

## Great Western Trail Public Meeting

January 4, 2017

Tom Hadden, Duane Wittstock, Brian Hemesath

*This document is not meant to be a transcript of the meeting but a summary of the questions and comments expressed at the meeting. Every effort was made to maintain the intent of each comment and question with the summary.*

Meeting began at 5:30pm

Tom Hadden, City Manager, began the meeting by greeting everyone and having Duane Wittstock, City Engineer, and Brian Hemesath, Principal Engineer, introduce themselves. Sally Ortgies, Director of Parks and Recreation was also in attendance. Mr. Hadden stated that the purpose of the meeting was that it was not a public hearing but a meeting with the property owners. Duane Wittstock will present a PowerPoint presentation with questions to follow from the landowners who were sent letters. If there is time, questions from the audience about the trail will be answered. Mr. Hadden also noted that if anyone had a specific question they could stay after to ask staff or send an email. It was also mentioned that there are no City Council members present and no decisions being made at this meeting.

Duane Wittstock presented a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed options for the Great Western Trail.

Discussion:

Theresa Greenfield, representing Colby Interests, started the meeting off by asking staff to provide the timing of this project and the next steps that will be followed.

Duane Wittstock responded that the next step will be a recommendation from Warren County Conservation Commission and they will take a position on what alternatives are in the best interest of everybody. Then Warren County Supervisors will take action. After that, West Des Moines will pursue the alternative and start the Right-of-Way acquisition process, design and move forward. The timeline is not set yet. It is believed that Warren County Conservation has not set a date to consider the issue.

Melynda DeCarlo, property owner, stated that she understood that on January 11, 2017, the Conservation was going to vote and wondered if this is still correct?

Duane Wittstock replied that he did not know that for sure.

Ms. DeCarlo continued that assuming that date is correct, then it goes to the Board of Supervisors and they vote?

Duane Wittstock affirmed by saying he believed so.

Ms. DeCarlo stated that they have been told that 2 of the 3 Board of Supervisors will vote for D1 and D2 and if that is correct and it is recommended to you, will you move forward with that recommendation?

Duane Wittstock replied that the next step, from West Des Moines' perspective, is to take the input from Warren County and take it to our council for discussion and direction.

Ms. DeCarlo wanted to know if West Des Moines is the final decision maker.

Duane Wittstock answered that the property is controlled and owned by Warren County. West Des Moines is building the road, and is the financing arm in this situation. Each group has their input, and the council will decide if they want to finance this project. He does not know what they will decide.

Ms. DeCarlo asked if the costs associated with the D1 and D2 options are known so that they will know the impact.

Duane Wittstock replied that all that has been done is what is seen in front of you. The City won't do the engineering for the project till we know the preferred plan.

Charlotte Kendall, property owner, likes the D1 and D2 options. She knows the bikers really want the canopy but when there is a storm the trees come down, there is so much debris. She thinks if we have to give in a bit she wants D1 and D2, because Alternative A cuts their Century Farm and will impact the agricultural production.

Vernon Webb, from the Webb Family, would choose Option A. It goes through the north of the farm and doesn't take too much. It will mess up the Century Farm but not the houses.

Bill McKibben, property owner, is speaking for his parents and they all live on the same farm. He personally liked the original plan running down the bike path. It spreads it out to edges of property and doesn't dissect them. It is his understanding that the bike path will be replaced and trees will be planted. The original plan affects Kathy Beck's property the least and Alternative A would destroy Annette Kendall's Century Farm. The bike path is public property and will be replaced. He personally will go with the original plan, and if he looked at it right, the other maps even show an adjustment so that the new house wouldn't be impacted. The design could be tweaked a little bit. He likes the original plan.

Steve Herwig, from West Des Moines, wanted to know when the railroad Right-of-Way was turned over to Warren County Conservation, if there were any stipulations on that property.

Duane Wittstock responded that he did not believe so, and that is more of a Warren County question and not West Des Moines. It is not a Rails to Trail project like some railroad Right-of Ways' were.

Brian Walsh, property owner, would like to enter in a new proposal. The leaders of this area built highway 5 and the federal government put money into I-35. He does not see the benefit of this new road. He would vote for Option A, but if Option A is chosen, he hopes it makes these farmers very rich. He proposes that West Des Moines uses their money differently and that Microsoft uses the infrastructure that is already in place.

Mr. Walsh replied that he would like to add a proposal that this whole thing goes away. According to him, he does not understand why we are spending tax payer's money to put in this road. He also feels there will not be any development off this road.

Duane Wittstock responded that in the last conversation with Microsoft, they still intend to bring this project forward in early of 2017.

Elmer Fitzsimmons, from Fox Valley, was not aware of this road going in when he purchased his property. He feels there are three alternative roads that can be used instead of building this new road.

Jason Weems, property owner, wanted to know the projected return on investment on the taxes for Microsoft and if it will actually pay for the road.

Duane Wittstock replied yes.

Mr. Weems wanted to know in how many years.

Tom Hadden replied in 15 years, more or less.

Mr. Weems then asked how much the property owners' taxes are going to go up because of this.

Duane Wittstock said none, as a result of this. That is why it works well for everybody. Otherwise abutting property owners, or property taxes would put these improvements in.

Rory Taylor, from Norwalk, confirmed that the three things they needed out there were; water, sewer and a road. He wants to know where the sewer is coming in from, and if it's the north.

Duane Wittstock responded that the sewer is coming from the east from the existing Middle Creek trunk sewer and will extend west across Interstate 35.

Mr. Taylor wondered why a road is needed to go with the sewer and water. He only sees one interest group benefitting from this highway going through and that is the developers.

Duane Wittstock replied that he thought he answered his own question. What it amounts to from a City, is in order to keep the lights on, you need an increased revenue stream to deal with inflation.

Mr. Taylor asked that the revenue is coming from Microsoft?

Duane Wittstock said that Microsoft will pay for the roads so that the taxpayers don't have to. It will spur development. There's no doubt about it. This is the model and it benefits West Des Moines and Warren County as well.

Mr. Taylor wanted to know if all of this is hinging on farmers selling their land.

Duane Wittstock responded that they don't have to sell their land. They can farm as long as they want, but some people will sell.

Mr. Taylor stated that once it is taken away you will never get it back. He feels that there are opportunities for volunteers to help maintain the trees on the trail and that there is no reason to tear out a trail due to this.

Tim Huguinn, property owner, wanted to know that once West Des Moines City Council chooses an alternative and the acquisition process is started, how long will it take, and will you contact us in writing?

Duane Wittstock confirmed that once an alignment is figured out and there is a green light from Council, the engineers will develop the design and Right-of-Way needs. We will then make contact with the property owners. We will retain appraisers and start Right-of-Way negotiations after that. The quickest it could take is 90 days. You will be contacted early in the process.

Mr. Huguinn asked if Warren County does vote January 11, does that information go to the MPO.

Duane Wittstock replied no. The three bodies are Warren County Conservation, Warren County Board of Supervisors and City of West Des Moines City Council.

Mr. Huguinn followed up with, if a decision is made in February, then 3-6 months from there if we settle?

Duane Wittstock responded with probably.

Kim West, is from the north side, and stated that you made a comment that this bike trail will be moved and be created just like these bike trails on Jordan Creek Pkwy. He does not see people biking on Jordan Creek Pkwy for recreation. He wants to make sure that it is being understood, where the cyclists are coming from.

Duane Wittstock states that the options that are presented are in response to concerns that have been expressed.

Mr. West said what about the option this guy in the front had (Brian Walsh). That is a wonderful option.

Meredith Jenks, from Fox Valley, said that nobody wants this. We want our properties, the farms and bike trail to stay intact. Is that even an option?

Duane Wittstock said that from a practical aspect, he thinks the chances of everything staying status quo and not developing in that area is almost zero, because development in the area is already occurring. Since it is already occurring it would be a good plan to try to get it so it works best for everyone in the area. Before Fox Valley there was a corn field and now there is Fox Valley. Now there are plus 240 acres developing south of there in Norwalk. Development is heading in that direction, and it will grow without respect to what anyone in this room wants it to do. That's the reality.

Ms. Jenks replied that this is not the answer we want for the area. We choose plan A for Fox Valley.

Melynda DeCarlo spoke again and she wanted to know, on the D1/D2 options, what the distance is between the proposed bike trail and the red line on the map.

Duane Wittstock told her the white grid lines in the background are a quarter mile apart for distance, those are 40 acre tracks.

Ms. DeCarlo also needed to understand how the 2 lane highway, on the D1/D2 options, will grow into a 6 lane highway without taking over the bike trail when it is enlarged.

Duane Wittstock replied that it works out for the best if we can delineate what the future Right -of- Way will be early on in the process so that people don't build right up to it and we have to take a house later in time. We believe that this will ultimately become a 6 lane road due to traffic projections and that generally takes 165 ft. of Right -of- Way in our street system. What we would like to do is note where that Right -of- Way will be so everyone knows the worst case today.

Ms. DeCarlo did not understand how this doesn't take the bike trail.

Duane Wittstock further explained that these D options show 165 ft. of road Right -of- Way, as well as 100 ft. bike trail Right -of- Way. There is a 265 ft. strip through there, except where it crosses the streets. The trail is shown crossing the street at intersections.

Ms. DeCarlo asked if that presumed a 6 lane highway.

Duane Wittstock replied ultimately yes, with two lanes initially.

Ms. DeCarlo wondered if it is two lanes divided.

Duane Wittstock affirmed that it is two lanes. It will be two lanes of one side of the six. It will be widened as capacity is needed.

Ms. DeCarlo then asked if it will be two lanes on each side.

Duane Wittstock explained that it will be two lanes initially on one side. It will be grass until capacity is needed.

Ms. DeCarlo asked if it was like G14.

Duane Wittstock said it will be an urban section with curb and gutter. There won't be ditches.

Sally Ortgies showed the slide that depicted the cross sections with Right -of- Way shown and greenspace. Brian Hemesath then explained the drawing in detail. He mentioned that all of the alternatives, where the road is alongside the trail and is not removing the trail completely, will have these Right -of- Way spaces. Sally also mentioned that this slide shows how the two lane road will look initially. Duane noted that even though the slide depicted the road on one side, it could also start off on the side closest to the trail, and that none of these details have been decided yet.

Ms. DeCarlo clarified that the road could be on the other side initially.

Duane Wittstock replied that it could.

Tim Huguinn asked who is paying for the four more lanes in the future.

Duane Wittstock said they did not know yet.

Bill McKibben thought that due to where that runs, it will probably be the people that abut the property.

Duane Wittstock responded that as the area develops and the tax base increases, it could be paid for that way. We do not know that for sure. That is historically how it works.

Bill McKibben stated that we all know that roads are built small and go bigger, hopefully Colby buys the land and develops it and that is spread among the entire development. To the farmers that abut that property and decide to go all in, that is one heck of a tax charge that will go to the property owner.

Duane Wittstock replied that there is no change in taxes as a result of the road itself.

Unknown commenter stated that taxes would not change right now but would when you expand it probably.

Duane Wittstock said not necessarily. It will be whatever the value of the land is for whatever it is being used for.

Brian Hemesath said that something to consider is that the road is not going to get widened until a significant amount of development occurs. This would mean a lot of the properties that are adjacent to

the road are sold, built up and developed. Similar to how it looks on Jordan Creek, Mills Civic Parkway, 50<sup>th</sup> St., and 60<sup>th</sup> St. There will be either houses or businesses along there.

Bill McKibben agreed but noted that this is also talking about traffic flow patterns and if you do the numbers and that two lane road cannot handle all the traffic because people want to come up at an angle instead of squaring it, then who will pay for it? There is a big difference between if someone else is paying for it and us.

Duane Wittstock agreed and said that the Council recognizes that it would be a tremendous burden either on abutting property owners or taxpayers and they see the Microsoft Project as a windfall. It's about \$100 million dollars of public improvements.

Bill McKibben reiterated that he voiced his opinion on which option he would like and he understands that growth will happen out there as the result of annexation. Sometimes we are our own worst enemy by the things we do.

Tim Huguinn wanted to know if he would have to move right away once construction began, if and when he sells his property to the City.

Duane Wittstock replied that he does not know for sure. Obviously, we will need to make arrangements to work the best for all parties as we can. We need to get the options chosen so we can know where we are going. We try to work the best we can with property owners to make it work for everybody.

Mr. Huguinn was at the public meeting in 2012 or 2014, at the apple orchard, and he did start construction on the house after that, so he knew all of this. He said they are in full support of the original plan, and that it's just hard to know what to do when you have to wait on all of these agencies.

Mr. Huguinn followed up by saying that he has a lot of questions, but he's just not sure which to ask because he doesn't think they can be answered until we know where the route is going and then once that is finalized it will fall into place.

Duane Wittstock stated that is exactly right.

Mr. Huguinn then stated that we just have to sit and wait.

Duane Wittstock affirmed that is what we all do until it is decided at the political level.

An unknown commentator said she represents two different entities so to speak. The "Dream Team," young kids who train on bikes and they train a lot on the Great Western Trail. It is a very good training opportunity for these kids who have never been on a bike before. If the Great Western Trail goes away and we find ourselves riding more on heavy traffic areas such as Hickman Rd, such as the proposed lanes, it takes the joy out of the biking. Secondly, she is a real estate agent with Iowa Realty, and sees how the metro is growing. She believes that not putting in the road is not the answer to the growth that will happen and hopes that it can all be worked out.

Jenna Kline, from Stoneridge Division wants to know if there is any way to work with the City of Des Moines and get them to connect to the other side of highway 28 and get that connection downtown. She also feels that the economic development is directly related to that bike trail.

Duane Wittstock said in response to the first question on what Des Moines' plans were for the SW connector that it is the City's understanding that they chose a priority to work on the SE Connector first and their staff believes that their next major project will be the SW Connector from downtown to Hwy 28. That is the latest information that we have received from their staff. Des Moines' project priorities will be determined by the Des Moines City Council.

Bill McKibben asked if a route gets picked, but doesn't get put in, is the county or West Des Moines going to prevent anyone from building or developing in that area, so they don't abut to that property area?

Duane Wittstock replied that before Microsoft's announcement, The City showed developers these proposed road networks that have been on our comprehensive plan since '93. When someone comes to us with a project we tell them that this is what the plans are. We don't know when or exactly where it will happen but your property could be at risk to either be disturbed by the construction, or removed in the future. We are informing them, and I think that is the best we can do at this time. I suspect that is what we will continue to do going forward. I think the chances of the road not being built somewhere is pretty slim. That is my personal opinion.

Bill McKibben mentioned that it's hard to stop something when there is financing behind it.

Duane Wittstock stated that we need to understand the opportunities where someone else is going to pay all of your bills does not occur very often, and West Des Moines has been very fortunate in having some of these guys come in and do this, but it's still a rare occurrence in Iowa to have it happen.

Bill McKibben reiterated that he will go with all the other farmers and property owners that do not want the road built, but if it is built then let it be in a way that doesn't chop people's properties up. He knows people want the Great Western Trail not touched, but to say we are going to run a road through someone's property so that we can keep a bike path 1.6 miles long unaffected, he has an issue with that.

Duane Wittstock said that one of the other things he did not bring up here, and should have, is wherever the trail and the road diverge there are skinny remnant pieces of ground. For the safety of the trail, and for the safety of the street, we want to minimize access points to the road and across the trail. We do not want a lot of driveways going across any one of them, and as we end up with a space between the two of them, we end up with access problems for the remnant properties. We can still have a pretty big piece of property, but you will end up with an access problem because you either will have to cross the road or cross the trail, or both, which causes another conflict point. That's not all of the intangibles but that's an issue we need to consider.

Duane Wittstock also stated that one of the more dangerous trail crossings, that he is aware of, is on County Line Road. He drives that on a regular basis and doesn't know how many close calls he's personally had out there. Drivers are not expecting people to cross mid-block and cyclists tend not to stop. It's an equation, a future problem and if we can cross the trail at the intersections and keep the number of intersections to a minimum, which he thinks we have tried to do here, it is safer for everybody. We need to preplan the improvements, keep it as safe as possible and have a minimum number of crossings as possible, this probably will be the best compromise. That is why we are here tonight to vet these issues out.

Kathy Beck, property owner, said that she knows she will be impacted, it is just a question of how much. One of the main concerns she has is losing the ground and, if she is left with some, what is her safety net? With more traffic and people closer to her livestock she is worried about the safety of her animals. Her big concern is if the road runs down the middle of her property, how she will get her young colts across six lanes of traffic, back and forth multiple times a day. Her only preference is the original plan that we came up with. She feels that no one maintains the trail and the trees fall on her fences and need to be cut down. Volunteers will not maintain this area. She thinks West Des Moines has a great idea about putting in native hard woods that are long lived and less maintenance.

Kathy feels that this trail is not maintained and there are sections without trees and does not see the argument about losing the trees. She feels we all need to come to a compromise. She really wants the plan to be the one that goes right next to the bike trail. She has worked her life building this place up and it is devastating to her to see it torn up for some silly trees. She says that we aren't talking about miles and miles of trees, this is a little bit trees that won't even last.

Keith Sweeney, property owner, says his property is next to Mr. Huguinn and backs up to the trail. He is concerned about the proposed ideas and if and how his property will be affected. One of the proposals does not touch his property but he sees a proposed road in the future going straight through it that causes concern. He wants to know how this is going to work with Right -of- Way.

Brian Hemesath clarifies that the side roads on the plans are shown for illustrative purposes and can change. In response to his property being affected he discussed speaking after in order to get into more details.

Mr. Sweeney stated that it is hard to decide on a plan when you don't know how it will affect your property in the future.

Brian Hemesath replied that we will take your comments in order to put them in the record.

Kari Carney, guest, lives right along the bike trail just south of Cumming. She saw in one of the long range plans, from West Des Moines, that there is potential road construction that will happen near her in the future and she will fight that. She wants the landowners and cyclists to not fight against one another since they are not the bad guys. She feels that West Des Moines wants heavy commercial, retail and high density housing in that area. She does not feel there is a purpose for this road. According to her studies show that urban highways have negative consequences. She does not want the land taken away from the farmers or the bike trail touched.

Jon Hanke, property owner, hopes that the people truly affected by this will ask their questions, even though he respects the bike trail. "Right now we are in Warren County. Will we be annexed into West Des Moines at some point? "

Tom Hadden spoke to address a couple things. He stated growth and development will happen. Des Moines Golf & Country Club was once Dowling High School and before that farmland of some sort. He stated that West Des Moines is not taking anyone's land away. The infrastructure will be put into place and the people can decide whether they want to sell. He wants to be realistic and have good solid growth. He replied that annexations tend to be voluntary and everything is driven by market and if people choose to sell their property.

Mr. Hanke liked the idea of not even building this road. He says if you look at Maffitt Road it is already developed and wider. If you are going to be working on the road anyway why not make that the road for Microsoft. He doesn't understand why we have to cut through everyone's farmland and houses. Part of it is already there, why not just make that a better road than what it is now.

Duane Wittstock replied that it goes back to the economics and the opportunity to have the road put in by somebody else other than property owners and tax payers. That is the simple answer of it. This is not an apples to apples comparison but the work around the Jordan Creek area, everybody thought the major tax dollars were going to be generated by Jordan Creek mall itself, but the major tax influx was secondary development around Jordan Creek. He suspects if development keeps tracking like it has in West Des Moines, Waukee, Ankeny or Urbandale, the secondary development is what is going to generate the traffic and the tax dollars. There is no black and white answer to your question but it's an issue of investing in the right place. For the last 30 years, it's been a pretty successful strategy to keep the tax rates reasonably low in the metro area.

Mr. Hanke followed up with asking what the speed limit will be on the new road.

Duane Wittstock stated that the West Des Moines section will be up to Council, but probably 45mph. Through time, as traffic increases, speeds naturally slow down, due to congestion. People worry about speeders through there, but once the traffic increases it will slow down.

Ms. McKibben said that if you put a road through our land you are taking it. That road is yours. She understands that progress needs to happen and feels that the farm owners have worked with you on the 5 bypass, and the annexations. She does not intend to sell and she makes her living off that land. She asks that you consider the ground you are taking. It is not just land but our livelihood that has been passed down through the generations. She prays that you will consider doing the best that you can to not destroy our lives and our livelihood and not let Warren County make a decision for what happens to us, because we agreed to be in your City.

Kathy Beck was involuntarily annexed. This is the third time this has happened to her. She wants to know where does it stop. Where is it safe for people who are like her who want to have some sort of security and don't want to be forced off again? Where do we go? What do we do? Who represents us? Is Microsoft more important than we are? We were here first. I came from the first family of Des Moines.

Bob Winchell, from Century Farm NE Madison County is curious whether or not to build a new road and is it ever going to be put to a vote by the citizens in the affected areas?

Duane Wittstock responded that the general answer to that is no. The elected people make that kind of decision. It's not a referendum issue.

In response to a question from the crowd, he said that he thinks there is an opportunity, if people want to exercise it, to contact the elected officials. You will need to contact them to do that. We think it's important. He states that we have heard from the bicycle community quite a bit, and up to this point the property owners have been pretty quiet. We have received individual calls. It is time to express your concerns to the elected officials also. Normally, you don't hear a staff person say go call the elected official, but in this case it is probably appropriate. The elected officials between Warren County and West Des Moines, are the ones that will make the decisions.

With another question from the crowd, Duane Wittstock said that we don't even have a date it will be after Warren County decides what they want to do then West Des Moines will react to it in some fashion. I guess the earliest would be end of February. That is as quick as it could be

Duane Wittstock answered multiple questions from the crowd. We can get something on the web page as soon as we know and get some information posted. Warren County Conservation has done some postings on their end. The Council will be the last to make the decision.

Rory Taylor, from Norwalk, commented again that the bottom line is, you need to know from Warren County if you can have the trail.

Duane Wittstock said yes, that is what it amounts to. If we are going to encroach on the trail, Warren County operates the trail and owns the ground. They are a property owner like anyone else. If they don't consent to that, then West Des Moines will decide what it is going to do.

Duane Wittstock responded to Kathy who just asked which plan is his favorite, which is a hard thing to do. To be frank with the group, he states, we worked with County Conservation on this. The concerns everyone has expressed over the last two weeks, we have heard before. We think the D options addressed most of them. It is not 100% good for anybody, or bad either. We bring the trail in to intersections to cross, we limit the number of crossings of the trail and the road. As you have heard tonight, there are a lot of diverse positions on this. It is hard to strike a compromise with the positions being so diverse. I think the D options pretty much get you there with the concerns we have heard so far. It encroaches more on the property owners, it's not as far away as the bicycle community would like. The trail will get re-landscaped if relocated. The other issue we have not brought up, which is not West Des Moines' concern, Warren County has 26 miles of trail to maintain. If you have read the paper they are pretty tight with their money with the jail and things they need down there. With the D options, about a mile and a half of trail will be brand new and at least some of the maintenance would not be needed for a while. It is a financial impact that Warren County will be considering as one of its issues. I think the D options are the middle ground for all parties.

Jon Thompson, from Des Moines, wanted to address the property owners. He doesn't want to see anyone's property or the trail touched. He thinks that most people in the room do not think this road needs to happen at all. If the development happens it will destroy your way of life in this part of the state. He said to do your hardest to make sure it doesn't happen. Talk to the City Council and tell them do not make it happen.

An unknown person asked the question about the zoning in that area and the possible changes to it that could occur.

Duane Wittstock told them that is not his area of expertise, our development people handle the land use and zoning. The City Council can initiate land use changes on their own, or it can be petitioned by property owners to have it changed through a public hearing process. He stated that the zoning is independent of the road.

Brian Hemesath commentated that none of the land through there, except Fox Valley, is zoned at this point. It is all under our comprehensive plan land use plan. There is land use for every property in the West Des Moines area but it may not be zoned yet.

Duane Wittstock encouraged people that if you have specific questions to call our Development staff and visit with one of our planners to discuss the process.

Andrea Bolton, from Des Moines, started by addressing that you mentioned that this has been in the plan since 1993, and that it seems as if you are operating on a “if you build it they will come” mentality. Population is growing and will continue to grow, it is the metro. However, as a national award winning community, from quality of life to government to planning, it is our responsibility to be visionary with this planning. The roads, side streets, zoning is conceptual. This road is conceptual. You have the opportunity to visualize what the roads, and communities will be like in the future. Rather than following an “as is” plan and following how it is today, you can be the trendsetters to do something different in the future. When this land is gone, whether its agricultural land or trail, it is gone. Plan better, do better, be the visionaries that we know you are. With that being said, you eluded to the comments coming from the original plan dictating where we are today. It is my understanding that the original plan did not include utilizing the Great Western Trail as an original option. In the original comments, in 2006, 2012 they made it clear then that they wanted to utilize highway 5 and highway 28 and there were other options. I am not quite sure how we got from those thoughts to where we are today. It is also my understanding that you cannot condemn agricultural land for trail use. Since you mentioned the D options are your favorite you need the extra corridor, how will that be done and how will that be paid for. How will you work with property owners, since it requires them to sell it to you to get that 100 ft. corridor, since you can’t use eminent domain that you can with the road project.

Duane Wittstock responded that we don’t use eminent domain very much on any of the projects. Right-of-Way Acquisition usually goes through a negotiation process, and we are pretty successful with that. At this point, until we know where it is going we won’t know what tools are available. For the most part most of our Right -of- Way is acquired at arm’s length transaction from the property owners.

After an unknown comment, Duane Wittstock replied that is exactly why we are here tonight to hear from the property owners. The last time we heard from the property owners, their preference was that if the road needs to go in, it needs to go in on the Great Western Trail footprint, and minimize impacts to them. That goes back to hopefully everybody listening to everyone’s positions tonight and hopefully striking a compromise. We will see where it goes. That is what the root of the meeting is all about.

There was a comment from the crowd about how the road would not be happening now if it wasn’t for Microsoft.

Duane Wittstock replied that it wouldn’t be happening today, and when we did the planning for the studies, I’ll be frank, I didn’t think I’d see it in my lifetime. There is an opportunity at this point in time. From a financial ability, West Des Moines is in good shape. Warren County, Cumming and Norwalk currently are not in a financial position to do anything like this project in the foreseeable future. If we can find a solution, it will work out well for everybody.

Brian Walsh said that he still goes back to his original point, if Microsoft wants to connect their facilities they are already connected by the 5, and 235, and to just put in some roads after it’s done.

Duane Wittstock noted that you would still be in the same situation in the future when the road goes in. The area is developing. It is more orderly if we can figure out what is going to happen as early in the process as possible. As more developments occur the harder it gets. When the area develops it will

take an enhanced road system and the network to make it work. The area will develop whether anyone here does anything or not. Mr. Walsh asked what the current asking price is per acre that the farmers would be asking for right now.

Duane Wittstock did not know.

Mr. Walsh said he heard \$33,000 an acre.

Tim Lane, from Windsor Heights, discussed the topic of development and its different meanings. He feels that the trail is useful to more than just the cyclists. He does not agree with the need for the road for Microsoft. He does not feel the name Great Western Trail will be the same if the trail is affected.

Theresa Bockenstedt, from West Des Moines, said that as you are building this parkway, as a shortcut for people to get to the Waukee area, and you are only going to let them drive 45mph, do you really think they are going to save time?

Duane Wittstock did not understand the question.

Ms. Bockenstedt said that we were told at the Warren County Conservation meeting that this parkway is supposed to help people get from Waukee to the Hwy 5 area in a more quick fashion, but it's only supposed to be a 45mph area.

Duane Wittstock affirmed that statement, and continued saying that it will make a connection around the I-80 out by the weigh station and tie back in across the river crossing by the south side of the river. What's lacking today is crossings of the river itself. If you drive I-80 west of town, it is getting pretty congested during rush hour periods, so it provides another route for people to do that.

Ms. Bockenstedt followed up by saying that you told her this meeting would not occur until late spring, at least another 3 or 4 months, and I am offended.

Duane Wittstock replied that you may be offended but you were not invited to this meeting. This is a property owner informational meeting with invitations sent out to the property owners. He said everyone here is welcome and we will take your comments, but the public meeting is in the future. We sent the notice to Warren County Conservation and they posted it on their website. You are here and we will do what we can with it, but this was a meeting with staff and property owners for dialog on the options. That's what the purpose of the meeting was. Tom indicated that when we started this meeting. You are welcome here but the meeting was for the property owners.

Ms. Bockenstedt noted that as far as the property owners go, as a West Des Moines resident, she has the option to vote out some of these elected officials, and none of these property owners from Warren County have a thing that they can do to the elected officials over their property.

Duane Wittstock said that each property owner has elected representation of some form with their government whether it's the city or the county. They have the same options.

Ms. Bockenstedt clarified that you are the one making decisions over their property.

Duane Wittstock replied the decisions will be made by the elected and appointed individuals.

Rory Taylor stated that money is going to talk. He understands the whole farming thing and his family comes from a line of farming. Bottom line is, he feels you are asking opinions of land owners, and you

are getting bicyclists opinions and both don't want you to put the road through. He wants to know if you are going to take these opinions and do anything with it, or is it in one ear and out the other. He does not agree with putting the road through.

Doug Gaumer, from Indianola, would like to know what plan E is. Based on all the contingencies you all talked about; Warren County has to vote, Supervisors vote, City Council has to vote, why is only one option the bike trail? What about the developers to the north, maybe they would love the road to go through their property to develop. He thinks other options should be looked at.

Kathy Beck asked about the ground that does not get concreted and if you are putting the two lanes in then coming back and putting the rest in. She wants to know who will pay for the maintenance for that, and if it is each property owner that it butt ups against to.

Duane Wittstock told her it probably would be the City at large, through property taxes.

Ms. Beck wanted to make sure it would not be the property owners who would have to go out there and mow it.

Duane Wittstock said that he did not think so. We will need to run that by Council and make sure. There are certainly Right-of-Ways in town that are taken care of by the property owners and by the City. The ground between the street and trail is a pretty substantial area, I would guess the City would maintain it but I do not know for sure.

Ms. Beck wanted to know if they would be able to lease the land back.

Duane Wittstock was not sure and told her that is a Council question.

Emily Shetler, guest, asked if it is possible, on the city maps, to show what the city boundaries are, today. She also wanted to know if the properties that are not annexed on that plan, if the plan is to annex them.

Duane Wittstock said that it will be up to Council. Property owners and other possibilities for annexation, would be Norwalk or Cummings. The comprehensive plan is a plan for land use but it does not delineate the future borders.

Annette Kendall, guest, asked a question about construction. In the D1 /D2 options, how does that work with the crossing of the bike path and the road? Right now, County Line Road is very bad in that area, then you have all the other roads like Orilla, Adams and all the stops along the way. One must be really careful driving, because a lot of bikes don't stop and I see a lot of groups of bicycles driving Adams Street now instead of the trail. How do you handle the crossing distances?

Duane Wittstock responded to the series of questions by saying the bicyclists have the rights to use the road, just like the car does with the same rights and obligations. One of the concerns Warren County Conservation has was the crossing of the roads themselves. We built an underpass under Maffitt and that worked because there was enough grade separation between the ground and the drainage ditch to get enough vertical clearance and still maintain drainage. What we see with the trail, in this segment, is there use to be a railroad line underneath, there are no defined large ditches that drain up to the trail itself. In order to put an underpass in there you would end up with water standing in the underpass all the time since we can't get that to drain by gravity. This forces at-grade crossings. Starting at County

Line Road, long term, we believe that crossing will go away at some point and a road will be built when a property develops that ties County Line Road into Maffitt Lake Road. Orilla Road is a major road and goes a long way to the south. That crossing will be there, essentially forever, and it would be difficult to get anything other than an at-grade crossing there at that location. The safest way to cross these streets is at the intersection itself. Adams St. is in the air. Depending on how the area develops, there will be potential to have Adams St continue straight through or have it connect to another street. Either way, there will be a trail crossing and due to be at the top of the ridge, it would be an at grade crossing vs an underpass. The safest place will be at the intersection itself. The crossings that are shown on these maps, we believe, will be the future streets that will service the area as it develops. Needs and development can change but this is our best guess right now.

Jon Thompson voiced that there are other examples in the metro area of bike trails having mid crossings and not having to cross at the intersection. He cited the High Trestle Trail as an example. He also feels there is a need for safety and crossing at the intersection isn't always the answer.

Duane Wittstock stated that he respected his position but they had differing opinions on the safety of mid-block crossing.

Bill Lorenz, from Des Moines, mentioned that he also had differing opinions on intersection crossings. He cited the Hickman side trail that people use to get to and from the Raccoon River Trail. He feels it is incredibly unsafe to cross at those intersections due to the traffic. He also mentioned that no one rides the Hickman side trail because it's fun.

Kevin Moreland, from West Des Moines, wanted to thank everyone for letting the cyclists come to the meeting to speak, knowing it was for the property owners. He mentioned that everyone needs to remember that the trail is not going away, and that whatever is touched, will be replaced. He feels that the cyclists need to support the landowners, they will have the final say over what we do. He encourages the property owners to talk to Warren County and the Commissioners, Supervisors and board and collectively come together with your decision; whether it's no road, or one of these options. The cyclists owe it to the landowners to support them. We can deal with anything that gets thrown out to us. Maybe it's not what we will want it to be, but the trail is not going away, it is just going to be different. He doesn't think he has the right to make the landowners change things around just so we can have the trail not change. He feels that the cyclists have made their opinions known and that tonight they have had a chance to hear from the people that live in the area and not just the ones that use it for recreation. He supports any decision that is made.

Rick Swalwell, West Des Moines Park Board, also wanted to thank Duane and Tom for hosting this meeting. He does not have a solution, he loves to bike and the trail but he loves the City too. Population grows and city spreads out. He knows Duane was reluctant to say to call the City Council but he is not reluctant to, and said to go ahead and call them tonight. They need to know how you feel. Bring your passion to the table and let the elected officials know how you feel.

David Foster, from Norwalk, sees that a good portion of the Warren County Conservation Board is here and hearing this. One supervisor is here, and thank them for being here. He suggests that everyone gets familiar with the comprehensive use plan map that West Des Moines has on their website. It gives a feel for what they have planned out over this area.

Duane Wittstock followed by saying we will do the best we can to summarize the notes and get them to the elected officials. We will try to get something on the webpage with this information so everyone has access to it. He appreciates everyone coming.

Meeting was concluded at 7:52 pm.