

# Highway 252/I-94 Environmental Impact Statement

## PAC Meeting 10

### Meeting Summary

**March 23, 2023 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

#### **Attending Members and Staff**

(43 Panelists)

**MnDOT – Deputy Commissioner Kim Collins, Mark Linderberg, Michael Barnes, April Crockett, Aaron Tag, Christina Perfetti, Nissa Tupper, Sheila Kauppi, Ricardo Lopez, Amber Dallman, Erik Rudeen, Jennie Read, Andrew Lutaya**

**State of Minnesota – Senator Bobby Joe Champion, Alexis Varner (Aid to Senator Bobby Joe Champion)**

**Brooklyn Park – Mayor Hollies Winston, Council Member Xp Lee, Jesse Struve, Jeff Holstein, Christian Eriksen**

**Brooklyn Center – Mayor April Graves, Liz Heyman**

**City of Minneapolis – Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, Julieann Swanson, Katie White, Bethany Turnwall (Policy Aid to Council Member Jeremiah Ellison)**

**Hennepin County – Commissioner Jeff Lunde (District 1), Carla Stueve, Jessa Trbojevich**

**Metropolitan Council – Chair Charlie Zelle, Council Member Reva Chamblis, Peter Grafstrom, Bethany Brandt-Sargent**

**Metro Transit – Victoria Dan, Adam Harrington**

**Federal Highway Administration – Wendall Meyer, William Lohr, Anna Varney**

**SRF Consulting – Mikaela Ziegler, Leif Garnass, Marie Cote, Brett Danner, Don Demers**

**Bolton & Menk – Marcell Walker, Breyonne Golding**

**Bellwether Consulting – Rebecca Lieser**

#### **General public**

(29 attendees)

**Brendan McCarthy, Darryl Sannes, David Mulla, Indred Alexander, Nahid Khan, Tara McCarthy, Tom Kouri, Michael Svard, Chereen Norstrund, Dan Pederson, Ellen, Jackie, Janet Jordan, Jennie Chapman, John, Jonathan Uwha, Katy Thompson, Kevin Scherber, Kim, Laurie, Leo Pawelsky, Mark, Mark, Noah, Sandy, Stephen, Susan Wimberly, Tammy Kurtti**

The Highway 252/I-94 project team conducted a presentation to the Policy Advisory Committee which included the information below. For additional details on the topics below, please see the presentation posted on the project website.

## Opening Remarks

Welcome, Housekeeping, and Introductions (Kim Collins, MnDOT)

PAC members identified themselves in the chat:

- Wendall Meyer, FHWA
- Jeffrey Joneal Lunde, Hennepin County Commissioner
- April Graves Mayor Brooklyn Center
- Christian Eriksen, City of Brooklyn Park
- CM Xp Lee, Brooklyn Park
- Senator Bobby Joe Champion - Senate District 59
- Michael Barnes, MnDOT Metro District Engineer
- Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council
- Jeremiah Ellison — Minneapolis City Council Ward 5

1. Project Overview and Schedule - 10 minutes
2. Purpose and Need Statement and Project Objectives – 5 minutes
3. Scoping Document Recommendations – 20 minutes

PAC Reflection

Mayor Graves – why wasn't more specific information provided on the alternatives that were dismissed for transparency with the PAC and the public? It would be nice to see specific data on this. Need to explain why alternatives were dismissed. The 3 Hwy 252 alternatives advancing don't seem very different.

CM XP Lee – what are managed lanes? Is it E-Z Pass, Buses, and Carpools?

- Leif Responded with definition of managed lanes.
- Comm Zelle described managed lanes as “free flow pricing”.

CM Erickson – observation that looking at MnDOT website that it would be useful to see the traffic volumes using each intersection to access Hwy 252.

Mayor Graves – Can another alternative be added to those advancing to the DEIS? Why weren't there details about alternatives dismissed?

- Leif Responded the intent of today's presentation was to focus on the alternatives recommended to advance to the DEIS. If another alternative is being asked to advance to the DEIS please submit that as a formal comment.

CM Chamblis – send the previous analysis and presentations to the Mayors and City Councils.

4. Engagement Update – 20 minutes

PAC Reflection

5. Equity and Health Assessment Update – 10 minutes

PAC Reflection

CM XP Lee (chat) – are E-Z Pass fees shared with cities?

- Council Chair Zelle – recalls from days at MnDOT that fees cover the cost to manage the E-Z Pass lanes, not a revenue generator.
- Mark L (MnDOT) – fees go to MnDOT only.
- Mike B (MnDOT) – legislation is very prescriptive; some of fees can be shared with Met Council.

Commissioner Lunde – Will get project information out to groups that Hennepin County is in contact with. The status quo is no good, changes are needed [the highway].

Open Comment Period – 15 minutes

- David Mulla – the EPA comments on the draft Scoping Document show they have serious questions about the narrow focus of the project Purpose and Need, and the lack of equity and health focus. MnDOT pushed back hard on this EPA comment. This tells us MnDOT is inflexible. Freeways are not good for people of color. Only a few of the Cooperating and Participating agencies offered comments to the informal review. When do these agencies offer comments? Is MnDOT only interested in a rubber stamp of approval?
- Nahid Khan – it seems MnDOT is not being up-front by recommending the 6 lane freeway options and the 4-lane normal speed freeway. MnDOT does not have the funding for the project. MnDOT wants to build the 4-lane freeway now and expand it to 6 lanes later but MnDOT is only interested in the 6 lane freeway. MnDOT should recommend less costly improvements such as the 4-lane low speed freeway or 6 lane expressway. Property seizures are not addressed fully. Property seizure for the local roads was not included.
- Ingrid Alexander – I am a resident in Brooklyn Park along Hwy 252. I agree on the need to improve safety. I don't agree on the traffic demand and its purpose to bring more traffic to Hwy 252. MnDOT is currently trying to rectify the past injustices of I-94 on the Rondo neighborhood; the Hwy 252 project is repeating history. Why not put the traffic on Hwy 169.
- Michael Svard – the statement that Hwy 252 freeway takes traffic off the local roads – agrees this takes commuters that today want to use the local roads rather than Hwy 252. However, fewer access points to Hwy 252 as a freeway will increase traffic on local roads as drivers need to travel to other access points and this increases exposure for accidents. For the Managed Lanes alternative, the increase in transit riders is only 700 riders per day – that is only 5 riders per bus so don't need any more buses so don't need to convert existing lanes to managed lanes.
- Brendan McCarthy – explained his son was killed by a drunk driver on Hwy 252. Asked why Hwy 252 was designed to be dangerous. Why did Brooklyn Center get \$30M to build an interchange at 66<sup>th</sup> St?

- Tom Kouri – the Objectives Slide stated many good things such as equity but there is a big disconnect with the alternatives recommended to advance to the DEIS. There are other alternatives that better meet safety, equity, etc. As Mayor Graves said some of these other alternatives should move forward.

## Written Comments

Provided via the Q&A feature during the meeting.

- Please release the names and agencies of PAC members in attendance at this meeting today. We as members of the public should have that information.
- Please record the questions asked by the PAC members and the answers / discussion in response to the questions.
- Related to Managed Lanes: Data in the report projects 700 incremental bus riders per day by 2040. That is 5 additional people per Bus/day. That increase would need no new bus trips per day. Why create managed lanes if it won't serve any additional bus trips than what occurs today?
- Alternatives recommended for further consideration by MnDOT in March SDD are very problematic.
- a) Alternatives with lower traffic volumes on the Hwy 252 segment of project have been eliminated in the March SDD. These would be expected to perform better in the EIS than the 6-lane freeway on health, environment, and equity. Why is MnDOT biased against alternatives with lower traffic volumes?
- b) The MnDOT recommended alternatives for the Hwy 252 segment indicate that MnDOT weights transportation goals (i.e. increasing traffic numbers and speeds) higher than health, environment and equity goals. The elimination of alternatives with lower traffic volumes that provide a wider range of benefits to local communities creates a false set of choices for the public comment period and for rigorous evaluation during the EIS). Alternatives with lower traffic volumes that should be retained for further evaluation in the EIS include the 4-lane low speed freeway and the 6-lane expressway with permanent safety improvements.
- Why are these executive managed toll lanes added North of 694 on 252, yet are not on other local north/south routes intersecting 694 such as 169 and highway 100.? Even North/South bound 694/494 on west end of this loop?
- Please explain how the EHA work will actually influence the development of the draft SDD, etc.

Adjourned at 4:39 pm

## Next PAC Meeting

The next PAC meeting will be held in the summer of 2023.