

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 Community Leaders Meeting (Meeting 4)

Date: 02/23/2021 (10:00 am – 11:30 am)

Location: Zoom Meeting

Participants: See end of document for list

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome

- A project update was provided to the meeting attendees and the project team conveyed the purpose of these Community Leaders' Meetings
 - The purpose of these meetings is to gather local and regional community groups to better connect with the different community/neighborhood groups and organizations to collect input. The meetings provide the opportunity to have a conversation and understand not only the NEPA process but also help gather information that would best shape the project moving forward.
 - The group started with participants in Rethinking I-94 Phase I and new members have been invited to participate in this working group to provide feedback and guidance throughout the environmental process.
- Discussion on how the community leaders working group has been designed to help communicate project updates and receive public feedback in the most efficient manner. The project team recognizes that a strong partnership with community leaders is beneficial and effective in reaching out to the public.
- Until further notice, engagement will continue to be virtual.

2. Study Status Update and Look Ahead

- Update that currently, we are in Phase 2, which is the environmental phase. It was stated that MnDOT used what it learned from Phase 1 to start draft environmental documents.
- Process overview and logical termini have been shared with the community leaders during working group meetings but have not gone to the public for comment.
- Some concepts included in the draft Purpose and Need has been shared with the members of the community leaders working group; however, it was emphasized that the draft document has not been released to the community leaders or public for comment.
- Meeting attendees questioned why comments and feedback that were sent to the project team earlier have not been reflected in the draft Purpose and Need that will be shared with the public.
 - The project team stated that all comments received will be evaluated by the project team and a response to comments will occur using a methodological approach. The project team will gather input on the drafts from the public in addition to the community leaders then the project team will respond to comments. The project team is keeping track and analyzing all the comments received from the Community Leaders' members.
- The project team stated that they anticipate responding to comments in Spring 2021. The project team is committed to provide response to every comment received regardless of whether the feedback/comment gets incorporated into the final Purpose and Need.

- The project team also stated that comments from the public received at the PAC met earlier this month (2/5/2021) are included in the comments that will be analyzed and responded to this spring.
- The PAC is anticipated to meet on a quarterly basis.
- Livability Workshop Update
 - MnDOT stated that a second Livability Workshop was to occur at 10am on February 25, 2021, and that anyone interested in attending the Livability Workshop on economic vitality could reach out to Hannah Rank with MnDOT.
 - Overview provided of the livability initiative, which hopes to address other issues identified in Phase 1.
 - It was stated that holding in-person meetings and community events is not feasible at the moment, the project team intends to attend any community events to help deliver the most accurate information related to the project. The project team is committed to providing any informational materials to community leaders regarding the project.
 - MnDOT stated that the purpose of the Livability Workshops is to have discussions with the public and share the outcomes with elected officials.

3. Public Involvement

- Update provided on public involvement plan and graphics showing high level schedule and comment/response process.

4. Logical Termini, Goals, Purpose and Need, and Evaluation Criteria

- Overview provided of NEPA process and status.
- It was reiterated that all the documents are drafts and that none of the documents that have been shared with public. The drafts are subject to change based on new information, feedback, and comments.

5. Discussion

- Questions were raised about the need to address things that are not related to transportation but more of the outcome of having the current transportation infrastructure.
- The project team responded that while the draft Purpose and Need is limited to the transportation needs that prompted the transportation project, the project team is committed to addressing other social and environmental issues through the livability framework.
- Some of the needs suggested, such as air quality and reducing VMT are measures or metrics included in the evaluation criteria that will be used to determine the alternative(s) for the program of projects.
- The project team emphasized that no alternatives have been developed and no discussion has started on alternatives.
- Community leaders had concerns that project contradicted commitments and resolutions that have been passed in resolutions by cities.
- The project team responded that the draft Purpose and Need includes consistency with State and regional plans as an additional consideration that influence the program development process and alternatives evaluation.
- A question was asked on who makes the final determination on the project design. MnDOT stated the MnDOT and FHWA are the project leads on the NEPA portion and will have the ultimate determination on the transportation improvements along I-94.
- One attendee recommended diversifying public involvement by being more creative for underrepresented communities (i.e. the East African community in Seward and Cedar Riverside are involved but this applies to many others). Going to a residents' council meeting at Riverside Plaza or one of the building "coffee hours" at Seward Towers could be good ways to reach out to these communities.
- A question was raised on why air pollution was not a project need. MnDOT stated that air quality is a metric that will be used to evaluate alternatives.
- Concerns were also raised regarding the lack of commitment to address air pollution when it has been stated as one of the goals by MnDOT to reduce greenhouse gas.

- It was stated that the terms “primary” and “secondary” are not terms that reflect the prioritization of community. MnDOT stated that “Primary” refers to the main transportation problems that prompted the project.
- A question was raised that if vehicles were slowed to a certain speed (i.e. 30-40 mph), would noise walls be needed? MnDOT stated that there are a lot of factors that affect noise that are not always associated with speed such as vehicle type, ground type, distance to receptors, etc.
- A participant mentioned that VMT reduction should be a primary need and choices coming out of this project should be different than existing conditions.

6. Next Meeting

- March 23, 2021 (10:00 am – 11:30 am)

Meeting Chat Comments/Questions with Responses

Below are the virtual meeting chat comments and questions. All comments will be included in the project’s comment collection, review, and response process.

1. **From Alex Burns to Everyone: 10:11 AM**
When will the purpose & need document that was shared with the policy advisory committee on 2/5 be posted for the public to view?
2. **From Sheila Kauppi to Everyone: 10:18 AM**
Can you share how or what public engagement looks like? example community groups having a meeting, can you speak to how MnDOT or the Project Team would be involved in those meetings
3. **From Hannah Rank to Everyone: 10:20 AM**
my info for the Livability Workshop: Hannah.rank@state.mn.us
4. **From Mary Morse Marti: 10:24 AM**
Can you please tell the group who makes the final determination on the project design? Is it the PAC?
5. **From Mary Morse Marti: 10:26 AM**
Thanks. Who within MnDOT? Who within FHWA?
6. **From Alex Burns: 10:26 AM**
Can I respond to Sheila's comment?
7. **From Dan Pfeiffer: 10:26 AM**
yes, alex, you're next
8. **From Mary Morse Marti: 10:28 AM**
Thanks, Gloria
9. **From Sheila Kauppi: 10:29 AM**
I am not referencing any meetings
10. **From Andy Singer: 10:35 AM**
What was the point of the community leaders meetings if the comments the agency received from the community leaders wasn't reflected in the Draft Purpose and Needs and Evaluation Criteria. Weren't we supposed to INFLUENCE the draft? You say that you took in the letter that we wrote to the agency and will reply to it later ...but I thought the entire purpose of this group was to give feedback to the agency that would influence the draft
11. **From Becky Alper: 10:35 AM**
https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/nepa/guidance_purpose_need.aspx
12. **From Andy Singer: 10:36 AM**
You're not answering my question.
13. **From Maura Brown (she/her) The Alliance: 10:36 AM**
Do the comments received to date influence the draft?
14. **From Debbie Meister: 10:36 AM**
Livability was IDed in Phase 1 and was not incorporated in goals, purpose and needs. Why?

- 15. From Becky Alper: 10:38 AM**
What about air pollution in the needs?
- 16. From Pat Thompson (she/her): 10:38 AM**
can you go back to the purpose
- 17. From Becky Alper: 10:38 AM**
*poor air quality
- 18. From Scott Berger: 10:39 AM**
If some segments of the freeway were converted to boulevards, the bridges wouldn't be necessary and costs could be reduced.
- 19. From David Juliff: 10:39 AM**
Have the City of Saint Paul and City of Minneapolis agreed to the Purpose and Need statements, or are there things that they would like to see included that currently are not?
- 20. From Sheldon Mains (He/Him): 10:40 AM**
Most of the public involvement seems to be things that work for middle class folks. I assume that you will include being more creative for other communities (I'm personally concerned that the East African community in Seward and Cedar Riverside are involved but this applies to many others). For example, going to a residents council meeting at Riverside Plaza or one of the building "coffee hours" at Seward Towers or info at Halal grocery stores....
- 21. From Theresa Nelson: 10:41 AM**
How about if reducing air pollution was a goal?
- 22. From Becky Alper: 10:41 AM**
Agreed, Theresa.
- 23. From Sheldon Mains (He/Him): 10:42 AM**
Is "structural considerations" the only thing being considered for bridges? How about bridge crossing ADA requirements, making the bridges more inviting for pedestrians, people in wheel chairs, people walking?
- 24. From Becky Alper: 10:45 AM**
Sheila k, can you share who you are with? Do you work at MnDOT?
- 25. From Debbie Meister: 10:47 AM**
Every neighborhood organization in St. Paul along the corridor is represented with the St. Paul City Council resolution and/or with the letter sent by 25 organizations.
- 26. From Alex Burns: 10:47 AM**
Who is the one side you are referring to?
- 27. From Scott Berger: 10:47 AM**
Yeah, I'm also confused by this reference.
- 28. From Sheldon Mains (He/Him): 10:47 AM**
are you asking me?
- 29. From Alex Burns: 10:48 AM**
No, I should have clarified, I was asking Sheila.
- 30. From Andy Singer: 10:52 AM**
But Peter's question is, if you haven't incorporated the Cities' positions into the Purpose and Needs Statement and Evaluation Criteria (the core of a project) then aren't you wasting drafting time? Why not start with a draft that reflects the Cities' positions?
- 31. From Debbie Meister: 10:53 AM**
If items are not primary needs and purpose, there will not be funding nor implementation. This is the crux of the comments you are getting.
- 32. From Andy Singer: 10:57 AM**
There's an F right there on Cretin!
- 33. From Pat Thompson (she/her): 10:57 AM**
F-

34. From Andy Singer: 10:57 AM

I feel like I'm attending a meeting written by George Orwell.

35. From Scott Berger: 10:59 AM

If vehicles were slowed to say 30-40 MPH would noise walls be needed?

36. From Scott Berger: 11:00 AM

The point I'm trying to make here is that so far this presentation seems to assume a freeway is the only possibility because otherwise noise walls would be saved for later stages.

37. From Andy Singer: 11:00 AM

Please go back to the previous slide

38. From Sheila Kauppi: 11:00 AM

Sheila Kauppi MnDOT Deputy District Engineer

39. From Becky Alper: 11:01 AM

Thank you.

40. From Sheila Kauppi: 11:05 AM

VMT reduction is part of the conversations are also being talked about at the STAC group

41. From Sheila Kauppi: 11:05 AM

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/sustainability/advisory-council.html>

42. From Peter Wagenius: 11:06 AM

yes

43. From Andy Singer: 11:06 AM

"Reducing VMT" should be a primary need. Instead you show a slide of the old "Level of Service" being a primary need and evaluation criteria. One expectation is that transit will be considered as a way to "Reduce VMT."

44. From Peter Wagenius: 11:07 AM

could the question be re-stated?

45. From Pat Thompson (she/her): 11:08 AM

Having needs met near where I live decreases need for travel

46. From Mary Morse Marti: 11:08 AM

VMT reduction is primary--related to full-size cars, trucks, and SUVs, whether internal combustion engines or electric motors. Choices coming out of this project should be different than existing conditions.

47. From John Levin, Minneapolis/St. Paul: 11:10 AM

There are plenty of ways to reduce VMT. The key is to establish that a goal and THEN explore how to do that while achieving other goals.

48. From Andy Singer: 11:14 AM

can't raise my hand.

49. From Theresa Nelson: 11:15 AM

From MnDOT's sustainability webpage: The Office of Sustainability and Public Health (OSPH) has four focus areas that connect back to agency and statutory transportation and climate goals.

Reduce carbon pollution from the transportation sector.

Increase operational efficiencies that support Executive Orders, including efforts to reduce fuel consumption and energy use.

Improve resilience of the transportation system to climate change and other natural and human disruptions.

Promote public health in transportation decision making.

50. From Becky Alper: 11:19 AM

Are you going to send this PPT out to all participants in this meeting?

51. From Hannah (she/her): 11:19 AM

Here is the link:

52. From Hannah (she/her): 11:19 AM

<https://minnesota.webex.com/mw3300/mywebex/default.do?service=1&siteurl=minnesota&nomenu=true&ma>

[in_url=%2Fmc3300%2Fe.do%3Fsiteurl%3Dminnesota%26AT%3DMI%26EventID%3D1188641367%26UID%3D0%26Host%3DQUhTSwAAAAQS1nZfP6Cm76qB3EVoe4cCLtwWzA_zpZOMruD6z-GHXHJlStcGFR85xyQeEGO20HVPhniY3vLPR00vyORFuDgf0%26RG%3D1%26FrameSet%3D2%26RGID%3Dr4f928fc637b147454712a1643e41fe8c](https://www.fmc3300.com/fe.do?siteurl%3Dminnesota%26AT%3DMI%26EventID%3D1188641367%26UID%3D0%26Host%3DQUhTSwAAAAQS1nZfP6Cm76qB3EVoe4cCLtwWzA_zpZOMruD6z-GHXHJlStcGFR85xyQeEGO20HVPhniY3vLPR00vyORFuDgf0%26RG%3D1%26FrameSet%3D2%26RGID%3Dr4f928fc637b147454712a1643e41fe8c)

53. From Dan Pfeiffer: 11:19 AM

I will send out the ppt and documents

54. From Scott Berger: 11:20 AM

In our local council we supported the letters signed by the cities. Please re-review those.

Meeting Participants

Community Leaders

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
X	Alper	Becky	Move Minneapolis
	Armon	Alec	Hamline Midway Coalition
	Baker	Keith	ReConnect Rondo
X	Barobs	John	Move Minneapolis
X	Berger	Scott	Union Park District Council
X	Burns	Alex	Sierra Club North Star Chapter
	Cashman	Kerry	Seward Neighborhood
	Check	Nick	Saint Mark Parish
X	Golemo	Alexa	MacGroveland Community Council
	Gunderman	Amy	Lexington Hamline Neighborhood
	Haight	Vanessa	Elliot Park Neighborhood
	Johnson	Glen	Elliot Park Neighborhood
X	Juliff	David	Be Civil – ReConnect Rondo
	Khalif	Farhio	St. Paul NAACP
	Klebsch	Angelica	Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio
X	Levin	John	Hamline Midway Coalition Transportation Committee
	Levins Holden	Olivia	Hope Community
	Liban	Mohamed	Somali American Partnership
X	Mains	Sheldon	Seward Redesign, Inc
X	Morse Marti	Mary	Move Minneapolis
	McLaughlin	Chris	Seward Neighborhood Group
X	Meister	Debbie	Neighborhoods First!
	Mudge	Kate	Hamline Midway Coalition
	Murray	Kathryn	St. Anthony Park
	Narayanan	Ashwat	Our streets Minneapolis
X	Nelson	Theresa	Move Minnesota
	Pleskovitch De Canedo	Amanda	Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio
	Royce	Caty	Frogtown Neighborhood Association
X	Selle	Dawn	Hallie Q Brown
X	Singer	Andy	Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition
	Schwantes	Lindsay	Hamline Midway Coalition
	Scott Knox	Tiffany	Wilder
	Smaller	Martine	Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
	Tabbut	Julie	Prospect Park Association
	Thomas	James	Pastor – Mount Olivet Baptist Church
X	Thompson	Pat	St. Anthony Park Community Council, District 12
	Wako	Abdulrahman	Union Park District Council
	Watson	Shannon	St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
	Weinhagen	Jonathan	Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
X	Werner	Jens	Summit-University Planning Council
	Wilson	David	Green Minneapolis

Guests/Unknown Affiliation

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
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X	Brown	Maura	The Alliance
X	Gallatin	Kevin	Sustain Saint Paul
X	Lopez	Toya	Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
X	Wagenius	Peter	Prospect Park (also Sierra Club)

Technical Advisory Committee or Policy and Planning Committee Members

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
	Agosto	Kelly	Hennepin County
X	Cox	Colin	Hennepin County
	Gottfried	Jason	Hennepin County
	Hager	Jenifer	City of Minneapolis
	Harper	Cyndi	Metro Transit
	Harrington	Adam	Metro Transit
	Hiniker	Cole	Metropolitan Council
	Isaacson	Brian	Ramsey County
	Kershaw	Sean	City of St. Paul
	Mandell	Paul	Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board
X	Mazzitello	John	Ramsey County
	Musty	Peter	Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board
X	Newton	Randy	City of St. Paul
	Nix	Noel	City of St. Paul
	Schoenecker	Ted	Ramsey County
	Stark	Russ	City of St. Paul Mayor's Office
	Vanhala	Joan	Hennepin County
X	Vennewitz	Amy	Metropolitan Council

FHWA/MnDOT/Consultant Staff

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
	Austin	Lisa	MnDOT
	Barnes	Melissa	MnDOT
X	Chiglo	Jon	WSB - consultant
X	Cho	Joanne	WSB - consultant
X	Colas	Josh	MnDOT
	Corkle	Jack	WSB - consultant
X	Crockett	April	MnDOT
X	Goff	William	MnDOT
X	Gray	Kirsten	WSB - consultant
	Hampton	Tori	MnDOT
X	Jeff	Gloria	MnDOT
X	Kauppi	Sheila	MnDOT
	Knutson	Cyrus	MnDOT
X	Pfeiffer	Dan	WSB - consultant
X	Rank	Hannah	MnDOT
X	Varney	Anna	FHWA
X	Washington	Lyssa	4rm+ula - consultant