

Staff Report

EAST LINCOLN WAY STUDY FINDINGS

September 23, 2025

BACKGROUND:

The Ames Area MPO's (AAMPO's) 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, *Forward 2045*, identified the E Lincoln Way corridor from Duff Avenue to the South Skunk River bridge (see Attachment A for study area map) as a potential location for a lane reconfiguration to three lanes. Additionally, the City of Ames' Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan, *Walk Bike Roll Ames*, identified high priority pedestrian crossing locations along this corridor.

Because of the poor pavement condition along this corridor, a roadway reconstruction project in the amount of \$3,600,000 is programmed in the City's Capital Improvements Plan as an FY 2026/27 Arterial Street Pavement Improvements Program project. In March 2023, the City submitted a project application to the AAMPO and was awarded a Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) for the project. Of the \$3,600,000 total construction budget, \$2,880,000 would be from the STBG grant and \$720,000 would be from General Obligation Bonds (local match).

Because the location of this reconstruction project overlaps with the potential roadway reconfiguration identified in *Forward 2045* and the high-priority pedestrian crossing locations identified in *Walk Bike Roll Ames*, the AAMPO programmed a corridor study to determine the best roadway cross section (including lane configuration and multi-modal improvements) for the corridor.

The results of this corridor study would then identify the appropriate cross-section to move forward with for design and reconstruction. This study also included assessing the intersection of S Duff Avenue and E Lincoln Way, although that intersection is not currently a part of the reconstruction project that is programmed. The intersection assessment was included to review operational changes that may occur with different roadway cross sections.

At its October 8, 2024, meeting, City Council approved a professional services agreement with Strand Associates, Inc. to conduct this study. The study had the following scope:

- Use vehicle, crash, transit, and multimodal data, along with forecasted volumes from the AAMPO's Regional Travel Demand Model, to assess present and future traffic operations at the intersection of Duff Avenue and Lincoln Way and along the E Lincoln Way corridor from Duff Avenue to the South Skunk River bridge.
- Review the pedestrian crossing locations identified in *Walk Bike Roll Ames* along the study corridor.

- Based on the above analyses, review alternative layouts for the intersection of Duff Avenue and E Lincoln Way and typical cross-sections of the corridor, and develop a preferred alternative.
- Develop an online survey for gathering public input on the corridor and preferred alternative.
- Develop probable construction costs for the preferred alternative.
- Prepare a study report summarizing the findings and present the report at an Ames City Council meeting.
- Using analyses from a prior Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) done for potential development south of E Lincoln Way (which included proposed extensions of SE 3rd Street and SE 5th Street into a new north-south roadway connecting to E Lincoln Way), evaluate the corridor with and without this development scenario and include this analysis in the study report appendix.

See **Attachment B** for the final study report and **Attachment C** for the presentation slides.

PREFERRED CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS:

After assessing multiple alternatives, the study found that the following improvements would provide the best traffic operations, multimodal connectivity, and safety while remaining within the existing right-of-way:

- Reconstruct E Lincoln Way (Duff Avenue to the east end of the South Skunk River Bridge) **as a 3-lane roadway** with one 13-foot travel lane in each direction and a 14-foot two-way-left-turn lane in the center (see Figure 6 of the study report, Attachment B).
- Construct a 10-foot shared-use path along the south side of the roadway.
- Include pedestrian crossing improvements at the locations identified in *Walk Bike Roll Ames* as shown in Figures 7–9 of the study report (Attachment B).
- Reconfigure the intersection of Duff Avenue and Lincoln Way as shown in Figure 10 of the study report (Attachment B).

The study shows that the recommended improvements are suitable to handle forecasted 2050 traffic volumes based on the latest projections from the AAMPO's regional travel demand model, which accounts for anticipated development and committed roadway projects. Additionally, the study found that the recommended improvements would synergize well with any potential development and roadway extensions that could occur south of the study corridor.

PM Peak Intersection Operations at Duff Ave & Lincoln Way (LOS = Level of Service)

Year	Existing Geometry LOS/Delay	Study Recommended Improvements LOS/Delay	Delay Improvement
2027 (Build Year)	LOS D (42.3 seconds)	LOS C (26.2 seconds)	16.1 seconds
2050 (Future Year)	LOS E (63.9 seconds)	LOS C (34.0 seconds)	29.9 seconds

In addition to operational benefits, the recommended alternative improves safety and multimodal connectivity:

- Pedestrian crossing safety
- Reduction of conflict points
- Separation of left-turning traffic from through lanes
- Calmer travel speeds

PROJECT COST:

As noted, a roadway reconstruction project in the amount of \$3,600,000 (\$2,880,000 in AAMPO STBG funds; \$720,000 in GO Bonds) is already programmed in the CIP for FY 2026/27.

A concept-level cost estimate for the recommended improvements was developed during the study. The total estimate is \$3.1 million, which is within the \$3.6 million budget. This estimate excludes water main replacement, which would be funded separately through the Water Utility Fund. It should be noted that reconstructing the corridor under the existing 4-lane geometry would likely result in similar construction costs to the recommended 3-lane cross-section.

OPTIONS:

1. Utilize the study's recommended improvements when proceeding with final design of the 2026/27 Arterial Street Pavement Improvements project. This would include the reconfiguration of E. Lincoln Way to a 3-lane roadway section with a center turn lane, addition of a shared use path on the south side of the roadway, pedestrian crossing improvements, and intersection improvements at Duff Avenue and Lincoln Way.
2. Maintain the existing roadway and intersection geometry when proceeding with final design of the 2026/27 Arterial Street Pavement Improvements project.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff is presenting the findings of the study and its recommended improvements, but is not seeking direction from City Council at this time.

Staff intends to bring this item back to the City Council at the next meeting on October 14, 2025, seeking direction regarding which of the two options mentioned above should

be utilized when preparing the final design of the 2026/27 Arterial Street Pavement Improvements project along E. Lincoln Way.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[A - Study Area Map.pdf](#)

[B - Study Final Report.pdf](#)

[C - Study Presentation Slides.pdf](#)