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MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JOSHUA TETZLAFF, CITY ADMINISTRATOR
SUBJECT: 2025 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - SIDEWALKS
DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2024

At a meeting on 9/3, citizens submitted a petition to the City Council, asking that a sidewalk not be placed on Lincoln Avenue N. I have attached a copy of the petition, as well as a map showing the stated address of each signer of the petition. Some of the reasons stated during the public hearing for not wanting a sidewalk along Lincoln Avenue N have been that there have not been any safety issues with the current street cross section, there is not data supporting adding sidewalks, not all streets should necessarily have sidewalks, residents do not want to have to remove snow or maintain sidewalks, residents are fine walking in the street, and that the street will be too narrow.

At that meeting, the City Council moved forward with designing the 2025 project with sidewalks included on each street.

At the last City Council meeting (10/21), a resident that lived on Lincoln Avenue N came to discuss sidewalks on Lincoln Avenue with the City Council, expressing their belief that sidewalks were not needed. It was asked of staff that the sidewalk discussion be brought back for discussion.

The design of the 2025 Infrastructure Project has proceeded since September with the inclusion of sidewalks in the project, since that is how the project was approved. I would recommend leaving the sidewalk as part of the project. I understand that this a change for the neighborhood, with many residents living on Lincoln Avenue N and the surrounding streets for a long time without sidewalks. I understand that there have not been any accidents. The neighborhood has been fortunate. But I also don't believe the City should wait for an accident to take place to try to address a safety issue when it could have taken could have done something now.

It is true. Not every person enjoys living in a neighborhood with sidewalks. But, in my opinion, living in a City, especially one that is growing and looking towards responsible growth in the future, includes outfitting every street in a manner that is provides a safe way of using the street, whether in a vehicle or walking. Recently, staff spoke with staff from the School District regarding Safe Routes to School, and it was mentioned that the City's continued building out of the sidewalk network has been vital in allowing the school district to change bus routes and to obtain Safe Routes to School grants. Anecdotally, it was mentioned that sidewalks have made bus pick-ups and drop-off much safer. On streets that have sidewalks, kids tend to stand on the sidewalk while they wait for the bus. On streets without sidewalks, many kids stand in the street waiting for the bus.

The City has done well at trying to make the entire town walkable over the last 20 years. I would recommend it continue to buildout the sidewalk network as Infrastructure projects continue.

Recommendation

Staff recommends leaving all the planned sidewalks in the 2025 Infrastructure Project.