



# Sustainability Action Network

Local Solutions for Transition to a Sustainable Economy

P.O. Box 1064, Lawrence KS 66044  
a Kansas not-for-profit organization

Lawrence City Commission  
Lawrence City Hall  
6th & Massachusetts St.  
Lawrence KS 66044

6 December 2010

As representing the Sustainability Action Network, Electric and Human Powered Vehicles Committee, we support expanding the scope of the project for rebuilding Iowa St. to include a ten foot wide bicycle-pedestrian side lane separated to the west of the auto lanes.

We ask that you do this for the following reasons:

- 1) Adding bicycle facilities during road repaving or rebuilding is fully in keeping with City policy.
- 2) It is in keeping with the Complete Streets principles that Lawrence now has under consideration as a result of the 29-30 September 2010 workshops that the City hosted.
- 3) It is in keeping with the new March 2010 Federal Highway Administration policies stating that “Every transportation agency has the responsibility to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycle facilities into transportation systems, . . . to consider walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes, . . . to go beyond minimum design standards and requirements, . . . that walking and bicycling should not be an after thought in roadway design, . . . [and] to anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future improvements”.
- 4) As Highway U.S. 59, Iowa Street is the major north-south corridor of Lawrence with many bicycle-pedestrian destinations on it's entire length – industrial, commercial, recreation, Lawrence School Board, and K.U. - and deserves “complete street” status if any street does.
- 5) At the south end of this project at Irving Hill Rd. overpass, is the highest concentration of K.U. Student residences. And at the north end of this project is the Community Mercantile grocery, with probably the greatest demographic of bicycle riders to any local retail location. This commercial node is currently virtually land locked for bicycle access.
- 6) South of Irving Hill Rd. overpass along Iowa St., there already exists a ten foot wide bicycle-pedestrian side lane west of the auto lanes, and it connects with the bicycle-pedestrian side lane all along Clinton Parkway.
- 7) South of Clinton Parkway, Iowa St. has an oversized 21 foot wide center turn lane which could later be narrowed to fit a new bicycle-pedestrian side lane west of the auto lanes.
- 8) The scope of this project has already been changed from the original Yale-to-15th St. to the current Harvard-to-Irving Hill Rd. extent The scope has also been expanded exclusively for more auto considerations such as three right-turn lanes and east-leg and west-leg reconstruction of 15th St. (see [Iowa St. scope of project 27Apr10.pdf](#)). Likewise, the budget has been expanded from the original \$4.5 million to \$5.6 million construction costs.

- 9) If the scope of the project does not now accommodate a bicycle-pedestrian side lane, that opportunity will be lost forever. Of all of Iowa St., the right-of-way here is the narrowest, and for reasons more than just bicycles and pedestrians, it would be wise to purchase more R.O.W. before development pressure prohibits it or makes it too expensive. And now is the time to physically widen the topography south of Terrace Rd., because you will not have another opportunity until 2050 at the end of this new pavement's 40 year life expectancy.
- 10) As Federal policy states, “. . . anticipate likely future demand . . . and do not preclude the provision of future improvements”. And as one of our wise former M.P.O. Commissioners said, “In transportation planning, never close out your options”.

When the Sustainability Action Network met twice with the Public Works director and the City Engineer, we were told that the concept of a bicycle-pedestrian side lane was a “good idea, but reality came down to priorities and allocation of resources, and they had to stay within the budget”. And yet they can always find justification to expand the budget numbers for auto needs, while any expansion for bicycle needs is considered a red flag.

We also see the budget numbers shifting, both for available revenues and planned expenses. The original 27 April 2010 construction cost without a center turn lane was \$4.5 million, but now the stated construction cost with center turn lane is \$4.5 million. Public Works told us when we met that the additional cost for a bicycle-pedestrian side lane would be \$500,000 (now listed as \$504,000), but that is inflated by adding in the cost of moving Westar overhead electric poles. Westar will pay for that moving, estimated at one half the \$155,000 total that Public Works reports as a City cost for moving fiber-optic and power poles. And the original 27 April budget allocated \$150,000 for purchase of right-of-way, but Public Works chose to delete that and build only what can fit in the existing R.O.W. In fact, Public Works told us that R.O.W. cost for adding a bicycle-pedestrian side lane would be \$20,000-\$60,000.

While construction costs are always subject to change, by the same token, the City also has much discretion in accessing revenue sources. On 27 April 2010, Public Works recommended the City fund the project with revenues of \$3 million from the Surface Transportation Program, \$1 million from sales tax, \$1.25 million from general obligation bonds, and \$0.8 million from Federal Aid Safety Funds. Today the sales tax amount is lowered to \$1 million, and the Safety Funds amount is raised to \$1 million. According to the sales tax figures (see [2010 Sales Tax Spending Plan](#)), there are additional annual tax revenues of \$12,891,000. If the Commission so chooses, it can tap those sales tax funds for the needed \$426,500 true amount to add the bicycle-pedestrian side lane. The Commission also has the option of requesting funding participation by Douglas County, but has not yet exercised this option.

We remind the Commission that there is a preponderance of reasons to build a bicycle-pedestrian side lane along Iowa St. Unfortunately, the original proposal overlooked its inclusion, contrary to local and Federal policy, giving 100% funding to autos at the exclusion of bicycles. But it is not too late for the Commission to commit to a mere 7.1% of total budget to include bicycle facilities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Almon