

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date:</b>	September 24, 2012
	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>	37
	<b>Roll Call No.</b>	<u>12-1523</u>
	<b>Communication No.</b>	<u>12-517</u>
	<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Richard A. Clark, City Manager</b>

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Direct City Manager to develop an alternative safety project for Hubbell Avenue from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street, and rescind prior Council direction for the Hubbell Avenue Restriping project.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Initial studies of the Hubbell Avenue Corridor suggested restriping would help improve safety. The public outreach showed a general lack of acceptance by adjacent residents and business owners for the restriping of Hubbell Avenue from East 18th Street to East 33rd Street with bicycle lanes. On August 27, 2012, the City Council voted to direct the City Manager to rescind an earlier grant application with the IDOT for a restriping project on Hubbell Avenue from East 18th Street to East 33rd Street, which included bicycle lanes.

Four-lane to three-lane restriping projects have been shown to improve safety by reducing vehicle speeds; improving sight distance for left turns and driveway exiting traffic; and eliminating passing vehicles, all of which results in a reduction in crashes. It is recommended that a new pilot project be considered. A portion of the original project would be included as part of this pilot project to evaluate the safety benefits that could be realized on this corridor. It is suggested a pilot project be developed on Hubbell Avenue from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street that has public consensus, on a temporary basis, and be evaluated over a several-month period for safety performance and community acceptance before any final striping would be applied. A future grant agreement would need to be negotiated with the IDOT to reflect the reduced scope, including the pilot project implementation.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Amount: \$220,000

Funding Source: It is anticipated that \$20,000 would be funded by the City--2012-13 CIP, Street Improvements – Pg 6, STR250 CP038 ENG990000. An estimate of \$200,000 would be funded through an IDOT Traffic Safety Fund grant.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

The safety project was originally proposed for Hubbell Avenue from East 18th Street to East 33rd Street due to the many needs on the corridor, including: mix of through and turning vehicles causes safety and mobility difficulties due to lane changing and positioning to bypass turning vehicles and left turning vehicles must wait in a through lane of traffic creating poor turning visibility when an opposing driver is also turning left. 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.

In December 2011, the City of Des Moines received a Traffic Safety Fund grant from the IDOT to restripe Hubbell Avenue from East 18th Street to East 33rd Street, 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.

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.

Concerns were expressed 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, 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 the presence of the existing DART buses on Hubbell Avenue with the regular vehicle traffic.

On August 27, 2012, the City Council directed the City Manager to rescind the application to the IDOT for Traffic Safety Funds and return the tendered grant agreement for a Hubbell Avenue “Four-Lane to Three-Lane Conversion” restriping project, including bike lanes, from East 18th Street to East 33rd Street. However after further discussions with the IDOT to implement suggested restriping to help improve safety that has public consensus, the desire is to reduce the project scope and negotiate a grant agreement.

There was much discussion at the August 27th City Council meeting regarding the safety benefits that four-lane to three-lane restriping projects have been shown to have. Staff has subsequently worked with the IDOT to try and find a solution. A portion of the original project would be included as part of this pilot project to evaluate the safety benefits that could be realized on this corridor. It is suggested that Hubbell Avenue from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street be restriped on a temporary basis without bicycle lanes and be evaluated over a several month period for safety performance and community acceptance before any final striping would be applied. A future grant agreement would need to be negotiated with the IDOT to reflect the reduced scope, including the pilot project implementation.

The Traffic Safety Fund grant would include the project being separated into two (2) phases: Phase 1--new markings applied in paint, Phase 2--permanent durable markings applied. This section of Hubbell from Easton to East 33rd Street would be evaluated over a several month period for safety performance and community acceptance before Phase 2 could be implemented. If the safety benefits and community acceptance are not realized, the roadway could be restriped back to the original four-lanes. Funds from the IDOT grant for Phase 1 would not have to be returned, but City funds would have to be used to remove the “three-lane” paint markings and restripe back to the original “four-lane” cross section.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):**

Date: August 27, 2012

Roll Call Number: [12-1388](#)

Action: [Rescind](#) the Traffic Safety Fund grant for \$360,000 awarded to the City by Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) for the proposed Hubbell Avenue Restriping Project from E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street to E. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. ([Council Communication No. 12-449](#)). Moved by Mahaffey to adopt. Motion Carried 4-3. Nays: Coleman, Hensley and Cownie.

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.

**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 Street; seconded by Scott Galenbeck. Motion passed 4:3. Nays: Jennifer Bohac, John Morrissey, and George Robinson.

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

Approved grant agreement.

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