

Focus Group 1: Emergency Responders

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

11 AM – 12 PM

Summary of focus group discussion:

What is the one worst spot on TH 11?

- The curve at the airport, especially westbound. People end up in the ditch. Should the speed be lowered for this curve?
- Skew at CSAH 3: could be good to lower the speed through this area
- Speed zone in Badger: No one slows down to 50 mph
- Intersection with CSAH 2 in Badger has issues due to the skew
- Need to address skew on many roadways

Speed and safety concerns:

- The group was concerned about raising the speed limit to 60 mph in rural areas of TH 11. The group expects that most people will drive 65-70 mph, but there will still be some older drivers at 50 mph. The speed differential could end up getting worse.
- The group noted that there are head-on crashes related to passing and congestion at shift changes. Rush hour occurs at 12:30 AM with shift changes in Roseau and Warroad. The group was concerned about peak traffic: shift changes and recreational traffic.
- There is drifting and blowing snow in open areas, particularly between Roseau and Fox. Where bushes have been planted, conditions have improved.
- It is dangerous to pull people over east of Warroad. The shoulders are very narrow.
- There are issues with the lack of turn lanes on the ridge west of Warroad.
- The group was concerned about areas where there are no passing zones but have good visibility and areas with bad visibility where passing is allowed.

What is working?

- Center turn lanes, turn lanes, passing lanes, bypass lanes are helpful. However, there is inconsistency with the location of turn and bypass lanes. Some locations have turn lanes, others have bypass lanes, and the busiest locations sometimes do not have either. There are sudden stops for turns and issues with sun glare. However, some participants expressed concern about safety issues and blind spots at bypass lanes.
- Driver feedback signs have worked in this region.

Additional information about the TH 11 corridor:

- There is a busy intersection at Oak Manor Trailer Park (420th Ave).
- There is a desire to add lanes to improve passing opportunities.
- There is a lot of traffic heading to/from Lake of the Woods on the first two weekends of December and during the fishing opener. Many fish houses and boats are towed on the highway.
- Many people are turning left from westbound TH 11 into Streiff's Sporting Goods outside of Warroad.
- There is bad drainage on the ridge – hydroplaning due to wheel ruts, particularly in eastbound lane.

Focus Group 2: Businesses and Chambers of Commerce

Thursday, July 30, 2015

7:30-8:30 AM

Information and concerns from each participant:

Participant 1:

- People want to see a four-lane highway from I-29 to Baudette
- Wider shoulders are needed between Warroad and Roosevelt
- More turn lanes are desired
- Speed limit should be increased
- People want better opportunities to pass
- The curve by the airport is a hot spot

Participant 2:

- Most deliveries to Super One come from the east
- Trucks arrive every day from Fargo, TH 89, and points east
- Most employees live in or near Roseau

Participant 3:

- Most deliveries arrive from the west – Wadena and Grand Forks.
- CSAH 2 and Main Street are bad crash locations in Badger.
- Would like to see one passing lane between Greenbush and Badger and two passing lanes between Badger and Roseau.
- Speed limit should be reduced in Badger to make it easier to see at skewed intersections. A school bus was involved in a crash at a skewed intersection.
- Acceleration lanes on TH 11 at CSAH 2 would be helpful. Most people do not make a right turn onto TH 11 from Main Street due to concerns about safety.

Participant 4:

- Passing lanes are a priority.
- The speed limit should be increased.
- Would like to see people slowing down in city limits.
- TH 11 and TH 32 intersection is very busy and has poor visibility. It is busy with truck and recreational traffic.

Summary of discussion and additional concerns:

- The only reason people slowdown in Badger is because of low gas prices.
- Lighting could help at skewed intersections in Badger.
- Deer are an issue at the north end of Badger.
- People are seeing more bicycle and pedestrian traffic, bust mostly on local or county roads. There is interest in improving biking in the county, including developing a trail on the former rail line between Roseau and Warroad. Greenbush and Badger are also interested in a trail extension. People see a lot of cross-country bike traffic on TH 11. Hotels are also interested in bike rental.
- A turn lane is needed at the Seven Clans Casino in Warroad.
- A new CHS fertilizer plant is planned between Badger and Greenbush.
- Highway maintenance in the winter is generally good.

Focus Group 4: Manufacturing

Thursday, July 30, 2015

10-11 AM

Information and concerns from each manufacturer:

Participant 1:

- There is sometimes short-term congestion on TH 11 when there is flooding in Winnipeg. Trucks typically come through Pembina, but when flooding closes nearby roads trucks have to come through Warroad and west on TH 11.
- Participant is primarily served through TH 32. Most supplies and markets are south of Roseau County.
- About 14 semi-trucks serve them each day.
- They employ 230 people from around the Greenbush area.
- There are no big problems at TH 32/TH 11 intersection.

Participant 2:

- TH 11 is very important to the business: trucks use TH 11 from I-29 and TH 71.
- There is a lot of wear and tear on the highway.
- Shoulders are very important, especially because there is a lot of farm equipment in spring and fall.
- Airport curve is a problem.
- Generates 40-60 trucks a day on TH 11.
- There are two shifts at the factory with over 2,000 total employees: 5:30 am – 2:00 pm and 2:30 pm – 12:30 am. There is shift change congestion between 4-8 AM and 2-4 PM.
- Concern about casino entrance: it needs a turn lane and potentially a signal. People will stack up in the turn lane when the trail is crossing.
- Overhead line height is becoming an issue with agricultural equipment as equipment gets larger.
- Winter road closures create challenges: bad storms cause re-routes for shipments coming from Thief River Falls.
- Passing lanes would be helpful west of Warroad.
- Employees have not complained about traffic or safety on TH 11.

- All shipments arrive via truck, not rail. There is a lot of truck traffic on TH 11 and a need for a stronger road. There are not a lot of good alternate routes for trucks.
- Considering adding another plant facility in the next 5-10 years.
- Employees live both east and west of Warroad, split about 50-50. Employees use back roads to avoid TH 11. There are many ways for traffic to disperse from the plant.

Participant 3:

- Does not generate much freight.
- Biggest issues are the lack of turn and passing lanes.
- There are issues with the frequency of access west of Warroad. It is the worst area in the corridor with lots of turns in and out of driveways.
- Has five employees.

Participant 4:

- Generates about 100 trucks per week between inbound and outbound shipments.
- Getting onto TH 11 is challenging, especially making a westbound left turn from the site. Constructed a frontage road to connect its two buildings to avoid using TH 11. One building is 3.5 miles west of Roseau and the second is 4.5 miles west of Roseau. There are no plans to consolidate the buildings.
- Has 45-50 total employees. A separate building leases a portion of the westernmost building, employing 25 staff.
- If busy, sometimes runs a small second shift (about 7 employees).
- Snow and ice removal has been good on TH 11.
- Would like to see TH 11 as a four-lane highway.
- Highway 64 (Bemidji to Motley) is a good model for TH 11. It is wide with many turnoff lanes.

Additional discussion:

- Recreation traffic on TH 11 creates issues: people turning into the casino, large ice houses (“ice castles”) being towed in the winter.
- Safety of passing is the biggest issue.
- It is really tough to make left turns off TH 11 between 2-3 PM.

Focus Group 5: Recreation-Related Businesses

Thursday, July 30, 2015

11:15 AM-12:15 PM

Summary of focus group discussion:

- The frontage road west of TH 89 is a huge asset to the community in Roseau. It would be great if it was extended further west and east (through the Hardees site). The frontage road in front of the Roseau Electric Co-op has been a benefit as well.
- The airport curve is an issue with lots of bad crashes. It needs to be straightened out and have better visibility.
- The group had an interest in raising the speed limit on TH 11 and adding additional lanes
- It is important for the highway to look good. Participant mows the ditch in front of the business.
- Most business is related to Polaris or hockey on winter weekends. There is also some stopover traffic from people on their way to the Northwest Angle. Travelers will stop before the border crossing.
- Participant has a line from Greenbush to Warroad. They would need advance notice to move lines in preparation for a construction project on TH 11. They are small and try to do most work with their own staff, so they need as much advance notice as possible.
- Participant appreciates the shoulders – they are helpful when trucks are working on the lines.
- The electric co-op is seeing about 2-4 percent growth in the power load every year. Most growth is related to more electric use by agriculture.
- There is not enough housing in Roseau for the number of jobs. People sometimes end up staying in hotels long-term. Rents are low, so there is not an incentive to build new housing.

Focus Group 6: Agricultural Businesses

Thursday, July 30, 2015

1-2 PM

Information and concerns for each business

Participant 1:

- Planning to open new facilities on the north side of TH 11 about four miles west of Badger. Construction will begin fall 2016 with the goal of opening in spring 2017. Access will be from County Road 111 and TH 11.
- Expects about 400 trucks total in the high season in April and May. Additional operations will generate roughly eight trucks a day.
- The trade area is around Greenbush, Badger, and Roseau. Traffic to the new facility will come from both the east and west.
- It would be helpful to have an acceleration lane on TH 11 at the proposed exit onto TH 11.

Participant 2:

- Concern about the amount of traffic and speeds on TH 11 in Badger. People don't slow down.
- Canadian Pacific Rail is not interested in serving Roseau County despite increasing demand. As a result, agricultural truck traffic will continue to increase on TH 11.

Participant 3:

- Ships all over the country and the world. At least 50 shipping containers were transported in June from trucks to the railyard in St. Paul.
- Is expanding operations and expects to generate 2,000 trucks next year. Operations will double next year. They are adding a new warehouse. They have enough land to continue expanding in the current location east of Roseau.
- Turn lanes are needed on TH 11.
- Most truck traffic is on TH 11. Many trucks are coming from the west, making left turns into their facility.
- Ships year round, with highest volumes in June and July. Approximately 5 shipments a day leave during June and July.
- The plant is open 18-20 hours a day.
- Commodity prices drive the market. Demand is getting stronger but is tied to the market.

Additional discussion:

- The group has seen an increase in tourism in the area. Many people are pulling boats from Grand Forks.
- The group estimates there are 18-22,000 truck trips a year for grain production and associated activities.

Focus Group 7: Trucking and Transportation Businesses

Thursday, July 30, 2015

2:15-3:15 PM

Summary of focus group discussion:

- The biggest need is for passing lanes, especially between Roseau and Warroad. There is a lot of traffic at shift changes
- There are issues with the skew of CSAH 13 east of Salol. This road was just paved and is only going to get busier. There are also sight line issues.
- Need to address the curve at the airport.
- There is interest in raising the weight limit – even up to 85,000 would help. New equipment is better but the trucks weigh more.
- 90 percent of business is related to Polaris. Trucks haul between different Midwest Polaris plants. The rest of their business is related to livestock hauling from Roseau County to South St. Paul.
- It is hard to attract new employees to trucking.
- Trucks typically use TH 89 to go south.
- Minnesota roads are generally in good shape.
- There is a high elderly population in the area, resulting in some slower drivers.
- There is not much agricultural machinery on TH 11.