

## Staff Report

**UPDATE: SOUTH DUFF ACCESS AND TRAFFIC SIGNAL PROJECT**

December 22, 2015

**BACKGROUND:**

This project was last discussed before City Council on April 28, 2015, where several alternatives were presented. Ultimately, it was decided to move forward with “Option 4b”, which was the one alternative that also was supported by the Iowa DOT (see Attachment 1). In general, staff was directed to address three issues 1) to negotiate cross-access easement rights for the east-side properties via Walmart’s property, 2) secure grant funding and negotiate a 3-way split for local funds between the City, Walmart, and Hunziker, and finally 3) to design the project such that it does not adversely affect truck deliveries to 811 S. Duff Avenue (Howe’s Welding).

Since that time, staff has hired CGA engineering consultants to begin preliminary design to facilitate these discussions. Attachment 2 is the most current iteration of design that shows the reconfiguration of the western most portion of Walmart’s parking lot. The concept also shows the potential layout for a traffic signal and raised median along South Duff Avenue between South 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Squaw Creek.

**Issue 1: Secure Cross-Access Easements (Walmart)**

After several attempts, staff was able to setup a conference call with Myohsa Polidore, Walmart’s current realty manager for Iowa. Ms. Polidore indicated that after reviewing the proposed design, Walmart is now supportive of granting cross-access through their parking lot. She will be emailing staff with Walmart’s standard form of easements for review by the City’s Public Works and Legal staff.

The easement format also includes language for ongoing maintenance of the easement area that staff will disseminate to affected businesses on the east-side of South Duff Avenue for their feedback. The access drive south from Walmart would be across land owned by U-Haul, which has expressed support for easements for those properties between Walmart and Squaw Creek.

Walmart will also be sending the City as-built information for their 534 South Duff Avenue location. This will allow CGA to move the design forward thereby addressing Walmart’s concerns regarding construction staging and how to maintain their shopping cart containment system during construction, if possible. Other follow-up items requested by Walmart will include a legal description and site plan for the proposed cross-access easement, as well as the potential design and location of the wayfinding signage.

## **Issue 2: Project Funding**

As part of the design process, CGA has also generated an updated opinion of probable cost for the overall project. The estimate includes a new traffic signal, raised median, wayfinding signs, and a mill-and-overlay for the affected Walmart parking lot (including access routes). Over the last several months staff has also received confirmation that this project will have Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP) and Urban-State Traffic Engineering Program (U-STEP) funds. Therefore, the remaining project funds needed will be split three ways between the City, Walmart, and Hunziker. A summary of the funding to date is shown below:

<b><u>Costs:</u></b>		<b><u>Revenues:</u></b>	
Design	\$ 100,000	Iowa DOT TSIP Grant	\$ 450,000
Traffic Signal	\$ 290,000	Iowa DOT U-STEP Grant	\$ 400,000
Raised Median (S. Duff)	\$ 160,000	Remaining funding needed	\$ 180,000
Parking Lot Reconfiguration	\$ 480,000		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	\$1,030,000		\$1,030,000

As shown above, it is estimated that an additional \$180,000 will be needed after the grant funding has been applied. Therefore, the City, Walmart, and Hunziker respectively will need to contribute approximately \$60,000 each to fully fund the project. It should be noted that this amount does not reflect actual bids and is likely to change once the project has been sent out for bid.

Ms. Polidore indicated that Walmart is willing to contribute funds towards the project at a fixed-dollar amount for their third of the local match. However, Walmart is not willing to enter into a funding agreement for a one-third split of the local funds without establishing a maximum contribution. This would be up-to the equivalent cost for their responsibility to install a raised median per the Iowa DOT access permit requirements. At this time the estimated cost for Walmart to install a standalone raised median would be \$80,000 (around half the cost of the project's median).

## **Issue 3: Median break for truck deliveries**

Attachment 2 illustrates the proposed configuration for the raised median. In the area of 811 South Duff (Howe's Welding) there will be a section of mountable median with rumble strips with the length of the opening based upon a "large" delivery truck (WB-62, truck dimensions used for Interstate design). CGA was tasked to apply the WB-62 truck turning template, which has been shown on the preliminary design to illustrate an entering and exiting truck movement.

## **Next Steps (calendar year 2016):**

Several items that are currently under development will be brought back to City Council during the first part of 2016. Staff will continue to develop the construction plans and

draft cross-access easements agreements for those properties on the east side of South Duff Avenue. As the evolution of design gets into a higher level of detail, staff will draft funding agreements between Hunziker Development and Walmart for their contribution to the project in advance of the project letting. Finally, staff is anticipating to receive funding agreements in the January-February timeframe for the TSIP and U-STEP funds from the Iowa DOT. This would put the project on track for an early spring letting with a completion date during Fall of 2016.

It should be noted that staff has been in contact with the local businesses prior to the April 2015 meeting. Afterward that meeting, it was the consensus of the majority of the landowners that they did not desire to attend ongoing project meetings until the City could get a firm response from Walmart regarding their involvement in the project. Now that the City has made significant progress with Walmart, staff is planning to send out a project update for their feedback and suggestions. This feedback will be included in the next project report to City Council, coming in the first quarter of 2016.

**Attachment 1**





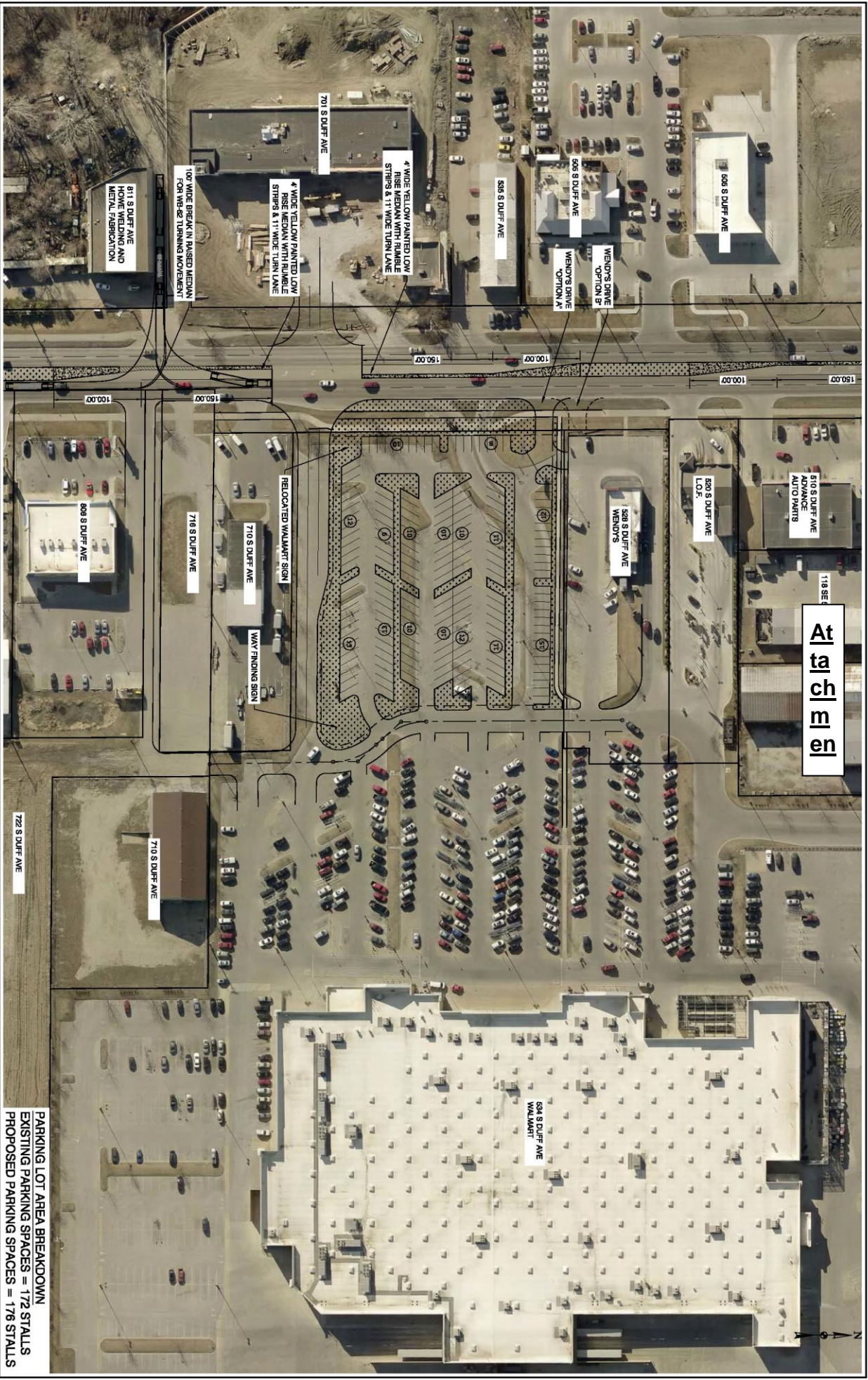
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# S DUFF INTERSECTION AMES, IOWA

**CONCEPT #2**



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**PARKING LOT AREA BREAKDOWN**  
 EXISTING PARKING SPACES = 172 STALLS  
 PROPOSED PARKING SPACES = 176 STALLS

**HOGAN LAW OFFICE**  
3101 INGERSOLL AVENUE, SUITE 103  
DES MOINES, IOWA 50312  
(515) 279-9059  
FAX (515) 277-5836

TIMOTHY C. HOGAN  
COURTNEY I. SCHULTZ

December 18, 2015

**VIA E-MAIL (dvoss@city.ames.ia.us) and US MAIL**

Mayor Campbell  
PO Box 811  
515 Clark Avenue  
Ames, Iowa 50010

RE: South Duff Access Project

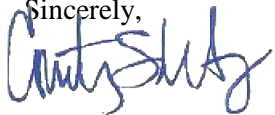
Dear Mayor Campbell and the Ames City Council:

I am writing on behalf of Boston Commons Ames, LLC, which owns the property located at 806 S. Duff Avenue. As you know, the City has been working with the Iowa Department of Transportation in connection with the South Duff Access Project. The staff will be providing a status report on the project at the meeting scheduled on December 22, 2015.

The current concept plan contemplates the installation of a traffic signal and medians along a portion of South Duff. In the past, we have expressed our concern regarding the need for private easements to facilitate access to the traffic signal from the properties located on the east side of Duff Avenue. To date, there is no plan to provide interconnectivity between the adjoining properties. And specifically, there has been no access provided from my client's property to the traffic signal. We request that the City require these easements in order to provide all of the properties access to the signalized intersection.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Courtney I. Schultz

Cc: Harry Wolf – Boston Commons Ames, LLC (via e-mail)  
Damion Pregitzer – City of Ames -- Engineering (via e-mail)