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Wednesday, 22 June 2011 18:31

County, village will address Hwy. LL crossing with Main Street project

A SEMI TRACTOR negotiated a left turn from Highway D onto Highway LL in Belgium on Monday. Officials are considering options for reconfiguring the intersection, which was the site of a fatal accident in May. *Photo by Sam Arendt*Belgium Village President Richard Howells told the Village Board last week he's been assured by Ozaukee County officials that the reconfiguration of the hihgway D and LL intersection, the site of a recent fatal accident, is getting careful deliberation.

Larry Rassel, 62, of Lake Church died May 30 following surgery to amputate his leg above the knee. His leg was severed when his motorcycle was struck by a Chevrolet Trailblazer that stopped for the stop sign on Highway LL, but then proceeded into the intersection striking Rassel's motorcycle, which was eastbound on Highway D.

Village officials had been calling for a change in the intersection for years, saying there are numerous near misses that are never reported.

"After meeting with county officials, I have been assured that the intersection has a very high priority with the county," Howells told the board.

He said the safety of the crossing has come under question, noting at least one previous fatality occurred at the site.

Reconfiguration of the intersection is likely to be done next year in the first phase of the Main Street reconstruction,
Howells said.

However, he said, the most obvious solution — a four-way stop — has no support from Highway Commissioner Bob Dreblow or other county officials.

"I was told a four-way stop is simply not going to happen there," Howells said.

Currently, traffic on Highway LL must stop at the intersection, yielding to traffic on Highway D, which is also Main Street.

Howells said a preliminary draft of the improved intersection recommends stop signs on Highway LL be mounted on posts that extend over the roadway and possibly illuminated by LED lights.

The plan also includes bicycle lanes in all four directions, elimination of two of the three traffic islands and cutting the curb back eight feet at turn lanes.

The intersection design is a work in progress, but several options have been ruled out, Howells said.

The county will not consider install a roundabout or rumble strips, he said.

“The county people said everywhere rumble strips are installed, people think they are too noisy,” Howells said.

Stoplights are also not a possibility at this time.

“The county said there is not nearly the volume of traffic needed at that intersection to justify traffic lights,” Howells said.

While the intersection will be reconfigured next year, he said, the majority of the Main Street reconstruction has been scheduled for 2013 by the county.