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August 3, 2012

City Council President John Michitson
& Members of the City Council

RE: South Central St.

Dear Mr. President and City Council Members:

I hereby request permission for the City Engineer John Pettis, DPW director Michael Stankovich and members of the Route 125 design team including the firm of VHB to address the City Council concerning the design of the Route 125 project and the design of South Central St.

I have asked the design firm VHB to present alternative scenarios to the City Council.

I watched the City Council meeting last week. Several businesses expressed their concern about parking on South Main St. I agree with their concerns and always have.

As I have previously expressed to several of those businesses, once the project is complete and the City regains control of the project area, it will be up to the City to enforce "no parking" rules. It has always been our intention to work with businesses to ensure the businesses have adequate parking.

VHB, City Engineer John Pettis, Mike Stankovich and others will present the two scenarios to the City Council on Tuesday. One of those scenarios is the design plan presented to the State by the design team of VHB and approved previously by the State, to make S. Central Street one way for a small area at the beginning of the street.

After watching the Council meeting, I asked city officials and VHB examine alternatives. They looked at the alternative suggested by Councilor Macek of having S. Ferry Street become one way instead of S. Central. For reasons that they will explain, they do not recommend this option, and it is not being presented to the Council. I also asked them to consider leaving S. Central Street two-way and having the intersection signalized. They feel that this is not a viable alternative and would lead to traffic tie ups. They will explain their opinion at the meeting.

The two options that they will be presenting is to keep the approved plan in place, which will make S. Central two way for a small area at the beginning, and a separate alternative which would be to leave S. Central street two way and to not install signals at the intersection. The VHB design team, the city engineer, DPW director and the traffic

signal coordinator from the fire department all recommend that the Council stay with the existing plan. They will be at the council to express their opinion. Attached is a letter from Mr. Stankovich and Mr. Pettis expressing their opinion that this plan remain in effect. I am not a traffic or safety engineer and I have no personal opinion on this.

If the council, after hearing both sides of this issue, continues to believe that it is not in the public's interest to make S. Central street one-way, I ask the Council to take a formal vote on this matter. I will present the Council's vote to the State and ask them to approve it.

Ultimately, the city and the State must agree on a design. No street can become one-way unless the City Council approves it. On the other hand, there could be financial consequences for the city if we as a city refuse to make S. Central Street one-way and the State refuses to allow us to change the plan. It is crucial that we all agree on one plan. I strongly recommend that the Council remain flexible on this issue, work with the State to adopt a plan that the State will approve.

I also recommend that if the city and State reach agreement, that whatever plan is adopted remain in effect for no more than one year and that it be revisited at that time. I have asked VHB to redesign the curb cuts so that S. Central Street can accommodate either one way or two way traffic.

I am on vacation for two weeks and will be unable to attend Tuesday night's meeting. My Chief of Staff, David Van Dam, will call me with the results of the meeting and the city will present it to the State later in the week. I will keep you informed.

I am attaching two documents. The first is the letter from Mr. Stankovich and Mr. Pettis expressing their opinion. The second is the ordinance to make S. Central Street one way. If, after hearing both sides, the council prefers this option, then this ordinance must remain on file until the next meeting in two weeks.

Very truly yours,



James J. Fiorentini
Mayor

JJF/lk



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Date: August 3, 2012

To: City Council President John A. Michitson and Members of the City Council

From: Michael K. Stankovich, Director of Public Works *MKS*
John Pettis, City Engineer

Re: South Central Street – Directional Changes

As you know, MassDOT's reconstruction of South Main Street (Route 125) and Salem Street is well underway with projected completion of this project in the spring of 2013. To improve traffic conditions in this area, South Central Street was designed to be made one way outbound from the intersection with Main Street. This design was approved by MassDOT and the City executed a *Traffic Control Agreement* with MassDOT concurring with this approach. It is my understanding that the issue of changing South Central Street back to two way traffic is before the City Council on August 7, 2012.

The engineering firm of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) was the designer for this project. They have been asked to review all possible options to keep South Central Street as two way. For many reasons they recommend keeping the design as approved by MassDOT, but will attend the City Council's meeting on August 7, 2012 to present the various options. City staff, and the Traffic and Safety Committee concur with VHB's recommendation and recommend remaining with the MassDOT approved design.

Finally, please be advised that since there is federal funding involved with this construction project, there is a Traffic Control Agreement (TCA) in place. Any changes to the South Central intersection will require amending this TCA. Amending the TCA requires MassDOT and Federal Highway review and approval.

cc. Mayor James J. Fiorentini
William Cox, City Solicitor

