


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

 CITY OF DES MOINES OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER	Number: 23-233	Meeting: May 8, 2023
	Agenda Item: 6	Roll Call: [_____]
	Submitted by: Steven L. Naber, P.E., City Engineer	

AGENDA HEADING:

Approving and authorizing the execution of Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Agreement E. University Avenue (IA 163) from E. 14th Street (US 69) to Easton Boulevard Four (4)-Lane to Three (3)-Lane Conversion.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval of IDOT Agreement No. 2024-TS-026 for Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP) funding between the City of Des Moines and IDOT E. University Avenue (IA 163) from E. 14th Street (US 69) to Easton Boulevard Four (4)-Lane to Three (3)-Lane Conversion.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$500,000

Funding Source: 2023-2024 CIP, Page 163, East University-E. 14th Street to I-235, ST315, Being: \$500,000 in TSIP funds and \$400,000 in G.O. Bonds

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

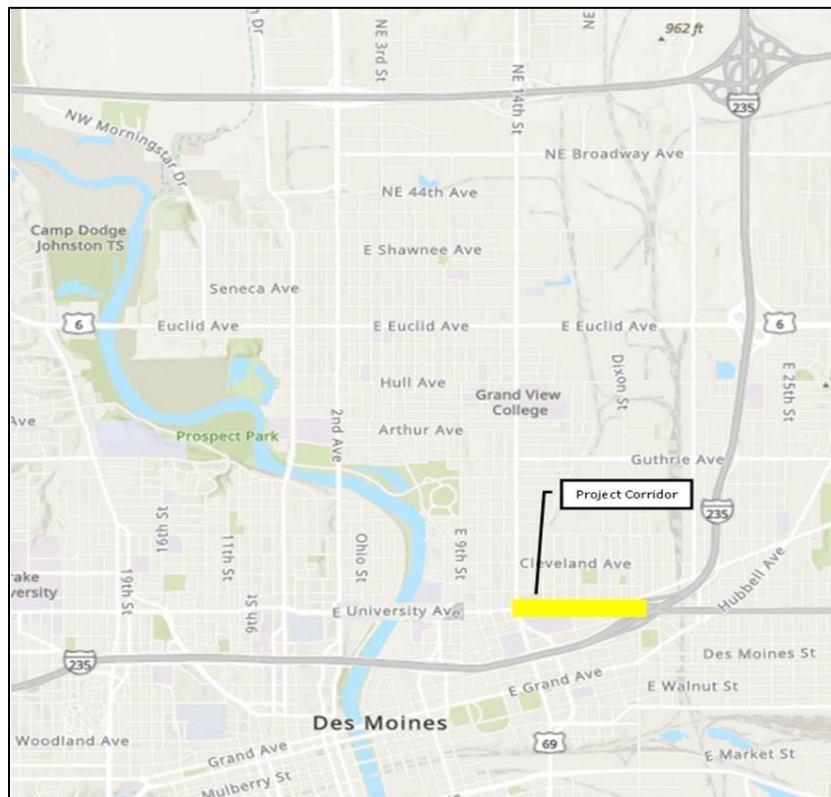
- The IDOT implemented an annual program beginning in 1988 to provide for statewide traffic safety improvements. These improvements may include roadway construction projects to correct high-crash locations, upgrading of obsolete traffic control devices to comply with the requirements of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, or traffic studies to determine how to correct a safety problem. Since the program began, Des Moines has been successful in securing funding, including several major intersection improvements, traffic signal upgrades, and other safety projects.
- On April 28, 2022, an East High School student was killed while crossing E. University Avenue in the 1600 block.
- City staff attended the Martin Luther King Jr. Park Neighborhood Association Meeting on May 17, 2022, to discuss the potential for traffic safety and pedestrian improvements in the area of E. University Avenue and E. 14th Street and around the schools.
- City staff met with representatives from Des Moines Public School District (including staff from Operations, East High School, and Hiatt Middle School) on June 6, 2022, to discuss school

operations (open campus, start, dismissal), where pedestrians are walking, and potential for traffic safety and pedestrian improvements in the area of E. University Avenue and E. 14th Street and around the schools.

- City staff also met with staff with the IDOT on June 22, 2022, to discuss potential traffic safety and pedestrian improvements in the area in the area of E. University Avenue and E. 14th Street and around the schools.
- On June 27, 2022, by Roll Call No. 22-1100, City Council approved an amendment to Chapter 114 of the Municipal Code to amend the definition of school district as it pertains to establishing school speed zones, which allowed City staff to move the existing “School Speed Limit 25 When Flashing” Assembly from just east of E. 15th Street to east of McCormick Street, extending the school speed limit zone from ~200 feet east of the Hiatt School parcel (“schoolhouse” as defined in Code) to ~200 feet east of the school property, which includes the stadium. A static “School Speed Limit 25 When Children Present” sign (with no flashing lights) has been erected where the existing flashing assembly is located due to the extensive length of the school speed limit zone.
- City staff also recommended the following improvements on E. University Avenue, targeting construction in 2024, pending IDOT approval:
 - Resurface E. University Avenue from east of E. 14th Street to west of Easton Boulevard and reconfigure pavement markings to provide a three (3) lane roadway (converting the four (4)-lane roadway to a three (3)-lane roadway).
 - Remove existing pedestrian traffic signal in front of Hiatt Middle School (west of E. 15th Street) and replace with a new High-Intensity Activated CrossWalk (HAWK) signal located at E. 15th Street to align with the west sidewalk along E. 15th Street. School District representatives at the June 6, 2022, meeting believe moving the pedestrian signal location to E. 15th Street would better serve students and would be better coordinated with future school building improvements at Hiatt Middle School. The signal improvements would include adding a red beacon to the stop sign for southbound E. 15th Street traffic so motorists on E. 15th Street would not use the HAWK signal to enter onto E. University Avenue.
 - Replace the “School Speed Limit 25 When Flashing” Assemblies and “School Speed Limit 25 When Children Present” sign with new “School Speed Limit 25 When Flashing” Assemblies with Speed Feedback Signs to meet the current standard (similar to the assembly on SW 9th Street near Lincoln High School).
 - Modify the medians in the west and south legs of the intersection of E. University Avenue and E. 14th Street so they are not impeding in the crosswalk and meet ADA requirements.
 - Consider adding pedestrian refuge islands at other locations along E. University Avenue such as E. 16th Street and in the vicinity of E. 17th Street.
 - Filling the sidewalk gap on E. University (IA163) in the vicinity of McCormick Street.
- Members of the Martin Luther King Jr. Park Neighborhood Association have requested a pedestrian signal on E. 14th Street (US Highway 69) at Garfield Avenue and on E. University Avenue in the vicinity of E. 17th Street.
- Members of the City Council have directed staff to have a HAWK installed on E. University Avenue at E. 17th Street as soon as possible. With public improvement bidding requirements and

lead times of seven (7) to eight (8) months for signal equipment and materials to be manufactured, City staff are targeting installation in the summer 2023.

- IDOT staff indicated resurfacing E. University Avenue from east of E. 14th Street to west of Easton Boulevard and reconfiguring pavement markings to provide a three (3)-lane roadway (converting the four (4)-lane roadway to a three (3)-lane roadway) could be eligible for TSIP Funding. IDOT has also indicated an interest in participating in sharing the costs for modifying the medians at the intersection of E. 14th Street and E. University Avenue to provide accessible pedestrian crossings at the intersection.
- Four (4)-lane to three (3)-lane roadway conversions have been successful on roadways with daily traffic volumes of less than 20,000 vehicles per day. E. University Avenue between E. 14th Street and Easton Boulevard carries approximately 9,500 vehicles per day.
- The primary benefits of this type of lane reduction are reduction in speeds, approximately 50% reduction in crashes, and improvement in walkability by reducing pedestrian crossing width and increasing the separation between the sidewalk and the vehicular travel lanes.
- On August 8, 2022, City Council authorized an application for TSIP for the four (4)-lane to three (3)-lane roadway conversion of E. University Avenue from east of E. 14th Street to west of Easton Boulevard.
- On December 13, 2022, the IDOT approved \$500,000 in TSIP funding to the City for the project.
- Therefore, City staff recommend approval of IDOT Agreement No. 2024-TS-026 for TSIP funding between the City of Des Moines and IDOT. The estimated project cost for construction is \$900,000, with TSIP Funds in the amount of \$500,000. Funding is available for construction starting in 2024.



PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: August 8, 2022

Roll Call Number: [22-1226](#)

Action: [Approving](#) the Fiscal Year 2024 TSIP application to the IDOT for the E. University Avenue (IA 163) from E. 14th Street (US 69) to Easton Boulevard Four (4)-Lane to Three (3)-Lane Conversion Project. ([Council Communication No. 22-367](#)) Moved by Gatto to adopt. Second by Boesen. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Actions related to the construction contract for the project, including partial payments to the contractor and final acceptance of work.

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