The project team is currently working on finalizing the preferred alternative along Manning Avenue that will be used to identify project limits and to inform the next steps in the project development process. The Manning Avenue corridor project will likely be phased over a period of several years depending on growth patterns, some of which are planned as early as 2015.

Next Steps:
- March - May 2014
  Preparation of study documents, preliminary roadway design, and initial project phasing
- June 26, 2014
  3rd Open House: Present preferred alternative and phasing plan
- July 2014
  City Council/Township Boards asked to approve preliminary roadway design
- July 2014 - April 2015
  Final Design Phase (extent and details TBD)
- May 2015
  Begin First Phase of the Manning Avenue construction project (extent and details TBD)

The New Manning Avenue Corridor - Moving Forward

Manning Avenue is an important roadway in Washington County that serves a variety of functions. From a transportation perspective, its role is to provide connectivity to/from the regional highway system (i.e., I-94, TH 5 and TH 36). However, it also provides access to a multitude of businesses, commercial enterprises, recreational areas, schools, churches, and residences.

Recognizing that plans for growth and development along the corridor (and in the region) will strain Manning Avenue to a point of not functioning properly, Washington County and its partners are taking a proactive approach by developing plans for the corridor that will respond to this demand for many years to come. At the same time, the project partners are looking at alternatives to improve safety and mobility along the corridor.

Making improvements to a roadway like Manning Avenue affects many people, especially those that live on or near it. For this reason, Washington County has conducted a series of informational meetings to share project information, to educate the public about general transportation considerations, and — most importantly — to gather input from the residents, the business community, and the general public. This input will be used to inform the project development process and is critical to ensuring a successful project. This newsletter contains follow up information on some of the more common questions received to date.

A third Open House is planned for June 26, 2014 from 4:00pm-7:00pm at Baytown Town Hall, where Washington County's preferred alternative for Manning Avenue will be on display. Subsequently, these plans will be presented to the elected officials of each community involved for adoption.

Follow the progress and sign up for e-mail updates at www.co.washington.mn.us/manningcorridor

Open House Invitation
Thursday, June 26, 2014
4:00pm - 7:00pm (brief presentation at 4:30pm)
Baytown Town Hall
Please join us to review the preferred alternative for Manning Avenue, and to review future phasing plans for the project.
**Why a Four-Lane Roadway?**

One common question heard at previous public meetings was "why do we need four lanes on Manning?" Manning Avenue, in its current condition, will reach its capacity in just 2-3 years (as shown in the Capacity Timeline table to the left) based on anticipated growth and development. However, even if no new development occurs in the near-term, Manning Avenue would still reach its capacity in just 5 years, based on general background growth in the region. The table also demonstrates that upgrading Manning Avenue to a 3-lane section would not be a viable long-term solution due to its capacity limitations.

Inadequate roadway capacity often results in driver frustrations and delay, increased neighborhood cut-through traffic, and safety problems. By upgrading Manning Avenue to a 4-lane roadway in the near-term, the project partners are making a long-term investment that will accommodate future capacity needs in a safe and efficient manner.

**Can the Speed Limit Be Changed?**

Some residents have expressed concerns related to vehicular speeds along Manning Avenue and wonder if speed limits will change with the project.

Speed limits are determined by Minnesota state laws and are set by City or County officials.

- Speed limit studies conducted throughout the metro area indicate that changing posted speed limits does not significantly affect driver speeds.
- Drivers choose speeds based on their available sight lines and ability to react.
- Changes or improvements to the roadway, such as adding medians, turn lanes, or traffic signals, have a greater impact on safety than speed limits.

What does that mean for the changes in the Manning Avenue corridor? The roadway will still have the same general alignment after the project; therefore, it is not expected that the speed limit will change significantly. However, it is standard Washington County practice to request a new speed study after any major project is complete to ensure that the posted speed limit is appropriate for the new conditions.

**Multi-Use Trails - Combining Connections with Safety**

A primary goal of the Manning Avenue project includes improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety. Based on input gathered at previous public meetings, there are mixed feelings about the need and location of trails along Manning Avenue.

For a corridor of this type, the preference is to accommodate multi-use trails on each side of the roadway. Why?

- It reduces the need for users to have to cross the highway to use the trail.
- It promotes the best stewardship of project funds by constructing improvements for the present and the future.
- It facilitates non-motorized access to businesses, recreational areas, schools, churches, and residential properties/neighborhoods.
- It accommodates active lifestyles, positively impacting the quality of residents’ life and health.

**Medians and U-Turns Along the Corridor**

Several common questions heard at public meetings relate to how the Manning Avenue project will affect how people get to/from their destinations, and the safety implications of these changes.

**How will access be “managed” along the corridor?**

National and state studies have shown that as the number of access points (such as driveways and side streets) increase along a roadway, the ability to maintain safe and efficient traffic flow decreases. The result is an inefficient roadway that has a higher number of crashes due to the increased number of conflict points.

Access will be managed on Manning Avenue by properly spacing intersections, consolidating access points where practical, and separating the roadway with a raised median.

**Are U-turns safe? Are they legal?**

Left turns and crossing movements from side streets at highway intersections involve particularly high crash risk, because drivers must simultaneously judge traffic gaps from two directions at once, often with limited sight lines. U-turns are a safe and accepted traffic maneuver and are legal except where prohibited by signage or where sight lines are insufficient. When making a U-turn, drivers have a clear view of oncoming highway traffic by looking straight ahead, and only need to judge one direction of highway traffic rather than having to wait for simultaneous gaps in both directions. For these reasons, replacing left turns with right turns and U-turns has been consistently shown to reduce both crash frequency and crash severity, and can even reduce delays during peak traffic times by eliminating the need for simultaneous gaps.