

## **Prospects Brighten for Highway 310 Upgrade**

Members of the City Council Public Works Committee and City staff attended a meeting on March 14 at the County Highway Commission offices, where representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation provided an update on the status of future plans for State Highway 310 between Two Rivers and I-43.

### **Near-Term Improvements to Address Safety**

In the near term, DOT and all of Manitowoc County share concerns about safety along STH 310 between the Interstate and Two Rivers. That stretch of highway qualifies as one of the “top ten” stretches of highway in the state, in terms of the number of accidents.

We learned that these concerns will be addressed within the next couple of months, with the installation of four-way stops at 310’s intersections with CTH R and CTH Q. Plans call for plenty of advance warning for motorists on 310, informing them of the new stop signs along the state highway.

In 2009, WisDOT plans to replace the four-way stops at R and Q with roundabouts, which will be designed to accommodate large truck traffic, and will be well-signed and lighted to help motorists use them efficiently and safely.

In 2011, when the State plans a maintenance paving project on STH 310 from I-43 to the Two Rivers city limits, a third roundabout is planned, to replace the existing four-way stop at 310 and CTH B.

### **Longer Term Planning Includes Possible Upgrade to 4 Lane Highway**

The 2011 paving project should have a useful life of 8-10 years, according to WisDOT. That means that Highway 310 will be due for some more significant rebuilding in 2019-21. The State is carefully considering whether that will be the time to upgrade the highway to a 4-lane facility.

As readers are likely aware, the cities of Two Rivers and Manitowoc have been working with County Highway Commissioner Gary Kennedy to lobby WisDOT for such an upgrade, not only on Highway 310 but also on Highway 10, all the way to Appleton.

There is not only a safety argument for such an upgrade—there is also a strong economic argument for an improved, 4-lane highway to connect the Lakeshore to the business centers of the Fox Valley. That will be a long-term process, but at least the Highway 310 segment is looking like a nearer-term prospect.

At last week’s meeting, WisDOT’s Northeast Wisconsin Regional Director, Mike Berg, reported that STH 310 has been determined appropriate for classification as a “connector route” to I-43, which changes the “level of service” that the State expects that route to provide to the motoring public. Prior to 310 being classed as a connector, it would have

had to approach an average daily traffic (ADT) count of 15,000 to be considered for an upgrade to four lanes. As a connector, that threshold falls to 8,700 ADT.

Highway 310 from I-43 east to CTH B already sees traffic counts of about 9,000 ADT, so it looks like there is a good probability of this segment being upgraded to four lanes within the next 15 years. From CTH B east to Two Rivers, the traffic counts are lower, not yet at the four-lane threshold.

In order to get the entire 8.5 mile length of STH 310, from I-43 to Two Rivers, in the planning mode for an upgrade to four lanes, it will be necessary for the City and other area governmental units to get Highway 310 in the State's overall transportation improvement plan, which is developed by DOT staff and then finalized by the State's Transportation Projects Commission (TPC).

Area State Senators Alan Lasee and Joe Liebham currently sit on the TPC, so you can be assured that they will be hearing from area governments, as well as businesses that count on STH 310 as their lifeline to I-43 and the larger interstate highway system.

Bottom line, there is good progress being made on plans to upgrade Highway 310, through the cooperative efforts of the Manitowoc County Highway Commission, the cities of Two Rivers and Manitowoc, and our partners in government at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Our collective efforts are starting to show results.

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