



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
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TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 8, 2011
Committee Room #1

PRESENT: Aids. Meaux, Jay, McBride – 3

EXCUSED: Ald. Wilke, Pantuso

ALSO PRESENT: W. Wehrley, Acting Public Works Director/City Engineer

Ald. Meaux as Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Mr. Robert Gutierrez, P.E., Federal Highway Administration, 141 NW Barstow St., Waukesha, and Mr. Tim Anheuser, Federal Highway Administration, 141 NW Barstow St., Waukesha, presented the Zoo Interchange Corridor Study.

Mr. Gutierrez said that the governor has put the zoo interchange as a top priority budget item. He reviewed the project with the committee. Mr. Gutierrez said the zoo interchange is the oldest and most heavily travelled interchange in the state. Crumbling infrastructure and emergency bridge replacements are reasons the interchange needs to be rebuilt. Crash rates in this interchange are between two and five times higher than the statewide average for urban freeways. During peak hours of the day, all legs of the interchange currently experience a breakdown in flow where demand is much greater than the capacity. The new modern design elements will improve safety and will lessen the congestion.

Mr. Anheuser discussed the initial development of alternatives. He noted that the development process for the zoo interchange started in 2008. In May 2009 a draft impact statement was prepared and public hearings were held. Through the public hearing process three main areas were focused on. Reduce impacts and/or program cost, improve options at 84th Street to minimize diversion to 76th Street, and re-establish (maintain) Blue Mound Road/Wisconsin Avenue access to and from I-94.

Mr. Anheuser mentioned other comments and concerns. These included an eight-lane versus six-lane construction, traffic on local streets, location of American Transmission Company electric towers, noise impacts, lack of mass transit options, location and type of stormwater facilities, natural resource impacts and neighborhood impacts.

The team took a hard look at the comments received and went back to the drawing board. They studied access alternatives from I-94 to Wisconsin Avenue/Blue Mound Road and Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, developed new freeway alternative with fewer impacts and less cost, added a local arterial component to address local trips within the study area, and to address trips diverted from Wisconsin Avenue/Blue Mound Road. A reduced impacts alternative was reviewed which includes a high capacity Watertown Plank Road interchange with US 45.

An aerial survey was taken in September 2010 for the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center area. Through this it was discovered that one-half of the traffic into the medical center comes from local streets. The other largest portion of traffic comes to and from the Center from the north. New local arterial components need to be added for traffic diversion. These alternatives are WIS 100 (I-94 to Watertown Plank Road), Watertown Plank Road (WIS 100 to 87th Street) and 84th Street (I-94 to Wisconsin Avenue).

The reduced impacts of the new plan include a relocation of 8 residential units instead of 39. No Milwaukee County Zoo building relocations and no relocation for the Milwaukee County Behavior Health Building will be necessary. There will be fewer utility impacts as there will be more distribution and buried lines.

Mr. Anheuser said that the estimated budget has been reduced from \$2.3 billion to \$1.7 billion. This includes the \$65 million local road investment making the project more affordable. As a result of the new alternatives developed, WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) determined that a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was necessary. This statement includes all of the information contained in the original 2009 DEIS, information on the Reduced Impacts Alternative and Adjacent Arterials Component and comments receiving in 2009 during the original DEIS availability period. This SDEIS report is available for public review on the FHA's website and CD's are available from them.

A public hearing is scheduled on March 22 and 23 at the Tommy Thompson Youth Center at State Fair Park. This will be a traditional town hall style hearing. Court reporters will be available for people to give their testimony if uncomfortable with the town hall style hearing. The comment period ends on April 4, 2011. Announcement of a preferred alternative will be made in late spring 2011. Final environment approval should be completed in the summer of 2011 with construction on adjacent arterials in 2013.

Mr. Gutierrez said he understands the neighborhood concerns related to Glenview Avenue, although he noted that the traffic is already there. He said he has spoken to all the people that potentially would be relocated in the Blue Mound corridor. Starbucks on Highway 100 would like to remain in that corridor and they will try to locate them elsewhere if need be.

Ald. McBride expressed concern regarding the change at the intersection of Glenview and Wisconsin. He noted that this neighborhood has a lot of children, three schools and a college. Mr. Gutierrez said they will keep the road as narrow as possible and the design allows for a left turn lane onto Wisconsin and will provide a safe distance for children on the sidewalks. He said the designs will evolve as work is done with the community. There is a lot of engineering to be done yet. The city's engineers will be consulted after a decision is made. Mr. Gutierrez said they have heard loud and clear to try and get people to use 45 and widen Watertown Plank Road, making it more efficient.

Ald. McBride inquired about foot traffic on Mayfair Rd. Mr. Gutierrez said they are looking at providing some additional width for bike lanes to make it safer for bikes and pedestrians.

Ald. Jay was concerned about all the children in the area of Highway 100 and wondered how they would be able to cross eight lanes of traffic safely being a major arterial. She wondered what the lane expansion would do to all of the businesses on Highway 100.

Mr. Gutierrez said they are studying this. Some parking lots will be losing parking spaces. They are proposing to close the first two median openings at the intersection of Highway 100 and Blue Mound Road. By closing the medians it will be harder to ingress and egress the businesses. He said the proposed design is for 2035 traffic. He asked for any comments or feedback be sent to them, the City of Wauwatosa engineer or the DOT website.

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
City of Wauwatosa

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