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Arlington Leaders to Weigh in on Multimillion Dollar Abram Street Makeover

By [Tim Ciesco](#) | Tuesday, Jun 10, 2014 | Updated 9:10 AM CDT



Tim Ciesco

Arlington city council members will get an update this week on plans to make major improvements to Abram Street.

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It's the gateway into downtown Arlington and the

bridge that gets drivers from Cooper Street to Highway 360. But now, Abram Street is at a crossroads as the city debates whether it should continue to be both of those things.

"We're trying to establish ourselves as a destination," said Tony Rutigliano, President and CEO of the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation. "And a destination generally revolves around people."

The Downtown Arlington Management Corporation, which works to promote the downtown area and encourage development there, wants it to be more pedestrian friendly.

They say one way to do that is to eliminate two lanes of Abram, then add sidewalk space and street-scaping.

It's one of three different configurations the city is considering as it works to finalize plans for a \$4.9 million makeover of Abram Street between Cooper and Collins streets.

The project will be paid for with money from the bond issue voters passed in 2008.

“We really feel strongly that for us to be successful long term, we need to move to a more pedestrian environment,” said Rutigliano.

While several downtown businesses have endorsed that plan, others are worried it may do more harm than good.

“My view is that it should stay the way it is because it’s a major thoroughfare,” said Buddy Saunders, who owns Lone Star Comics on Abram Street. “And it’s going to create some really serious traffic problems.”

Saunders said he is a strong supporter of new development in downtown Arlington, but doesn’t believe spending nearly \$5 million in taxpayer dollars to shrink the road and make it look prettier is the best way to get that done.

He’s posted a large sign that reads “Do you want 2 lanes cut from Abram Street? Tell the city what you want” in front of his business.

“There’s no reason why it can’t be redeveloped with the five lanes that is has now,” said Saunders. “Those two things are not incompatible.”

Arlington city council members will receive an update on the project during a workshop Tuesday afternoon, where they’ll also give city staff their input on how the project should proceed.

Find this article at:

<http://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/Arlington-Leaders-to-Weigh-in-on-Multi-Million-Dollar-Abram-Street-Makeover-262457241.html>

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