

## **Item 24-1134: Grant application request for new traffic signal at the Richmond Street (STH 47) / Ridgeview Drive intersection**

**Municipal Services Committee**

Mon, Aug 26, 2024 4:30PM

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 24:17**

All right, moving to item 24-1134 grant application request for a new traffic signal at the Richmond Street (State Highway 47)/Ridgeview Drive, intersection.

**Alderson William Siebers (District 1) 24:29**

Move for approval.

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 24:30**

Second.

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 24:31**

All right, we have a motion and a second. Traffic engineer Lom, you want to tell us about this one, which is so exciting for District Six.

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 24:40**

I was gonna say, for some people at the table, right? I won't repeat everything that's in the memo, because I'm sure everybody else has places to be. But very generally, Richmond and Ridgeview intersection has been sort of a stubborn thorn in our side. At any given time, there's a few intersections around town where people are—where we're getting close to meeting the requirements for a signal, and we get a lot of complaints about them, and this is, this is definitely one of those. So, the good news is that we believe we're eligible for a Wisconsin DOT, SISIP grant, which would cover 90% of the \$600 or so thousand dollars that it would take to do all the improvements there. So really, this is simply a request to apply for that grant.

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 25:33**

All right, thank you. I see Alder Hartzheim. You're on...?

**Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 25:39**

13 please.

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 25:40**

Gotcha.

**Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 25:41**

Thank you, Chair. I'm wondering if I could direct—er to traffic engineer Lom. Always the name. My concern is coming north out of that very busy, crazy roundabout, there's a very short distance there before you get to this street or this intersection. Has it been determined that that's—that there's not going to be end up being a backup from the push/pull of that very crazy roundabout intersection?

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 26:17**

So, one of the first things that we look at when we look at something like this (and I try not to bore you with all of this), but we run it through our micro simulation model to make sure we understand what the implications

Mon, Aug 26, 2024

would be. Northbound really doesn't show much of a problem at all. Southbound tends to be a little bit trickier, and they're—on a normal day, we wouldn't expect to see southbound traffic back up that far, but it's possible, because we look at it in 15-minute increments. So, there could be a minute here or a minute there where we do start to get into a little bit of trouble. The reality of the situation here is, though, either (a) we have to live with what we have, which is a crash problem. We can't get pedestrians across, and or and very extended weights at certain times of the day to get onto Richmond Street. Or we have to look at something that would restrict access, so perhaps a extending the median through that area to cut off left turns or something relatively extreme like that. So, we're left with kind of not a lot of great options. But we do think that this is the best solution, and we do think that it'll work. And it's worth pointing out that because this is on the Wisconsin—the DOT system, that they have to be comfortable with it as well before we would—before they would sign off on it.

**Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 27:47**

Thank you.

**Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 27:49**

All right. Alder Croatt.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 27:51**

Thank you, chair. I wasn't going to talk about this one, but since I'm here, I do travel this area a lot, and when I first read this, I'm like, "Whoah, what? What are we proposing?" But absolutely, there's some problems there, and I agree with you, the southbound back up on the roundabout tends to be more of a problem than northbound, so it seems like a good idea. But what happens if we don't get the grant? Obviously, nothing, but...?

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 28:19**

Well, we would be left with a decision. Now it does—I guess I should have pointed it out, but it is in the memo that it does fall on the boundary with Grand Chute. The Grand Chute—Grand Chute and the city collectively would be left with the decision of how important, how much of a priority is this for us? And you know, there's sort of different levels. The \$640—I think—thousand dollars that we show in there is to not just install the signal, but make all the improvements in the corners to be able to and get crosswalks across there for pedestrians, get the left turns lined up. There are ways to install a signal that would be less expensive than that, would also be less safe than that. So, we'd be left with the hard decision of, you know, do we want, as locals, fork out 100%.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 29:09**

Yeah, the reason I ask is 640 is a lot of money, and we're only doing 10% right, and Grand Chute's doing cost share as well?

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 29:18**

We would be splitting the 10% with Grand Chute as of currently.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 29:21**

All right.

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 29:21**

Their—and their town board did commit to that at their last meeting.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 29:25**

Yeah. So, if we had to do it with them, we're talking—and without a grant, we're talking significant amount of money. Where would this rank in priority with other problematic intersections?

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 29:39**

Well, right now, probably the two intersections that are under the most scrutiny are that one and French and JJ. We have a solution coming for that intersection as well that is related—essentially the DOT is going to pay for almost all that one as well because the thing that's putting it over the edge is the four is the 41 project and the Ballard interchange closure. So, I would say those are probably the two that we get the most complaints about right now.

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 30:15**

Okay, thanks. Let's hope we get it.

**Alderman Denise Fenton (District 6) 30:18**

So, traffic engineer Lom, can you—so it is my understanding that we are—that DOT is going to put a temporary signal in there, and that we have asked them to continue the temporary signal for an extra year. So, do you—first question is, do you have any concerns about the signal being there without the accompanying safety measures that we're talking about for the permanent solution? And then the second question would be—and we talked about this—given—will having that temporary signal give us some metrics that will help us justify the permanent?

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 31:02**

Yeah, so there's a couple of things there. The first question about—so, just to clarify for everybody, the Ballard Road closure—the Ballard interchange closure, happens next year, 2025, and as part of the, what they call the TMP process, the Traffic Mitigation Plan for that, DOT identified this intersection and French and JJ as both being problematic intersections during that time period. So, they are paying 100% of the cost to do temporary signals at both of those locations, which is great. And to your point, could it be a little bit safer with aligned left turn lanes and so forth? Yes, but there simply isn't the time or the inclination from the state to do that.

**Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 31:54**

One dynamic that I think we touched on in the memo is once you put in a signal, it's very hard politically to remove it, right? Because there's two things that happen. One is, is the people that currently use that intersection get used to it, but we also get what we call induced demand, right? There's a lot of people who want to use that intersection who are avoiding it right now, and so once—so that we have gotten the DOT to agree to keep that temporary signal up until the spring of 2026 at which point the Richmond intersection will—or interchange—will close, and then we're probably going to end up with a four way stop out there for a little while between when they take down their temporary and we put up our signal, but it won't be so bad, because the 47 interchange will be closed, and the traffic in that area will be extremely low. So, I think—hopefully that answered your questions.

**Alderman Denise Fenton (District 6) 32:54**

I think so. Yes, thank you. Anybody else? All right, hearing none, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor, please signify by saying aye. Aye. That passes five, zero.