

HIGHWAY 53 RELOCATION PROJECT – PILOT EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS (2/12/2018)

DISTRICT-1

PROJECT BACKGROUND



Project Overview: Highway 53 Relocation Project took place between Eveleth/Virginia in the United Taconite mine area:

- 3.2 miles of new four-lane highway
- 1,132 foot bridge across a former mine pit
- New interchange at Highway 53 and Interstate 35
- Utility relocation for the city of Virginia
- Relocation of the Mesabi Trail

Timeline: Construction timing: 2015-2017

- Bridge opened: September, 2017
- Post project evaluation: October-December, 2017

Method & Tools Used to Inform and Engage: A variety of efforts were used to reach a range of individuals and organizations:

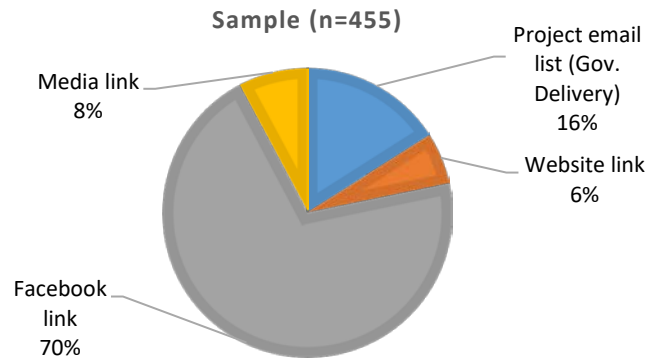
- News media
- Email updates
- Project newsletters
- MnDOT project website
- Webcam, project photos and videos on the website
- Social media
- “Coffee and Conversations” meetings
- 511mn.org website
- Phone hotline

Coffee & Conversations were used to help provide accurate project information and a forum for ongoing dialogue with community members.

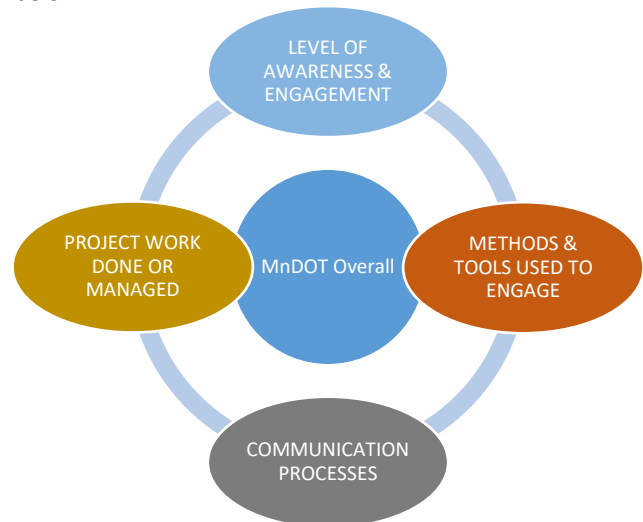
NOTE: The insight and learning from this pilot evaluation is influencing future projects as well as the evaluation process itself (scales, questions, etc.)

EVALUATION PROCESS

Post-Project Pilot Approach: An online survey was conducted in late 2017, with n=455 respondents from multiple sources (some more actively engaged and other more passive).



Content Areas Assessed: The survey was a holistic assessment of the content areas depicted in the diagram below.



Objectives:

- Understand exposure to and perceptions of communication and engagement efforts
- Assess perceptions of the project and MnDOT overall
- Explore how perceptions vary based upon recall of information and level of engagement
- Couple this information with other forms of evaluation and debriefing to round out the evaluation

KEY FINDINGS

Level of Awareness

- Top of mind, about half of this sample recalled receiving information about the Highway 53 project.
- Recall of information increased substantially with age (61% for those age 55+ and 28% for those <35).

Methods & Tools Used to Engage

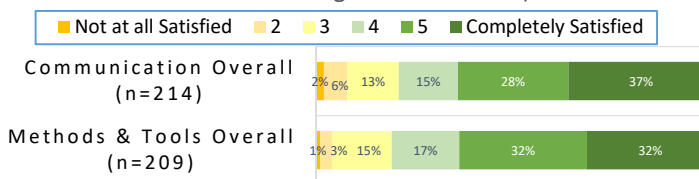
The modes with the broadest exposure include:

- **News media** – which can help justify the benefits of the project, not just the status of construction
- **Webcam, photos & videos on the project website** (and the website overall) - which are positively perceived and can showcase technology on more than one level
- **Social media** – which attracts a slightly younger audience
- **Email updates** – which can provide more detail
- **Coffee & Conversations** – which created a “lift” in satisfaction with the project and MnDOT for those who attended (but not all were satisfied with the logistics (e.g., location, timing, etc.) if they were unable to attend)

Satisfaction with Communication and Method and Tools

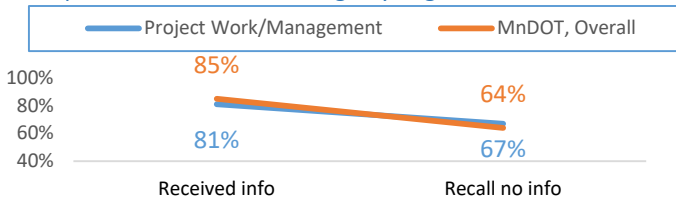
- The majority of those who received information about the project were positive about communication overall and the mix of modes used to educate and engage.

Satisfaction Ratings (among those who recall receiving information)



- Those who recall receiving information were more satisfied (as shown below) and more likely likely to feel that opportunities to provide feedback were adequate.

Top-3 Satisfaction Percentage by Segment



NOTES:

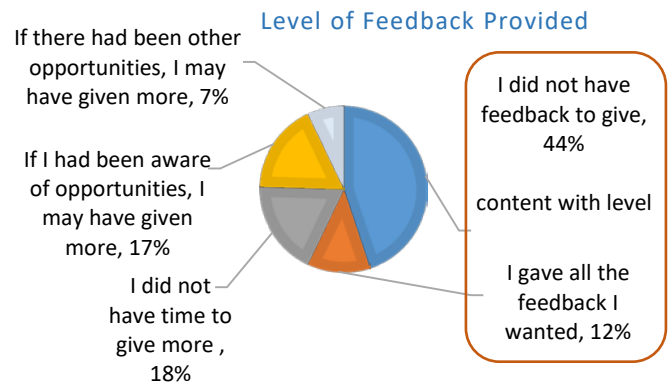
- Those more active in engagement (from Gov. Delivery email or project website), have higher ratings than those who came in through Facebook or a news link. The sample mix needs to be considered (or possibly weighted) if/when overall comparisons are made across studies. For more information on this study, please contact Jan (Janette.Kihm@state.mn.us) or Renee (Renee.Raduenz@state.mn.us)

Project Work Done/Managed

- MnDOT’s efforts to ensure safety were rated positively by three-quarters– which aligned with team priorities and the project safety record.
- About two-thirds rated the completed bridge positively.
- The most common concern that surfaced in comments was a perceived lack of guardrails on the roadway.

Feedback Provided

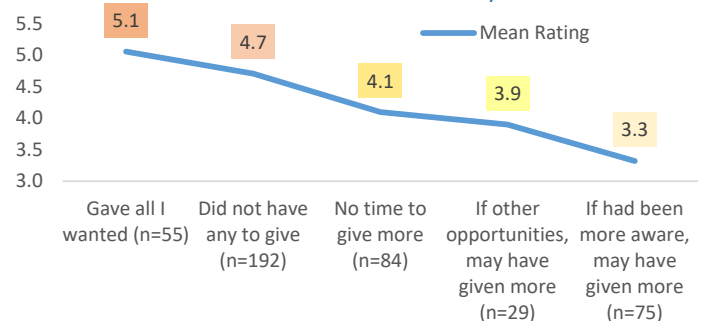
- About one-quarter of the sample provided feedback and just over half were content with their level of feedback.



MNDOT Overall

- How people feel about their own level of feedback impacts their perception of MnDOT (and those unaware of opportunities are the least satisfied).

Satisfaction with MnDOT Overall by Feedback Level



- There are opportunities for MnDOT to manage expectations and be more transparent with the public.
 - Less than half agreed that MnDOT valued or considered their feedback and/or was clear about what decisions feedback could influence.
 - Most of the rest were unsure (and a handful disagreed).

Conclusions & Actions Influenced

- This evaluation underscored the importance of articulating constraints and aligning engagement type with the appropriate level (e.g., inform, consult etc.).
- Project team was/is addressing the guardrail issue.
- DI is holding project meetings at multiple times of day.