

CITY COUNCIL

For City Clerk's Use:

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APPROVED

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DENIED

Reso No. _____

File No. _____

Ord No. _____

Agenda Item No.: 21

Date: November 14, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Charles Grimm, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Maple Street Plaza: Operations and Maintenance

RECOMMENDATION:

It is requested that Council provide direction to staff regarding the on-going operation of the Maple Street Plaza and possible closure of the northern section to through traffic.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Several options have been identified to provide alternative access between Grand Avenue and Valley Parkway should Maple Street be partially closed. These options range in cost from approximately thirty thousand dollars (\$30K) to seventy thousand dollars (\$70K) for improvements.

BACKGROUND:

The Maple Street Plaza ("Plaza") has now been in operation for several months and to some extent has become a victim of its own success. Although actual bookings for events will not begin until after the new year, the Plaza has already seen a high level of use. Much of this use has occurred around the fountain area where many small children and their parents took advantage of the water feature during the warm summer and early fall. The high use over the last few months has allowed staff to analyze the use of the Plaza and make some recommendations regarding needed signage, hours of operation and traffic patterns.

It became clear during the first month of operations that the number of children using the fountain near through traffic created a potential liability problem. When the concept of the Plaza was first developed, Maple Street was proposed to be terminated at the alley. At the request of the proposed hotel owner, it was ultimately approved for one-way through traffic as the hotel's main entrance was to be located on Valley. Because the hotel has not materialized, the north portion of Plaza near the fountain has been closed to through traffic to address child safety around the fountain area. The bollards were installed just north of the alley, meaning that north bound traffic on Maple must exit via the alley and proceed eastward.

Staff observation has indicated that the partial closure seems to be working well with little or no problems. However, the City has received a complaint from the property owner of the bank located at the northwest corner of Grand Avenue and Maple Street. The concern indicates that the lack of

straight access to Valley Parkway has hurt business. As a result, staff has provided three possible alternatives (versions 1,2,3) that would alter Lot 1 and allow for direct access through that lot to Valley Parkway. Versions 1 and 3 show new driveways in the center and east end of Lot 1. Version 2 actually provides access to Valley Parkway directly adjacent to Maple Street, meaning that access to Valley Parkway is almost the same as it was for a through Maple Street. As shown on the exhibit, there are costs associated with each alternative. Another alternative that has been suggested is that the City install wrought iron fencing around the fountain area. Staff is not supportive of this alternative as fencing would tend to visually divide an area that is designed to be an open Plaza.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION:

Other aspects regarding the on-going maintenance and operation of the Plaza are also being addressed. The need for "5 MPH" speed limit signs, "No Parking" signs and directional arrows will also be added with Council approval. Any signage added will be small and keep within the existing character of the Plaza.

Plaza lighting is also being addressed. Currently, the Pedestrian (Ped) lights are activated from dusk to dawn and staff is proposing no change as they constitute the safety lighting for the whole Plaza. During Daylight Savings Time the multi-colored "up" lights were being run from dusk until 2:30 AM. Due to their low energy use staff would continue to run them the same duration during winter months. If Council concurs, following Thanksgiving the "up" lighting would be run with just red and green lights for the Holiday Season. The colored lights are currently run on a two minute cycle and that would remain the same unless Council wishes a change.

Specific events for the Plaza will be booked and coordinated by the Events Coordinator position now located in the City Manager's office. On-going maintenance and operations will be overseen by the City Appearance Committee.

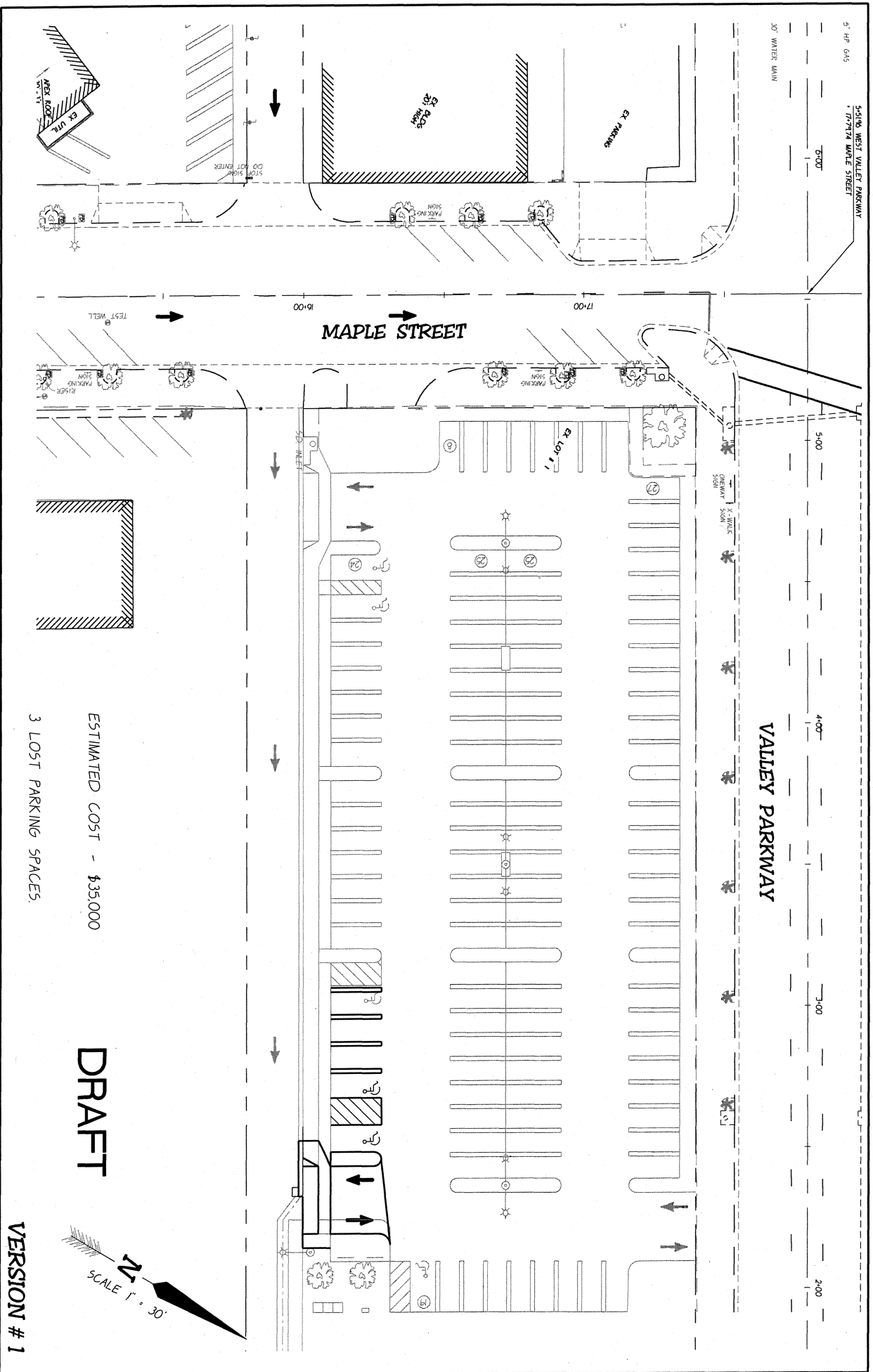
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

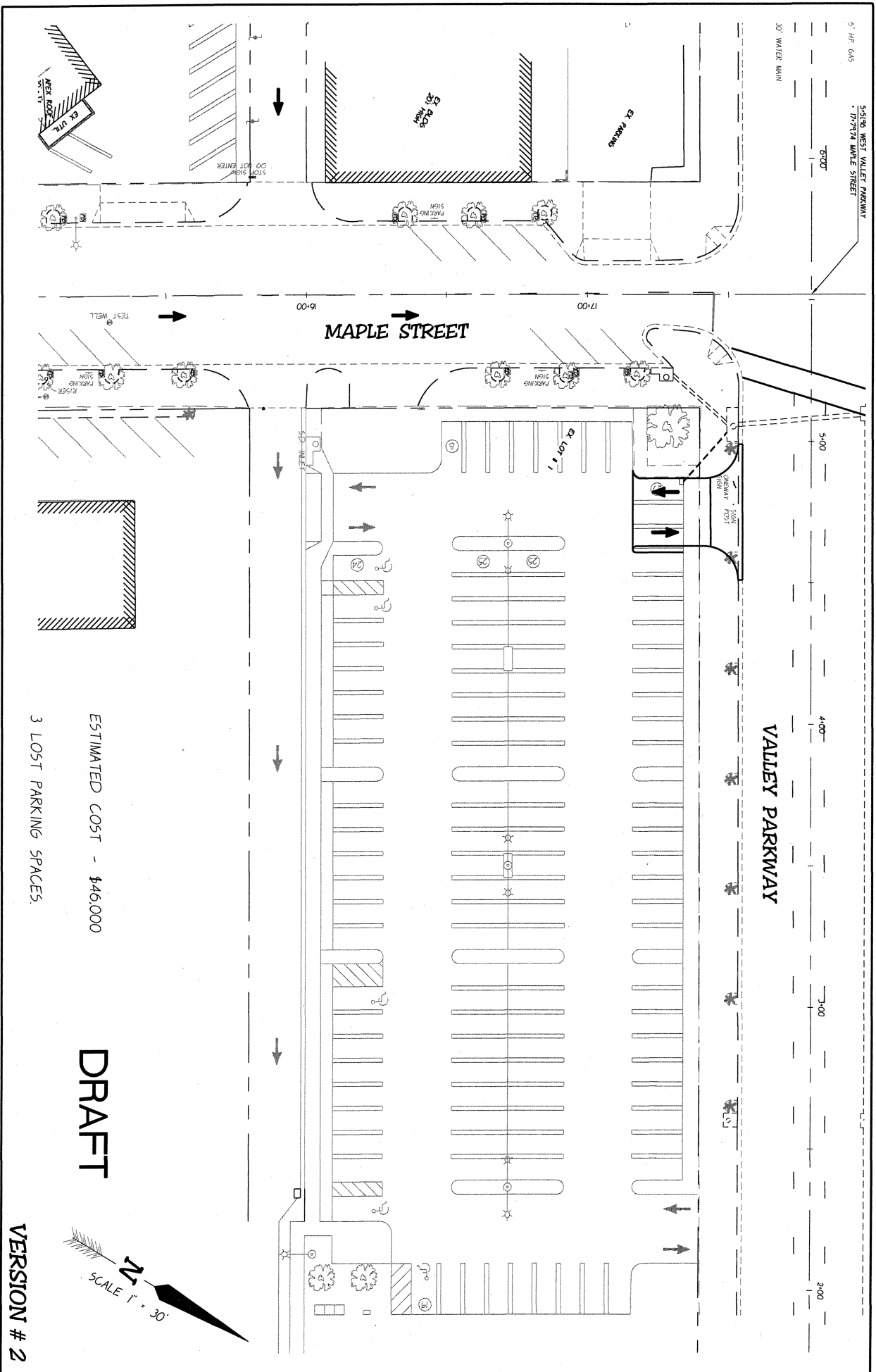
In summary, City staff feels that the partial closure of Maple Street is working well without any new improvements. If Council feels a more direct access to Valley Parkway is needed staff, should be directed to implement one of the attached alternatives identified for Lot 1. In addition, staff would like direction from Council to proceed with the maintenance and operation items as stated above.

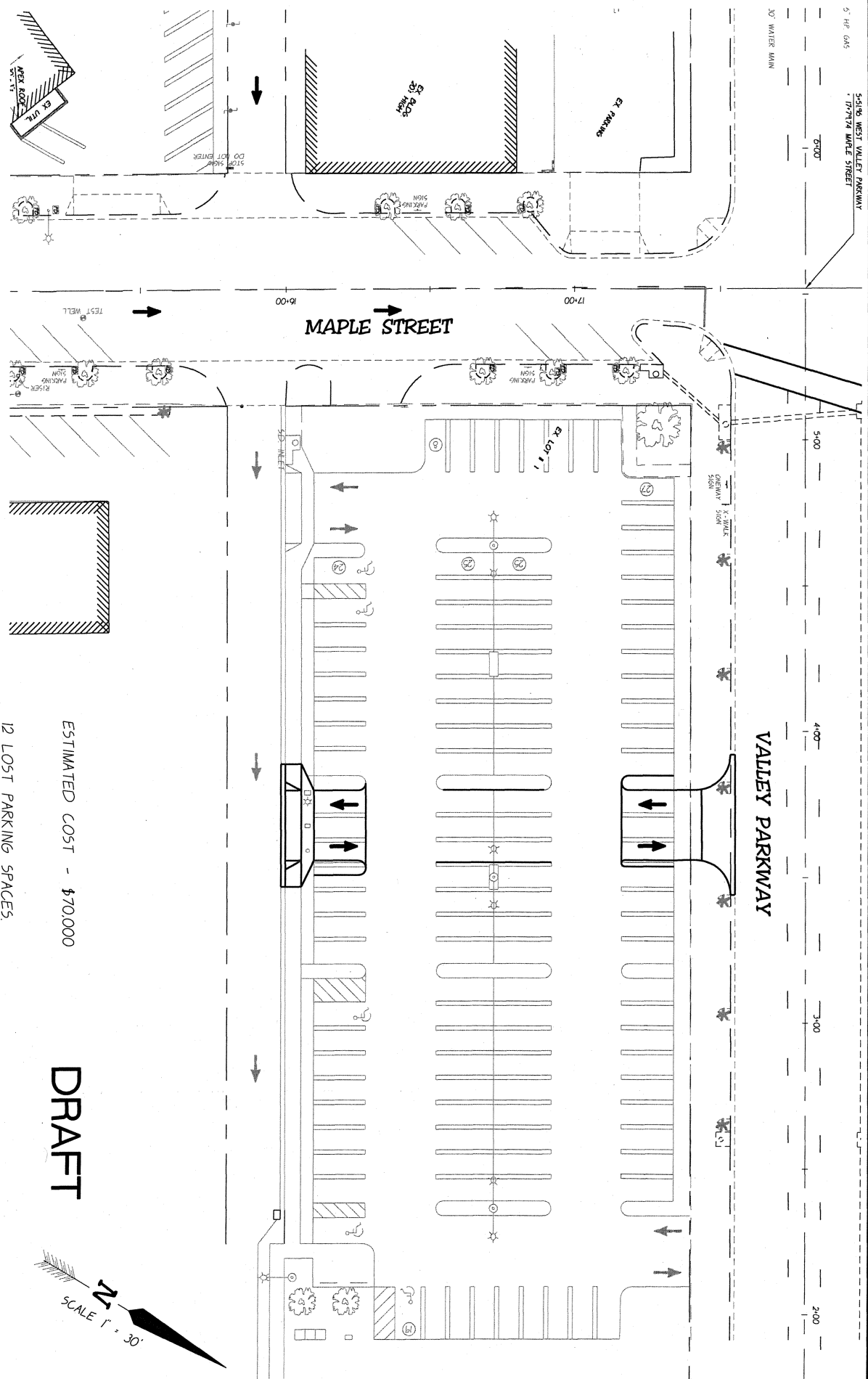
Respectfully submitted,



Charles Grimm
Assistant City Manager
Attachments: Lot 1, Versions 1-3



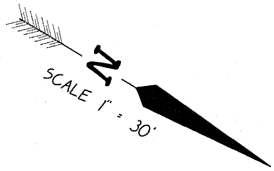




ESTIMATED COST - \$70,000

12 LOST PARKING SPACES.

DRAFT



VERSION # 3