

RECORD OF MEETING

Williston Comprehensive & Transportation Plan Update

Highway 2 Corridor Study Review Committee

June 2, 2009 – 8:30 a.m.

Williston, ND – City Hall

Members in Attendance:

Bob Hansen
Kent Jarcik
Monte Meiers
Glenn Boyeff
Brent Bogar
Walt Peterson
Jack Olson
Stewart Milakovic
Jeff Rodacker
Alan Estvold
Cindy Gray
Peggy Harter

Representing:

City of Williston
City of Williston – Planning
City of Williston – Engineer
City of Williston – Planning Commission
City of Williston
NDDOT – Williston District
NDDOT – Planning and Programming
NDDOT – Planning and Programming
Ackerman Estvold Engineering
Ackerman Estvold Engineering
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.

Introductions

Peggy Harter welcomed the group to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves and state who they were representing.

Highway 2 Alternatives

Peggy Harter explained that a few different alternatives were developed along the Highway 2 Corridor based on the project issues that were previously brought up when we met with this group, and during public input meetings and by local agencies. She stated that the focus of these concept alternatives has been to improve access across Highway 2, and in order to do that along a major highway, that usually means giving up or limiting some access points, and improving upon others in order to retain the function and operations of the highway. She stated that it's important to keep in mind that none of these alternatives are mutually exclusive. In other words, the suggested solutions can be mixed and matched as desired. SRF will have traffic projections within the next few weeks, but in the meantime, we wanted to go over these conceptual alternatives with the group to determine if there are any that should be eliminated or added. A description of each of the alternatives as provided by Peggy and the discussion that took place by

meeting participants is listed below:

Alternative 1

- Highway 2 intersection with 26th Street and 2nd Avenue – Highway 2 becomes a continuous movement separate from the 26th Street and 2nd Avenue intersection. An extension of 2nd Street intersects with Highway 2. The 26th Street and 2nd Avenue intersection remain as a separate intersection. 26th Street would “T” into 2nd Avenue. Monte Meiers expressed that he did not like this proposed configuration for this intersection because it takes one intersection and makes it two. It makes the existing northbound thru movement from 2nd Avenue onto Highway 2 into a thru movement at 26th Street and a right-turn movement at Highway 2.
- Highway 2 intersection with 6th Avenue and NDDOT Entrance – Close 6th Avenue North between 26th Street and Highway 2. This would require relocating the Kum and Go access to 26th Street. Limit NDDOT entrance to a three-quarter access. This would allow northbound right turns into the entrance, southbound left turns into the entrance and right turns out of the entrance onto Highway 2. This eliminates through movements and left turns out of the entrance onto southbound Highway 2. NDDOT is somewhat concerned about limited access but is not totally opposed to it since this concept involves a new access to Highway 2 that would connect 26th Street to 2nd Avenue via 22nd Street E and could include an access into the NDDOT parking lot.
- New roadway extension of 26th Street with full access to Highway 2 – The alignment of the roadway would connect 26th Street to Highway 2, cross Highway 2 and run along the west side of the NDDOT parking lot and turn west and connect into 22nd Street which is an east/west street that has full access with 2nd Avenue. The concern about this alternative is that the proposed roadway alignment cuts through the existing church property and the church is currently expanding their parking lot through this area. SRF will look at other alternatives for this roadway connection that will have less impact on the church property. However, a roadway alignment further west along the church’s property line would lose the connectivity to 22nd Street and 2nd Avenue.

It was stated that the City may not support limiting access at 6th Avenue and Box Elder Street if the new alignment doesn’t connect across the highway. The other concern mentioned is that this would bring more traffic to the 22nd Street and 2nd Avenue intersection. This intersection is not currently signalized and it has a frontage road that parallels 2nd Avenue that could be problematic with increased traffic volumes due to the close proximity of the frontage road to 2nd Avenue. It was also mentioned that this alignment may increase traffic volumes on 22nd Street on the east side of 2nd Avenue, which is a residential neighborhood. Walt Peterson stated that the NDDOT District office site has very poor soil for constructing a roadway.

- Highway 2 intersection with Box Elder Street – Limits access for Box Elder Street to three-quarter access. Once again, this allows left turns onto the side street and right turns in and right turns out. Monte Meiers expressed concerns about further limiting access

across Highway 2 since people are already having problems crossing Highway 2. Peggy Harter stated that the three quarter limited access removes the more conflicting movements which would have to cross both directions of traffic on Highway 2 with the intention of improving safety and forcing those movements to a signalized intersection. Box Elder Street currently has lower traffic volumes and it does not have good connectivity to other roadways either west or east of Highway 2, so it is unlikely that the volumes will have a great increase with westerly growth. Therefore, it is unlikely that the intersection would ever meet signal warrants. Walt Peterson added that a low volume intersection like Box Elder Street is one that NDDOT might consider closing, so limiting it to a three-quarter access may be a good option.

- Highway 2 intersection with 18th Street – Remains a full access, signalized intersection. 18th Street north of Highway 2 currently has a median to limit movements to a frontage road and a credit union access which are located very close to Highway 2. At this intersection we are proposing that these two accesses to 18th Street be closed and the median be removed. The existing median isn't wide enough and there are tire tracks over the median. In order to construct a properly designed median, it would require widening that section of 18th Street. The committee also brought up the option to allow right turns into the credit union access off of 18th Street.
- Highway 2 intersection with 9th Avenue – Remains a full access, signalized intersection. 9th Avenue on the north side of Highway 2 has an intersection with the frontage road that is too close to the highway and this alternative recommends closure of the access to the frontage road. Eliminating the frontage road between 18th Street and 9th Avenue does not appear to have any major impacts to businesses.
- Pedestrian grade separated crossing with Highway 2 south of 9th Avenue – A pedestrian underpass of Highway 2 is proposed south of 9th Avenue. This location has good connectivity between the schools east of Highway 2 and the ballpark and growing residential area on the northwest side of Highway 2. Walt Peterson mentioned that he received a comment at a recent public meeting in support of a pedestrian/bike grade separated crossing with Highway 2.
- Highway 2 intersection with 11th Street – This alternative proposes grade separation of Highway 2 with 11th Street with no ramps. The alignment north of the highway would curve and connect into 14th Street, which connects further north to 26th Street. Monte Meiers thought a different alignment on the north side of the highway may need to be considered since 14th Street is residential and it does not actually have roadway platted all the way to connect to 26th Street. Peggy explained that we didn't show that as an alternative at this time due to a steep grade drop west of the development in that area.

The committee was in support of a grade separated roadway crossing. The committee expressed concerns about Highway 2 going under 11th Street to maintain oversized load height requirements since Highway 2 is the designated truck route. Since no ramps are proposed with this alternative the committee didn't think this would be the best location for the grade separation since it would remove access from Highway 2 to the hospital

south of the Highway. Walt Peterson observed that there is room to lower Highway 2 but it would require storm sewer.

- Northbound Highway 2 alignment moved closer to the southbound alignment north and south of 11th Street so that the intersection of Highway 2 and 11th Street can operate as a single intersection. This would require reconstruction of bridge structure over the creek for the northbound lanes.
- Highway 2 and 2nd Street – Create a new full access intersection with Highway 2 and 2nd Street. Currently all of these movements are handled by several slip ramps. This would allow for the removal of the slip ramps. It is anticipated that this intersection would meet signal warrants with current traffic volumes. Signalization would create a new potential interruption to traffic flow on Highway 2.

Alternative 1A

- Highway 2 intersection with 26th Street and 2nd Avenue – This intersection remains one intersection as it is today with the exception that the southbound to westbound free right turn lane would be improved for truck turns (specifically for those hauling wind tower blades) and a third southbound lane would remain in the southbound direction to relieve merging issues. The third southbound lane on Highway 2 would drop into a right turn lane at Box Elder Street. The committee liked this alternative with the exception that the free right-turn lane improvements would cause removal of the frontage road. With this alternative the committee would like to see the frontage road to remain in place. SRF pointed out that the frontage road could remain in place, but will have impacts to the property in the northwest quadrant of the intersection.
- All of the other intersections shown with this alternative were the same as Alternative 1.

Alternative 2

- Proposed interchange with Highway 2 and 26th Street – The intersection remains between 2nd Avenue and 26th Street, but traffic movements would be different due to the grade separated interchange of Hwy 2 and 26th St. The committee was interested in understanding the directional flow of this alternative. Peggy described the movements in detail, and assured the group that all movements have been accounted for, and the interchange would actually be relatively easy to navigate, especially for drivers heading east and west on 26th Street. This alternative removes the need for existing for 26th St traffic to turn onto and off of Hwy 2 via 6th Avenue. It was noted that the intersection at Highway 2 and 4th Avenue was not changed with this alternative. Concerns were expressed about the SB Highway 2 to SB 2nd Avenue movement. It has become much more complex than simply going straight through the light. Jack Olson noted that this would be a high cost alternative and may not be necessary if a by pass or beltway was proposed or constructed for Highway 2. Jack also wondered if, at some point, an “order of magnitude” type of cost comparison could be made between this and the concepts shown in Alternatives 1 and 1A.

- Highway 2 intersection with 6th Avenue and NDDOT Entrance – Close 6th Avenue North between 26th Street and Highway 2. This would require relocating the access to the gas station to 26th Street. NDDOT entrance would remain a full access. The committee stated that 6th Avenue to the north of Highway 2 is proposed to be closed under all alternatives, which would not be favorable to the owner of Kum and Go. Cindy noted that changes to property access are always an issue with adjacent property owners, and it's seldom possible to satisfy all affected property owners when considering changes of this nature.
- Highway 2 intersection with Box Elder Street – Limited access for Box Elder Street to three-quarter access. This allows left turns onto the intersecting street and right turns in and right turns out. Also the same alternative as shown previously for this intersection. Peggy Harter stated that with the low traffic volumes and the limited potential for the intersection meeting signal warrants, the three-quarter access allows the most access while creating a safer intersection.
- Highway 2 intersection with 18th Street – Remains a full access, signalized intersection. 18th Street north of Highway 2 currently has a median to limit movements to a frontage road and a credit union access which are located very close to Highway 2. At this intersection we are proposing that these two accesses be closed and the median be removed. The existing median isn't wide enough and there are tire tracks over the median. In order to construct a properly designed median, it would require widening that section of the roadway. The committee also brought up the option to allow right turns into the credit union access off of 18th Street.
- This alternative also recommends closure of the frontage road between 18th Street and 9th Avenue. Eliminating the frontage road between 18th Street and 9th Avenue does not appear to have any major impacts to businesses.
- Highway 2 intersection with 9th Avenue – This alternative proposes grade separation of Highway 2 with 9th Avenue with no ramps. The bridge would also include a location for a pedestrian grade separated crossing. The committee was favorable toward this location for a grade separated crossing.
- Northbound Highway 2 and the Highway 2 intersection with 11th Street – The alignment of the northbound lanes is moved closer to the southbound alignment, allowing the intersection of Hwy 2 and 11th Street to operate as a single intersection rather than two separate intersections as required by the current design (one intersection for NB Hwy 2 and one intersection for SB Hwy 2). This would require reconstruction of one structure over the creek. The west approach would curve and align with 14th Street to avoid the steep downhill grade on 11th Street west of the highway. Monte suggested that rather than aligning with 14th Street west of Hwy 2, it might be a better option to run a new street between the creek and the back of the development sites. Cindy stated that SRF avoided that in our concepts due to the steep grade west of the developed property, but it could be considered if this is viewed as a favorable alternative.

- Interchange at Highway 2 and 2nd Street – This allows for the removal of all slip ramps that currently connect Highway 2 and 2nd Street and allows for a continuous flow of traffic. Peggy indicated that SRF tried to maximize the radius of the loops and ROW impacts in our conceptual layout, so it may be possible to actually design such an alternative with less ROW impact. The committee liked this alternative. Once again NDDOT mentioned that it would be higher cost. It was noted that many years back the slip ramps were designed for a future interchange. Walt Peterson will look for this design in their records.

The committee was comfortable with all aspects of the conceptual layouts to be shown to the public at the next public input meeting, with the addition of another option for access between Hwy 2 and 26th Street that has less impact on the church property. Although detailed design won't be completed, the committee thought it would be good to indicate the major differences in cost between some of the alternatives and to indicate the access and property impacts. The committee will not select a preferred alternative until after receiving public input on the alternatives.

Next Steps

- The Comprehensive Plan committee was meeting the same day to approve or make final changes to the future land use plan. Once this is completed future year growth tiers will be determined and the input will be put into the traffic model so that future traffic numbers can be obtained.
- SRF will add some general impact analysis for each of the alternatives prior to showing the alternatives to the public.
- SRF will present and receive feedback on the alternatives at the next public input meeting (approximately in July).
- After receiving public comment, the Highway 2 Corridor Study Committee can meet to select a preferred alternative.
- SRF will do a more detailed preliminary cost estimate and traffic analysis on the preferred Highway 2 alternative.

If there are any additions or corrections to these minutes, please contact Peggy Harter of SRF at (701) 237-0010 or at pharter@srfconsulting.com.

PH/CG