Department of Transportation

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Subject: Clarifications and Responses to the CANA Steering Committee Report.

This memo seeks to clarify and/or respond to transportation elements of CANA's Lake Street Garage Steering Committee Report.

Importance of the Inter City Bus Terminal

Many rely on their car as they travel to other cities to visit family, friends, and services. Yet for those without access to a car, intercity buses are the only available form of transportation. This affects students, of which about 80 percent of the intercity bus clientele near campus is according to carriers. But it also affects other community members without a car, as they cannot visit family that live in other parts of the state. Anecdotally, staff have interacted with riders who used intercity buses to visit incarcerated friends, family who lived in other parts of Wisconsin, and job centers in Milwaukee. Providing intercity transportation to those without auto access is an equity issue. Just as the city provides covered parking, we would like to offer bus patrons with a facility sheltered from the elements that has restroom access.

Intercity bus transportation aligns with City climate goals, in that bus transportation generally emits a third of the greenhouse gases per person as a passenger car.

Because of this, construction of an intercity bus terminal is recommended in the 2017 Madison in Motion Transportation Plan, as well as the 2018 Imagine Madison Comprehensive Plan. Intercity bus service is important in keeping Madison connected to the state and to rail and air transportation.

Intercity bus carriers use bus stops that serve their base ridership. It is important to locate the terminal near their patrons. The City performed two location studies over the past 8 years, and the State Street Campus Garage was identified as the most feasible location for a long term facility. It is central to intercity bus patronage, within a quarter mile of where intercity buses have loaded for decades. Because the city has control of the site and the garage needs reconstruction, the intercity bus terminal can be constructed for less than $2 million. Recent city efforts in purchasing and constructing community facilities suggest an alternate location could exceed $10 million which is not budgeted. An alternate location could require the use of eminent domain, which the City prefers not to pursue.

Use of Hawthorne Court

Emergency Exits – All emergency exits will remain accessible. Some exits will have larger pedestrian areas adjacent to them.

Deliveries and Loading - Hawthorne Court is a fire lane and parking is prohibited. Parking in a fire lane for loading and deliveries is never acceptable. Preservation of this illegal use should not prevent intercity bus use. However, loading and delivery areas are a legitimate need and if not accommodated could impact other services such as the BRT. For that reason the project will create one to two loading bays on University Ave which will provide a legal area for deliveries that do not block a fire lane.

One way Hawthorne Court Use –One-way traffic flow will simplify operations, and provide more pedestrian area. The current width (~16 feet) generally is insufficient for two-way traffic flow and contributes to the current circulation and pedestrian safety challenges on Hawthorne Court. The new Hawthorne Court design will create a wider environment for pedestrians with a dedicated pedestrian zone approximately three times wider than the current sidewalk.

Pedestrian Counts on University Ave – Transportation staff will collect University Ave pedestrian counts in early December. Intercity buses will have to cross the University Ave sidewalk roughly 24 times a day. However, buses regularly operate in areas with high pedestrian activity throughout the City. For example, about 100 buses per day travel on Langdon Street in front of Memorial Union and the campus mall crossing, which has much more pedestrian crossings. Recent pedestrian counts show there are twelve times more pedestrians on Lake Street than Hawthorne Court during the peak daytime hours and three times more during the peak bar time hours.

Parking

The State Street Campus Garage is 60 years old and nearing the end of its life. The City is responsible for its safety and structural integrity. The garage cannot be reconstructed without temporarily eliminating parking. During reconstruction, the City will prioritize transient parking that supports businesses and University events in the Francis Street garage – which is probably sufficient to meet the majority of these needs.

Access to the existing parking lots on Hawthorne Court will remain during construction.

Resident Experience

Residents and intercity buses will need to cross/use the BRT bus lane and unprotected bike lane on University Avenue. This crossing will be necessary for residents with or without the intercity bus terminal. Crossing bike and bus lanes is common throughout the city (Mineral Point Road). The City will seek to provide signage and pavement markings to alert drivers to the shared uses near Hawthorne Ct.

Bus Terminal

Amenities - Bus terminal amenities will be determined during the design phase. The City will seek to provide a terminal that is safe, sheltered from weather, climate controlled, with access to restrooms. The current outdoor intercity bus loading area on Lake Street has none of these amenities.

Crossings - Intercity buses will cross a bike lane, a BRT bus lane, and a sidewalk to access the terminal. This turning movement has been reviewed with turning templates by Traffic Engineering, and some modifications to the curb but will be made to accommodate this turning movement. We have had discussions with intercity bus providers and they did not feel this movement would pose a problem. Many City service vehicles make this movement currently. Buses must cross sidewalks, cross walks, and bike lanes throughout the city and this circumstance is not exceptional. The current circulation proposal will allow intercity buses to use the University/Lake Signal for their through/left movement heading to the east.

Number of Spaces – Preliminary designs provided 4 to 5 spaces for intercity buses within the terminal with traditional pull-in stalls. In discussions with intercity bus providers they specifically asked that the layout be revised to provide a modern pull-through concept with fewer spaces. The providers stated the advantages of pull through movements were more important and that the proposed overflow spaces on Lake Street would accommodate peak periods. The current design provides five bus parking stalls when the two overflow stalls on Lake Street are included.

Queuing that extends to University – Trip generation projections for Hawthorne Court are modest, with traffic projected to be about a quarter to a third of what a typical residential neighborhood street would carry. Extensive queuing is not anticipated. Parking entrances and exits for special events will all occur on Lake Street, simplifying traffic flow. Special event parking flow is a key reason residential parking (Hawthorne Court) was separated from the general parking (Lake Street) in the parking garage design.

Lake Street bus access – As mentioned in the previous memo, three of the four development proposals used Hawthorne Court for bus circulation. The one alternate design that used Lake Street for bus access created twice as many curb cuts and turning movements, with 40 percent of the 260 feet of frontage being devoted to driveways. Lake Street has considerably more pedestrian traffic, which would need to cross the 100 feet of driveways with this alternate design. Similarly, the alternate design had more of the ground floor Lake Street frontage non-activated, which was contrary to the stated activation goal in the RFP. While pedestrian activity on Hawthorne Court does increase during bar time hours, there is only one bus currently scheduled at that time of day.

Conclusion

As mentioned in Transportation's previous memo, while there are challenges associated with the use of Hawthorne Court for intercity buses, the problems associated with alternate layouts that have 4 openings on Lake Street are much greater. Staff believe mitigation measures can minimize or even eliminate the challenges associated with the use of Hawthorne Court while also achieving other key objectives.

The State Street Campus Mixed Use development provides an opportunity for the City reconstruct an aging garage with two-thirds of the cost paid for by TIF and air rights. Without this support, reconstruction of the parking garage would not be possible. The proposed project accomplishes the primary goals set out by the City of Madison RFP including providing transportation and housing, expanding the City's tax base, increasing population density, activating streets and sidewalks, and creating a City-owned bus terminal.