

Highway 252/I-94 Environmental Impact Statement

PAC Meeting Summary

Date: 08/20/2021

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), 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)**, **Reggie Edwards (Brooklyn Center)**, Jason Stroebel (Brooklyn Park)

SRF: Brett Danner, **Don Demers**, **Craig Vaughn**, **Becky Krugerud**, **Justin Sebens**, **Leif Garnass**, **Dale Gade**, **Adele Hall**, **Matthew Stegeman**, **Jackie Nowak**

The Highway 252/I-94 project team conducted a presentation on August 20, 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

MnDOT Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher welcomed participants to the meeting and outlined the agenda, including the Transit Feasibility Study process and results, PAC reflection and conversation, an Equity and Health Assessment update, and an open comment period.

2. Transit Feasibility Study Process and Results

Metropolitan Council Chair Charlie Zelle introduced the Transit Feasibility Study and staff who will be presenting information: Adam Harrington and Adele Hall. Chair Zelle emphasized the multimodal nature of the corridor, and that this is one corridor among a whole network of transit investments currently underway.

Adam Harrington (Metro Transit) presented a summary of existing transit service in the Hwy 252 and I-94 corridor. Adele Hall (SRF) presented the detailed concepts assessed in the Transit Feasibility Study, the results of the evaluation process, and recommendations for further study in the Hwy 252/I-94 Scoping Decision Document. Jerome Adams (MnDOT) explained the relationship between the Transit Feasibility Study and the rest of the Hwy 252/I-94 EIS project and schedule.

3. PAC Reflection

Commissioner Anderson Kelliher and Chair Zelle opened the PAC conversation.

- a. Representative Esther Agbaje: At what point in the process do environmental concerns begin to be studied? Constituents have raised concerns regarding environmental issues. Will electric busses be considered?
 - i. Chair Zelle responded that Metro Transit is committed to reducing emissions and continuing to expand its electric vehicle fleet. Expansion of transit service will allow more people to shift to more efficient transit modes.
 - ii. Adam Harrington with Metro Transit confirmed that Metro Transit is advancing electrification efforts, and future developments along the corridor will also help reduce the impact of industry and other land uses along the corridor. Metro Transit will have a zero-emission bus plan prepared for the legislature in 2022.
 - iii. Commissioner Kelliher clarified that environmental issues will be studied as part of the EIS process. MnDOT is conducting an Equity and Health Assessment as part of the Hwy 252/I-94 project. This is a new process for MnDOT and has never been completed as part of a project.
- b. Representative Esther Agbaje: There were 1,000 added riders as part of Concept B and Concept D, are these the same riders or different riders?
 - i. Metro Transit noted that the ridership numbers are based on forecasted 2040 ridership. The riders may be different riders, however the level at which the analysis is being conducted it is difficult to tell.
 - ii. SRF clarified that these ridership forecasts do not include specific ridership demographics. SRF noted that each concept is likely pulling different geographic areas; routes serving park and ride locations have a broader geographic area, while local routes typically serve the neighborhoods along the corridor.
- c. Representative Esther Agbaje: How will the impacts of the pandemic on travel patterns be addressed in future planning efforts?
 - i. Commissioner Kelliher responded that the Minnesota Legislature has asked MnDOT and the Met Council to study the impacts of the pandemic on transit; the study will be conducted by the University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies (CTS).
- d. Mayor Mike Elliott stated that additional time is needed to review the slides.
 - i. Commissioner Kelliher noted that PAC members are always welcome to provide comment outside of the PAC meeting if desired.

- e. Councilmember Jerimiah Ellison: Is there an intention to study stations at West Broadway, Lowery Avenue, and Dowling Avenue as part of the broader transit network in North Minneapolis?
 - i. Metro Transit noted that station locations is a component of the analysis. Further analysis will include a more detailed evaluation of the costs and tradeoffs on individual station areas and will be cognizant of impacts/benefits on the broader network.
 - ii. Commissioner Anderson Kelliher noted that concept A will not proceed as part of the SDD process, but concepts B, C, and D will advance for further study.
- f. Mayor Mike Elliot: Is it the assumption that the 1,000 riders in Concept B and Concept D are the same people? When we provide only peak hour service that probably serves people who work regular 9-5 jobs. If we want to serve people who work 3rd shift, we need all day service. The pandemic also has taught us that people use transit for more trips than just getting to work. The most reliable riders use transit for many trips.
 - i. Commissioner Anderson Kelliher noted that there may be some overlap between the markets. The note about 3rd shift works will be noted for the team to study in future work.

4. Equity and Health Assessment Update

Commissioner Anderson Kelliher welcomed C. Terrence Anderson to the meeting and introduced Dale Gade (SRF) to give an update on the Equity and Health Assessment.

5. Public Comment Period

Commissioner Kelliher opened the public comment period.

- a. Peter Wagenius: Thanked Metro Transit for the presentation and reinforced comments made by elected officials. Peter emphasized the benefits of all-day transit service, including for people who work jobs at hours other than 9-to-5, as well as other types of trips.
- b. Joshua Houdek: Josh indicated his support for high-quality bus rapid transit alternatives. Josh noted that Concepts B and D look promising and thanked Metro Transit and MnDOT for going beyond the previous Highway Transitway Corridor Study in this evaluation. Josh noted that transportation is a key source of emissions and will be important to addressing the climate crisis.

6. Next PAC Meeting

Quarterly PAC – October 7th, 2:30 – 4:00 PM