



Council Communication

Office of the City Manager

Date

August 24, 2009

Agenda Item No. 52
Roll Call No. 09-
Communication No. 09-594
Submitted by: **Jeb E. Brewer, P.E.**
City Engineer

AGENDA HEADING:

Proposed restriping of Ingersoll Avenue to a three-lane roadway, including bicycle lanes and additional parking.

SYNOPSIS:

Staff recommends approval of the Traffic Safety Committee recommendation that Ingersoll Avenue be restriped to a three-lane roadway, including bike lanes and some additional parking between Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and Polk Boulevard, including second reading of the Ordinance regarding the traffic regulation changes.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$7,500 for pavement marking removals. Minor costs for pavement marking and signing modifications.

Funding Source: 2009-2010 Operating Budget, Page 93, Engineering Department Traffic & Transportation - Sign Installation and Maintenance, ENG100413, and Street Markings Maintenance, ENG100416. Pavement marking removals from 2009-2010 CIP Traffic Control Improvements, page 5—Citywide Signals, Channelization, and School Crossing Protection Program, TFC091.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

At their January 5, 2009 meeting, by Roll Call No. 09-021, the City Council directed that a review and analysis be conducted of parking conditions along Ingersoll Avenue. The business community along Ingersoll Avenue has requested that the number of on-street parking spaces be maximized. Also, the Ingersoll Avenue corridor has been identified as a high priority by the Des Moines bicycling community for the addition of bicycle lanes.

Staff has conducted this study, and more specifically has reviewed an alternative to restripe Ingersoll Avenue between Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and Polk Boulevard to a three-lane roadway (one-lane in each direction, along with a center turn lane), adding bike lanes on each side, and increasing the number of on-street parking spaces.

Staff has prepared an updated comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the three-lane concept, along with the potential number of parking spaces that could be added with the proposed restriping project. A copy of this comparison is attached, along with a diagram showing the proposed layout at a typical signalized intersection. Overall, it is estimated that approximately 50 parking spaces could be

added between Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and Polk Boulevard. Over 30 of these spaces could be added near the signalized intersections of 28th, 31st, 35th and 42nd, where the current five-lane configuration does not allow parking, except in designated insets.

The traffic study, including a comprehensive computer analysis of the traffic conditions, was completed in June 2009, and the results of the study along with the advantages and disadvantages of the three-lane roadway were presented to the Ingersoll Business Association at a meeting on July 23, 2009. At the meeting, there was general support for the three-lane concept, with bike lanes and additional parking. In order to obtain more comprehensive input from the public, the Traffic Safety Committee held a special meeting on August 5, 2009, at the Central Presbyterian Church, 3829 Grand Avenue, to receive additional comments and consider this project. Approximately 100 people were in attendance, and appeared to be evenly split in their preference in favor of or opposed to the three-lane concept. One general concern against the proposal was that the three-lane traffic flow would create additional congestion, making it more difficult for patrons to get into or out of the businesses. Staff indicated that, based on the traffic models, traffic queues will be somewhat longer than current conditions, but still would remain within an acceptable range. Following considerable input and discussion, the Traffic Safety Committee approved the three-lane recommendation by a 6:1 vote.

At the August 10, 2009 meeting, by Roll Call 09-1474, the City Council passed the first reading of the ordinance changes for implementing the three-lane roadway and directed that a follow-up meeting be held to provide additional information, answer questions and receive additional input, primarily from the businesses along Ingersoll Avenue and also from area residents. This meeting was held on August 19th at the Plymouth Congregational Church, 4126 Ingersoll Avenue. Staff made a PowerPoint presentation at 5:00 p.m. of the background, history and details of the project, along with results of studies of many similar projects in Iowa and around the country, followed by questions and answers, and repeated the presentation at 6:30 p.m., again followed by a questions and answers session. A total of approximately 100 people were in attendance at the two sessions. A printed copy of the presentation is attached.

Some business owners and individuals expressed support for the proposed changes to make Ingersoll more pedestrian-friendly and enhance safety. A number of business owners raised concerns that the change to three lanes would create additional congestion, making it more difficult for patrons to get into or out of the businesses; would divert traffic (and potential customers) to Grand Avenue or other streets; and the addition of bike lanes would create safety concerns. Some owners also expressed concern about losing a large number of parking spaces, based on incorrect information that had been circulated. Staff assured those in attendance that the claim of lost parking was incorrect, and that the proposed project would result in approximately 50 additional parking spaces on Ingersoll.

A detailed analysis of the traffic modeling results show that with three lanes of traffic, with right-turn lanes where there is a heavy right-turn movement, Ingersoll would operate at an adequate level of service without excessive delays, even during the peak morning and afternoon periods. Therefore, it is not expected that there would be any significant diversion of traffic from Ingersoll. In addition, both Ingersoll Avenue and Grand Avenue have additional capacity compared to their current traffic volumes, so if there is an increase in east-west traffic through the combined corridor, they should still operate at acceptable levels of service.

Grand Avenue is also not a good alternative to Ingersoll Avenue for bike lanes. Grand is a major four-lane roadway that connects the State Fairgrounds through the downtown area and continues to and through West Des Moines. In the hierarchy of streets within Des Moines, Grand Avenue is considered a more important regional roadway than Ingersoll Avenue, and historically the traffic volumes on

Grand Avenue have been approximately 2,000 vehicles per day higher than Ingersoll Avenue. In order to install bike lanes on Grand Avenue, traffic would have to be reduced to one lane in each direction, which would reduce its ability to serve as a major regional arterial street, especially when other parallel major facilities, such as I-235 or University Avenue, had construction or incidents that disrupt their traffic flow.

Staff assured attendees that if the changes are implemented; the City will monitor the conditions, and if the change is not working, will change Ingersoll back to the current configuration. Several people requested to know what criteria the City would use to determine if it is not working. Staff will monitor the traffic conditions after the changes, and may need to make some changes to signal timings, minor parking adjustments, etc., to provide the best operating conditions. Staff also proposes that the evaluation criteria should include an objective analysis of the traffic conditions, as well as some measure of the acceptance of the changes by the businesses and public. After approximately six months of operation, staff would conduct more detailed analysis of the overall traffic conditions and operations, including bicycles and buses. Any of the following traffic conditions would warrant changing Ingersoll back to the current four-lane configuration:

1. Traffic congestion and delays substantially higher than are currently projected.
2. Substantial diversion of traffic from Ingersoll to Grand or other parallel streets.
3. Substantial increase in traffic crashes, including pedestrian, bicycle or bus crashes (although this will be difficult to measure effectively, due to the short after period and the delay in crash data being available through the state's computerized crash records system).
4. Other significant traffic problems that cannot be resolved by some other methods.

It is also proposed that the City work with several Ingersoll stakeholders to develop some criteria for measuring the business and public acceptance of the changes. If business owners or others experience problems or concerns about safety or access to/from their property, they can contact the Traffic and Transportation Division at 283-4973, or Michelle Schomer at mischomer@dm.gov, and traffic staff will promptly contact and work with the person to try to resolve the problem or concern.

Based on a thorough analysis of all of the traffic conditions, staff believes that the proposed alternative to reduce Ingersoll Avenue to a three-lane roadway, with a center turn lane and bike lanes, will provide additional parking; significant safety benefits from the left-turn lane, bike lanes and traffic calming effects of only one through lane in each direction; create a complete street for this section of Ingersoll; provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages business vitality; and provide an adequate level of service for vehicular traffic during peak periods.

The cost to implement this change will be relatively minor, since the only work involves pavement markings, along with some additional signing required. Staff plans to implement the changes within two weeks of City Council approval.

The following revision to the Municipal Code is necessary to designate the three-lane concept on Ingersoll.

Sec. 114-306.01. Traffic lanes allocated.

(15) On Ingersoll Avenue, from a point 300 feet west of Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to a point 150 feet east of Polk Boulevard, one lane eastbound, one lane westbound, and the center lane eastbound and westbound left turn only.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: August 10, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-1474

Action: Amending Chapter 114 of the Municipal Code regarding proposal for a three-lane restriping project including bicycle lanes and additional parking on Ingersoll Avenue. (Council Communication No. 09-554)

) Moved by Hensley that this ordinance be considered and given first vote for passage; refer to Traffic and Transportation to report back with data on current traffic counts, schedule a meeting with business owners to view computer model and submit a written evaluation after 6 months. Motion Carried 6-0. Mayor Cownie declares a conflict of interest and abstains from voting.

Date: January 5, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-021

Action: Amending Chapter 114 of the Municipal Code submitting traffic regulation changes as follows: (Council Communication No. 09-001) Moved by Hensley that this ordinance be considered and given first vote for passage; refer item (A) back to City Manager, Planning and Traffic and Transportation for review and recommendation. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Date: August 5, 2009

Roll Call Number: N/A

Action: Motion was made by Carl McPherson to accept staff's recommendation regarding the proposed three-lane configuration, including bike lanes and additional parking spaces, for Ingersoll Avenue between Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway and Polk Boulevard; seconded by Bob Saf. Motion passed 6:1.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Third reading of Ordinance. Additional parking regulations to be brought to City Council for consideration at a future meeting.

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