

To: Mayor and City Council
From: John Joiner, P.E.; Director of Public Works
Date: March 28, 2023
Subject: Cherry Avenue Extension

Overview:

The Cherry Avenue Extension project was initially identified in the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as a potential solution to relieve traffic congestion at the Lincoln Way and Duff Avenue intersection. The options to address the congestion were to widen the intersection or provide alternative routes. The broad level modelling conducted with the LRTP showed the most likely cost-effective solution was to provide an alternative route, as conceptualized below:



The project appeared in FY 2020/21 of the 2020-2025 Capital Improvements Plan. The project budget indicates costs and financing sources as follows:

COST:	
Engineering	350,000
Land Acquisition	150,000
Construction	2,750,000
TOTAL	3,250,000

FINANCING:	
FY 2019/20 G.O. Bonds	300,000
FY 2020/21 G.O. Bonds	510,000
Water Utility Funds	550,000
Federal/State Grants	1,890,000
TOTAL	3,250,000

Preliminary engineering expenses of \$51,920 were expended in FY 2021/22 in preparation and evaluation of the project.

Traffic Study:

Regulations governing the development of the LRTP prohibit any engineering follow up to the initial modelling until the local government sponsor (City of Ames) programs a project. Once the project is programmed, a traffic engineering study is needed to so that the proposed improvements would accommodate existing and future traffic patterns.

A traffic study with detailed modelling was performed for the Cherry Street extension project. The results indicated that **the project provides little to no benefit in level of service and vehicle delay for current and 2045 projected traffic operations for the Lincoln Way and Duff Avenue intersection. In fact, the study found that the project will actually have negative impacts on the traffic operations of S. 3rd and S. 5th Streets.** When future development in the areas east of Wal-Mart and Target is included with the project, the study shows a decrease in level of service and a significant increase in delay for intersections in the area.

Recommendations:

Based on the traffic study findings, staff recommends that the funding originally programmed for the Cherry Street extension project (including AAMPO funding) be reprogrammed to another project. The Cherry Street connection itself can then be reevaluated during the upcoming update to the AAMPO's LRTP (now Metropolitan Transportation Plan), which is expected to begin later this year, with an adoption date in October 2025. Overall, this approach will allow for the most effective use of funds while still allowing the Cherry Street

extension to be considered in the future when conditions change and a project may be warranted.

This is only an informational update. No action is required by City Council at this time. Staff will present a recommended alternative project for consideration at a future City Council meeting.