

Arlington Citizen-Journal

Plus digital subscription sign-in

Search

Web Search powered by YAHOO! SEARCH

News Obituaries Sports Cars Homes Classifieds Jobs Find and Save

Arlington C-J > News

NEWS

RSS Mobile Newsletters MY YAHOO!

Connect with us on Twitter

Other favorites:

Cowboys Rangers Mavs Stars TCU UT A&M Tech OU UTA UNT SMU



Second phase of study to help determine how narrowing Abram Street could benefit downtown

Posted Tuesday, Sep. 10, 2013 0 comments Print Reprints Share



CLICK to shop with

home decor | fashion | beauty | events | gifts | home decor | fashion | beauty | events | gifts | gourmet & more | fashion | beauty | events | gifts | gourmet & more

ACCENTS

ARTICLE PHOTOS (4) COMMENTS

BY SUSAN SCHROCK
sschrock@star-telegram.com

Wider sidewalks and additional landscaping are among amenities city leaders say could be added downtown by removing the continuous center turn lane to narrow Abram Street.



View photos

The City Council is expected to vote next month on a contract for a second phase of study to determine what benefits could be gained by reducing Abram Street from five lanes to four lanes.

Council members said last week that they would like a consultant to illustrate and gather public input on two possibilities for reducing Abram Street to four lanes. One is between Cooper and Collins streets; the other is a shorter section between West Street and the Tarrant County Subcourthouse.

That information will help the council decide the future of the downtown section of Abram when it is rebuilt, which could be as soon as 2015.

Last fall, the council approved \$55,000 for the first part of a study on how downtown traffic could be affected if Abram Street between Cooper and Collins streets were reduced to four, three or even two lanes. Each lane reduction would free up 10 feet of space to add features such as wider sidewalks, more landscaping and streetlights, and even parking on the north and south sides of the street, officials have said.

A pedestrian-friendly downtown is one of the goals adopted in 2004 as part of a vision for the heart of the city. Additions since that time include numerous restaurants, the Levitt Pavilion and student housing for the University of Texas at Arlington.

"We hear from property owners that they want to see wider sidewalks, they want to see streetscaping and the possibility of public art. They really hope Abram can be a gateway street for downtown," said Tony Rutigliano, president of Downtown Arlington Management Corp. "That means enhancing the [aesthetics](#), crosswalks and intersection improvements. It's really about creating an environment that is friendly to pedestrians."

At the Sept. 3 meeting, most council members said they did not want Abram to be reduced to anything less than four lanes.

"It's not just an incidental road. I've been worried for a while — are we going to add to that congestion?" said Mayor Robert Cluck, adding that Abram Street is already "wall-to-wall cars" during peak morning and afternoon [travel](#) times.

"I know beautification is important. But I suspect to the average citizen the most important thing is to get out of town or to get into town."

Some residents and business owners have previously voiced concerns about reducing the number of lanes, saying it would create more congestion on Abram Street and drive customers away from downtown. Reducing Abram to four lanes is expected to add about one minute to motorists' [travel](#) time between Cooper and Collins streets, according to consultants.

After discussion last week, council member Robert Rivera said he opposed reducing Abram Street traffic lanes.

"In the several months we have been taking a look at this ... I'm convinced the existing five-lane section is the way I want to go," Rivera said. "Being able to move the traffic, the significant amount that flows through daily, that is what I would like to see us move on with."

Jill House, assistant director of public works, told council members that leaving Abram as five lanes would not allow for the addition of pedestrian amenities and that reducing it to two lanes would significantly affect motorists' [travel](#) time and create public safety concerns.

"If there were a wreck, getting emergency vehicles through the corridor would be a challenge," House said.

Between 24,000 and 27,000 vehicles use the street each day, but consultants expect an increase of 8,000 to 11,000 vehicles by 2030. Reducing Abram to four lanes is expected to add about one minute to

MOST POPULAR

- Face it, Longhorns: It's all about Johnny Manziel
- Weatherford man injured in fight at Ballpark in Arlington sues Rangers, beer vendor
- Fired Fort Worth firefighter charged with sexually assaulting child
- Cowboys release Jay Ratliff, ending months of rancor over injury
- TCU notes: Patters on not ready to put Boykin's backup on the field

motorists' [travel](#) time between Cooper and Collins streets and about 45 seconds if narrowed only between West Street and the subcourthouse, according to consultants.

"I don't see that as a huge impediment to traffic flow, personally," said council member Robert Shepard, adding that those two options seem to impact traffic the least.

Council members said public feedback will help with their decision. Two or three public meetings are expected to be held during the second phase of study.

"Do we want it just to be a thoroughfare or do we deliberately want to slow traffic for an eatery with a sidewalk cafe or make it more walkable?" council member Sheri Capehart said. "That is really the overriding question: What do we want Abram Street to function as? That will play hugely in which of these options we need to go with. I don't have that answer."

Arlington voters approved nearly \$22 million in the 2008 bond election to rebuild Abram from Cooper to the Grand Prairie city limits. The proposed contract for the second phase of the study will include \$97,500 for a topographic [survey](#), which is required for the Abram rebuilding no matter how many lanes are built, House said.

This report includes material from the Star-Telegram archives.

Susan Schrock, 817-390-7639 *Twitter:* [@susanschrock](#)

[Looking for comments?](#)

[TERMS OF SERVICE](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#) [ABOUT OUR ADS](#) [COPYRIGHT](#) [CONTACT US](#) [ADVERTISE WITH US](#) [REPORT A PROBLEM](#) [ABOUT THE MCCLATCHY COMPANY](#)