

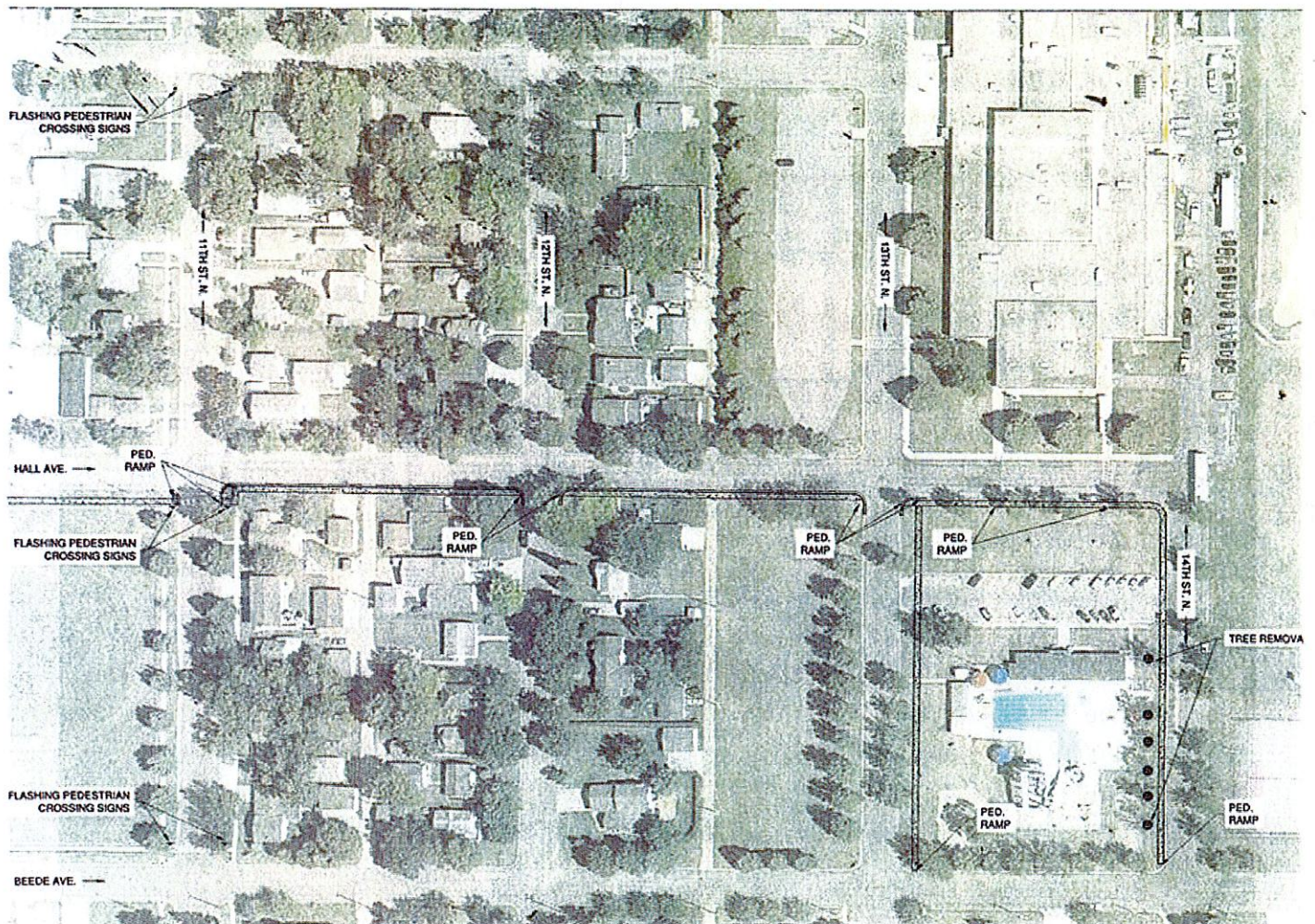
https://www.wahpetondailynews.com/news/no-public-input-at-safe-routes-to-school-open-house/article_0999e08a-d9da-11eb-9b4b-6bfc744410cd.html

FEATURED

No public input at Safe Routes to School open house

By Audra Anderson • Daily News

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The proposed plan for the Safe Routes to School project.

Courtesy Breckenridge Active Living Committee

The Active Living Committee held an open house for the Safe Routes to School project Monday, June 28, but the open house was an empty house as no members of the public attended.

The meeting was intended to be an informational period where community members could ask questions about the project and express concerns.

In 2015, the Active Living Committee applied for the Safe Routes to School Planning Assistance Grant through the Minnesota Department of Transportation and were awarded the grant, provided by West Central Initiative. Through surveys, observations and public information meetings, the active living committee and West Central Initiative found that 63-76 percent of Breckenridge students live within city limits.

They also found the drop-off loop at the elementary school is a concern among community members, and elementary, middle and high school students walk to and from the schools daily along Hall Avenue, where there are no sidewalks. The railroad forms a barrier between southside and northern students in Breckenridge, and the southern students have no sidewalk crossing at Eighth Street. Finally, there is a high volume of traffic and speed is a concern on 11th Street.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$397,000, of which the city would be responsible for around \$115,750. The project cost will be finalized once the project is bid in spring next year.

The Safe Routes to School project would involve:

- the installation of a new sidewalk on the south side of Hall Avenue from Breckenridge Elementary and Middle School to Breckenridge High School
- the installation of new sidewalks on the east and west sides of the Breckenridge Family Aquatic Center from Beede Avenue to Hall Avenue
- the installation of flashing pedestrian signs on 11th Street for the Hall Avenue intersection and on Beede Avenue near the east parking entrance
- the installation of a new crossing gate on the east entrance of the southern parking area at Breckenridge Elementary and Middle School
- the installation of additional sidewalk on the northwest side of Breckenridge Elementary and Middle School for improved bus loading and unloading

Along Hall Avenue, between 11th Street and 14th Street, the existing curb and gutter will be removed and a new curb will be installed, making the road width consistent.

“The driving area should be about the same as what is available now. A new 6-foot wide sidewalk will be installed behind the new curb with ADA-compliant ramps at each intersection,” according to a project information report.

The project contractor, Uteig Engineering Inc., and the active living committee will continue to seek public input before a project memorandum with environment assessment is submitted to the Minnesota Department of Transportation by Dec. 1, 2021.

Next, Breckenridge City Council will vote to approve the project and it will be submitted to the state by Feb. 1, 2022. Construction bids will be sought in early 2022, and the construction will ideally be completed by fall 2022.

Audra Anderson

