



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Portion of 18th Street to Close; Community to See Long-term Benefits

WHEELING, W.VA. – A portion of 18th Street, between Market and Chapline streets will close permanently on Friday, Aug. 16, but many benefits to the community will follow.

Mayor Glenn Elliott explained that earlier this year, City Council voted to abandon a small section of 18th Street behind the campus of West Virginia Northern Community College (WVNCC). The benefits to the City for taking such action include the following:

- Opening up Wheeling Creek to pedestrian access (i.e., the City will maintain a pedestrian right of way through the campus to the Creek);
- Creating an aesthetically pleasing park/greenspace area at the southern gateway into downtown;
- Entrusting the care and upkeep for this area to an institution that has made considerable investments into its campus and greatly improved the look and feel of this area south of 16th Street; and
- Creating a pathway for WVNCC students to get from their existing parking lot to campus without having to cross the pedestrian unfriendly intersection at 18th and Chapline.

This abandonment was discussed extensively at a development committee meeting as well as a full City Council meeting.

“Several years ago, WVNCC purchased the former ECS property south of 18th Street between Market and Chapline streets to use as a surface parking lot. Early in my term of office, I approached WVNCC officials to see if they would be open to a shared arrangement utilizing some of that ECS property to provide pedestrian access to Wheeling Creek—something that is totally lacking downtown. They were very interested in the concept, but ultimately the property was purchased at a tax sale and fell into legal limbo. Once WVNCC recovered the property last

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year, we resumed discussions on this topic and considered possible site plan configurations,” he said.

Elliott further explained the idea was to reconfigure the site in such a way so as to provide WVNCC with roughly the same amount of surface parking spaces the ECS property would afford but do so in a way that provides unfettered pedestrian access to the Creek and extends the green space going south from WVNCC's main building.

“The only way to achieve this goal was to close down the section of 18th Street at issue here. We had City staff reach out to all the various stakeholders (including all nearby property owners) and received very minimal objections with respect thereto. And we discussed this proposal in considerable detail in two public meetings. The consensus from our discussions was that this abandonment was justifiable in light of the various municipal benefits to be derived therefrom,” he said.

At this time, WVNCC is still working on final plans for the site with its own architects and engineers, and they expect to move forward with site development in early 2020.

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