

WELCOME TO THE VAN DORN STREET, 33RD TO 48TH STREET,
STREET REHABILITATION PROJECT PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

December 13, 2012; 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Gere Library (56th and Normal)

We are here to present two proposals for rehabilitating Van Dorn Street between 33rd and 48th Street. Public Works is committed to working in partnership with the neighborhoods and the community on plans for our city streets. Changes to our city streets come with choices that can impact trees, the space between traffic and homes, the degree of safety for drivers, and many other considerations. We want to discuss these choices with you and determine what makes the most sense for you and for your fellow citizens.

The City's comprehensive plan calls for a balance between the need to move traffic more safely and efficiently within the city, and the impact of street widening on adjacent property owners and the neighborhood. This is accomplished with a "center turn lane strategy."

The idea behind a common center turn lane is to minimize the impact that right and left turns have on traffic flow. Most of you have been behind a car turning left on a two lane road and understand how much slower you proceed as a result. By having a center turn lane, we reduce time cars spend slowing or waiting for turns and the number and severity of rear end collisions. The comprehensive plan goal is to introduce this strategy on all arterial streets in the City that have significant stretches running through neighborhoods. That's why we are here tonight.

Currently Van Dorn has two lanes from 33rd to 37th Street, and three lanes from 37th to 48th Street. This project proposes to have three lanes of traffic all the way from 33rd to 48th Street which would require widening because the existing lane widths do not meet requirements set by the Nebraska Board of Public Roads Classifications & Standards. The widening of the roadway is accomplished by reducing the area between the existing curb and sidewalk. Van Dorn Street is currently 26-feet wide from 33rd to 37th Street, and 31-feet wide from 37th to 48th Street. Adding and maintaining the existing common center lane will require widening to either 32-feet or 35-feet.

Tonight, we will present to you two options for accomplishing the center turn lane strategy. As we mentioned at the beginning, each option comes with advantages and disadvantages that you should carefully consider as we make this decision.

Option 32 is our current assumption for the street as most neighborhoods are concerned about street widening. The lanes would be 10 feet wide rather than the 11 foot width that is the minimum standard. The option may save some of the trees between the sidewalk and the curb but that couldn't be determined until the project is under construction. It will also keep traffic farther away from the houses on each side of the street. Those are the advantages.

There are disadvantages to consider as well. First, it is not up to the City to implement 10 foot lanes. We have to ask the Board of Public Roads Classifications & Standards for a relaxation of the 11 foot lane minimum width. The request may lead to delay in starting the project as we will have to wait for the Board to rule, making it more of a challenge to get work started in 2013. If the Board says "no" we have to use the 11 foot minimum standard.

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We cannot guarantee that we can save the trees along the route as tree root systems may interfere. We will not know for certain which trees will face this problem until the curb has been excavated.

There is also a safety factor. 10 foot lanes push cars closer together, decreasing driver margin for error to prevent collisions.

Current Examples of 32' wide roads include:

- S. 13th Street, High Street to South Street
- S. 33rd Street, South Street to Sheridan Boulevard
- S. 40th Street, "A" Street to "O" Street
- S. 48th Street, "O" Street to Normal Boulevard

Option 35 would change our assumption to 11 foot lanes. The wider lanes allow for additional safety and capacity as the traveling public has more room to maneuver for turns and creates greater separation between vehicles. The 11 foot would likely allow for faster action in completing the street work, as the Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards would not have to consider a relaxation of minimum design standards. The downsides are that we will be less likely to save as many of the trees along the street, and people living along the route will have cars and the street curbs closer to their homes and some believe that property values are impacted when streets are widened.

Current Examples of 35' wide roads include:

- Pioneers Blvd., 33rd to 56th Street
- South 56th Street, South to "A" Street
- South 40th Street, Normal Boulevard to Sheridan Boulevard
- South 48th Street, Calvert to Pioneers
- Adams Street, North 57th Street to 62nd Street
- Adams Street, North 66th Street to North 70th Street

For both options, we can try to reduce the impact on trees by "wiggling" or shifting the road within the right-of-way. While this is a time consuming process, we understand that neighborhoods value their trees and want us to preserve them as best we can. We will also work with the Parks and Recreation Department on suitable locations for replacement street trees.

We are here to answer your questions and provide greater detail about the differences under each option. We have comment cards here for you to fill out giving us your opinions on these options. They will assist us in the decision making process with the Mayor's office.

For more information please contact the following, or visit the City website at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: projects):

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