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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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To: Municipal Services Committee
From: Danielle Block, Director of Public Works
Date: September 20, 2023
Re: Staff Report – Resolution #10-R-22 Lawe Street Truck Route Analysis

Department of Public Works and Community and Economic Development staff have reviewed and discussed the various elements included in Resolution #10-R-22 submitted by Alderperson Meltzer, District 2 and Alderperson Del Toro, District 4. A copy of the Resolution is included in the attachments (Exhibit 1).

Lawe Street from Wisconsin Avenue to College Avenue is proposed to be reconstructed in 2026, utility reconstruction in 2025. During the initial scoping discussions of the upcoming Lawe Street reconstruction project, the exploration of removing the Truck Route designation from Lawe Street between College Avenue and Hancock Street occurred. Further discussion on potential alternate routes also occurred. The future design of Lawe Street is being completed by Ayres Associates, an external engineering consultant. This design work and future construction work is being completed under the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) STP-Urban Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) program. Under this program, the project is being funded by the Federal, State and local governments through a State Municipal Agreement. A copy of the agreement is included (Exhibit 2).

Preliminary study of the corridor included a review of existing road and traffic conditions, proposed improvement requirements under WisDOT STP-Urban BIL program, City-wide truck route network, community listening session specific to the truck route, coordination with industrial and commercial carriers, and long-range City comprehensive plans.

Existing Roadway Conditions

- Collector Street and Designated Truck Route
- Roadway Typical Section
 - 60-ft right of way
 - 32-ft total roadway width
 - 11-ft travel lanes
 - 5-ft paved shoulder and curb & gutter
 - 8.5-ft grass terraces
 - 5-ft sidewalks
 - No Parking
 - No Bike Lanes
- Pavement Condition
 - Poor
- Tree Canopy Survey
 - 78 total trees
 - Approximately 47% *may* be removed due to species (Ash), condition (poor) or location (under power lines). Further design details are required to finalize the required tree removals.
 - Street Terrace Tree plantings will be part of the reconstruction project once the pavement and restoration are complete.

Existing Traffic Conditions

- Speed
 - Posted 25 mph.
 - Speed study indicated the 85th percentile speed is 30 mph. Which is below the citywide average for Collectors.
- ADT (Average Daily Traffic): 6,000 - 8,300, depending on the block.
- Truck %'s (≥15,000 GVW)
 - 3.1% Large Trucks or 279/day
- Crash History: 38 reportable crashes 2018-2022
- School Zone: Crossing at North St – Edison Elementary School

Proposed Improvement Requirements

- 32-ft roadway width (no widening)
 - 10-ft travel lanes
 - 6-ft bike lanes
 - 8.5-ft grass terraces
 - 5-ft sidewalks
- Pedestrian Accommodations and Traffic Calming
 - Currently investigating the feasibility of developing pedestrian enhancement features at select intersections. Design details and cost analysis pending.
 - Features could include side street curb extensions, median islands for refuge, etc.
 - Traffic Calming features being considered include modifications to the width of the roadway, signage, lighting, etc. These features do not include vertical installations (i.e., raised intersections or crosswalks) in order to minimize traffic noise from vibrations.
- Placemaking Opportunities
 - Pending funding resources and design within parameters of City Streetscape Guidelines:
 - Stamped and Colored Concrete
 - Decorative Lighting
 - Bus Stop Enhancements

Lawe Street Truck Route Community Listening Session Feedback

- Listening Session was held on the evening of August 2, 2023. Invitations were sent to residents and businesses along the project corridor. The goal of the listening session was to gather feedback specifically related to the truck route. Public Works provided a brief project update and Community Development facilitated an interactive discussion to generate input from residents and businesses along the project corridor.
- A summary of the listening session comments is attached (Exhibit 3).

Industrial and Commercial Carrier Coordination

- Number of Trips and Destination
 - Appvion currently takes approximately 16 round trips per day. 32 total trips per day along Lawe Street.
 - The 32 trips currently take place any time of day as ordering is placed by the distribution center. Trips also occur all days of the week, not just weekdays.
 - Appvion has been utilizing the Kensington Distribution Center for over 30 years, with a similar trucking pattern.
- Additional Mileage and Environmental Impacts
 - To reroute Appvion truck traffic along HWY 441, the mileage would increase by at least 50%. This would create an increase in CO2 emissions of 109 metric tons per year. This is an estimate related to Appvion trucks only. Other industries and trucking traffic would likely have increases as well.
 - See the attached Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator for a description of the CO2 emissions impact (Exhibit 4).

- Alternative Route – HWY 441 Hazards
 - Industry has expressed concerns related to the use of HWY 441 via Northland Avenue. The entrance ramp to the highway is uphill, making it difficult to enter and merge with highway traffic. Further, the reverse is true when exiting HWY 441 the downward incline onto College Avenue is also not ideal for truck traffic.
 - The industry expressed the local truck route being preferred from a driver and traffic safety standpoint based on the geometry of HWY 441.
- Compromise
 - During the month of August, leadership from Appvion approached City staff with a potential compromise. The compromise would restrict industrial and commercial truck traffic from utilizing the Lawe Street corridor from 10pm to 5am daily. This compromise would apply to the entirety of Lawe Street from Wisconsin Avenue south to College Avenue. Offering a positive benefit to those residents located north of Hancock Street that, under the Resolution language, would still have a Truck Route designation.
 - A letter regarding this topic is included (Exhibit 5).

Truck Route Network

- The existing City Truck Route Network map is attached (Exhibit 6).
- Alternative Route Discussion
 - Staff does not recommend a new alternative truck route to replace Lawe Street.
 - Efficiency and Cost – an alternative truck route could disrupt the efficiency of our transportation system, leading to increased travel time, congestion and additional fuel costs.
 - Safety Concerns – the existing truck route network has been designed with safety in mind and appropriate truck turning accommodations.
 - Community Impact – implementation of an alternative route could have a negative impact on a corridor that historically has not experienced measurable trucking volumes.
 - Environmental Considerations – a modification to the truck route will likely have increased emission levels and travel time.
 - Based on these factors, staff does not recommend any alternative truck routes.

City of Appleton Long Range Plan

It is worth noting the discussion of Truck Routes and Transportation planning within the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The City of Appleton has designated truck routes to discourage heavy vehicle traffic on neighborhood streets and other roads where these vehicles may present conflicts. In general, these include state and county trunk highways passing through the city, along with local streets in industrial districts or business parks in the community (COA Comp Plan 2010-2030, pg. 77). Lawe Street is a designated Collector Street. The Future Land Use Map within the Comprehensive Plan indicates most of the area north of Atlantic Street as future multi-family residential, mixed use, commercial, and industrial land use.

Truck Route Summary

The specific authority of a city to regulate heavy traffic is contained within Wis. Stat. 349.17 and City Municipal Code Sec. 19-136. Heavy trucks/commercial vehicles equal to or over 15,000 pounds shall drive on marked truck routes. Heavy trucks are allowed to deviate from the marked truck routes for the purpose of making pickups or deliveries as long as they leave and re-enter the designated route at points closest to their immediate destinations. There are exemptions to the types of trucks (i.e., municipal vehicles, emergency vehicles, buses).

For future consideration by the Committee, based on the analysis completed, staff does not recommend the removal of the Lawe Street Truck Route designation. This north-south connection is a historic and critical truck route to sustain the viability of strong economic anchors at the northern end of the project limits. Appvion alone has 350 employees to operate and manage their Appleton location. This industry has been a stable business in the Appleton community for over 115 years.

Staff does not recommend the designation of an alternative route in lieu of Lawe Street. Richmond Street and HWY 441 are the closest truck routes if Lawe Street is eliminated.

Staff anticipates recommending a compromise to the operational hours of the Lawe Street truck route. Based on feedback from industry, staff anticipates introducing an agreement limiting the hours truck travel along the entirety of Lawe Street from Wisconsin Avenue to College Avenue from 5am to 10pm. Trucks would not be scheduled to travel along Lawe Street from 10pm to 5am. This compromise could be memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding between the industries and the City of Appleton at a subsequent meeting.

10-R-22 Recommendation

The pertinent portion of the Resolution asked "... that when the redesign comes up prior to Lawe Street's reconstruction, staff will explore removing the Truck Route designation from Lawe Street between College Avenue and Hancock Street and finding an alternate route for truck traffic to travel north and south."

This resolution is referred to Council via the Municipal Services Committee. **Based on the fact that Staff has explored the designation and alternate routes and presented its recommendation through this Memo, Staff's recommendation is to approve the resolution at this time.**