

Hiawatha officials meet with KDOT on 1st Street concerns

(KNZA)--Hiawatha city officials met with Kansas Department of Transportation officials last week to discuss safety concerns along the 1st Street corridor.

City Administrator Becky Berger updated the Hiawatha City Commission Monday evening on the meeting, which she called productive.

The meeting follows KDOT's decision to have the traffic signals at the intersection of 1st and Oregon removed.

Berger said discussed was converting the existing four-lane street to a three-lane roadway consisting of two through lanes and a center two-way left-turn lane.

The reconfiguration, known as a “road diet”, would be similar to what was done in Fairview.

Berger said there is some speed limit modifications that need to be made along the corridor, with KDOT planning a speed study this winter.

She said the street would be re-striped following a seal project planned next spring.

The proposed project would be completed by the start of school in the fall of 2024.

Commissioner Brian Shefferd said while he believes the proposed project would improve north-south traffic flow, he has some concerns how it would effect traffic leaving the high school. Shefferd said he believes it would create a bottleneck.

Berger said she will check with KDOT to see if there are other communities where the same change has been made within a school zone and the impact its had.

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