



**CITY OF LA CROSSE
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**

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May 4, 2017

To the Honorable Mayor and
To the Finance and Personnel
Committee of the Common Council
City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

RE: Resolution appropriating funds in connection with road replacement in the
North bound lane of Losey Boulevard between State Road and Johnson Street.
(Resolution #17-0276)

Dear Mayor and Council Member:

The legislation was referred to the Engineering Department for additional information and recommendation.

Losey Boulevard was paved with concrete in about 1957 which would make the concrete below the asphalt overlays approximately 60 years old. Concrete streets have an expected useful life span of 50 years on average. In 1994 the first asphalt overlay was installed from La Crosse Street to Madison Street, then in 1997 from Madison Street to State Road, and the remaining from State Road to Mormon Coulee Road was installed in 2000. In 2012 the City removed the existing asphalt overlay and installed a new overlay from La Crosse Street to Market Street. In 1997 the overlay cost was \$0.93/sf and in 2012 the cost rose to \$2.98.00/sf. Projecting the cost to 2018 would mean an increase in the unit cost of an overlay to \$3.80/sf. The cost for the overlay from Market Street to State Road is estimated to be \$850,000.00.

Therefore, using the above values, the \$200,000.00 in referred resolution would only overlay approximately 200 feet of the two North bound lanes and much of these costs would be used for mobilization and traffic control for the project. **The Engineering Department recommends this resolution be referred to the City of La Crosse's Capital Improvement Program with a strong support from the City Council to fund an overlay project on Losey Boulevard from Market Street to State Road in 2018.**

Although overlays are a good way to make concrete roads last longer they were never meant to replace a street from ever being reconstructed. It is recommended that after the life of two overlays on a street project the street should be a candidate for a total reconstruction down to the base course. Total reconstruction is the only method that is going to give the street the smoothest (less vibration) and quietest ride. Replacing all of Losey Boulevard at one time with a new concrete street (curb and pavement) would cost approximately \$12,250,000.00. Most likely a project of this magnitude will be reconstructed in phases. If this project is broken down into 4 sections of reconstruction then each section would cost slightly over \$3,000,000.00.

When checking for grants and possible funding sources it became evident that the State and Federal Funds for road construction are few. The grants that are available are Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP), Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STP-U), National Highway System-Local (NHS-L), and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER). LRIP is a grant we get every two years in which we receive approximately \$110,000.00. The City used this funding twice on Losey funding overlay projects. The next funding cycle is 2018/2019 but because of the process the earliest we could fund a project with these funds would be August/September 2018. STP-U grants are competitive grants that are awarded by the Metropolitan Planning Office (MPO). The next funding cycle is now with the application due in May for construction of the projects in 2021 and 2022. This funding cycle only has between \$300,000.00 and \$500,000.00 to award. The next STP-U cycle has approximately \$3,500,000.00 for construction years 2023/2024. The City used this funding twice for Losey overlay projects. Both the NHS-L and the TIGER are federal grants programs that require the project to be fully designed and ready to construct in accordance with Federal and State requirements. To design a highway project in accordance with the federal and state requirements would cost the City approximately 10% of the construction cost. Therefore, if the City wanted to try and go after these funds we would have to fund the design with local funds. To design a \$3,000,000.00 project would cost approximately \$300,000.00 for design.

The good news regarding Losey Boulevard is that the traffic volumes overall have been decreasing since 1996 which peaked with a total average 30,250 vehicles per day. The latest traffic counts for Losey are from 2014 with a total average of 22,200 vehicles per day. That is a reduction in traffic of 8050 vehicles per day. If this trend continues the City may consider a “road diet” which means reducing the number of lanes needed which then would significantly reduce reconstruction and maintenance cost.

The speed limit on Losey Boulevard was 25 miles per hour until 1977 when the City Council change the speed limit to the current speed limit of 30 miles per hour. Even though the posted speed is 30 mph everyone knows the traffic tends to move much faster. Unfortunately, this is a law enforcement issue. In my opinion reducing the speed limit back to 25 mph is not going to slow the traffic down without heavy law enforcement. The better way to slow traffic down is to implement traffic calming measures as outlined in the “City of La Crosse Traffic Calming Policy” found on the City’s web site.

In summary, the recommendation is to fund the next Losey Boulevard Overlay Project from Market Street to State Road in the 2018 Capital Improvement Program for the short term. The long term solution is to work toward a total reconstruction of Losey Boulevard. To do so the City may have to fund the design of the project with local funds in order to apply for construction grants. \$300,000.00 should be added to the 2018 Capital Improvement Program to be funded in 2019.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Turtenwald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Randy Turtenwald, P.E.
City Engineer