



CITY OF WAUWATOSA

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TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, February 10, 2009

PRESENT: Alds. Jay, Maher, McBride, Meaux, Stepaniak - 5

ALSO

PRESENT: W. Kappel, Dir. of Public Works; J. Archambo, City Admin.

Ald. Meaux as Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Change in Median Opening Signage – N. 124th Street North of W. North Avenue

Mr. Kappel, Director of Public Works, reported on a proposed change in the no left turn signage at the first median opening for northbound N. 124th Street traffic north of W. North Avenue. Northbound left turns have been prohibited there because the median does not line up with any driveways on the west side of the street. Due to the proximity to North Avenue and the long lines of traffic that frequently back up from the traffic signal, Mr. Kappel recommended also prohibiting northbound traffic from making U-turns at the opening.

Mr. Kappel noted that the median opening allows southbound traffic to turn left to access retail establishments on the east side of the street. The signage came to his attention recently because the existing sign was reversed and an employee of one of the east side establishments was erroneously ticketed for an illegal left turn. The police department has since administratively rescinded that citation.

Moved by Ald. Stepaniak, seconded by Ald. McBride to approve a 90-day trial of a No U-Turn No Left Turn sign for northbound N. 124th Street traffic at the first median open north of W. North Avenue. Ayes: 5

Recommendations of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

Mr. Kappel, Director of Public Works, reported that a copy of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority's recommendations to the governor and state legislature was received in mid-December. It includes the following recommendations: 1) that the RTA continue as a permanent body—at this time representing the counties of Kenosha and Milwaukee and the urbanized area of Racine; 2) that the RTA be enabled to levy up to a 0.5% sales tax as a dedicated funding source to support bus transit, commuter rail, and other transit projects in the region; 3) that RTA members be the oversight group for transit service and operations and the sole recipient of federal transit aids from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, State Transit Funding, and be the dedicated local funding source for transit in each municipality; 4) that the RTA be empowered to subcontract with existing operators to deliver transit services or assume operations as appropriate; 5) that the RTA board be empowered to directly operate or contract for provision of service both outside and within the RTA area; and 6) that the RTA be granted bonding authority for capital improvements.

The recommended structure for the seven-member RTA board is: one member from each of the three counties in the region, one member from the most populous city in each of the three counties, and one member from the most populous city in the region. Mr. Kappel reported that an RTA representative could attend a future meeting to answer any questions this committee might have.

Ald. Jay commented that she disagrees with many of the RTA recommendations, particularly having taxing authority without bringing it before the people and the fact that there is no end date to its existence and no limit to what the RTA can do.

Ald. McBride cited regional transit efforts elsewhere, some across state lines, and the need for, but lack of, regional cooperation here. He highly recommended continuing the discussion. Agreeing that the subject is worthy of further discussion, Ald. Maher said that an RTA has been endorsed by a number of policy makers and organizations for some time, some of whom would otherwise be seen as unlikely to support a sales tax for that purpose. Ald. Stepaniak also concurred with inviting a representative to appear. He commented on the availability of transit options elsewhere, such as airport-to-downtown connections. Since some of the preliminary information mentions stops in Wauwatosa, he would be interested in more details.

Ald. McBride mentioned the possibility of a Chicago Olympics with some events in Wisconsin. He has seen mention of the desirability of the Milwaukee area becoming more a part of the greater Chicago area to reap the benefits of a much more global city. With Madison having the fastest growth rate in the state, there is a need to bring that triangle together.

Mr. Kappel noted that there is a public information meeting at the Research Park tomorrow night on the Milwaukee Connector transit study, which also affects Wauwatosa. Based on the committee's consensus, he will invite an RTA representative to appear at an upcoming committee meeting. Mr. Archambo, City Administrator, indicated that he may also invite Ken Yunker of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to speak about some of these inter-related issues.

Update on Zoo Interchange Project – Transportation Management Plan

Mr. Kappel, Director of Public Works, reported on the first meeting of the Zoo Interchange Traffic Management Plan Advisory Group, on which both he and the City Engineer serve. The first meeting primarily established the committee's responsibilities. A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) is required for any project that receives federal funding under the Work Zone Safety and Mobility Act. The TMP for the Zoo Interchange project will include: 1) a temporary traffic control plan; 2) traffic operations component; 3) public information component; and 4) a transit and demand management component that was added by WisDOT due to traffic volumes and the limited number of alternate routes on local roads that are already over capacity at rush hour.

Mr. Kappel summarized the positions of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center and the Research Park on the Zoo Interchange project:

- Milwaukee Regional Medical Center (MRMC): Need I-94 access to the campus; support Texas U-turns; favor extending 92nd Street southbound between Wisconsin Avenue and Blue Mound Road and northbound to connect with Swan Boulevard; support traffic signal at Wisconsin Avenue and Hwy. 100/Mayfair Road.
- Milwaukee County Research Park: Need easterly exit from the Research Park to supplement the Innovation Drive exit onto Watertown Plank Road and the Research Drive exit onto Hwy. 100/Mayfair Road; prefer WisDOT use only existing right-of-way if the roadway is expanded, go east of the Research Park; not in favor of a bridge crossing Hwy. 45 to connect the Research Park and the MRMC; prefer the exit to the east in option M-1—along existing parking lot rather than roundabout off the southeast corner of the Park &

Ride lot; ensure east and westbound I-94 access; prefer option that brings Swan Boulevard across Hwy. 45 to line up with Innovation Drive

William Hatcher, Executive Director of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, reported on a meeting today with Research Park and WisDOT representatives. The DOT is abandoning the Swan Boulevard option that would link with Innovation Drive. Mr. Hatcher reported that he also spoke with UW-M School of Engineering planners this week. He has encouraged them to start considering access points for their county grounds site, but efforts have so far been directed toward their downtown campus. They have not progressed beyond the very sketchy site plan of six months or so ago. They were told their best access would likely be through the mental health site at 94th Street extended. A T-intersection would provide an access point to the northeast quadrant site. Although it would require a fair amount of excavation, it is as close as possible to the freeway intersection without interfering with it and is probably their only option off of Watertown Plank Road. They will probably discuss an access point from Swan Boulevard as well. 92nd Street extended would put their front door at the power plant. Mr. Hatcher reported that the only assumption DOT made in projecting MRMC numbers for mass transit was doubling the existing number. Therefore, a lot of the projected traffic numbers could look significantly different if rapid transit effectively served the campus, particularly during construction.

Mr. Kappel reviewed the status of the forestry preserve/forestry science center north of Swan Boulevard. He has suggested a joint effort with UW-M on entrances and exits in order to have a controlled intersection. There is only one freeway expansion option that might affect a portion of the forestry parcel.

Ald. McBride raised concerns about protecting pauper graves and asked if any of the proposed roads would require moving any graves. Mr. Hatcher said that extensive work was done on that entire quadrant prior to excavation of the basin area, and a major environmental survey of the entire quadrant was done when it was decided to keep the fill on site. There was no evidence of graves in that area, and no random burials have ever been discovered in the northeast quadrant.

The committee discussed the need to identify key points involving local roads on which to take a position and raise the city's visibility before the TMP group completes its work. A question was raised about putting a representative on the Transit and Demand Management Advisory Committee since Wauwatosa has some of the strongest needs.

Mr. Kappel explained that although the overall advisory committee will meet in six months, the subgroups of the advisory committee will begin meeting now and starting to address the issues. As soon as we are able to take positions on local issues, we will be better able to give direction to the City Engineer for the local roads committee. Mr. Kappel indicated that he would provide the committee with a summary of key points and staff recommendations. After coming up with a list of concerns and recommendations, the Chair suggested that some type of public dialog would be appropriate inasmuch the project will have a significant local impact.

There was further discussion regarding the City of Milwaukee's position on extension of 92nd Street to Blue Mound Road, which would involve some loss of property. There was also a question about newly available federal funding, which Mr. Kappel explained would apply to projects farther into the future.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

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