

Meeting Minutes: Rethinking I-94 Policy Advisory Committee

Date: 12/13/2019, 1-3 p.m.
Minutes prepared by: Hannah Rank
Location: Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, St. Paul

Attendance

- Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher, MnDOT
- Michael Barnes, MnDOT
- Melissa Barnes, MnDOT
- Mayor Melvin Carter, City of St. Paul
- Commissioner Toni Carter, Ramsey County
- Jon Chiglo, WSB
- State Senator D. Scott Dibble, District 61
- Councilmember Kris Fredson, Metropolitan Council
- William Goff, MnDOT
- Jason Gottfried, Hennepin County
- Peter Grafstrom, Metropolitan Council
- Mai Chong Xiong, City of St. Paul
- Torri Hampton, MnDOT
- Brian Isaacson, Ramsey County
- Gloria Jeff, MnDOT
- Sheila Kauppi, MnDOT
- Jacob Loesch, MnDOT
- Wendall Meyer, FHWA
- Councilmember Mitra Jalali, City of St. Paul
- Nicole Peterson, MnDOT
- Hannah Rank, MnDOT
- Russ Stark, City of St. Paul
- Nick Thompson, Metropolitan Council
- Anna Varney, FHWA
- Heather Worthington, City of Minneapolis

Agenda

- Summary of Phase 1 Public Engagement/Deeper Dive:
 - Discussion led by Commissioner Anderson Kelliher
 - PowerPoint presentation by Gloria Jeff on Phase 1 activities
- Environmental document next steps led by I-94 Project Manager Nicole Peterson.
- Discussion of topics to present or discuss at future PAC meetings.

Meeting Notes

- Introductions
- History of Hallie Q. Brown Community Center by Executive Director Jonathan Palmer
- Phase 1 Engagement Report Presentation by Gloria Jeff
 - Phase 1 of Rethinking I-94 — conducted between January 2016 and August 2018 — focused on understanding the I-94 corridor and the communities along the interstate between St. Paul and Minneapolis. During this first phase of Rethinking I-94, MnDOT conducted initial engagement with stakeholders, researched existing conditions, and developed ideas for improving safety and traffic congestion on and along the corridor.
 - The *Rethinking I-94 Phase 1 Report* details two years of technical research and engagement activity centered on the I-94 corridor. This activity included a wide range of engagement and technical tasks aimed at establishing a foundation for future planning and project work on I-94.
 - MnDOT's Rethinking I-94 Website has a lot of information and resources from Phase 1. It can be found at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/i-94minneapolis-stpaul/index.html>
 - When we asked community members what their concerns were, they said:
 - Congestion
 - Safety
 - Improved health and environment
 - Identity or sense of place
 - More job opportunities
 - Better connections across the freeway
 - More inclusivity in planning
 - Result from Phase 1: Engagement Toolkit that can be utilized for other projects (MnDOT and project partners). The Toolkit has already been used by Ramsey County for their Dale Street Project over I-94.

The Community Summary can be found on our website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/i-94minneapolis-stpaul/pdf/vision/community-summary.pdf>

- Discussion of Presentation:
 - Commissioner Toni Carter:
 - Ramsey County Public Works Department (Dale St. bridge engagement) used the toolkit from Rethinking I-94.
 - Commissioner Anderson Kelliher:
 - Noted this corridor is important to MnDOT and important to the communities.
 - The efforts in Phase 1 has resulted in developing a framework around livability and has created staff positions that allow more definition around what this means for transportation projects.

- Governor Walz has a goal to reduce Green House Gas Emissions – sustainability and public health is now elevated in MnDOT’s Organizational Structure.
 - Rethinking I-94 will continue to be used to identify efforts in the corridor.
 - Rethinking I-94 will be successful with strong Agency Partnerships.
 - Mayor Melvin Carter:
 - It is important for listening to be authentic for all of our agencies.
 - Challenged the team to determine if the freeway is needed.
 - Encouraged that communities want safe connectivity across the current freeway.
 - City of St. Paul would like us to consider pedestrians first.
 - Senator Scott Dibble:
 - Don’t just address congestion.
 - Suggested utilizing Yingling Fan at Humphrey School as a resource.
 - Suggested that we should discuss the basic duties and powers of the Policy Advisory Committee.
 - Councilmember Jalali:
 - How do we reimagine the corridor when there are sunk costs with the current infrastructure?
 - A land bridge might be a solution to creating better connectivity.
 - Is I-94 needed?
 - Modal choices for residents to travel is important.
 - Heather Worthington:
 - Mentioned the desire for reparative work on the corridor and that I-94 is unique.
 - Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood is an important part of Minneapolis history. This neighborhood felt impacts when I-94 was originally constructed.
 - Suggested that Agencies consider opportunities for transportation facilities near and around the corridor.
- **NEPA Update: Environmental Documentation** by Nicole Peterson
 - Mentioned briefly that there was a Facilitated Discussion on December 11th to discuss the environmental review process. She thanked agency partners for participating.
 - Currently we are in Phase 2. This Phase is long in duration and may extend into 2023.
 - Environmental document will be a tiered process to account for the corridor and for specific projects.
- **Possible Future Topics for Policy Advisory Committee Meetings**
 - Commissioner Anderson Kelliher
 - Suggested that examples be shared where other states/cities are working through similar efforts nationally.
 - Land bridges or similar methods of connection.

- Dealing with housing? We can be both hero and villain in the same sentence in terms of transportation – e.g., Green Line development is exciting but also created gentrification that we have to think about while we’re doing this corridor.
- NEPA and environmental process that is multiyear to get a sense of scale and time.
- Potentially taking an information trip to locations that have been successful in addressing objectives similar to the Rethinking I-94 effort. These may include specifically transportation, transit, and connection issues. The outcomes of the trip would be the value gained in going and talking to other communities on their lessons learned:
 - The Commissioner is already in active conversation with Local Initiatives Support Corporation, known as LISC, on their land bridge efforts in in Washington, D.C.
 - There are other resources that can leveraged as well