



**DRAFT**

Approved: October 10, 2022

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**CITY OF ARDEN HILLS, MINNESOTA  
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022  
IMMEDIATELY FOLOWING REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
ARDEN HILLS CITY HALL**

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**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Mayor Grant called to order the City Council Work Session at 7:35 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor David Grant, Councilmembers Brenda Holden, Fran Holmes, Steve Scott, and David Radziej

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** City Administrator Dave Perrault; Public Works Director/City Engineer David Swearingen; Assistant to the City Administrator/City Clerk Julie Hanson; Brian Johnson, SRF Consultants; and Joey Lundquist, Ramsey County

**1. AGENDA ITEMS**

**A. Roundabout Staging Discussion**

**Brian Johnson, SRF Consultants, and Joey Lundquist, Ramsey County,** introduced themselves to the City Council and said they were in attendance to provide an update regarding the roundabout project at County Road E and Snelling Avenue.

**Mayor Grant** stated that the City is pursuing this project because of capacity which will improve safety, especially during the PM hours, but it is not strictly because of safety. He said capacity is the driver, not safety.

**Ms. Lundquist** concurred that there are no safety issue concerns currently at this intersection.

**Mr. Johnson** stated they are on track to finish the project's plans by end of year and could go out for bids in early 2023, with construction starting in the spring of 2023.

**Councilmember Holden** stated that every time Ramsey County has a construction project in Arden Hills, there are issues. She said that this project cannot be postponed.

**The Council** encouraged **Mr. Johnson** and **Ms. Lundquist** to do all they can to ensure the various private utility companies and stakeholders have addressed potential issues so that the project can stay on track and that there are no surprises.

A discussion ensued regarding project coordination and the importance of communication between SRF, Ramsey County, the private utility companies, contractors, and City staff.

**Councilmember Holden** requested a timeline and asked if such could be required as part of the bidding process.

**Mr. Johnson** stated that the contractor works with the utility companies so it can be tricky, but he and **Ms. Lundquist** said they should be able to get a time commitment for this project.

**Mr. Johnson** said there is an open house scheduled for Thursday, October 6 in which information regarding what to expect for this project will be discussed.

**Councilmembers Holden and Scott** said most people that live in the project area are not in favor of this project.

**Councilmember Holmes** stated that most people do not think this intersection is a problem. She said they do not see this as a capacity issue, there are not many cars there and that traffic moves through the intersection fine. Some consider this project a waste of money.

A short discussion ensued about the fact that there are various utilities that will impact this project.

**Mr. Johnson** indicated the project footprint has been identified and preliminary right-of-way staking has been performed as temporary easements will be necessary. He indicated the Ramsey County's right-of-way agents have met with each property owner that abuts the project.

**Ms. Lundquist** stated that there will be one driveway closure at the Lindey's property, but they are working with them for a site redesign.

**Mr. Johnson** said Lindey's is supportive of the project and the goal is to ensure the business will continue to thrive during construction.

**Councilmember Holden** asked about crosswalks at this location.

A discussion ensued regarding how the crosswalks would function in a roundabout setting.

**Mr. Johnson** indicated that they had met with the property owner located straight across from Lindey's and that the owner is supportive. He said they have received a few calls from residents about trail connections and crosswalks and the feedback and been mostly positive.

**Mr. Johnson** referred to the project layout as provided in the Council packet. He talked about the change that included the sidewalk extension down Lake Johanna Blvd which will connect back to the shoulder and eventually connect to the trail.

A discussion ensued regarding additional requests that were brought up by residents such as crosswalks, connections and striping, and ADA requirements.

**Mayor Grant** asked for confirmation of the City's costs for this project at \$800,000.

**Ms. Lundquist** agreed with that figure and stated the project's total cost will be somewhere around 1.2 to 1.5 million.

**Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen** commented that that estimate does not include the City's utility improvements.

**Mr. Johnson** stated that the cost estimate needs to be updated as it does not reflect current bid prices, and there is a chance it could increase unless the bidding climate changes.

**Councilmember Holden** asked if the County ever turns a bid down if it is not reasonable.

**Ms. Lundquist** indicated that yes, the County has turned down a bid in the past and then rebid later in the year.

A discussion ensued regarding the breakdown of the associated costs for this project.

A discussion ensued regarding the watermain and associated connections in this area.

**Mr. Johnson** stated the costs could also increase based on how traffic is managed during construction. He said there are three options: close the intersection completely so that no traffic is going through the intersection, which is not practical; build the project under full traffic, which is difficult due to the small footprint; or divert traffic. He said traffic can be diverted by closing lanes or even constructing a bypass, which would be very impactful to this area.

**Mayor Grant** stated that options for diverting traffic would be additional costs above the estimate provided earlier.

**Mr. Johnson** agreed and stated that for example, a bypass could cost an additional \$100,000 versus just dealing with closures.

**Councilmember Holden** asked how long the project will take if the intersection is closed the entire time to all traffic besides local traffic.

**Mr. Johnson** estimated that if most traffic is diverted, it could take 12 weeks (3 months), best case scenario.

**Ms. Lundquist** said that if a bypass is constructed, that would add an additional 2 months, for a total of 5 months to complete the project and would add an additional \$100,000 more in costs.

**Councilmember Radziej** stated he liked the idea of a bypass to keep the traffic moving.

A discussion ensued regarding the various options for handling traffic as presented in the City Council's packet.

**City Administrator Perrault** questioned the additional projects that Ramsey County has scheduled for next year that could impact this project, such as the work on Snelling Avenue from County Road E to Highway 96.

**Ms. Lundquist** said they can coordinate the two projects and work together regarding closures.

**Mr. Johnson** stated that the various stages of constructing the roundabout and opening lanes throughout the process would help with this issue.

A short discussion ensued regarding the project on Snelling Avenue to Highway 96. It was noted this is set to be a mill and overlay project and should not take long to complete.

**Councilmember Holden** stated she would rather spend the \$100,000 if it means the project can be completed more quickly.

**Mayor Grant** requested clarification on how additional costs would be split.

**Ms. Lundquist** indicated the additional costs would be shared and split in the same manner.

A discussion ensued regarding option two, which is constructing a partial bypass, and how the intersection would function over the course of the project's construction should a bypass be built.

A discussion ensued regarding option three, which includes temporary stages of closures.

**Ms. Lundquist** stated that right-of-way work and temporary easements would be addressed in January of 2023 and the bidding process takes about a month. She said a contractor could be on board by the end of March.

A short discussion ensued about the fact that some utility work can be performed before construction is fully underway, but some must wait until that time.

**Ms. Lundquist** said they would like this project to be completed before school starts in the fall and that since she writes the contracts, she can include dates for the various stages of completion.

The Council indicated that construction hours can be extended to allow additional working hours above what is allowed in ordinance.

**Mayor Grant** asked about MSA dollars for this project.

A discussion ensued about how MSA funding functions in general.

A discussion ensued about ARPA funding and other projects in general.

**Mayor Grant** reiterated that capacity at the intersection is an issue. He asked if the intersection can accommodate the traffic levels during the PM hours.

**Mr. Johnson** said the traffic study shows this intersection meets warrants for a traffic signal but that a roundabout would be more effective. A roundabout would have more capacity.

**Mayor Grant** asked that they quantify how much more capacity the city is gaining by installing a roundabout. He asked what percentage is the City buying.

**Mr. Johnson** said he did not have this figure off the top of his head but would speak with their traffic folks and provide a follow-up report.

**City Administrator Perrault** asked about the grading for this location.

A discussion ensued about the ICE report and various traffic impacts in the area during prior construction projects in the area.

**Councilmember Scott** asked how difficult it would be if the City would want to expand the roundabout to a double lane 20 to 30 years later.

**Mr. Johnson** said that a single lane roundabout has a lot of capacity and he did not know that this area would ever need a double lane, since the area is so built up already.

**Ms. Lundquist** stated there are other cities that had double lane roundabouts that have converted back to a single lane because they work better.

**Councilmember Holmes** asked if Ramsey County said that if the City does not pursue a roundabout now, it would never get one.

**Ms. Lundquist** confirmed that it could be quite a number of years before the County would come back to any kind of improvements at this intersection.

**Councilmember Holmes** stated these are the two reasons to do this project now – to use the available MSA funds and if the City does not do this now, it will not get done.

**Mayor Grant** said that and the watermain can be addressed at this time.

**Mayor Grant** asked **Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen** if the watermain in this area would need to be addressed at some point, regardless. He also used the example of when the TCAAP project moves forward.

**Public Works Director/City Engineer Swearingen** stated yes, this section of watermain would need to be addressed at some point whether a stop light or roundabout project takes place at this location, or when the TCAAP project moves forward. He agreed that as it currently stands today, this section of watermain is redundant.

**Mayor Grant** stated the City would like to move forward with option 2.

A short discussion ensued regarding the October 6<sup>th</sup> open house and public engagement.

## 2. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND STAFF UPDATES

None.

**ADJOURN**

Mayor Grant adjourned the Special City Council Work Session at 9:00 p.m.

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Julie Hanson  
City Clerk

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David Grant  
Mayor