

Highway 149 The High Bridge

Project Background

- [Highway 149 High Bridge re-decking in St. Paul, MN](#)
- The High Bridge (Smith Ave, Highway 149) in St. Paul was originally constructed in 1986-1987 over the Mississippi River. The Highway 149 mill and overlay with the High Bridge re-deck project extends through three cities and two counties. For this case study, the focus is engagement activities around both the High Bridge re-deck and Highway 149 resurfacing project.

Public Engagement Challenge

- The High Bridge re-deck and Highway 149 mill and overlay were initially scheduled to happen in different years. In order to minimize adverse impacts to the public, the projects were moved to occur in the same construction season. The initial engagement occurred approximately 2 years before construction of the High Bridge started. The engagement took place during the design phases of project delivery which limited the amount of input the public had. If engagement would have occurred during the scoping phase, more input and community issues could have possibly been addressed within a similar scope and budget.

Public Engagement Tool

- MnDOT project staff held three community engagement workshops focusing on both the High Bridge re-decking and the Highway 149 resurfacing.
- Participants were given scale-models of different options for the new bridge cross-section and for the Highway 149 roadway cross-section. They were able to create cross-section designs for the new bridge and roadway with different size travel lanes, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities.
- MnDOT provided food and drinks at all workshops, which were held over dinner hour. This was paid for through consultant budget for two of the workshops and a purchase order for one of them.

Key Takeaways

- This was an example of engaging the public on how best to utilize an existing cross-sectional width.
- The exercise was effective in setting expectations and understanding of limitations.
- Through the process, other community concerns were identified and were able to be addressed throughout the design phase.

Level of Engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, and Collaborate

- Community members and public officials were provided project information, limitations, and opportunities to better understand the project.
- Through the Community Advisory Committee, community members provided feedback on design alternatives.
- Participants were involved in the design process. Their concerns were heard and validated in the workshop format and in the outcomes of the workshop.
- Through the Community Advisory Committee, MnDOT and community members developed design alternatives that addressed both technical and community-empathized concerns that were not originally a part of the project scope.

Caveat

- After the workshop we had a lot of people who wanted to be involved, so we created a Community Advisory Committee. Applications were distributed through email communication and advertised at the community workshops. Twenty-three people applied and twelve people were selected with the assistance of local government staff. Applicants were selected to ensure a diverse collection of interests and perspectives were represented on the committee.

Quote

- The public was shocked that their neighbor didn't want the same the same thing that they did. Staff's favorite quote was "I trust MnDOT".

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Keywords

- Bridge Re-Deck; Short Time Frame; Workshop; IAP2 Inform, Consult, Involve, and Collaborate

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