Return to table of contents

IV. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Information regarding the project was made available throughout the study through press releases, media articles, presentations, project newsletters, the project email address and the project web page on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's website. Information was received through questions from the email address, comment forms, telephone calls, and verbal inquiries.

A. COMMITTEES

To provide guidance throughout the Needs Assessment Study, two committees were formed – a Policy Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consists of technical resource staff from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, City of Madison, Dane County, Madison MPO, Madison Metro, Federal Highway Administration, adjacent communities, Wisconsin DNR, and Wisconsin DATCP. A listing of the specific members of the TAC is included in Table 2.

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) was established through the City of Madison Mayor's office by resolution, which was approved by the Madison Common Council. The PAC included representatives from neighborhood associations, businesses, adjacent communities, MATC, Madison Transportation Committees and City Alders. A listing of the specific members of the PAC is included in Table 3.

TABLE 2 – TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Christy Bachmann City of Madison	**Johnny Gerbitz** Federal Highway Administration	**Jay Obenberger** WisDOT District 1	**Barbara Feeney** WisDOT District 1
Drew Beck Madison Metro	**Jennifer Grimes** WisDOT District 1	**Marshall Quade** WisDOT District 1	**Kevin Hagen** Graef Anhalt Schloemer & Associates
Jan Bennett WisDOT District 1	**David Huntley** WisDOT District 1	**Robert Reukema** WisDOT Central Office	**Kim Lobdell** KL Engineering, Inc.
Cathy Bleser Wisconsin DNR	**Bob McDonald** Madison MPO	**Mike Rewey** WisDOT District 1	**Gerry Schmitt** KL Engineering, Inc.
Adam Clayton WisDOT District 1	**Peter Nauth** DATCP	**Dave Trowbridge** City of Madison	
Allan Coville Village of McFarland	**Larry Nelson** City of Madison	**Amy Volkmann** Town of Burke	
David Dryer City of Madison	**John Norwell** Dane County	**Gary Weinert** City of Monona	

TABLE 3 – POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

Joe Campana Eastside Neighborhoods Planning Council	**Paul J. Mitchell** Heritage Heights Neighborhood Assn	**Robert J. Schaefer** Ridgewood Neighborhood Assn.
Joseph R. Clausius Clarendon Hills Homeowners Assn.	**Larry Nelson** City Engineering	**Richard Schneider** Glendale Neighborhood Assn.
Judy S. Compton 16th District Alderperson	**Andy Olsen** 15th District Alderperson	**Kathy Soukup** Eastmorland Community Neighborhood Assn.
Robert W. Dye MPO Member	**Warren E. Onken** 3rd District Alderperson	**John J. Theiste** Westchester Gardens Neighborhood Assn.
Randall L. Glysch Carpenter-Ridgeway Neighborhood Assn.	**Wayne Reynolds** East Buckeye Neighborhood Assn.	**Amy J. Volkmann** Town of Burke Representative
David Hooker Manager Parking/Security Services, MATC	**Santiago Rosas** 17th District Alderperson	**Richard Wilberg** Far Eastside Business Assn.
Andrew Kraiss Elvehjem Neighborhood Assn.	**Tim A. Saterfield** Lake Edge Neighborhood Assn.	

These committees met every one to two months to discuss the technical and policy aspects of the study and provide guidance and input to the consultant team. Agendas and minutes of the committee meetings are available upon request.

B. FOCUS GROUP WORKSHOPS

Three focus group workshops were held in the spring of 2002. The purpose of the focus group workshops was to obtain input from the specific groups on perceived problems and issues early in the study process, in a small group format to encourage active participation. Workshops were held for the bicycle and pedestrian interests, neighborhood interests and business interests. After brainstorming sessions on the problems and needs in small groups, individuals were asked to rank the problems and needs in order of priority. Input from these workshops was presented to the advisory committees and incorporated into the identification of needs throughout the study. The problems identified at the three focus groups were consistent with the needs stated throughout the study. The main concerns addressed were the East Washington Avenue intersection, diversion of traffic through neighborhoods, access and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, the congestion at the Buckeye Road and Pflaum Street (and frontage road) intersections, noise, and business visibility and accessibility.

The problems identified at the three focus groups were consistent with the needs stated throughout the study. The main concerns addressed were the East Washington Avenue intersection, diversion of traffic through neighborhoods, access and facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, the congestion at the Buckeye and Pflaum Road (and frontage roads) intersections, noise, and business visibility and accessibility.

C. BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

Individual business interviews were conducted with over twenty businesses located along the project corridor. A letter explaining the background of the study and study process was sent to over 500 businesses in the study area. The letter invited the business to the focus group workshop and asked them to participate in the individual interviews. Businesses that were interviewed represented a range of business sizes, as well as commercial, industrial, retail and office interests. Results were presented at the advisory committee meetings and incorporated into the study.

Three main types of businesses were interviewed along the study corridor – retail, office and industrial. While each group had their own list of concerns and issues, three areas were common to all – the East Washington Avenue/Stoughton Road intersection, the Buckeye/Pflaum and adjacent frontage road area, and the need to plan aggressively to accommodate growth so problems don't get worse. All the groups stated it was very important to let the businesses along the corridor know what was being planned so they are aware of issues that may affect their business and be able to voice their ideas and concerns.

The retail businesses main concerns addressed visibility and congestion. Many felt that the congestion on Stoughton Road discouraged some shoppers from coming into their businesses, yet they liked the high volume of traffic on the roadway because it provided them increased visibility. Businesses located near the East Washington Avenue intersection were concerned about maintaining accessibility when improvements are made. Businesses located near the Buckeye/Pflaum area would like to see improved traffic flow at the intersections with the frontage roads. Because of the close proximity to the main intersections, severe congestion occurs in these areas causing confusion and safety problems.

The office developments along Stoughton Road were concerned that the congestion on the roadway was affecting their ability to attract tenants and workers. Besides the issues common to all three groups they stated that more accessibility needs to be provided to the World Dairy Expo area, currently this is served mainly by the Pflaum Road intersection and problems with weaving movements between Milwaukee Street and STH 30, in both directions. Going northbound on Stoughton Road from Milwaukee Street it is difficult to merge across six lanes to go westbound on STH 30. Going southbound on Stoughton Road from STH 30, the entrance ramp becomes the exit ramp to Milwaukee Street and it is difficult to merge into through traffic.

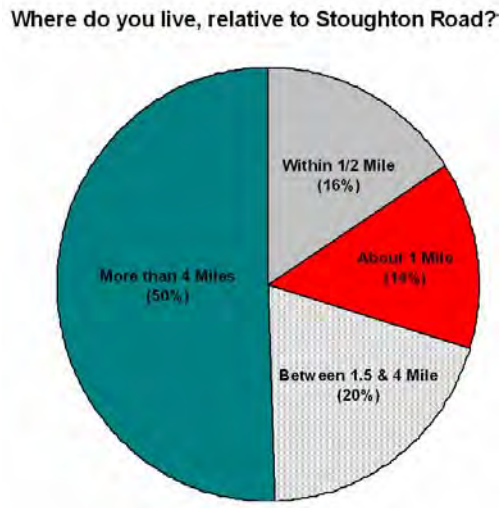
The main concerns of the industrial businesses addressed movement of truck traffic. Many of these businesses had extensive trucking operations that are severely impacted by the ability to get to the beltline (USH 12/18) or the interstate (IH 39/90/94). Some businesses have changed their hours of operation so that the heavy trucking movements can be completed during non-peak times, although they stated that the peak times are expanding because of a heavy flow of traffic over a longer period of time. The main problem in getting access to Stoughton Road from the side roads, particularly at Buckeye Road, Pflaum Road and Hoepker Road. There was also some concern over the increase in truck traffic as the Hanson neighborhood and Marsh areas expand, that will need to be considered in future plans for the corridor.

D. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

A survey was prepared and distributed early in the study process to determine the perceptions of the users of Stoughton Road on the levels of roadway congestion. The survey asked respondents to rate congestion in three segments – the Beltline to Cottage Grove Road; Cottage Grove Road to East Washington Avenue; and East Washington Avenue to IH 39/90/94. The survey was distributed at the workshops, businesses interviews and to customers at Farm-n-Fleet. Close to 200 responses were received and tabulated.

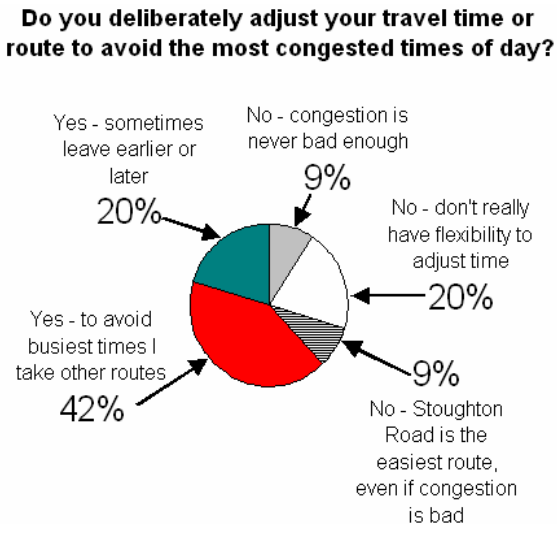
Most of the responses came from people who travel Stoughton Road on a daily basis, and who live more than 1 ½ miles from the project corridor.

EXHIBIT 13 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY



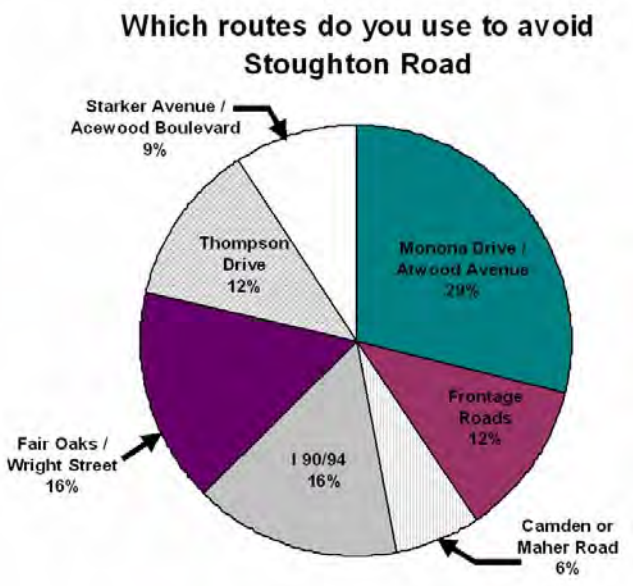
The results indicated that there is perceived congestion on Stoughton Road, with the highest congestion levels in the Beltline to Cottage Grove Road section. One of the most revealing facts of the survey is that over 80% of the respondents stated that they avoid Stoughton Road or adjust their travel time during the most congested times of the day, or would if they had the flexibility to adjust their schedules.

EXHIBIT 14 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY



The survey also asked what other routes do travelers take to avoid Stoughton Road. These results showed diversion to the Interstate, area collectors such as Monona Drive as well as local neighborhood streets.

EXHIBIT 15 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY



E. PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

Near the end of the study process, three public information meetings were held to present the data collected, provide a preliminary assessment of the needs that were identified and the corridor deficiencies. Several potential short-term solutions were also presented. The public was asked for their input on these items and to identify any needs or issues they felt were not addressed in the study. A newsletter was prepared announcing the meetings and summarizing the study progress. This newsletter was mailed to over 16,000 area residents and businesses. The meetings were held at Kennedy Elementary School, LaFollette High School, and the WisDOT District 1 Offices. Approximately 150 people attended the public meetings.

EXHIBIT 16 PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

Exhibits on display included:

- Project aerial
- Historic aerials showing land use and growth
- Historic traffic volumes along the corridor
- Crash maps
- Population and employment growth areas
- Existing and projected PM peak hour levels of service
- Map of roadway improvements for future traffic analysis
- Map of transit and bus enhancements for future traffic analysis
- Maps showing congested roadways – existing and future
- List and illustration of corridor deficiencies
- List and illustration of potential short-term improvements
- Exhibits of several potential short-term improvements

Handouts that were available at the public meetings included the Goals and Objectives, Frequently Asked Questions, Project Contacts, the newsletter, and comment forms. A 13-minute project video, summarizing the study results, was prepared and shown at the information meetings.

Over 40 written comments were received at the information meetings. The comments were reviewed, summarized, distributed to the advisory committees, and incorporated into the study as appropriate. Responses were sent to individuals who asked specific questions.

F. PROJECT VIDEO

A project video was prepared near the end of the study process. The 13-minute video presented information regarding why Stoughton Road is being studied, why it is important, traffic congestion and safety issues, pedestrian and bicycle issues, neighborhood issues, projected growth and change in the study corridor, and where the study goes next.

The video was shown at the three public meetings and was made available to all advisory committee members, neighborhood associations in the study area, and adjacent local governments. Copies of the video are available upon request to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Return to table of contents