

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact: Chad Bird, City Manager, 563.382.3651
Jeremy Bril, City Engineer, 563-382-2157

Locust Road design features and principles

Decorah, IA (October 29, 2019) – Thank you to the many community residents that attended Decorah’s Locust Road Improvement input meetings. There were many valuable insights from residents and some ideas to continue to work through as we approach final design work. Resident and user input is valuable, so the City encourages residents to keep providing input.

The design for the Locust Road project is based on the following guiding principles:

1. Does current alignment meet current design standards with the proposed design?
2. What safety concerns need to be addressed?
3. Cost vs Benefit of realignment

The design team is of the opinion that the current alignment with the proposed design will meet **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)** standards for a design speed of 40mph (posted speed is 35mph). To address safety concerns, the design team reviewed the crash history available from the Iowa DOT and discussed the safety issues with City officials. Based on information available from the crash history and from the City, it was determined that the corridor needs to be designed to encourage traffic (specifically truck traffic) to slow down through the corridor, provide a safe separation between bicyclists and vehicles, and provide an open corridor for better performance during winter months.

The proposed design addresses these by:

- a) providing narrower lanes, adding rumble strips and wider bike lanes
- b) installing “check your speed” signs along the corridor and making the entire corridor a “do not overtake” corridor by using double yellow center lane markings
- c) installing street lights throughout the corridor per **Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS)** requirements to provide a lighted and safer corridor during low light periods and
- d) the trees and debris within the ROW will be cleared to provide an open corridor to remove shade from the roadway which should aid in a less icy road than currently experienced

Realigning the roadway raised as a question during the recent input meetings; this is not just a matter of asking for alternative bids. There are several factors and decision points that need to happen during the design process before deciding to proceed with preparing plans for an alternate bid. Some of these include:

1. To design an alternate alignment, an additional topographic survey of the wooded bluffs on either side of the alignment would be needed
2. The project includes State funding. Designing a new alignment through undisturbed land will trigger additional environmental surveys and requirements leading to additional cost and schedule delays
3. There will be additional Right-of-Way (ROW) needed. Per DOT bidding requirements, the project will not be allowed to be advertised for bids unless ROW acquisition is complete. Acquiring additional ROW will come at an expense as ROW is purchased from each adjacent individual property owner

4. The City will have to incur additional design costs in completing a new set of plans for the bid alternate including designing the new alignment, designing another alternative drainage design, additional time for DOT and DNR permitting and geophysical and geotechnical surveys

Regarding the approximate cost, assuming that the width of the redesigned road including drainage ditches, clear zones, etc. will be approximately 60 feet wide. From available LiDAR survey information, the approximate amount of excavation, primarily rock, is about 10 feet deep on an average. The length of the redesigned curve is estimated to be approximately 2,400 linear feet. This will require about 62,000 cubic yards of rock excavation. Information available from the Iowa DOT's letting site indicates an average price of \$70/cy for excavation in rock. As can be seen, without even considering all the other additional design, environmental and ROW costs, just the cost of excavation is expected to be in excess of \$4.3 million.

Another aspect to a proposed redesign of straightening the curve is the potential increases in vehicle speed with a straighter line of travel.

Based on the above considerations, a decision was made to reconstruct the road within the available ROW and along the existing alignment.

Further questions may be directed to Street Department at 563.382.2157 or City Manager's office at 563.382.3651.

##