

City officials considering second viaduct

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Public meets with architectural firm during open house Tuesday.

Motorist safety and the elimination of blaring whistles when trains rumble through town are why city officials are looking at the feasibility of another viaduct in Gothenburg.

Community members met with representatives of Schemmer Associates, Inc. and Iteris, both of Lincoln, to discuss the project Tuesday night at the local library.

Schemmer's, an architectural firm, was hired for \$69,715 to develop a transportation plan and Iteris completed a traffic model study.

During an earlier interview, city administrator Bruce Clymer said Tuesday's open house was a chance for the public to view and discuss four proposals of viaducts over Union Pacific Railroad tracks and Highway 30 as prepared by Schemmer's and based on city traffic patterns.

"It was also to get ideas from people about what they think for a location or even if they think we need another overpass," Clymer said.

Locations and traffic routes for an overpass over the railroad tracks include:

An east near alternative that starts at Highway 47 to east Fourth Street where it crosses the Fourth Street industrial tract and Cottonwood Drive. The route flows into Avenue L and Avenue M to 27th Street where it joins Highway 47.

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An east far alternative that travels the same route until the old highway (Road 766) when it jogs northeast, then north and winds to the northwest through cornfields until joining Highway 47 just south of the home of Doug and Stephanie Block.

A west Fourth Street alternative that begins at Highway 47 and travels west to First Street, and north through cornfields to Highway 47 just south of the Block residence.

A west First Street alternative that begins at Highway 47 near Baldwin Filters and travels west past the industry and north where it follows the same route as the west Fourth Street alternative.

The idea of a second overpass has been talked about for several years and appears in Gothenburg's comprehensive plan (see box on A1).

Clymer said the council also heard a presentation about the importance of "quiet" zones that eliminate the blast of train whistles when railroad crossings are closed.

Train conductors aren't required to sound whistles at and near closed crossings.

If the council moves forward with a new viaduct, he said the Cottonwood Drive and Lake Avenue crossings would be closed.

Last February, the council budgeted \$60,000 for the study of which the Dawson County Railroad Transportation Safety District will pay \$50,000.

"They voted to have the study done because of the need for future planning," Clymer said.

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Göteborg's sole overpass was finished in 1987.

From the information Clymer said he's received, Göteborg qualifies for state and federal assistance to build a second overpass.

In the meantime, he said Schemmer's will take community feedback from the meeting and include it in a report that will be presented during a public hearing the third week in September.

A formal presentation of findings will be presented to the council in November.

"At that point, depending on feedback, the council will decide to move forward or not," Clymer said.