

To: **Mayor and City Council**
Through: **Ryan Schroeder, City Manager**
From: **Ross Beckwith, Public Works & Parks Director/City Engineer**
Date: **February 22, 2021**

Bidwell Avenue Safe Routes to School Grant

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 2016, the City was awarded a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) federal grant in the amount of \$288,400 for the installation of a sidewalk along Bidwell Avenue from Thompson Avenue to Butler Avenue. After working through preliminary engineering, it was discovered that the project cost was going to be much higher than previously thought. As a result, City Council rescinded the federal grant in October of 2016. In 2020, staff again applied for a SRTS grant for Bidwell Avenue and was successful in securing funding for program year 2023.

This corridor has many challenges with steep side slopes and close proximity to existing residences. Staff previously met with the two main property owners south of Logan Avenue who both liked the idea of moving the east curb in towards centerline. This design narrows the roadway, minimizes impacts on trees, minimizes the need for retaining walls and property acquisition, and prohibits parking on the east side of the roadway.

Staff also met with Heritage Middle School (who wrote a letter of support for the initial SRTS Grant). They own the property on the east side of Bidwell Street between Logan Avenue and Butler Avenue. The school prefers that the existing width of Bidwell Street remain as is along this section to allow for on-street parking during sporting events. They understand and accept that the boulevard trees would need to be removed to fit the sidewalk within the current right of way along their property.

City Council supported the aforementioned design in 2016 and preliminary plans were completed by Kimley-Horn. A layout is attached. The chosen design has the lowest cost and least amount of property and tree impacts. Narrowing the roadway allows construction of a 5-foot boulevard and 5-foot sidewalk within City right-of-way.

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Federal Aid staff administer the SRTS contract. They have recommended we get an engineering consultant on board before we have a kick-off meeting. Staff has prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) to obtain an engineering firm.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The SRTS grant pays for up to 80% of construction costs. It does not pay for engineering, construction inspection/testing/administration or right-of-way. We are eligible to receive \$640,000 from SRTS which

is 80% of the estimated \$800,000 construction cost. The City has \$300,000 budgeted in the Sidewalk Fund for 2023 to finance the remainder of this project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is looking for support of the current design and to move ahead with the RFP process.

Attachment: Bidwell Street Safe Routes to School Layout