

Division Street Ballot Q & A –by Ben Bifoss, Traverse City City Manager September 14, 2012

Q. There is a ballot question on November 6 about Division Street, what's that about?

A. Many residents agree that traffic on Division Street is a problem. Except for at traffic lights (and sometimes even there) it is difficult for bikes or pedestrians to cross Division Street. Traffic speeds and safety are often cited as concerns. Division Street could be redesigned to address these problems.

Q. Why doesn't the City just fix it?

A. Division Street is a State Highway under the control of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) so the City cannot fix it.

Q. Why doesn't the State just fix it?

A. The street is built within what is called Right of Way; that is the amount of property that the State controls for Division Street. The Right of Way is currently too narrow to do much different than is already there. That is what the ballot question is about.

Q. What happens if the proposal passes and what happens if the proposal fails?

A. If the proposal passes, sometime within the next 10 years a future City Commission could approve the transfer of up to 30 feet of property along the west side of Division Street; between 14th Street and 8th Street to the State for a redesigned Division Street; but only if that future City Commission approved of the redesign of Division Street. That future City Commission could also transfer additional property north and south of 11th Street that could be used for a roundabout.

If the proposal fails, then there is not sufficient property available to make significant changes to the current road.

Please refer to the map to see the property in question.

Q. What happens on Division, north of 8th Street?

A. Nothing happens north of 8th Street because property acquisition is too expensive.

Q. I would like to see specifics before I vote, why can't I see the plan now?

A. It is likely to cost between \$500,000 and a million dollars to develop the plan. There are surveys, historical reviews, environmental reviews, engineering reviews and reviews of reviews before a plan is developed. MDOT cannot spend that amount of money on a plan that can't be built. Everybody needs to know that the property at least could be available before that amount of money is spent on a plan.

If the ballot proposal is approved, it will provide the City and the State an opportunity, working together, to create a plan that would make Division Street safer and easier to use for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians by using the additional property. That plan would have to be approved by the City Commission before the parkland could be used.