



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Bang
City Council Members
Administrator Meyer

FROM: Robin Anderson, Executive Director
Mason City Area Chamber of Commerce

DATE: October 18, 2006

RE: 19th Street SW Overpass

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "RA", written over the "FROM:" line of the memorandum.

I understand the council will be considering the scope of the 19th Street SW Overpass at the workshop on Thursday night. I plan to attend this meeting to answer any questions you have regarding the origin of this project and the request for federal funds.

As I believe you are aware, we (Chamber & EDC officials and Mayor Marinos) first broached this subject with our federal elected officials in November 2005 in preparation for our community trip in January 2006. The advice we received from Senator Harkin's chief of staff (Richard Bender) was to emphasize the economic development and growth benefits of such a project since ALL communities requesting funding for a grade separation project tout the benefits of cleaner air, alleviation of congestion, and safety. Staff in Senator Grassley's office advised that bringing forth the name of a prospect actively considering a site in the area would make our request even stronger.

When we returned to Washington, DC in late January 2006 we emphasized the unique advantages of dual rail access (two providers) in marketing this area. We also emphasized the investment in infrastructure that had already been made by local government.

We hear from local business and industry that a choice in rail providers is desirable. We know that Freedom Fuels chose the 19th Street SW location because of the site's access to two rail providers. If the proposed overpass only accommodates the UP tracks, the UP is assured a monopoly in the newly-annexed area.

My understanding is the engineers have a design that accommodates two rail providers. An overpass that crosses both the UP line and an additional provider's line is estimated at \$200,000 to \$400,000 more than crossing only the UP tracks.

It is our hope the council will approve this option, especially since this is the design that was described to our partners in Washington, DC on two separate occasions. It is our intent to continue to work with our federal elected officials on behalf of the private sector to secure additional funding in future years for this very important project.

I have attached a copy of a page from our Washington DC legislative packet from 2006 for your review. In summary, what differentiates our project from those of numerous other communities was the potential for marketing the area to prospects touting two rail providers.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

19th Street SW Grade Separation Project

Background: 19th Street is a four-lane arterial in Mason City. Near Pierce Avenue the street is blocked by an average of 42 trains per day for 6 1/2 hours per day by the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The street accommodates 10,400 vehicles per day.

The difficulties with conflicting vehicular and rail traffic for this location can be summarized in four areas:

1. **Congestion:** When a train is crossing 19th Street, traffic must either wait for the train to clear or detour approximately three miles through residential and industrial neighborhoods. During an annual business survey, primary employers in the area listed the 19th Street corridor as a major concern with trains detaining employees and truck traffic delivering raw materials or moving finished products. Area residents are publicly protesting lengthy waits at the rail lines that average 507 cumulative hours per day. Recent and future Industrial developments in South Industrial Park and Monroe Industrial Park are/would also increasing the volume of trains per day.
2. **Air Quality:** The City of Mason City has been one of the very few areas of the State unable to meet air quality attainment standards. Emissions from idling vehicles exacerbate this pollution problem.
3. **Growth & Development:** Adding an additional rail line to the new 1,200-Acre industrial park is essential in attracting new industrial development. Industrial prospects have turned away from the area for the lack of a second rail access. Railroad companies have expressed interested in constructing additional rail lines to serve the area. However, a new rail line crossing at 19th is not pragmatically feasible without an overpass because of the current level of congestion.
4. **Emergency Response:** The Union Pacific Railroad intersects 19th Street, and a second rail line, owned by Iowa Traction, parallels the north side of 19th street. With both rail lines crossing within this area of town, our ability to respond with emergency services (ambulance and fire protection) has been cut off at times.

*Our
hook!*

Progress: Since last year, a feasibility study has been completed and a grant request submitted to the State for this project. A decision related to the state grant is anticipated in March.

Budget: Proposed sources of funds include:

City of Mason City	\$1,000,000
Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (Pending)	\$ 880,900
Union Pacific Railroad	\$ 160,000
Federal Request 2006	\$1,000,000
Federal Request 2007	\$2,800,000
Federal Request 2008	\$1,700,000
Total Cost	\$7,540,900

Potential Federal Resources:

SAFTEA-LU (Safe Accountable Flexible Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy For Users)

The following page will illustrate the location of the area in need of the overpass and we have also included computer generated renditions of what the structure would look like as proposed.