


COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

 CITY OF DES MOINES OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER	Number: 24-285	Meeting: July 15, 2024
	Agenda Item: 6	Roll Call: 24-1003
	Submitted by: Steven L. Naber, P.E., City Engineer	

AGENDA HEADING:

Approving and authorizing the execution of Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Agreement for IA 163 (E University Avenue) from US 69 (E 14th Street) to Easton Boulevard street improvements.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend approval of IDOT Agreement No. 1-24-UST-015 between the City of Des Moines and IDOT for IA 163 (E University Avenue) from US 69 (E 14th Street) to Easton Boulevard for Urban-State Traffic Engineering Program (U-STEP) funding.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$385,512 funding from Urban-State Traffic Engineering Program (U-STEP)

Funding Source: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Page 127, E University – E 14th to Easton, ST315, Being: \$385,512 in U-STEP funds, \$500,000 in Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP) funds, and \$315,420.38 in General Obligation Bonds

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The intent of U-STEP, administered by IDOT, is to solve traffic operation and safety problems on primary roads located within Iowa cities' corporate limits.
- 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, as well as in the vicinity of nearby schools in the area.
- City staff met with representatives from the 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 IDOT on June 22, 2022, to discuss potential traffic safety and pedestrian improvements in the area of E University Avenue and E 14th Street, as well as in the vicinity of nearby schools in the area.
- 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 Americans with Disabilities Act (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.
- At the direction of members of City Council, a HAWK was installed on E University Avenue at E 17th Street 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

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 May 8, 2023, by Roll Call No. 23-0630, City Council approved IDOT Agreement No. 2024-TS-026 for TSIP funding between the City of Des Moines and IDOT in the amount of \$500,000 for E University Avenue (IA 163) from E 14th Street (US 69) to Easton Boulevard four (4)-lane to three (3)-lane conversion.
- On October 23, 2023, by Roll Call No. 23-1502, City Council held a hearing for the E University Avenue Improvements from E 14th Street to E 17th Court, approving plans, specifications, form of contract documents, engineer's estimate, receive and file bids, and designating the lowest responsive, responsible bidder as OMG Midwest, Inc., d/b/a Des Moines Asphalt & Paving (Kevin Bragg, President), \$1,200,932.38.
- The E University Avenue Improvements from E 14th Street to E 17th Court project will resurface deteriorated roadway pavement on E University Avenue from E 14th Street to E 17th Court along with converting the roadway to a three (3)-lane facility. This project also includes:
 - Improving sidewalk curb ramps at intersections along the corridor to meet ADA guidelines.
 - Installation of new school flasher assemblies. Reconstruction of medians at the intersection of E University Avenue and E 14th Street to resolve conflicts with existing crosswalks.
 - Installing HAWK pedestrian signals at the intersections of E University Avenue and E 15th Street and E 14th Street and Garfield Avenue.
 - Constructing a new pedestrian crossing with a refuge island on E University Avenue at E 16th Street.
- Construction of this project is underway and is scheduled to be completed in early August 2024 before school is back in session.
- The City staff recommend approval of IDOT Agreement No. 1-24-UST-015 for U-STEP funding in the amount of \$385,512 between the City of Des Moines and IDOT.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Anticipated actions include partial payments to the contractor and final acceptance of work.

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