

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date	January 26, 2009
	Agenda Item No. 61 Roll Call No. <u>09-</u> Communication No. <u>09-031</u> Submitted by: Jeb E. Brewer, P.E. City Engineer	

AGENDA HEADING:

Authorizing notification of the City’s preferred alternative for the Southeast Connector.

SYNOPSIS:

Authorizing notification to the Iowa Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration of the preferred alternative identified as the “Yellow Alternative” for the Southeast Connector that extends from S.E. 12th Street and travels along an alignment mid-block between Scott Avenue and E. Market Street until it reaches the city-owned rail right of way. The alternative then follows the former rail right of way southeast before turning east near Pleasant Hill Boulevard. From there, the alternative travels a short distance to the east where it reaches the existing U.S. 65 Bypass interchange at Vandalia Road. The Federal Highway Administration will include and take into consideration the City’s notice of its preferred alternative, among all other public comments submitted during the comment period, when the Administration approves the Final Environmental Impact Statement and issues the Record of Decision for this phase of the Southeast Connector project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$102 million total estimated cost (2014 dollars)

Funding Source: To be determined. Anticipated funding sources include City, State, and Federal funding.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

On March 7, 2005, by Roll Call 05-531, City Council approved the professional services agreement for the Southeast Connector. Federal funding for the project became available in June 2005. In cooperation with City staff, the consultant team has performed the required environmental studies, engineering reviews, analysis, and public involvement process. There have been two public open houses, two drop-in centers, several business meetings, five project advisory committee meetings, as well as meetings with the federal, state, and local resource agencies.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southeast Connector project has been approved by the Iowa Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration for public distribution and review. The DEIS describes the project and compares alternatives with anticipated impacts. The project consists of a new arterial roadway that will traverse the southeast quadrant of Des Moines in order to meet the current and future needs of the traveling public and business community between S.E. 14th and U.S. 65. The Southeast Connector will provide a safe, efficient, and direct route from downtown Des Moines to the U.S. 65 outer beltway on the southeast side of the Des Moines

Metropolitan Area. The DEIS describes how alternatives were developed, considered and ultimately narrowed down to the two alternatives further evaluated.

The two alternatives are referred to as the Yellow Alternative and the Brown Alternative, and are described as follows:

The Yellow Alternative extends from S.E. 12th Street and travels along an alignment mid-block between Scott Avenue and E. Market Street until it reaches the City-owned rail right of way. The alternative then follows the former rail right of way southeast before turning east near Pleasant Hill Boulevard. From there, the alternative travels a short distance to the east where it reaches the existing U.S. 65 Bypass interchange at Vandalia Road.

The Brown Alternative generally travels along Scott Avenue to approximately SE 22nd Street where the roadway shifts further south to CB&Q Street and continues east past the south side of Sunset Beach Lake where it meets a city-owned rail right of way. This alternative then follows the former rail right of way southeast through a salvage yard to Vandalia Road and then runs along Vandalia Road until it reaches the existing U.S. 65 Bypass interchange.

The Yellow Alternative has been recommended by the City's Engineering Department and consultant engineer as the preferred alternative for the following reasons:

- Addresses the project's purpose and need most effectively
- Provides a more direct east-west route between downtown Des Moines and the U.S. 65 Bypass
- Allows for future business access and development on both sides of the corridor and does not require new right of way to be purchased along Scott Avenue because of the mid-block design between Scott Avenue and E Market Street.
- Uses city-owned property (former rail corridor) that already intersects the Chesterfield Neighborhood.
- Provides opportunities for economic development in the neighborhood.
- Avoids the cost of going through the salvage yards and allows Vandalia Road to be an alternate route.
- Improves emergency access to the project area by providing a continuous east-west connection with a reduced number of at-grade rail crossings and eliminating the possibility of a landlocked situation for the area south of Vandalia Road.

This current Council action will authorize the Engineering Department and the City's consultant engineer to notify the Iowa Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration that the City of Des Moines' preferred alternative for the Southeast Connector project, of the two options presented in the approved DEIS for the project, is the Yellow Alternative. This notification will then be evaluated and considered by the Federal Highway Administration during its review period of public comments on the project DEIS. Following said review; the Federal Highway Authority will review and approve a Final Environmental Impact Statement and issue a Record of Decision. At that time, the City will also be authorized to proceed with its own actions necessary to approve the project based on the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: March 7, 2005

Roll Call Number: 05-530

Action: Approving items regarding Southeast Connector Project: Execution of Iowa Department of Transportation Agreement. (Council Communication No. 05-098) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Date: January 15, 2009

Roll Call Number: N/A

Action: Informational presentation to the Plan & Zoning Commission

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Approval of Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision, in addition to normal Council actions on projects, including funding in the Capital Improvement Program, grant applications and agreements, professional service agreements, property acquisition and construction contracts.

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