

City seeks input to keep traffic flowing smoothly

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Areas along Highway 50, Stanford, Main and Cherry streets could be among those affected when the Vermillion Area Master Transportation Plan is finalized.

Representatives from the city, the state department of transportation and the URS Corporation – a provider of engineering, construction and technical services – were on hand in the Council Chambers of Vermillion City Hall to seek input regarding the plan Monday night.

This week's meeting marked the second time public opinion was sought regarding possible areas of improvement, the first being last year.

"The issues that we had received during that meeting have kind of set the direction of where we wanted to look at the transportation system," said Bill Troe, vice president of surface transportation for URS.

Many of the issues focused around parking at the university,

pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and traffic congestion.

"The other thing that we really want to focus on in the transportation planning process is safety, so we also gathered all the crash records over the last three or four years," Troe said.

According to the acquired data, some of the most crash-heavy areas can be found along the intersections of Highway 50 and Stanford, Cherry and Dakota, Cherry and Plum and Main and Center, each of which saw between eight and 10 collisions between 2008 and 2010.

The biggest crash site was at Cherry and Rose streets, which saw more than 10 collisions during the same period.

Troe said there could be a number of solutions to the problem, including the installation of more stoplights.

In laying out the plan, the traffic problems of today are not the only ones explored. Among the other data that is taken into account is the locations of future residential and job

growth, estimates of future traffic conditions and potential changes to future roadway, bus/transit, bicycle and pedestrian systems.

One area that could see commercial growth is the northwest part of town near Wal-Mart and Hy-Vee.

When this is coupled with possible southeast residential growth, more vehicles could be added to Cherry Street, which could then increase the likelihood of vehicle/pedestrian conflicts.

"When you think about the investment we make with the infrastructure, we want to also be thinking about where we want to be in 20 years from now, 25 years from now, relative to where development is occurring, so we can plan for the future, not try to react as development comes in," Troe said.

For more information on the study, visit vermilliontransportation.blogspot.com.

An opportunity to present written comments will be provided until May 14.

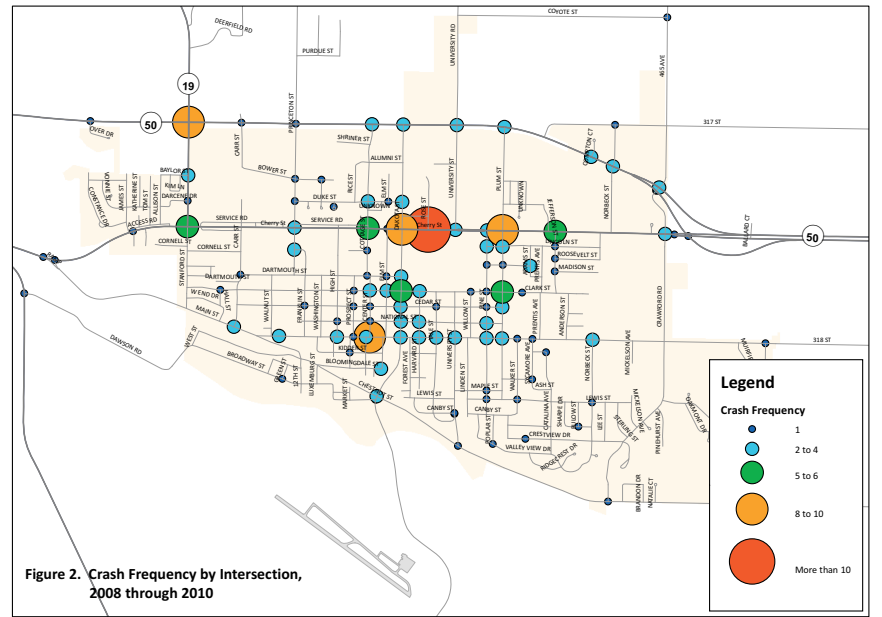


Figure 2. Crash Frequency by Intersection, 2008 through 2010

Traffic safety was among the issues discussed during a meeting Monday regarding the city's master transportation plan. This graphic shows the most crash-heavy areas in Vermillion between 2008 and 2010.

USD students receive Global Learning Scholarships to study overseas

Five University of South Dakota students have been awarded Global Learning Scholarships to study abroad.

Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of State, Morgan E. Nelson, a biology and mathematics major from Sioux Falls will study in Ghana; Katie Kammert of Rapid City majoring in both biology and Spanish, will study in Peru; Abby Wolf, a biology major from Jordan, MN, will study in Ireland; Sean Patrick McCann, a

biology and Spanish major from Newell, SD, is to study in Argentina; and Alison Petrick of Gayville, majoring in biology and secondary education, will study in Costa Rica.

The \$60,000 grant for "Capacity Building for Undergraduate Study Abroad Program" was awarded in 2010 to be used for scholarships for students traveling abroad, program development for students in targeted areas, and faculty and staff training opportunities.

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