

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 Community Leaders Meeting Summary (Meeting 11)

Date: 10/26/2021 (10:00 am – 11:30 am)

Location: Zoom Meeting

Participants: **See list below**

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome

- WSB welcomed the group and provided an overview of the agenda

2. Project schedule

- Sheila Kauppi (MnDOT) gave an overview of the project schedule.
 - Currently, the project is in its informal public engagement stage. This informal public engagement process is not required by NEPA or MEPA but is part of MnDOT's public engagement initiatives to ensure that inputs from all stakeholders are accounted for and are reflected in the draft project documents.
 - A formal public comment period is planned for 2022 based on the current schedule.
 - Schedule has been delayed due to civil unrest, pandemic, etc. Therefore, the schedule may need to be adjusted.
- MnDOT explained that while the project is still in progress, there are important things related to transportation infrastructure within the corridor that will need to be addressed between now and 2025-2027. These improvements are separate from the Rethinking I-94 program of projects but are necessary to keep transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks, bridges, pavement, etc. functioning/in good repair and safe.
 - Comment from Alex Burns (Our Streets Minneapolis): Explanation [on future improvement needs between now and 2025-2027] was helpful. Want to make sure that smaller maintenance projects will not preclude certain alternatives.
 - Gloria Jeff (MnDOT) clarified that alternatives have not been undertaken, just projects.
 - Sheila (MnDOT) provided additional comment using Augsburg pedestrian bridge as an example. There are certain improvements that are high on the priority list due to needs expressed and identified. For example, the temporary Augsburg pedestrian bridge is an important transportation infrastructure in the area that provides connectivity and access over I-94. Before committing to an investment, an evaluation of the investment is necessary to properly understand the benefits of the investment. Additionally, it is important to work with smaller businesses on smaller projects for workforce development.

- Comment from John Levin (Hamline Midway Coalition Transportation Committee): There was confusion last time with the schedule graphic. Logical termini, purpose and need, etc. are shown ending before alternatives. Do not want to send message that there is nothing to worry about right now. Decisions about these things will have ramifications for next 5-10 years.
 - Phase 1 and additional engagement prior to formal comment period are not required under NEPA or NEPA. This is MnDOT's effort to be transparent as possible about the project and provide the public and stakeholders the opportunity to shape the project.
 - Jack (WSB) noted that the schedule should be shifted to reflect that public engagement will be ongoing. During public engagement, people have shared ideas for potential alternatives. Although we [the project team] are not formally developing alternatives yet, we are still documenting this feedback. Doing some testing to better understand what a holistic alternative could look like. For example, comments were received about TH 280 interchange, Cretin/Vandalia weaving, etc.
 - Gloria (MnDOT) shared that the Phase 1 Project Team received comments from the public about conducting engagement early, reaching out to a diverse group of people and organization, exploring different ways to better deliver and communicate transportation needs and want people. Rather than just documenting gaps in public engagement, we are trying to do additional engagement to reach to a broad spectrum of communities. Therefore, there have not been major changes to documents yet, as we want to hear from a more diverse group before making any edits or changes.
 - Sheila (MnDOT) also shared that the project team is relying on findings from Phase 1 to try and understand how to better engage people. Aware of the demographic within the program area, the project team recognizes that at times, there are language gaps and other barriers that impacts how well complex information gets delivered to certain communities and people.

3. Recent and upcoming Rethinking I-94 outreach activities

- Highlights/feedback from recent public engagement activities were presented to the group.
 - Based on the comments received, the common themes were:
 - Reduce traffic
 - Reduce speeds
 - Increase safety at interchanges, entrances, and exits
 - Decrease number of exits and entrances
 - Better express transit service
 - Walkability and bikeability
 - More safe solutions for getting across I-94 for all transportation modes
 - Easy to care for and attractive link between downtowns that does not harm environment
 - Concerns about spending resources on crossing/capping options vs. investing in adjacent communities
 - The project team has reached out to faith-based organizations, freight stakeholders, and schools to ensure a broader range of public engagement. The project team has extended the option to be present at events hosted by faith-based organizations, schools, and freight stakeholders to share more about the project.

- Surveys were sent out to faith-based organizations, freight stakeholders, and schools (school administrative staff not to students).
- Upcoming outreach
 - The project team plans to be present at the following events:
 - Minneapolis Farmers Market (10/16)
 - Open Streets (10/24)
 - Four Sisters Farmers Market (due to weather, this event was canceled)
 - Midtown Farmers Market (10/30)
 - Four online open houses/community conversations with language options will be held November 16 & 17. The presentation portion of the sessions is planned to be recorded (not the Q&A portion)
 - Anticipating two one-hour sessions on each day. Each session will be in English, with one additional language option at each session (Spanish, Hmong, Karen, or Somali).
 - Selection of the additional language option was based on the most commonly identified languages from Phase 1 and MnDOT Metro's recommendation.
 - The intent is to provide written translations of the presentation portions following the events for those who are unable to attend the sessions. Confirmation of dates and times will be finalized this week. Once confirmed, the information will be emailed to Community Leaders.
 - Pat Thompson (St. Anthony Park Community Council, District 12) asked what the structure of the online open house sessions, if they would be a listening only session or if people would be able to ask questions
 - The session will start with a 15-minute presentation which will provide a general overview of the project and the remainder of time is reserved for Q & A.
 - Glen Johnson (Elliot Park Neighborhood) asked when the project team would have the times for the open house sessions confirmed and finalized.
 - The project team has had a hard time finding a translator who would be available for these sessions. Once it is confirmed that we can get a translator present at the sessions, the date and time of the open houses will be finalized and published on the project website. Brad will send out an email to the community leaders once the open house information gets updated.
 - Overview of additional outreach efforts that have been made since the last Community Leaders' Meeting were presented.
 - Faith-based communities shared that they would like to receive surveys to distribute to their community members. Surveys were distributed to faith-based organizations along and near the corridor.
 - The project team recognized a gap that inputs/comments were lacking from those in the freight industry. To ensure the involvement of stakeholders in the freight industry, the project team is collaborating with MTA members on freight perspective. Survey emails were sent out to known freight haulers in the metro.
 - Contacted Hallie Q Brown Community Center to help reach out to more communities, neighborhoods, and demographics the project team may not have been able to reach.
 - The project team has reached out to Youth Congress of St. Paul and Minneapolis to get input from youth.

- The project team is working to expand its outreach among youth, senior housing residents, and rental communities.
- David Juliff (Be Civil – ReConnect Rondo) asked if the project team has reached out to school bus companies.
 - Brad (WSB) responded that the team is talking to transportation directors at schools.
- Debbie Meister (Neighborhoods First!) asked how transit users were being targeted for the public engagement process.
 - Brad (WSB) answered that they were being included as part of other groups. Gloria (MnDOT) provided additional comment that Metro Transit has policies/processes that limit surveys/outreach work on transit platforms and vehicles. Therefore, the Project Team is seeking input from transit users through other means.
 - Sheila (MnDOT) added to the response and mentioned that the team is trying to direct people to the draft documents whenever possible so everyone has the same baseline.
 - Joshua Houdek (Sierra Club North Star Chapter) shared that Move Minnesota and MN350 are canvassing transit users and noted that the Project Team could reach out to them: finnm@movemn.org, adrianna@mn350.org
- Theresa Nelson (Move Minnesota) recommended the project team to include the local Safe Routes to School network

4. Community Leaders outreach activities

- After the project update, the project team shared questions with the Community Leaders regarding how they are engaging or sharing information with their constituents.
 - How have you shared Rethinking I-94 information with your community in the past month? What are your community members saying?
 - Theresa Nelson (Move Minnesota): Move Minneapolis has mostly been directing people to MnDOT survey, website, and pop-up event booths. Members shared similar things [related to the project] to what the project team has shared. Recommend the project team work with residential properties along I-94 and Green Line. It would be great to distribute survey to these sites.
 - Brad (WSB) noted that the project team wants to keep track of where focused survey responses are coming from (general such as type of housing, not specific building). The surveys that have been distributed have been designed so that surveys can be grouped into certain categories. To be clear, specific people cannot be identified using the survey.
 - David Juliff (Be Civil – ReConnect Rondo) shared that four 1-hour sessions, hosted by ReConnect Rondo, were held at Rondo library. While David was unable to attend, he noted that he would provide any insightful things discussed at those sessions.
 - Scott Berger (UPDC) - Walked along University and the Green Line and noticed new sidewalk installed along frontage road to eliminate a sidewalk gap. Observed noise and other impacts of I-94 during the walk and reminded him why he does not travel there with kids. Others have shared with him that multimodal improvements are needed. There are lots of aggressive drivers, spillover effect from I-94. Additionally, there are community members who are not sure how to provide feedback. Recommend the project team distribute flyers, stickers, etc. to wider areas to capture feedback from more people.

- Glen Johnson (Elliot Park Neighborhood) shared that there is a segment on Rethinking I-94 planned for at their upcoming organization meeting and is working to get neighborhood feedback.
- Sheila (MnDOT) mentioned to the group that she is open to one-on-one discussion to capture project needs. Rethinking I-94 team would be able to provide the following materials/services:
 - Focused survey (including paper formats). To receive a paper survey, please reach out to Brad Hamilton (BHamilton@wsbeng.com)
 - Listening sessions
- Comment from Alex Burns (Our Streets Minneapolis): Asking how people use I-94 seems to only be directed towards input from people driving.
 - Scott Berger (UPDC) agreed that the engagement questions “...are very much grounded in status quo, which many believe was a mistake from the get-go in retrospect.”
 - Pat Thompson (St. Anthony Park Community Council, District 12) commented that framing is important to not assume that everyone uses I-94. Pat recommended that the project team reach out to residents at South St. Anthony Park Green Line buildings
 - The project team is continuing to work to expand our public engagement
 - Gloria (MnDOT) asked if this question dismisses questions asked during Phase 1 that were more general questions?
 - Brad (WSB) shared that based on the responses we have received when asking this question, people have responded with “I do not use I-94.” This answer has prompted staff at events to ask why not and those answers were recorded.
 - Understanding why people avoid using I-94 has also been helpful feedback.
- Theresa Nelson (Move Minnesota) recommended asking, “How do you interact with I-94?”
 - The project team can look at potential changes, but do not want to alter the question too much to create variation in the survey methodology. Understanding that the project is not only focusing on improvements specific to the highway the project team has also asked, “How do you interact with I-94?”
- It was encouraged for Community Leaders to contact the project team to request presentation/discussion with their organizations. If there are specific materials the project team could provide, please reach out to Brad Hamilton (BHamilton@Wsbeng.com).

5. Next steps

- Project schedule review
- Continued outreach

Next Meeting

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

Location: Zoom

Meeting Participants

Community Leaders

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
	Alper	Becky	Move Minneapolis
	Armon	Alec	Hamline Midway Coalition
	Baker	Keith	ReConnect Rondo
	Barobs	John	Move Minneapolis
x	Berger	Scott	Union Park District Council
x	Burns	Alex	Our Streets Minneapolis
	Cashman	Kerry	Seward Neighborhood
	Check	Nick	Saint Mark Parish
x	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
x	Levin	John	Hamline Midway Coalition Transportation Committee
	Levins Holden	Olivia	Hope Community
	Liban	Mohamed	Somali American Partnership
x	Mains	Sheldon	Seward Redesign, Inc
	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
x	Wako	Abdulrahman	Union Park District Council
	Watson	Shannon	St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
	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
x	Brown	Maura	The Alliance
x	Jekot	Megan	Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood
x	Pickett	Jamila	
x	Staebell	Jason	Hennepin County

Technical Advisory Committee or Policy and Planning Committee Members

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
	Agosto	Kelly	Hennepin County
x	Cox	Colin	Hennepin County
x	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
	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
	Vennewitz	Amy	Metropolitan Council
	Xiong	Mai Chong	City of St. Paul, Legislative Aide to Councilmember Dai Thao

FHWA/MnDOT/Consultant Staff

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
x	Atwood	Stephanie	MnDOT
	Austin	Lisa	MnDOT
x	Barnes	Melissa	MnDOT
	Bahnasy	Ebtehal	4rm+ula - consultant
	Chavez	Mike	WSB - consultant
	Chiglo	Jon	WSB - consultant
x	Cho	Joanne	WSB - consultant
x	Corkle	Jack	WSB - consultant
x	Crockett	April	MnDOT
	Garrett Jr.	James	4rm+ula - consultant
x	Goff	William	MnDOT
	Gray	Kirsten	WSB - consultant

x	Hamilton	Brad	WSB - consultant
x	Hampton	Torri	MnDOT
x	Hauf	Austin	WSB - consultant
x	Jeff	Gloria	MnDOT
x	Jones	Maggie	MnDOT
x	Kauppi	Sheila	MnDOT
	Knutson	Cyrus	MnDOT
x	Lindeberg	Mark	MnDOT
	Omar	Adam	MnDOT
x	Rank	Hannah	MnDOT
x	Varney	Anna	FHWA
	Washington	Lyssa	4rm+ula - consultant
x	Ziegler	Mikaela	WSB – consultant