



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Edward L. Roberge, PE, City Engineer

DATE: July 21, 2016

SUBJECT: Report from the City Engineer on the status on the Loudon Road Safety Improvement Project (CIP 19).

Recommendation

Accept this report.

Background

At its meeting on January 11, 2016, City Council considered the status of the Loudon Road Safety Improvement Project (CIP19). Council requested that staff consider additional alternatives and funding options for improvements and report back.

Discussion

Council will recall that a number of project alternatives were outlined at the January 11, 2016 meeting; including capacity improvements such as widening the 4-lane corridor to add raised median to restrict left turns, or an added fifth lane for continuous left turns; utilization of parallel local streets to develop a one-way traffic circulation pattern along the corridor; a reduced 3-lane option with center left turn lane and safety shoulder (context-sensitive); access management, and a no-build alternative. Through discussion, Council requested that staff consider other alternatives where the existing 4-lane roadway could be maintained and include crosswalk and sidewalk enhancements, the closure of driveways to promote better access management, and streetscape aesthetic improvements. Council stressed the importance of safety but equally stressed concern with the 4-lane roadway capacity.

Alternative Comparison Matrix

Based on alternatives evaluated through previous studies and additional options to be considered at the request of Council, staff prepared the attached Alternative Comparison Matrix for Council consideration.

The matrix outlines three (3) project alternatives including:

- retaining the existing 4-lane roadway (the repave only option),
- retaining the existing 4-lane roadway and include select improvements (in addition to repaving the road, improvements include select sidewalk and crosswalk enhancements, and select driveway narrowing and closure),
- conversion to a 3-lane roadway (alternative approved by Council on February 11, 2014).

The matrix outlined comparative factors for each alternative including safety and traffic operational factors, each alternative's complete streets compatibility, property impacts, access, implementation costs, available and needed funding, as well as schedule. Staff has populated each comparative factor with a change ranking from very negative to very positive.

Grant Funding Eligibility

Staff met with representatives of the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to present and review the 4-lane access management alternative to determine Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) eligibility. Where the HSIP program is a data driven program, direct benefits through the reduction of crashes within the project area is required. Based on the NHDOT review, retaining and resurfacing the existing 4-lane roadway configuration will have no safety benefit, therefore, the costs associated with that work will not be eligible for HSIP funding. While access management in the form of driveway narrowing and closures has been demonstrated to be a worthwhile safety improvement, NHDOT outlined only a limited number of driveway closures that would meet the HSIP safety improvement requirements for eligibility. HSIP funding would be limited to the work required to close specific driveways.

Implementation Cost

The Alternative Comparison Matrix outlines costs to implement each alternative reviewed. Each project alternative includes total project cost, HSIP funding potential, available funds (unexpended funds available from the original \$160,000 appropriation), and additional funding needed. Funding needed ranges from \$0 to \$1,170,000.00 depending on alternative.

Project Schedule

The matrix also outlines an anticipated schedule to complete each alternative. For both HSIP supported alternatives (3-lane conversion and 4-lane access management), federal project submittals and requirements will need to be completed prior to authorization to

construct. Based on the status of the project, these alternatives would begin before the 2017 construction season. With respect to the 4-lane repave only alternative, this project could be incorporated into the existing City-wide paving contract and possibly completed this fall.

Given the significance of this project, staff is prepared to coordinate a project information meeting to review these alternatives with the public and/or make a formal presentation to City Council for a public hearing to solicit comment on the project alternatives.