

SHNA TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
Monday, June 21, 2010

Transportation Committee members present: Shary Bisgard, Andy Bowman, Jackie Csedo, Herman Felstehausen, Edith First, Liz Freitick, Lou Gardner, Carol Glaser, Greg Hull, Peg Hutnik, Tom Kalinke, Mary Lindquist, Janet Loewi, Barbara Lomperski, Ruth Munz, Kurt Paradise, Mike Speidel, Bill Whisenant and Mathew Zastrow

Also present: Alderman Mark Clear, County Supervisor Brett Hulse, Glen Yoerger, city engineering project manager, and KL Engineering consultants Mike Bakalars and Aaron Steger

Spring Harbor Drive Intersection:

Mark Clear said: There is no funding to reconstruct the tunnel under University Avenue. The federal government will not allow a non-ADA compliant tunnel to be reconstructed. The acquisition of right-of-way land would be difficult since there are intensive utility lines nearby. There would not be time to acquire right-of-way before next year when University Avenue is scheduled to be reconstructed. There is no hard data on how much the tunnel is used. Spring Harbor Middle School uses it for field trips when they need to cross to the other side of University Avenue. Few of the students walk to school and there are no current school enrollees on the south side of University Avenue.

Andy Bowman said that we need to build for the future. He said walking and bicycling is going to become more common and we need to do the tunnel now instead of digging up the road later. The road is being built for a 50 year life and we need to look beyond 'today' when deciding on the tunnel.

Mike Bakalars, KL Engineering consultant, said he believes the whole roadway will become less of a speedway when University Avenue is reconstructed. He expects the improvements to result in reduced vehicle speed. The traffic signal at the intersection of Spring Harbor Drive and University Avenue will be programmed for a longer period of time than it currently is. Mike believes the median will be large enough for pedestrians to feel safe while standing there. He said putting the signal in the median will help drivers to see the intersection better.

In response to a question about reducing the road grade leading to the Spring Harbor intersection, Mike said the present grade meets the standard.

Herman Felstehausen suggested we ought to explore additional amenities and to create a sense of landing in the median by installing Ballards at both ends of the median and in the middle, which would likely make pedestrians feel safer.

Mike Bakalars said they are exploring whether to allow u-turns at the Spring Harbor intersection. They hope to have the lights timed so people will have the opportunity to make a u-turn. He said there will be gaps in the traffic because of traffic signals on each side of the intersection; he said no such gaps exist on both sides of the street at the same time now.

Mark Clear said perhaps there could be a raised median at the Spring Harbor Drive pedestrian crossing using a different pavement color treatment, although the colors have to be reapplied every 3 months on average. He said there may be additional compromises available to make the intersection safer for pedestrians to cross the street.

Jackie Csedo and Shary Bisgard will put together a sub-list of committee members interested in putting forth a determined effort to reconstruct/save the tunnel. These members will be asked to go above and beyond the transportation committee time commitment to work with Alder Clear, Dane Co Super Hulsey, KL Engineering, and city staff to make a tunnel at Spring Harbor Drive a reality.

Norman Way and Craig Avenue

Glen Yoerger, city project manager, said Norman Way is far down on the list for installation of traffic signals and it will likely be years before traffic lights will be installed. Mike Bakalars said they are looking at modifications to the intersection since right now buses and large trucks would be unable to navigate a u-turn.

The city will need to acquire right-of-way for Norman Way.

There is much discomfort regarding the current recommendation by the consultants to allow only right turns from Craig Avenue since there are approximately 560 housing units in that area who rely on University Avenue to exit their area. The committee asked the consultants and the city to explore allowing cars exiting Craig Avenue to turn left onto University Avenue as well as turning to the right.

Traffic engineering staff believes reversing Norman Way is a feasible alternative. If the traffic pattern is reversed on Norman Way, that would allow cars from that area to exit to Old Middleton Road. It was agreed it would be very helpful if there was an alternate exit to University Avenue.

Other Issues:

Construction Funds: Mark Clear said an additional \$2.7 million dollars are necessary to reconstruct the road. He and Dane County Supervisor Brett Hulsey will sponsor a TIP amendment which has to be passed by October 2010 if the road is to be reconstructed in 2011. The federal government is paying for half of the costs, with the city and county picking up the other half. \$7.3 million was originally budgeted for this project.

Janet Loewi noted that a Dane County Capital Projects/Equipment Detail Sheet dated 6/14/1999 and completed by John Norwell, then the Dane County Transportation Commissioner, showed that University Avenue reconstruction would have cost \$10.3 million at that time.

Count-down timers will be installed at every signalized intersection on University Avenue as required by the federal government.

Left-turn arrows at signalized intersections will be coordinated.

Right-of-way will have to be acquired at the **Whitney Way** intersection.

Continuous lighting will be installed all along University Avenue.

The consultants are considering allowing u-turns at the intersection of **Tomahawk Trail** and University Avenue.

Madison Metro—the bus stops will be coordinated with pedestrian crossings. The consultants are working with Madison Metro on pull-outs for the buses.

Reconstruction plans must be completed by November 1, 2010.

Construction on this two mile stretch of University Avenue will last from May to November, 2011.

The consultants were asked to provide written answers to each of the SHNA recommendations so they can be discussed at the next SHNA Transportation Committee meeting.

According to Christy Bachman, city engineer, MG&E is not interested in burying the electrical wires along University Avenue.

Mark Clear said University Avenue is the only substandard entry into the city.

There is a possibility of segmenting the work by completing Allen Blvd. to Capital Avenue in 2011 and the rest of the project in 2012. Further discussion on this topic will be at the next Transportation Committee meeting.

With regard to managing traffic spilling onto side streets during construction, Glen Yoerger said the city doesn't typically post sign detours during a construction project but his department is still looking at it. The plan is to maintain traffic through the construction area by providing one lane in each direction and left turn lanes at signalized intersections. He said the bridge will be a choke point for motorized vehicles during construction.

Janet Loewi asked about establishing marked bike/pedestrian crossings on the east side of the Allen Blvd. and University Avenue intersection, where the Asbury bike path comes out. She said in order to cross there to go straight onto Allen Blvd. or east onto University Avenue, walkers and bikers have to go west along University Avenue to the marked crossing, then cross University Avenue north, then cross Allen Blvd east, crossing 5 different landing spots and approximately 10 lanes of traffic in the process.

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be Monday, July 12, at 7:00 p.m. at Dale Heights Church.

(Minutes drafted by Shary Bisgard)