

ITEM #:	38
DATE:	06-24-25
DEPT:	PW

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: PHASING FOR THE 2024-26 TRAFFIC SYSTEM CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (13TH & GRAND)

BACKGROUND:

The Traffic Systems Capacity Improvements Program in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a program that addresses issues identified in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The 2045 LRTP identified several critical intersections that were at or nearing capacity and needed improvements.

The 2024-26 Traffic System Capacity Improvement Program will address the intersection of 13th Street & Grand Avenue. The project will add dedicated left turn lanes and a new traffic signal at the intersection, a shared use path along the west side of Grand Avenue through the project corridor, and a leading pedestrian interval (LPI) at the traffic signal.

The City retained WHKS & Co. of Ames, Iowa in August 2024 to prepare the design for this project. The preliminary design is now substantially complete. **One of the key remaining elements to finalize is the construction phasing plan. In developing this plan, careful consideration has been given to maintaining access for adjacent residents, accommodating necessary construction activities including underground utility work, ensuring the safety of both the traveling public and construction personnel, and completing the project efficiently.**

Based on these considerations, WHKS & Co. and City staff recommend a phasing plan that would close 13th Street to the east side of Grand while the east 2 lanes of Grand Avenue are being worked on, and close 13th Street to the west side of Grand while the west 2 lanes of Grand Avenue are being worked on. This creates two "T"-shaped phases as shown in the attachment. This approach is expected to significantly accelerate construction while enhancing safety for workers and the public.

A critical consideration along 13th Street is maintaining access and operational readiness for Fire Station 1. Staff has met with representatives from the Fire Department to review the proposed phasing and discuss mitigation strategies. **The Fire Department has indicated that they can continue to operate effectively under the proposed plan. To further support emergency response, staff will evaluate on-street parking regulations along side streets and may implement temporary changes to ensure sufficient access for emergency vehicles.**

The alternative to the two "T-shaped" phased approach is to maintain traffic flow in all directions during the project. This approach, however, presents many hazards and practical difficulties. First, although traffic flow would be maintained, the level of service would be severely limited due to lane closures, resulting in major delays. Second, lane widths would be narrowed and workers would be in close proximity to traffic, which would both slow traffic flow

and present safety concerns. Third, the project would need to be constructed in an estimated 12 phases, which would substantially increase project costs and the length of time the project is underway. Finally, this many phases would also make it difficult to connect utilities and paving sections in a manner that allows the infrastructure to work as a cohesive system, which can lead to premature failure after construction. For these reasons, staff believes the two "T-shaped" phase approach is preferred.

Once the phasing concept is approved by the City Council, the final design process can proceed. Staff will be working with CyRide to evaluate route and stop adjustments. Staff will also meet with adjacent residents to determine any accessibility needs, property access, and construction parking. It is anticipated that the construction will occur in the 2027 construction season. This will allow staff time to complete property acquisition, preliminary utility relocation, and the lead time to procure the signal equipment.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Direct staff to proceed with the attached phasing plan for the 13th Street and Grand Avenue project.
2. Direct staff to proceed with an alternate phasing plan that maintains traffic flow in all directions at all times during the construction of the project.
3. Direct staff to proceed with some other phasing plan.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Closing portions of 13th Street using the two "T-shaped" phasing approach presented by staff and the consulting engineers will significantly reduce the construction timeframe of the project and provide safer construction activities, while maintaining effective access for emergency response vehicles. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[13th__Grand_Traffic_Control_Sheets.pdf](#)
[Grand_13th_Street.pdf](#)