

Traffic snarls: consequences for the West Central Neighborhood as traffic diverts onto residential streets? Does the traffic analysis look at impacts on the West Central Neighborhood and how do the City and Developer plan to mitigate these impacts?

... six of the 92 intersections analyzed are projected to be congested beyond city standards by 2025, the study says. They are:

1. Northwest Boulevard and Maple Street,
2. Indiana and Post Street,
3. Maxwell and Monroe,
4. Second Avenue and Maple,
5. Fifth and Maple, and the
6. three-way intersection at Northwest Boulevard, Indiana Avenue and Monroe. ~ John Osborn

Kendall Yards traffic studied Analysis finds most crossroads wouldn't suffer

Alison Boggs, *Spokesman-Review* June 2, 2006

Just a half-dozen of the more than 90 intersections studied across downtown Spokane would see unacceptable congestion over the next 20 years if an 80-acre residential and commercial development is built as planned.

That's one of the findings in a two-inch-thick traffic study recently submitted to the city of Spokane by the Kendall Yards development, which calls for 2,600 residences and 1 million square feet of office and retail space to be built overlooking the north bank of the Spokane River, stretching west from the Monroe Street Bridge. More than 5,000 people would call the neighborhood home.

Due to the magnitude of the 20-year project, the city of Spokane sent its traffic engineer to Colorado for four days to meet with the developer's engineers. The city also asked a Portland-based consultant to review the city's information requests, to make sure they were appropriate.

"This is a different project. This is a huge project," said Tom Arnold, the city's engineering services director. "We were just checking to see: Are we on par? Are we asking for the right things?"

The result is an analysis of the development's potential impact on 92 intersections stretching from Fifth Avenue north to Northwest Boulevard and from Summit Boulevard east to Washington Street. The study proposes two new signalized intersections, one north of the Monroe Street Bridge and the other for southbound traffic heading over the Maple Street Bridge. It projects an additional 3,800 additional vehicle trips during evening commute hours and forecasts that six intersections – including the one at Maxwell and Monroe – will have delays beyond acceptable levels.

It also proposes ways to address that congestion, but both the city and developer say they have not yet determined who will pay for improvements. Among the suggested solutions are adding left- or right-turn arrows to traffic signals, adjusting signal timing to create better traffic flow, and adding turn lanes.

The study will be among the information used by the hearing examiner when considering whether to approve Kendall Yards. That public hearing has not been set yet. The city has asked the Spokane Regional Transportation Commission to determine the air quality effects of the proposed changes, said Glenn Miles, the SRTC's transportation manager. That analysis should be complete next week, he said.

Representatives of the developer and city said the parties are still negotiating about the intersections proposed for Monroe Street and Bridge Avenue and just north of the Maple Street Bridge, roughly at Bridge Avenue.

Arnold said via e-mail that the city received the developer's proposal Tuesday and evaluating it would "take some time." As to the intersection at Monroe and Bridge, the city wants to make sure the left-turn lane on Monroe is long enough to accommodate traffic and avoid backups on the bridge, Arnold said. The traffic study said the existing striping on the bridge would provide 175 to 200 feet of room for left-turning vehicles.

In addition, the city plans to one day build a crossover from Monroe to Lincoln at Bridge, to help disperse northbound traffic. Kendall Yards has proposed that crossover be moved north to Broadway Avenue to make room for a signalized intersection at Bridge, which would ease vehicle and pedestrian access to the development, the study says.

The city agrees "in concept" to moving the crossover but needs to make sure air quality standards would be met, Arnold said.

Kendall Yards also proposes a new intersection just north of the Maple Street Bridge. That intersection would include a signal for southbound traffic heading over the bridge, and free right turns from Maple northbound and Ash southbound into the development.

"The basis of the traffic study is that those things are in place and are in the locations we've proposed," said Tom Reese, Kendall Yards project manager. "That's not to say we still don't have some design work to make those intersections function better."

Kendall Yards is designed to promote walking and alternative modes of transportation, the study says. For that reason, the city and developer negotiated a 5 percent to 10 percent reduction in projected vehicle trips.

Despite that reduction, six of the 92 intersections analyzed are projected to be congested beyond city standards by 2025, the study says. They are: Northwest Boulevard and Maple Street, Indiana and Post Street, Maxwell and Monroe, Second Avenue and Maple, Fifth and Maple, and the three-way intersection at Northwest Boulevard, Indiana Avenue and Monroe.

At those intersections, delays would range from 89.7 seconds (at Maxwell and Monroe) to 167.8 seconds (at Northwest Boulevard and Maple), which qualifies them for an F rating on the "level of service" scale used by traffic engineers. At those intersections, the traffic from Kendall Yards alone would range from 5 percent of the total at Indiana and Post to more than 20 percent of all total traffic, at Maxwell and Monroe.

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