

Highway 25 Coalition

Agenda

Thursday, August 30, 2018

7:30 AM

North Mississippi Room, Monticello City Hall

1. Call to Order
2. Consideration of Adding Items to the Agenda
3. Consideration of Approval of July 26, 2018 Meeting Minutes
4. Treasurers Report
5. Highway 25 Area Study – Next Steps
6. Highway 25 Area Study – Consideration of Preferred River Crossing Options
(tabled from 07/26/18 meeting)
7. Consideration of Approval of the 2019 Highway 25 Coalition Work Plan and Budget
(tabled from 07/26/18 meeting)
8. Consideration of Authorizing Expenditure for Development of Highway 25 Coalition
Website (tabled from 07/26/18 meeting)
9. Transportation and Related Economic Development/Land Use Updates
 - A. Becker
 - B. Becker Township
 - C. Big Lake
 - D. Big Lake Township (Fiscal Agent)
 - E. Monticello
 - F. Sherburne County
 - G. Wright County
10. I94 Coalition Update
11. Other Updates
12. Adjourn

Highway 25 Coalition

Meeting Minutes – July 26, 2018

7:30 AM

North Mississippi Room, Monticello Community Center

Members Present - **City of Becker** – Tracy Bertram, Greg Pruszinske, and Rick Hendrickson; **Becker Township** – Brian Kolbinger; **City of Big Lake** – Raeanne Danielowski, Clay Wilfahrt, Layne Otteson, and Hannah Klimmek; **Big Lake Township** – Larry Alford and Bob Hofer; **City of Monticello** – Brian Stumpf, Jeff O’Neill, Lloyd Hilgart, Matt Leonard, and Jennifer Schreiber; **Sherburne County** – Tim Dolan and Andrew Witter; and **Wright County** – Michael Potter and Virgil Hawkins

Others Present: Claudia Dumont, MnDOT and Stacy Morse, Congressman Emmer’s Office

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. Motion by Tim Dolan, seconded by Tracy Bertram, to accept the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Consideration of approval of meeting minutes from meeting April 26, 2018.

Motion by Tim Dolan, seconded by Raeanne Danielowski, to approve the meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Treasurers Report

The cash balance as of 7-17-2018 is \$231,238.23. Motion by Michael Potter, seconded by Tim Dolan, to accept the submitted treasurer’s report. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Highway 25 Area Study – Consideration of Preferred River Crossing Options

Clay Wilfahrt and Andrew Witter introduced the item noting that they met with Monticello Township. It was reported that the meeting was positive and concluded with the township requesting to be informed on the project. Raeanne Danielowski, Chair, stated that by conducting the meeting with the township the motion made in April has been fulfilled and that option E should be added to the study. Jeff O’Neill disagreed stating that Monticello believes the item was tabled to be brought back for discussion and that meeting with Monticello Township didn’t automatically resolve that option E would be added to the second phase review. He also noted that he was unable to attend the meeting because he was not given adequate notice. In addition, the Wright County Commissioner representing Monticello Township did not have sufficient notice to attend the meeting. Brian Stumpf questioned the reason for Sherburne County and Big Lake to be pushing Option E forward. Ms. Danielowski responded that there is simply a push to follow the process and to offer three options. After some discussion over the motion made in April, the item was brought back for discussion.

Jeff O’Neill distributed a handout which highlighted Monticello’s support for three options previously accepted by all the members of the Coalition which included A, B and D. The handout identified reasons why option E is not a viable option. It was noted that option E performs last in removing daily traffic from existing bridge; is the highest cost alternative; and rated fair/poor overall for 3 of the 4 main study goals. Additionally, as

opposed to options A, C and D, option E has a number of readily identifiable flaws which should eliminate it from further review.

Monticello believes that three viable options exist for further study and does not consider it an effective use of public resources to review an option that, upon review of the criteria, poses significant challenges on the Wright County side of the river. Mr. O'Neill added that Monticello has been against Option E from the beginning because it conflicts with the city's land use plan and will be damaging to the city's future. Raeanne Danielowski disagreed about Monticello's opposition to Option E from the very beginning. She commented on the public informational meeting and how Option E was a part of that meeting. She feels that it is important to continue to include Option E for study purposes as it was within the study scope that was brought forward to the public. Clay Wilfahrt commented that without looking at Option E the information would be incomplete.

Claudia Dumont, MnDOT, commented on the options and stated that it would be beneficial to have more than two options when seeking federal funding. In her opinion, Option E should be included in the study to be true to the process. Tim Dolan agreed and noted that Option E was included on the maps and distributed to the public and should be included for further review. Big Lake Township agreed that Option E should be included. O'Neill reminded all that three options would be studied with A, B and D which would meet the criteria suggested by Dumont.

Raeanne Danielowski mentioned that moving three options forward is following the process that was decided on by the group. Mike Potter disagreed and noted that the contract with SRF states two or three options. Mr. Potter added that the purpose of the coalition and for another bridge crossing is to alleviate traffic from Highway 25 and Option E removes the least amount of traffic. Lloyd Hilgart added that he hoped area cities would acknowledge that Monticello is spending millions of dollars on the Fallon Avenue Overpass to provide an alternative local crossing and alleviate traffic from Highway 25.

Jeff O'Neill stated that, as part of the coalition, the options should be viable to member entities. Claudia Dumont commented that conceivably all options could move on to the next stage of review. Raeanne Danielowski was in favor of this idea. Tim Dolan added that looking at all of the options does not relieve Monticello's opposition to Option E.

Jeff O'Neill reiterated that Monticello can support any of the other options, but Option E would hurt Monticello. He expressed an expectation that the group would support another city's concern that a location of a bridge would be detrimental to a community. He requested to present data to the group that would show why Option E would be hurtful for Monticello. Raeanne Danielowski responded that others should be allowed to also present on the options. She added that all cities have made investments in their communities. Clay Wilfahrt questioned whether the next phase will include the impacts to local jurisdictions. Andrew Witter responded that those impacts will be made known further down the road. Jeff O'Neill added that Option E is the only option that actually damages a city and questioned the need for further study.

Mike Potter moved to eliminate Option E from the study. Brian Stumpf seconded the motion. Motion failed 2-5; Becker; Becker Township; Big Lake; Big Lake Township; and Sherburne County voted against.

Tracy Bertram commented that Becker is unresolved about the options because all of the options affect Monticello. She noted she would like to see the process proceed. She understands Monticello's opposition to Option E, but Big Lake has also expressed concern about Option A.

The motion made in April was brought back to the floor. **Motion made by Tim Dolan to include Options A, D, and E for next phase review. Raeanne Danielowski seconded the motion. Motion failed 5-2; Monticello and Wright County voted against.** The motion failed because any action must have at least one affirmative vote from both sides of the Mississippi River. Discussion continued on Option E to try to reach any kind of consensus from the coalition.

There was significant discussion and disagreement back and forth about including Option E for the second phase review. Without a resolution to omit or include Option E, it was recommended to table the item and bring back in August. Raeanne Danielowski was concerned about tabling as she doesn't think any decision will change. Additionally, Brian Stumpf questioned the viability of the coalition. **Larry Alford moved to table the discussion and decision until the next meeting to allow Monticello to provide data regarding Option E. Tim Dolan seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-2; Big Lake and Sherburne County voted against.**

5. Adjourn.

The remainder of the agenda will be discussed at the next meeting which will be August 30 in Monticello. Michael Potter moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Brian Stumpf. Motion carried unanimously.

4.

8/31/2018

801 HWY 25 CORRIDOR TRANSP STUDY

| | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Variance</u> |
|---|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Receipts: | | | |
| Total Revenues | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Other Financing Sources: | | | |
| Capital Contributions | 0.00 | 150,000.00 | 150,000.00 |
| Total Acct 397 | <u>0.00</u> | <u>150,000.00</u> | <u>150,000.00</u> |
| Total Other Financing Sources | <u>0.00</u> | <u>150,000.00</u> | <u>150,000.00</u> |
| Disbursements: | | | |
| Traffic Engineering Expenditures | 0.00 | 41,161.22 | (41,161.22) |
| Total Acct 426 | <u>0.00</u> | <u>41,161.22</u> | <u>(41,161.22)</u> |
| Total Disbursements | <u>0.00</u> | <u>41,161.22</u> | <u>(41,161.22)</u> |
| Other Financing Uses: | | | |
| Total Other Financing Uses | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Beginning Cash Balance | | 121,219.43 | |
| Total Receipts and Other Financing Sources | | 150,000.00 | |
| Total Disbursements and Other Financing Uses | | <u>41,161.22</u> | |
| Cash Balance as of 08/31/2018 | | 230,058.21 | |



August 23, 2018

TH 25 Coalition and Study Team Members

Subject: TH 25 Area Study – Moving Forward

Dear Members of the TH 25 Coalition and TH 25 Area Study:

Considering recent conversations that have occurred at the last few Coalition meetings, we have developed three options for moving forward with the TH 25 Area Study. We hope that the Coalition can reach consensus on the direction we will take to complete this early study. Identifying, getting environmental clearance, permitting and constructing a major river crossing in this area is very difficult to do. We believe it is infinitely more difficult if agencies are not in agreement on the process being taken and together on an outcome. At this early stage of study, we are not eliminating any alternatives, but only identifying a few alternatives for some further collection of information/analysis. The purpose of this is to further the understanding of these options as the group contemplates going forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

As such, our main goal is to keep the Coalition united and produce a product that will position the Coalition to enter the next phase of the project where the preferred river crossing location will be determined through the NEPA process. The focus of our work is to provide sufficient high-level analysis to help define what might be possible and the challenges that are ahead. The decision on eliminating alternatives can't be made through the current TH 25 Area Study. All the identified alternatives (including the No Build Alignment) will be included during the future NEPA process.

One of the goals of the current study is to identify near and long-term improvements that address current and future transportation issues within the study area. These improvements would help make the system safer and attempt to address some of the future travel demand brought on by community growth. To-date, we have demonstrated the need for additional river crossing capacity in the area and we have developed and evaluated six alternatives to address this issue. To some extent, all six river crossing options will either reduce the traffic volume on the existing river bridge or will increase the capacity of the existing bridge (Option B, No Build Alignment). Some of these river crossing options do a better job than others at reducing volumes on the current bridge and reduce volumes through the core of downtown Monticello. In addition, we did a high-level evaluation of other potential issues and impacts. Each option has different impacts and issues; none of them are perfect and there is still a lot of detail that we don't know that would be uncovered in the next phase of work. At the next coalition meeting, we are planning to have our environmental river crossing expert there to help everyone understand the process better and how decisions will need to be made so that they hold up under significant scrutiny and environmental review.

We have been asked by our project manager to outline various options for the coalition to move forward. We have identified three options for your consideration:

1. Continue on the same path and complete the tasks identified in the original scope. This path would include some additional evaluation of three of the six alternatives; Options A, D and E and an additional public open house. This path would also include recommendation for short-term improvements to help with safety and traffic flow, identification of funding opportunities and an outline of key steps and timeframes from NEPA through construction of a new river crossing.
2. Document what has been completed for the six river crossing options, but don't conduct any additional analysis and don't hold the last public open house. All additional analysis would occur in the next phase of the project (NEPA). Like the first option, this path would also include recommendations for short-term improvements, identification of funding opportunities and developing an outline of key steps through construction of a new crossing.
3. Stop the study and provide all completed materials to the TH 25 Area Study Team.

As we stated earlier, our main goal is to keep the Coalition united and produce a product that will position the group to enter the next phase of the project where the preferred crossing location will be determined through the NEPA process. We feel that Option 1 is the best option moving forward to achieve the goal of moving toward more river crossing capacity. It should also be understood that there are several major decisions that could affect the future study, such as the upcoming decision on whether the Nuclear Power Plant will decommission and the potential for Intermodal Freight Development on the north side of the Mississippi River near TH 10. Whatever is decided, we believe it is important to follow a process and to stick together.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve the TH 25 Coalition.

Sincerely,

SRF CONSULTING GROUP, INC.



Josh Maus, PE (MN), PTOE
Principal

JM/DKM/cw



David K. Montebello
President/CEO

Memorandum

To: Highway 25 Coalition

From: Clay Wilfahrt, City of Big Lake City Administrator

Date: July 26, 2018

Re: Work Plan and Budget

Each year, the Highway 25 Coalition adopts a work plan and budget for the following year in accordance with the Joint Powers Agreement. Attached is a copy of last year's work plan and budget document. The budget and work plan can be amended by the Joint Powers Board at any time throughout the year. The work plan is a portion of the "Powers and Duties" section of the Joint Powers Agreement. The section indicates that the Coalition has the authority to expend funds for the following purposes:

- a. Approve a work plan and annual budget. In July of each year, the Highway 25 Coalition will establish a work plan and budget for the following fiscal year.
- b. Although projects are intended to be completed within a prescribed budget approved on an annual basis, the Board has the flexibility to modify work plan and associated expenditures as it deems necessary to support the mission of the Highway 25 Coalition. In addition, the Board has the option to seek additional funding from its Members outside of the budget as needs arise.
- c. Seek grant funds supporting planning efforts and to utilize funds on hand as necessary to meet grant program fund matching requirements.
- d. Apply for, receive, and expend State and Federal funds available for funding goals of the Highway 25 Coalition, as well as funds from other lawful sources, including donations.

- e. Enter into contracts with public or private entities as the Board deems necessary to accomplish the purpose for which the Board is organized, including, but not limited to, the use of consultants.
- f. Obtain such insurance as the Board deems necessary for the protection of the Board, its property, members of the Board, and Members.

The section also indicates that the Joint Powers Board is not limited to expending funds for these purposes. In a separate section of the agreement, activities of the Coalition are listed as well including:

- a. Examination of the impacts of continued growth in Member jurisdictions on traffic patterns.
- b. Conducting traffic studies defining and identifying priority improvements.
- c. Preparation of collaborative project design and delivery recommendations.
- d. Study of various transportation risks associated with improvement alternatives and associated timing of the construction of improvements.
- e. Identification and application for funding of activities via grant programs.
- f. Development of unified effort among local and state interests in obtaining funding of improvements to include: (i) providing input and leadership within each Member community on matters pertaining to Corridor improvement planning and implementation; and (ii) advocacy at the State and Federal level.
- g. Partnering with MNDOT on regional transportation decisions and involvement in regional policy decisions and discussions.
- h. Incorporation of public input in planning efforts.

Presumably, the Joint Powers Board has the authority to engage in any of the activities, powers, or duties listed.

The 2017-2018 work plan was sent out to the self-appointed chief contact person from each entity. The only comments received requested adding a few items, and making the work plan specific to those items. The thought is that if the list is general and unspecific, there is no tangible measuring stick to gauge success. If the work plan is specific, it will allow the Joint Powers Board to easily measure success. The items that were requested to be added were:

- A. Complete the Traffic Study
- B. Seek and apply for Federal construction grants in 2019, such as BUILD Grants (Formerly TIGER Grants). This requires our Federal Legislator's

support and the use of a consultant to assist with the development of the application(s).

- C. Hire a consulting firm to guide, represent and promote the TH 25 Coalition.

The argument in favor of a broad plan is that it will allow the authority latitude in its authority to complete a variety of tasks under the scope of the work plan.

The Joint Powers Board should discuss how it wants to approach the 2018-2019 Work Plan. Would it prefer to keep the plan very broad and inclusive of all options, or should it look to narrow its focus to include only a few measurable and attainable goals? If kept broad, the requested items could simply be added to the 2017-2018 plan. If the Joint Powers Board prefers a narrowly focused plan, it could contain the three items above and any additional items requested.

In addition to a work plan, the Joint Powers Board needs to adopt a budget. The budget for the past two years has been \$150,000. As of July 17, 2018, the Coalition had a cash balance of \$231,238.23. \$39,981.20 of the budgeted \$150,000 for the traffic study has been expended, and once the entire amount of the budget for the traffic study has been expended, the Coalition will have a cash balance of \$121,225.43.

Some items that may require funding in 2018-2019 include:

- A. Grant writing
- B. Lobbyist support
- C. Further research and follow up studies
- D. Feasibility Studies and preliminary drawings
- E. Web Site and other community outreach

The coalition should discuss its preference for a budget for 2018-2019.

Highway 25 Coalition 2018 Work Plan and Budget Discussion

1. Work Plan
 - A. Completion of Transportation Plan
 - B. Identification of key improvements by June 2018 for inclusion in member jurisdiction capital improvement planning.
 - C. Promote adoption of Transportation Plan by member jurisdictions
 - D. Promote and support Initiation of official mapping by member jurisdictions
 - E. Conduct feasibility studies on individual projects where enabled by Joint Powers Agreement.
 - F. Assist member jurisdictions with implementation of priority projects
 - G. Assist member jurisdictions with identification of Federal and State Funding Opportunities
 - H. Lobby for State and Federal project funding in support of member projects
 - I. Exploration of Private and Public Partnerships
 - J. Coordinate/Communication with - I 94 Coalitions
 - K. Coordination and support for CEDS initiatives
2. Budget Consensus during previous discussion was to keep budget same as 2017 at \$150,000
 - A. Ongoing Transportation Planning Efforts
 - A. Follow-up studies relating to priority projects
 - B. Feasibility Studies/preliminary drawings
 - C. General ongoing consultant support
 - B. Communications/lobbying
 - A. Consultant fees
 - B. Community Outreach
 - C. Web site