

**I-694 Realignment
Noise Advisory Committee (NAC) Meeting #1
March 25th, 2010
Arden Hills City Hall
Arden Hills, MN**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting attendees included representatives from MnDOT, City of Arden Hills, Wenck Associates and NAC members. See attached sign-in sheet for list of attendees.

Meeting was initiated at 6:00 PM by Mark Lindeberg of MnDOT who introduced himself as the overall project manager for the I-694 realignment project. Attendees also introduced themselves. Mark discussed the following items:

- Provided overview of the purpose of the project, which is to replace a total of nine (9) bridges that were built in the late 1950s to early 1960s that have been determined to be nearing the end of their useful life. Project alignment was displayed to NAC members on large map.
- Stated that the purpose of the NAC is to learn about the MnDOT process for the overall project and the included noise evaluation process.
- An Environmental Assessment (EA) was previously completed for the proposed realignment project and a noise analysis was included as part of the process.
- This noise study will update the initial noise study with additional information, including more noise receptors along with traffic forecasts for the existing, no-build, and proposed project conditions.
- Current schedule for the project is for letting of the project in the spring of 2011 with construction to begin in the summer of 2011.

Question from NAC: How is this project related to “unweaving the weave” along I-694 between 35E and 35W?

- Response from Mark: The entire project involves adding two lanes from 35E to 35W to make the highway six total lanes for the section. Prior to being able to construct the additional two lanes from 35E to 35W, additional improvements are needed to improve the overall flow of traffic. It has always been MnDOT’s intention to make these interchange improvements to allow for the construction of the additional two lanes. Due to the large costs, it is not possible to improve the interchanges and add the two new lanes simultaneously.

Question from NAC: What are the density requirements used to put up sound walls/barriers? Where are the noise barriers going to be placed?

- Response from Mark: The intent when placing noise barriers is to select logical termini. The current plan for the west end of 694 is to analyze up to the bus garage in the event that a noise barrier is determined to be needed, feasible and reasonable.

Mark stated that there will be an open house on Wednesday, March 31st to discuss the overall project.

Mark introduced Peter Wasko of MnDOT to give the presentation on noise and the noise analysis for the project.

Peter began to go through the slides on the noise presentation; he allowed for questions/discussion throughout the presentation.

Question from NAC: Why are heights of barriers limited?

- Response from Peter: Barriers are limited in the analysis to 20 feet in height above the ground. Taller barriers become unstable and as a result engineering, design and construction costs increase significantly for barriers over 20 feet in height.

Question from NAC: Will the noise analysis for the realignment consider the future condition of 6 lanes for the entire stretch from 35E to 35W?

- Response from Peter: No; the noise analysis will be based on the alignment as shown on the map. An additional study and noise analysis will be required in the future in the event that the project to construct the two new lanes between 35E and 35W proceeds.

Question from NAC: Are future developments considered in noise analysis? Land along west end of 694 is zoned for high density residential.

- Response from Peter: There is a policy for including proposed developments in noise analysis. The project must have an approved plat or be permitted.

Comment from NAC: Residents within the neighborhoods are interested in how the noise modeling is conducted and how the noise model compares to the actual existing noise.

Comment from NAC: Noise levels will be increased by the proposed project because speeds will be increased.

Comment from NAC: Noise may not get louder but the duration of the noise may last longer as a result of the proposed project.

Comment from NAC: The vibrations from the road are significant for home owners near the existing road.

Comment from NAC: The bridge at the west end of 694 has settled; this has lead to an increased “slapping” noise as cars travel over the bridge.

Question: Can late night “jake braking” by truck drivers be addressed? Can signs be added along the road?

- Response from Peter: There is a process were the City can apply to add signs along the highway which indicate that engine braking or “jake braking” is prohibited. The City is responsible for the cost of the sign, installing and maintaining the sign, and enforcement of the ordinance. MnDOT is not an enforcement agency and would have no way to enforce the ordinance. As a side note Peter commented that signs prohibiting engine braking were not effective in Bloomington. The installation of the signs only caused truckers to use engine brakes more when they saw the signs. The City eventually removed the signs.

Question from NAC: What is the existing traffic along 694? What are the 2030 projected numbers?

- Response from Mark: The current traffic volume is approximately 90,000 vehicles per day. The 2030 traffic volume projections are 140,000 vehicles per day.

Question from NAC: How does a five (5) MPH decrease or increase in speed affect noise?

- Response form Peter: A change in speed of five MPH results in approximately a 0.7 decibel change in noise levels. A change in noise levels of one decibel or less is not perceptible to humans. Based on MnDOT analysis, a change in speed of more than 10 MPH is needed before there is a perceptible change in noise levels (i.e., greater than 3 decibels).

Comment from NAC: Some of the residents have purchased a noise meter and have used it to take readings within their neighborhood. Current noise levels are high.

- Response from Peter: Is noise monitoring being conducted for an hour? Does the meter have an “A” weighted scale? MN Noise standards are based on exceedance values for 10 percent and 50 percent of an hour. Noise monitoring results need to be compared to State standards. If a noise meter does not have an “A” weighted scale setting then it may be picking up noise that is not audible by the human ear, which would skew the noise readings higher.

Question from NAC: When was the noise standard enacted? What was the purpose or driving factor behind the standards?

- Response from Peter: Noise standards were put in place in approximately 1974 and were enacted by Legislative mandate into MN Rules and Statutes.

Question from NAC: Why is there a speed limit of 45 MPH in St. Paul on 35E?

- Response from Peter: That speed limit was set by a court ruling after a long legal process pertaining to the road in that area.

Question from NAC: How far back from the road is the cost effectiveness of the barriers measured?

- Response from Peter: The barrier is considered effective if it can provide at least a five decibel reduction in noise levels. Typically this level of reduction is seen for the first one or two rows of houses adjacent to the highway. Effectiveness of noise reduction by barriers can extend out to 500 feet from the road but more often is found to be effective within 200-300 feet of the roadway. At greater distances the barrier provides less than a five decibel reduction in noise.

Comment from Peter: The current cost of a barrier is approximately two million dollars per mile of road for each side of the road.

Question from NAC: Have walls been constructed in MN that do not meet the MnDOT formula of feasibility and reasonability (i.e., providing at least a five decibel reduction at a cost of less than \$3,250 per decibel per residence)?

- Response from Peter: To my knowledge there have not been walls constructed that do not meet constraints of the formula. Comment from Peter: If the formula is not followed or if there are deviations from the policy then there is no end point to the deviations and there is no longer an enforceable policy. There have been very few instances where a court/legislative mandate has lead to a noise barrier installation.

Comment from NAC: Based on the above statement, feels there is a mechanism where the residents can go through the legislature to get a noise barrier constructed and that this process is not the end of the discussion.

Question from NAC: Which types of pavement are loudest/quietest?

- Response from Peter: Concrete is typically louder than bituminous but for high volume truck highways concrete wears much better. To support the traffic weight and volume on a truck highway, bituminous pavement must be constructed on top of a concrete foundation. This leads to the bituminous

pavement cracking or breaking. As soon as the bituminous pavement starts to crack and break, it becomes louder than concrete pavement. Overall bituminous pavement becomes louder with age. The noise associated with concrete pavement does not increase with age (i.e., remains stable). MnDOT does conduct research and has been making strides in developing quieter concrete pavement.

Comment from NAC: The residents along Hwy 10 would like the aggregate impacts of the Ramsey County bridge replacement project and the MnDOT 694 realignment project to be considered in the study.

Question from NAC: Does the 2030 traffic projection include the removal of the light at Hwy 96 and Hwy 10?

- Response from Mark: Yes, the 2030 projections include that intersection improvement. When conducting traffic volume projections, MnDOT takes into account known traffic improvement or realignment projects within the analysis.

Presentation was concluded by Peter.

Mark adjourned the meeting at 7:40 PM and stated the next NAC meeting would be held towards the end of April.

The next meeting will include the preliminary analysis of the noise modeling.

Mark asked NAC members to notify MnDOT of days/times that are best for the next meeting.

Attachment

Sign-In Sheet

Noise Advisory Committee Meeting Arden Hills City Hall

SIGN UP LIST

Date Thursday, March 25, 2010 - 6:00 - 7:30 PM

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