

NEWSLETTER

March 2003

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation and KL Engineering, Inc. are completing a needs assessment for Stoughton Road (US 51). A needs assessment is an analysis of the existing and future conditions of the project area. The study is identifying existing problems along the corridor and looking at the impact that growth on the east side of Madison will have on the route.

The Stoughton Road Needs Assessment covers a 10-mile area from Terminal Drive/Voges Road in McFarland through the Cities of Madison and Monona to I 39/90/94 in the Town of Burke (see map).

Existing problems and future needs are being addressed in this phase of the study. Some short-term solutions may also be proposed.



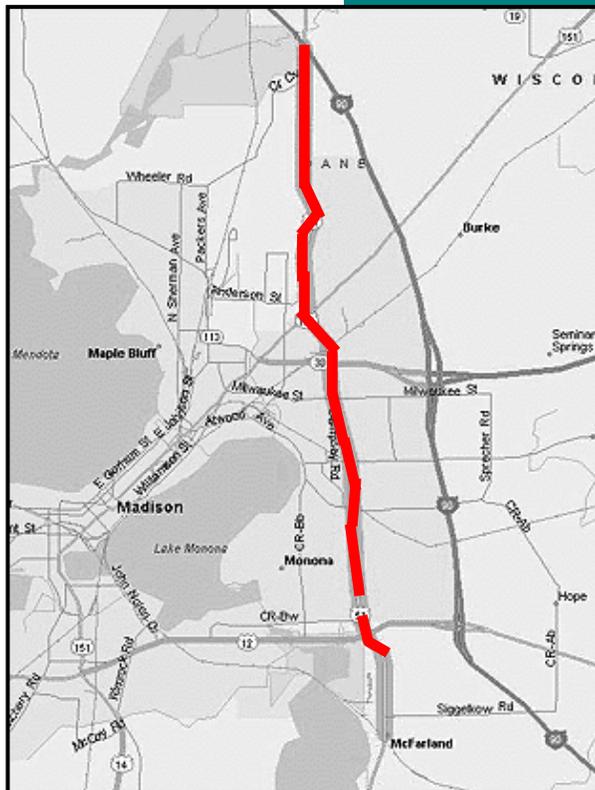
Why is Stoughton Road Being Studied?

The entire project area has never been addressed as a whole, although several improvements have been made to different areas of Stoughton Road at different times. The speed limit changes several times and some sections are built as expressways. Other areas are signalized and operate as local roadways. This study is considering the needs of the entire corridor at the same time.

High traffic volumes and traffic congestion. This is especially evident during the morning and afternoon rush hours. The roadway is at a point where small incidents can cause large traffic delays. Several intersections have high crash rates.

Development plans for Madison's east side and nearby communities. Currently the roadway handles vehicles with a diverse mix of commuter, local, and inter-regional destinations. Expected development in the area will greatly increase traffic levels.

Barriers to pedestrian and bicycle travel. Several schools and points of interests are located on one side of Stoughton Road while developments are located on both sides of the roadway. The existing roadway is very wide at key intersections, making it difficult for bicycle and pedestrian traffic trying to cross the roadway. The City of Madison places a high priority on maintaining bike and pedestrian accessibility and improving safety.



U.S. 51 Stoughton Road Needs Assessment

Public Involvement

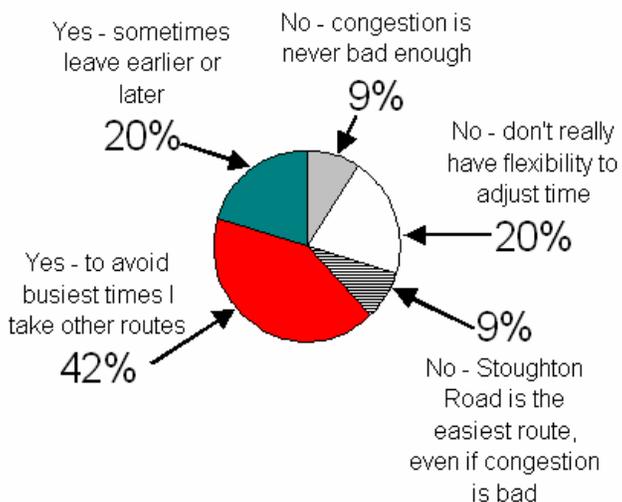
Since the study began in late 2001, an extensive public outreach program has been on-going. Two advisory committees, technical and policy advisory committees, have guided the process. The technical advisory committee consists of engineering, planning and administrative staff from the communities of Madison, Monona, McFarland, and Burke; Dane County; the Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; Madison Metro; the Federal Highway Administration; the Wisconsin DNR; the Wisconsin DATCP, and the WisDOT.

The policy advisory committee includes elected officials and representatives of neighborhood groups, schools and businesses along the corridor. The purpose of the public outreach program is to obtain input and opinions from everyone impacted by the roadway and to share information with the community about the existing and future condition.

In the Spring of 2002, workshops were held for neighborhood representatives, business representatives, and bicycle and pedestrian representatives to discuss issues and concerns along the corridor. Individual interviews were conducted with a variety of businesses in the corridor.

A public opinion survey was distributed along the corridor to obtain input and perceptions of the congestion along Stoughton Road. The results indicated that there is perceived traffic congestion along the route, especially between the Bellline and Cottage Grove Road. The chart below also shows that there is a significant volume of traffic that avoids Stoughton Road during these peak times. Monona Drive, I90, Fair Oaks Avenue/Wright Street, and several local roadways were indicated as alternative routes.

Do you deliberately adjust your travel time or route to avoid the most congested times of day?

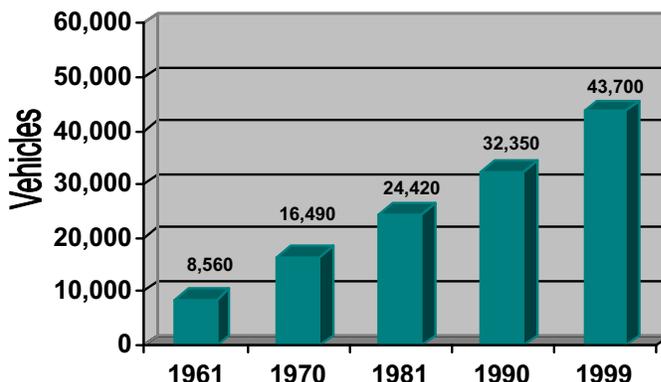


The final tasks in the public outreach plan include three public information meetings, presentations to adjacent municipalities and committees, and the preparation of a project video.

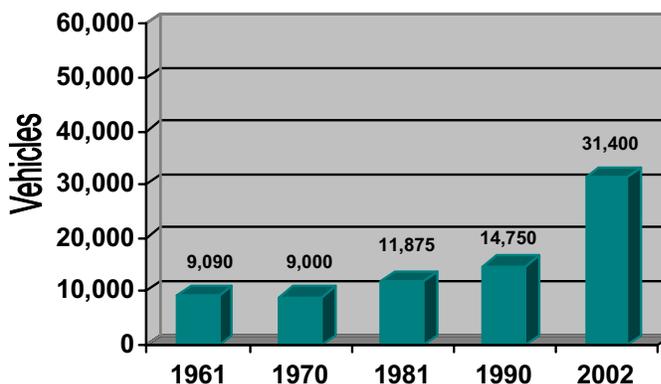
Existing Traffic Conditions

Traffic along Stoughton Road has increased dramatically in the last 20 years. The following charts show the increases in traffic south of Buckeye Road and north of East Washington Avenue from 1961 to 2002.

South of Buckeye Road



North of East Washington Avenue



Stoughton Road & E. Washington Avenue Intersection

U.S. 51 Stoughton Road Needs Assessment

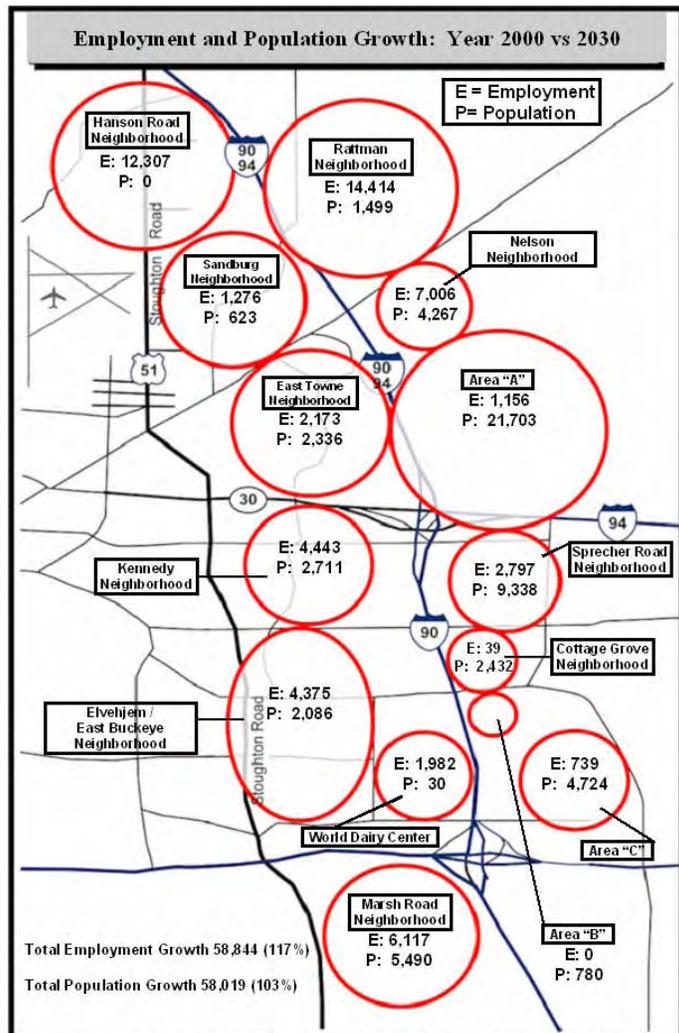
Future Growth & Traffic

Future traffic conditions were projected based on the population and employment growth expected to occur by approximately 2030. In addition, planned roadway improvements included in the current Transportation Improvement Plan were assumed to be completed by 2030. These include:

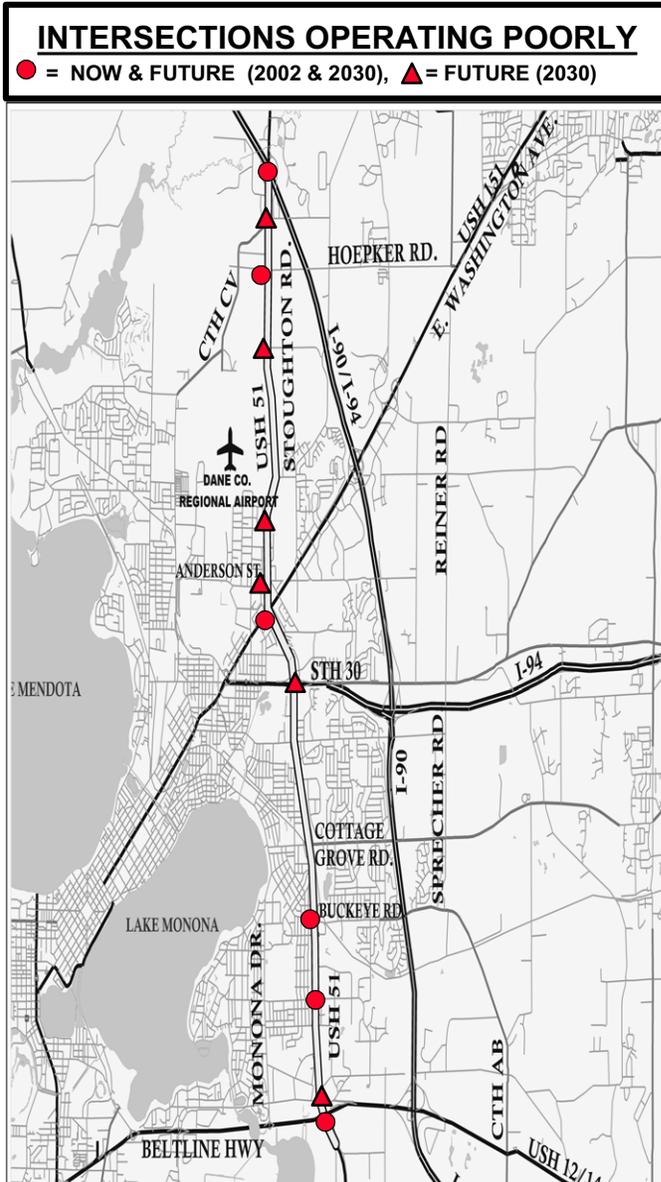
- expansion of US 151 from Madison to Sun Prairie to six lanes
- expansion of I94 east of I39/90 to six lanes
- construction of a new four-lane arterial on Sprecher and Reiner Roads from US 151 to US 12/18
- expansion of Lien Road from N. Thompson to Reiner
- expansion of Cottage Grove Road from S. Thompson to Sprecher
- extensions and capacity improvements to several two-lane collector streets.

The future year scenario also includes implementation of commuter rail and expanded bus service as envisioned in the Transport 2020 initiative.

The population and employment growth assumptions are shown on the maps below.



Source: East Side Arterial/Collector Roadway Needs Study, Madison MPO, April 2002 (Updated with Census 2000 data)



The map above shows the intersections that are operating poorly now and 2030 based on the traffic analysis. Several of these locations also have high crash rates.

Next Steps

Wisconsin Department of Transportation is working closely with the City of Madison and other local communities to determine what the next steps will be. After the completion of the public meetings, a technical report and executive summary will document the data collected and analyses completed for the Stoughton Road corridor. If the study identifies possible short-term, low-cost solutions, these will be implemented as soon as possible. If the changes required to meet the roadway needs are of a larger scope and cost, an environmental evaluation will be conducted.

For more information about the study, visit the website, www.dot.wisconsin.gov in the "Plans and Projects" section.



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U.S. 51 Stoughton Road Needs Assessment



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

Three public information meetings will be held to present the preliminary findings of the Needs Assessment. All meetings will present the same information, please attend the meeting that is most convenient for you. **The meetings will be an Open House format from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

Dates and Locations:

April 7, 2003

Kennedy Elementary School
 Gymnasium
 221 Meadowlark Drive, Madison

April 9, 2003

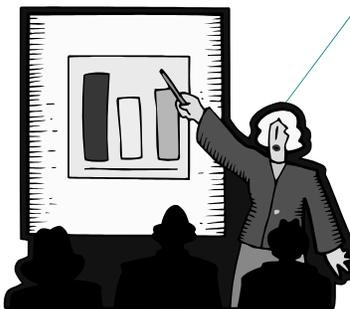
LaFollette High School
 Cafeteria
 702 Pflaum Road, Madison

April 10, 2003

WisDOT District 1 Offices
 (1/4 mile north of MATC)
 2101 Wright Street, Madison

Information Available at the Public Meetings:

- Historic Traffic Volumes
- Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes
- PM Peak Hour Intersection Operations
- Crash Maps
- Historic and Current Aerial Photos
- Population and Employment Growth Areas
- Corridor Needs and Problems
- Potential Short Term Improvements



All meeting locations are wheelchair accessible. A sign language interpreter will be available upon request by calling the WisDOT District 1 Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (608) 246-5385 or contacting one of the project managers.