

To: Amy Miller, Interim City Manager
From: Sean Murphy, Senior Engineering Technician
Courtney Ryan, Engineering Technician
Date: April 7, 2022
Re: *Concerns Expressed by Mr. Brostrom*



Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to respond to concerns expressed by Mr. Randy Brostrom regarding the IA 92/A Avenue corridor and US 63/Market Street corridor 3-Lane Conversion project during the City Council meeting April 4, 2022.

Background

The IA 92/A Avenue corridor and US 63/Market Street corridor 3-Lane Conversion project was awarded by Council to Minturn, Inc. December 6, 2021, with an estimated cost of \$1,182,928.20. The project is funded through the Iowa Department of Transportation's (DOT) Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP) in the amount of \$639,000 with city funding of \$543,928.20. Electrical work on the project is anticipated to begin this month; due to supply chain delays, construction is scheduled to begin in August.

Mr. Brostrom stated that if a street has too much traffic a 3-lane won't work; that the Iowa DOT stated the city could not go from a 4-lane to a 3-lane because of the intersection of Market and A Avenue; and asked if a traffic study was performed. Mr. Brostrom also indicated that having two lanes each direction allows traffic to pass stopped school buses at the railroad tracks, slow truck traffic that has turned or merged into traffic, and slower moving vehicles such as road graders. In addition, Mr. Brostrom stated that a 3-lane feels like it could cause an accident such as in Albia at the location of Hardees and Caseys.

Public Works Department Response

1. If a street has too much traffic a 3-lane won't work.

This number was originally addressed as 15,000 vehicles per day although per the study performed by Snyder and Associates, research shows 3-lane configurations are feasible with volumes of up to 17,000 vehicles per day. Currently the IA92/A Avenue corridor varies between 6,500 to 12,700 vehicles per day based on the Iowa DOT's traffic count maps. While the typical expected growth rate of 2% per year Mr. Brostrom referenced during the meeting is generally accurate, the city has seen an annual decrease in traffic of 1% - 2% between 2006 and 2014, and a bypass would be expected to further reduce traffic counts.

2. The Iowa DOT stated that the city could not go from a 4-lane to a 3-lane because of the intersection of Market and A Avenue.

The intersection of Market and A Avenue will remain a 4-lane due to the turning radius.



3. Was a traffic study performed?

A comprehensive traffic study was performed by Snyder and Associates in 2018 via the Traffic Engineering Assistance Program (TEAP). The study of Oskaloosa's crash data showed the city has a higher rate of crashes per capita than the statewide average. Specifically, from Hwy 432 to 3rd Street on A Avenue, the study concluded that the corridor's crash rate was three times the statewide average for similar roads and all major intersections within the corridor had a crash rate higher than the statewide average.

Due to the study, Oskaloosa was approved as a Safety Improvement Candidate, which is determined by an Iowa DOT analysis of crash data that consider both severity and frequency. The city then qualified for funding under the Iowa DOT's Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP) for construction or improvement of traffic safety and operations at a specific site or corridor with a crash history.

4. Having two lanes each direction allows traffic to pass stopped school buses at the railroad tracks, slow truck traffic that has turned or merged into traffic, as well as slower moving vehicles such as road graders. Also, a 3-lane feels like it could cause an accident such as in Albia at the location of Hardees and Caseys.

The advantages of the 3-lane are to improve overall traffic efficiency and safety, minimize traffic delays and congestion, and allow for future planning. Per the 2007 article referenced and shared by Mr. Brostrom, former Dickinson Engineering civil engineer consultant Jim Dickerson stated a 3-lane controls speed and stops erratic maneuvers during lane changing and pulls the left turning traffic away from the through traffic. The Iowa DOT indicates that the conversion of a 4-lane undivided road to a 3-lane road is a proven safety countermeasure that has the potential to reduce crashes and improve livability.

