

Highway 252/I-94 Environmental Impact Statement

PAC Meeting Summary

Date: 06/07/2021

Virtual Meeting

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

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

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 Phillippe Cunningham (Minneapolis), **Councilmember Jeremiah Ellison** (Minneapolis), **Mayor Mike Elliott** (Brooklyn Center), Reggie Edwards (Brooklyn Center), Jason Stroebel (Brooklyn Park)

SRF: **Brett Danner**, **Don Demers**, **Craig Vaughn**, **Becky Krugerud**, **Justin Sebens**, **Leif Garnass**, **Dale Gade**

The Highway 252/I-94 project team conducted a presentation on June 7, 2021, to the Policy Advisory Committee which included the information below. For additional details on the topics below, please see the presentation posted on the project website.

1. Opening Remarks

Commissioner and Chair Anderson Kelliher opened the meeting with remarks acknowledging all that has happened since the PAC last met in February. This included Derek Chauvin's conviction for murder and the killing of Daunte Wright during a police encounter with Brooklyn Center Police. She respectfully acknowledged that folks might not have a lot of mental space available for transportation projects right now, but sincerely thanked those who attended the PAC meeting for being present and giving this project their attention.

Mayor Elliot gave his opening remarks centered around the recent events in Brooklyn Center and discussed in general the negative impacts highways have on local communities. He indicated that he is here to fight for Brooklyn Center and discussed allowing individuals who have been traumatized by highway projects to lead and that it may feel different than we are used to doing.

Met Council Chair Zelle thanked the mayor for his words. He offered the idea that we can only proceed at the pace of trust.

Roll call was taken.

2. Enhanced Engagement

Nissa Tupper (MnDOT) gave a presentation and update on the Equity and Health Assessment process that is underway as part of the project.

Hally Turner, supported by Abdullahi Abdulle, (both MnDOT) gave a presentation on Equity in Transportation from the department's perspective. The key takeaway is MnDOT is defining transportation equity and developing metrics. Everyone has a role in advancing transportation equity.

3. PAC Reflection

Mayor Elliot – Agreed with comment from councilmember Chamblis. Made the comment that people of color are not presenting project material on the topic of equity. Indicated that local leaders within Brooklyn Center have shown that people of color can lead. Mayor indicated that the only time he talks about the project is at the PAC meeting.

Councilmember Chamblis – Thanked the group for including diversity and equity at the beginning of the project. Suggested that the project use the disaggregated data when looking at the racial makeup of the corridor. Encouraged Brooklyn Park and North Minneapolis to speak up and participate in the process.

Councilmember Jacobson – Project has taken different paths throughout the process. She is also excited to see the topic of race and equity being included in the project. Asked - how we look at racial equity within transportation in a way that improves communities all the way around?

4. Racial Equity in Transportation

Conversation with C Terrence Anderson (University of Minnesota Center for Urban & Regional Affairs) and Brett Grant (Voices for Racial Justice)

a. Question 1

- i. Why is it important that equity be an early consideration in the planning of infrastructure projects like Trunk Highway 252/I-94?
- ii. How can policymakers help make a difference?

C Terrence Anderson – Need to focus on the process and not on the end goal. Questioned how to discuss living in a racially equitable society when no one has lived in a racially equitable society in the US/Minnesota/Twin Cities. To get racially equitable outcomes, we must know what inequity we are trying to address. What needs to be addressed? Then what are the solutions that address that problem?

Brett Grant – Used racial equity impact assessments to analyze a project in St. Paul. Indicated that MN is ranked 10th in the country for wealth, jobs, etc.; however, when looked at through a racial lens, the

state falls to 45th. Communities do not feel the tangible solutions of racial equity. Looking to include a racial equity note at the project bonding commission.

5. Question 2

- a. We are currently in the Environmental Impact statement process which will evaluate how some of the benefits and burdens of the project are shared. What is the significance of equity in both the process and the outcomes of a complex project such as this?

Brett Grant – Shared an example of a student project that looked at cumulative impacts of projects. Indicated that the EIS is different than the impacts regarding a racial equity impact assessment. Need to disaggregate the data when looking at racial equity and impacts. Need to understand how measures that come out of the communities can be used even when they do not fit into best practices.

C Terrence Anderson – When hurt on a personal level, the person hurt decides what healing looks like. Need to understand that a community must decide what healing looks like. Need to understand that the people who harmed, are the ones who own the process. Need to allow the community to take over that power so they feel they have gained the trust. Need to think about a process that gives the people power over the process.

6. PAC Reflection on Q1 and Q2

Council Member Ellison – Thanked everyone and the presenters. Commented on and liked C Terrence Anderson's 0 to 100 analogy.

Rep Agbaje – Idea of naming the specific harm around equity is very important. Need to have the EHNA name the specific harm that has been done in the past. Asked how we as leaders are the best way to communicate with the public on identifying the specific harms.

Mayor Elliot – We have been talking about this topic for a long time. Feels this group has undermined this process. Need to acknowledge the path here. Appreciates the speakers. Need to underscore who owns the process is one thing he heard and how to make space for measures that do not fit into best practices.

7. Transit Feasibility Study

Metro Transits Adam Harrington provided an update on the status of the Transit Feasibility Study and noted that a more extended, special PAC meeting would be conducted in July to specifically look at the transit feasibility study in more detail and how Transit will be looked at in the decision-making process moving forward.

8. Project Updates

- a. Workforce Subcommittee

Jerome Adams (MnDOT) provided a brief update that the workforce sub-committee and its goals. The committee is currently on hold until the project is further along in the environmental process.

b. Public Engagement

Craig Vaughn (SRF) provided an update on public engagement that referenced what the team has completed to date. He indicated that the public engagement team is working on a variety of items and gave a summary of work currently going on.

- i. Online open house (Live June 1st through June 30th)
- ii. Community conversations
 - a. Minneapolis – June 15th
 - b. Brooklyn Center – June 17th
 - c. Brooklyn Park – June 22nd
- iii. Summer pop up engagement – Pop-up engagement will be taking place throughout the summer in all three of the corridor cities.

c. Environmental Update

Brett Danner (SRF) gave a brief update on the environmental work. He indicated that the purpose and need, logical termini, and evaluation criteria memo were all out for public comment.

d. StairStep Update

Chris Hoberg (MnDOT) gave an update to the PAC regarding the team's collaboration with the StairStep Foundation. He updated the group regarding StairStep's participation in the process and informing the community of the project, providing project updates.

9. Public Comment Period

The deputy commissioner opened the public comment period of the meeting and received no questions or comments from the public. The deputy commissioner then opened the comment period up to PAC members for discussion.

Council Member Chamblis – Thanked the presenters. Finds the information very valuable. Happy to see that the recommendation was to start with racial equity. Indicated that she would like to institutionalize the racial impact assessment to our process as a state.

Mayor Elliot – Made a statement that to date the engagement has been more promotion of the project and not informational in the sense that the project team has not asked the public what they would like to have happen for Hwy 252. Said he wants to see more participation by people of color in his community.

10. Next PAC Meeting

Special July Transit PAC – July 23rd, 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Quarterly PAC – August 20th, 1:00 – 2:30 PM