

December 16, 2008

A joint NPC-NBA meeting on transportation issues was held December 16 with eight NPC members/staff and two NBA members (Rylee Wedekind and Steve Nelson) present.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the Northside Neighborhood Steering Committee's preliminary plan recommendations as presented at the December 13 Open House for public input. The results of the group's discussions will be taken back to NPC and NBA so that each organization can decide whether and how to participate in giving input to the Northside plan process.

We also discussed the possibility of NBA and NPC continuing to work together on traffic safety issues in order to express a strong Northside voice to the City. As noted, any decision about cooperation at this level will require each organization's internal approval.

The group reviewed the six preliminary strategies for traffic controls as set forth by the NS Steering Committee. The strategy proposed by the Steering Committee is listed first, with a summary of the NPC-NBA group discussion following each strategy. Maps illustrating a number of the strategies are available on the City's website at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/neighborhoods/northsidePlan/>

STRATEGY 1. Consider widening North Sherman Avenue using Warner Park property to provide enough space for a beautifully landscaped median that serves as a pedestrian refuge, a wider sidewalk along the Park, and mark high visibility pedestrian crossings. (Note: the widening would apply from Northport to Trailway where Ryan Funeral Home is located)

- **AGREE:– Widen Sherman along Warner Park** -- All liked the first illustration showing 4 lanes – two lanes each direction on either side of a median - not the second with lane limitation at Trailway and at Windom. Consider pedestrian activated signal at Warner Park/Northside Town Center entrances crosswalk.

STRATEGY 2. Explore and consider options for reinventing North Sherman Avenue from Commercial Avenue to Sherman Middle School as a “Main Street” improving streetscape design, marking high visibility crossings, and considering bike lanes.

- **MIXED: Explore and consider options for North Sherman** (Commercial to the Middle School) for a “Main Street” Everyone liked road markings for crosswalks and streetscaping (ie: trees, better lighting, banners, hanging baskets, stamped concrete, flower boxes, façade improvements to businesses and houses, Public Art, update sidewalk areas). There was disagreement on bike paths, some felt there should be some – others felt the road too narrow and unsafe.

STRATEGY 3. Explore options for redesigning the intersection of Packers Avenue/County Highway CV/Northport Drive as a roundabout or t-intersection with high visibility crossings for bikes and pedestrians.

- **MIXED: Explore Options for Packers/CV redo** – Some like the roundabout idea but all agreed that the high traffic volume as well as the nearby railroad crossing could cause issues with a

roundabout. More supported the new “T” shaped plan. More info is needed on volume and roundabout with 40,000+ cars using that intersection.

STRATEGY 4. On Northport Drive, consider decreasing three lane segments to two lanes in each direction while maintaining a dedicated right turn lane; mark bike lanes; add bumpouts and parking; mark high visibility crosswalks; widen terrace along sidewalk; and replace existing chain link fence on median with more attractive fencing. (Note: Replace free-flow right turn lane from Northport Drive onto North Sherman Avenue with a dedicated right turn lane coordinated with a traffic/pedestrian light and high visibility pedestrian crossing.)

- **MIXED: Northport Drive** – Most like the proposed concepts except for parking lanes – felt with traffic speeds this would be too dangerous. General agreement that changing the free-flow right turn from NP to Sherman to a dedicated right turn lane using the same light signal could improve pedestrian and vehicle safety. Bike lanes on Northport were discussed and more info is needed re: state requirements for lane widths (6 ft or 8 ft), as well as how bike lanes would relate to parking, etc.

STRATEGY 5: Consider options for improving bicycle connectivity throughout the area and to other parts of the City through such methods as marking additional bike lanes on major and minor road corridors and adding bike path connections including the Hartmeyer and Sherman Flyer bike paths.

- **MIXED: Improve Bicycle connectivity** All agreed on bike paths (Hartmeyer and Sherman flyer) to connect to other city paths. Limited discussion on bike paths on Sherman Ave, again no agreement – expressed NBA’s position of four lanes. It was good for the group to hear Steve’s perspective as a business owner on Sherman on the importance of maintaining traffic volume.

STRATEGY 6: Evaluate bus stop crossings and consider where to retrofit with accessible ramps, high visibility crosswalks, and other amenities.

- **AGREE: Evaluate Bus Stop Crossings** – All agreed this is important with emphasis on shelters and reconsideration of bus stop locations.

In addition to the six preliminary strategies proposed by the Steering Committee, the group discussed several other strategies that were strongly supported by participants in the October 29 NBA-NPC community forum on transportation. We agreed these strategies should also be forwarded again to the Steering Committee for consideration.

- Consider appropriate engineering (example: high visibility crosswalks) and behavior (enforcement, awareness) tools to reduce speed and dangerous driver behavior (red-light running) on N. Sherman while maintaining desirable traffic volume levels.
- Time traffic lights on N. Sherman consistently to provide bigger gaps in traffic and allow pedestrians more time to cross at crosswalks.
- Consider additional pedestrian improvements at all key intersections: better lighting, high visibility crosswalks, islands, signage, flags, etc. Aberg and N. Sherman and Aberg/Huxley are examples.
- Conduct comprehensive planning for N. Sherman and Northport/Packers/CV corridors that combine transportation/traffic safety, economic development, beautification, and other goals