

**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**02-107**

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

**AGENDA:**

MARCH 4, 2002

**SUBJECT:**

DESIGN CONCEPT  
AND RIGHT-OF-  
WAY ACQUISITION

**TYPE:**

**RESOLUTION  
ORDINANCE  
RECEIVE/FILE**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

JEB E. BREWER, P.E.  
CITY ENGINEER

**SYNOPSIS -**

On July 10, 2000, by Roll Call No. 00-2002, an agreement was approved between the City of Des Moines and the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) for the widening of Merle Hay Road from Ovid Avenue to Douglas Avenue. This project provides a continuous two-way left turn lane. Commercial driveways will be combined where possible. The total project cost, including right-of-way acquisition, is estimated to be \$1,610,000.

On January 31, 2002, staff presented two preliminary design alternates to affected property owners at a public informational meeting. From discussions with property owners and IDOT, a preliminary design concept has been developed. The project is now ready to proceed with final design and right-of-way acquisition.

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

Funding for the construction cost is shown in the current Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget, page STR-38, Merle Hay Road Widening - Ovid Avenue to Douglas Avenue. All design costs incurred after April 4, 2000 will be reimbursed by IDOT. This project also includes 95 percent IDOT funding for right-of-way and eligible construction items.

The total obligation for the City for the entire project, based on preliminary cost estimates, is now estimated at \$170,000.

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**Approval of the preliminary design concept and authorization to proceed with final design and right-of-way acquisition.**

**BACKGROUND -**

On June 15, 1998, by Roll Call No. 98-1831, City Council authorized the City Manager to submit an application to IDOT for Traffic Safety Funding to widen Merle Hay Road between Ovid and Douglas Avenues. The proposed project would provide for two lanes in each direction on Merle Hay Road along with a center two-way continuous turn lane.

This section of Merle Hay Road was identified as the 3rd highest accident location in IDOT's "Top 200" statewide listing, based on 1995-1999 crash data. In that time period, there were 98 reported accidents. Approximately 60 percent of these were rear-end and sideswipe crashes that were caused by a vehicle in the left through lane of traffic waiting to turn left. The construction of a two-way left turn lane will substantially reduce the number of these accidents.

IDOT subsequently approved funding in the amount of \$500,000 out of an estimated \$1,370,000 project. The remainder of the costs was to be shared approximately equally between the City and other IDOT funds, with the City's portion estimated at \$455,000.

Staff successfully worked with IDOT to convert the funding of this project to involve federal safety funding, which allows the construction and right-of-way costs to be 90 percent federal, 5 percent IDOT, and 5 percent City. Design and inspection costs incurred after April 4, 2000 are to be funded 100 percent by IDOT.

In January 2000, IDOT approved this project for federal safety funding, with an estimated cost of \$1,610,000. IDOT prepared an agreement for the revised funding which was approved by City Council on July 10, 2000, by Roll Call No. 00-2002. The City will provide preliminary survey, design, and construction inspection for this project. All of these costs incurred after April 4, 2000 will be 100 percent reimbursed by IDOT. Five percent of the construction and right-of-way costs and a prorated share of longitudinal and outlet storm sewer costs will be the responsibility of the City.

On September 24, 2001, by Roll Call No. 01-2856, an addendum to the original agreement was approved between the City of Des Moines and IDOT to include the traffic signal upgrading at Merle Hay Road and Douglas Avenue as part of the project.

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