

Decorative Lighting Along the Bancroft Gateway Options for Financing Annual Lighting Assessments

One of the final remaining issues to resolve is how to finance the ongoing assessment of the decorative street lighting along Bancroft. The incremental annual cost has been estimated by the City at \$6,942. Here is an outline of the options discussed formally and informally.

1. **Abutting owners assessed** — The Committee has agreed that the traditional method of assessing adjoining owners for the full assessment load is not reasonable nor acceptable since the entire neighborhood benefits by enhancing this gateway through the district.
2. **Payment by City of Toledo** — City of Toledo agrees to pay the annual assessment cost for perpetuity based upon the community benefit of enhancing an historic district with city-wide importance.
3. **Payment by an alternative partner** — Instead of the City, an alternate party such as OWEA, WOVE or another partner agree to provide the dedicated annual funds for perpetuity.
4. **Establish A Special Improvement District (SID)** — Creating the SID requires petition by property owners (60% based on linear feet), City approval, a plan for the improvements and a governing board to manage the process. The cost would be spread among property owners of the defined SID based on linear feet. Depending upon the number of properties in the designated district, average annual cost per property could be about \$10-15/year based on the current lighting plan. Challenges include obtaining the necessary signees and being responsible for non-collection of the assessment due to foreclosures or other issues.
5. **Petition by 50% of property owners** — This option is similar to the SID, without the governing body to manage the enhanced lighting. The cost would be spread among property owners of the defined district based on linear feet. Depending upon the number of properties in the designated district, average annual cost per property could be about \$10-15/year based on the current lighting plan. The major challenge is obtaining the necessary signees from 50% of the property owners (based on linear feet) including absentee owners and vacant properties.
6. **Council ordinance to assess cost to district property owners** — This option is similar to the above, without the petition process. It is also based on the premise that enhancing the Bancroft Gateway benefits the full Historic District. Properties within the Historic District or a similar area would be assessed for the annual cost based on linear feet. As with the other assessment options, the average annual cost per property could be about \$10-15/year. Clear support from the OWEA and WOVE and a Council ordinance would be necessary.
7. **Capitalize a fund that would pay the assessment** — this approach would require a grant (about \$200,000±), and similar to an endowment, the interest generated would be used to pay the annual incremental assessment cost for perpetuity. The grantee would be a local organization (OWEA or WOVE) that would contract with the City to pay the assessment, with a likely clause to transfer assets and responsibility for payment to another identified group if the organization ceases to exist at some point.

I suggest we review this list at the next Design Review Committee meeting, reach consensus on a preferred approach and then develop a clear strategy to make it happen.