

**Northside STEAM SRTS Sidewalk Gap Special Assessment Project**  
**RESPONSES TO “Res 2 STRS STEAM RFI Questions 101218”**  
**December 11, 2018**

- Can City Council and/or the City Administration provide any direction to residents on the future of Non-motorized Transportation paths being developed along Traver? In particular, what is the:
  - Likelihood of development?
  - High level description of what the work might include (e.g. sidewalks on one side, both sides; paths in the road or solely along the right of way)?
  - Benefit to efficiency or cost control to pursue the current proposal now vs. delaying it to coincide with this future work?
  - Prioritization of this work in contrast to other projects?
  - Cost ceiling (if any) of the project; is there a tipping point where the costs outweigh the benefits of non-motorized pathways along this route?

Staff Response: The inclusion of the proposed sidewalks along Traver Road between John A Woods and Barton in the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and the City’s Capital Improvements Plan do not guarantee that the sidewalks would be built. If the installation of new sidewalks were to be pursued as part of a future project, they would still require a special assessment. Placement of proposed sidewalks within the current road footprint or within the right-of-way behind existing curbs would be considered in the same fashion as was done for the SRTS project, which currently proposes that 85%-90% of the new sidewalks on Traver Road be constructed in what are currently the existing parking lanes. The main difference between constructing the sidewalks now with the SRTS project instead of waiting for the future CIP project is that there is approximately \$400k of SRTS Grant funding available now, which would likely not be available to offset assessment costs in future projects. The priority of this project was based on the community request to apply for the SRTS Grant, and is also consistent with the City’s prioritization of sidewalk gaps, which indicated that this location was a very high priority (95<sup>th</sup> percentile).

- What would be the process to amend the Resolution, if scope (i.e. properties) were removed from the list? Would that need to happen BEFORE a vote on Resolution 2? Would the proposed modifications need to be submitted to SRTS for review before a Resolution 2 vote?

Staff Response: If properties were removed from the scope, the modifications would need to be submitted to SRTS for approval before City Council is asked to vote on a resolution to submit final plans to MDOT and solicit bids for the project.

- Similarly, if, based on the cumulative responses from these questions, it appears that a mutually agreed upon solution to the current proposal could be found, could that solution be pursued and executed in the engineering plans before a vote on Resolution 2? This would

ensure that any modifications are implemented and agreed upon before Council moves the project through to the next phase, and would increase residents' trust in the process.

**Staff Response:** Based on the discussions and questions, staff has further reviewed the design and made modifications that will preserve more vegetation. Design changes were to residents and property owners on December 11, 2018.

If this is possible, what would be the best course of action? Can the postponed vote agenda item be withdrawn (perhaps with an update to Council in its place), pending a revision and resubmission to council rather than Council needing to make another motion to postpone, discuss, and then vote on the motion? Who would be able to make this change to the agenda?

**Staff Response:** In order to move forward with the project for construction in 2019, Council will need to make a decision on Resolution #2 on December 17, 2018.

Is this block able to submit a new traffic calming petition now that there is a new rubrik, or has there already been a request processed and reviewed under the updated process? If a new petition is possible and is accepted, what types of interventions or improvements would be possible under this petition? How would that impact the work outlined in the current SRTS @ STEAM proposal before Council?

**Staff Response:** This 1600 block of Traver Road can resubmit a petition for Traffic Calming at any time. The Traffic Calming Program has been modified since the last petition, with the goal of making the process more manageable and allowing more projects to move forward. Although the narrowing of Traver Road will likely have a traffic calming effect within the limits of the proposed sidewalk project, the addition of speed humps or other traffic calming devices could be considered as part of the Traffic Calming Program, should a petition be submitted.

- In light of the mutually observed dangers of the intersections at Barton and Traver as well as John A Woods and Traver, would it be possible to include pedestrian crossing updates as part of the current proposal? If so, what engineering options would be feasible? For example, there is some interest in exploring pedestrian islands which would work to slow traffic, and provide a safer mid-crossing scenario and higher visibility of pedestrians. What would the process be to explore this and how would it fit within the timeline and process of the current proposal? How would this impact assessable costs?

**Staff Response:** Based on concerns and observations at the intersection of Traver Road and both Barton Drive and John A Woods, design staff added additional safety improvements at both locations. Although pedestrian islands were not designed, bump-outs and improved crosswalks were. These improvements do not add to the assessable cost of the project.

- Could engineering define the intrusion on each property based on the *current* drawings, both the temporary intrusion from the construction process as well as the permanent intrusion from modifying the terrain to accommodate the sidewalks?  
Methods to do so could include:
  - Walking Traver and marking the proposed sidewalk paths and curb lines with (non-toxic, water soluble) paint

- Providing topographical overlay to the current designs
- Providing additional dimensions to better communicate the extent of the permanent intrusion and the alteration of property
- Providing any insight or descriptions into the proposed grading and what's in the right of way vs. on private property
- Based on professional industry standards, can the sidewalks on Traver move into the roadway any more than already spec'd in the current designs?

Staff Response: Neither the current or previous plans included the construction of sidewalks on private property. All new sidewalks will be located in the public right-of-way. Current plans for Traver incorporate moving the curb line inward to create more space to construct the proposed sidewalks. This greatly reduces any temporary grading and impacts on private property, to the extent that most properties on Traver will not be impacted by the construction. Traver Road drawings were provided in letters to residents and property owners mailed the week of December 10th, and pdfs will be sent by email so owners can zoom into their parcels for greater detail.

- Would this current project qualify for permeable sidewalks, which offers a more environmentally friendly alternative to the traditional concrete sidewalks and would offer increased drainage? How might that be incorporated into the current proposal, and how might it impact the cost of the project (if at all)?

Staff Response: The overall increase of impermeable area along Traver Road will only be approximately two feet for most of the length. The City has experimented with permeable pavements in the past, and have found that maintaining permeability in the pavement is very challenging, and the City does not have the right equipment to adequately maintain it. Further evaluation and study of the concept would need to be performed to determine if soil conditions in the area would make permeable sidewalks feasible or desirable. The inclusion of permeable sidewalks would also substantially increase the cost of the project. Because of all these factors, staff does not recommend pursuing this concept.

- What kind of sidewalk designs are required by the City engineers per industry standards and City design guidelines/requirements? If future work on Traver (up to Moore) is a priority, what might the connecting pathways look like?
  - For example, if you hypothetically put the SRTS grant aside, would the City allow installation of sidewalk on only one side of the street?
  - What's the maximum that a sidewalk can be 'in the road?' How might this impact cost as compared to the current designs?

Staff Response: Based on the City's design standards, staff would pursue the installation of sidewalks on both sides of a street during all preliminary designs of sidewalk gaps. In some cases, the road can be narrowed to create space for a sidewalk as long as minimum lane widths for two-way traffic is maintained. The current design has done this for 85%-90% of Traver Road – maintaining two nine-foot lanes for vehicular traffic. When sidewalks are placed adjacent to curbs, the minimum width should ideally be eight feet in order to accommodate both safety and snow storage considerations.

- It is a correct statement that the funds that may be supplied by the grant from MDOT (via the Michigan Fitness Foundation), have not yet been received, right? We believe this is the case - please confirm for a Traver resident.
- Do the funds for planning the sidewalk project come from the City's engineering budget? Or from other funds as well? If from other funds, please specify which ones and what percentage of the project - for a Traver resident.

Staff Response: The SRTS grant has been conditionally committed to this project. The grant will not be officially approved until funds are obligated by MDOT after final plans are submitted. The way such projects operate, the City never actually receives the grant funds. Rather the project is bid by MDOT, and then uses the grant funding to pay the selected contractor. Funds for the City's share of the project, including all the work performed to date, come from the City's Street, Bridge, and Sidewalk Millage.

- Please define the costs involved at a detailed level\*

The SRTS STEAM Project in Current Form	Description of work (including linear sq ft of sidewalk)	Breakdown of costs	Grant money applied	Totals (linear sq ft price included)
Not Assessable				
Assessable				

Staff Response: Based on the current Estimate with the new design changes, (see attached), the total project cost is estimated at \$1,010,329.72. Assessments to property owners make up 10.8% of the project cost. The cost estimates for the project are not broken down the way in which is requested above.

Please provide a breakdown of the assessable amounts for each of the streets in the plan: Traver, John A Woods, Barton, Starwick, Brookside. If this is possible to do in the above table, great. If not, please list separately.

Staff Response: Individual streets were not estimated. The assessable amount for each street can be calculated on the \$43/ft and the frontage along each parcel on those individual streets. Parcel frontages and estimated costs based on \$43/ft is attached and was provided along with Resolution 2. (The difference between \$109,685.88 and the total in the attached document (\$96,750.00) is based on side frontage only being assessed 50%, in which the City just covers that difference).

- Please define the costs if Brookside was REMOVED from the project

STEAM Project Minus Brookside	Description of work (including sidewalk length)	Breakdown of costs	Grant money applied	Totals (linear sq ft price included)

Not Assessable				
Assessable				

- Please define the costs if John A Woods was REMOVED from the project

<b>STEAM Project Minus John A Woods</b>	Description of work (including sidewalk length)	Breakdown of costs	Grant money applied	Totals (linear sq ft price included)
Not Assessable				
Assessable				

- Please define the hypothetical costs if Traver got sidewalks only on the north side, based on the current plans, but there was no SRTS grant money applied

<b>North side of Traver, sidewalks alone</b>	Description of work (including sidewalk length)	Breakdown of costs	Grant money applied	Totals (linear sq ft price included)
Not Assessable			\$0	
Assessable			\$0	

- Please provide a comparison to the recent SRTS project at Clague.

<b>The SRTS @ Clague Project</b>	Description of work (including sidewalk length)	Breakdown of costs	Grant money applied	Totals (linear sq ft price included)
Not Assessable				

Assessable				
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- What opportunities are there to extend the timeline of payment or reduce the special assessment residents are required to pay?

Staff Response: City Council can extend the timeline for repayment at the reading of Resolution 4.

- Traver Road residents have questions around the overall cost benefit ratio of the project. How does the City measure this? What information can be shared to present the case for how the funds this project requires are equivalent to the value of the completed pathways (“the benefit must be proportionate to the cost”)? This relates to some of their questions around the legality of the project based on interpretation of the Ordinances, Chap 13 - special assessments, 1:286 (i)

Staff Response: The concept of “benefit” in this case is highly subjective and qualitative. The City has not performed any such calculations for the overall project. In terms of the effect and benefit to properties, see the below response.

- How do you measure the impact of this project on residents’ property values? Please provide any calculations or information specific to this project that could present the City’s perspective of the impact on residents’ property values. This again relates to some of the residents’ questions around the legality of the project based on Chap 13, 1:286 (i) in the Ordinances

Staff Response: The improvements made with a special assessment generally increase or maintain the value of the parcels specifically benefited. However, the benefit does not necessarily refer to only an increase in market value, but can also include the added use and enjoyment of the property. In theory, the value of the special assessment on the property will be offset by a reasonably proportionate increase in the value of the property resulting from the improvement. However, it is not necessary for there to be a rigid dollar-for-dollar balance between the special assessment and the amount of the benefit (increased value) to the property. The actual monetary benefit to any individual parcel is difficult to measure. The market will ultimately indicate the contributory value of the new sidewalks to the overall property value, which will be reflected in the property assessment. Changes in market value from year to year are attributable to numerous factors. The Assessor's Office analyzes sales and utilizes statistical measures, which reflect local market conditions, in establishing annual property values at the proper level of assessment and uniformity.