

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:**            **ROAD CLOSURES FOR RAGBRAI ROUTE**

**BACKGROUND:**

Ames will be an overnight stop for RAGBRAI XLVI from Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, through Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 10,000 registered bicycle riders, 4,000 support personnel, and several thousand additional non-registered bicyclists are expected to arrive beginning the morning of July 24<sup>th</sup> from Jefferson, and leave the morning of July 25<sup>th</sup> for Newton. Ames was last an overnight stop for RAGBRAI in 2008. The Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) is leading the local RAGBRAI organizing committee in preparing for RAGBRAI's arrival in Ames.

The proposed route will enter Ames from the southwest on July 24<sup>th</sup>, following South Dakota Avenue to Mortensen Road, taking Mortensen Road to Beach Avenue, Beach Avenue to S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and reaching the official welcome area along South 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Beach Avenue and University Boulevard (adjacent Jack Trice Stadium).

The following day, July 25<sup>th</sup>, riders will leave from the intersection of University Boulevard and S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street, following S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street to Dayton Avenue, taking Dayton Avenue to E. Lincoln Way, and following E. Lincoln Way eastbound out of the City.

**The volume of riders who are anticipated to participate will require the closure of many City streets to ensure safe travel through the community.** As the potential routes were evaluated, particular attention was paid to reducing the potential for conflict points (such as busy intersections or challenging turns). Additionally, the proposed route was prepared with the intent of minimizing the disruption to the community. Although many community members will participate in RAGBRAI activities, others may not view these road closures as impediments to going about their daily activities. This proposed route was prepared in a way that allows residents to detour through areas to access homes and businesses.

**INBOUND ROUTE:**

**The closures indicated below will take place on Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

- Riders will approach Ames northbound along R38/South Dakota Avenue. They will ride intermixed with vehicular traffic during this approach
  - To reduce backups on the westbound off-ramp from U.S. 30, staff has consulted with DOT about closing this off-ramp for the day. Vehicles will instead use the University Boulevard or X Avenue exits.

- Riders will turn east on Mortensen Road. Once past the intersection with Pinon Drive, bicyclists will have the full width of the road.
- Dotson Drive will be closed between Mortensen Road and the west parking lot of Ames Middle School. This will maintain access to the Middle School for any activities occurring that day.
- Seagrave Boulevard will be closed. Residents in this neighborhood will use Coconino Road as the single point of entry/egress to this neighborhood.
- The intersection of State Avenue and Mortensen Road will be access controlled to facilitate drivers who need to cross the route on State Avenue.
- Gateway Hills Park Drive will be closed at Mortensen Road. Residents living along Gateway Hills Park Drive, along with those who need access to the Parks and Recreation Office and the Ames/ISU Ice Arena, will cross the route at the intersection of Hayward Avenue and the Hansen Ag Center driveway.
  - Staff will modify recreation schedules to reduce the number of activities held at these locations during the day.
  - Residents living in the apartments at 2300 Mortensen will be provided access across the route through the ISU Towers parking lot access.
- Once riders reach the median-separated portion of Mortensen Road at Ash Avenue, they will be guided onto the eastbound portion of the boulevard.
  - The two westbound lanes of the boulevard will be converted to two-way travel for local traffic. This will allow residents to access and leave their homes while providing a large, dedicated lane for RAGBRAI riders.
  - At Coneflower Court, eastbound vehicle traffic will be required to turn around and head westbound. Between Coneflower and Beach Avenue, Mortensen Road vehicle traffic will be westbound only.
- RAGBRAI riders will turn north onto Beach Avenue. No northbound vehicle traffic will be allowed on this portion of Beach.
  - The closure of Mortensen will continue through to University Boulevard.
  - The southbound lane of Beach Avenue will be a one-way access for residents who live along Beach, on Indian Grass Court, and on Greenbriar Circle. These residents will leave their homes and head southbound, and will return to their homes from the north.
- Riders will travel along Beach until they reach South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, where they will turn east and enter the welcome area.

## **WELCOME AND CAMPING AREAS**

- The Welcome Area will be set up on South 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Beach Avenue and University Boulevard. This section of roadway will be closed from approximately 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> (for set up) through 10:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> (for tear down).
- Because Brookside Park will be a main camping area for riders, it is anticipated a large number of people and support vehicles will be entering and exiting this area. Therefore, 6<sup>th</sup> Street between University Boulevard and Brookridge Avenue will be closed from 6:00 a.m. July 24<sup>th</sup> through approximately 11:00 a.m. July 25<sup>th</sup>.

- Registered support vehicles will be allowed access, along with other City staff and RAGBRAI support vehicles. CyRide will be allowed access through this area to connect between east and west Ames.

## **OUTBOUND ROUTE:**

**The closures indicated below will take place on Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.**

- The main outbound route assembly point will be the intersection of South 16<sup>th</sup> Street and University Boulevard. The majority of the outbound route will intermingle RAGBRAI riders with vehicle traffic, unlike the previous day's route. This is for three primary reasons:
  - Lower anticipated vehicle traffic on this portion of the route (early morning, summer traffic)
  - Shorter duration of riders movement
  - Increased difficulty of providing alternative access to those impacted by the route
- Staff anticipates directing riders from the Brookside camping area onto southbound University Boulevard. Staff will control the traffic signals at 6<sup>th</sup>/University, Lincoln Way/University, and S. 4<sup>th</sup>/University to facilitate cross traffic access
- Riders will turn east onto South 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The Veterinary Medicine entry, S. Grand Avenue, Golden Aspen Drive, and South Kellogg Avenue intersections will be managed to facilitate access.
- The traffic signals at S. Duff Avenue and S. Dayton Avenue will be controlled to alternate the RAGBRAI riders with vehicular cross traffic.
- Riders will turn north onto South Dayton Avenue. Most, but not all properties along this portion of the route can be accessed by alternative streets (Isaac Newton Drive, S. Dayton Place, S. Bell Avenue, SE 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Freel Drive).
  - S. Dayton Place and Browning Street will be closed at the intersection with S. Dayton Avenue.
- Upon reaching East Lincoln Way, riders will turn east and head towards Nevada.
  - Alexander Avenue will be closed at its intersection with East Lincoln Way. Access to this road will be facilitated through Bell Avenue.

## **GENERAL NOTES:**

The closures described above will require a mix of volunteers, City staff, Ames Police, and ISU Police to manage. Additionally, City staff anticipates using nearly the entire City inventory of temporary traffic control devices, and incurring approximately \$7,250 in costs to rent additional traffic control devices for this two-day period. Additionally, staff will use the City's Sign Shop to create custom directional signage to facilitate rider and motorist movements.

At various locations along the route, staff will utilize electronic message boards to warn motorists and residents about the planned closures in the week prior to the event, and will also use these signs on the day of the event to direct traffic. In addition, staff has coordinated with DOT to notify those driving to Ames on I-35 about potential detours and delays.

**Although the proposed route will minimize the number of residents who are potentially affected, there will undoubtedly be delays and disruption to some portions of the traveling community these days. Even with a substantial outreach and detour plan, City staff expects that an event of this magnitude will cause some frustration to residents!**

In June, RAGBRAI staff will ride the planned route and identify any potential hazards the City may need to address. City staff already plans to inspect the proposed route in the months and weeks prior to RAGBRAI to ensure any roadway defects are corrected, with the goal of creating a safe riding surface for the thousands of bicyclists who will participate.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the proposed road closures as indicated above
2. Direct staff to work with RAGBRAI to develop an alternative route
3. Do not approve road closures for RAGBRAI

#### **CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Hosting RAGBRAI as an overnight town is an excellent opportunity to showcase the community for a large number of visitors. It also requires a significant investment in time and materials to plan and implement the necessary closures to create a safe and minimally disruptive route. **Even with such planning, residents should expect delays and detours to access their homes and businesses on these two days!**

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving the proposed road closures as indicated above.



## RAGBRAI Route Overview

