments will be forwarded to Council, as received.

Financial Implications:

The financial implications of this abandonment include the maintenance requirements for the public right-of-way and revenue generated by the eleven (11) existing parking meters. Five (5) meters were removed in 2021 for the construction of the adjacent apartment complex. Should the abandonment be denied, the five (5) meters will be replaced for a total of sixteen (16) parking meters onsite. The annual meter revenue varies between \$1,335 and \$2,904 per year since 2017 (**Exhibit J**). Per Public Works Maintenance and Operations, street maintenance cost for the square footage of the street range between \$2,500 and \$3,000 per year. Generally, the revenue produced by the parking meters is offset by the cost of maintenance.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommended Conditions of Approval: All conditions shall be met to the satisfaction of Community Development Department staff, unless otherwise noted:

1. The order of abandonment shall reserve to the City all water rights, whether surface or groundwater, appurtenant to the area to be abandoned.
2. Prior to the recordation of the order of abandonment, the applicant shall deposit with the City a check made payable to the Washoe County Recorder for the recording fee.
3. The abandonment order shall be recorded with the Washoe County Recorder within eighteen (18) months of the date of Council approval, or said approval shall be null and void.
4. The order of abandonment shall provide public utility easements for existing utilities, including traffic control infrastructure, unless the utilities are relocated to the approval of the servicing utility company prior to issuing the order of abandonment.
5. Prior to recordation of the order of abandonment, a mandatory property owners association or similar entity shall own and be responsible for the maintenance of the property, including trash removal. Signage shall be installed at the entrance to the property indicating that the block is privately maintained. Contact information for the subsequent entity shall be provided on the signage. Such documents shall be reviewed and approved by the City Attorney to ensure conformance to this application, the conditions of approval, and applicable City regulations.
6. The order of abandonment shall provide a one-way twenty-six (26) foot vehicular access easement as shown in **Exhibit C**.
7. The order of abandonment shall provide a blanket pedestrian access easement throughout the property.
8. Prior to recordation of the order of abandonment, installation of a six (6) foot wide sidewalk on the west side of the property shall be completed.
9. Prior to recordation of the order of abandonment, evidence demonstrating that the existing five (5) foot landscaped parkway and five-foot (5) wide sidewalk on the east side of the property shall be maintained in perpetuity.
10. Prior to recordation of the order of abandonment, a maximum of sixty-eight (68) parking spaces including a minimum of twenty-two (22) parking spaces dedicated for public use shall be developed.

11. Prior to recordation of the order of abandonment, a parking plan, including the parking rates, shall be submitted and approved by the Administrator. The approved plan shall accompany required application material for a business license on the site. Any modifications to the approved parking plan shall be approved by the Administrator prior to implementation. All paid parking spaces shall not exceed the City rate, as amended, and twenty-two (22) of those spaces shall also comply with the City parking meter times.
12. When the parcel to the west (APN 011-024-18, as amended) is developed, development may result in driveway cuts for access and the number of private spaces may be reduced accordingly. The modified parking area plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Administrator prior to issuance of any associated building permit.
13. Prior to recordation of the order of abandonment, a site improvement plan shall be approved demonstrating a final landscape plan, stamped by a licensed landscape architect, shall be submitted to and approved by the Administrator including a minimum of 4,890 square feet of landscaping, ten (10) interior islands, two (2) large trash bins, two public benches, and no parking space shall be more than thirty-five (35) feet from a shade tree.
14. Prior to issuance of any building permit, the plans shall be reviewed for comment by TMWA. Plans shall demonstrate no trees within ten (10) feet of the existing water main and fire hydrants; and four (4) feet from existing laterals, backflows, and meters. Final design and placement/type of landscaping and hardscape materials shall be subject to review and approval by the Administrator.

Findings:

In approving any abandonment, the City Council shall find that the public will not be materially injured by the proposed abandonment.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council determine that the public will not be materially injured by the proposed vacation and approve the abandonment, subject to the conditions in the staff report.

Proposed Motion:

Staff recommends Council make a determination that the public will not be materially injured by the proposed vacation and approve the abandonment, subject to the conditions in the staff report.

Attachments:

- Exhibit A - Case Maps
- Exhibit B – Abandonment Area
- Exhibit C – Site Plan

Exhibit D – 2020 Minutes

Exhibit E – Signage & Parking Management Plan

Exhibit F – Landscape Plan

Exhibit G – Amenities

Exhibit H – TMWA Overlay

Exhibit I – Public Comment

Exhibit J – Stevenson Street Parking Meter Revenue