Hometown Neighborhood Working Session #3
Traffic, Transportation & Parking
November 6, 2008
Questions & Answers

Q: Where were the traffic counts taken?
A: The traffic counts were taken along E. North Avenue just west of N. Cambridge Avenue (on the bridge). The traffic counts reflect both eastbound and westbound traffic.

Q: If approved, where would a traffic signal be located?
A: If approved, a traffic signal would be placed at the intersection encompassing E. North Avenue and Cambridge Avenue (both north and south of E. North Avenue).

Q: Are the traffic counts only recent or do they include historic traffic count data also?
A: The traffic counts were just taken, however we have historic counts from nearly 20 years that show that traffic on North Avenue has actually gone done a little bit, which really surprised us.

Q: What is the likelihood that a traffic signal being installed at the "Humboldt side" of E. North Avenue at the Commerce Street intersection?
A: We don't think it's very likely given the location does not satisfy any of the necessary "warrants" that traffic engineers require before recommending installation of a traffic signal.

Q: How would the traffic patterns look with different numbers of students living in the residence hall? What would the traffic patterns look like with 200, 300 or 400 students?
A: The analysis we completed focused only on the proposal incorporating 700 beds. We're very confident that the development can be easily incorporated into the current traffic situation.

Q: What is the ripple effect of traffic in surrounding neighborhoods?
A: Negligible to none. There is a predominant connecting route between the university campus and this location, which uses North Avenue and Oakland. Both of these streets are arterials that serve through traffic as well as local traffic.

Q: Why does the university run shuttles 24 hours per day?
A: We know that students are nocturnal and function on a 24 hour cycle (dinner at 11pm; visiting friends or studying at the library at 3 am, etc.), so providing a safe transit system for them is important. Parents are interested in knowing that their kids will have safe transportation when at UWM.

Q: What are the plans to make the students safe as pedestrians? North Avenue is already a busy street and the Riverview students attempt to run across the street with dangerous oncoming traffic.
A: There will be measures taken to increase the safety of pedestrians and students in the planning process with Mandel Group and the City of Milwaukee. Our traffic analysis emphasizes a balanced system where cars, bikes and pedestrians are all taken into consideration. We believe that we can "calm" traffic by installing the signal at Cambridge and North, and give pedestrians a chance to patronize businesses on both sides of the street.

Q: Did you account for pedestrian and bicycle use in your traffic analysis?
A: Yes, both pedestrian traffic and bicycle use were accounted for in the analysis, and we actually took counts at the same time as we were counting cars.

Q: Does this analysis count the traffic from the residence hall to UW-M or just in the neighborhood?
A: This first analysis was taken of the residence hall's immediate surrounding streets and neighborhood. We followed accepted professional guidelines in sizing the area that we studied.

Q: Do you know specifically how the area will benefit from the residence hall from a traffic perspective?
A: If a traffic signal is installed at the intersection of North and Cambridge, it will provide benefits to the neighborhood. If a traffic signal is not installed, the impact would be negligible, which means that streets intersecting with North Avenue will continue to suffer from unsafe intersecting movements into North Avenue traffic.

Q: Will there be a right turn lane at the intersection if there is a light installed?
A: No, there will be no right turn lane on Cambridge or North. We will have to consider "right turn on red" restrictions for pedestrian safety.

Q: How many trucks will be on North Avenue during peak traffic hours?
A: In our analysis and based on the traffic counts we took, only 2% of vehicles traveling on these streets are trucks. About 50 were counted during traffic peak traffic hours in the AM and PM, including those leaving and entering the paper mill.

Q: Will there be any particular measures taken for the roadways entering into the paper mill?
A: Cambridge is still a public street, however Thomas Avenue was vacated several years ago and is now owned by Wisconsin Paperboard. On Cambridge, we're giving up some of our land so

that the street can be widened and parallel parking added on both sides. We foresee a total of 20 stalls on Cambridge north of North Avenue.

Q: Will there be traffic light sensors at the new stoplight; will it flash at certain times?
A: The traffic light must be synced with the other traffic lights on Oakland Ave.; the City of Milwaukee will decide if the light was to flash at certain times. Generally, traffic engineers like to keep signal operations consistent.

Q: Is there data available in regards to the amount of cars that take a right or left from Cambridge Ave. onto North Ave.?
A: Yes, there is data on those numbers and it will be included in our traffic analysis.

Q: What other measures do you plan to take to decrease traffic and increase safety in this area?
A: There are many "design cues" that help in decreasing traffic. Things such as narrowing the roads, planting greenery in medians, etc., are measures that will be researched to increase safety for pedestrians in the area. A lot of what can be done is beyond our property lines and would need buy-in/support from the BID and neighboring property owners, as well as their investment in the improvements themselves.

Q: Will restricting right on red turns at this intersection increase safety for pedestrians crossing North Ave. due to the imbalance of the intersection on the side of the residence hall?
A: That is something that can be investigated with the City of Milwaukee if the traffic light is approved.

Q: Will there be a bike lane or curb bump-outs for bicyclist safety?
A: Mandel Group only has control of the immediate property around the residence hall; we will try to work with city officials to make the safest environment possible for students, bikers and pedestrians.

Q: What is the likelihood of a signal being installed at the intersection of Cambridge and North?
A: The City of Milwaukee will analyze the benefits and potential dangers of this intersection. They ultimately need to approve the signal. We hope that they interpret our results as we have, and that they will support a light at this intersection.

Q: Have you analyzed how the intersection would function if a traffic signal is not installed?
A: The imbalance of service levels on North Avenue and Cambridge Avenue stay pretty much the same. North Avenue continues to run at a "level of service" A or B, and Cambridge continues to run at D or F. The traffic added by this project is small in comparison to the counts

on North Avenue, so there won't be much change expect for longer queues waiting to intersect into North Avenue.

Q: What will be done to prevent bikers from using the sidewalk as opposed to the bike lane?
A: We haven't seen that pattern in our analysis, but it's something that will be taken into consideration in the planning process with both Mandel Group and the City of Milwaukee.

Q: Will there be any measures taken to control traffic to the west by the Riverview residence hall?
A: As traffic engineers, we see the challenge of justifying a signal at that location. However, if a traffic signal is installed on Oakland and Cambridge Ave, it will provide the opportunity for more gaps at the Commerce/North intersection, and the current situation would be improved at least modestly.

Q: What is the ripple effect on traffic of having 700 students added to this area?
A: Our analysis shows that there is not a huge impact with traffic patterns. UW-M will provide public transportation for students and not all students will have the ability to store a vehicle at the Hometown residence hall. This is really one of the lower-traffic solutions that you can place, in particular as compared to retail or office uses.

Q: What measures are being taken by UW-M to decrease traffic and provide transportation to students?
A: UW-M offers a shuttle service that runs every 15 minutes to take the students to class. They also offer a zip car program which is a car sharing program that allows students to use a car only when they need it. Students are highly discouraged from bringing a personal vehicle to campus.

Q: Where will there be parking for the future retail that will be on the Hometown site?
A: There are 21 spaces for retail on the site set aside for retail, as well as street parking on the North Ave. bridge.

Q: Will there be parking available for student bicycles?
A: Yes there will be about 100 spots for bike parking inside the garage as well as spaces outside the residence hall. We're looking at ways to make more bike storage available through different racking systems, and might even consider a bike-share program if the students find it enticing.

Q: How will the traffic be affected in neighborhoods north of the residence hall such as Riverside?

A: Data has not been collected for those neighborhoods. Given the lack of any destinations in this neighborhood, and the availability of Oakland, North and Maryland to access campus, we don't see a reason why anyone would want to "cut through". It would take them more time. North Avenue runs very efficiently right now, as does Oakland, so it's our opinion that these streets will continue to be the main routes to/from campus.