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|  <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p> | Date: | December 4, 2017 |
| | Agenda Item No. | 44 |
| | Roll Call No. | <u>17-2092</u> |
| | Communication No. | <u>17-827</u> |
| | Submitted by: | Pamela S. Cooksey, P.E., City Engineer |

AGENDA HEADING:

Receive and file the Connect Downtown study and refer to the Plan and Zoning Commission for consideration as an element of PlanDSM and refer to the City Manager for recommendation of funding options.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommendation to receive and file Connect Downtown that includes recommendations for modifications to the downtown street network to make be more welcoming for walking and biking. Connect Downtown and MoveDSM should be considered by Plan and Zoning Commission for inclusion in City’s PlanDSM and be referred to the City Manager for implementation and funding strategies.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- In 2013, Jeff Speck, author of “Walkable City,” was hired by the City to evaluate the current ability to walk and bike in the downtown core. On March 23, 2015, a summary of Mr. Speck’s full observation was presented to the City Council at a Council Workshop. The changes in Mr. Speck’s summary included lane reductions, lane width reductions, removal of peak-hour parking restrictions, installation of pedestrian bump-outs, and one-way to two-way street conversions. Staff was asked to move forward with next steps to identify the impact to the traveling public with these changes and to determine what it would take to implement these changes.
- Four (4) pilot projects were implemented in 2015 to demonstrate the ideas presented by Mr. Speck:
 - Peak Hour parking restrictions were removed on 7th Street from I-235 to Martin Luther King Jr Parkway, Mulberry from 15th Street to 5th Avenue, and on Locust from 17th Street to 2nd Avenue.
 - 12th Street from Mulberry Street to Grand Avenue was converted from a one-way street to a two-way street.
- Little comment or concern has been heard from the travelling public regarding these pilot changes.

- On June 8, 2015, City Council authorized the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Professional Services for the Downtown Walkability Study. The selection committee, which consisted of City staff and representatives from the Greater Des Moines Partnership (GDMP), Urban Land Institute of Iowa (ULI), and Des Moines Bicycle Collective, could not come to an agreement on the selection of a consultant team. Therefore, the study was split into two (2) projects – a planning project led and funded by the GDMP and ULI, and a traffic modeling project led and funded by the City. The combination of the planning project and the traffic modeling project was later retitled Connect Downtown.
- The planning project included the development of conceptual designs and a prioritized implementation program for changes to downtown streets as originally suggested by Mr. Speck, along with public outreach and focused stakeholder and downtown business coordination. The study area for this planning project included the roadways within the boundaries of University Avenue on the north, the rivers on the south, Martin Luther King Jr Parkway to the west and E 15th Street to the east.
- The traffic modeling project supported the planning project by developing several dynamic traffic models to determine how much change could be made to the downtown street system without introducing an unreasonable amount of delay to the traveling public entering, exiting, and travelling within downtown during the peak hours of the day.
- In September 2017, the East Grand Avenue Complete Street Pilot Project was constructed from Robert D. Ray Drive to Pennsylvania Avenue, which included a reduction in the number of vehicular travel lanes from three (3) to two (2), the addition of parking protected bike lanes in each direction, the reduction of the pedestrian crosswalk distance across East Grand Avenue from 52 feet to 20-feet, and the addition of raised concrete bus stops for transit users. This project is a pilot project for Connect Downtown to demonstrate what several of the streets would look like if the proposed changes are implemented.
- On November 6, 2017, the Consultants for the planning project and City staff presented preliminary findings from the overall Connect Downtown study to City Council at a work session. Based on input received at the work session, as well as comments received from the Engineering Department, several revisions were incorporated into the final version of the Connect Downtown study.
- On December 19, 2016, by Roll Call No. 16-2133, the City Council authorized a professional services agreement for the City's Transportation Master Plan, now known as MoveDSM. MoveDSM is currently underway and planned to be completed in mid-2018. Connect Downtown provides a master plan of potential street changes within the study area. The transportation network developed as part of Connect Downtown will be coordinated with the overall Citywide network developed as part of the MoveDSM transportation master plan. As funding and staffing allow, the Connect Downtown will be used by staff as a starting point to further evaluate and validate the street concepts in conjunction with public input, Iowa Department of Transportation coordination (for any proposed changes to state facilities), and City Council direction. Both Connect Downtown and MoveDSM will be presented to the Plan and Zoning Commission for review and consideration for inclusion in PlanDSM. The proposed changes would then be recommended for incorporation into the City's Capital Improvement Program for construction.

- As presented to City Council at the October 30, 2017 work session on Intelligent Transportation Systems, the City must have the ability to actively manage traffic during special events, construction detours, and during peak hours at busy intersections if the proposed street and lane reduction changes are made per the recommendations of Connect Downtown. Allocation of resources for proper traffic management and maintenance related to the recommended changes will be critical to the success of any project outlined in the Connect Downtown study.
- If Connect Downtown is approved and implemented as drafted, costs are estimated to include:
 - \$33.5 million (estimated design, construction, and administration costs).
 - \$500,000 per year (estimated contract cost for pavement marking restriping).
 - Additional costs for snow removal/street sweeping (unknown).
 - Additional costs for traffic management (costs are being developed with the Intelligent Transportation Systems Master Plan, estimated at \$15 million, plus staffing).

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: July 10, 2017

Roll Call Number: [17-1194](#)

Action: [On](#) 2017 Traffic Signal Repairs and E. Grand Complete Street Conversion: Resolution approving plans, specifications, form of contract documents, Engineer's estimate and designating lowest responsible bidder as Iowa Signal, Inc. (Wayne Lesley, President), \$341,662.69. ([Council Communication No. 17-534](#)) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: April 25, 2016

Roll Call Number: [16-0658](#)

Action: [Approving](#) Professional Services Agreement with Cambridge Systematics, Inc. for professional services for the Downtown Walkability Study Traffic Modeling Project, not to exceed \$356,981. ([Council Communication No. 16-221](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

- Consideration of recommendation by Plan and Zoning Commission regarding Connect Downtown and MoveDSM inclusion in PlanDSM.
- Approval of funding strategy to determine City and private cost share to implement changes proposed in the Connect Downtown study.

- Additional Operating budget funding for annual pavement marking re-striping costs, signage, snow removal costs, and street sweeping costs.
- Additional CIP, Operating budget funding, and staffing to implement Intelligent Transportation Systems upgrades to provide the ability to actively manage traffic.

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