

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM MCFARLAND CLINIC FOR 12TH STREET AND DUFF AVENUE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ENHANCEMENTS

BACKGROUND:

Since the opening of a new office-medical building located on the northwest corner of 12th Street and Carroll Avenue, McFarland Clinic, Mary Greeley Medical Center, and staff within the Public Works Department have been working to improve the safety of the east-west pedestrian crossing on the north side of the intersection at Duff Avenue and 12th Street. The concern is due to the high number of McFarland and MGMC staff who walk back and forth to the main clinic building during the day, versus the high number of vehicles seen along Duff Avenue; approximately 12,000 vehicles per day.

There has been a progression of treatments applied to the crossing. The first treatment was the placement of in-street "State Law - Yield to Pedestrian within Crosswalk" signs that were mounted on heavy rubber bases and placed in the crossing at the lane-lines between the north and south bound through lanes. Initially this treatment yielded great results. However, it also quickly became a significant maintenance problem due to the high volume of traffic in the area, in which the signs were often hit by passing vehicles and have been replaced a number of times since their installation. The signs have since been moved to the center of the roadway to avoid being hit as often. However, this has also greatly reduced their effectiveness in slowing traffic and increasing drivers' awareness of pedestrians within the crosswalks.

The second treatment planned was to add high visibility crosswalk markings ("International Style") and advance warning signs. This application is new and is still under observation and evaluation by staff. The concern is that this treatment is still a "static" application and may not get the attention of distracted drivers.

McFarland Clinic leadership, working with the City's Traffic Engineer, has looked into the possibility of adding push-button activated warning lights to the existing crossing. These lights would be a new style of warning light called Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) which has been given interim approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Their studies have shown an increase in yielding to pedestrians from 18% to 81% percent as compared to crossings without flashers.

Therefore, **McFarland Clinic sent a request to City staff proposing that the Clinic pay to install a crossing treatment meeting all the current standards required for a RRFB installation.** At that point, staff reviewed their proposal for liability issues and found that if McFarland Clinic were to pay for and install the RRFB crossing they would need to 1) secure professional engineering services, 2) submit the plans and

specifications, and 3) have the crossing inspected prior to the City being able to accept the crossing. This in essence would be treating the crossing installation like a public improvement project, which is due to the fact that McFarland Clinic does not have staff with the correct professional engineering credentials and expertise, like those engineers within the City's Public Works Department.

Staff recognizes the impacts of having McFarland Clinic go to the extent of paying for professional design and construction services for an improvement that is estimated to cost approximately \$9,000. An alternate approach would be for City Council to direct staff to design and install the RRFB crossing treatment, similar to other installations that staff has conducted in the past. This would leverage existing City staff resources and result in a significant cost savings to the overall project. It is estimated that this design would involve 10 hours of Traffic Engineering staff time.

Either approach will require that the City Attorney draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by McFarland Clinic, thereby agreeing 1) to an amount to be paid to reimburse the City for the costs associated with the improvement, 2) that the City reserves the right to modify or remove the equipment after it is activated if it is found for some reason to have a negative impact on safety or maintenance, and 3) that upon failure of the equipment, the replacement will be at the City's discretion.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. a) Direct the City Attorney to draft a Memorandum of Understanding stating that McFarland Clinic agrees 1) to an amount to be paid to reimburse the City for the costs associated with the improvement (excluding engineering), 2) that the City reserves the right to modify or remove the equipment after it is activated if it is found for some reason to have a negative impact on safety or maintenance, and 3) that upon failure of the equipment, the replacement will be at the City's discretion.
 - b) Approve the installation of the Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon treatment, thereby directing City staff to design and install push-button activated RRFB at the north side east-west pedestrian crossing of Duff Avenue and 12th Street.
2. a) Approve the installation of the Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon treatment, whereby McFarland Clinic will design and install a push-button activated RRFB at the north side east-west pedestrian crossing of Duff Avenue at 12th Street; with City approval of plans and specification, and inspection of the installation.
 - b) Direct the City Attorney to draft a Memorandum of Understanding as outlined under Alternative 1(b).
3. Reject the proposed installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon treatment at the north side east-west pedestrian crossing of Duff Avenue at 12th Street and continue with the traffic advisory treatments currently in place.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The section of Duff Avenue from 13th Street south to the southern extent of the Hospital-Medical district presents unique challenges for pedestrian safety. The very nature of a Hospital-Medical district attaches a high number of trips and, therefore, needs to be positioned along an Arterial Street to handle these traffic volumes. At the same time, the streets need to facilitate the movement of McFarland Clinic and Mary Greeley Medical Center staff and patients throughout the district. Crossing treatments like the RRFB have been designed as a low-cost alternative to signalized crossings along higher volume roads.

Given the less than satisfactory nature of our experience with previous crossing enhancements, the installation of this Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon is a next logical step for this area. Since the RRFB will largely serve McFarland Clinic and Hospital staff, it is appropriate for the Clinic to finance this improvement. However, it appears to be a good partnership to utilize City staff expertise to provide the design.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, directing the City Attorney to draft a Memorandum of Understanding stating that McFarland Clinic agrees 1) to an amount to be paid to reimburse the City for the costs associated with the improvement (excluding engineering), 2) that the City reserves the right to modify or remove the equipment after it is activated if it is found for some reason to have a negative impact on safety or maintenance, and, 3) that upon failure of the equipment, the replacement will be at the City's discretion, thereby approving the installation of the Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon treatment, directing City staff to design and install push-button activated RRFB at the north side east-west pedestrian crossing of Duff Avenue at 12th Street.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between City of Ames

and

McFarland Clinic, P.C.

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING between City of Ames and McFarland Clinic, P.C., is agreed to by both parties upon signature by both.

WHEREAS, McFarland Clinic has brought to the City's attention issues regarding pedestrian safety at the north-side, east-west intersection of E. 12th Street and Duff Avenue, and has offered a proposed solution and has offered to assist the City financially in that solution,

THEREFORE, the parties agree to the following:

1. City of Ames will purchase and install flashing pedestrian crosswalk markings known as Rectangular Rapid Flash Beam (RRFB) signs, on the north side, east-west intersection of E. 12th Street and Duff Avenue.
2. The City will bill McFarland Clinic for the actual cost of the equipment (signs and poles) to be installed, but not for any engineering costs incurred by the City in the installation of the signs and poles. McFarland will reimburse the City for the actual costs of the RRFB signs and poles.
3. The City reserves the right to modify or remove the equipment after it is installed and activated if it is found for some reason to have a negative impact on safety or maintenance.
4. Upon the failure of the equipment, replacement shall be at the City's discretion.

Agreed to by the parties, per the signatures below:

CITY OF AMES

MCFARLAND CLINIC, P.C.

Ann H. Campbell
Mayor

Roger Kluesner
Chief Operating Officer

DATE: _____

DATE: _____