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2013-07-12 News Shrewsbury

Mayor Outlines Pros/Cons Of Connector

Only one resident spoke at public hearing on South County Connector

by Dennis Hannon

July 12, 2013

The silence was deafening Tuesday at the Shrewsbury Board of Aldermen's public hearing on the South County Connector proposal. Rebecca Spradling of Lansdowne Avenue was the only person who showed up, and even she offered more questions than conclusions.

But the low turnout is not to be interpreted as indifference to the \$110 million project, according to Mayor Felicity Buckley.

"I've talked to many people who feel very strongly" about the issues raised by the county's recently released Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed roadway, she said. "A lot of people feel there is a potential for something really good to happen.

"We want to be assured that it's going to happen. There are other concerns that need to be addressed along the way as well," she said.

Shrewsbury "could benefit from the connector in a very unique way," Buckley said. "We have carried an inordinate amount of traffic through our community. The roads that carry this traffic are just neighborhood roads - they were never built (as) thoroughfares."

The idea of removing regional through-traffic from Shrewsbury's streets has an appeal, Buckley said.

Another attractive idea in the proposal is a grassy median along Shrewsbury Avenue, Buckley said.

However, there are a number of concerns. The biggest question is that the impact study shows an overwhelming amount of traffic at the northern connector end at Laclede Station Road. There is the potential that spillover from the over-crowded connector could stream onto Shrewsbury's streets, she said.

"We could end up with the worst of both worlds, with traffic coming through our community as well as traffic wrapping around our community and overwhelming this area," Buckley said.

The mayor said she also is concerned that the expressway could pinch off foot and bicycle paths, which are important transportation resources for residents.

Spradling and Buckley both both expressed concern that the connector could worsen maintenance problems on Shrewsbury's county-maintained streets.

"Would our road, if the traffic becomes less, then come back to Shrewsbury to maintain?" Spradling asked. "I think the maintenance on our road is

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atrocious."

Buckley said she has talked to the county highway department about the sorry state of Shrewsbury's arterial roads. She said the problem is a shortage of resources.

Buckley said there is no indication of how these questions might be resolved but that the city would be working with the county.



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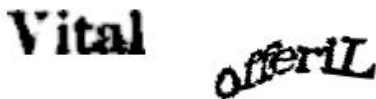
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