

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date:</b> June 14, 2010
	<p><b>Agenda Item No.</b> 78</p> <p><b>Roll Call No.</b> [Roll Call]</p> <p><b>Communication No.</b> <u>10-321</u></p> <p><b>Submitted by:</b> <b>Donald M. Tripp,</b> <b>Park and Recreation</b> <b>Director</b> <b>Jeb E. Brewer, P.E.</b> <b>City Engineer</b></p>

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Approve a proposal to stripe and sign bike lanes along Urbandale Avenue from 34th Street to Merle Hay Road.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Staff recommends approval to stripe and sign bike lanes along Urbandale Avenue.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Estimated costs are between \$15,000-\$25,000 for painting and signage and funds are budgeted in the FY09-10 CIP Budget, PKS 045 Recreation Trails.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Urbandale Avenue is currently a boulevard street with a single lane of traffic on each side of the boulevard. In addition, there is on-street parking extending the entire stretch of the street with the exception of small areas near the intersections with Beaver Avenue and Merle Hay Road. At these intersections there are left and right turn lanes. Because of the width of the road on each side of the boulevard, there is an outside stripe to designate the separation of the travel lanes and the parking lane.

On the south side of the road is the Inter-Urban Trail from 50<sup>th</sup> Street west to the Des Moines City limits near 67<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition, the Inter-Urban Trail starts again where Urbandale Avenue becomes Leado Avenue near 34<sup>th</sup> Street. This street is designated as an on-street bike route on the City’s Bike and Trails Master Plan Map. Most of this street has been repaved within the past five years.

For many years, the City of Des Moines has maintained a Bike and Trails Master Plan Map. This map has been the guide in developing the City’s extensive off-street trails system that includes such trails as the Inter-Urban Trail, Neal Smith Trail, Meredith Trail, etc. Every year more and more of the City’s trails are connected together into a cohesive system of trails that makes it much easier for citizens to use the trail system for recreation, fitness and bicycle commuting. As a result of this and other factors such as rising gas prices, increased awareness of rising obesity rates and an environmental consciousness, more and more people are thinking about bicycling on a regular basis. Regardless of why people are biking more, there is a growing demand to make the City’s streets safer for bicycles.

In the 2007 and 2008 City Satisfaction Survey, residents were surveyed about their feelings toward riding a bike on City Streets. Only 23% (2007) and 25% (2008) of those surveyed felt that they were able to safely ride a bicycle on City Streets. This was last among Public Works questions in approval rating. Based on the survey results improving the City streets, bicycle safety was ranked third in the suggested priority list for Public Works, tied with flood protection.

Several different plans, policies and goal statements refer to the use of bicycles as transportation, not just recreation and fitness. Some of the most recent include:

1. Bicycle Friendly Community Goals – On December 17, 2007 by Roll Call No. 07-735 the City Council adopted a series of goals in an effort to make Des Moines a More Bicycle Friendly Community. The overall goal is to have the City recognized by the League of American Bicyclists as a designated Bicycle Friendly Community. To date, less than 100 cities across the country have received this designation. (In September 2008, the City was given the honorable mention rating by the League of American Bicyclists).
2. Complete Streets Policy – On September 22, 2008, by Roll Call No. 08-1701 the City Council adopted a complete streets policy that seeks to review all City street projects for compliance with the policy. The policy's intent is to help City streets become useable transportation facilities for more than just automobiles and trucks.
3. City Goals – On October 23, 2006, the City Council adopted 12 goal statements for the City. The addition of on-street bicycle facilities directly relates to one of these goals; *Sustainable Green Community: Des Moines will be a leader in setting policies and practicing service delivery innovations that promote environmental sustainability. Des Moines will offer safe, reliable and convenient transportation alternatives that reduce reliance on automobiles and parking facilities.*

A group of Beavertdale neighbors has diligently worked hard on bike and trail issues as part of the Beavertdale Main Street Program. This group has produced a series of work related to bike and trail issues in the Beavertdale Neighborhood. Their work included a survey of property owners along Urbandale Avenue, which was placed on the Beavertdale website and in their newsletter. This survey was used to gauge reactions from people to removing parking from Urbandale Avenue. In addition to the survey work, on several occasions car counts were performed along the corridor to help determine actual usage of the parking along Urbandale Avenue.

A public meeting with property owners along Urbandale Avenue was held on April 23, 2009. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting. The biggest concern voiced by property owners that attended the meeting was the loss of on-street parking in front of their homes. Several suggestions were offered during the meeting including allowing parking during the evening hours and prohibiting parking the rest of the day. After conducting research, staff believed that prohibiting parking all day was the best option. Most of the streets that intersect Urbandale Avenue have on-street parking and the longest distance a property owner would have to walk to a parking space is approximately 400 feet. In addition, staff from the traffic department explored the possibility of allowing permits for parking during special events.

After that meeting, staff recommended to City Council that Urbandale Avenue from Leado Avenue to just west of Merle Hay Road be striped with bike lanes on the road. This proposal would require the removal of on-street parking along the entire length of Urbandale Avenue. It also included striping and signing of the street for bike lanes. At its July 27, 2009 meeting, the City Council referred the item to the

City Manager and asked that other alternatives be sought to address concerns from neighborhoods about the potential loss of parking in front of their homes.

On March 10, 2010, a public meeting was hosted to discuss and gather input on seven proposed alternative options for bicycle facilities on Urbandale Avenue. Approximately 35 people attended the meeting and comments and suggestions were taken for over an hour. Based on the feedback and comments received from those who attended the meeting, staff is recommending the following:

- **Urbandale Avenue between 34<sup>th</sup> Street and 38<sup>th</sup> Street:** Reduce the width of the travel lane and the parking lane to accommodate a bicycle lane. This would create a 10-foot travel lane, 5-foot bicycle lane and a 7-foot parking lane in each direction. This accommodates all the requested needs from property owners and bicyclists. It does not remove on-street parking and creates a bicycle lane for bicyclists.
- **Urbandale Avenue between 38<sup>th</sup> Street and 49<sup>th</sup> Street:** Designate a bicycle lane in the current existing parking lane. This would allow people to continue to park in front of their homes and businesses and also dedicate a bicycle lane through the area. Cars would be able to park in the bicycle lane, but studies have shown that the on-street parking is infrequently used so conflicts between parked cars and bicycles should be minimal. Bicycles would need to enter the travel lane to pass parked cars so signage will be needed to alert cars to the possibility of bicycles entering the lane.
- **Urbandale Avenue between 49<sup>th</sup> Street and Merle Hay Road:** Reduce the width of the travel lane and the parking lane to accommodate a bicycle lane. This would create a 10-foot travel lane, 5-foot bicycle lane and a 7-foot parking lane in each direction. This accommodates all the requested needs from property owners and bicyclists. It does not remove on-street parking and creates a bicycle lane for bicyclists.

In addition to the above recommendation, staff is also recommending, that if approved, this be studied for a year to see the impacts of the automobile speeds on Urbandale Avenue, number of bicycles using the street and number of cars parked on the street.

Before coming forward to the Council, this recommendation was considered by the Park and Recreation Board and the Traffic Safety Committee. All residents and property owners along Urbandale Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Merle Hay Road were sent letters notifying them of the meetings. On April 27, 2010 the Park and Recreation Board received and filed this recommendation, on May 11, 2010 the Traffic Safety Committee approved the recommendation and on May 25, 2010, the Park and Recreation Board approved the recommendation.

The only costs associated with this would be to paint bike and arrow symbols on the bike lanes and to hang bike signs along the street. Estimated costs are between \$15,000-\$25,000 for painting and signage and funds are budgeted in the FY09-10 CIP Budget, PKS 045 Recreation Trails.

#### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: December 17, 2007

Roll Call Number: [07-2344](#)

Action: [Adoption](#) of “Goals To Make Des Moines A Bicycle Friendly Community.”

([Council Communication No. 07-735](#)) Moved by Hensley to approve. Motion Carried 6-1.

**BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):**

Date: May 25, 2010

Roll Call Number: 10-040

Action: Park and Recreation Board, Approval of a proposal to stripe and sign bike lanes along Urbandale Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Merle Hay Road.

Date: May 11, 2010

Action: Traffic Safety Committee approved recommendation to sign and stripe bicycle lanes along Urbandale Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Merle Hay Road and that they be monitored for a one-year period.

Date: April 27, 2010

Roll Call Number: 10-033

Action: Park and Recreation Board, Receive and File a proposal to stripe and sign bike lanes along Urbandale Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Merle Hay Road.

Date: May 26, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-049

Action: Park and Recreation Board, approval of recommendations to sign and stripe bike lanes along Urbandale Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> St to Merle Hay Road.

Date: April 28, 2009

Roll Call Number: 09-040

Action: Park and Recreation Board, receive and file of recommendation to sign and stripe bike lanes along Urbandale Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> St to Merle Hay Road.

Date: May 12, 2009

Action: Traffic Safety Committee, Approval of recommendations to sign and stripe bike lanes along Urbandale Avenue from 34<sup>th</sup> Street to Merle Hay Road and remove street parking along this stretch of road.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

Clerk's Office on Thursday afternoon preceding Monday's Council meeting. Citizens can also request to receive meeting notices and agendas by email by calling the Clerk's Office or sending their request via email to [cityclerk@dmgov.org](mailto:cityclerk@dmgov.org).