

March 8, 2019

Bridge Avenue Street and Utility Improvement Project Newsletter

Open House No. 2

Please Join Us! - Tuesday, March 26, 2019

A second public open house has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 26 from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Albert Lea City Hall, 221 East Clark Street. The purpose of the Open House is to share information and encourage public comments (verbal and written) on the project. There will be a formal presentation at 5:00 p.m. to share updates with the public and present the preliminary design proposed along the corridor. The same presentation will be repeated at 6:00 p.m. County and City staff, and the consultant engineering team, will be available to answer questions; updated drawings will be on display.

Project Update

Freeborn County and the City of Albert Lea are proposing to reconstruct Bridge Avenue (Freeborn County CSAH 22) between Marshall Street and Hammer Road. In addition to reconstructing the roadway, the project will include underground utility system (water and sewer) updates and streetscape improvements along the corridor. County and City staff have been working with the consultant engineering team to develop the preliminary design of the road and its associated improvements.

Recent tasks completed by the design team include the following:

- Review and analysis of the proposed traffic lanes and turning lanes at each major intersection.
- Review of the existing traffic signal operations and modifications to the signal timing at Hammer Road and Bridge Avenue.
- Storm water management and development of a roadway drainage system along the corridor.
- Refinement of proposed streetscape alternatives.
- Coordination with utility owners along the project corridor to get a clear understanding of how the roadway improvements may impact existing utilities (water, sanitary sewer, electric, gas, telecommunications, etc.)

Open House No. 1, December 11, 2018

There were over 50 people in attendance at the December 11th Open House to discuss proposed improvements along the Bridge Avenue corridor. There were three stations set up in the City council chambers that provided attendees with graphical information on 1) Roadway design concepts, 2) Streetscape concept drawings, and 3) Traffic analysis information. Attendees were provided comment sheets to record questions, concerns, and observations about the project. Many of the open house participants had similar project concerns.

Below are responses to the general project questions from the December 11, 2018 open house.

Question 1: How will the traffic lanes be changed and why?

Answer 1: A traffic analysis study was performed along the corridor to identify any operational and safety concerns. The study recommends a 3-lane roadway with one lane in each direction and a shared center left turn lane. This configuration would be safer for motorists, continue to maintain efficient and safe vehicular operations, and improves pedestrian conditions by reducing some pedestrian crossing distances.

Question 2: What are the plans to change the Bridge Avenue/Richway Drive intersection?

Answer 2: During the preliminary design phase, at least 8 intersection alternatives were developed and studied at the Bridge/Richway intersection. The engineering team will consider the advantages and disadvantages of each option and recommend an alternative that provides safe traffic and pedestrian operations.

Question 3: How will the project improve the visual features and pedestrian experience along Bridge Avenue?

Answer 3: The goal of the streetscape improvements is to enhance pedestrian safety and create a welcoming corridor to downtown Albert Lea. Currently, the preliminary design drawings show a proposed 8 to 10 foot-wide multi-use trail along the east side of Bridge Avenue that will provide pedestrians and bicyclists with a safe, inviting area along Bridge Avenue. Other streetscape improvements are still being reviewed, but may include decorative street lighting and improvements at street corners that will enhance pedestrian crossing safety.

Project Schedule

The Bridge Avenue preliminary design phase will be completed in the spring of 2019. Final design, easement acquisition, and permitting will follow immediately thereafter. Construction is scheduled for 2020.

Whom May I Contact with Questions?

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