

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Wendy Rampson, Planning Manager
Nathan Voght, ReImagine Washtenaw Coordinator

SUBJECT: Response to Questions regarding DB – 1: ReImagine Washtenaw Corridor Improvement Study

DATE: February 16, 2015

City Council will consider a resolution of support for the ReImagine Washtenaw Corridor Improvement Study at the meeting of February 17, 2015. Councilmember Lumm forwarded to staff a number of questions about this study, and this memorandum responds to these questions.

Study Background

The ReImagine Washtenaw Corridor Improvement Study evaluated Washtenaw Avenue from the Stadium split in Ann Arbor to Cross Street in Ypsilanti. The stated goals of the study are:

- Expand multi-modal transportation choices
- Increase pedestrian safety and experience
- Improve streetscape and non-motorized infrastructure
- Enhance transit service operations and facilities

The specific elements identified to accomplish these goals include:

- Provide the communities along Washtenaw Avenue with right-of-way needs for identified improvements
- Recommend proposed road cross sections for development nodes and links between nodes
- Identify suitable transit Super Stop locations and develop concept plans for each one
- Identify suitable pedestrian improvements including midblock crossings

The study included a traffic analysis conducted by the project's transportation consultant, Parsons-Brinkerhoff. VISSIM 5.40 software was used for the traffic operations analysis. VISSIM is a dynamic microsimulation model, where traffic movements are modeled using geometric parameters, traffic volumes, vehicle types, intersection control, and driver behavior and interaction. VISSIM can provide Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) such as vehicle delay, travel time, queuing, and fuel consumption on a network-wide basis, so that the effects of improvements at a single location may be measured throughout the network. VISSIM is used as a tool for testing and comparing alternatives to determine the most effective combination of elements in facilitating traffic flow. In addition, the VISSIM model can test subtle changes to the

roadway system, such as adjustments in traffic signalization, changes in transit operations, and the addition of lanes.

Questions

Responses to the questions submitted to staff are provided below.

1. Q: On weekdays between, say, 7 am and 7 pm, what percentage of the cars and trucks on B I-94 are coming from or going to US 23? Did the traffic study measure this basic feature of Washtenaw? If not, why not?

A: The traffic analysis for the study (Appendix C of the report) included an existing operations analysis as a baseline for measuring the effectiveness of the future design alternatives. Existing AM and PM peak traffic data for the following Ann Arbor intersections were included in the consultant's VISSIM models:

- Washtenaw Avenue and Huron Parkway (Primary Study intersection)
- Washtenaw Avenue and Pittsfield Boulevard
- Washtenaw Avenue and Yost Boulevard
- Washtenaw Avenue and SB US-23 to WB Washtenaw off-ramp
- Washtenaw Avenue and NB US-23 to EB Washtenaw off-ramp

The existing AM and PM peak hour traffic volumes were obtained from Synchro models provided by MDOT. The data used in these Synchro models were collected during a signal optimization project conducted within the last five years. The interchange counts are contained in the model, but not in the traffic study documentation, so we cannot provide a specific number in response to this question.

2. Q: Did the authors of the report ever survey or observe the businesses along Washtenaw to estimate what percentage of their customers arrive by personal motor vehicles and what percentage of foot, bike or bus? If not, why not?

A: The study scope did not include a survey of businesses to determine the percentage of customers, employees, or delivery vehicles that arrive by different modes of transport. The model did take into account existing bus routes through the study area, which were coded into the VISSIM models. The model does not incorporate pedestrian or bicycle trips, which currently are a small percentage of the total.

3. Q: Where would auto and truck traffic be rerouted if changes to Washtenaw were to slow down the flow of traffic even further? Have there been any studies of the impact of increased traffic flow on those alternative routes? Have there been any efforts to determine the opinions of the businesses and neighborhoods along those alternative routes? What would be the impact there on pedestrian and vehicular traffic?

A: The Study does not propose to reduce capacity from Washtenaw Avenue; rather the recommendations anticipate future improvements that can shift low-occupancy vehicle traffic to high-occupancy vehicle traffic, such as buses. The Study provides future Complete Streets cross-sections for each jurisdiction that is part of ReImagine Washtenaw initiative. Any future changes to the roadway will take detailed transportation analysis by MDOT to ensure that traffic and intersection performance is not unreasonably impacted.

4. Q: Did the RW study attempt in any way to find out where the customers of the businesses on B-I-94 live and therefore how far they have to travel to shop there. Did the study attempt to find out how people actually get to the businesses along the avenue by car, by truck, by bus, by bike, or on foot? If so, the results are not mentioned in the \$3 million report. If not, how can the planners attempt to impose a plan on an area whose fundamental characteristics they do not know?

A: The cost of this Study was approximately \$255,000, which was funded as part of a larger \$3 million HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. Given the lack of complete sidewalks, no bike lanes, and general observation, it is clear that many of the current users of the corridor are in vehicles. However, the Washtenaw Route 4 has the highest ridership of any AAATA route, and many transit riders board and de-board in this segment of Washtenaw to access jobs, shopping and nearby residences. For the purposes of this study, knowing the exact distribution of modes of travel by users of the corridor was unnecessary.

5. Q: How many of the existing businesses along B-I-94 can survive primarily on neighborhood customers who walk or bike there? Are there any plans to help existing businesses survive if there is less motorized traffic seeking to patronize them? What kinds of businesses does the plan foresee as replacing those that rely so heavily on customers arriving by car?

A: There is no plan to forcibly remove vehicular traffic from the roadway. Rather, as land use changes incrementally occur over time, access to commercial businesses is improved (for instance, through consolidation of curb-cuts), public transportation becomes more frequent and convenient, and more people choose alternative modes of transportation, such as biking, walking and public transportation, a “mode-shift” will occur. There will be no reduction in the overall capacity of the corridor to “move” people as a result from providing additional modes of transportation along it. In fact, overall capacity may *increase*, if those that choose modes of transportation other than the car are provided reasonable access to use the corridor.

6. Q: How does B-I-94 compare with other major AA streets for the average and the peak hour volumes of traffic? Is it the street in town with the heaviest volume of traffic? If not, how does it rank?

A: Listed are recent counts of combined two-way average daily traffic (ADT) for several major arterials, reported in the SEMCOG traffic database:

- South State – North of I-94 – 47,700
- Washtenaw – East of Huron Parkway – 45,200

- Ann Arbor-Saline – Northeast of I-94 – 32,000
- Jackson – West of Maple – 29,000
- Packard – West of Easy – 26,500
- Plymouth – West of Nixon – 24,700
- Geddes – West of Earhart – 20,000
- Ellsworth – East of State – 19,000

7. Q: Are there any credible plans for reducing the volume of private motor vehicles on Washtenaw-short of so strangling traffic flows that customers will shop elsewhere, businesses will close, and commuters will seek jobs in other places? There is talk in the plan of more transit, mixed use development, and greater density in housing (check this/). The theory seems to be that many people who live outside Ann Arbor but work within it will move into these projects, sell their cars, and take the bus to work. But is there any empirical evidence that this will work on anything like the needed scale? Won't many of these same people keep their cars and drive along Washtenaw to work when they are in a hurry and drive to the many destination shopping sites along Washtenaw and beyond? And won't this increased housing density only increase the amount of vehicular traffic on the avenue?

A: There are numerous examples around the country of corridors that have moved from a vehicular-dominant environment, to a more multi-modal corridor, with increased use of alternative modes of transportation. There are a variety of key elements that have driven corridor transformation and increased use of alternative transportation in this examples. Washtenaw Avenue shares some of these key characteristics:

- The corridor is a major connector between the two primary urban areas in the County, and that also provides access to multiple anchor institutions at either end and a freeway interchange in the middle.
- Some of the most-dense housing is already located along the corridor, and has improved in quality over time. So, with additional types of housing provided, with easy access to efficient transit, additional people will be drawn to the corridor that use transit.
- The corridor already has the highest transit ridership of the entire AAATA system, and has increased 40% between October 2011 and October 2014, so more people are already choosing transit over private vehicles.
- Increasing property values, demand for housing, and general economic prosperity is expanding outward from Ann Arbor, which will encourage investment along frequently used corridors that provide good access, including Washtenaw Avenue.

The impact of reducing congestion on the corridor through simple access management improvements cannot be understated. Using an example of a shopper seeking to go to the bank, McDonald's and then Arborland, the current configuration where each of these businesses has individual curb cuts generates 4 "trips" on the roadway, where if a site access were combined to allow that same individual to access the same businesses without having to re-enter Washtenaw Avenue, the number of "trips" has been reduced by 50% to 2.

8. Q: We frequently hear complaints that potential shoppers shun Washtenaw because of the terrible traffic conditions. Have you done any surveys to determine the attitudes of shoppers in different parts of the city and beyond?

A: There were no surveys of shoppers conducted as part of this Study, although input opportunities were provided on-line through an Ann Arbor Open City Hall topic and through 5 public meetings throughout the corridor. Given high parking lot utilization at businesses along the corridor, the low number of vacant storefronts, and the status of Arborland as the third largest taxpayer within the City of Ann Arbor, these anecdotal comments do not seem to support the perception that people are avoiding the retail in this area.

9. Q: The build-up-to-the-street philosophy has already been imposed on the developer of Arbor Hills Crossing and of a gas station along Washtenaw outside the city. How are such impositions consistent with the desire stated in the plan to have wider rights-of-way that might be eventually used for designated bus, bike and pedestrian lanes? Aren't these two goals in the plan directly contradictory?

A: The Corridor Improvement Study was conducted for exactly this purpose – to make sure as new buildings are proposed, the City has a clear “future right-of-way line” from which to measure setbacks. This line also provides the City with an opportunity to acquire additional right-of-way when projects are going through the site plan approval process. The study identifies the space that will be needed within this future right-of-way to accommodate the current number of vehicle lanes, in addition to cyclists, and walkers.

10. Q: Isn't there another contradiction? If somehow developers are pushed into creating more "mixed use" projects along Washtenaw, won't the increased number of residents along the avenue add to the numbers using their cars to reach destinations outside the project, increasing the number of driveways, cars and needed parking places. Even if some of the new residents may operate without cars, is there any reason to believe that others will bring their cars with them-increasing, rather than alleviating, the serious traffic problems along Business I-94?

A: Please refer to the responses provided for Questions #5 and #7.

11. Q: The report offers no numbers on the ways that shoppers along the Ann Arbor portion of Washtenaw get from home to the businesses they support – by bus, bike, walking, or motor vehicle? Why were there no studies of this vital statistic? Can a report claim to be at all realistic if it operates in ignorance of the actual uses of the avenue it seeks to "reimagine"? What are your best estimates of who actually uses Washtenaw for shopping?

A: Please refer to the responses provided to Question #4, 5 & 7.

12. Q: How many of the existing businesses along B-I-94 are of a sort to survive primarily on neighborhood customers? For example, are there any other large toy stores in Ann Arbor

besides Toys 'R' Us? Are there any other book stores east of downtown besides Barnes & Noble? Are there any other bookstores that large?

A: The scope of the Study did not include a commercial retail analysis of the area in the way presented in the question.

13. Q: What is the percentage of car ownership in each of the adjoining and nearby neighborhoods?

A: Vehicle ownership within the corridor is provided in table from the 2010 U.S. Census, below:

Vehicle Available within a Quarter Mile of Washtenaw Corridor by Block Group		
	Number of Households	Percentage
Total	10582	100%
No Vehicle Available	1009	10%
1 or More Vehicle Available	9573	90%
Total Owner occupied	4317	100%
No Vehicle Available	76	2%
1 or More Vehicle	4241	98%
Total renter occupied	6265	100%
No Vehicle Available	933	15%
1 or More Vehicle	5332	85%

14. Q: The plan includes wider and more numerous medians. Would this improve the traffic flow along B-I-94 or make slow traffic even slower? What evidence do you have for your conclusions on this?

A: The Median U-Turn Intersection Treatment (MUTIT or “Michigan Lefts”) is one of the few infrastructure approaches short of adding travel lanes that could improve level of service for cars and pedestrians in this segment of the corridor. According to a [FHWA research brief](#), MUTITs can provide the following benefits:

- Reducing signal phases at the intersection provides increased capacity for the MUTIT in comparison to the conventional intersections. The capacity increases are typically in the range of 20 percent to 50 percent.
- The total network travel time savings can and usually does outweigh the additional travel time required for left-turning vehicles from the major road and cross street for corridors with the MUTIT compared to conventional intersections.
- The safety performance of MUTIT is better than conventional intersections because they have fewer vehicle-vehicle conflict points. Typical total crash reductions range from 20 percent to 50 percent.

- Head-on and angle crashes that have high probabilities of injury are significantly reduced for the MUTIT compared to conventional intersections.

In addition, medians will provide opportunities for midblock pedestrian crossings, in addition to aesthetic enhancements.

15. Q: If there were more numerous and wider, greener medians along Washtenaw, who would maintain them? (Certainly not MOOT, which has never helped to maintain even the existing medians.

A: Medians may contain low-maintenance landscaping, such as rain gardens, or can be decoratively paved. Maintenance of landscaped medians would need to be addressed at the time they would be planned for installation.

16. Q: On page 28 the report quotes someone called the "National Complete Streets Coalition" as saying, "Streets are streets for everyone." The report concedes that "Washtenaw Avenue is (a) state trunkline called M-17; it is also a designated truck route." Why are there no trucks shown in the futuristic drawings of the future Avenue? Is there no contradiction between being a "designated truck route" and a "complete street"?

A: The proposed vehicular lanes of 11 ft. were reviewed and conceptually approved by MDOT and will accommodate truck traffic. While mixing truck traffic with bike lanes is not ideal, they can reasonably co-exist with good design.

17. Q: Can you give some examples of where the Complete Street idea you envision has actually been created? What was the street like before the conversion? Are there any examples of streets that are major arteries for cars, trucks, and emergency vehicles? Did any of them entail the tearing down of all or sets of existing buildings? If so, what was the condition and use level of those buildings before and after the conversion?

A: City Council adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2011, which guides planning and design for Ann Arbor streets. Many other Michigan communities have also adopted Complete Streets policies, and planning for all legal modes of transportation is considered a best practice. It also makes Ann Arbor more competitive for scarce state and federal funds.

Reimagine Washtenaw was inspired in part by the multi-jurisdiction planning effort to improve Michigan Avenue between Lansing and East Lansing. On a much larger scale, communities along the Gratiot Avenue corridor in Wayne and Macomb counties are working to implement complete street initiatives to stimulate redevelopment. In all of the three examples noted, the focus is first on infill development – converting underused parking lots and vacant lots to businesses – and secondarily on making sure any buildings that are torn down are replaced with buildings that further the vision for the corridor. Huron Village and Arbor Hills Crossing shopping centers are recent examples of redevelopment of underutilized or autofocused sites in the Washtenaw corridor.

18. Q: Can all streets and highways be equally "for everyone?" Should US 23 itself be converted into a "complete street"? How about I-94 itself?

A: US-23 and I-94 are limited access highways, which have legal limitations for the type of traffic allowed to use them.

19. Does the plan still envision the creation of a Corridor Improvement Authority to capture state and federal grants-or could Ann Arbor separately ask for any grants to improve traffic flow or other goals along its portion of Washtenaw?

A: The plan does not make recommendations for funding. At the point where a specific infrastructure investment is proposed through the City's CIP, the City may apply for federal or state funding on its own, or in coordination with the other jurisdictions, depending on the project. A Corridor Improvement Authority is not required for grant applications, but is one tool, among many, that can be used to implement the goals of ReImagine Washtenaw. If City Council determines that a CIA is desirable, Ann Arbor could join with the other ReImagine Washtenaw communities to form a multi-jurisdictional CIA, or it could form one by itself for just the portion of the corridor in the city.

20. Q: The poster for the project said, "Reimagine Washtenaw envisions Washtenaw Avenue as a walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly street." Yet for many who might otherwise shop on Washtenaw, it is essentially undrivable for many hours of the day. Why didn't the objectives for the study include as a major goal making it a more drivable street?

A: The study addresses vehicle capacity and safety in the Traffic Volume Reduction Strategy section (see Page 82). Recommended actions include:

1. Pursue a multi-faceted approach that includes:
 - Transportation mode shifts
 - Traffic diversion
 - Transportation Demand Management (e.g., staggered work hours, carpooling, transit)
 - Park Once (e.g., service drives, sidewalk connections)
2. Establish a proactive stakeholder subcommittee to advance traffic volume reduction strategies.

Through gradual mode-shift, access management improvements, and employment of other strategies that may reduce traffic congestion, such as Transportation Demand Management, the future corridor will provide a much better driving (and walking/biking) experience.

21. Q: Alternatively, quote the four goals list on p. 7 of the report itself: "Expand multi-modal transportation choices; Increase pedestrian safety and appearance; Improve streetscape and non-motorized infrastructure; Enhance transit service operations and facilities." None of the goals was providing a better experience for drivers or a smoother traffic flow.

A: Please refer to the answers to Questions #14 and #20, above.

22. Q: Similarly, the report complains (p. 50) that "traffic congestion affects service reliability" for buses. But why is there no discussion about how the same congestion affects drivers of cars, trucks and emergency vehicles and forces potential customers of Washtenaw Avenue businesses to take their cars and their dollars elsewhere? The several solutions proposed include, "Transit signal priority, queue jumps and transit-only lanes" to "improve the reliability of the (bus) system and further increase ridership." But won't each of these "proposed solutions" only make congestion worse for drivers of cars, trucks and emergency vehicles?

A: It is well known that traffic congestion affects drivers. The section including the discussion on Page 50 of the Study was on "Transit." Implementation of most of the transit improvements mentioned would not adversely affect vehicular flow. The implementation of a transit-only lane is a long-term option that would only be implemented if the resulting capacity were still adequate to reasonably move vehicular traffic.

23. Q: The report includes the vision for bus-only lanes for the entire corridor," (p. 56) and on the Ann Arbor portion both a "buffered bike lane" (p. 35) and "a wide median" on the Ann Arbor portion of Washtenaw (p. 34). Can all of these possibly be done without reducing the number of lanes for private vehicles, which are already facing intolerable congestion? Can even one of these be implemented without further congesting the avenue?

A: The City of Ann Arbor cross section and images shown on Pages 38-40 of the study call for all of the modes of transportation mentioned, without any reduction in the number of vehicular lanes.

24. Q: A major goal of the report is "to assemble public access throughout the corridor... as property develops," primarily through "voluntary easement, donation or outright purchase" through negotiations with developers. (p. 83) Having more easements along the avenue might provide more room for all the dedicated lanes the plan envisions, but aren't the planners already compromising this prospect by insisting that new developments be as close to the sidewalk as possible as has occurred with the Arbor Hill development?

A: Please refer to the answer provided for Question #9. In the case of Arbor Hills Crossing, the current MDOT right-of-way line is at the curblineline of the street. As part of the site plan review process, the City was able to obtain an additional 22-foot easement that now contains a public sidewalk and bus bay.

25. Q: We keep wondering what the report proposes to do with all the private vehicles that now make Washtenaw so congested with traffic. One phrase the report uses is "traffic diversion," which "considers an individual's route select preferences based on congestion and time to arrive at their destination." (p. 84) Isn't this just another way of saying that, if the plan succeeds in creating even more traffic congestion along Washtenaw, motorists may be

forced to shift to alternative routes? Wouldn't this entail driving greater distances than at present to reach the same destinations with a corresponding waste of time and gasoline?

A: We know that diversion is already occurring due to congestion, today. Predictions of general background increases in traffic volume suggest additional diversion. If the land use, access, transit, and cross-section improvements are effectively implemented over time, diversion rates may decrease. Additional traffic analysis will be required to better determine diversion rates at the time the improvements are proposed.

26. Q: The report suggests that "major alternative east/west routes for the use of Washtenaw Avenue include Packard Road to the south and Clark Road/Huron River Drive to the north." (p. 84) Have you any evidence to suggest that the infrastructure of Hogback, Clark, Huron River Drive, Platt, and Packard can handle such increased traffic flows? Don't these suggestion only apply to motorists travelling between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti? Do they have anything to do with the needs of motorists travelling to and from US 23, either as a link to destinations to the north and south, or the motorists using 23 to get to and from I-94 as a link to Detroit and the many destinations in between?

A: Washtenaw Avenue is a piece of the overall transportation system in the region, and as such, impacts and is impacted by many different factors. The traffic analysis conducted for this study was informed by the WATS County-wide transportation model. Decades of transportation studies have recognized the strong east-west travel demand over the US-23 corridor, including Plymouth, Fuller/Geddes, Huron River Drive, Packard and Ellsworth. Changes to any of these corridors affect the traffic on others as drivers adapt to their specific travel demands.

27. Q: The report also talks about "mode shifts" to reduce automobile travel by making "transit and non-motorized travel" more attractive. The only example it cites is AAATA's "transit service improvements in the Washtenaw Avenue corridor." Will any of this significantly reduce traffic by those using Washtenaw as a shopping destination or those using Washtenaw as a link to US-23? Is there any efficient way to take Packard instead of Washtenaw as a link to 23 or 94? If so, what is it?

A: As public transportation becomes more efficient and convenient, and as the predicted demographic trends of lower car ownership become more prevalent, and as more diverse housing is provided along the corridor to draw from more diverse market segments, mode-shift will continue to occur. Making transit more attractive is only one of many factors that will drive mode-shift.

28. Q: At the end of the report, there are numerous citizen comments listed that describe the main problem of Washtenaw as being traffic congestion and suggesting that many of the proposals in the report will only make it worse. For example: "I avoid driving on it as much as possible," reflecting a reality that is very bad for the businesses along the avenue. (p. 95) Or: "Washtenaw is a thru roadway, not a neighborhood. Please don't reduce lanes for any reason like bike lanes because they are not really needed. It is a through road." (p. 96)

"What is most frustrating is that it takes 10 minutes to drive 2 miles." (p. 96) "The new design does nothing to reduce the big problem: traffic volume. Please do not tell us the bus lanes will fix that because commuters going to Livonia/Northville/Neve will NOT opt to take a bus." (p. 100) "I think maintaining traffic flow (5 lanes) and speed (45 mph) are imperative. People have places to go, and things to do. Walking and biking are fine, but the vast majority of people (read: taxpayers) travel by car, and will continue to do so." (p. 101) Why did these legitimate citizen concerns receive so little consideration in the report? Why does the ideological view expressed at the Planning Commission--that every street should be a complete street--take precedence over the felt needs of the majority of actual users of Washtenaw? Don't the majority of the users of Washtenaw want to keep it to use the disparaging term of the report--"auto-centric?"

A: The concerns expressed by the public involved in the public participation process were understandable and considered. There sometimes is a general misunderstanding that the Study calls for unilateral reduction in travel lanes to provide for walking and biking. This is not what the Study recommends. The Study is careful to assert on each jurisdiction's cross-section page (35, 39, and 43) that "All of these strategies would require more detailed design analysis, justification through traffic studies and coordination with MDOT."

29. Q: The City built a bike path along Washtenaw from Tuomy to Whole Foods. It was supposed to increase the number of shoppers biking and walking to businesses like Whole Foods. Has it actually reduced the number of shoppers biking and walking to businesses like Whole Foods? Has it actually reduced the number of those driving in to that shopping center? What are the numbers:

A: The City conducted a 12-hour pedestrian and bicycle count on the south side of Washtenaw at Stadium on June 24, 2010. There were 49 pedestrians and 56 bicyclists in that period. The bicyclists were evenly divided going eastbound and westbound; 6 of them were in-road, the rest were on the shared use path. The observers noted that most of the cyclists appeared to be commuters.

The shared use path on the north side of Washtenaw was completed in Fall 2011. Staff was unable to locate counts in time for this response, but we will forward this information if it is available. It should be noted that shared use paths are used by the community for a variety of purposes, not just shopping. Examples include access to bus stops, commuting to jobs or school in or near the corridor, traveling to dining and entertainment, visiting friends and neighbors and exercising. Prior to the construction of the Washtenaw Avenue shared use paths, all of these activities were limited and potentially dangerous due to the lack of a safe facility.

30. Q: At the insistence of the city Planning Commission and staff, the developer of Arbor Hills Crossing shopping area several of the stores – including Arhaus – were built close to the highway to create "increase walkability." Arhaus has a door that opens to the sidewalk along

highway rather than to the parking lot. What percentage of customers come in from the parking lot, what percentage walk in from the highway?

A: City staff does not do counts of non-motorized trips to specific businesses, rather it does counts at key intersections. The Arbor Hills Crossing site plan was designed with the intent to provide convenient access: Arhaus is easily accessible by car from the parking lot, and also by employees or shoppers who arrive by bus, by bike, or on foot.

31. Q - If you cannot answer such practical, real-life questions, how can you presume to impose a plan with the same ideology on the remaining businesses on the highway?

A: To remain competitive in the face of demographic and cultural changes, businesses all over the country are recognizing the need to tap into the demand for “walkable urbanism.” It would be irresponsible for our development regulations to continue requiring a pattern of development that is becoming economically irrelevant.

32. Q: Michigan Left Turns – Are there less intrusive alternatives than Michigan lefts for vehicles seeking to make left turns onto Washtenaw? For example, could service drives be created that shunt drivers wishing to turn left onto North-South streets like Huron Parkway, Chalmers, and Pittsfield, where stop lights would permit them to turn onto Washtenaw without intruding into traffic flow?

A: Access management techniques such as shared services drives (which exist now on the south side of Washtenaw) can certainly help. However, these could potentially introduce more delay into the traffic flow on Washtenaw, because the north-south traffic signals would need to be timed to allow the pooled traffic to clear. As noted in the response to Question #14, Michigan Lefts can provide relief to congested corridors.

33. Q: City-owned land along B-I-94 – The city apparently owns a long stretch of off-road land – considered a service drive – on the south side of B-I-94, between Huron Parkway and Yost or Pittsfield. Shouldn't the plans make full use of this land for pedestrian, bike or bus traffic before making encroachments on the number or width of lanes now used daily by dozens of thousands of cars, trucks and emergency vehicles?

A: Again, the Corridor Improvement Study does not recommend reducing the travel lanes on the Ann Arbor segment of Washtenaw Avenue. The service drive right-of-way is under the jurisdiction of the City of Ann Arbor and MDOT, and currently provides a number of businesses with off-street parking. In the near term, City staff is exploring the feasibility of narrowing the parking lot aisle in this area to create a shared use path along the northern edge of the parking lot, connecting from Huron Parkway to Yost. In addition, AAATA is in the design phase to improve the bus stop at Pittsfield and Washtenaw, adjacent to the service drive, to become a “Superstop”.