

# Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 Community Leaders Meeting Summary (Meeting 9)

Date: 08/24/2021 (10:00 am – 11:30 am)

Location: Zoom Meeting

Participants: **See list below**

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Welcome

- Jack Corkle (WSB) welcomed participants and went over the agenda and objectives for the meeting

### 2. Livability Update

- Gloria Jeff (MnDOT) gave an update on the livability initiative workshops on Health and the Environment, and Trust. She also introduced Connectivity, which will be the topic of the next livability workshop.
  - The health and environment workshop was held on June 24<sup>th</sup>. Key takeaways included: a desire for focus on communities of color; reducing or eliminating salt as a deicing method; focusing on transit as a solution to improving public health; increasing barriers to driving; and establishing a common set of goals across different agencies.
  - At the health and environment workshop, The City of Minneapolis and City of Saint Paul discussed their climate initiatives
    - The City of Minneapolis' goals include a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 4 miles per person and supporting a car free or "car lite" lifestyle. The City of Minneapolis stated they were generally opposed to any increase in highway capacity in the city. In addition, they had adopted an environmental justice policy.
    - The City of Saint Paul's goals include a climate justice initiative. The initiative will address climate change as a top priority. The City of Saint Paul also wants to feature underrepresented voices and reduce VMT.
  - Over the month of July, MnDOT staff invited stakeholders and community leaders/members to take part in a conversation centered around the Trust pillar. The conversations were conducted in a one-to-one structure with individuals or smaller groups and are still in process. The intent of the trust workshop format was to provide a more personalized way to listen and learn from the community.
  - Aspects of trust discussed at these meetings included support, open communication, community interest at the forefront of planning, collaboration, and inclusivity. During these meetings, MnDOT asked a series of questions:
    - How would you rate your collaboration with government agencies like MnDOT?
    - How did you build connections with that government agency?
    - How do you obtain government resources to support your communities?
    - How would you trust that MnDOT is hearing your community?
    - How can we better engage your community where they are?
    - How can the state government build trust with their community and leaders?
  - Key takeaways from the trust workshop meetings included: there is a lack of transparency and accountability from MnDOT to communities; communities feel they do not have influence;

communities believe that MnDOT has already made up its mind on projects; communities believe their input will not be incorporated to project; a perceived mismatch with community goals and MnDOT goals; non-profits have limited capacity to engage on MnDOT projects as they have finite resources; communities want MnDOT to develop ongoing relationships outside of construction; and communities wanted to stay informed and updated with content on MnDOT's website using plain language.

- An introduction to connectivity for the next workshop was presented and a draft working definition was provided: Connectivity aligns physical infrastructure with the social and cultural connections of the community. Discussion included how connectivity means different things to different communities and each community has different cultural meanings of connectivity.

- Next meeting topics will include:

- summary of the Trust and Connectivity workshops,
- update on Livability papers production and review schedule,
- update on NEPA activities, and
- feedback from outreach efforts.

- Participant comments/questions:

- Question - Keith Baker (ReConnect Rondo): How do NEPA and MEPA intersect with MnDOT's livability initiatives, will livability be brought into those evaluation processes?
  - Response- Jack Corkle (WSB): In the Tier 1 document, the evaluation criteria is tied to the Livability Framework. NEPA and MEPA are woven together and will be done jointly. Therefore, the environmental document would ensure to meet both state and federal requirements.
- Question – Mary Morse Marti (Twin Cities Shared Mobility Collaborative): It would be very helpful to hear where these conversations took place and with whom.
  - Response – Mikaela Ziegler (WSB): You can always find more information about livability workshops on the MnDOT livability website - this is where summaries will be posted when they are available  
<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/livability/involvement.html>

### 3. Brainstorming (Continued discussion from previous meeting)

- Previous Ideas (collected at July meeting)

- Mainline

- Remove freeway - replace with low-speed Blvd., high speed dedicated transitways, high speed bicycle highways, additional developable space for housing/industry/commerce
- Less cars, more transit
- Lower vehicle speeds
- Roadway design that encourages lower speeds (<12' lanes, much smaller curve radii, trees along the travel way)
- Reduce the footprint to increase developable space.
- Parkway-like setting for I-94 (similar to I-35E).
- Dedicated high speed transit
- Options that would have the biggest impact to reduce particulate pollution along the corridor

- Access/interchanges

- Reduce speeds on TH 280 with interchange work
- Better freight connections on the corridor and not on side streets, particularly connecting from/to TH 280
- Work with local agencies to revisit frontage roads - make them more community oriented - not just connections to/from the highway

- Redesign highway off-ramps to reduce speeds before vehicles get to the local street system. Vehicle speeds at the ends of the ramp are significantly higher than posted speeds today.
- Speed/safety issues on connecting streets to I-94 - currently feel hostile
- Low-speed (i.e., tight) geometry and widths on side-streets.
- Bike/Ped
  - A pedestrian scale corridor. Lighting, signage, speeds, vegetation.
  - Pedestrian scale corridor - not just crossing as an afterthought
  - Frontage roads - more human scale, pedestrian-oriented
  - More pedestrian scale crossings (assuming highway remains)
  - If trench remains, wider bridges with space allocated to non-car uses
  - Dedicated bikeways
- Other Thoughts/Ideas
  - Streetscape - Incorporation of art, green to soften, improve air and sound and sense of place. Know there is something above the trench.
  - Stipend for commercial and residential buildings to install air filters to increase indoor air quality
  - Reduction in light pollution in the corridor
  - Consider freight noise restrictions (ban internal combustion engines, EV only)
  - Only allow EV freight
  - Move freight off the corridor
  - EV freight infrastructure
  - Small-scale, local, incremental development of newly developable land instead of one master developer
  - On non-developed land, implement carbon sequestration and renewable energy generation
  - Understanding cost of alternatives relative to new opportunities created for development (what value could be created?)
  - Areas along the corridor welcoming to children - safe areas to play
- No new ideas were offered by the community leaders

#### 4. Recent and Upcoming Outreach Activities

- Jack Corkle (WSB) gave an update about past and upcoming outreach activities from the Rethinking I-94 project team
  - Virtual Open House
    - MnDOT has been collecting comments through the Feedback tab on the virtual open house website.
  - Signs and stickers long the corridor
    - Signs were taken down and team is looking into new locations
    - Stickers are still in place
    - Pop-up event participants have indicated they have seen signs and stickers.
  - Pop-up events include:
    - Chroma-Zone Creative Enterprise Zone in Saint Paul- July 24<sup>th</sup>
    - Black Business is Beautiful Local Market in Saint Paul – August 14<sup>th</sup>
    - National Night Out Prospect Park in Minneapolis – August 17<sup>th</sup>
    - Saint Thomas More Farmers Market in Saint Paul – August 20<sup>th</sup>
  - At these events, the project team asks people how/if they use or engage with I-94. Participants then use stickie notes where people could note negatives and positives of using or engaging with I-94 and the corridor, and the changes they would like to see along the corridor. Event attendees are also given postcards where they are asked what neighborhood they come from, what they like about their neighborhood, and how they want to see I-94 change.

- Information on the project's draft purpose and need was presented in the form of two posters.
- Common feedback themes from outreach activities:
  - desire to see a reduction in traffic,
  - do not like congestion
  - increase safety at interchanges, entrances, and exits of the highway
  - inclusion of HOV lanes
  - Resident thought that Highway should respond to population growth in some way (increased transit, HOV, etc.)
  - Those that live near the highway wanted to see an increase native green space around highway
  - Frequent users of the highway including several bus drivers were interested in the return of dedicated bus lanes/shoulders like prior to 35W bridge collapse
  - Residents of neighborhoods that bordered the corridor wanted to see an increase or improvement sound walls and caps/land bridges over large sections of the highway to reconnect neighborhoods and increase greenspace area
  - Wary of large-scale construction projects for noise and air pollution, driving difficulty that happens with construction
  - Worried that their neighborhoods will become high traffic throughfares leading to more air and noise pollution
  - Residents who lived both near and far from the corridor wanted to see an increase of walkability and bikeability over and around the highway and were concerned about the environment.
- Community meetings the project team has been invited to include:
  - Saint Anthony Park Community Council
  - Hamline Midway Council
  - Council for Minnesotans with African Heritage
- Future outreach events:
  - Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup> – Saint Thomas More Farmers Market from 1pm to 5pm
  - September 9<sup>th</sup> - Lowertown Sounds from 6pm to 9:30pm
  - Saturday September 11<sup>th</sup> – Selby Avenue Jazz Festival from 11am to 7:30pm
  - Saturday September 11<sup>th</sup> – Mac-Grove Fest from 11am to 4pm
  - Sunday October 24<sup>th</sup> – Open Streets Minnehaha from 11am to 5pm
  - Community Leader Outreach Event
- Community leaders discussion on outreach activities
  - Mary Morse Marti (Twin Cities Shared Mobility Collaborative) talked about using the twitter hashtag #rethinkI94, also concerned about how difficult it is to get to the feedback page on the virtual open house, thinks the questions are leading.
  - A committee member wanted to know if MnDOT would use/participate in the twitter hashtag #rethinkI-94. A discussion ensued that MnDOT generally does not use Twitter, Facebook, etc. in the metro area unless it is for announcement type activities. Committee members reiterated that Twitter was a great place to have conversations and that other parts of MnDOT use it. MnDOT expressed concerns about collecting demographic data and understanding the voices making the comments. Other committee members acknowledged this concern. MnDOT is going to have some internal conversations about using Twitter.
  - Glen Johnson (Elliot Park Neighborhood) responds that Elliot Park would like to invite the rethinking team to a future upcoming Elliot Park Council Meeting
  - Joshua Houdek (Sierra Club North Star Chapter) talks about people turning out to support the expansion of the midtown greenway to Ayd Mill Road
  - Toya Lopez (Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate) said that information learned in the Community Leader's meetings is shared back with Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate.

HPHC will be having education events soon to health professionals regarding I-94 and clean transportation in general.

- Gloria Jeff (MnDOT) notes that the intent of the community leaders' meetings is to be a two-way street. Community Leaders should take information back to their communities and then come back to MnDOT to share what their communities are saying about Rethinking I-94.
- Sheldon Mains (Seward Redesign, Inc) from Seward Neighborhood brought up how trucks keep hitting the 26<sup>th</sup> avenue bridge, but that communication from MnDOT was less than adequate. No communication about closures, fixing, bike paths etc. He would like to see MnDOT be more communicative.
- Jack Corkle (WSB) asks if there are barriers for groups sharing things about rethinking?
- Theresa Nelson (Move Minnesota) shared the lack of clarity on questions that are being asked by MnDOT and that Move Minnesota has been blogging about how to think bigger

## 5. Next steps

- Generating and testing ideas
- Continued engagement and outreach on Livability Framework and NEPA items
- Participant comments/questions:
  - Question - David Juliff (Be Civil/ReConnect Rondo): What does 'generating and testing ideas' mean?
    - Response - Jack Corkle (WSB) – 'Generating and testing ideas' refers to determining feasibility and baselines for potential alternatives. Example given on doing traffic studies to establish baselines for future alternatives options.

## Next Meeting

Date: 9/8/2021 (10:00 am – 11:30 am)

Location: Zoom

## Meeting Participants

### Community Leaders

| Present | Last Name             | First Name  | Organization                                      |
|---------|-----------------------|-------------|---|
|         | Alper                 | Becky       | Move Minneapolis                                  |
| x       | Armon                 | Alec        | Hamline Midway Coalition                          |
| x       | Baker                 | Keith       | ReConnect Rondo                                   |
|         | Barobs                | John        | Move Minneapolis                                  |
| x       | Berger                | Scott       | Union Park District Council                       |
|         | Burns                 | Alex        | Sierra Club North Star Chapter                    |
|         | Cashman               | Kerry       | Seward Neighborhood                               |
|         | Check                 | Nick        | Saint Mark Parish                                 |
|         | Frank                 | David       | Prospect Park Association                         |
|         | Golemo                | Alexa       | MacGroveland Community Council                    |
|         | Gunderman             | Amy         | Lexington Hamline Neighborhood                    |
|         | Haight                | Vanessa     | Elliot Park Neighborhood                          |
| x       | Houdek                | Joshua      | Sierra Club North Star Chapter                    |
| x       | Johnson               | Glen        | Elliot Park Neighborhood                          |
| x       | Juliff                | David       | Be Civil – ReConnect Rondo                        |
|         | Kershaw               | Sean        | Wilder  |
|         | Khalif                | Farhio      | St. Paul NAACP                                    |
|         | Klebsch               | Angelica    | Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio            |
|         | 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        | Twin Cities Shared Mobility Collaborative         |
|         | 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                 |
|         | Selle                 | Dawn        | Hallie Q Brown                                    |
|         | Singer                | Andy        | Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition                      |
|         | Schwantes             | Lindsay     | Hamline Midway Coalition                          |
|         | Scott Knox            | Tiffany     | Wilder  |
|         | Smaller               | Martine     | Northside Residents Redevelopment Council         |
|         | Spreeman              | Taylor      | Hallie Q Brown                                    |
|         | Tabbut                | Julie       | Prospect Park Association                         |
|         | Taitel                | Sam         | Seward Neighborhood Group                         |
|         | Thoman                | Barb        | Union Park District Council                       |
|         | 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          |
|         | Werner                | Jens        | Summit-University Planning Council                |

|  |        |       |                   |
|--|--------|-------|-------------------|
|  | Wilson | David | Green Minneapolis |
|--|--------|-------|-------------------|

Guests/Unknown Affiliation

| Present | Last Name   | First Name | Organization                               |
|---------|-------------|------------|--|
| x       | Atwood      | Stephanie  |  |
| x       | Brown       | Maura      | The Alliance                               |
| x       | Clapp-Smith | Merritt    | Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board  |
|         | Gallatin    | Kevin      | Sustain Saint Paul                         |
| x       | Jereb       | Adrianna   | MN 350                                     |
| x       | Lopez       | Toya       | Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate |
|         | 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   |
| x       | Xiong       | Mai Chong  | City of St. Paul, Legislative Aide to Councilmember Dai Thao |

FHWA/MnDOT/Consultant Staff

| Present | Last Name | First Name | Organization         |
|---------|-----------|------------|----------------------|
|         | Austin    | Lisa       | MnDOT                |
| x       | Barnes    | Melissa    | MnDOT                |
| x       | Bahnasy   | Ebtehal    | 4rm+ula - consultant |
| x       | Chavez    | Mike       | WSB - consultant     |
| x       | Chiglo    | Jon        | WSB - consultant     |
| x       | Cho       | Joanne     | WSB - consultant     |
| x       | Colas     | Josh       | MnDOT                |
| x       | Corkle    | Jack       | WSB - consultant     |
| x       | Crockett  | April      | MnDOT                |
|         | Goff      | William    | MnDOT                |
|         | Gray      | Kirsten    | WSB - consultant     |
|         | Hampton   | Tori       | MnDOT                |
| x       | Hauf      | Austin     | WSB - consultant     |

|   |            |         |                      |
|---|------------|---------|----------------------|
| x | Jeff       | Gloria  | MnDOT                |
| x | Jones      | Maggie  | MnDOT                |
| x | Kauppi     | Sheila  | MnDOT                |
| x | Knutson    | Cyrus   | MnDOT                |
| x | Omar       | Adam    | MnDOT                |
| x | Rank       | Hannah  | MnDOT                |
| x | Varney     | Anna    | FHWA                 |
| x | Washington | Lyssa   | 4rm+ula - consultant |
| x | Ziegler    | Mikaela | WSB – consultant     |