

March 27, 2019

«AddressBlock»

Dear Coon Rapids resident:

For many years, the City of Coon Rapids has sought to provide additional access to Trunk Highway (TH) 610 near Coon Rapids Boulevard. Currently, only westbound on-ramps and eastbound off-ramps to and from TH 610 exist at both East River Road and Coon Rapids Boulevard. You may have heard there are plans for the expansion of access points to TH 610, and we want to inform you of the preliminary nature of these plans.

Background Information

The City studied several design concepts for full access at Coon Rapids Boulevard between 2011 and 2014. Page 1 of the map attachment enclosed (labeled as Alternative 2 design of March 2011) shows the preferred design at that time, and the plan was submitted to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)/Metropolitan Council Interchange Review Committee. That group determined the plan did not meet their qualifying criteria and suggested a range of options for future consideration.

2018 Advancements

In 2018, Anoka County was awarded federal funds to construct a grade separation (overpass) of Foley Boulevard over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) railroad tracks. This project is scheduled for construction in 2021. As preliminary design work for this project began, several layout alternatives were identified and reviewed as it relates to the overpass. During this process, the full access interchange to TH 610 was reviewed again, in an effort to ensure the Foley overpass project would not deter future construction of providing additional eastbound access to TH 610. It was around this time that the City acquired vacant land on the corner of Foley Boulevard and Coon Rapids Boulevard to allow for the potential future TH 610 access ramps.

As the Foley Boulevard overpass design process advanced, it became apparent that the previous preferred design for an interchange at TH 610 and Coon Rapids Boulevard presented several challenges (in addition to the Interchange Review Committee denial from 2014). County and City staff began working with separate consultants to investigate other options that could provide full access to 610 between Coon Rapids Boulevard and East River Road, and allow the Foley Boulevard overpass project to move forward.

2019 Advancements

In early 2019, the alternative design on page 2 of the attachment enclosed with this letter was

developed, which has been determined to be the best solution to date. It allows the Foley Boulevard overpass project to advance, and appears as though it may meet the qualifying criteria of the MnDOT/Metropolitan Council Interchange Review Committee. This new alternative was presented to the Coon Rapids City Council and Anoka County Board in February, and both governing bodies pledged general support for the project. No formal action, however, was taken on the design plan by the Coon Rapids City Council or the Anoka County Board. Once this project is further along, and if it meets the criteria of the MnDOT/Metropolitan Council Interchange Review Committee, there will then be future opportunities for public comments and feedback about the proposal.

In March, this new plan was formally submitted to the MnDOT/Metropolitan Council Interchange Review Committee for consideration. City staff are currently awaiting a hearing on this matter and we do not know when that hearing will take place. Only after the hearing will City staff know if the new concept meets the required criteria of the Review Committee.

To see this newest design plan in more detail than what is provided on the attachment to this letter, please visit www.coonrapidsmn.gov/610proposal. The large PDF online will allow you to zoom in, and view the proposed design in more detail.

As previously stated, the Foley Boulevard railroad grade separation (overpass) project (primarily the yellow roads on attachment page 2), which is being led by Anoka County, has full funding and construction is planned to begin in 2021. A public open house will be scheduled for the project in the near future. While the Foley Boulevard overpass project is moving forward with construction, it does not mean that the TH 610/East River Road full access interchange (primarily the green roads on attachment page 2) is approved or included as part of the overpass project. These are two separate projects.

City staff will continue to investigate and consider all options related to expanding access to TH 610 that are in the best interest of the City's transportation goals, residents, local businesses, and the traveling public. As more information becomes available, we will share it with you, and you are always welcome to contact me directly at 763-767-6494 or thimmer@coonrapidsmn.gov.

Sincerely,



Tim Himmer
Public Works Director