

AGENDA

**CITY OF HOPKINS
CITY OF MINNETONKA**

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2004

6:30 P.M.

**HOPKINS ICE ARENA PAVILLION
11000 EXCELSIOR BLVD., ROOM 201**

1. Introductions
2. Joint discussion regarding Shady Oak Rd. between Excelsior Blvd. and Hwy. 7
3. Adjournment

Date: December 3, 2004

To: Mayors and City Councilmembers of Hopkins and Minnetonka

From: Jim Kerrigan, Hopkins Director of Economic Development and Planning
Steve Stadler, Hopkins Public Works Director
Lee Gustafson, Minnetonka City Engineer
Ron Rankin, Minnetonka Community Development Director

Subject: Joint discussion about upgrading Shady Oak Road between Excelsior Boulevard and Highway 7

Background

Mayor Anderson and Mayor Maxwell have scheduled a joint meeting of the two city councils because of the importance of upgrading this section of Shady Oak Road, and especially because of likely opportunities for the renovation and re-use of property along Shady Oak Road. Having this joint meeting, and perhaps others to follow, offers the city councils the chance to collaborate on a vision for the Shady Oak Road area.

Hennepin County currently has this project in their capital improvements program to begin in 2008, right after the reconstruction of Shady Oak Road from Bren Road north to Excelsior Boulevard. Hennepin County and our two cities have known for some time that the road needs to be upgraded, and that it is a fairly complex project, for several reasons:

- The severe angle of the Shady Oak Road intersection with Highway 7 slows turning movements and greatly increases the backup of vehicles on Shady Oak Road.
- Curves on the road need to be straightened, and this will require some significant property acquisitions.
- Wetlands border portions of the road and will be affected by changes in alignment and widening.
- On-street parking for businesses at the south end will likely be eliminated.
- This section of Shady Oak Road traverses both cities, making collaboration important.

Both city councils have initially agreed that this is “more than just a road improvement project”, and deserves careful planning and implementation. Hennepin County has worked with Hopkins and Minnetonka on the design engineering, has set up a contract with Hoisington-Koegler for a land use analysis, and has helped the cities outline a public input process. The county is very interested in facilitating a process that will result in a successful project.

Below are sections that discuss each of these aspects of the project, and pose questions for joint discussion and feedback to help guide the process.

Geometric Options

Hennepin County has hired WSB and Associates to assist them with traffic forecasting and alignment options. The first issue WSB was directed to review and provide recommendation on was the 20-year traffic forecast, because the roadway section needs to carry the 20-year design volume. WSB evaluated both a 3-lane and a 4-lane section in their analysis, and their results concluded that a 3-lane section would fail at the Main Street intersection because of the lack of through traffic capacity in one lane. The traffic simulation clearly showed northbound traffic backing up into the Excelsior Boulevard intersection with a 3-lane design, while the 4-lane section functioned adequately under all conditions. WSB also evaluated the difference in width requirements between a 3- and 4-lane section and determined that the width difference did not significantly impact the project limits. Staff from both cities therefore believes the 4-lane section should be recommended to their respective city councils for consideration.

There are several layouts for potential alignments along this corridor. The alignments can essentially be separated into options for the north half, and the south half. Staff has determined that there can only be one alignment through the “duck pond” area due to the need to minimize wetland impacts on both sides of the road. As such, the duck pond area acts as a hinge point in the roadway allowing alignments from the south half to be combined with different options from the north half.

Discussion Question: Do the city councils agree that the four-lane section should be used for the county’s roadway design and alignments?

Property Impacts

In connection with the roadway planning, and at the request of Hopkins and Minnetonka staff, Hennepin County has hired Hoisington-Koegler to work with the cities on a land use analysis. The purpose of this study is to examine the impacts of roadway alignments on nearby properties. In some cases, right-of-way acquisition might take entire properties, or in other cases, leave remnant properties that might be combined for re-use. Both cities feel an early study of these potential impacts is important.

In the commercial area south of Main Street, where many businesses are close to the existing road, there needs to be a careful examination of how vehicle access, parking, and building entrances will be affected by the reconstruction of Shady Oak Road. The land use analysis will offer an opportunity to look at these issues, and their likely impacts, sooner rather than later in the process. Staff views the study as an important tool in looking at the effects of the roadway alignments on the properties near Shady Oak Road.

Discussion Question: Do the city councils agree with looking at various options for the north and south halves of this roadway, to work with Hennepin County on a land use analysis of the roadway impacts, and to identify the potential for renovation and re-use of property?

Public Input Process

Hopkins and Minnetonka staff have been working closely with Hennepin County to develop a thorough public input process. Staff is intending to begin the process with a public kick-off meeting, hosted by Hennepin County, after the city councils have held this first joint meeting on the preliminary layouts and land use analysis idea. Public input would likely be in the form of additional open houses, targeted neighborhood meetings, and public workshops with commercial property owners and tenants, probably starting in January.

Discussion Question: Do the councils agree with staff's approach to obtaining public input?

Next Steps:

Following council direction, staff will prepare an agenda for a public kick-off meeting that is tentatively scheduled for early January, prior to the start of the land use analysis. The agenda would include background information, process updates, and opportunities for public input. Staff does not intend to review specific roadway layouts or preliminary property impacts at this first public input meeting. Specific information related to these issues will be discussed at later meetings.

By sometime in March, initial results of the land use analysis will be available for review at another joint meeting of the city councils. That meeting will be an important step in constructing a shared vision for this area.