

Entry Corridor Beautification

Highway 117 is the front door to the city of Colfax and its downtown. To improve first impressions along this route, the design team has proposed expanding on a current roadside planting project. The current project includes planting native grasses and wildflowers along the east side of Highway 117 near the entrance to the new Quarry Springs Park. The design team proposes expanding on this endeavor by planting the same types of species along the west side of Highway 117 to add seasonal interest to this corridor. The native grasses and wildflowers proposed will include DOT approved native species that are low maintenance and add color and texture to the roadway. Native plantings in road rights-of-way are an important part of complete road systems. They support pollinator habitat, and slow, clean water runoff, and reduce snow drifting.

In order to ensure that the native grasses and wildflowers to successfully establish, a rigorous maintenance schedule must be created for the first few years of life. It is common to mow the newly planted native vegetation as one would mow turf grass for the first year in order to combat weed growth, which could shade-out/kill the native vegetation. During the second year of establishment, mowing should continue, but less frequently than the first year. Often times, the third year of establishment is when the native vegetation truly begins to flourish and less maintenance is needed to ensure endurance and beauty for years to come. The city should follow specific maintenance instructions provided by seed manufacturers and/or plant providers.

Corridor Lighting and Signage

Inspired by Colfax's history in mineral springs, the design team proposed a series of banners to be mounted on new light poles along this corridor. These give a sense of arrival into Colfax, as the banners would continue until travelers reach downtown. The banners would be interchangeable if the community desired to use them for promoting other imagery or seasonal events. More information detailing the banner pole locations and design can be seen on board #8.

Highway 117 Center Turning-Lane

With the continued development of the adjacent Quarry Springs Park, the steering committee felt it would be important to plan for increased traffic flow along Highway 117. An added center turning-lane would prevent future traffic congestion and make travel safer through this area. With wide paved shoulders already in place, adding a center turning-lane may be as easy as removing the current roadway paint and creating new pavement markings to allow for the center lane (see diagram to the right). All changes along this corridor need to be designed by a professional engineer and approved by the Iowa Department of Transportation.



Blackeyed Susan
Rudbeckia hirta



Purple Coneflower
Echinacea purpurea



Ironweed
Vernonia fasciculata



Prairie Blazingstar
Liatris pycnostachya



Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa



Prairie Cinquefoil
Drymocallis arguta



Rattlesnake Master
Eryngium yuccifolium



Pale Purple Coneflower
Echinacea pallida



Golden Alexander
Zizia aurea



Stiff Goldenrod
Solidago rigida



Foxglove Beardtongue
Penstemon digitalis



New England Aster
Symphotrichum novae-angliae



Hoary Vervain
Verbena stricta



Tall Coreopsis
Coreopsis tripteris



Wild Lupine
Lupinus perennis



Big Bluestem
Andropogon gerardii



Indiangrass
Sorghastrum nutans



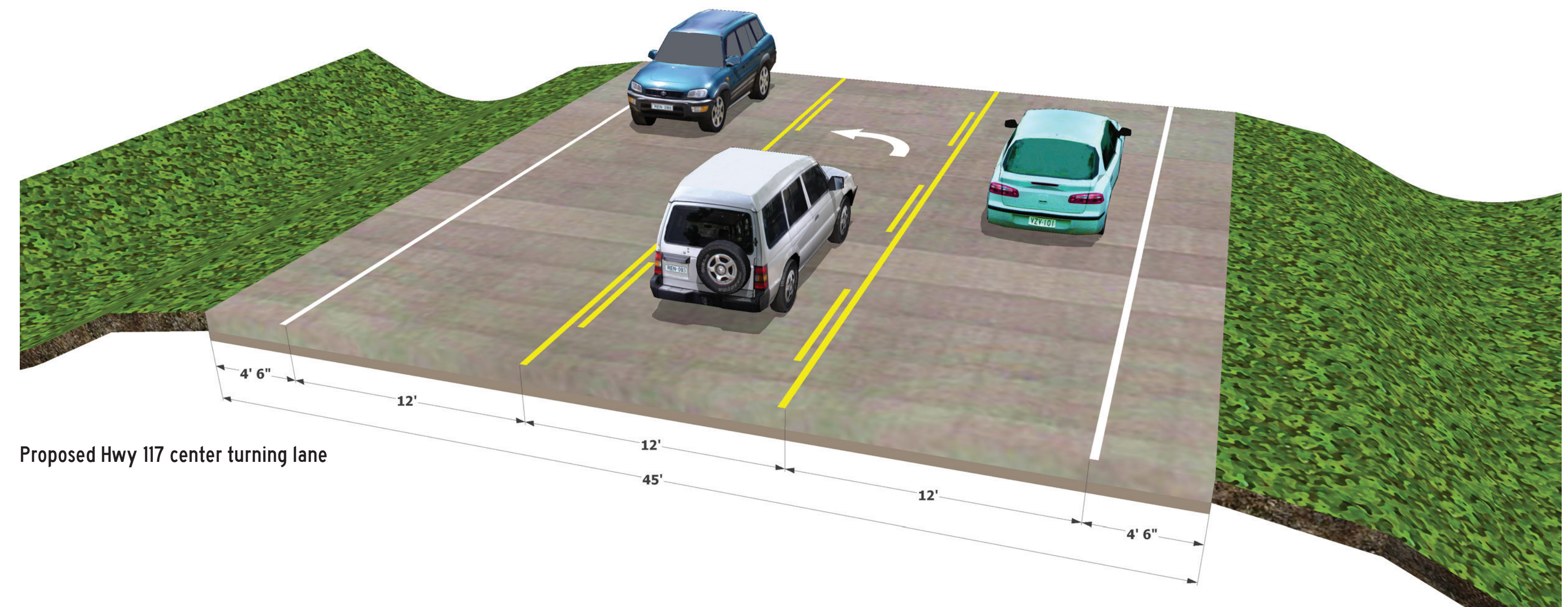
Virginia Wild Rye
Elymus virginicus



Highway 117 corridor, looking south



Before



Proposed Hwy 117 center turning lane

Colfax

Highway 117 Corridor Improvements (1/2)

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Iowa Department of Transportation

Trees Forever

ISU Landscape Architecture Extension

ISU Extension Community and Economic Development

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