

Olson Memorial Highway Multimodal Study

PAC Meeting 1

Meeting Summary

June 26, 2023 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Attending Members and Staff

(21 Panelists)

MnDOT – Mark Linderberg, Mike Barnes (PAC Chair), April Crockett, Christina Perfetti, Mike Samuelson, Jesse Johnson, Lindsey Bruer

State of Minnesota (Senate/House) – Not present

City of Minneapolis – Bethany Turnwall (Policy Aid to Council Member Jeremiah Ellison), Rattana Sengsoulichanh

Hennepin County – Commissioner Irene Fernando (PAC member), Chad Ellos, Dan Soler

Metropolitan Council – Council Member Robert Lilligren (PAC member), Kyle O’Donnell Burrows, Joseph Widing, Laura Greteman, Bill Emory

Minneapolis Park Board – Not present

SRF Consulting – Pat Corkle, Stephanie Falkers, Chris Brown

SDK Communications – Stephanie Devitt

General public

(17 attendees)

Yasmin Hirsi, Nkongo Cigolo (Metro Transit), Christi Sullivan, Brandon Detvongsa, Kathy Neitzke, Jose Antonio Zayas Caban, Jason Zimmerman, Jana Hottinger, Eva C Young, Andy Braun, Patrick Haney, Esme Mergendahl, Alma Flores, Alex Burns, Nichole Buehler, Marina Yoder

The Olson Memorial Highway Multimodal Study project team conducted a presentation to the Policy Advisory Committee which included the information below. For additional details on the topics below, please visit the project website.

Opening Remarks

Welcome, Housekeeping, and Introductions (Mike Barnes, PAC Chair, MnDOT)

PAC members identified themselves:

- Bethany Turnwall, policy aid to Council Member Jeremiah Ellison
- Commissioner Irene Fernando
- Council Member Robert Lilligren

1. Role of the Policy Advisory Group - 10 minutes
2. Study Process and Overview – 25 minutes
3. Corridor Context – 15 minutes

PAC Reflection

Commissioner Fernando – Questions regarding the discussion of pedestrian safety? The interim project last year included cones making the crossing distance shorter (but not really) and unsure bikes conflicting with the cones – what are the benefits and outcomes?

- *Mike Samuelson responded that the placement of the posts/cones is crucial; however, they did not shorten the crossing as desired in the project last year. The focus has been on walking and not necessarily on bikes. The number 1 priority was pedestrian crossing Olson Memorial Highway.*

Commissioner Fernando – How many feet did it reduce the crossing in interim and what will be in the next project? Commissioner lives in the area and crossing was difficult.

- *Mike S. responded that MnDOT will work with Hennepin County on future design.*

Bethany Turnwall – North Loop constituents asked if project team looked at N 7th St and N Lyndale Ave Area as a precedent example.

- *Mike S. noted that MnDOT is focusing on State owned roadway examples, but working with City of Minneapolis to work on all of Olson Memorial Highway.*

Commissioner Fernando – C-Line Stations are temporary, so when will these Stations be upgraded?

- *Mike S. responded that MnDOT is working with Metro Transit, this would likely be in 2027.*
- *Kyle O'Donnell Burrows (Metro Transit) confirmed this timeline.*

Commissioner Fernando – Residents continued frustration with lower priority and delayed service by the residents (Blue Line project changed route and now there are only temporary C-Line Stations).

4. Part 1 Purpose and Need Development – 10 minutes
5. Public Engagement Overview – 15 minutes

PAC Reflection

Commissioner Fernando – Residents frustrated, what do you wish for the northside? Now have less restaurants and grocery stores and imply quality of life maybe not is good in 2023.

Bethany Turnwall – The City has identified their perspective with the adoption of the recent City Council resolution.

Commissioner Fernando – Questioned the role and timing of future Policy Advisory Committee Meetings, specific to the Olson Memorial Highway Multimodal Study. What are the other meetings? How will this go forward?

- *Christina responded that a total of three PAC meetings are currently planned, including another PAC meeting this fall and one at the beginning of 2024. She noted that this meeting was originally moved to increase attendance.*
- *Mike Barnes highlighted the general roles, including guiding policy and funding decisions and supporting engagement activities. For example, is there adequate community engagement, are we engaging with the right individuals, etc.*

Commissioner Fernando – Is MnDOT working through County and City staff as a part of this study?

- *Mike Barnes responded that MnDOT is working with a Technical Advisory Committee throughout this study, which includes staff representation from the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Metro Transit, the Metropolitan Council, the Minneapolis Park Board, and the Minneapolis School District.*
- *Mike S. added that the Technical Advisory Committee is currently meeting monthly and will increase more frequently over the next several months.*

6. Opportunity to Address PAC Members – 15 minutes

Open Comment Period – 15 minutes

- Jose Antonio Zayas Caban – Executive Director of Our Streets and North Minneapolis resident. Spoke about the general logistics of the Policy Advisory Committee meeting, noting it is inaccessible and poorly timed. Regarding Olson Memorial Highway, he noted the history of harms and racism within the corridor and North Minneapolis and added that the previous demonstration project fell short of community desires.
- Alex Burns – Began with a desire to amplify some of his questions in the chat. Alex expressed a desire to know more about the near-term safety improvements planned for later this year – noting a feeling that they are being carried out with a lack of public participation. It was commented that biking wasn't a big priority in the comments, but that's because it's dangerous to do so. Comments were also noted about bollards not being safe enough to install a bike lane, MnDOT should install concrete barriers to allow for safe bicycle travel, also advocating for lower speeds.
- Nichole Buehler – Executive Director of the Harrison Neighborhood Association and a Community Connector through the MnDOT Study. Would like to highlight something from their first meeting, the composition of the Policy Advisory Committee is similar to a corridor management committee, and this body doesn't have seats for the community. It would be appreciated for seats to be available to the public so they can directly participate. This meeting format includes people listening into the meeting who cannot see who else is attending or any questions typed into the chat. It feels one sided with officials being participants and community members not being able to fully participate.
- Stephanie Falkers - Read through the questions from the Q&A (identified below) so everyone on the meeting could hear what had been asked.

- Christina Perfetti – Noted that public engagement materials would be translated into Spanish, Somali and Hmong for all activities. MnDOT does plan to attend Open Streets Glenwood.
- Nichole Buehler – Please consider the addition of Lao as a language translation as there is a large population on the corridor who would benefit from Lao translation.
- Commissioner Fernando – Questioned the process and logistics for the PAC meeting, including meeting frequency, when's the next meeting. Not all policy makers were in attendance today, and what can be done to ensure all can attend future meetings.
 - Christina responded that we are planning to have another PAC meeting in the fall and beginning of 2024.
 - Mike Barnes added that efforts were made to pick a time that worked for everyone, but that can be difficult.

Written Comments

Provided via the Q&A feature during the meeting.

- What considerations for freight mobility will there be?
- Regarding the planned safety improvements for this year, when will MnDOT be installing those changes and when will the public be informed about what is planned? Will community members have an opportunity to provide feedback before the changes are made?
- Is the bus movement going east primarily or both east and west? Will there be more frequent bus service moving into Golden Valley?
- whats the ratio between local travel vs remote (1 mile or less, vs more than 1 mile?) and how does that correlate with whos involved with safety issues/accidents? that is, are the safety issues trending with local users vs remote users?
- further, what rates of accidents are correlated with some kind of crime (in this high crime area) such as Kia Kids, speeding, or J walking?
- Are there any temporary improvements that can be made on the bridge crossing 94 so there isn't a sharp drop off from sidewalk to crosswalk? When the weather is nice I bike to Target Field Station to watch games and when I need to cross 94 that intersection has such a sharp increase that I have no clue how someone who uses a walker or wheelchair would be able to cross.
- that is, would reducing crime in the area as a fundamental measure, help to reduce accidents?
- Additional questions about the safety improvements: Will the safety improvements include lowering the speed limit? If you didn't deem the plastic barriers to be safe enough for a bikeway, why won't MnDOT install concrete protection or use jersey barriers? Why hasn't MnDOT committed to working with students at Summit Academy's Teen Tech Center to co-design an asphalt art intersection at Van White?
- Thank you for reviewing some of the past engagement efforts that have been conducted; however, I've yet to hear any mention of the campaign to Bring Back 6th--a campaign led by community which seeks to implement the changes residents have been calling for for decades through multiple iterations of redundant "community engagement efforts." Our campaign is the reason we are finally at this stage of studying Olson Highway. We are here today because of the perserverance of community, and residents' strong organizing and advocacy efforts. It would go a long way toward building trust with community if the PAC were to recognize those efforts.
- What other ped. safety improvements have been considered, in addition to shortening crossing distances at signalized intersections?

- Will MnDOT be attending Open Streets Glenwood and Open Streets W Broadway? Here is the registration link: <https://www.openstreetsmpls.org/>
- Will there be translated materials of the project and for future updates? And what languages are currently listed for translations?
- Strongly agree with Nichole's comments. *(about neighborhoods being represented on the PAC and challenge in engaging this group)*
- Is there a timeline when the John Biggers Seed Project railings are installed on the 94 overpass?
- Concrete barriers vs. the flexible barriers (as they were installed in 2022) for bike lane additions would allow bike lanes to be plowed, an absolutely necessary consideration.

Adjourned at 4:24 pm

Next PAC Meeting

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