

To: **Mayor and City Council**  
Through: **Ryan Schroeder, City Manager**  
From: **Ross Beckwith, Public Works & Parks Director/City Engineer**  
Date: **June 14, 2021**

## **Public Improvement Hearing; Authorize Preparation of Plans & Specifications for 2022 Street Improvements Project 22-1**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The City Council is requested to hold the public improvement hearing for the 2022 Street Improvements Project and authorize the preparation of plans/specifications on the project. The 2022 project recommends reconstruction of Crusader Avenue from Bidwell Street to Robert Street and the Humboldt Avenue cul-de-sac. On May 10, 2021, the City Council received the feasibility study that described in detail the proposed project improvements, estimated costs and schedule.

Staff held a virtual open house meeting on February 25, 2021 to discuss the project in detail and take questions/comments over the phone. Notes from the question and answer portion of the meeting are attached. Staff, the Mayor and two City Council members also met with residents on-site on March 18, 2021 to hear concerns of the project.

The proposed improvements on Crusader Avenue and Humboldt Avenue include full reconstruction of the street (watermain, subgrade, curb, asphalt, driveway aprons, etc.). In addition, sanitary sewer structures will be repaired as needed and castings will be outfitted with I/I barriers. Storm sewer structures will also be replaced as needed. This project also proposes to add a 5-foot concrete walk on the north side between Bidwell Street and Livingston Avenue and on both sides from Livingston Avenue to Robert Street in line with the City's approved Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

Currently, Crusader Avenue has two different street widths of 36-feet, Bidwell Street to Livingston Avenue, and 40-feet in the commercial area between Livingston Avenue and Robert Street. Proposed changes to street widths decrease the impervious surface of the roadway and reduce impacts to properties with the installation of a new 5-foot sidewalk. No changes to on-street parking are proposed. Proposed upgrades to the different sections of Crusader Avenue and Humboldt Avenue cul-de-sac are as follows:

#### **Bidwell Street to Livingston Avenue**

- Reduce the roadway width from 36 feet to 32 feet by moving the north curb line 4 feet to the south
- Construct a 5-foot boulevard and 5-foot ADA compliant concrete sidewalk on the north side of the road

Livingston Avenue to Robert Street (Commercial Area)

- Reconstruct the road to the existing 40-width
- Construct a 5-foot boulevard and 5-foot ADA compliant concrete sidewalk on both sides of the road. Approximately half of this sidewalk is currently in-place or will be with the redevelopment of the Baker’s Square site
- Replace the existing street lights with LED lights

Humboldt Avenue cul-de-sac

- Reduce the roadway throat width from 36 feet to 32 feet by moving the east curb line 4 feet to the west
- Reconstruct the bubble of the cul-de-sac to the current dimensions

Concerns have been raised by residents about the addition of a sidewalk and what that will do for pedestrian safety. Taking pedestrians off the street will actually reduce the possibility of injury from vehicular contact. The barrier style curb and boulevard are physical separators between pedestrians and vehicles which will decrease the risk of a run-off-road vehicle/pedestrian accident occurring.

Another concern is that narrowing the roadway will make it less safe. Studies show that speeds reduce when lanes are narrower as drivers tend to travel at the speed they feel comfortable. Narrower streets lead to a safer, more cautious driving behavior. A narrower roadway also means pedestrians have to travel less distance to cross the road. Besides safety benefits, narrow roads cost less to construct and maintain, and the pile of snow at the end of the driveway from the plow will also be reduced.

A 32-foot wide roadway is not anything new to West St. Paul. Below is a list (not exhaustive) of 32-foot wide streets in the City with parking on both sides:

<b>Street</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Arion Street	Kruse Street	Macarthur Avenue
Arion Street	Macarthur Avenue	Oakdale Avenue
Audrey Drive	Muriel Boulevard	Carol Lane
Carol Lane	Kathleen Drive	Audrey Drive
Carol Lane	Audrey Drive	Muriel Boulevard
Carol Lane	Muriel Drive	Kathleen Drive
Kathleen Drive	Muriel Drive	Carol Lane
Kathleen Drive	Carol Lane	Westview Drive
Kruse Street	Butler Avenue	Conver Street
Kruse Street	Conver Street	Westchester Drive
Macarthur Avenue	Conver Street	Altman Avenue
Macarthur Avenue	Altman Avenue	Westchester Drive
Mainzer Street	Oakdale Avenue	Carrie Street
Cherokee Avenue	Annapolis Street	Mina Street
Cherokee Avenue	Mina Street	Dodd Road
Conver Street	Kruse Street	Macarthur Avenue
Conver Street	Macarthur Avenue	Oakdale Avenue
Roeller Avenue	Oakdale Avenue	Carrie Street
Westchester Drive	Kruse Street	Macarthur Avenue
Westchester Drive	Macarthur Avenue	Oakdale Avenue

On-street parking is proposed to remain on both sides of Crusader Avenue with the reduction in roadway width from 36 feet to 32 feet. Staff has been monitoring the amount of on-street parking that occurs

along Crusader Avenue, and in general it is minimal. Below are random dates/times that staff monitored Crusader Avenue and recorded both parking and pedestrian activity:

Date	Day	Time	Parked Cars North Side	Parked Cars South Side	Pedestrians on Street
12/28/21	Mon.	11:30am	None	None	None
1/4/21	Mon.	1:30pm	None	None	2 pedestrians north side
1/9/21	Sat.	10:30am	None	2	None
1/20/21	Wed.	8:00am	None	1	None
1/25/21	Mon.	1:00pm	1	None	2 pedestrians south side
2/2/21	Tues.	7:30am	None	None	2 pedestrians (1 each side)
2/11/21	Thurs.	5:50pm	None	2	None
2/14/21	Sun.	9:15am	1	1	1 pedestrian north side
2/26/21	Fri.	2:30pm	None	None	1 pedestrian south side
3/6/21	Sat.	9:00am	1	1	1 pedestrian north side
3/16/21	Tues.	9:30am	1	1	2 pedestrians north side
5/10/21	Mon.	4:45pm	None	None	None
6/8/21	Tues.	4:30pm	1	None	None
6/10/21	Thurs.	9:00am	2	2	None

However, each school day around 3pm there are significant cars lined up and idling on the north side of Crusader Avenue from the entrance to Crown Of Life past Stryker Avenue to pick up kids from the Crown of Life School. This is a short window each school day, but certainly a significant surge of vehicles concentrated on the north side of Crusader Avenue. In addition, between Bidwell Street and Stryker Avenue on certain weekends (probably less than 10 per year) both sides of Crusader Avenue are full with parked cars for events at Net Ministries. There are multiple ways to enter/exit the neighborhood though, so those who reside along Crusader Avenue do not have to drive between Stryker Avenue and Bidwell Street during such congested parking times. Adding a sidewalk on one side of the road would also improve safety for pedestrians who need to park and walk to their event by keeping them out of the road.

Snow removal of concrete sidewalk is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. With the addition of sidewalk on the north side of Crusader Avenue, two single-family homes would be responsible for over 200 feet of snow removal with the installation of a sidewalk on the north side. These residents have raised concern that this is a much longer stretch of sidewalk to maintain than others have to do in the City. Below is a list of single-family properties on Charlton Street, Marie Avenue and Annapolis Street that currently maintain more than 200 feet of sidewalk:

<b>Single Family Properties Maintaining 200+ Feet of Sidewalk</b>
300 Marie Avenue
2047 Charlton Street
882 Cherokee Avenue
879 Allen Avenue
169 Annapolis Street E.
880 Ottawa Avenue
882 Winslow Avenue
882 Stryker Avenue
28 Annapolis Street W.
887 Humboldt Avenue
884 Humboldt Avenue

886 Gorman Avenue
78 Annapolis Street E.

A boulevard provides separation between pedestrians and vehicles and allows space for snow storage. The existing proposal is for a 5-foot boulevard between the back of curb and sidewalk. However, a 4-foot boulevard would also be acceptable, and has been constructed on recent reconstructs such as Kraft Road and Humboldt Avenue. Reducing the boulevard to 4-feet on Crusader would not change the location of the proposed sidewalk and would only reduce the roadway width by 3-feet, to a 33-foot wide roadway.

Looking ahead, the next City Council steps for this project include:

1. January 2022 Council Action: *Approve Plans and Specifications and Order Advertisement for Bids*
2. Bid opening in February 2022
3. March 2022 Council Action: *Accepting Bids and Awarding Contract*
4. Construction June - September 2022
5. September 2022 Council Action: *Order Preparation of Proposed Assessment and Call for Final Assessment Hearing.*
6. October 2022 Council Action: *Assessment Hearing*

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The preliminary total project cost is \$1,631,523. The City’s current Public Improvement and Special Assessment Policy states that street reconstruction projects are assessed at 25% of the total project cost. However, watermain, sanitary sewer, storm sewer and new sidewalk costs are not included in the assessment, but rather funded by the City or St. Paul Regional Water Services.

Estimated single-family home assessments were calculated at \$7,215.96 per lot, which is slightly below the Moreland Avenue pending assessment amounts. A special benefit appraisal was recently completed for properties on Crusader Avenue, which has a cap on single-family home assessments of \$11,600. All other properties (besides single family) will be assessed on a per foot basis, which is estimated at \$51.10 per linear foot. Estimated project financing is shown below:

Sidewalk Fund	\$ 109,018
Sales Tax/Street Imp. Fund	\$1,030,511
St. Paul Regional Water Services	\$ 203,554
Assessments	\$ 288,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,631,523</b>

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff is recommending that the City Council conduct a public improvement hearing and adopt the attached resolution authorizing the preparation of plans and specifications for the 2022 Street Improvements Project 22-1.

Attachments: Open House Q&A  
Resolution