

# Rethinking I-94 Phase 2

## Environmental Working Group

### Monthly Meetings Recap:

*Last updated November 8, 2021*

*The following is a summary of topics, outcomes, and action items that were discussed at the Environmental Working Group meetings.*

#### October 2021

- WSB is working with MnDOT to create surveys for freight organizations and initiate engagement with non-English-speaking populations; youth; the elderly; and adjacent communities through faith/community centers
- Overview provided on Cooperating and Participating Agencies Follow-Up
- Review of scoping document comments and discussion on documenting the following:
  - Historic resources
  - Where to discuss the lid
  - Greenhouse gases
  - Noise
  - Economic impacts
  - Public and agency involvement
- Discussion on transit ideas and the framework for alternatives development

#### September 2021

- WSB provided overview of the intent of recent work by the Bike and Pedestrian Working Group and provided a summary of work to date. Discussion on bike and pedestrian group and the materials presented.
- Overview presented of upcoming meeting with Cooperating and Participating Agencies – September 30, 2021, from 8:30 – 10:30 am.
- Discussion on messaging regarding the framework for development of alternatives.
- Discussion on status of documents regarding development of alternatives that was sent to group for comment. WSB has addressed comments and will schedule meeting with FHWA to get clarification on a few items.
- Update on Outreach Activities events was provided including overview of upcoming events for October.
- Several issues discussed at the first Bridge Working Group meeting were raised, including how to navigate current bridge project needs in the program area relative to the Rethinking I-94 NEPA process.
- Document review comment/discussion on SD/DSDD to be covered at next meeting.

## August 2021

- Cooperating and Participating Agencies - Overview of Agenda for upcoming meeting
- Section 4(f) - Memo comments/discussion on pedestrian bridges. MnDOT had concern with pedestrian and other bridges being considered Section 4(f) solely on basis of being labeled a trail by other entities. They are concerned that this will have implications on future projects and the restrictions on future improvements and projects. FHWA recommended that further discussion may be needed on how to approach Section 4(f) properties at a program level and decision not be applicable to just this project.
- Alternatives – updates provided on the draft process memo and draft of ideas generated to date.
  - MnDOT noted a need for further discussion on approach for transit options with Metro Transit prior to Transit working group on ideas that fall under their purview.
- Updated and discussion on outreach activities
- Details on the Bridge Working Group discussed - tentative timing was 3rd Wednesday either in advance of or following the Policy and Planning Committee (PPC). MnDOT to send out meeting place holder (reoccurring).
- Discussion on Bike and Pedestrian Group activities - Overview on factors to evaluate potential ideas for bike and pedestrian at different crossings to provide clarification to FHWA.

## July 2021

- Cooperating and Participating Agencies
  - Concurrence responses on updated Coordination Plan received from CRWD, EPA, and Met Council.
  - With current engagement schedule, target second half of September for next Cooperating and Participating agency meeting.
- Section 4(f)
  - No additional comments received on memo.
  - FHWA still reviewing Griggs St. and Mackubin St. ped bridge CATEX documents.
- Alternatives
  - Process memo updated to address comments.
  - Group discussion on several outstanding comments from FHWA on the draft ideas identified to date memo.
- Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document (SD/DSDD)
  - No additional comments received on sections 10-12 (distributed prior to last meeting).
  - DSDD working draft provided to the group. DSDD will change as the project progresses and need further review, but want to get comments on initial framework and approach.
- Bridge Working Group
  - Group will help determine how to proceed with ongoing bridge projects in the corridor.

- MnDOT working on plans for working group, targeting first meeting in August.
- 22nd Avenue Pedestrian Bridge
  - MnDOT has updated project schedule. Need 40 months from the start of public engagement.
  - Will discuss next steps relative to Rethinking I-94 with MnDOT Bridge Office and bridge working group.

#### June 2021

- 22nd Avenue Pedestrian Bridge - MnDOT gave an overview of the 22nd Ave pedestrian bridge project in Minneapolis located between 22nd and 23rd Ave over I-94, connecting Seward and Cedar-Riverside neighborhoods. Known as Augsburg Pedestrian Bridge with Augsburg University located on north side. Discussion conducted on implications of Rethinking I-94 for 22nd Ave pedestrian bridge project. How to design to not preclude potential Rethinking I-94 alternatives.
- John Ireland Blvd Bridge Project - MnDOT gave overview of the John Ireland Blvd Bridge project located just east of current logical termini (Marion St.). Discussion on coordination with bridge office taking place on potential managed lane alternatives from Rethinking I-94 project. MnDOT scoping project for 2025-26 with project including full replacement of deck but no pier or approach improvements. Replacing in-kind exactly at its current location. FHWA recommended that this project should wait, there are too many unknowns. Discussion on what would happen regarding federal performance requirements if this investment were not made in the current planned timeline.
  - Proposal to start a bridge working group to address similar issues as they come up.
- Cooperating and Participating Agencies - Final edits/comments on the Cooperating and Participating Agencies letter. First part of August is recommended date of meeting with Cooperating and Participating agencies
- Section 4(f) Memo Comments - WSB provided an overview of the Section 4(f) Memo. No comments received since sending out last draft in May. Unresolved issue: Griggs St. and Mackubin St. pedestrian bridges. Clarification provided on potentially historic sites, which will be reflected in separate memo.
- Alternatives - Discussion on items of concern/review key comments. FHWA provided comments on several documents prior to meeting. MnDOT initiated discussion on differences between replace existing, replace and enhance existing, and what is reflected in no-build discussion. MnDOT wanted clarification on combining No Build and Maintain Existing infrastructure. Brainstorming ideas - Will conduct brainstorming activity at next meeting.
- Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document (SD/DSDD)
  - Will discuss at next meeting.

#### May 2021

- Cooperating and Participating Agencies - Discussed comments/changes to revised Public Involvement Plan (PIP), Coordination Plan, and status letter. Materials will be revised and provided for further comments.

- Meeting Updates with Resource Groups
  - Water Resources: WSB provided overview and needed clarification on comments received on the water resources memo and items discussed at meeting held earlier this month with MnDOT and FHWA.
  - Contaminated materials: Moving forward with investigation. Anticipate Phase 1 sometime in June. Information likely available in July.
  - Cultural resources: Working on public engagement process, coordinating with WSB on outreach activities. MnDOT-CRU will be invited to community leaders meeting to introduce the Section 106 process to provide details on investigation.
- Section 4(f) Revised Memo
  - Revised memo shared, asked for comments within 3 weeks from FHWA.
  - Discussion regarding whether only active recreation uses are considered 4(f) vs places for contemplation, green space, etc. Park areas do not necessarily need to have amenities for active recreation, but this is where "significance" of the resource comes in. OES discusses with FHWA, try to decide together but FHWA has the final say.
  - Discussion on whether evaluation does or does not consider areas where there is a lack of recreational facilities. If a park were impacted, would try to compensate/mitigate. Not clear that anything would be done to address a gap not created by the project.
  - Discussion on whether there is a recreational facility concept similar to wetland banking. Analogy is not fully transferrable.
- Resource Evaluation Memo / EAW Items
  - FHWA: No changes needed at this time, update as more information becomes available.
- Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document (SD/DSDD)
  - Several comments received, will follow up directly with commenters to clarify a few items.
- Alternatives
  - A few comments were received on alternatives materials.
  - Brainstorming ideas will take place at a future meeting.

#### April 2021

- Cooperating and Participating Agencies - Overview of draft update letter to Cooperating and Participating agencies on status since October 2020. Purpose of new letter is to reengage with agencies after the pause in the project. Key items: Notification of updates to Coordination Plan; Introduce Josh Colas as new project manager; Send Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for review.
  - Overview of updated Coordination Plan. Key changes: Minor text edits; Updates to contact info: USFWS, Hennepin County, MDH; Schedule updates.
  - Public engagement plan - Overview of the Public Involvement Plan and comments received from FHWA. Updated version to be distributed once comments from MnDOT received and addressed. Key Contents: Project background - similar to

information in existing plans; Engagement process - tools, techniques, messaging; Stakeholder groups; Document review process.

- Noise Analysis - April 13th meeting update - Data collection activities, monitoring locations, etc. Monitoring will take place this summer and fall. Discussed concerns with reduced traffic volumes due to COVID-19. MnDOT and FHWA are comfortable with modeling approach in place to begin monitoring process. HDR proposal to use "sound curves" to identify areas for further analysis. Intent for Tier 1 is to understand existing conditions and whether noise mitigation would need to be considered for alternatives. In what areas would walls need to be analyzed?
- Evaluation Memo / EAW Items - Overview and discussion on write-ups on resources analyses and how they will be evaluated/studied in Tier 1 document. The intent is for the text to be consistent with SEE items from the Scoping Document and EAW.
- Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document - Status update - Working through early sections until alternatives are available. Provided Draft text – Chapters 1 – 8 and evaluation criteria portion of Chapter 9. Intent is to gather feedback on initial information to reduce burden of reviewing document later.
- Alternatives – Overview of proposed draft process – presented the draft Range of Alternatives Development Process memo.
  - Brainstorming and public outreach: April-Mid May
  - Assign ideas to categories: mainline, interchange, "elements": Late May.
  - Organize ideas into alternatives: June-July.
  - Refine alternatives to be studied: August.
  - Evaluate alternatives: August-December.
  - Ideas generated to date.
    - Ideas sorted into categories: mainline and access/interchange (for ideas that apply to both), mainline, access/interchange, "project elements."
    - Project elements include items such as bus shoulders, BRT, frontage road connections, technology items, spot geometric changes.

#### March 2021

- John Ireland Bridge Project - Discussion on potential implications for Rethinking I-94.
  - Located just east of current program area. MnDOT Bridge Office proposing superstructure replacement. Recently scoped for 2025, not programmed yet.
  - Deck mill & overlay on Marion St (current eastern terminus) is also planned, would be ~7-year preservation investment vs. ~20-year for John Ireland.
  - FHWA staff noted that they will need to discuss and compare the two bridge projects internally.
- Discussion on State and Federal Environmental Process
  - Check in to make sure we are meeting all requirements and not missing any steps.
  - Helps to clarify expectations within the corridor among groups involved. For example, MnDOT is doing a voluntary EIS, not mandatory as some groups believe. Mandatory triggers will likely be avoided.
- Update and Discussion on National Policy Direction
  - Will need to develop language on why we are doing certain analyses and not others.
  - Example: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Recent executive orders directing federal agency heads to begin addressing this issue, including development of figures for the Social Cost of Carbon (SCC) and other gases.
- MnDOT MICE tool currently used for calculating emissions for informational purposes.
  - FHWA staff noted that in terms of GHG emissions and SCC, the directive to agency heads is to start looking at how to address this. The current understanding is that until there is new guidance, Rethinking I-94 is grandfathered into the pre-executive order rules.
  - Potential requirement may be to simply multiply emissions figures by SCC. Until state-level numbers are developed, this cannot be completed.
  - Current approach should be to move forward with MICE tool for reporting tool until nationwide conversations play out further. Unclear if there will be opportunity vs obligation to do additional analysis.
- Recommendation to engage MnDOT air quality/noise staff in discussions on when to start MICE calculations. Should discuss how to set expectations and relay information and assumptions to the public, especially understanding of when calculations would/could be updated.
- NCHRP Report 456 - Guidebook for Assessing the Social and Economic Effects of Transportation Projects
  - Discussion on whether methodologies presented in this report may be useful for addressing Livability concepts in environmental document.
  - In general, current rules and guidance address many of these topics. Other areas addressed by current approach for traffic analysis, MMLOS, etc.
- Section 4f Update
  - Revised memo shared with the group. Incorporated additional comments received from MnDOT.
  - The group agreed that regardless of permit status, community gardens should not be considered Section 4(f).
  - Discussion regarding represent facilities such as Pelham Blvd cycletrack where a portion is on a MnDOT bridge and a portion is not on the bridge?
    - FHWA - If no long-term public interest, not subject to 4(f), and therefore no OWJ. Should still avoid, minimize, mitigate, just not under Section 4(f).
    - Current understanding is that if MnDOT owns bridge that has a 4(f) facility, then MnDOT is OWJ.
  - Question posed to group regarding status of Griggs and Mackubin pedestrian bridges.
  - Discussion on public interest in river and freeway crossings considering conversations around land bridge proposals. WSB to conduct additional research on land bridge examples.
- Update to Cooperating and Participating Agencies
  - WSB to develop update message on project status for Cooperating and Participating Agencies and will include revised schedule.

- Public Involvement Plan to be shared with agencies.

#### February 2021

- PAC Meeting Update
- Primary and Secondary Needs Discussion
  - Group discussed comments shared at recent PAC meeting (02/05/21) regarding the division of project needs into primary and secondary and the potential for combining into a single list.
    - FHWA perspective is go to the public with what we have and adjust based on further feedback.
  - Discussion on how to better explain how issues in the corridor will be addressed through NEPA/MEPA and Livability paths.
  - Discussion on addressing bike/ped needs.
  - Discussion on how and where transit fits into NEPA/MEPA and Livability paths.
- Section 4f Discussion Items
  - Update on ROW permits for community gardens.
  - Update on Section 4(f) memo.
- Scoping Document Working Draft Updates and Overview
  - Goals and Purpose and Need
  - Mussel Survey Update
  - Discussion on SEE Impacts in the Scoping Document
  - EAW Documentation

#### January 2021

- Section 7 Review and Field Work Timeline: Update given on Section 7 schedule for fieldwork. It was decided that discussions with USFWS should start now to determine which species could be impacted and what the BA should look like. BA will have a “living methodology,” and may need to change in terms of methods and schedule as the project evolves.
- Section 4(f) Discussion: MnDOT will provide additional information on agreements/permits with regards to community gardens within MnDOT ROW.
- Upcoming PAC Meeting: Discussion on the PAC/PPC/TAC meeting materials and comments
- I-5 Project in Oregon Discussion: FHWA to reach out to City of Portland for details on the reasoning for the city pulling out of the project.
- Scoping Document Working Draft: Overview of document provided. Key resolutions included:
  - Decision to add section detailing differences in conditions because of COVID-19.
  - Purpose and need – Agreement on placing goals prior to purpose and need.
  - Schedule – agreed that general time range is ok for scoping document.
  - EAW - MnDOT stated that Rethinking I-94 should complete EAW and place in appendix.
  - Cumulative – Decision was to address cumulative since it is mandated in MEPA.



- FHWA will get back on decision regarding clarification on environmental consequences from FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A. What needs to be included for these items?

#### December 2020

- Cooperating and Participating Agencies: New USFWS Contact for distribution list. Decision made to let agencies know that we are on hold and wait to give full update. In addition, decision made to update Coordination Plan and give new version to agencies when ready with an update on all items at once in early 2021.
- Section 4f Discussion Items: Update given on Section 4f/6f work since last meeting.
  - Community gardens were dismissed based on research into state of practice. Sorted into different categories based on traditional Section 4f criteria such ownership, openness to the public, etc. and whether they comprise the entirety of the resource in question.
  - Reviewed pedestrian bridges - Mackubin St - Should be considered Section 4(f) - Griggs St - Likely Section 4(f)
  - Ox-Cart Trail Garden included in memo for now because of historical marker - will need further investigation.
- Scoping Document Outline and Content: Outline discussion. MnDOT gave permission to move project description before P&N.
- Content Discussion: Discussion on inclusion of greenhouse gases (GHG). Decision was to use US 53 as guide for how we address GHG and there is no current mandate to use GHG in alternatives analysis/decision-making process .
- Agency Resolutions update: Minneapolis Resolution - Currently in draft form, has not been passed; Saint Paul Resolution - Very similar to Minneapolis language.
- Reconnect Rondo Draft Letter and Responses: Overview given on background information for MnDOT use on the topics and example projects raised in the draft letter. MnDOT Commissioner to discuss responses.

#### October 2020

- MnDOT Contract for Historic Properties: Overview of MnDOT cultural investigation underway to determine National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible properties. Public engagement related to the study will either follow or take place at the same time as the NEPA process related to I-94 project. Reconnect Rondo is doing a parallel historic study. The current MnDOT study is attempting to coordinate with the Reconnect Rondo study.
- Cooperating and Participating Agencies: Letter drafted to cooperating and participating agencies to let them know that communication plan and other critical information will not be available and that scoping meetings will be delayed. Letter notes engagement activities are paused until early 2021 and there is not an exact timeline for bringing forward alternatives. Draft letter was sent to group for comments.
- Environmental Resource Maps and Memos: Overview of the EJ memo presented and the baseline conditions for the analysis were discussed.



- Contaminated Properties Memo: WSB requested assistance on how to address a few of the MnDOT comments. It is recommended that a meeting be set up with the Project Management Team to discuss memos.
- Historical and Archeological Memo: Limited changes since previous draft. NRHP label on map legend was updated based on comment received.
- Threatened and Endangered Species Memo: No comments
- Section 4(f) and 6(f) Resources Memo: Discussion started with status and that all comments were addressed. Overview was given on undetermined properties. Meeting recommended with FHWA for concurrence on property determinations.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Approach: It was noted that an adjacent project considered bike and pedestrian accommodations as a primary need.
- No TAC meeting for October through December.

#### August 2020

- Cooperation and Participating Agencies: Update given on status of Purpose and Need and Evaluation Criteria and confusion on part of Participating Agencies on what concurrence means.
- Plain Language Evaluation Criteria: Overview given of the Plain Language evaluation Criteria document and feedback provided by the group. A revised document will be produced.
- Environmental Resource Map Revisions: Resource maps were presented to the group and discussed. Key items discussed was the need for an additional map be created that shows key community locations that are not identified on other resource specific maps.
- Environmental Resource Memos: Summaries provided of environmental resource memos to date (Water Resources, What's in my Neighborhood [HazMat], Endangered Species, Section 4(f)/6(f)). No comments mentioned except for Section 4(f)/6(f) map, which discussion centered on further guidance and needs for identification of properties that could meet the criteria. Group will provide further comment on all reviewed material.

#### July 2020

- Advancing PAC and Community Engagement Activities: Recommendation made to have individual meetings with individual PAC members in short time slots (e.g. 20 minutes) to provide the Purpose and Need and project goals.
- Environmental Resources Maps Discussion: The known resources that would need to be dealt with at Scoping and Tier 1 were mapped and presented to the group. The following resources were mapped: endangered species (federal), historic structures, wetland & floodplain (Not including NWI data), What's in My Neighborhood, and Section 4(f) & Section 6(f). Key items from discussion:
  - Historic Resources Map: Data to be provided on eligible and potentially eligible bridges within the corridor
  - Contaminated Resource Map: The current version of the WIMN resource map has a lot of information that may not be of relevance or impact the program area. Further discussion with the Contamination Group will be needed to simplify and refine the map.
  - Section 4(f) and 6(f) Resource Map:

- Resources that are not Section 4(f) or Section 6(f), will be addressed and justified as to decision on not being considered a Section 4(f) property.
  - DNR listed resources will be addressed as a category of its own.
  - The Met Council Regional Trail Search Corridors, Allianz Stadium, and Augsburg's College's Football stadium will not be considered Section 4(f) resources.
- Evaluation Criteria Discussion: The Evaluation Criteria was updated based on comments received and "Mobility" discussion was revised to clarify that the measure will be used to compare each alternative with the No Build alternative rather than between alternatives
  - Cooperating and Participating Agency Discussion: It was stated that the revised Evaluation Criteria and Purpose and Need was expected to be shared with the Cooperating and Participating Agency for concurrence soon.

#### June 2020

- Preliminary Range of Alternatives & Alternatives Discussion: The group felt the "Mainline Alternatives" was clearer; however, group felt the other two categories – "Access/Interchange Alternatives" and "Project Elements" – will need to be revisited and revised. Elements listed under "Access/Interchange Alternatives" and "Project Elements" included items that were too detailed for the scoping level. Other items discussed included:
  - Impacts associated with alternatives that have fatal flaws and/or with high high-level cost estimates can help screen alternatives without requiring detailed modeling or design.
  - Avoiding alternatives with major constraints (i.e. large ROW acquisitions, removal of major bridges) should be a part of the focus on developing a range of alternatives.
- Cooperating and Participating Agency Comments Discussion: Comments were received from cooperating and participating agencies on the purpose and need and evaluation criteria. Revised versions of the purpose and need and evaluation criteria will incorporate the comments.
- Updated Evaluation Criteria: Changes were made to the evaluation criteria such as combining mainline and access/interchange criteria into one table, and including additional measures and descriptions for clarity under certain evaluation criteria categories.
- Revised Plain Language Purpose and Need and Statement of Goals: Overall, the group was pleased with the plain language purpose and need draft. The Project Team will continue to work on the document to ensure that it is ADA compliant before it goes to the public.

#### May 2020

- Facilitated Meeting Discussion: A update of the TAC/PPC facilitated meeting was provided to the group.
- Updated Purpose and Need Discussion: Update given on the May 2020 revisions, which included a discussion on how the bridge and medium truck traffic sections of the purpose and need document are still in progress. The cooperating and participating agencies and community advisors will provide feedback before the document goes to

the public.

- Cooperating and Participating Agencies Discussion: Update provided on the May 12 cooperating and participating agency meeting. The cooperating and participating agencies were asked to provide feedback on the purpose and need and evaluation criteria.
  - Concurrence on the Coordination Plan was provided by FTA and USEPA.
- Plain Language Purpose and Need and Statement of Goals Discussion: An outline and anticipated page numbers for the plain language purpose and need were requested in preparation of putting together the plain document. The intent of the document is to summarize the full technical purpose and need document without deviating from its intent and language to avoid confusion and miscommunication with the public. Document should have more visuals and less text. Recommendation by the group included the following:
  - The plain language purpose and need document needs to clarify the categorization of needs: the terms “primary” and “secondary” are not used to prioritize needs.
  - Consider expanding upon efforts to address items under the livability framework and providing more distinction between NEPA process and livability framework parallel path in the statement of goals section.
- Evaluation Criteria Discussion: Feedback received at the facilitated meeting and draft responses were shared with the group. The group continued to discuss how some measures could be more quantitative and how equity and other livability topics could be better measured. Other group recommendations included:
  - A separate measure reflecting mode choice/mode split will not be provided.
  - The livability framework being developed at the District level. Livability framework measures should remain quantitative as much as possible.
  - Use of the HPDP provided guidance on how to address greenhouse gas (GHG), but not as part of the evaluation criteria.

#### April 2020

- Joint TAC and PPC Meeting Preparation: In April, the Environmental Working Group focused on preparing for the April 28th facilitated joint meeting with the TAC and PPC. Since the meeting was held virtually, additional preparation and coordination was provided. The group prepared for this meeting by discussing roles and responsibilities, ground rules, breakout group discussion topics, presentation materials, and handout materials.
- Cooperating and Participating Agencies: The next Cooperating and Participating Agencies meeting is scheduled for May 12th, 2020. The topics to be discussed include Purpose and Need and Evaluation Criteria.

#### March 2020

- Purpose and Need: In February, the full purpose and need document was updated based upon the second review from the Environmental Working Group. The updated document

(Version 3) is under review by the Technical Advisory Committee and the Policy and Planning Committee.

- **Definitions:** Definitions for mobility and connectivity, as well as other key terms and acronyms, are included in a glossary attached to the purpose and need document.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** The group discussed updated evaluation criteria and write-ups provided for each measure. Additional detail is being explored for the Goals and Livability measures.
- **Alternatives:** The group discussed the approach for defining alternatives related to the mainline and access/interchanges along with what could be considered as an element of an alternative (as opposed to a standalone alternative). The group recommended resolving the purpose and need and evaluation criteria before advancing into the range of alternatives.
- **Visual Impact Assessment:** The group discussed the timing and consideration of preparing a Visual Impact Assessment for this project along with new policies and guidance on the topic. Additional discussion will be provided on this topic.

#### February 2020

- **Evaluation Criteria:** In February, revisions were made to the evaluation criteria based on comments and discussion from January. It was suggested to look into the National Highway Institute's guidance on performing quantitative analysis for Environmental Justice measures. The group was informed that summaries of how the measures will be defined are in progress. The group suggested that definitions from Rethinking I-94 Phase 1 be used to define goals and livability framework measures.
- **Revised Purpose:** During the February meeting, the group agreed to revise bullet #3 of the Purpose document to "Improve mobility for people and goods on, along, and across the I-94." This revision was intended to align with the discussion provided at the facilitated TAC/PPC meeting.
- **Notice of Intent:** The group was also informed that the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a tiered EIS had been delivered and it was published in the Federal Register on February 20, 2020. The group also discussed ways to inform the public regarding the NOI. How information will be distributed will be further discussed with the public engagement efforts.
- **Introduction to Alternatives:** During the February meeting, the group discussed an initial list of range of alternatives for feedback and to discuss how alternatives will be addressed/developed for the project. The group discussed how to consider certain elements/features that could be applicable to multiple alternatives and may not be warranted as a standalone alternative. This was an initial discussion related to alternatives. Additional discussion related to the development of the range of alternatives will occur with the TAC

### January 2020

- **Plain Language:** In January, the group discussed the distribution and timing of plain language documents to align with public meetings and the concurrence points for the participating and cooperating agencies.
- **Purpose and Need:** In January, the second review of the full purpose and need document was underway for this group. Comments provided by the group were updated in February and added to the version that was provided to the TAC for review. Outstanding data items include medium truck data and future bridge conditions (in process).
- **Evaluation Criteria:** In January, the group discussed updated evaluation criteria, comments/responses from the TAC review, and the proposed schedule for committee and public review.

### December 2019

- **Facilitated Meeting:** At the December meeting the group discussed the comments that were received at the joint facilitated meeting between the TAC and PPC on the logical termini, purpose, goals, and evaluation criteria. Additional text revisions were discussed to include in updated documents that will be presented to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) which will likely be in February. The group also discussed commitment letters that will be coming from MnDOT to the two cities and counties regarding their efforts for studying problems outside of the logical termini. Draft letters were presented for review and comment. MnDOT intends to get the letters out by mid-January.
- **Notice of Intent:** Anticipated publication may be in February.
- **Purpose and Need – Revised Draft:** At the December meeting the group also discussed the upcoming revisions that will be made to the draft Purpose and Need document. A revised draft was targeted for distribution ahead of the end of the month. It was noted that some traffic data was still needed, and that bridge data was also missing. Discussions with the Metropolitan Council and MnDOT were still ongoing regarding the overarching documents framing the purpose and need. Subsequent updates to the draft purpose and need document may be needed, but for the upcoming draft, to maintain current form and content with information regarding the regional Transportation Policy Plan and the State Highway Improvement Plan (MnSHIP) remaining as other considerations.
- **Evaluation criteria** was not discussed at the December meeting. However, revised criteria were prepared and distributed to the Project Management Team and to the Environmental Working Group committee members in late November. The revised criteria incorporated some of the measures suggested by the Metropolitan Council.
- **Purpose and Goals:** The purpose and goals documents have been updated based on discussion from the 12/11 TAC/PPC meeting. See facilitated meeting discussion above.
- **Logical Termini:** Based on the 12/11 TAC/PPC meeting, WSB has drafted a letter stating MnDOT's commitment to study beyond the proposed logical termini. MnDOT will share comments of the first draft of the letter. See facilitated meeting discussion above.

## November 2019

- **Facilitated Meeting:** At the November meeting, the group discussed the agenda, materials, and roles of those presenting at the joint meeting between the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) on December 11, 2019. Updates to the logical termini, purpose and goals were discussed. Outlines of the draft presentations were presented and assignments were given for refining the educational materials on the environmental process.
- **Notice of Intent:** Prior to the November meeting the revised NOI was been submitted to FHWA for its review process. The NOI is in good shape for publishing early 2020. At the December meeting, the group discussed timing the publication of the NOI with the meeting of the Cooperating and Participating agencies, the coordination plan, the schedule, and the draft Purpose and Need.
- **Purpose and Need – Revised Draft:** At the November meeting the group discussed whether to move pedestrian and bicycle needs from “secondary” needs to “primary” needs. It was discussed that “primary” and “secondary” does not denote that something is less important, rather what is driving the project. There will likely be additional discussion, but for now, the pedestrian and bicycle needs will remain as secondary. The group also discussed a letter submitted to the project regarding evaluation criteria and project purpose/need by the Metropolitan Council. MnDOT was preparing a response to the letter and would be having follow-up discussions which could influence the purpose and need document.
- **Revised Evaluation Criteria:** At the November meeting, the group discussed the Metropolitan Council’s letter regarding evaluation criteria that was presented to the TAC in October. The Council indicated that they wanted more criteria associated with non-motorized travel and travel choices. They also wanted their Transportation Policy Plan to be the focus or overarching framework for the development of the evaluation criteria. The committee discussed that the purpose and need and the social, economic, and environmental (SEE) resources needed to be the framework for the criteria and to look at the suggestions provided by the Met Council to determine if some of their suggested measures from the letter made sense to incorporate. WSB agreed to review the criteria suggested by Met Council staff to see if they addressed measures under purpose and need, SEE resources or project goals.

## October 2019

- **Facilitated Meeting:** The group worked on the agenda and goals for a joint TAC and Policy and Planning meeting to discuss draft environmental documents related to: logical termini, project purpose, goals and evaluation criteria
- **Notice of Intent:** The NOI has been submitted to FHWA for its review process. The NOI is anticipated to be published late 2019/early 2020. Edits were discussed for submitting the information for publication.
- **Participating and Cooperating Agencies:** The group discussed confirmed agencies and how to integrate those that have not responded to the formal request. The date for a first

meeting of the agencies to present draft information regarding the project background, logical termini, purpose and goals was also discussed.

- Purpose and Goals: The purpose and goals documents have been updated based on comments provided by the TAC. The group discussed the comments and the revised documents. WSB will make edits as needed and send updated versions to the TAC.
- Logical Termini: WSB presented a revised logical termini document based on the comments received from the TAC. There were some comments that required additional group discussion. WSB will update the logical termini document and responses to comments based on the feedback received. Information will be resent to the TAC.
- Purpose and Need Comments: WSB presented the comments received on the draft document to the group and highlighted the comments that were being addressed. The group discussed approximately 15 comments that required additional clarification and input. WSB will make the revisions to the document and bring back to the group at the November meeting. An outline of the document and key elements/ideas will be presented to the TAC in October.
- There are still some items for which data is needed. Data is still needed for some existing traffic condition information, transit travel times and future traffic conditions.
- Evaluation Criteria: The group discussed the comments recently provided by the TAC on the evaluation criteria and framework that were presented in September.

#### September 2019

- Notice of Intent: The NOI has been submitted to FHWA for its review process. The NOI is anticipated to be published late 2019/early 2020.
- Revised Evaluation Criteria: The group reviewed a performance evaluation framework to assess how alternatives will be evaluated. A set of evaluation criteria have been prepared to be used as part of the Scoping Decision Document and the Tier 1 EIS. The evaluation criteria will be used to assess the project purpose and need, SEE impacts, and Goals/Livability as outlined in Phase 1. Information on draft evaluation criteria will be presented to the TAC in September.
- Purpose and Need Comments: The group has reviewed and provided comments to the initial Purpose and Need draft. The document is currently being updated to reflect the comments prior to being submitted to the TAC for review and comment.
- Purpose and Goals: The purpose and goals documents have been updated based on comments provided by the TAC.
- Logical Termini: WSB is in the process of revising the logical termini document based on comments provided by the TAC. It will be brought to the environmental working group for additional review before being presented to the TAC.

#### August 2019

- Schedule Discussion: Project schedule update presented and will be made available on SharePoint.
- Participating and Cooperating Agencies Discussion: Update on the revised letters and



noted that they will be sent out the following week. The Notice of Intent (NOI) drafted and submitted to FHWA for posting on the Federal Register. Estimated posting in October or November 2019.

- Draft Evaluation Criteria Discussion: Discussion on draft materials provided included: inclusion of other coordinated projects (i.e. LID project) to be evaluated during the Tier 1 EIS; the use of Tier 1 information for evaluation of specific projects (Tier 2); not using Met Council's definition of environmental justice; and ROW goal to not relocate or displace impacted residents. The group stated that the goal is to minimize impacts as much as possible; however, it was noted that even replacing the existing infrastructure may still have ROW impacts. Discussion on how scoping measures should focus on evaluation criteria and not design criteria.
- Draft Purpose and Need Discussion: A status update of purpose and need provided and status on ongoing studies and durations:
  - Traffic Forecasting (1-2 months)
  - Existing models/conditions information (2 months)
  - Metro Transit, reliability data pending (1-2 months)
  - Multi-modal LOS

#### July 2019

- Schedule Discussion: Updated schedule presented with incorporated additional items regarding outreach and modified internal review times.
- Participating and Cooperating Agencies Discussion: Agency lists provided so committee could provide any edits/comments or identification of other potential agencies and their participation. The revised draft invitation letters provided to the group. Committee agreed to send letters in July or August and CC those agency participants in current working groups and committees, so they are aware of its timing.
- Draft Logical Termini Discussion: The draft logical termini memo presented with recommended revisions. Committee instructed to provide additional comments.
- Draft Evaluation Criteria Discussion: Materials presented on the draft evaluation criteria. Items discussed included the overall approach with explanation on the process for scoping the Tier 1, and individual projects. Clarification added that there will be different and/or additional measures between the scoping and Tier 1 documents. The different categories were presented for the evaluation criteria based upon purpose and need items and Social, Environmental, and Economic (SEE) impacts.
- Section 106 Approach Discussion: Meeting set up to identify level of effort for historic and archaeological resources on the corridor at the Scoping and Tier 1 EIS levels.
- Contaminated Properties Discussion: A review of contaminated properties approach was discussed for the various documents. MnDOT is going to work on a revised approach to potentially include more information in the Tier 1. Detailed information to be completed at the Tier 2 level. Consensus that no Phase 2 work likely to be included in the Tier 1.

June 2019

- Introduction and Working Group Purpose Discussion: Topic centered on the role of the committee, which is to provide input and feedback on the development of materials related to the environmental documents developed for the project.
- Schedule Discussion: Draft schedule was presented, and the committee discussed agency review times and the need for MnDOT to provide input on public outreach review times, and ensure all committee reviews are covered.
- Participating and Cooperating Agencies Discussion: Overview of difference between cooperating and participating agencies. Draft invitation letters presented to group.
- Draft Logical Termini Discussion: Draft logical termini memo presented with the western limits identified as I-35W/TH 55 and eastern at the Marion Kellogg (last location before I-35E). A main concern was where to start and stop the managed lanes. Other concerns discussed included: the tunnel, the ability to include a managed lane, defining terms within the document, and clarifying a few examples used within the document.
- Draft Purpose and Goals Statement Discussion: Status overview given focusing on the template used, the current traffic and transit data being gathered, the document content, and the need for updates on baseline information.
- Contaminated Properties Approach Discussion: Level of detail in each document was discussed. A decision was made that the scoping document will start with identifying known sites and then advancing to traditional detailed information in Tier 1, when alternatives are more known.