

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date:</b> August 27, 2012
	<b>Agenda Item No.</b> 49 <b>Roll Call No.</b> <u>12-1388</u> <b>Communication No.</b> <u>12-449</u> <b>Submitted by:</b> <b>Jeb E. Brewer, P.E., City Engineer</b>

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Rescind the Traffic Safety Fund grant for \$360,000 awarded to the City by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) for the proposed Hubbell Avenue Restriping project from East 18th Street to East 33rd Street.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Early studies of the Hubbell Avenue Corridor suggested restriping would help improve safety. A grant was received to perform the work and before final project development, a series of public meetings was conducted. The outreach showed a general lack of acceptance by adjacent residents and business owners for the restriping of Hubbell Avenue. Based upon the outreach it is now recommended to rescind the grant. This corridor will continue to be monitored for trends in crashes including number, type, and severity to assess need for mitigation in the future.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Amount: N/A

Funding Source: The project will not be completed therefore project costs will not be incurred.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

The safety project was originally proposed for Hubbell Avenue from E 18th Street to E 33rd Street due to the many needs on the corridor, including: mix of through and turning vehicles causing safety and mobility difficulties due to lane changing and positioning to by-pass turning vehicles, left turning vehicles waiting in a thru lane of traffic creating poor turning visibility when an opposing driver is also turning left. Over the past five years, there have been a total of 300 crashes, many occurring at the intersections of E 18th Street, University, Easton Boulevard, Guthrie Avenue, and E 29th Street.

Four-lane to three-lane restriping projects have been shown to reduce vehicle speeds, improve sight distance for left turns and driveway exiting traffic, and eliminate passing vehicles, all of which results in a reduction in crashes. The types of crashes that could be reduced are the types prevalent on Hubbell Avenue such as left-turning, head-on, sideswipe, rear end, right angle, and fixed-object. Hubbell Avenue carries approximately 10,000 vehicles/day. Three-lane restriping projects are appropriate at volumes of up to 18,000 vehicles/day, therefore the restriping of Hubbell Avenue was pursued.

In December 2011, the City of Des Moines received a Traffic Safety Fund grant from IDOT to restripe Hubbell Avenue which is currently a four-lane cross section with no turn lanes to three-lanes (one lane

in each direction with a center two-way left turn lane). This restriping would also allow for bike lanes to be added to Hubbell Avenue as well, which was a component of the Bicycle Master Plan adopted by Council in May 2011.

After award of the grant, City Council directed staff to conduct an extensive community outreach process to determine if there was community acceptance for this restriping due to the large change to the corridor that would ensue, and to determine if there was support for the optional bike lanes that could be added as a side benefit if Hubbell Avenue were restriped.

The first public meeting was held in February 2012. Three options were presented for the Hubbell Avenue corridor between East 18th Street to East 33rd Street: (1) Do Nothing, (2) Restripe to Three-lanes, or (3) Restripe to Three lanes plus bike lanes. Concerns regarding large semi-truck movements in the corridor, backups that occurred when the train blocked Hubbell Avenue, bicycles mixing with trucks, the inability to turn left at certain intersections, and the presence of the existing DART buses on Hubbell Avenue with the regular vehicle traffic were some of the many concerns voiced by those in attendance.

An Advisory Steering Committee of volunteers from the February meeting was created to determine if those concerns could be worked through. The Committee was comprised of approximately 15 members including representatives from AE Dairy, Leachman Lumber, Des Moines Feed, Marel (Townsend Engineering), Copy Systems, Quik Trip, and Hubbell Avenue Area residents. They met three times over a two-month period to review concerns raised at the February public meeting regarding trucks, trains, buses and bicycles.

The Advisory Steering Committee came up with a compromise plan, which was to shorten the project limits from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street, to avoid the most industrial part of the corridor. This also helped to reduce the concerns in the area of the railroad tracks. This plan was presented to the entire community in a second public meeting held in June 2012.

Following the presentation and discussion, a survey of those in attendance at the June meeting showed that of the 43 responses received, 20% were in favor of moving forward with the project and 80% were against. Many of the comments heard at the second meeting were regarding driveway access being more complex due to less available gaps in traffic flow, the "Hubbell hill" being too icy in the winter that traffic may get stuck behind a slow driver, the inability to pass, and statements that the problems are at the intersections so those areas should be fixed, not the whole corridor. There were also several comments heard against placing bicycles on Hubbell Avenue and that alternative routes in the area, such as Easton Boulevard, should be explored instead.

The Traffic Safety Committee reviewed this item at their July 10, 2012 and August 14, 2012 meetings. A motion to recommend the project from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street failed 5 to 5 at the July 10, 2012 meeting. A motion was made then to defer the final vote until the August 14, 2012 meeting. There was much discussion as to how to best move this project forward. At the August 14, 2012 meeting, a motion was made to recommend the project from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street move forward for the safety benefits that are projected to be realized. This final motion passed 4 to 3.

Even though the Traffic Safety Committee did recommend the project by a narrow margin, staff recommends to not move forward with the project at this time. The public outreach process conducted over several months showed a general lack of acceptance by adjacent residents and business owners for the restriping of Hubbell Avenue. Staff will continue to monitor this corridor for trends in crashes

including number, type, and severity to assess need for mitigation in the future. Traffic and Transportation staff will pursue other safety improvements such as small scale spot improvements at specific intersections to mitigate some of the crashes occurring in the corridor through the use of annual maintenance and capital funds. Identification and feasibility of alternative bike routes in this area will also continue to be investigated.

This final step is for Council to rescind the Traffic Safety Fund grant awarded to the City by IDOT.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: June 13, 2011

Roll Call Number: [11-0974](#)

Action: [Approving](#) additional FY2013 Traffic Safety Fund Application to Iowa Department of Transportation for Hubbell Avenue “Four-Lane to Three-Lane Conversion” Project, including bicycle lanes. ([Council Communication No. 11-358](#)). Moved by Moore to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: May 23, 2011

Roll Call Number: [11-0938](#)

Action: [Receive](#) and file Trails and Greenways Advisory Committee recommendation of the Bicycle and Trail Master Plan as an element of the 2020 Community Character Plan. ([Council Communication No. 11-314](#)). Moved by Hensley to receive and file. Motion Carried 7-0.

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

Board: Traffic Safety Committee

Date: August 14, 2012

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: A motion was made by Jim Windsor to proceed with the Hubbell Avenue Restriping project compromise plan that reduced the project limits to include Hubbell Avenue from Easton Boulevard to E 33rd Street; seconded by Scott Galenbeck. Motion passed 4:3. Nays: Jennifer Bohac, John Morrissey, and George Robinson.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE**

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