

ITEM #:	<u>23</u>
DATE:	<u>02-24-26</u>
DEPT:	<u>PW</u>

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: G.W. CARVER AVENUE AND CAMERON SCHOOL ROAD INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

BACKGROUND:

The intersection of G.W. Carver Avenue and Cameron School Road lies on the boundary between the City of Ames and Story County and is shown on the [Roundabout Location Map](#) for reference. This intersection has been identified as a critical location for future transportation improvements due to projected traffic growth associated with planned and approved development in the surrounding area, including The Bluffs at Dankbar Farms and the proposed Greenbriar development, which have been the subject of incentive packages previously reviewed by City Council (see P&H Department Staff Reports [#1](#) and [#2](#)).

The initial Dankbar development agreement contemplated that developer funded transportation improvements at the intersection would be in the form of a signalized intersection, allowing for incremental improvements over time. Further refinement of design elements have indicated that a roundabout is a preferred improvement due to the increases in safety regarding speed management and benefits for crossings by multimodal users. Additionally, roundabouts are more cost effective to maintain over the long term due to no signalized equipment to maintain.

It should also be noted that the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) identifies a roundabout improvement at this location as Project N-47. Inclusion in the adopted MTP establishes consistency with regional transportation planning goals and supports future consideration of federal and state funding opportunities.

Following several City Council discussions regarding developer incentives and long-term corridor improvements, the Mayor sent a letter dated January 30, 2026 ([see Mayor's letter](#)) to the Story County Board of Supervisors requesting County participation in evaluating a roundabout improvement at the G.W. Carver Avenue and Cameron School Road intersection, consistent with the preferred treatment identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The Board of Supervisors voted to support moving forward with preliminary design of a roundabout.

The attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Ames and Story County establishes a framework for shared participation in an initial phase of work focused on feasibility and funding readiness. The scope of this phase includes:

- Preparation of a preliminary engineering design sufficient to identify right-of-way impacts;
- Development of a detailed Opinion of Probable Construction Cost (OPC); and
- Preparation and submittal of a site-specific application to the Iowa Department of Transportation's Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP).

Under the MOU, the City of Ames and Story County would share the actual costs of this initial phase on a 50/50 basis. The City would lead the selection of an engineering

consultant in accordance with City of Ames procurement policies and procedures. Story County engineering staff would participate in the consultant selection process and remain engaged throughout the project in a collaborative partnership role. Story County's total financial participation in this phase would be capped at \$50,000.

The City would initially pay the full cost of the preliminary engineering services and would seek reimbursement from Story County for its 50 percent share, not to exceed \$50,000. Funding for the City's share is expected to come from unobligated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. No construction funding is included or authorized as part of this action.

The MOU does not obligate either party to proceed with final design or construction. Any future phases of the project would be subject to separate approvals by the City Council and the Story County Board of Supervisors.

Story County approved the MOU at its February 10, 2026 meeting ([see attached MOU](#)).

NEXT STEPS:

Upon mutual approval of the MOU, City staff would initiate a solicitation to hire an engineering consultant. The anticipated schedule would allow completion of the work in time for submittal of a TSIP grant application in August 2026. Subject to the timing of procurement and consultant selection, staff would anticipate returning to the City Council in April with a proposed engineering agreement for consideration.

Following completion of the preliminary engineering and receipt of a refined Opinion of Probable Construction Cost (OPC), the City and Story County would evaluate potential options to program a roundabout improvement in a future year of the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). The timing of any future construction phase would depend on the availability of local funding, financial participation by Story County, and the potential receipt of grant funding or other external funding sources. The goal would be, if awarded a State grant and if both parties desire to proceed, that the roundabout construction could occur in FY 2027/28.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can do the following:
 - a. Approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Story County to share preliminary engineering and TSIP grant application costs for evaluation of a potential roundabout at the G.W. Carver Avenue and Cameron School Road intersection.
 - b. Direct Staff to allocate \$50,000 from unobligated ARPA funds to support the City's share of the preliminary engineering and grant application work.
2. Direct Staff to develop alternative approaches to program a roundabout.
3. Direct Staff to not pursue a roundabout and program a signalized intersection.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

By approving this agreement, the City will partner with Story County to advance the development of a roundabout option that is anticipated to improve safety and operational performance at a critical suburban intersection and accommodate planned housing growth in the northwest area of the community.

While the City and County evaluate the feasibility of a roundabout, the adjacent developers intend to continue with their development plans. If the roundabout project does not ultimately proceed, responsibilities for intersection improvements and signalization would still need to be finalized in conjunction with existing and future developer agreements. Therefore, it is the City Manager's recommendation that the City Council approve Alternative 1 as shown above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Roundabout Location Map](#)

[GWC Roundabout Letter from the Mayor](#)

[Incentives Staff Report Dec 9th](#)

[Roundabout Planning Dept Staff Report Dec. 16th](#)

[MOU - Signed by Story County](#)