



CITY OF IOWA CITY COUNCIL ACTION REPORT

March 21, 2023

Resolution setting a public hearing on April 4, 2023 on project manual and estimate of cost for the construction of the Riverside Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project, directing City Clerk to publish notice of said hearing, and directing the City Engineer to place said project manual on file for public inspection.

Prepared By:	Scott Sovers, Asst. City Engineer
Reviewed By:	Jason Havel, City Engineer Ron Knoche, Public Works Director Geoff Fruin, City Manager
Fiscal Impact:	Estimated cost of construction is \$520,000, available in the Myrtle/Riverside Intersection Signal account #S3933
Staff Recommendation:	Approval
Commission Recommendations:	N/A
Attachments:	Location Map Project Overview Resolution

Executive Summary:

This agenda item begins the bidding process for the Riverside Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project. The project generally includes the installation of sidewalk on the west side of Riverside Drive under the Iowa Interstate Railroad Bridge, as well as the installation of street and pedestrian level lighting and street trees from Benton Street to the Iowa Interstate Railroad.

The project also includes upgrades to the Riverside Drive storm sewer and sanitary sewer systems between the Iowa Interstate Railroad and Myrtle Avenue, as necessary to support the future Riverfront West Development. The construction costs associated with these upgrades (estimated at approximately \$160,000) will be reimbursed by the Riverfront West Developer, Scannell Properties.

Background / Analysis:

In 2016, the City finalized a streetscape master plan for the South Riverside Drive Corridor from U.S. Highway 6 to Myrtle Avenue. One of the main guiding principles that came out of the plan was prioritizing pedestrian circulation within the corridor. From the guiding principal, specific corridor objectives were developed, which included:

Continue with proposed improvements for a pedestrian underpass along the west side of Riverside Drive at Iowa Interstate Railroad.

Considering this objective, the City proceeded with a project to install a pedestrian tunnel through the Iowa Interstate Railroad embankment. During the design development phase, plans were provided to the Iowa Interstate Railroad for review and comment. While they understood the importance of the sidewalk connection across their facility, they were not supportive of the tunnel project, as they were concerned the construction of the tunnel may cause track settlement and potentially increase the chances of a train derailment.

Given the importance of the sidewalk connection, key stakeholders including City staff, the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Iowa Interstate Railroad collectively developed the proposed sidewalk design concept that eliminated the need for a tunnel through the railroad embankment. This option, as shown on the attached project overview, includes narrowing Riverside Drive and installation of a 4-foot-wide sidewalk between the west Riverside Drive curb line and the railroad bridge abutment. With the sidewalk being close to the vehicular travel lanes due to the limited space, a proposed concrete barrier between the sidewalk and the street was included to allow safe passage of pedestrians within the width-restricted area.

It is also important to note this project will construct the proposed sidewalk from its current terminus south of the Iowa Interstate Railroad to approximately 30 feet north of the Iowa Interstate Railroad. The remaining section of sidewalk from the north end of this project to Myrtle Avenue is planned to be installed as a part of the Riverfront West Development. The developer plans to install a temporary sidewalk at this location to provide connectivity during building construction prior to the completion of the permanent sidewalk.

The Riverside Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2023.