



SIoux CENTER

Citizens for Responsible Growth

6 real reasons to keep our nationally-recognized, safety-first 3-lane Main Street

1. SAFETY Even the safest 5-lane highway falls short of 3-lane safety outcomes. The MN DOT found that 5-lanes had 18-20% higher crash rates than 3-lanes. Two lanes each way encourages speed, and crashes are more serious when drivers go faster.

2. DATA There is no data to support the need for an expansion. A 4-lane roadway in Des Moines that had more than 16,000 vehicles per day and was GROWING recently enacted a “road diet” from 4 to 3 lanes despite growing traffic. They reduced accidents by 50% and travel time was hardly affected. In Sioux Center, US 75 has 12,000 vehicles per day, and that number has been DECREASING for several years despite population and business growth in Sioux Center over the same years.

3. LOCATION With the hospital moving off US 75 and the co-op relocating diesel pumps to the south edge of town, there’s no reason to believe predictions for traffic increases will be any more accurate today than they were in the past (in 1998, the city predicted traffic would reach 16,000 per day by 2007; it is still 4,000 per day below that).

4. BUSINESS IMPACT It will be harder to shop downtown with fewer parking spots, and it will be more dangerous to cross a 5-lane highway for drivers, bikers, and pedestrians. Helping outside traffic get through town more quickly will not benefit local businesses. And for homeowners whose land is taken, property values will plummet.

5. COST \$6.7 million, with a local share of almost \$3 million, is a lot to pay when you already have a well-designed relatively new highway that is safe and has more than adequate capacity. Is it good stewardship to put future residents on the hook for this?

6. AESTHETICS We’re proud of the way our city looks. An expansion would require land and trees to be taken from our neighbors. Not all can be replaced, given the set-back requirements from the highway (where will they go?). Unless the city spends thousands of dollars per tree, it will be decades before they reach the beautiful mature tree-line we see today.



Iowa Department of Transportation

Questions to ask Tony Lazarowicz, DOT

- Why did the DOT build this funding into its budget?
- If this project were deferred and at some point the growth did exist to justify it, would the DOT look favorably at funding it if the City came back with the same financial offer on cost sharing in the future?
- When programming for this project, did the DOT assume a 5-lane roadway would be built, or did it expect comprehensive alternative and environmental studies would be completed before deciding which alternative to implement?
- Since the 3-lane was completed, the traffic volumes on US-75 have decreased, even though the population of Sioux Center and in the county has increased. Knowing how hard it is to accurately predict future traffic growth, why support a project when there is no current need, and we do not know if there will ever be a future need?
- What information will you take back to the state DOT when you discuss planning for this project? Does the DOT take citizen opposition into account when making decisions?

7 questions to ask about the proposed 5-lane expansion

- What is the problem we are trying to fix with an expansion?
- The city has stated that a 5-lane will be as safe or safer than the current 3-lane. What safety research do you have to support that opinion?
- How many homes will be “safety exceptions” that need special permission from the DOT based on how close their house is to the road? Would you want to live in or buy a home that was a “safety exception?”
- When the 3-lane was implemented, the Council said safety was a priority over the congestion that occurred 2-3 hours a day. Does the current City Council now feel that community safety is less important than decreasing the travel time through town?
- Other cities have 3-lane roadways that get 40% more traffic daily than U.S. 75. They have additional lanes at traffic signal intersections and adjust the signal timing to favor traffic on the 3-lane roadway during peak hours. Has the city asked the consultant Mr. Perington to perform a traffic analysis of an alternative that adds turn lanes and medians at traffic lights and adjusts their timing to enhance flow and maintain safety?
- Could we focus on improvements to our 3-lane roadway and defer the construction of a 5-lane roadway until traffic volumes exceed 16,000 vehicles per day?
- How much time would a motorist save driving through Sioux Center on a 5-lane roadway during the busiest hour? During a typical hour?

Other questions to consider

- Given the price tag on this project and traffic numbers that seem to show it's unnecessary, would you say that this project is a stewardly use of our taxpayer funds? Is this a fiscally responsible move in today's economic climate?
- We are happy to live in a growing city, but what makes the City think growth in population will result in substantial growth in traffic on Main Street?
- What is the process this will go through before it receives final approval, and what are the other points at which you'll solicit and take into consideration citizen feedback?
- Why not put this question to a referendum and let the city of Sioux Center decide?



SNYDER & ASSOCIATES
Engineers and Planners

Questions to ask Mark Perington, Snyder & Associates

- Have you performed or will you perform a benefit cost analysis on the investment of public funds in the 5-lane proposal? Based on the minor improvement in travel times and the likely negative economic impact on safety (more crashes), would you expect the benefit cost to be greater than zero?
- Were you asked by the City or DOT to look at alternatives to improve traffic flow through Sioux Center other than the 5-lane alternative?
- Would an improved 3-lane roadway with concrete medians and right turn lanes at intersections decrease traffic delays and improve safety? Is that an alternative you might propose for the city to consider?
- Current recommendations say that 18,000 vehicles per day is generally the highest volume recommended for a 3-lane roadway. Studies completed by the DOT and Dr. Keith Knapp at Iowa State University indicated that even in smaller Iowa towns a 3-lane roadway should be able to provide an acceptable level of travel for 15,000 vehicle per day. Are you aware of this study?

