

# Downtown S.B. streetscape work begins

## Michigan Street project to make area pedestrian friendly.



Tribune Graphic/JOHN STUMP

By JAMIE LOO *Tribune Staff Writer*



effort to make the area more pedestrian and visitor friendly.

Construction will begin this week and is expected to be finished by Oct. 30.

The \$840,296 project will add patterned concrete sidewalks, information kiosks, pedestrian-scaled streetlights, planters and trees along Michigan, said Jitin Kain, a city planner and assistant director of Downtown South Bend Inc.

DTSB facilitated the streetscape planning process, Kain said, working with the Troyer Group and holding meetings with downtown stakeholders on the design.

The design process cost the city \$30,400.

The design and project are being paid for through downtown tax increment financing district funds.

Taxes collected in a TIF only can be used within the legally created boundaries of the district for infrastructure and other improvements.

"As more out-of-town visitors and area residents spend time at our downtown attractions, we want to make sure they experience downtown South Bend as a beautiful urban center," said Mayor Stephen Luecke on Monday.

"These upgrades will help make our downtown core a more walkable neighborhood and coincide with expanded private investment in the heart of the city."

DTSB executive director Marco Mariani said discussions for a new streetscape have been going on for

### Streetscape construction schedule

Work on the Michigan Street streetscape improvements begins this week with an estimated completion of Oct. 30. The construction will be done in five phases, each expected to last 15 to 20 days depending on weather.

Here is the order in which construction will be done:

- The east and west sides of Michigan from Colfax Avenue south to Washington Street.
- East side of Michigan from Washington south to Jefferson Boulevard.
- West side of Michigan from Washington south to Jefferson.
- East side of Michigan from Jefferson south to Wayne Street.
- West side of Michigan from Jefferson to Wayne.

a long time.

He said a new streetscape will help create an identity for downtown and highlight businesses.

"The goals really are to give us a standardized streetscape that is attractive," Mariani said. "We really want to green up the streetscapes, too."

Kain said some of the streetscape will mimic what has already been done on East Wayne Street.

The new sidewalks will be safer because the old bricks were becoming trip hazards for pedestrians, he said. Shorter light poles and new planters will provide an opportunity for more flags, banners and decorations such as holiday lighting.

Mariani said the locations and sizes of the planters are being carefully planned to give restaurants more room for sidewalk cafes. The current benches on the street and some of the trash cans also will be moved around, Kain said. The city also wants to have public art such as sculptures on the street in the future, Kain said.

Mariani said contractors Rieth-Riley Construction are on an accelerated construction schedule and will be working on Saturdays.

He said the goal is to minimize the impact to local businesses and finish as much as possible by the second University of Notre Dame home football game. When the project is completed, Mariani said, no parking spaces will be lost on the street.

In addition to the streetscape, the city is also performing some underground work on Michigan Street. Carl Littrell, city engineer, said HRP

Construction has been awarded a \$2.64 million contract to upgrade aging utilities in the area. The contract includes pipes, electrical and telecommunications conduit.

Littrell said a lot of this infrastructure has been in place for 30 years and needs to be replaced.

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