

**WOODBURY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM(S) REQUEST FORM**

Date: 2/22/2024

Weekly Agenda Date: 2/27/2024

**ELECTED OFFICIAL / DEPARTMENT HEAD / CITIZEN:** Supervisor J.Taylor

**WORDING FOR AGENDA ITEM:**

Information on Reconsideration of the Present Plan for a Roundabout and Closure of Access to Old Lakeport at the Juncture of Elk Creek and Christy Road in Sioux City

**ACTION REQUIRED:**

Approve Ordinance

Approve Resolution

Approve Motion

Public Hearing

Other: Informational

Attachments

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On February 22, a public information meeting was held at Morningside Assembly of God Church. More than 30 residents attended. Many of them shared concerns with me as the representative from the Board of Supervisors and Alex Watters (the lone City of Sioux Council member). With appreciation, County Engineer Mark Nahra stayed until 6 p.m. along with his City of Sioux City Engineer counterpart Gordon Phair and staff from DGR.

The Board of Supervisors should give direction for the county engineer to study all viable options for the 19 homes without vehicle access for the 2-3 months during construction. This was far and away the greatest source of contention to include concerns shared below.

The project intent originally addressed several needs: paving to new development that typically does not abut to an old intersection where the city plans to do utility work; 10-15 year future projections of increased traffic from such increased development; the difficult issue of egressing from the dead-end section of Old Lakeport onto Christy Road especially turning left.

**BACKGROUND:**

The greatest amount of feedback that I heard was with those concerned about access to include parking vehicles and vandalism, elderly/infirm people carrying groceries or driving back and forth from residents to a parking lot across the street in a golf cart; groceries; package deliveries; trash pick up; weather damage from normally garaged vehicles; child-seat laws or larger families normally in a mini-van; safety and security at night. The prospect of this for 2-3 months made people overwhelmingly share opposition to the project.

-This is an irony because the project was sold in no small part on the inability of those folks to egress from the dead-end portion of Old Lakeport onto Christy Road. I spoke to 7 households that night with a promise of hearing from more in the future. When residents asked why access couldn't be given over a certain path, the design team answered how one leech field could not be traversed without ruining a homeowner's septic system. Many shared that the increased signage has helped mitigate the turning issues from Old Lakeport and that given the lack of access during a shutdown, they would rather things stayed the same the way they are.

My greatest heartburn came from a resident who said that this project was going to be done no matter how much public input was given, so what was the point of elected officials being there. I assured her that though I'm one person, our Board takes citizens' concerns very seriously and is responsive as I believe both our elected bodies are.

I wanted to see if the engineers could be sent back to the drawing board regarding access-and I'm understanding there may be a possibility of an alternative after all. I would also like to see if project opposition was the case if the neighborhood access issue was solved (it seemed that opposition went down by at least some homeowners).

At the very least, it seems wise to "tap the brakes" and seek public input exploring all possible avenues. Similarly to what happened when we actually came to the hearing for a newly proposed drainage district (when things become soon-to-be reality with "real world" implications) then people voice their concerns the most specifically and passionately. I also believe that public notice should be sent informing affected landowners of any upcoming agenda item. As much as we believe people will follow our Board agenda, when projects affect them this specifically, it is a courtesy that can go a long way.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

**IF THERE IS A CONTRACT INVOLVED IN THE AGENDA ITEM, HAS THE CONTRACT BEEN SUBMITTED AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR AND ANSWERED WITH A REVIEW BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE?**

Yes  No

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive the information, hold a public agenda item on 3-5-2024 and consider the following:

Completing only the paving portion of Elk Creek Road as a standalone project.  
Completing the roundabout project additionally upon alternative access/egress from residents' homes.  
Alternatively completing an alternate access route long-term from the dead-end portion of Old Lakeport.

**ACTION REQUIRED / PROPOSED MOTION:**

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Date: 2/23/2024

Discussion items for Elk Creek Road Project:

Project Scope	Length 0.42 miles
	Elk Creek Road Grading and Paving plus intersection reconstruction

Project connects the Elk Creek Road pavement by the Residences at Elk Creek subdivision to the intersection of Christy Road/Old Lakeport Road/Southern Hills Road and Elk Creek Road. Cost share between the city and county is approximately 50-50 for the project. Project is undertaken under the terms of a letter of agreement between the Sioux City Council and the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors. Both governmental bodies approved development of the project.

Preliminary Total Project Cost estimate: \$1,709,086

Breakout Stage Cost:	Stage 1-	Elk Creek Grade and Pave:	\$ 787,323
	Stage 2-	Intersection reconstruction:	\$ 930,763

**This is not a \$2 million roundabout project.** Reconstruction of the intersection is only part of the project (~55% of total project cost). Whether a roundabout design is built or a standard four-way intersection is reconstructed, the intersection work will take approximately the same amount of time. The consultant is providing a diagram showing the footprint of the existing intersection on top of the roundabout for presentation at the Board meeting on February 27th. The existing footprint of intersection shows that the roundabout is only slightly larger but allows all five legs of the intersection to be accommodated within roughly the same footprint as the original intersection design and will smoothly allow all traffic to be accommodated.

Current condition: - Gravel Road on Elk Creek Road alignment east of the intersection.  
Intersection pavement is a PCC Pavement constructed in 1989. Pavement age is 35 years.

Proposed improvement: Elk Creek Road - grading and 24-foot-wide PCC Paving with 6' Granular Shoulders  
Intersection to be reconstructed with PCC. Reconstructing the intersection consists of changing intersection from current two-lane intersection E-W and N-S with fifth intersection leg 40 feet +/- NW of the intersection with a roundabout bringing all five streets into a single intersection. Sidewalks, utility improvements, and storm sewer improvements are also included in the project.

The intersecting leg from the NW is a dead end portion of Old Lakeport Road serving 18 residences. Currently the dead-end road outlets to Christy Road approximately 40' north of four way intersection. As traffic has grown in the area following the construction of new medical offices and commercial development, at least three residents have complained to county engineer about difficulty entering traffic on Christy Road and reported that the intersection is sometimes blocked by traffic backed up at the southbound stop sign. The county added a "Do Not Block Intersection" sign several years ago. Reported results are mixed on the effectiveness of this sign.

Project construction details: The project is divided into two stages. The first stage is grading and paving of Elk Creek Road. The start date is mid-May for this work. While the Elk Creek Road is underway, utilities will be relocated at the intersection. Once utilities are relocated, the reconstruction at the intersection will begin.

Project goals:

- 1) Grade and pave Elk Creek Road to improve the roadway for use by area residents and encourage additional development in the area.
- 2) Provide access to the intersection for residents on the dead-end road that is equal to access of the other four legs of the intersection so that the residents of this street can safely enter traffic in the intersection.

While not all residents on the dead end seem to agree on the whether access to Christy Road is a problem at the current intersections, based on comments I received at Thursday night's meeting much of their frustration with the project and the proposed intersection reconstruction was due to the loss of access to drive home to their respective residences during the project. The inconvenience of parking in the church parking lot and walking or using provided golf carts while the intersection construction underway was deemed to be unacceptable by residents on the dead end. Any improved access to the intersection provided by the roundabout was not deemed worth the temporary inconvenience.

The original plan for access for residents on the dead end had been to construct a temporary road through an easement across the Agnes property to Southern Hills Drive west of the intersection closure. This was found to be impractical due to this easement area being on top of the leaching field for the Agnes' septic system. A temporary access road would have damaged the septic system leaching field.

The alternative access accommodation proposed at the meeting was to put a wood chip surfaced walking trail/golf cart path across the Agnes easement. This type of traffic would not damage the septic leaching field, but would provide access. Parking spots would be leased from the church across the street. This alternative was not deemed adequate by residents who commented at the meeting. Golf carts have been used on other county projects when paving disrupts access to homes in a project corridor. Sioux City's normal policy is to require residents to walk home during street construction.

In the course of the meeting, it was learned that the residence across from the Agnes property had changed hands and that an easement might be able to be obtained from the new owner. City staff is pursuing this option over the course of the next week and the county engineer will report on the feasibility of this option on March 5. It is hoped that if continuous construction access to homes is provided, the residents' objections to the project will be addressed.

Emergency vehicle access and garbage pickup access concerns have been addressed by engineering staff working with Sergeant Bluff fire and rescue and requiring the contractor to assist with the collection of garbage. Delivery of mail and packages is also a concern. Mailboxes are typically relocated during construction. Package delivery concerns will be addressed with the contractor. Most of these issues should be addressed if a temporary road can be built off Christy Road as is being worked on by city staff.

#### NEXT STEPS:

Tabling the project could jeopardize completion of all work prior to the winter of 2024. The current project timetable with work beginning in May should ensure completion in one construction season.

At this point, I recommend that the Board allow the consultant and city and county engineering staff to address the concerns expressed at the meeting. Most of the residents' objections can be addressed. It is too early to pull the plug on the project.

Traffic will continue to grow at this intersection as development continues in the area. If the replacement of the intersection pavement is not done now, greater disruption to higher volumes of traffic will be incurred 5, 10, or 15 years from now and the access problems for the residents on the NW leg of Old Lakeport Road will only grow. Regardless of when the work is done, this year, or in 10 years, some inconvenience for these residents will occur. By delaying intersection construction today, we only kick the can down the road. The board has done this on other projects, such as 220<sup>th</sup> Street. Not only will the work be no less disruptive to these peoples' lives in the future, but it will be more costly to the city and county as construction costs will only continue to grow.