

County studies transit needs near UMore



Thursday, 09 April 2009

by Jessica Harper
Thisweek Newspapers

As plans move forward to turn UMore Park into a community of approximately 30,000 people, local officials are studying how they can improve roads in the area to meet future needs.

“We want something we all can agree on,” said Brian Sorenson, a Dakota County transportation engineer.

Dakota County officials are studying Highway 3, county roads 42, 46, 81 and 50, and other roads in between.

County officials expect the study will help them create a road map for a future transportation system that will accommodate increased traffic and development in the area, Sorenson said.

Traffic is expected to increase significantly on these roads in the next 20 years.

According to county estimates, County Road 46 is expected to have the largest jump in traffic volumes, nearly tripling from 8,300 vehicles per day in 2007 to 20,000 in 2025.

Per-day traffic volumes on county roads 42, 66, 81, and 79 are expected to increase as follows from 2007 to 2025.

- County Road 42: 17,900 to 25,900,
- County Road 66: 3,300 to 6,200,
- County Road 81: 660 1,000, and
- County Road 79: 350 800.

“The existing model does not consider the UMore Park development, so actual traffic may be much heavier than predicted in 2025,” Dakota County Transit Planner Scott Peters said.

County officials are in the process of updating data to obtain more accurate information, he said.

In the meantime, officials hope that by completing the road study, they will determine how to meet future traffic demands while accommodating future developments like UMore Park.

County officials are specifically examining how to do the following in a way that will accommodate plans for UMore Park and the Vermillion Highlands, a wildlife management area:

- Connect county roads 79 and 71 in Rosemount;
- connect Biscayne Avenue and County Road 73;

- realign County Road 46 and connect it to various city streets; and
- create a road to Vermillion Highlands.

Officials are also exploring the possibility of creating a new road connecting county roads 42 and 50 between Highway 3 and County Road 81.

This would fill a four-mile gap between Highway 3 and County Road 81, Peters said.

In addition to road connections, officials plan to study how public transportation, wildlife areas and trails could be expanded in the area.

The study will look at how the county can protect nearby wildlife areas and wetlands while improving its roads.

Although Dakota County is leading the study, Rosemount, Empire Township and University of Minnesota officials are involved to ensure the plan is compatible with their development plans.

In addition to conducting its study and creating a plan, county officials have been gathering public opinion.

Officials met with residents April 1 to discuss the study and address residents' questions and concerns.

County officials will present various transportation options to residents in June, Sorenson said.

A draft of the transit plan is expected to be completed by November.

E-mail Jessica Harper at:
jessica.harper@ecm-inc.com

Comments (0)

Write comment

[Close Window](#)