

Greentree Neighborhood Association Meeting
Hallway of Madison Ice Arena
Monday, October 12, 2009

Present: Nancy Priegel, Chuck Kime, Rick Floyd, Danielle Gale, Allen Youngwood, Larry Sperling and about another 13-14 neighbors from the Greentree Neighborhood. Guest presenters included Mr. Larry Barta, District One, Southwestern Wisconsin Project Manager Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, DOT Consultant Jim Old (spelling?) and Jack Bartman (spelling?) transportation modeling consultant.

The main feature of the October meeting was a **presentation from the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation (WISDOT) on a West Beltline Crossing Update**. The meeting was moved from Falk Elementary School to the Madison Ice Arena as a precaution after a reported outbreak of H1N1 flu at Falk School. A formal meeting room was not available at the Ice Arena so the briefing was held at the end of an unheated hallway at the Ice Arena. Our thanks to our DOT visitors for holding this briefing in far less than ideal circumstances.

Mr. Barta distributed a 20-page handout of plan maps and traffic diagrams summarizing the status of West Beltline Crossing studies and options under consideration. Mr. Barta said that a review of through traffic flow on the Beltline between Highway 51 in Monona to the east and Highway 14 in Middleton to the west indicated that side road traffic to the Beltline is largely maximized now and the WISDOT had considered 13 potential grade-separated crossings to go either under or over the Beltline to alleviate traffic flow near this major thoroughfare. Barta said it was clear that the area of the Beltline that showed the greatest projected future growth was the western section from Mineral Point Road north. Two potential crossings had been considered in that area (Blackwolf and Tramore) but were rejected from future consideration due to engineering costs, land purchase costs and development costs. Barta said engineering studies of both the Tramore and Blackwolf crossings showed they could work well to control traffic but it would be hard to connect these crossings because both would involve difficult property acquisitions. A similar proposal for a crossing at D'Onofrio Drive was considered unnecessary because the nearby High Point overpass will be expanded to a four-lane road. The Hammersley Road option would be equally problematic due to business displacements. Other options to the east would generally have little traffic benefits.

Three potential crossings were the subject of tonight's meeting as these three sites fall closest to the Greentree neighborhood: a West Towne-Wal-Mart Crossing, a crossing at Grand Canyon Road that would be an extension and enlargement of an existing bicycle underpass, and a so-called East Watts Crossing.

Barta said that a Beltline Draft Environmental Impact Statement in 2004 had also looked at Beltline crossings and the information presented this evening was the result of a relook and expansion of that 2004 study. He said this study uses traffic modeling prepared in 2005-6 for the MPO traffic model that looked at traffic volumes and projections made before spikes in gasoline prices and the global recession. This look at the Beltline interchanges included modeling work and aerial surveys. Discussions of aspects of the three crossings passing nearest the Greentree Neighborhood area followed. For each of the three following proposals, the WISDOT handouts showed cross-sectional diagrams, aerial and topographic relief of potential routes, as well as projected changes in traffic patterns for the years 2015 and 2030.

The **West Towne/Wal-Mart Crossing** would go under the Beltline connecting the West Towne internal parking lot road near Sears to Watts Road. That connector would go between the parking lots serving

Sam's Club and Wal-Mart. WISDOT believes this route would reduce traffic on both Gammon Road and High Point Road. The route presents some governance difficulties because it would be a public thoroughfare that connects to a private road within the West Towne property. The option behind WalMart probably cannot be engineered to avoid impacting the Timberlake condos.

The Grand Canyon Crossing would follow the existing Struck Street bicycle tunnel route under the Beltline. Barta said the underpass route here would cause some drainage issues that would have to be addressed in project planning. The Beltline profile might need to be raised. Barta said that without considering these improvements the projected traffic increases on Gammon Road would significantly slow down traffic flow and bog down commuting time that would lead drivers to cut through the Greentree neighborhood on a more consistent basis to escape snarled traffic.

The East Watts Road Crossing – would be an overpass from the Research Park area north of the Beltline that would cross the Rayovac (Spectrum Brands) property taking out a portion of parking lot near Forward Drive. Forward Drive would be maintained as a cul-de-sac but would connect to Watts Road. Barta said it appeared this alternative did not fit well geometrically in the available space and would be both expensive and difficult to build as it might encroach too close to existing communications towers (WMTV) and the anchors for those towers. Barta also notes that traffic estimates showed that the Greentree Neighborhood traffic would be most affected by this alternative and that traffic along Hathaway Drive would be expected to at least double if this alternative was developed.

A number of questions were posed by people in the audience as to clarifications on the designs presented, the need for the project based on the Beltline benefits, and questions about the changes in local traffic as presented in the diagrams provided.

Barta said that the timeline for the third phase of this project was proceeding. This meeting was the first for businesses and interest groups potentially affected by the crossing options. WISDOT expects to forward its recommendations on viable crossings after the end of 2009. After the recommendations are forwarded, the WISDOT will consider if funding is available to proceed with anywhere from none to several alternatives. Thereafter cost projections and potential environmental impacts would be studied and the technical projections in the recommendations would get revetted. WISDOT would then make recommendations of which projects should be considered for funding.

Of the three crossings discussed, the East Watts Road Crossing seemed the least “doable” and the Grand Canyon Crossing the “most doable,” though formal recommendations have not been made to date. The documents distributed at the meeting are also available at the WISDOT website.

Treasurer's Report – Mr. Youngwood reported that a GTNA Certificate of Deposit was maturing on November 2nd and would have appreciated to approximately \$2,500. Given current funding balances and projected expenses in the GTNA checking account, he anticipated renewing the CD and adding \$1,500 putting \$4,000 into a CD when it was rolled over.

Halloween Bonfire Planning -- Mr. Sperling reported that planning was well underway, that city approvals to use the park and fire permits had been procured and an article was prepared for the Stump to try and attract event volunteers. A wood supply had been arranged by Ms. Priegel with her neighbor Dave Evans and wood splitting crews had volunteered their time. Mr. Sperling was prepared to buy event supplies and round up volunteers. He had hoped to borrow large five-gallon cambros to serve the cocoa from area businesses.

Crime trends in the neighborhood – Mr. Kime briefly discussed neighborhood trends prepared by the West District. These showed that the Greentree Neighborhood Association service area had experienced an 18 percent increase in calls for police services. Though many of these calls were related to controlling traffic speed and responding to car accident reports there was also minor increases in burglaries, break-ins, auto theft, robbery and family dispute calls. Clearly even within the confines of the neighborhood there are more calls for police assistance and response. GTNA will take on a more thorough review of the provided statistics at the next reporting in January.

Search for Area 11 representation – The search continues for a new area representative to replace Ms. Gale, who will serve until a replacement volunteers to join the leadership team.

Meeting adjourned about 9:25 p.m.