THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: September 14, 2021

Subject: NCDOT Sidewalk Construction & Maintenance Agreement for Sidewalk Improvements to the Amboy Road Bridge

Staff Resource(s): Ken Putnam, PE, Transportation Department Director

Action Requested:

- Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with the N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to widen the sidewalk on the north side of the Amboy Road Bridge and improve the sidewalk connections to the RADTIP project and French Broad River Park; and associated budget amendment in the amount of $77,750 in the Capital Projects Fund utilizing Sidewalk Fee-In-Lieu revenue to provide the City's cost share of the sidewalk project.

Background:

- NCDOT and City staff meet on a monthly basis to discuss pedestrian and bicycle safety issues within the jurisdiction of the City.
- Following the completion of the City's RADTIP project, pedestrian and bicycle activity crossing the Amboy Road bridge has increased significantly, with many users walking and biking between RADTIP and French Broad River Park. The existing bridge has a very narrow sidewalk (approximately 30-36 inches wide), which does not safely serve the increased use and is not even wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or stroller safely. The Multimodal Transportation Commission discussed the issue in late 2020 and requested the City and NCDOT study potential solutions.
- The City and NCDOT conducted traffic counts collected on Saturday, March 20, 2021 during a 13-hour time period from 8:00 am until 9:00 pm and recorded the following activity on the bridge:
    1. Cars = 9,468
    2. Trucks = 50
    3. Pedestrians = 282
    4. Bicycles = 338
- While NCDOT has programmed a project to improve Amboy Road, including replacing the bridge, this project is not scheduled until FY 2029.Since the bridge replacement project is not scheduled until 2029 , NCDOT and City staff have worked to develop an interim solution to address existing safety concerns.
- The proposed project will narrow the vehicle travel lanes on the bridge to provide space for a widened sidewalk, as well as replace the pedestrian safety rail on the bridge.
- NCDOT has analyzed truck turning needs and determined that the vehicle lanes on the bridge can be narrowed with no impacts to truck traffic.
- The narrowing of the lanes will provide the needed space for the expanded sidewalk.
- The total cost of the project is $500,050.
- The City's cost share is $77,750 and will go toward the sidewalk connections between the bridge and the existing sidewalks on either side.
- NCDOT will design and construct the project and the City will be responsible for maintenance and liability for the sidewalk that is not located on the bridge.
- The City will also be responsible for routine sweeping, debris removal, and snow/ice removal for the sidewalk located on the bridge.
- Approximately 2 years ago, MSD met with the City to conceptually discuss a potential project associated with their need to install a new large sewer line across the river.

- Their concept involved constructing a pedestrian bridge (with their sewer line attached to the underside) from the north end of French Broad River Park across the river, to a yet-to-be-determined landing point on Riverside Drive, between ⅓ and ½ mile north of Amboy Road bridge.
- Since that initial meeting, the City has not been involved in any further discussions.
- It is unlikely that this project will be constructed within the next several years.
- Additionally, the project would not replace the need for immediate pedestrian safety improvements to Amboy Road bridge and would not conveniently serve those wishing to travel from Meadow Road to Amboy Road from the south.

Council Goal(s):
- Transportation and Accessibility

Committee(s):
- The Multimodal Transportation Commission has discussed the project and provided support at their March 24 2021 meeting.

Pro(s):
- Increases the inventory of completed sidewalk sections.
- NCDOT and the City are partnering on the subject project.
- Enhances pedestrian flow and safety on the Amboy Road Bridge.
- Provides a needed connection to nearby park facilities and the RADTIP project.

Con(s):
- The City is responsible for all maintenance activities for the sidewalk not located on the bridge.
- The City is responsible for routine sweeping, debris removal, and snow/ice removal for the sidewalk located on the bridge.

Fiscal Impact:
- The City's cost share is $77,750 and the funds will come from Sidewalk Fee-In-Lieu revenue that has already been collected. General Funds are not being used for this project.
- Future maintenance activities would be addressed with the Public Works Department's annual operating budget along with other existing sidewalk needs.

Suggested Motions:
- Motion authorizing the City Manager to execute an agreement with the NCDOT) to widen the sidewalk on the north side of the Amboy Road Bridge and improve the sidewalk connections to the RADTIP project and French Broad River Park; and associated budget amendment in the amount of $77,750 in the Capital Projects Fund utilizing Sidewalk Fee-In-Lieu revenue to provide the City's cost share of the sidewalk project.

Attachment(s):
- Resolution
- Budget Ordinance
- Map Section
- MSD Sidewalk Location Map

RESOLUTION NO. 21-_____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE FOR BOTH PARTIES TO PARTNER IN WIDENING THE EXISTING SIDEWALK ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE AMBOY ROAD BRIDGE AND IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO THE RADTIP PROJECT AND FRENCH BROAD RIVER PARK.

WHEREAS, the NCDOT and the City have identified a pedestrian safety issue along SR 3556 (Amboy Road) at Bridge # 321; and

WHEREAS, the NCDOT has developed plans to widen the existing sidewalk along the north side of SR 3556 (Amboy Road) from Lyman Street to Riverview Drive; and

WHEREAS, the NCDOT and the City will partner to fund the project; and

WHEREAS, the NCDOT will construct the widened sidewalk; and

WHEREAS, according to NCDOT policy, it is the responsibility of a local government to maintain pedestrian facilities within the public right-of-way for state-maintained streets, except for the sidewalk that will be located on Bridge # 321;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to execute an agreement with the N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to widen the existing sidewalk on Amboy Road Bridge and improve the sidewalk connections to the RADTIP Project and French Broad River Park.

Read, approved and adopted this the 14th day of September, 2021.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney

ORDINANCE NO. _____

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

That the City of Asheville Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget Ordinance be amended to provide an appropriation of $77,750 to provide the City's cost share of the sidewalk project as follows:

GENERAL CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND (K1001)

Revenues:

Sidewalk Fee In Lieu	$77,750

Appropriations:

Contracted Services	$77,750

That this ordinance shall be in full force and effect upon the date of final passage.

Read, approved and adopted this 14th day of September, 2021.

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City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney