Clemson to spend $2M on streetscape

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — Clemson City Council has approved a three-year Tax Increment Finance allocation of more than $2 million for streetscaping on side streets off College Avenue and the Calhoun District.

City officials say the major factor in construction will be to ensure that work can be completed between May 10 and Aug. 30 and be done within budget.

Plans for the latest streetscape initiative, starting in 2011, consist of three zones — from Keith Street to S.C. Highway 93; from Keith Street to Tiger Boulevard; and the Calhoun District. Included in the project are lighting, landscaping and directional signage. City officials would also like to explore downtown trash pickup and recycling centers.

The latest approval brings the total expenditure to $2,083,000, including $130,000 in engineering fees, $30,000 in signage, $190,000 in utility relocation costs, $1,550,000 in construction contract expenses, $145,000 for the fabrication and installation of signage, and $38,500 in

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contingency funds.

Funding for the project consists of $1,025,000 in the original TIF allocation; $740,000 from monies originally set aside for an unsuccessful bid to purchase the vacant Astro Triple theatre; $360,000 in TIF funds carried over from reconstruction of the former planning office; and $8,500 in interest earnings.

Clemson City Administrator Rick Cotton said some aspects of the streetscape project could get costly.

"One decorative street light could cost $5,000 by the time you run conduit, do the electrical work and so forth," Cotton said. "So, it's not going to be inexpensive."

Cotton added that while he is unsure of the exact cost of street and directional signs, he has heard estimates range from $120,000 to $160,000.

Landscape architectural experts from Seamon Whiteside and Associates will return to Clemson Oct. 27 for a meeting with business and community leaders and residents. The meeting, which is expected to finalize concepts for the plan, will be at 2 p.m. in the city's new community room.

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