

# Lynn business owners praise parking lot expansion plan

By Thor Jourgensen / The Daily Item | Posted: Wednesday, August 20, 2014 3:00 am

LYNN — Wyoma Square business owners said plans this fall to expand the city parking lot bordering Reinfuss Field will bring more customers into the square's restaurants and help neighboring shops and stores.

"It's a huge enhancement for every business in the area," Lazy Dog owner Thomas Dill said Tuesday.

City Inspectional Services Director Michael Donovan said construction expanding the current 50-space lot located behind Broadway businesses will start in late fall and take about 100 days to complete. The \$500,000 project will more than double the number of spaces in the lot and provide a new exit running out of the lot onto Broadway past First Lutheran Church.

"Final specifications are being reviewed. I will send them out to Purchasing (city Purchasing Department) in a week to go out to bid," Donovan said.

Dill said the existing lot is cramped and crowded with only one exit and entrance onto Broadway's Wyoma Square side. Expanding the lot means replacing the hillside where Little League fans viewed Wyoma Little League games with a wall. Wyoma Little League President Tony Luciano said new viewing and sitting areas will make up for the hill's loss.

Luciano said he is also confident city officials will ensure the new Broadway exit will be marked with traffic safeguards aimed at forcing drivers to exit the lot slowly.

"Kids are always running around there — I want to make sure they are protected," he said.

The lot — unlike municipal lots located downtown — is owned by the city, not the Off Street Parking Commission. Donovan said Inspectional Services will maintain the lot and said no plans are currently in place to charge drivers to park in the lot.

"We haven't got that far yet," he said.

Dill said local business owners, Little League parents and city officials have worked together to draw up lot expansion plans with an eye on solving a single problem.

"The only thing impeding growth is parking," he said.

Longtime Wyoma Square business owner Richard Covert said the lot expansion means more convenience for Lazy Dog and Rolly's Tavern customers and additional business for surrounding businesses.

“It will help us from late afternoon to late evening,” Covert said.

As long as pedestrian safety precautions are in place, Luciano said the lot expansion will spell improvements for Reinfuss Field.

“I think it is good overall for the whole area,” he said.