Moab City Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: February 25, 2020
Title: Cancelling Design and Construction of the Downtown Parking Structure
Submitted: February 18, 2020

Presenter(s): Karen Guzman-Newton and Mike Duncan, Councilmembers

Attachments: RESOLUTION NO. xx-2020, A RESOLUTION CANCELLING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE DOWNTOWN PARKING STRUCTURE

Recommended Motion: None at this time. This item is scheduled for public hearing at a regular City Council meeting March 10, 2020. A vote may be scheduled for that meeting subsequent to the public hearing. Its presentation at this time is for discussion only.

Background/Summary:
In 2017, UDOT issued $10M of “Hotspot” (areas impacted by recreation and tourism activity) funding to Moab for transportation improvements. In late 2017 a committee of business people and local government officials proposed a Downtown Parking Structure (DPS). $8.3M was scheduled for its design and construction. In late Oct 2019, the City entered a $850K contract for DPS design with Kimley-Horn, a design consultant. At this time, a minority of those contract funds have been spent for on-going design.

Since that time, for a variety of reasons, dissatisfaction with DPS has grown even as its design has progressed: loss of original motivation (to replace Main St. parking), a reduction in number of parking stalls provided, an inability to accommodate over-sized vehicles, cost overruns, changes in structural design which lower construction cost at the expense of higher future maintenance costs, complaints that it would not help Main St. congestion and complaints that its localized nature provided singular benefits to a few businesses rather than a broad spectrum of the community.

For these reasons, and the observation that the great bulk of Hotspot funds remain unspent and that UDOT is receptive to alternative uses as long as they meet the Hotspot funding criteria, alternative uses of DPS funds have recently been suggested: namely a regional shuttle/transit/bus system and/or dispersed surface parking lots (a goal of the original Hotspot study) located N or S of downtown.

This resolution directs staff to cancel the Kimley-Horn contract. It also initiates the process of creating a viable shuttle/transit/bus system, possibly including dispersed surface parking lots.
WHEREAS the primary need for DPS as identified in the 2017 UDOT Region 4 Arches Hotspot Study was to replace on-street parking lost as part of Main Street Improvements, but that those Improvements were rejected by residents and Council who objected to loss of on-street parking,

WHEREAS the solution to Moab’s congested Main St. can hardly be improved by drawing more vehicles to downtown, the intent of DPS,

WHEREAS the DPS, according to the Downtown Parking Study, primarily benefits businesses within 600 feet of the structure, that is a limited number of businesses, and thus is a poorer use of public funds than dispersed parking or a regional shuttle which benefits a broader number of businesses.

WHEREAS DPS design has changed significantly from its original less-intrusive partially buried bottom floor and two additional stories, to an imposing and view-shed blocking four story structure of 42’ including its roof parapets,

WHEREAS DPS, still early in its design phase, has already incurred significant cost overruns forcing the adoption of structural construction techniques that trade lower construction cost for increased maintenance cost during its life,

WHEREAS DPS will incur significantly higher maintenance cost than the existing surface lot, with poor prospects for offsetting revenue whether it charges for parking or not, since according to the Downtown Parking Study the lot is often under-utilized,

WHEREAS DPS cannot accommodate over-sized vehicles, a critical parking need,

WHEREAS UDOT is receptive to the redirection of Hotspot funding as long as their goals of reduction of congestion, economic development and increased tourism opportunity can reasonably be expected to occur,

WHEREAS an alternate use of DPS funds has been identified that satisfies the above criteria, namely a regional or valley-wide shuttle system that encourages visitors to leave their cars at their hotel and residents to leave their cars at home,

NOW, THEREFORE, Be It Resolved by the Council of the City of Moab, Utah that:
1) City staff direct Kimley-Horn to cancel the Downtown Parking Structure design contract with the intent of minimizing financial liability to the City and UDOT.

2a) Moab City Council coordinate with Grand County Council to form the “Arches Hotspot Region Coordinating Committee,” with two council members from each governing body. This committee shall determine staff assistance on an as-needed basis as well as assistance from existing city or county committees. The Committee will serve as the point contact with UDOT for purposes of the Hotspot Funding Program and any subsequent applications for future project funding.

2b) The Arches Hotspot Region Coordinating Committee enlist the Grand County Public Transit Committee shall initially pursue the feasibility of a public transit system project in addition to dispersed parking projects that may or may not complement a public transit system.