



LOCAL

Kalispell Awards Parkline Trail Bid

Construction on the multi-use trail project will begin this summer

BY MAGGIE DRESSER

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Train tracks through downtown Kalispell that will be uprooted in the coming months to make way for the Kalispell Parkline Trail, as pictured on May 5, 2021. Hunter D'Antuono | Flathead Beacon

At its May 3 meeting, the Kalispell City Council awarded a base bid and add-ons to Sandry Construction for the Kalispell Parkline Trail, a multi-use path for which construction will begin this summer.

The council approved an \$8.1 million overall budget for the project. Officials estimated the total bid is \$2.5 million over budget due to rising material and labor costs.

While the city already had \$3.8 million from the Transportation Investment Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant and \$1.2 million set aside for the project, officials are working to redirect additional funds, which could include a \$1 million transfer to the west side tax increment financing, redirecting 20% of reserves from the city's general fund, \$525,000 in block grants and \$828,000 for Old School Station lot sales.

"The reserve policy and that fund has allowed us to weather some of those storms for one-time fund expenditures," City Manager Doug Russell said.

Sandry Construction's base bid of \$5,993,677, not including construction administration, compared to the initial estimate of \$4,768,540, which officials say was conducted several years ago.

In addition to the base bid, there are eight additives for the project, which include seeding and irrigation, lighting, U.S. Highway 2 bridge improvements, first spare conduit, second spare conduit, site furnishings, west end at Meridian and plaza map etching.

Councilor Sid Daoud was concerned that dipping into the reserve fund would eventually require raising taxes.

"I'm cautious about digging into these reserves if it's not an emergency," Daoud said.

Daoud attempted to amend the resolution to strike five of the eight additives from the project, but the motion failed with the remainder of the council in support of the full project.

"I do think it is important that we make this investment," Councilor Kyle Waterman said. "To me, it's about investment to our other partners who are along the Parkline Trail. Those are going to be developers but those are also community partners ... The city's able to show that we're putting our best foot forward."

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