

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 9/15/2022

### "Downtown Streetscape Planning Underway"

Downtown Sylvania is continuing to be a success story for our community. There are new businesses, more activity and more growth. To plan and continue downtown improvements, the City of Sylvania has begun a 12 to 18 month long design phase to receive public input and ideas, and envision a new streetscape and expansion of the downtown.

The first public input session was held August 24<sup>th</sup> in City Council Chambers. The session was well attended and many comments and ideas were received. The design consultants are reviewing this input and incorporating it onto the first draft of an improvement plan for presentation at the next public meeting in January.

This new streetscape will be transformational for our downtown. Pedestrian walkways, trees and planting areas, vehicular circulation, parking and ADA accessibility are all areas of concentration. And the preliminary plan is expected to extend similar improvements into the Main Street block between Maplewood and Erie Streets, doubling the size of our downtown.

The new streetscape project, formally known as the Downtown Transportation Improvement Project, will be financed with \$2,000,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding awarded to the City. Additional funding is expected from a proposed Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) district currently being considered and from the City's capital improvement funds.

In addition to the streetscape improvement, the City is also reviewing the Sylvania Zoning Code for possible updates to the downtown sections. These updates could include changes to building sizes, allowable uses and parking requirements for downtown properties.

The last streetscape improvement was made over forty years ago when the brick pavers, street trees and decorative street lights were added. Though visionary in their time, these improvements are now aging and need replacement. Water and sewer utilities under Main Street are over 100 years old and will be replaced as a part of the project. And ADA accessibility will be incorporated.

I was fortunate to recently be invited onto WTOL TV11 Leading Edge with Jeff Smith to discuss the improvements to our downtown, and that discussion is available by Googling "Leading Edge August 28<sup>th</sup>".

I welcome everyone's input and ideas for a better downtown. My thanks to the Sylvania Area Chamber of Commerce, Red Bird Sylvania, Heritage Sylvania and the Sylvania Art Commission for all they continue doing for our downtown. Together we can keep downtown Sylvania improving for the future.

