



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor Laurel L. Prussing and Members of the City Council  
**FROM:** William R. Gray, Public Works Director  
Craig E. Shonkwiler, Civil Engineer  
**DATE:** July 8, 2010  
**RE:** High Cross Road Multiuse Path – Windsor Road to University Avenue  
Project Update

### Introduction

A multi-use path is proposed along the west side of High Cross Road (Illinois Route 130) from Windsor Road to University Avenue (U.S. Route 150).

### Proposed Improvements

The proposed improvements consist of constructing a separated multi-use path that will run mostly in an easement parallel to the west side of High Cross Road connecting many existing subdivisions, activity centers, and major businesses on the east side of Urbana. At certain locations, such as at intersection crossings and a portion of the path north of Stone Creek Boulevard, the multi-use path will be located within the High Cross Road right-of-way. The multi-use path will be an eight foot wide path with two foot earth shoulders. The project will also include the installation of a 75' long x 12' wide steel truss pedestrian bridge across a drainage ditch adjacent to the Po'Boys Restaurant and Sports Complex. The path surface will be primarily hot-mix asphalt with some sections of Portland Cement Concrete at select locations. See attached aerial drawing of proposed improvements.

### Project Purpose

The project will directly connect the Stone Creek, Water's Edge, and Beringer Commons subdivisions, the Po' Boys Restaurant and Sports Complex, U.S. Post Office, Wal-Mart Super Center, and Aldi grocery store. The path will also connect with the recently constructed Windsor Road multi-use path, the existing Stone Creek Boulevard multi-use path, the future Florida Avenue multi-use path, the future Washington Street bicycle lanes, the future Kickapoo Trail project on the abandoned CSX railroad line, and the existing Beringer Commons sidewalk system.

The project is included in Urbana's Bicycle Master Plan and the regional Champaign County Greenways and Trails Plan.

The use of a separated bicycle and pedestrian facility along High Cross Road was evaluated using an algorithm developed by the League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB). The LIB algorithm evaluates the suitability of a "sidepath" or sidewalk as a bicycle facility by evaluating the number of driveway and street crossings, the speed and volume of the parallel road, the anticipated pedestrian use, the width and

length of the path, and the design of the path at intersection crossings. The sidepath suitability score for the High Cross Road multi-use path was found to be a 5 under the post-Menard's build out scenario. A score of 5 classifies the path as "Most Suitable" under the following ranges:

<u>Suitability Score</u>	<u>Suitability</u>
<= 7	Most Suitable
8-9	Somewhat Suitable
10-11	Least Suitable
>= 12	Not Suitable

### **ITEP Grant**

On June 5, 2006 the city was awarded an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) federal grant for the not to exceed amount of \$558,000. Under the ITEP grant, 80% of the construction costs and 50% of the right-of-way acquisition costs are eligible for reimbursement.

### **Project Status**

The preliminary design of the multi-use path is complete. Comments on the draft Preliminary Design Report (PDR) from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) have been incorporated into the final report and the city is awaiting clearance of some minor environmental issues. Once the environmental clearance is received the final PDR will be submitted for IDOT approval. Upon IDOT approval of the PDR, the city can proceed with the acquisition of right-of-way, the finalization of path design, and the preparation of plans and specifications.

During the development of the PDR, archaeologists employed by IDOT discovered a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead site near the northwest corner of High Cross Road and future Florida Avenue. Subsurface testing of the site was performed by personnel at the Illinois State Archaeological Survey in the spring of 2010. The results of the site testing indicated the site did not meet criteria for listing on the National Register; therefore, the State Historic Preservation Officer determined no historic properties will be affected by the project and the city can move forward with constructing the multi-use path at this location.

### **Project Timeline**

Approximately one mile, or about half of the length of the project, will be located on permanent easements on land owned by Menards, Inc. The development of the Menard's owned land will require ground and surface drainage changes at the proposed path location. To avoid the reconstruction of the multi-use path at the Menard's owned land the project was delayed for several years to allow for Menard's to develop the land which has not yet occurred. An exact timeframe for the Menard's development is unknown as it is primarily linked to the state of the economy. In 2009, the city moved forward with the draft PDR and subsequent preliminary design of the multi-use path due to the unknown status of the Menard's development and the concern with the possible loss of the ITEP grant.

### **Projected Project Cost**

Preliminary construction costs for the entire project are now projected for year 2011 at \$1,284,000 compared to \$652,000 for year 2005 as applied for in the ITEP grant. The increased construction cost is due to delays related to coordination of the Menard's owned land, new state regulation requirements, the addition of some unforeseen items (i.e., traffic signal upgrades, drainage culverts, earthwork, etc.), and general inflation of costs for construction related items.

The acquisition of right-of-way, permanent easements, and temporary construction easements for the project have also increased from \$60,000 in year 2005 to \$370,000 in year 2011 based on comparable costs for the Windsor Road Improvement Project.

### **City Budget**

The local share of the project cost will be funded using a combination of City Capital Replacement and Improvement Funds (A09) and Motor Fuel Tax Funds (E09). Currently, there is \$402,530 allocated from both funds for this project.

### **Options to Consider**

The ITEP grant has a not to exceed limit of \$558,000 which is intended to be 80% of the construction cost and 50% of the right-of-way costs. With the increase in project costs the local share has increased to the point that using the ITEP grant to construct the project has come into question. Upon consultation with IDOT, city staff has developed several options for the Mayor and City Council to consider.

#### **Option 1: Build Entire Project, Use Grant**

To build the entire project from Windsor Road to University Avenue and use the ITEP grant the local share will be greater than originally anticipated. With the increased project costs the local share has increased from \$296,000 to \$1,174,000.

##### *Pros:*

- The grant is utilized as originally intended; thereby, allaying potential criticism from the awarding agency for holding onto the grant and not using it.
- The entire multi-use path is installed.
- A connection with the Windsor Road multi-use path is made averting potential criticism from IDOT and the public about the Windsor Road path ending abruptly.

##### *Cons:*

- The increased project costs and fixed grant amount result in a higher local share. A higher local share would require the reallocation of budgeted moneys and the ultimate deferral of other city projects.
- Constructing the path before the Menard's land is graded and developed will result in an expected throwaway cost of around \$300,000 to \$400,000.

#### **Option 2: Do Not Build Project, Give Grant Back**

##### *Pros:*

- Budgeted local share moneys would be available to other projects.
- Throwaway costs on Menard's owned land would not be realized.

*Cons:*

- According to IDOT, giving the grant back could jeopardize the award of future grants to the city. Currently, the city intends to apply for an ITEP grant for the addition of bicycle lanes on Main Street.
- Connection with the existing multi-use path systems along High Cross Road is not made.

### **Option 3: Re-apply For Larger Grant**

*Pros:*

- Additional grant funds could be secured lowering the local share cost.
- The entire multi-use path is installed.
- A connection with the Windsor Road multi-use path is made averting potential criticism from IDOT and the public about the Windsor Road path ending abruptly.

*Cons:*

- When the original ITEP grant was awarded the city was one of a few local agencies in the state to receive the applied for amount. According to IDOT, other local agencies received partial funding of the applied for amount.
- Re-applying for a larger grant will delay the project and there is not a certainty additional grant moneys would be available or awarded.
- Delaying the project could impact the award of future ITEP grants to the city.
- Constructing the path before the Menard's land is graded and developed will result in an expected throwaway cost of around \$300,000 to \$400,000.

### **Option 4: Use Grant on another Project**

According to IDOT, ITEP grants are awarded on a project by project basis; therefore, the ITEP grant for the High Cross Road multi-use path cannot be moved to another city project (i.e., Main Street).

### **Option 5: Build Smaller Project, Use Grant**

Under this option the original grant money could be used to fund a smaller section of the entire project. Specifically, the multi-use path could be built from Windsor Road to the Po' Boys Restaurant and Sport Complex entrance for a distance of 3,350 feet. The local share for this section of the path is expected to be about \$310,000. Also, under this option, the PDR would still be completed for the entire portion of the path from Windsor Road to University Avenue. *This option was specifically recommended by IDOT.*

The remainder of the path from the Po' Boys entrance to University Avenue could be built after the Menard's owned land is developed sometime in the future. The city could apply for a second ITEP grant to help with the cost of the remainder of the path or the city could build short sections of the path using only city funds as they become available after Menard's has developed their land.

*Pros:*

- The ITEP grant is fully utilized; thereby, allaying potential criticism from the awarding agency for holding onto the grant and not using it.
- Building a smaller portion of the project shows IDOT the city is committed to the project and the use of grant funds makes it possible to secure future grants from IDOT.

- The grant money and matching local share is directed toward the portion of the project that includes the high cost steel truss bridge.
- Budgeted moneys are available to cover the local share of the smaller project.
- The smaller project includes a connection with the Windsor Road multi-use path, Stone Creek multi-use path, the Stone Creek and Water's Edge subdivisions, and the Po' Boys Restaurant and Sports Complex.
- A connection with the Windsor Road multi-use path is made averting potential criticism from IDOT and the public about the Windsor Road path ending abruptly.
- Throwaway costs on Menard's owned land would not be realized.

*Cons:*

- The remainder of the project from the Po' Boys entrance to University Avenue is not built.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the city proceed with Option 5: Build Smaller Project, Use Grant. It is also recommended the city defer future grant applications for the remainder of the High Cross Road multi-use path until development occurs along High Cross Road.



**HIGH CROSS ROAD MULTI-USE PATH**  
 WINDSOR RD. TO UNIVERSITY AVE. (US. RTE. 150)  
 SECTION NO. 05-00416-00-BT

**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED MULTI-USE PATH/SIDEWALK
- PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE BRIDGE
- EXISTING TRAFFIC SIGNAL
- EXISTING STOP SIGN
- EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY

SCALE  
 1" = 130'  
 Aerial photos April 2008

