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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 10, 2021

State Appeals Board Unanimously Dismisses Petition Against Indianola's Square Reconstruction Project

INDIANOLA, IA— The Iowa State Appeals Board unanimously dismissed a petition filed against the City's Square Reconstruction Project, which is commonly referred to as the Streetscape Project, and its use of Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) funding to support it. The petition argued that the use of LOST funds for the project was in violation of what voters approved LOST funding to go toward.

In 2016, the LOST referendum stated funds could be used for public safety facilities, public works, and street maintenance and cannot be used for property tax relief. The referendum for LOST was passed that year by voters with the intentions to use the funds to build a new Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF). With LOST funds exceeding the projected annual estimate of \$1 million, the City is utilizing those surplus funds on the Square Reconstruction Project. The one-time use of LOST will not impact the City's ability to meet the financial obligations required for construction of the WRRF, nor will it impact property taxes.

The Square Reconstruction Project is a public works project that revitalizes and improves the area's roads, water, storm and sanitary sewer systems, as well as enhances the Square as a community gathering space. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the project's costs are allocated to critical upgrades of aging, failing infrastructure in the downtown area, such as:

- Replacement of 70-year-old water mains with larger, 8" PVC pipes to provide adequate water pressure for modern day sprinkler systems;
- Replacement of sewer lines that are more than 100 years old and undersized for modern day standards and increased usage;
- New stormwater pipes and drainage structures to improve drainage; and
- ADA compatible sidewalk ramps and upgraded accessible parking.

The remaining project components incorporate new, additional sustainable green infrastructure as a replacement for what was removed during construction, including:

- Permeable brick pavers, which purify rainwater before entering the Des Moines River Watershed;
- Rain gardens, which preserve native area species, purify rainwater, and help stormwater soak into the ground, reducing soil erosion and flooding;
- New foliage, including 43 trees, 60 shrubs and more than 2,000 perennial plants— creating much needed shade and reducing surface air temperatures, bringing energy efficiency to nearby buildings; and
- New, energy efficient LED streetlights that reduces light pollution and operating costs.

Other improvements include wayfinding elements to establish the Square as a community hub and pedestrian-friendly environment for tourism; wider sidewalks that improve safety and can accommodate outdoor dining and other adjacent business-related activities, boosting the local economy; and street furnishings such as refuse containers, benches, and bike racks to reduce pollution by encouraging citizens to recycle and to bike or walk rather than drive.

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