



## Hwy 252/I-94 Equity & Health Assessment (EHA) Equity and Health Neighborhood Advisors -- Meeting #12

Tuesday, March 29, 2023 | 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm  
Brookdale Library – 6125 Shingle Creek Pkwy, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430  
Zoom Meeting ID: 976 0266 3472 | Passcode: 292382

### Attendees

#### EHNA members:

1. Akia Vang, Minneapolis resident
2. Jim Wynne, Brooklyn Center resident
3. John Wexler, Brooklyn Park resident
4. Michael Svard, Brooklyn Park resident
5. Nahid Kahn, Brooklyn Center resident
6. Sherri Orr, Minneapolis resident
7. Stephen Cole, Brooklyn Park resident
8. Tammy McLemore, Brooklyn Park resident
9. Tara McCarthy, Brooklyn Center resident

#### Staff and consultants:

1. Aaron Tag, MnDOT
2. Allison Bell, Bellwether Consulting
3. Marie Cote, SRF Consulting
4. Nissa Tupper, MnDOT
5. Rebecca Lieser, Bellwether Consulting

## Notes

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

- Nissa Tupper led the welcome and introductions.
- Nissa provided an overview of the EHA Report 3 schedule and the public engagement that will occur during the Hwy 252/I-94 comment period.

EHNA questions and discussion:

- What are the times of the Hwy 252/I-94 pop-up events?
  - March 21, 5:30-6:30 pm at the Brooklyn Park city hall as part of the NewConnect event
  - April 4, 10:00am-Noon at Webber Park Library in Minneapolis
  - April 4, 6:00pm at Folwell Park Recreation Center in Minneapolis
  - April 11 (time still being confirmed), at the Brooklyn Park Library
  - April 12, 9:00am-Noon, at the Brooklyn Center Community Center
  - April 16, 12:30-2:00pm at the Church of Nazarene
- What is the format of the door-knocking activities? Will they drop off a handout if no one is home? What is staff's script?
  - Staff will drop by homes that may have property impacts. They will drop off a flyer if no one is home. The immediate script does not mention the house being impacted, but if there is a question about if my property will be impacted, then staff will respond that there is a potential that one of the recommended alternatives moving forward may impact your property.
- Will staff door knock on all homes with property impacts or only those with a full acquisition?
  - Staff will drop by all homes. At this point, we don't know if properties have partial or full impacts.
- Who will be doing the pop-ups?
  - NewPublica and two of their subconsultants. These are consultants who have connections with the community.
- Is there a plan to include a presentation at the Minneapolis City Council meeting as well since both Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park are included in engagement activities?
  - MnDOT offered a presentation to the Minneapolis City Council. The City has not requested a Council presentation.

### 2. Hwy 252/I-94 SD Alternatives and Elements

- Aaron Tag provided a presentation of the alternatives and elements in the Hwy 252/I-94 Project Scoping Document.

EHNA questions and discussion:

- Did the purpose and need for the project change? Saw that there was a new version uploaded in March 2023. Was "movement of goods" added to the purpose and need? Emphasis on "goods" puts more weight on improvements for truck traffic, which tends to be in contradiction for improvements for local neighborhoods.

- *No. The reference to “people and goods” in the purpose statement has not changed throughout the scoping process. “People and goods” was included in the draft purpose and need statement at the start of the EIS process in 2020.*
- Is the four-lane freeway with bus shoulders actually six-lanes?
  - The bus shoulders are narrower than regular travel lanes. It would be two lanes in each direction with a shoulder on the outside.
- Can the access combinations go with any of the alternatives?
  - Yes, they can go with any of the three freeway alternatives.
- On slide 16, why are the green impacts wider for the Brookdale Dr tight diamond with Hwy 252 under option than the tight diamond with Hwy 252 over option?
  - With Hwy 252 under, Brookdale Dr goes over the Hwy 252 and needs to be higher. The ramps are higher than. This requires more fill resulting in more impacts.
- For the 85th Ave intersection options, would people still be able to walk or bike across at 85th? People like to walk to the gas station and McDonalds, and they cross Hwy 252 on the pedestrian bridge.
  - Yes, 85th would be an underpass or an overpass. The pedestrian bridge would be removed and there would be a trail on 85th Avenue crossing Hwy 252.
- The 66th Ave intersection options all look complicated. Don’t look good for safety.
- While there is much focus on Hwy 252, as it should definitely should, I have yet to see more details about the I-94 portion besides expanded lanes and maybe a pedestrian bridge. Are there more approaches or envisioning for this stretch of the interstate?
- All I-94 alternatives remove a general purpose lane and replace it with a managed lane. MnDOT collects all the revenue from managed lanes, so it is in their best interest to change general lanes to managed lanes. Want to see the lane additions alternative back on the table.

### 3. Equity and Health Assessment Discussion

- Allison Bell facilitated the discussion on the EHA alternatives assessment framework.

EHNA discussion:

- Community Livability
  - Traffic volume:
    - Increased lanes generally incentivize additional traffic and speed which consequently leads to more potential crashes, pollution emission, and burden on already impacted communities.
    - Lower volumes of neighborhood traffic on local roads when more Hwy 252 accesses are maintained.
    - Bus shoulders are only used during rush hours. They will be empty most of the time and don’t see the value.
      - On the other hand, we need more regular bus service to see more people get out of their cars and use transit.
    - Freeway alternatives will keep commuter traffic on Hwy 252 and out of the neighborhoods, but there will be more neighborhood traffic on local roads because accesses are closed and have to drive through neighborhood streets to get to the freeway.

- Air quality, traffic noise, and light pollution:
  - More lanes incentivize more traffic and therefore reduced air quality while more traffic noise and light pollution
  - The corridor has the highest rates of asthma and lung cancer in the state. Adding more cars will continue to aggravate issues and increase rates.
  - Increased traffic volumes will create more light pollution and noise pollution.
  - Will also see an increase in truck and freight traffic.
  - Air pollution will go down in neighborhoods with more commuter cars funneled to the freeway with the freeway options.
  - Increased traffic volumes will cause more wear and tear on roadway and increased maintenance costs.
  - Increased freeway noise will increase stress on an already vulnerable community.
- Water quality:
  - Freeway alternatives increase the road surface which will cause more water runoff.
  - Increased lanes as impervious pavement decreases permeable surface and may enhance flooding and more.
- Neighborhood impacts:
  - Managed lanes limit the lanes that local traffic can use.
  - Higher traffic volumes will decrease home property values.
  - Freeway options have property acquisitions and impacts to businesses, churches, and homes.
  - Access closures in the freeway options have a major impact on how residents get around their community.
- Personal safety
  - Higher speeds and higher traffic volumes makes a corridor feel industrial and less like a walkable community. People don't want to walk because they don't feel welcome. It doesn't feel safe. It doesn't feel like a neighborhood.
  - Renderings of corridors look beautiful, but reality often doesn't look like that. Aesthetics are important for sense of safety. Brooklyn Center is forming a Cultural and Public Arts Commission. The City and community places high importance on public art and aesthetics.
  - Increased lighting and wayfinding for bus stops helps people feel safe. More lighting at crosswalks, trails, and bus stops.
  - Increased traffic volumes will likely also increase criminal activity near the highway. Intersections along highway are already used for drug sales.
- Roadway Safety
  - Vehicular crashes
    - Increased traffic volumes increase the risk of crashes.
    - The 4-lane low speed freeway alternative had a 60% decrease in crashes compared to existing conditions, but it was eliminated.

- SD analysis prioritizes regional impacts at the expense of neighborhood impacts. May see less crashes on highway but more crashes on local roads as people travel through neighborhoods to get to Hwy 252 accesses.
    - Crashes involving pedestrians & bicyclists
      - Alternatives with fewer lanes will have shorter crossing distances for pedestrians and bicyclist, but pedestrians and bicyclists won't have to cross Hwy 252 when they're on a bridge or underpass
        - People will still have to cross on and off ramps. Ramps will have crosswalks and traffic lights.
      - People don't choose to cross Hwy 252 on foot unless they absolutely must. Anything would be better than what is out there today.
  - Transportation Equity
    - Access to destinations
      - Local community burdened by losing access and longer travel times to the highway with the freeway options.
    - Distribution of benefits and burdens
      - North metro commuters receive all the benefits of the freeway alternatives. However, the two minute maximum reduction in travel time over the length of the corridor is a minor benefit to commuters.
      - The local community is burdened by all the stresses of freeway alternatives, including housing displacement, construction impacts, and increased noise pollution.
  - Which alternative, if any, do you prefer?
    - Don't like any of the options. None of the above. They don't address the EHA priorities.
    - 6-lane freeway with bus shoulder. Don't like managed lanes. The 4-lane freeway with bus shoulders from the community standpoint. Out of access combinations, prefer combination 2 because it has the most access to the community.
    - If I had to pick, I would pick it would be the 4-lane because of less traffic volume and less property impacts
    - Our choices have been intentionally limited. We have a false choice. All the good options have been taken away. Against picking any one of these. The 4-lane is a prelude to the 6-lane.
      - If the 6-lane is chosen, MnDOT could phase construction so the 4-lane is built first. If the 4-lane is chosen, they could build a 6-lane at some point in the future, but they would have to go through the entire environmental review process again.
    - 6-lane freeway with managed lanes. It encourages people to carpool. Revenue can help with maintenance.
    - 4-lane with bus shoulders. The less traffic the better.
    - 4-lane with bus shoulders.

#### 4. Wrap up and next steps

- Allison recapped next steps for Report 3.