

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date:	June 9, 2014
	Agenda Item No.	61
	Roll Call No.	<u>14-0902</u>
	Communication No.	<u>14-267</u>
	Submitted by:	Jeb E. Brewer, P.E., City Engineer

AGENDA HEADING:

Approving recommendation for Hubbell Avenue Restriping Pilot Project to return the roadway to its original four-lane configuration from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street and direct the City Manager to close out the grant process with the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) for this 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 November 19, 2012, the City Council voted to restripe Hubbell Avenue from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street without bicycle lanes and then evaluate safety performance and community acceptance over a several-month period. Final striping would be applied only after review of the temporary project performance.

After seven (7) months, the review of project performance was prepared. Traffic volumes, speeds, travel times, and crash information were collected, in addition to a public opinion survey. The traffic data stayed consistent with no significant changes in vehicle volume, vehicle speed, or travel times. This shows that the three-lane conversion did not have a negative impact on traffic flow.

In reviewing the crash history for the evaluation period, crashes increased during the first three (3) months as drivers transitioned to the new striping configuration and then leveled off for the following four (4) months; however, the crash data did not show the large reduction that was anticipated.

Public opinion of this project has not changed. Eighty-seven percent (87%) did not support moving forward with this project, afterwards 93% still oppose this change.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$15,000

Funding Source: 2014-15, Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Page Street-40, Traffic Signals, Channelization, and School Crossings, TR091

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: lane changing and positioning and left turning vehicles waiting in a through lane of traffic. 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 have allowed for bike lanes to be added to Hubbell Avenue.

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 to a three-lane roadway.

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 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.

On September 24, 2012, the City Council directed the City Manager to develop an alternative project. Staff subsequently worked with IDOT to try and find a solution. It was 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.

On November 19, 2012, City Council voted to approve the project, and that it be separated into two (2) phases: Phase 1—new markings applied in paint, Phase 2—permanent durable markings applied. This section of Hubbell Avenue from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street would be evaluated over a several month period for safety performance and community acceptance before Phase 2 could be implemented. Phase 1 was then implemented on August 3, 2013.

The evaluation of project performance has been completed. Traffic volumes, speeds, travel times, and crash information were collected, in addition to a public opinion survey. It was found that the traffic data stayed consistent with no drop in vehicle volume, vehicle speed, or reduction in travel times. This shows that the three-lane conversion did not have a negative impact on traffic flow. If “Complete Street” elements were part of this project, this would show that these elements could be added without negatively impacting traffic flow.

Crashes increased during the first three (3) months of the evaluation period as drivers transitioned to the new striping configuration and then leveled off for the following four (4) months; however, the crash data did not show the large reduction that was anticipated. Crash data was limited, having only seven (7) months data. For crash data, longer periods (closer to five (5) years) give a better picture of how the roadway will truly operate long-term with the new reconfiguration. Seven (7) months of crash data provides a limited snap shot.

Over 300 surveys have been received. Public opinion of this project has not changed. Before the “trial” three-lane project was installed, 87% did not support moving forward with this project. Currently, 93% still oppose this change. Eighty-one percent (81%) before thought it would make it less safe; after, 85% still feel it is less safe than before. Sixty-seven percent (67%) thought it would negatively impact shopping and business on Hubbell; after, only 48% felt it had a reduction on shopping and business on Hubbell. Charts of the survey are attached to the roll call.

A public meeting was held on May 20, 2014, to present the staff recommendation that given that there was not a large reduction in crashes experienced, staff recommends to return Hubbell to its original four-lane configuration. Approximately 50 people attended.

Some of the safety treatments installed as part of the pilot project will be able to stay. These treatments were selected in response to concerns and comments heard from residents in previous public meetings that had specific safety concerns at the intersections. These items include upsized signal heads, pedestrian countdown timers, and left-turn signal modifications at Hubbell Avenue at East 29th Street. The signal at Easton Blvd. will be rebuilt and the left-turn arrow for northbound Hubbell traffic at Guthrie Avenue and the left-turn arrow for southbound Hubbell traffic at Easton will remain to handle these higher demand left turns; however, the left-turn lanes will be removed as part of the restriping.

Funds from the IDOT grant that were expended on Phase 1 for the pilot project do not have to be returned; however, funding from Phase 2 of the pilot project will not be utilized, and will be returned to IDOT. City funds are required to be used to remove the “three-lane” paint markings, and restripe back to the original “four-lane” cross section, which is estimated to be approximately \$15,000.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: February 25, 2013

Roll Call Number: [13-0292](#)

Action: [Approving](#) Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Agreement for the Hubbell Avenue Restriping Pilot Project with no bicycle lanes from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street. ([Council Communication No. 13-084](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: November 19, 2012

Roll Call Number: [12-1804](#)

Action: [Hubbell](#) Avenue Restriping Pilot Project, with no bicycle lanes, from Easton Boulevard to East 33rd Street, (roll call contains alternative motions). ([Council Communication No. 12-586](#)) Moved by Moore to adopt pilot project for 1 year. After the trial period, bring all parties together to determine the level of success and whether to continue on a permanent basis. Motion Carried 4-3. Nays: Griess, Mahaffey and Meyer. * Previous motion by Mahaffey to close the grant and return the funding failed. 3 Yeas: Meyer, Mahaffey and Griess. 4 Nays: Coleman, Hensley, Cownie and Moore.

Date: September 24, 2012

Roll Call Number: [12-1523](#)

Action: [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. ([Council Communication No. 12-517](#)) Moved by Mahaffey to adopt. Motion Carried 6-1. Nays: Meyer.

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 East 18th Street to East 33rd 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 East 33rd Street; seconded by Scott Galenbeck. Motion passed 4:3. Nays: Jennifer Bohac, John Morrissey, and George Robinson.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Implement alternative elected by City Council.

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