

Highway 252/I-94 Environmental Impact Statement

PAC Meeting Summary

Date: 02/12/2021

Virtual Meeting

Invited Members and Staff (those in attendance are **bolded**)

Hennepin County: **Jeff Lunde** (Commissioner), **Jason Staebell** (Project Manager)

MnDOT: **Margaret Anderson Kelliher** (Commissioner), **Michael Barnes** (District Engineer), **Jerome Adams** (Project Manager), **April Crockett** (Area Manager), **Chris Hoberg** (Area Engineer), **Erik Baxstrom**, **Nissa Tupper**

FHWA: **Wendell Meyer** (Division Administrator), **Anna Varney**

State of Minnesota: Representative Melissa Hortman, **Representative Michael Nelson**, Representative Samantha Vang, Representative Fue Lee, Representative Esther Agbaje, **Senator John Hoffman**, Senator Chris Eaton, Senator Bobby Joe Champion

Metropolitan Council: **Councilmember Reva Chamblis**, **Councilmember Robert Lilligren**, **Adam Harrington** (Metro Transit), **Victoria Dan** (Metro Transit)

Cities: Councilmember Dan Ryan (Brooklyn Park), **Councilmember Lisa Jacobson** (Brooklyn Park), Councilmember Terry Parks (Brooklyn Park), **Councilmember Phillipe Cunningham** (Minneapolis), **Councilmember Jeremiah Ellison** (Minneapolis), **Mayor Mike Elliott** (Brooklyn Center), Curt Boganey (Brooklyn Center), Jason Stroebel (Brooklyn Park)

SRF: **Brett Danner**, Todd Pollum, **Craig Vaughn**, **Becky Krugerud**, **Justin Sebens**, **Leif Garnass**, **Alicia Valenti**

The Highway 252/I-94 project team conducted a presentation on February 12th, 2021 to the Policy Advisory Committee which included the information summarized below. For additional details on the topics summarized below, please see the presentation which is posted on the project website.

1. Opening Remarks and Roll Call
 - a. Chair Anderson Kelliher welcomed the group. Met. Council Chair Zelle provided opening remarks on the project and PAC. Chair Anderson Kelliher reviewed roles of the PAC, which included guiding policy and funding decisions, reviewing TAC recommendations, helping with the identification of important community issues, encouraging community participation, and providing input as requested by MnDOT.
2. Project Objectives
 - a. SRF reviewed the project objectives. There are five objects including: reducing injury and fatalities; promoting public health, ensuring consistency with local plans and road

networks, minimizing the acquisition of property, and reaching equitable social, environmental and economic goals.

3. Project Background
 - a. SRF reviewed project background and previous studies within the corridor that have led up to and influenced the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. Previous projects include studies that have been completed between the year of 2005 and 2018. SRF reviewed the project transition from the Hennepin County-led EA to the MnDOT-led EIS. The transition to the EIS will allow for further review and analysis of transit on the corridor and more alternatives to be analyzed in greater detail.
4. Schedule
 - a. SRF provided an updated to the project schedule. The EIS is currently in the Purpose and Need phase which goes through Spring 2021.
5. Environmental Process Update
 - a. SRF reviewed the outcomes of each phase in the EIS process. The Purpose and Need Statement phase was described to the group which included a timeline describing the anticipated outcomes/deliverables for the phase. The Purpose and Need update included a slide outlining the draft Purpose and Need Statement. The Purpose and Need Statement is currently being reviewed by FHWA and Metro Transit and will be published for public comment in March 2021. SRF reviewed the Scoping and Draft EIS phases, which included a description of how project alternatives are developed and evaluated as well as the possible outcome of selecting a preferred alternative.
6. Transit Feasibility Study
 - a. Metro Transit provided an updated on the TFS. The update included an explanation of current transit service in and around the project area and reviewed the four concepts being studied in the TFS.
 - i. Station-to-Station BRT along I-94 and I-694 to Maple Grove Transit Station (Hwy Transitway Corridor Study)
 - ii. Concept B: Station-to-Station BRT along I-94 and Hwy 252 to Northtown Transit Center
 - iii. Concept C: Capital improvement (in-line or online station) along I-94; connecting local and/or express service improvements
 - iv. Concept D: Local and express service improvements. He reviewed design considerations for each along with potential station locations.
 - b. The TFS will further evaluate each concept and integrate them into the highway alternatives during the Scoping Phase of the draft EIS.
7. Workforce Sub-Committee
 - a. MnDOT provided a brief update on the workforce sub-committee and its goals. The committee is currently on hold until the project is further along in the environmental process.
8. Special Topic: Health in Transportation
 - a. MnDOT presented on the topic of public health and transportation, which included discussion on how this topic will impact the EIS process and future MnDOT projects. The presentation reviewed the current MnDOT vision and how health topics are integrated into the MnDOT decision-making process. The presentation included a summary of MnDOT policies and efforts that align with MnDOT's vision. Recent examples include the 2013 Complete Streets Policy, an agreement with the Minnesota Dept. of Health and MnDOT, the use of Health Impact Assessments, the creation of MnDOT's Sustainability and Public Health Division in 2019 and the creation of the Sustainable Transportation

Advisory Council.

- b. Senator Hoffman indicated he was pleased with the efforts on the Health in Transportation work and praised MnDOT's intersectionality.
 - c. Mayor Elliot appreciated the presentation and indicated that he felt the project was headed in the right direction. He noted that Brooklyn Center was near the top for COVID cases within Hennepin County and wanted to note the health disparity within Brooklyn Center. He also noted the initiative the Safety Task Force took by donating their own time to help with community involvement. His last note discussed equity and justice from a decision-making standpoint and encourage the team to take notice of who is giving the presentations to the PAC and the public.
 - d. Council Member Chamblis indicated she is pleased with the engagement efforts. She noted that all the project partners should be aware of the need to include BRT in connection with MnPASS along this corridor.
 - e. Commissioner Lunde thanked the group for the conversation and the presentation. He indicated that he endorses health and equity during all parts of the conversation and would like a deeper discussion with the transit team regarding BRT within the communities along the corridor.
9. Enhanced Engagement: Health and Equity Assessment
- a. MnDOT presented on the Health Evaluation Process. The presentation reviewed the three health equity lens tools which include Health Impact Assessments (HIA), Community Impact Assessments (CIA), and a Hybrid Approach combining aspects of both the HIA and the CIA. The project will use the hybrid approach. The hybrid approach will be community driven, both qualitative and quantitative, applying MnDOT's Equity Lens Framework. The hybrid approach will be integrated with the overall project engagement effort.
 - b. SRF reviewed the draft EHA process, benefits and timelines associated with the Highway 252/I-94 project. The process will use a series of questions to guide the project team on how to further define equity within the project outcomes. Sample questions included:
 - i. What groups are affected by the project? Are some groups affected differently by its implementation, and if so, how?
 - ii. What are the relevant social disparities within the agency and community that needs to be considered?
 - iii. Are there potential negative social or agency outcomes? What strategies are in place to mitigate these outcomes?
 - c. The project will use a Community Steering Committee that will work directly with project partners throughout the EHA process. The EHA process is planned to be completed by the end of 2021 and will include a report on the existing health conditions and social disparities (anticipated to be completed in April 2021), an evaluation of the equity and health benefits/impacts of project alternatives, and equity and health recommendations for future projects (anticipated to be completed in December 2021).
10. Public Engagement
- a. SRF reviewed the next three months of public engagement on the project. SRF presented the overall engagement timeline, which includes the implementation of the Public Engagement Plan, EIS 101 videos, and the creation of an EIS 101 presentation library over the next three months. The EIS 101 Presentation Library is intended to provide education information on the state and federal steps required for the EIS Process. As well as information to empower community stakeholders by educating them on the topics and questions under consideration by the project team. Public

engagement next steps include additional listening sessions and additional EIS 101 webinars. Future engagement will continue to be informed by input received during past engagement done as part of the Environmental Assessment.

11. Next PAC Meeting

- a. The next PAC meeting is scheduled for June 7th, 2021 1:00 – 2:30 PM. Racial equity in transportation was raised as a potential topic for a future PAC meeting.

12. Open Comment Period

- a. The public was provided two minutes each to provide comments to the committee.