

September 21, 2017

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Harry Black, City Manager **HB**

Subject: Third and Elm Streets Bench Replacement

The Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) received a number of complaints about concrete benches and trees located on City right of way, south of Third Street east of Elm Street.

In response, a meeting was convened of nearby property owners and stakeholders, DCI, CPD and others who raised concerns about the environment created by the large concrete benches. Specific concerns were raised related to the ability of individuals to sit or lay behind the benches, creating a visual barrier for patrol officers. Further, the stakeholders asked that the benches and trees be removed.

This area has also been identified as an issue in our Panhandling Stakeholders meetings. This group includes representatives from DCI, 3CDC, REDI, Strategies to End Homelessness, CPD, my office and other City departments as necessary. It has been determined people are using this space behind the benches to engage in lewd and lascivious activities.

Based on these concerns, DOTE determined that the concrete benches should be replaced with benches allowing more transparency and thus more accommodating to ensuring a safe environment. The trees will remain in place. Benches will remain but a different type of bench is being installed.

The work to replace these benches is underway and is being performed by Department of Public Services staff.