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Larsen Road, 76 project aims for safety

By Bethanie Gengler
NEENAH NEWS

The state Department of Transportation discussed roadwork at the State 76 and Larsen Road intersection at a public meeting last week, including the possible installation of a roundabout.

The 76/Larsen intersection is 2.2 miles south of U.S. 10 in the Town of Clayton, a mile west of where the new Neenah High School is being constructed. The intersection had 16 crashes from 2016 to 2020, resulting in one fatality and nine people with injuries.

The DOT installed larger 4-foot stop signs in 2020 and "cross traffic does not stop here" signs in 2021. There have been no failure-to-stop crashes since then. Officials anticipate increased traffic once the new high school opens in fall 2023, leading to congestion.

DOT officials said if no improvements are made there will continue to be high crash rates with increased likelihood of injuries or fatalities at the intersection. They are proposing adding either all-way stop

control at a cost of \$1.3 million or installing a roundabout for about \$1.8 million.

A 2015 safety study produced by the University of Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Lab showed that fatal and severe injury crashes decrease by 40% when roundabouts are installed, according to the DOT.

The proposed roundabout would be single lane and requires land acquisition at all four quadrants. All-way stop control would require acquisition of a triangular piece of land in the southeast quadrant. The intersection would be closed during construction and traffic would be detoured using Interstate 41 and U.S. 10.

A comment submitted during the meeting indicated that large commercial vehicles often cause backups at roundabouts and the commenter questioned whether the DOT would consider adding an additional lane exiting the roundabout to allow cars to pass. DOT project manager Bill Bertrand said that adding a lane after the roundabout and encouraging passing and a tight merge would create safety is-

sues. An attendee questioned whether traffic lights could be installed before the improvements to deal with immediate safety concerns. Bertrand said traffic lights were considered as an early alternative for improving the intersection but did not move forward.

Another suggestion was whether the speed limit could be reduced from 55 to 45 miles per hour in the area. Bertrand said the speed limit is based on the average speed of 85% of vehicles that travel the road. Posting an artificially low speed limit increases the variability of speeds, which he said creates unsafe conditions.

The DOT is accepting public comments on the project through Sept. 9 and can be submitted on the DOT website under the highway projects and studies-northeast region tab or by emailing William.bertrand@dot.wi.gov.

Construction at the intersection is expected to start in 2026. If traffic increases once the high school opens, the project may be advanced to 2025.

Substance use programs promoted this month

Neenah News

Apricity, a nonprofit organization that provides those impacted by substance use disorders with treatment, employment and support services, is marking Recovery Month in September through its annual fundraising campaign.

The organization's three core treatment and recovery programs are the focus of fundraising during Recovery Month. It offers a matching gift challenge totaling \$30,000 from The Boldt Co., Gloria West

family and an anonymous family. All donations Apricity receives this month will be matched up to that amount.

Apricity's Contract Packaging facilities in Neenah and Milwaukee offer additional treatment after inpatient services, as well as transitional employment opportunities with the organization. The state-licensed, alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) certified treatment and recovery program offers training and vocational rehabilitation that includes resume creation, lead-

ership training, guidance for enrolling in higher education, job search assistance and career-readiness classes.

"Apricity has given me the opportunity to learn how to live free of drugs and alcohol, figure out what I want out of life and pursue educational interests to further both my recovery and future," said former client William Reitzloff.

Apricity chief executive Michelle Devine Giese said the campaign allows the community to make twice the impact in supporting individuals on their recovery journey.

"Apricity's Recovery Month Campaign celebrates and features individuals in recovery from substance use disorders and raises crucial funds for our residential treatment, job-readiness training and sober living programs," she said. "These gifts support life changing programs that bring hope and healing to individuals and their families."

Apricity's community outreach on substance use disorders also supports patients in Ascension and ThedaCare emergency departments and several behavioral health clinics who have experienced an opioid/stimulant overdose or have a history of misuse.

Workplace award nominations sought

Applications are being accepted for the 2023 New North Workplace Excellence Award, which recognizes organizations within the 18-county region that are improving their competitive advantage through people practices.

Award submissions are evaluated on two primary criteria: people practices and business practices.

A collaboration between New North Inc. and Right Management, the Workplace Excellence Award application process has three phases. The initial form can be found at thenewnorth.com. Submissions must be made by 5 p.m. Oct. 7 to be eligible and should be emailed to lisa.smith@right.com.

Organizations that meet the first phase of requirements will be notified Oct. 28 and be invited to submit a detailed application that is due Jan. 27.

Those advancing to Phase 3 will be contacted Feb. 17. Site visits are scheduled for March or early April.



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