

COUNCIL WORK SESSION April 25, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Council Work Session of the North Mankato City Council was held in the Council Chambers on April 25, 2022. Mayor Dehen called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. The following were present for roll call: Council Members Norland, Oachs, Whitlock, Steiner, and Mayor Dehen, Interim City Administrator Fischer, Public Works Director Host, and City Clerk Van Genderen.

US 169 and Belgrade Avenue Study

Interim City Administrator Fischer introduced representatives from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Nicklaus Ollrich, Traffic Engineer; Glen Coudron, Project Manager; and Rhonda Allis, District 7 Planning Director. MnDOT conducted a study of the 169 and Belgrade Avenue intersection. MnDOT will be working on Vet's Bridge in 2025; it may be an ideal time to change the 169 and Belgrade Avenue intersection with the bridge's closure.

Project Manager Coudron stated the Vet's Bridgework would include redecking and closure of the bridge, so it might be a good time to make changes to the 169 Belgrade Avenue intersection. He indicated there would be a City cost participation.

Traffic Engineer Ollrich reported the goals for the work session are to share the information on the US 169 and Belgrade Avenue Study, seek City Council support for the recommendations that have been developed and discuss potential cost participation. He reported rehabilitation of the Veteran's Memorial Bridge over MN River between Mankato and North Mankato is planned for 2025 and includes removing and replacing the concrete bridge deck. The bridge will be closed during construction, making it an ideal time to work on the intersection. Traffic Engineer Ollrich reviewed the Belgrade Avenue Corridor Study completed in 2017 conducted by MAPO, the City of North Mankato, and MnDOT, which recommended further study of the interchange, and included the possibility of a roundabout at the US 169 Southbound Ramp Intersection. As part of the Highway 169 Corridor Study completed by MAPO, City of North Mankato, City of Mankato, Blue Earth County, Nicollet County, and MnDOT also recommended further study of the intersection. The current MnDOT study began in May 2021 with HR Green as a consultant with participation by City of North Mankato staff. The study reviewed existing conditions, traffic volumes, and crash data from the southbound and northbound ramps at the intersection of Belgrade Avenue and US 169. Operations analysis indicated the intersection is operating at acceptable levels.

Traffic Engineer Ollrich reviewed six potential alternatives and examined their feasibility. Staff preferred alternatives included the two traffic signals; with a 4-lane Belgrade Avenue option and a two traffic signal and westbound dual left and a reduction to a 3-Lane Belgrade Avenue option.

Discussion was held concerning maintaining and improving the multi-modal operation of the intersection and bridge. Mayor Dehen requested further consideration for tapering to a three-lane road as you enter Belgrade Avenue.

Discussion was held concerning cost participation. The 4-lane option costs approximately 2.4 -2.9 million dollars with a City cost participation of roughly \$450,000 to \$500,000, and the 3-lane option costs about 2.5-3 million dollars with a City cost participation of approximately \$450,000 to \$500,000. Interim City Administrator Fischer reported the project is not scheduled into the 5-year CIP, so a discussion would need to be held concerning funding for the project. Public Works Director Host stated the 2025 construction date would allow the City to review potential funding options.

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Public Works Director Host reviewed the potential Belgrade Avenue improvement costs associated with the Belgrade TIF Funding. Currently, the fund still holds \$287,000. He examined two options for the sidewalk and streetscaping. Option 1 does not remove the existing sidewalk and would not be ADA compliant, and the project would not qualify for grants; it would allow parking on both sides, create a midblock crossing, and replace street lighting. The cost would be approximately \$600,000. Option 2 would extend the sidewalks creating ADA compliance and potential for patron seating, replace street lighting, and build a Center Pedestrian Crossing but only allow parking on the South Side. The cost would be approximately \$900,000.

Council Member Norland commented she liked option 2, preferring the ADA compliance and creating less crowding with parking on only one side. Council Member Norland requested clarification on if the road was left or if the sidewalks could be extended. Public Works Director Host reported the road would lose parking. Mayor Dehen asked for information on possible timing. Public Works Director Host noted it would be beneficial to complete the project simultaneously as the MnDOT Veteran's Bridge project.

Annual Water, Sanitary, and Storm Sewer Report

Public Works Director Host reported the North Mankato Public Works Department's objectives are Safety, Quality, and Productivity. On average, the North Mankato Water Department has 4.5 Full-Time Employees, two water plants, two water towers, one reservoir, two redundant connections with Mankato, five active wells, and 76 miles of watermain distributing 425 million gallons of water annually. Opportunities for the Water Department include continuing to update technology, effectively utilizing the CIP by building cash to pay for more extensive projects rather than bonding, and continued leak detection and valve exercising. Challenges include aging infrastructure and the large volume of locations required to be completed with a relatively small staff.

The North Mankato Sewer System has 64 miles of sewer mains, ten sanitary sewer lift stations, 4.5 miles of sewer force main, and 522 million gallons sent to the Mankato Treatment Plant annually. The City jets an average of 50,000 feet and televises 75,000 feet of sewer. Opportunities for the department include new technologies and effective CIP planning. Challenges include aging infrastructure and treatment costs. The City of Mankato treats North Mankato's waste, and increased costs may be coming to North Mankato due to upgrades being completed to the Mankato treatment facility.

The North Mankato Storm Sewer System includes four storm sewer pumping stations and 90 miles of storm sewer mains. Opportunities include establishing a CIP plan for the system and the addition of underdrain, which is being completed during mill and overlay projects that allow a resident to connect their sump pumps to the underdrain and reduce street issues. Challenges include maintenance of the City's ravines, aging infrastructure, and the new MS4 Permit implementation.

Outdoor Patio Seating Evaluation

Community Development Director Fischer reported that City Planner Lassonde researched current seasonal and permanent patios and the percentages of the properties designated seasonal and permanent patios.

Mayor Dehen thanked the staff for the memo. He noted that Spinners recently purchased land behind their property and expanded it for outdoor greenspace. He said the Circle has closed their access on Belgrade as outlined in the Belgrade Avenue TIF and is now utilizing that space

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as a temporary patio, and the business did not lose any parking. Council Member Oachs expressed confusion about the permanent and temporary patios and requested clarification on the permit.

Floodwall Mural

Interim City Administrator Fischer reported the Council has three different artists to review for the floodwall mural. A discussion was held concerning the three options and a consensus to work with Jordyn Brennan on further developing the design Jordyn presented. Council Member Whitlock mentioned the possible inclusion of historical elements.

Mayor Dehen commented that he read an article about No Mow May and suggested the City consider implementing the option.

Council Member Norland moved, seconded by Council Member Oachs, to adjourn the Council Work Session at 12:51 pm.

Mayor

City Clerk