

Lamers, Brandon - DOT

From: Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 3:56 PM
To: Vieth, David - DOT
Cc: Berens, Jeff - DOT; Hoelker, Michael - DOT; Lamers, Brandon - DOT; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT; Brown, Joel R - DOT; Petersen, Joan; Brad Czebotar; Sen.Miller - LEGIS; Rep.Anderson - LEGIS; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc; DOT DTSD SW Region; Tim Swadley; Jim Hessling; Brian Berquist; Theisen, Steven R - DOT
Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

David,

WisDOT can say all it wants that they have been responsive and included our input, but we remain at odds regarding key parts of this plan. A plan that's now been approved against our urging not to advance because its not ready. We also remain disappointed that our feedback has been ignored to move the project forward on your schedule discounting our Community. There is no trust in this process and it's the choice WisDOT has made to move things forward.

Jeff has reached out for a meeting. I will respond to him and we'll see what the future holds.

Thanks,
Matt

From: Vieth, David - DOT <David.Vieth@dot.wi.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 3, 2020 1:22 PM
To: Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>
Cc: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>; Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>; Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Sen.Miller - LEGIS <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Anderson - LEGIS <Rep.Anderson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc <DOTEXECSecretarysOFC@dot.wi.gov>; DOT DTSD SW Region <swr.dtsd@dot.wi.gov>; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; Jim Hessling <Jim.Hessling@mcfarland.wi.us>; Brian Berquist <brian@tcengineers.net>; Theisen, Steven R - DOT <Steven.Theisen@dot.wi.gov>
Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

Matt,

Thank you for your email and for speaking with me on Monday. WisDOT has continued moving forward with the environmental process for this important safety project. The US 51 Environmental Assessment (EA) was submitted to the FHWA with the preferred alternative as currently designed. The EA was reviewed by FHWA and approved on November 24, 2020. In a bit of a change from what I mentioned on our phone conversation, the legal notice will go out in early January (rather than mid-December) and the 30 day availability will extend into early February. The dates were slid back a bit to reduce the chances that the holiday period might limit opportunities to comment. WisDOT has heard and continues to acknowledge the concerns identified by the Village. The preferred alternative (Alternative H) addresses the purpose and need of the entire 18-mile corridor study and the EA adequately documents the study's findings. As is common in significant, complex projects, there are a number of details to be considered and evaluated as design moves forward, with the ultimate objective of improving safety and addressing the purpose and need for the project as the project moves to final design and then construction.

The signing of the EA does not foreclose opportunities to refine and improve the design as the project moves forward. WisDOT looks forward to the continued discussion of the Village's ideas and concerns as the process continues to move forward. You mentioned that you found in your past experience that regular working meetings were an important part of achieving a successful project and addressing local concerns. I agree and am asking the region team to follow up to schedule recurring meetings with Village officials to discuss project status and possible design refinements. There is significant design effort remaining for portions of the project, and issues that will require further analysis and refinement. For example, the department has already begun discussions of new traffic counts in the Farwell intersection area as well as the use of tethered drones to record traffic circulation in the area. This updated information would be available for use on possible design refinements in final design. We are also awaiting further input from the Village about the possible path under the Yahara River Bridge, and continued input on the intersection control at the Siggelkow ramp terminals to allow for needed design refinements in those areas as part of final design. These village's input will help to guide this to a project that will meet the needs of the public and be a source of pride for the Village and the Department.

As I mentioned in our conversation, it is important to keep this project moving forward to address long standing safety concerns for this important route. We are confident that working together the team will significantly improve the safety and operation of this important corridor. There are processes to help assure those objectives are achieved. Should you feel the department is not listening to the input from the Village, please let me know. The priorities for safety and operation will drive the final product and may not always align with local preferences, yet local input is a key part of finding the right design to achieve the best outcome. Obtaining FHWA's approval on the EA is an important step forward to allow for addressing the needs in McFarland and through the broader US 51 corridor involved in this project. I encourage the Village to continue to engage in the coordination efforts with the department as this project moves forward to final design and construction.

WisDOT has had extensive coordination with the Village over a number of years on improvements for this corridor and plans to continue that through the completion of the environmental process and through final design and construction. We would be happy to set up regular working meetings to discuss possible design refinements to the preferred alternative. I am asking Jeff Berens from the region's project team to connect with you about a reasonable schedule for those meetings to provide ample opportunity to hear input from the Village and discuss issues, and at times that fit well with progress on the project. Expect to hear from Jeff in the next week.

Dave Vieth

WisDOT Division of Transportation System Development
SW Region Director
608-516-6323

From: Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>

Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2020 8:25 AM

To: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>

Cc: Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>; Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Sen. Miller - LEGIS <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep. Anderson - LEGIS <Rep.Anderson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc <DOTEXECSecretarysOFC@dot.wi.gov>; DOT DTSD SW Region <swr.dtsd@dot.wi.gov>; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; Jim Hessling <Jim.Hessling@mcfarland.wi.us>; Brian Berquist <brian@tcengineers.net>; Theisen, Steven R - DOT <Steven.Theisen@dot.wi.gov>

Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

Good morning,

I just want to record for everyone's benefit that there has been no response by WisDOT regarding the message below. I can only assume as a result of this nonresponse that WisDOT intends to advance the Environmental Document for USH 51 without properly taking into account input from the Village of McFarland as it travels through our Community. We do not support this effort nor the plan presented. WisDOT should postpone submission of the Environmental Document until these issues can be resolved.

We would rather be partners in this project but it appears that is not a shared approach. We will continue to demonstrate and persist our opposition to this project by other means until our voice can be heard.

Thanks,
Matt

From: Matt Schuenke

Sent: Wednesday, November 11, 2020 10:44 AM

To: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>

Cc: Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>; Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Sen. Miller - LEGIS <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep. Anderson - LEGIS <Rep.Anderson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc <DOTEXECSecretarysOFC@dot.wi.gov>; DOT DTSD SW Region <swr.dtsd@dot.wi.gov>; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; Jim Hessling <Jim.Hessling@mcfarland.wi.us>; Brian Berquist <brian@tcengineers.net>; Theisen, Steven R - DOT <Steven.Theisen@dot.wi.gov>

Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

Jeff,

The Village is willing to meet with WisDOT if it materially affects the preferred alternative prior to its filing with FHWA. It remains unclear to me if all of our concerns are addressed in the plan to be presented or not, and with the very limited interaction between us again it's hard to be able to see that.

I appreciate your description of the process and the phone call from Brandon, but the truth of the matter is that the preferred alternative being advanced at the end of this month was prepared with little to no input from the Village. Brandon stated that we'll connect more in the design process, but the plan is in place by that point and decisions made without our involvement. Again, using items such as the plan for the Farwell intersection as an example, a layout for this intersection is being included in the EA without our input or consideration of other options. We cannot agree to this layout and the changes associated with it as it creates major traffic issues for all involved. As such this layout gets locked in to the process and deviating from this later becomes impossible. That has been my experience with how WisDOT and FHWA administers an EA after it receives its FONSI. We will remain in opposition until it can be demonstrated that the plan will adequately address the issues we have raised.

If this cannot be done we'll likely need to request the Public Hearing when it comes out, engage the Community and local stakeholders in providing additional feedback as well as further contact Central Office and our Representatives to properly address the points we've raised with this plan.

We could be made available as early as next week. Let us know what dates work for you.

Thanks,
Matt

Matthew G. Schuenke
Village Administrator

Village of McFarland

(608) 838-3153

From: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>

Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 7:04 AM

To: Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>

Cc: Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>; Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Sen. Miller - LEGIS <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep. Anderson - LEGIS <Rep.Anderson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc <DOTEXECSecretarysOFC@dot.wi.gov>; DOT DTSD SW Region <swr.dtsd@dot.wi.gov>; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; Jim Hessling <Jim.Hessling@mcfarland.wi.us>; Brian Berquist <brian@tcengineers.net>; Theisen, Steven R - DOT <Steven.Theisen@dot.wi.gov>

Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

Good morning Matt,

WisDOT anticipates the US 51 Stoughton to McFarland Environmental Assessment (EA) will be signed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in late November or early December 2020. Once the EA is signed by FHWA, there will be an approximate 30-day availability period for stakeholders to review and submit comments on the document.

During the EA document availability period, WisDOT will offer the opportunity to request a public hearing. A public hearing is a more formal event than a public involvement meeting that provides agencies and the public full opportunity to express opinions about the proposed project. If a public hearing is requested, it is anticipated to be held in February 2021, and the document availability period will be extended until that time. WisDOT will accept comment during the duration of the document availability period.

After the document availability period has ended, WisDOT will review all comments received and address any issues or concerns that are submitted. WisDOT will then work towards completing an addendum to the EA, which FHWA will review to determine whether the preferred alternative has a significant impact to the environment. If FHWA determines that the project does not have a significant impact to the environment, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued. At that point, the study will be completed, and the project can move forward into the final design process. If FHWA considers the impacts significant, further study in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be required. Based on analysis and public and agency comments to-date, WisDOT anticipates that FHWA will sign the FONSI in Spring 2021.

As we have previously discussed, items the village of McFarland has identified concerns about will continue to be evaluated and refined as part of the final design process. During the final design process, WisDOT will continue to meet the Village to address comments and issues.

Please provide dates Village staff would be available to meet, and the region will work to schedule a virtual meeting with village representatives to further discuss concerns and the anticipated EA and final design schedule.

WisDOT looks forward to continuing working with the Village on this project.

Sincerely,

Jeff Berens, P.E.
Major Studies Project Manager
WisDOT SW Region - Madison Office

From: Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>
Sent: Monday, November 02, 2020 4:40 PM
To: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>
Cc: Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>; Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Sen.Miller - LEGIS <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Anderson - LEGIS <Rep.Anderson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc <DOTEXECSecretarysOFC@dot.wi.gov>; DOT DTSD SW Region <swr.dtsd@dot.wi.gov>; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; Jim Hessling <Jim.Hessling@mcfarland.wi.us>; Brian Berquist <brian@tcengineers.net>; Theisen, Steven R - DOT <Steven.Theisen@dot.wi.gov>
Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

Jeff,

Will we be able to meet before or after the Environmental Plan is submitted to Federal Highway for approval?

Its not clear exactly what the next steps are in the process given the adjustments made in the schedule to date. Our preference is that we meet before given that there are aspects of the plan that do not adequately address our concerns and if submitted for approval, then the design cannot properly address these aspects which would again elicit an elevated response from the Village to oppose this project. Again though, where we are at within the schedule I'm not as clear on at the present.

Thanks,
Matt

From: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 2, 2020 1:20 PM
To: Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>
Cc: Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>; Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Sen.Miller - LEGIS <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Anderson - LEGIS <Rep.Anderson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc <DOTEXECSecretarysOFC@dot.wi.gov>; DOT DTSD SW Region <swr.dtsd@dot.wi.gov>; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; Jim Hessling <Jim.Hessling@mcfarland.wi.us>; Brian Berquist <brian@tcengineers.net>; Theisen, Steven R - DOT <Steven.Theisen@dot.wi.gov>
Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

Hello Matt,

Thank you for providing comments on behalf of the village of McFarland regarding the US 51 Stoughton to McFarland corridor study.

As mentioned in the Village letter dated October 23, 2020, WisDOT and Village representatives met in December 2019 to discuss the Villages' concerns with some of the design aspects of Alternative H, the preferred alternative for the corridor. WisDOT also provided additional information to the Village in March 2020.

Please know safety is a top priority for WisDOT, and we look forward to continuing to work with the village of McFarland through the final design process to resolve any outstanding issues. We will reach out in the future to schedule a meeting(s) to further discuss these concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeff Berens, P.E.
Major Studies Project Manager
WisDOT SW Region - Madison Office
(608) 245-2656

From: Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 1:48 PM
To: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>
Cc: Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>; Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Sen.Miller - LEGIS <Sen.Miller@legis.wisconsin.gov>; Rep.Anderson - LEGIS <Rep.Anderson@legis.wisconsin.gov>; DOT EXEC Secretary's Ofc <DOTEXECSecretarysOFC@dot.wi.gov>; DOT DTSD SW Region <swr.dtsd@dot.wi.gov>; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; Jim Hessling <Jim.Hessling@mcfarland.wi.us>; Brian Berquist <brian@tcengineers.net>
Subject: RE: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

Jeff,

Please find attached a letter from the Village of McFarland as our updated public comments on the project. Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Matt

Matthew G. Schuenke
Village Administrator
Village of McFarland

(608) 838-3153

From: Berens, Jeff - DOT <Jeff.Berens@dot.wi.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020 10:48 AM
To: Brad Czebotar <Brad.Czebotar@mcfarland.wi.us>; Matt Schuenke <Matt.Schuenke@mcfarland.wi.us>; Hougan, Maria P - MUN <clerktreasurer@pleasantsprings.org>; Gerald Mandli <mandli@co.dane.wi.us>; edmond.minihan@gmail.com; Hasslinger, Cathy - MUN <chasslinger@town.dunn.wi.us>; Ben Kollenbroich <bkollenbroich@town.dunn.wi.us>; clerk@townofdunkirk.com; Tim Swadley <tswadley@ci.stoughton.wi.us>; chair@town.rutland.wi.us; clerk@town.rutland.wi.us; Hanewall, Julie - MUN <jhanewall@townofalbion.net>
Cc: Hoelker, Michael - DOT <Michael.Hoelker@dot.wi.gov>; Lamers, Brandon - DOT <Brandon.Lamers@dot.wi.gov>; Grimes, Jennifer - DOT <Jennifer.Grimes@dot.wi.gov>; Brown, Joel R - DOT <Joel.Brown@dot.wi.gov>; Petersen, Joan <Joan.Petersen@strand.com>
Subject: 5845-06-03 US 51 Stoughton to McFarland: Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has planned a virtual public involvement meeting (PIM) for the US 51 Stoughton to McFarland study. A pre-recorded slide presentation and study exhibits will be available for public viewing on October 6, 2021. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an update and gather input as the study moves toward completion.

I have attached a US 51 summary document that provides general information on the study and the virtual meeting. I have also attached the postcard that is being mailed out to project stakeholders. WisDOT appreciates your interest in the study and looks forward to your input.

Please contact me with any questions about the meeting or the study. Thank you.

Jeff Berens, P.E.
Major Studies Project Manager
WisDOT SW Region - Madison Office
(608) 245-2656

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