

To avoid strings attached to DOT funding, village may pass up state funding for Fredonia Avenue

Using Wisconsin Department of Transportation money to help pay for an estimated \$2 million reconstruction of Fredonia Avenue may have sounded like a good idea at one point, but Village of Fredonia officials are growing increasingly leery of the strings attached to the state funding.

The right-of-way along the village's main street would have to be wider to accommodate bike lanes, and that could come at the cost of private property along the simple two-lane road lined with homes and businesses, Kristine Anderson of Ayres Associates told the Village Board last week.

"You may very well end up having to buy or relocate properties, depending on where that (property) line falls in relation to a front porch, someone's business, things like that," she said.

Village trustees said there are at least a handful of properties that would be significantly impacted by a wider right-of-way.

"I would not agree to condemn one home for any reason," said Village President Chuck Lopicola.

The board is considering two funding options for the project, both of which involve the village paying for some of the road work.

The village could apply for money from the state's County Highway Improvement Program, (CHIP) which is administered by Ozaukee County.

Or the village and the county could decide to pay for the project without state money. The county is involved in the project because Fredonia Avenue is part of County Highway W.

Anderson told the trustees about a variety of factors involved with each option, including the cost, time frame and impact on residents.

In order to receive CHIP funding, the village would have to follow design guidelines set by the state, Anderson said, which include submitting design reviews throughout the construction process.

"The municipally funded project wouldn't need quite so many of the design steps because we'd be working with you," Anderson said, adding Ayres would still hold the public information meetings that the DOT would have required.

Control over design driving debate

Written by SARAH McCRAW
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A host of reports would be required by the state.

“From a design standpoint, we’re probably looking at \$240,000 for all the surveys the DOT would need,” Anderson said.

Those reports would not be needed if the county and the village decided to pay for the project, she noted.

“The reporting tends to cost nearly as much as the engineering when you get DOT funding,” Anderson said.

DOT required design could be further complicated by the need to survey properties in preparation for a wider right of way, Anderson said.

Trustee Mark Edbauer Sr. said, “If you look at the DOT route, there’s potentially hidden costs there. The hidden costs to me are just not worth it.”

The county is also leery of using state money for the project, said Trustee Don Dohrwardt, who is also a County Supervisor.

“The county has pretty much already gotten to the point where they say, ‘We should really do this with local funding,’” Dohrwardt said.

“The project was originally intended to be done with the state funding,” he said. “The huge undertaking of all the reports and buying property and condemning houses and getting an extra 10 to 12 feet and curb-to-curb work, our 10% of the huge project is going to cost more than our share with the county.”

Anderson said it could take the village up to five years to begin roadwork.

Lapicola said construction crews could break ground as soon as next spring if the village and the county fund the work.

“We can’t wait another two years. That road is flying apart. It’s a mess,” Lapicola said.