

Staff Report

**SOUTH DUFF ACCESS STUDY**

**JULY 9, 2013**

On June 11, 2013, City Council referred to Staff a letter from Chuck Winkleblack regarding access management on South Duff Avenue from South 5<sup>th</sup> Street to approximately Squaw Creek. The letter is asking that City Council direct Staff to conduct a study of the corridor, evaluating the consolidation of several access drives along both the east and west sides of the street into a single signalized intersection. The purpose of the proposed changes is to improve traffic safety and efficiency along Ames' highest volume roadway.

On June 17, 2013, Staff held a coordination meeting with Iowa DOT staff, property owners, and developers who would be affected by a consolidation of access points. An owner's map of those properties that were represented during the meeting has been attached to this report.

Discussions during the meeting covered many concerns related to the existing condition of traffic congestion and traffic safety along the corridor, as well as recognizing the opportunity for improvements now that several properties are ready to redevelop in the near future. **Generally, there was a consensus amongst the group that there is a need to apply access management techniques to improve traffic flow, but also to provide a clear and safe way for their customers to access the properties.** Concern was expressed by several of the business owners that customers in the past, based on traffic conditions, may have avoided this area of South Duff Avenue, in turn hurting the economic value of their respective businesses.

**The meeting concluded with an agreement that the next step in the process would be a traffic study of the corridor, which would include a traffic signal warrant analysis. It is crucial that the feasibility of a consolidated access point be determined as it will greatly affect the design and layout of many, if not all, of the redeveloped properties.**

**STAFF COMMENTS:**

The South Duff Avenue commercial corridor for many years has experienced challenges related to access management and traffic safety. With several properties becoming vacant and/or are being considered for redevelopment, there is an opportunity to apply current best practices to reduce conflict points along South Duff Avenue.

**This project presents an opportunity to make a significant traffic improvement in the South Duff corridor that will have mutual benefit for the adjacent businesses and the greater Ames community alike. Therefore, it is recommended that City Council support this potential project by directing staff to conduct a traffic study to evaluate the feasibility of consolidating access drives into one signalized access. The study is estimated to take staff forty hours to complete.**

Attachments(2)



