Written by Carol Pomeday
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Officials exploring median strip, narrower traffic lanes, multi-use trail

Envision Belgium's Main Street with a median filled with shrubs and flowers, narrower traffic lanes with sidewalks on the south side and a tree-lined hiking and biking trail on the north side.

Perhaps sidewalks and 4-foot-wide bicycle lanes parallel with driving lanes are more appealing?

Those are among the changes being explored by Village of Belgium officials as they plan for the reconstruction of Main Street in 2013.

The work will be done in conjunction with the Ozaukee County Highway Department's redesign of the intersection at Highways D and LL. That will probably be done in 2012, with the design finalized next year.

The board intends to seek input from a variety of people, especially those who live or work on Main Street, to see what they want the village's primary road to look like.

Public Works Director Dan Birenbaum distributed copies of four preliminary designs by Village Engineer Matt Greeley of McMahon Associates to the Plan Commission and Streets and Electric Committee. The designs did not include cost estimates.

"I would like to get the Chamber (of Commerce) involved, but I wanted to present this to you first," Village President Kevin Kowalkowski said.

"I know 2013 seems like way out there, but now is the time to do our planning. I would like to get the engineering in place, so when this (the intersection) comes up, we're ready."

Kowalkowski prefers the median strip with a sidewalk on one side and a multi-use trail on the other side.

"Personally, I think it looks classy. We could put the light poles in the center and it would look nice," Kowalkowski said. "What I like is the trail is eligible for funding to offset the cost."

Plan Commission member Ron Weyker also preferred that plan, but said residents and businesses must be involved before any decisions are made.

The reconstruction would be within the existing 66-foot street width and right-of-way so additional land is not needed, Birenbaum said.

All four plans call for reducing the width of travel lanes to 12 feet to slow down traffic and make it easier for pedestrians to cross. If a trail is added, it would be about 10 feet wide, Birenbaum said.

Two plans called for parking on only one side of the street, something commission member

Rosemary Bruss did not like.

“For resale, I would rather have parking on both sides of the street. I would rather have both sides be more equal,” she said.

“If you’re having company, you don’t want them to have to park on the other side of the street. The same with businesses.”

Birenbaum suggested the Village Board choose two options, get all the costs involved and then get public input.

The electrical lines will be buried, he said.

Main Street will be reconstructed from Highway LL to the west village limits. Sewer and stormwater lines will be televised to determine if lines must be replaced.

Both public and private laterals, with permission of owners, will be televised to determine if laterals need to be replaced to prevent infiltration of rainwater into the sewer system, Birenbaum said.