

Commission hears opposition to KDOT 1st Street proposal

(KNZA)--Two residents appeared before the Hiawatha City Commission this week to voice their opposition to KDOT'S 1st Street "road diet" proposal, which includes removal of the street's traffic signals.

Hiawatha school board member Mitch Brown, reading from a letter composed by USD 415 Superintendent Lonnie Moser on behalf of the school board, outlined why the board feels the commission should refrain from accepting the proposal.

He said the 1st and Oregon Street intersection serves as the main entrance to the high school, and bears the brunt of high school and middle school traffic throughout the school year. Brown said the traffic lights at the intersection have always been there as a means of controlling the chaos.

He said the 1st and Iowa Street intersection serves much of the parent traffic for the middle school and the traffic signals provide a measure of safety for student pedestrian traffic.

Local resident Leah McPeak also voiced her opposition to the proposal. She said many kids utilize the traffic lights at 1st and Iowa to safely cross the street during the school year and in the summer to utilize the Aquatic Park.

McPeak said she has talked to others who share her concerns, and told the Commission she thinks they'll risk the safety of the youth in the community if they proceed with removal of the traffic signals.

Mayor Becky Shamburg acknowledged the concerns of Brown and McPeak.

She said the city plans to hold an informational meeting Monday evening at 6:00 at the Fisher Center regarding the 1st Street corridor and encourages to the public to attend. The meeting will include a presentation by city staff, with a question and answer session to follow.