

EAST GRAND AVENUE COMPLETE STREET PILOT PROJECT



The City has received a substantial number of comments from the public so far on the East Grand Complete Street Pilot Project, both in support and against the recent changes made.

Why did the City do this project?

The City of Des Moines Comprehensive Plan (PlanDSM) that was adopted by City Council in April 2016 includes the direction to create more and better transportation choices on the streets of Des Moines, including improved walking conditions, bicycle routes, and transit enhancements. Shortly after PlanDSM was adopted, The Greater Des Moines Partnership (representing several large downtown employers, development companies, neighborhood groups, etc) and the Urban Land Institute of Iowa partnered with the City to complete a Downtown Walkability Study (Connect Downtown) to explore opportunities to change the streets in downtown Des Moines to be more walking and biking friendly, resulting in a more attractive place to attract and retain employees and residents within downtown.

Because the Grand Avenue bridge is in the process of being replaced, the Historic East Village requested that the City proceed with completing a pilot project with the Connect Downtown concepts on E Grand Avenue prior to the re-opening of the bridge.

What is the project?

The East Grand Avenue Complete Street Pilot Project is a test of one of the street concepts proposed in the Connect Downtown plan. The concept includes narrower travel lanes to encourage slower vehicle speeds, shorter pedestrian crossings across E Grand, a protected bike lane that would become a part of a protected bike lane network throughout downtown, and placement of transit stops in the travel lane to minimize delay to the transit buses.

Parking along East Grand Avenue is now moved out away from the curb, between the travel lanes and protected bike lanes. Parking meters are still located on the curb as they had been in the past. Extra striping was used to help identify which parking spaces correlate to their associated parking meters. Although there were parking spots removed at several of the intersections due to the new design, new parking spaces will be provided along and adjacent to the corridor to make up for the lost spots. Also, the new Parking Garage at E Grand and E 2nd will be opening later this month.

Because it is a pilot project, the City chose to use mostly paint and vertical delineators (white sticks) rather than go to the expense of constructing raised concrete islands. This also gives us the ability to make changes as we go to make sure the design works as well as possible. If the project is acceptable after the year-long comment period, a design will be completed to replace the painted islands / vertical delineators with permanent concrete islands.

Public Engagement

The City will be collecting data, including comments from residents, employees, and visitors for a year to learn what is working and what could work better as the City considers moving forward with other similar concepts throughout downtown. Click here to provide comments on an interactive mapping tool:

<http://wikimapping.com/wikimap/East-Grand-Avenue-Complete-Street-Pilot.html#.WcPiY2CWyUI>

We are also working closely with the Public Works Department on impacts to snow removal and street sweeping operations and the Fire Department on impacts to emergency response calls along the corridor. Additional data that is being collected is volume of vehicular and bicycle traffic, crash data, speed data, before and after the pilot project implementation.

Based on several comments already received regarding vehicles having trouble making turns and concerns about the width of the street feeling too narrow, we are working with our contractor to make some changes to the vertical delineator placement to help with those concerns.

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