CITY OF RAPID CITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Patsy Horton, Division Manager
Long Range Planning Division

DATE: December 4, 2012

RE: **La Crosse Street and Interstate 90 (Exit 59) Interchange Options Study**

On December 10, 2012, the City Council is considering the appeal of a denial to Vacate a Non-Access Easement along Elk Vale Road (12VE013). Although the South Dakota Department of Transportation does not have jurisdiction over the access locations along Elk Vale Road, the South Dakota Access Location Criteria specifies that no new access locations shall be provided on non-interstate routes within a minimum distance of the interstate ramp terminals of 1/8 mile for directional access (right-in-right-out) and 1/8 mile for a full access. This criteria was established to help maintain the interstate mainline and interchange system operating at an acceptable level of service.

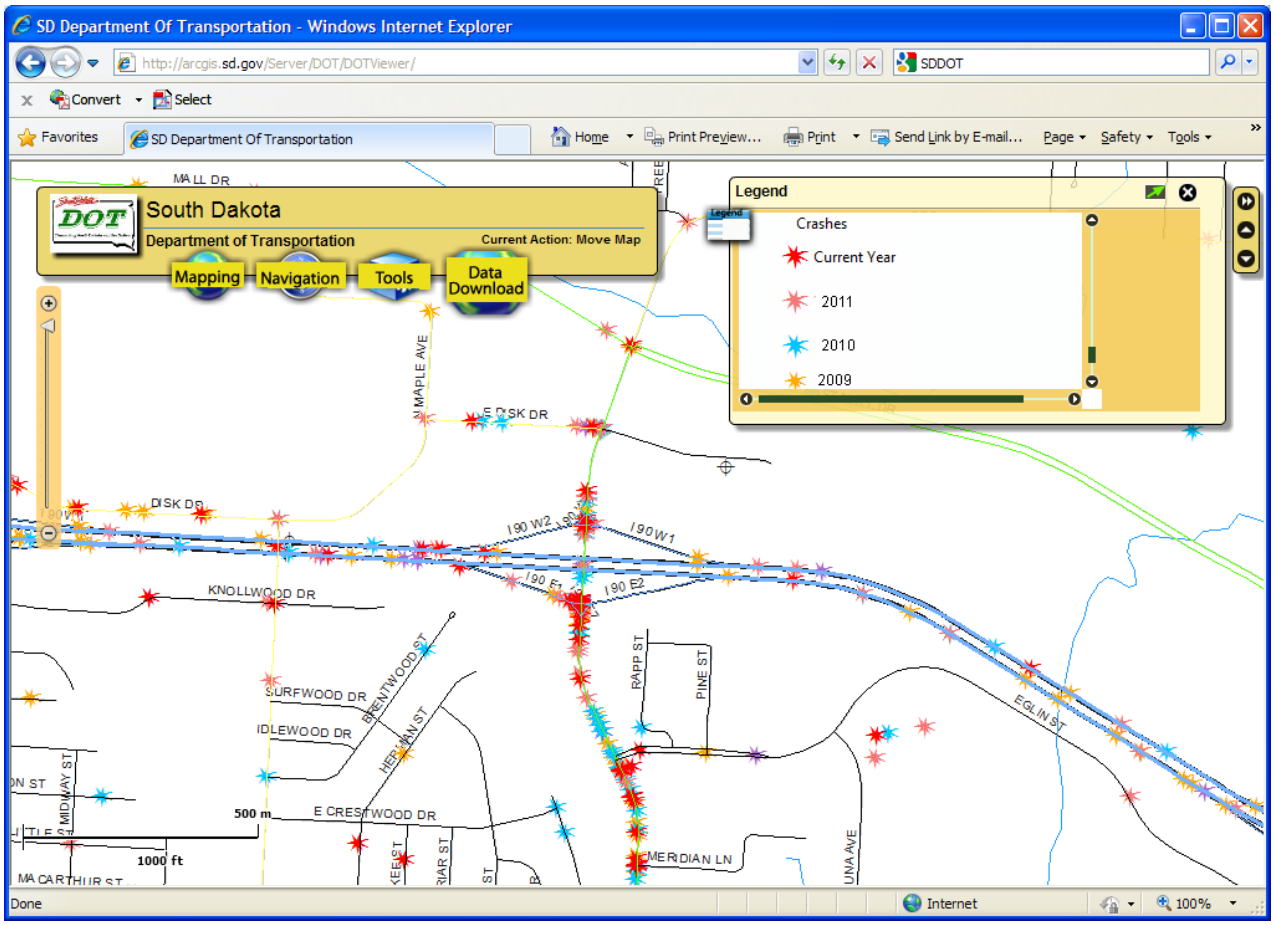
In 2010, the South Dakota Department of Transportation in conjunction with the City of Rapid City finished the Decennial Interstate Corridor Study to determine improvements needed to the various interchanges throughout South Dakota in a three-fold effort to (1) keep the interstate mainline operating at a Level of Service of C or better, (2) keep the interchanges at Level of Service D or better, and (3) identify areas not in compliance with the current interstate design standards.

Links to the Corridor Study documents and the I-90 Exit 59 (La Crosse Street) Interchange Options Study can be found at:

http://www.sddot.com/transportation/highways/planning/specialstudies/Default.aspx

Out of 126 interchanges studied across the State, Exit 59 (La Crosse Street) interchange had the fifth highest crash rate based on a 3 year crash history, more than double the statewide average crash rate. The statewide interchange crash rate average is 0.94; the La Crosse Street interchange at Exit 59 has a 2.49 crash rate. **The estimate to improve this interchange in order to reduce the 2.49 crash rate is between $7.2 million to $14.5 million.**

Recently, the State initiated the La Crosse Street Interchange Options Study to determine the best solution(s) to reduce the crash rate and provide recommendations to mitigate factors contributing to the high crash rates. One of the issues identified as a factor in the high crash rate is the close proximity of the access locations along La Crosse Street to the on/off ramps. The South Dakota Department of Transportation provides on-line access to the five-year historical crash data. Thirty-nine percent of the left turn crashes located within this interchange study area occurred at “driveway access” locations as depicted in the following screenshot.



Today, the State of South Dakota is allocating millions of dollars in planning funds and construction dollars to identify and implement changes to increase safety and reduce impacts to the traveling public. They are currently redesigning the interchange in order to reduce property damage costs associated with vehicle damage and to improve the public’s ability to access local businesses in a safe manner.

The City Council has an opportunity to avoid perpetuating the same circumstances identified at the La Crosse Street interchange by upholding the denial of the request to Vacate a Non-Access Easement (12VE013) at Elk Vale Road, thus maintaining adequate separation between the interstate ramp terminal and driveway access into the Discovery Subdivision west of Elk Vale Road.