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TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, June 24, 2008

PRESENT: Alds. Jay, Maher (6:44 p.m.), McBride, Meaux, Stepaniak -5

ALSO PRESENT: W. Kappel, Dir. of Public Works; J. Archambo, City Admin.; Ald. Purins, 7th Dist.

Ald. Meaux as Chair called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. -4

Proposed No Parking on N. 115th Street South of W. Center Street

Mr. Kappel reported that, at the request of a local alderperson and a constituent, he is recommending a 90-day trial of no parking on school days from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the west side of N. 115th Street from W. Center Street to a point approximately 130 feet south. To be most effective, the trial should begin in August just prior to the start of the new school year.

Ald. Purins reported that he has been working with the residents south of West High School on 115th Street. There are similar parking restrictions on 116th, 114th, and 111th Streets. He met with residents at the school and talked to the principal, and the school liaison police officer has been in contact with neighbors when there were issues with parking in front of homes. Depending on results of the trial, he noted, other residents may see some benefit to extending the no parking zone to the south.

Mr. Kappel confirmed that parking would be available after 4:30 p.m., but generally speaking, the school parking lot accommodates most evening events. When the lot is full, people park first on Center Street, which is very wide and can accommodate parking on both sides except immediately adjacent to each school. There is usually not much spillover to the side streets. 115th Street, he felt, would be one of the least likely choices for short-term parking when the lot is full. He explained that the determination of which side of the street to designate is based on the location of mail boxes and fire hydrants and how on-street parking can best be maximized. Mail carriers are not required to deliver to curbside boxes that are blocked by a vehicle.

Ald. Jay was concerned with accommodating daytime visitors to the schools who need to park for very short periods. Could parking be limited to a particular length of time rather than prohibited entirely from 7:30 to 4:30? Mr. Kappel explained the difficulty in enforcing that type of restriction and said that similar restrictions to those being recommended are in place around other schools. He has observed that there is adequate daytime parking in the very large parking lot between West High School and Eisenhower Elementary School. Ald. Purins confirmed that observation and noted that 116th Street would be most convenient after Center Street for anyone parking on the street; most drivers probably wouldn't park as far east as 115th Street.

Moved by Ald. Stepaniak, seconded by Ald. McBride to approve a 90-day trial of no parking on school days from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the west side of N. 115th Street from W. Center Street to a point

130 feet south beginning in August just prior to the start of the new school year. Ayes: 4

(Ald. Maher present. -5)

SEWRPC 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, Transit Issues and Policies

Kenneth Yunker, Deputy Director of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) distributed an overview of the “Year 2035 Regional Transportation Plan” dated June 10, 2008 and SEWRPC Newsletter 5, April 2007, titled “Year 2035 Regional Land Use and Transportation System Plans for Southeastern Wisconsin.” Christopher Hiebert, SEWRPC Chief Transportation Engineer, was also present. Mr. Yunker then summarized the information.

The 2035 Plan is an advisory plan that addresses existing and anticipated long range, 30-year-future problems, needs, and opportunities. An advisory committee with representatives of southeastern counties and municipalities, the Wisconsin DOT and DNR, the U.S. DOT, and the U.S. EPA guided the process of coming up with a cooperative framework of action. Wauwatosa’s Director of Public Works, Mr. Kappel, is a member of the committee. An important part of the analysis was forecasting the growth in regional travel and traffic and quantitative testing of the recommendations and other alternatives to see how well they would serve that growth. Highway improvements were considered only after first considering the potential of more efficient land use and expanded public transit, systems management, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and demand management.

Public transit is a local responsibility, although the state significantly assists, providing 60% of the funding for the Milwaukee County Transit System. A doubling of public transit service is needed over the next 30 years measured in terms of miles of bus service provided each day. The plan recommends developing a rapid transit system with stops every 3-5 miles and an express transit system that basically converts major local routes to a grid of limited stop bus routes.

Washington and Ozaukee counties have service similar to rapid transit routes. Ozaukee County sponsors their service but it is provided by Milwaukee County buses. Washington County has subsidized their service almost exclusively. A future need for both systems is more convenient service frequencies.

Potential corridors have been identified for upgrading bus routes on surface streets to commuter rail, bus guideways, or light rail. The corridors are to be looked at in more detail with local governments or transit operators interested in pursuing those options. In the early to mid-1990s Milwaukee County started to implement some express routes, but some service has been cut back since about 2001 when federal and state funding didn’t keep up with inflation. The county executive and Milwaukee mayor have recently been discussing use of \$91.5 million in funding that could help implement some express bus routes or a downtown streetcar loop. The plan recommends expanding local bus service by about 60%.

As express bus lines are implemented, the plan recommends developing reserved surface street bus lanes, expanded pass/discount programs, and joint marketing of the service through a single website. Traffic signal priority could also be provided so that a bus is automatically recognized and receives an extended green phase to help speed up service.

Regional transit authorities (RTAs) with new forms of funding, generally a sales tax, are prevalent in other areas nationwide, established in part because no single entity was able to take over an existing transit system.

We are very unique here in not having an RTA, but was somewhat logical at the time for the local entities to take over the Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha systems. The transit system here is now in a severe funding crisis and is heavily dependent on state and federal aid, which has not kept up with inflation. There is no possibility to make up for it with property taxes. Milwaukee County has severely cut service and raised fares. They are allocating federal funds that are principally intended for capital projects to operating costs and have spent down those funds to almost nothing. With about one-third of the fleet needing replacement over the next few years, funding will have to come from the operating budget with a potential 30-40% cut in services. There is also concern that some \$91.5 million in federal transit funds might be lost if Milwaukee and Milwaukee County can't decide how to spend it. To fully implement the recommended expansion, the system will need a new level of funding or a dedicated local funding source and a regional transit authority. A temporary RTA for Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties is meeting to develop recommendations on the need for an RTA, whether it should be by a transit operator or a funding agency, and the question of a dedicated funding source and what the amount should be. SEWRPC and DOT have been staffing the RTA.

The 2035 plan recommends increasing accommodation for bicycles as the 3,300 miles of arterial streets are resurfaced and reconstructed. It also recommends continued expansion of the existing 203-mile system of bicycle/pedestrian paths to a planned system eventually totaling 575 miles.

Among actions recommended to better manage and obtain the maximum capacity from the existing street system were expansion of the freeway traffic management system through operations monitoring and control, provision of advisory information, and improved incident management. Improved surface arterial management could be achieved through expansion and enhancement of coordinated traffic signal systems, regional and local operations improvement, and access management.

Demand management elements of the recommended plan involve actions to encourage reduction in personal and vehicular travel including expansion of park-ride lots, preferential treatment of higher capacity vehicles, and expansion of the vanpool program now primarily focused in Madison.

There are over 11,000 miles of streets and highways in southeastern Wisconsin. The 2035 Plan addresses the approximately 3,500 *arterial* miles, which is 270 miles of freeways and 3,200 miles of surface arterials. The freeway system represents about 35% of total travel and 3% of total street and highway miles. The entire freeway system needs to be rebuilt over the next 30-40 years to modern design standards that address current design deficiencies. The plan also recommends reconstructing 127 miles of the freeway system with two additional traffic lanes (one in each direction) to address current or projected congestion. The additional lanes can almost entirely be built within existing right-of-way. Additional lanes are also proposed on about 7%, or 231 miles, of surface arterials as they are reconstructed, and 88 miles of new arterial facilities are proposed.

In Wauwatosa, the recommendations involve additional lanes on both STH 45 and I-94 and widening Watertown Plank Road to six traffic lanes between Hwy. 100 and the Regional Medical Center. The longstanding proposal to connect the 124th Street gap south of Watertown Plank Road is also included in the recommendations, but local communities would be consulted on retaining that item. Widening of 124th Street between Watertown Plank Road and North Avenue would occur only if the gap were to be acted on. Another potential segment for widening on 124th Street would be between Lisbon and Ruby Avenues. These plans could change, however, to reflect results of preliminary engineering and environmental studies.

If the improvements recommended by the 2035 Plan are not done, SEWRPC's analysis projects a doubling of traffic congestion in the next 30 years. Doing everything except arterial street and highway improvements would only marginally improve conditions. Transportation related air pollutant emissions have been declining

and are projected to continue to do so even with increased traffic congestion because cars and trucks are getting cleaner in terms of emissions.

Ald. Stepaniak asked about the relationship of the 2035 Plan to the Zoo Interchange project. Mr. Kappel said that mitigation of Zoo Interchange congestion is contingent upon public transit doubling over the next 15-20 years. Should that not occur, there is an even greater need to address congestion. This will tie into a future discussion about our own local road system.

Ald. Maher commented that Wauwatosa will be most directly impacted by the Zoo Interchange project during demolition and construction. The question then becomes what can be done to minimize congestion and frustration during that process. Mr. Yunker explained that later in the preliminary engineering process after selection of a preferred alternative, a construction staging plan is developed. Using travel simulation models, SEWRPC forecasts traffic on both the freeway and local streets and identifies which streets are impacted. Those forecasts have proven to be fairly accurate. They will also look at transit improvements that could assist with mitigation.

Mr. Kappel reported that he sat in on discussions on the Marquette Interchange project to gain experience for the Zoo Interchange project. In answer to questions, he noted that Hwy. 100 will be undergoing a facelift as part of mitigation efforts. He was uncertain about the ability to add bicycle lanes anywhere, particularly on Hwy. 100. A segment of Blue Mound Road west of Hwy. 100 that will be repaved in 2011 does include widening of the parking lane, which would provide space for bicycles.

Mr. Yunker reported that the forecasts were done in 2005 and the plan completed in June 2006, and they have tried to update it as needed to reflect development proposals such as in the Burleigh area and county grounds, although it may not include the recent UW-M proposal there and could possibly be revisited. Mr. Hiebert confirmed that the forecasts do take into account anticipated growth.

Ald. Stepaniak asked how the west suburban TIA (traffic impact analysis) dovetails with this plan and the Zoo Interchange project. Mr. Kappel reported that he was just informed that completion of the TIA has been set back to mid-to-late July. Three or four technical meetings would likely be scheduled in late July and early August. Mr. Yunker noted that the TIA may identify additional surface street improvements. Ald. Stepaniak expressed hope for some type of report or presentation before the Council's August recess.

Ald. McBride questioned how much of the recommendation is driven by the Clean Air Act. Mr. Yunker said that they have worked with the DNR on clean air planning since the 1980s, and the general conclusion is that changes in transportation have a relatively minor impact on ozone levels or clean air. Cleaner vehicles, reformulated fuel, and the vehicle inspection maintenance program have had a more significant impact. The most significant reductions in emissions by 2035 would largely be from cleaner vehicles.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

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