

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date:	October 24, 2016
	Agenda Item No.	12
	Roll Call No.	<u>16-1808</u>
	Communication No.	<u>16-619</u>
	Submitted by:	Pamela S. Cooksey, P.E., City Engineer

AGENDA HEADING:

Approving the Howe Elementary, Park Avenue Elementary, and Windsor Elementary pedestrian crossing plans and authorizing City staff to proceed with acquisition of necessary right of way and easements.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval of the Howe Elementary, Park Avenue Elementary, and Windsor Elementary pedestrian crossing plans that include pedestrian bridge removal and associated enhanced at-grade pedestrian crossing improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$1,075,000 (estimated)

Funding Source: Various funding sources as follows:

- \$580,000 (estimated) 2016-2017 CIP, Page Bridge-4, City-wide Bridges, BR003
- \$495,000 (estimated) Des Moines Public Schools

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

City staff and Des Moines Public Schools staff identified the need to evaluate the existing pedestrian bridges over Indianola Avenue near Howe Elementary, over SW 9th Street near Park Avenue Elementary, and over University Avenue near Windsor Elementary based on continued deterioration of the bridges and ongoing maintenance concerns. The existing bridges do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements due to the steep grade of the bridge ramps.

On August 11, 2014, by Roll Call No. 14-1208, City Council approved a Professional Service Agreement with Shuck-Britson, Inc. to complete a Pedestrian Bridge Structural Evaluation of the three (3) pedestrian bridges. The evaluation considered short-term repairs, full replacement, and removal with associated at-grade improvements.

City staff and Des Moines Public Schools staff recommend bridge removal with associated at-grade enhancements based on:

- Future maintenance needs;
- Adjoining property impacts;

- Additional out-of-distance pedestrians would need to travel due to the longer ADA compliant ramps;
- Life cycle costs;
- Other elementary schools in Des Moines with similar at-grade crossing situations;
- Modify and improve pick-up and drop-off areas to reduce need for students to cross street; and
- Ability to improve/provide safe at-grade crossings.

The proposed at-grade enhancements at the school sites include:

Howe Elementary

- Add a 6-foot wide raised median on Indianola Avenue in front of the school property to promote slower traffic and to provide a refuge to pedestrians crossing Indianola Avenue.
- Add a high-intensity activated cross-walk beacon (HAWK) traffic signal with a new painted crosswalk for pedestrians to cross Indianola Avenue.
- Widen and reconstruct sidewalks on both sides of Indianola Avenue and build new sidewalk connection to the school.
- Narrow the travel lanes and add speed feedback signs on Indianola Avenue to encourage slower traffic.

Park Avenue Elementary

- Remove existing southbound right turn lane at Park Avenue & SW 9th Street to decrease the crossing distance across SW 9th Street for pedestrians.
- Add speed feedback signs on SW 9th Street to encourage slower traffic.
- Add parking insets along Park Avenue and SW 7th Street adjacent to school property.
- Increase sidewalk areas for pedestrians waiting to cross SW 9th Street and Park Avenue (all corners).
- Institute an advanced walk sign phase to the existing signals for pedestrians crossing SW 9th Street and Park Avenue.

Windsor Elementary

- Add a 6-foot wide raised median on University Avenue in front of the school property to promote slower traffic and to provide a refuge to pedestrians crossing University Avenue (requires minor widening of University Avenue).
- Add a HAWK traffic signal with a new painted crosswalk for pedestrians to cross University Avenue.
- Widen and reconstruct sidewalks in the vicinity of the HAWK signal.
- Add speed feedback signs on University Avenue to encourage slower traffic.
- Extend the existing bus inset on University Avenue to reduce congestion caused by buses blocking University Avenue.

Extensive public outreach was completed to gain input from parent/teacher groups as well as members of the neighborhoods where the bridges are located. The following meetings were held to present the findings and recommendations of staff to date:

January 12, 2016 – Park Avenue Elementary

January 14, 2016 – Howe Elementary

January 21, 2016 – Windsor Elementary

February 18, 2016 – Gray s Lake Neighborhood Association

March 1, 2016 – Indianola Hills Neighborhood Association
March 3, 2016 – Merle Hay Neighborhood Association
March 8, 2016 – Waveland Woods Neighborhood Association
September 22, 2016 – Howe Elementary (Neighborhood invited)
September 27, 2016 – Park Avenue Elementary (Neighborhoods invited)
October 6, 2016 – Windsor Elementary (Neighborhoods invited)

An informational presentation was given to the Des Moines School Board on September 20, 2016.

The majority of the attendees at the public input meetings expressed concern for student safety crossing the street, but were understanding of staff's recommendation to pursue the at-grade solution. There were about 10 parents who did express the desire to rebuild a pedestrian bridge. Staff responded to the input received by adding additional at-grade improvement elements to address safety related concerns about high traffic speed on the streets. Those additions were presented at the last set of meetings in fall 2016.

The schedule for the improvements include design during fall and winter 2016, bidding in February 2017, and construction summer 2017. The project would begin immediately after school is over and the selected contractor would be required to be substantially complete with the improvements prior to the first day of school in August 2017.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: August 11, 2014

Roll Call Number: [14-1208](#)

Action: [Approving](#) Professional Services Agreement with Shuck-Britson, Inc. for professional services for the Pedestrian Bridge Structural Evaluation, not to exceed \$62,689. ([Council Communication No. 14-398](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

- Approval of a funding agreement with Des Moines Public Schools.
- Normal Council actions for construction plan preparation.

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