

## *Highway 25 Coalition*

### **Agenda**

Thursday, October 25, 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 August 30, 2018 Meeting Minutes
4. Treasurers Report
5. Highway 25 Area Study – Consideration of Preferred River Crossing Options  
(tabled from 07/26/18 & 08/30/18 meetings)
6. Consideration of Approval of the 2019 Highway 25 Coalition Work Plan and Budget  
(tabled from 07/26/18 & 08/30/18 meetings)
7. Consideration of Authorizing Expenditure for Development of Highway 25 Coalition  
Website (tabled from 07/26/18 & 08/30/18 meetings)
8. 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
9. I94 Coalition Update
10. Other Updates
11. Adjourn

**Highway 25 Coalition**

Meeting Minutes – August 30, 2018

7:30 AM

North Mississippi Room, Monticello Community Center

Members Present - **City of Becker** – Tracy Bertram, Rick Hendrickson and Greg Pruszinske; **Becker Township** – Brian Kolbinger; **City of Big Lake** – Raeanne Danielowski, Clay Wilfahrt, Layne Otteson, Hannah Klimmek, and Gina Wolbeck; **Big Lake Township** – Larry Alfords and Bob Hofer; **City of Monticello** – Brian Stumpf, Jeff O’Neill, and Matt Leonard; **Sherburne County** – Tim Dolan, Steve Taylor, Dan Weber, and Andrew Witter; and **Wright County** – Michael Potter, Darek Vetsch, and Virgil Hawkins.

Others Present: Claudia Dumont from MnDOT, Stacy Morse from Congressman Tom Emmer’s Office, and Josh Maus, Beth Bartz, and Dave Montebello from SRF Consulting Group, Inc.

**1. Call to order.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m.

**2. Consideration of adding items to the agenda.**

No items were added.

**3. Consideration of approval of meeting minutes from meeting July 26, 2018.**

**Motion made by Tim Dolan to approve the July 26, 2018 Highway 25 Coalition Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Larry Alfords, unanimous ayes, motion carried.**

**4. Treasurers Report**

Larry Alfords presented the August Treasurer’s Report showing a cash balance of \$230,058.21.

**Motion made by Tim Dolan to accept the August 2018 Treasurers Report. Seconded by Tracy Bertram, unanimous ayes, motion carried.**

**5. Highway 25 Area Study – Next Steps**

Josh Maus from SRF Consulting reviewed recent Coalition conversations relating to the TH 25 Area Study. Maus noted that they hope the Coalition is able to reach a consensus on the direction to take to complete this early study. Maus clarified that at this early stage of the study, they are not eliminating any alternatives, but only identifying a few alternatives for further collection of information and 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. Their 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. Maus clarified that 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 the 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, there is a demonstrated need for additional river crossing capacity in the area and six alternatives have been evaluated to address this issue. Some of the 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. Maus noted that they have also done a high-level evaluation of other potential issues and impacts, with potential for a lot of detail that we don't yet know that could be uncovered in the next phase of work. Maus introduced their in-house environmental river crossing expert Beth Bartz, who provided information to help Coalition members better understand the process and on how decisions will need to be made so that they hold up under significant scrutiny and environmental review. Bartz reviewed requirements of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which involves a number of federal and state agencies to be involved in the process. Both MEPA and NEPA use development of a Purpose and Need Statement and evaluation of a "reasonable range" of alternatives as the foundation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that occurs during the scoping phase of the EIS. Both MEPA and NEPA require that federal and state agencies be involved in the determination of alternatives to be studied in an EIS. The alternatives screening process involves reviewing a broad range of alternatives and selecting a more limited number that will be carried forward for detailed study in the EIS. Federal guidance recommends that alternatives are eliminated during planning only when the alternatives obviously cannot meet the purpose and need, has known major environmental problems, or is not technically or economically feasible, as contrasted to simply not desirable. Dave Montebello stated that the process is very important and recommended that the Coalition continue with the process, noting that the project will come under scrutiny if options are eliminated prematurely. Montebello noted that there could be a viable reason to eliminate option E, but reiterated that we need to run the process.

Maus reviewed various options for the Coalition to consider to move forward; 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 with 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 or hold the last public open house. All additional analysis would occur in the next phase of the project (NEPA). This option 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, and 3) Stop the study and provide all completed materials to the TH 25 Area Study Team.

Maus stated that SRF Consulting feels that Option 1 is the best option moving forward to achieve the goal of moving toward more river crossing capacity. Maus also stated that it should be understood that there are several major decisions that could affect the future

study, such as the upcoming decision on decommissioning of the Nuclear Power Plant and the potential for Intermodal Freight Development on the north side of the Mississippi River near TH 10.

Michael Potter noted that no matter what we decide, all options must go through the EIS process due to the need for federal funding.

Matt Leonard discussed social economic issues as well as environmental/technical issues, noting that both sides of the river need to benefit.

Steve Taylor noted that as we go through the process, options will filter out.

Jeff O'Neill discussed the pressure the group has if we stay together. We need to recognize that there are two members of the group that could be damaged. O'Neill stated that we need to remove option E as it is not a viable option for Monticello. O'Neill also stated that he pushed against option E when the group first formed and feels he is obligated to express that only options A, B, and D move forward.

Beth Bartz advised the group to acknowledge O'Neill's statement and to stay in good shape going into the NEPA process.

Rick Hendrickson asked if there would be anything to gain by pursuing two bridge crossings. Bartz explained that the EIS will look at short term and long term solutions.

**6. *Highway 25 Area Study – Consideration of Preferred River Crossing Options (tabled from 07/26/18 meeting)***

Chair Danielowski reintroduced Item No. 6 that was tabled at the July 26, 2018 meeting to allow Monticello to provide data regarding Option E.

Tim Dolan noted that regardless of what moves forward, all options are going to be reviewed at EIS. Dolan questioned what would exclude an option. Beth Bartz explained that an agency could exclude an option if an agency perceives a flaw in an option.

Raeanne Danielowski acknowledged Monticello's concerns, but feels that the Coalition needs to do our due diligence to receive federal funding opportunities. Dave Montebello reiterated that being united is absolutely critical.

**Motion made by Brian Stumpf to remove option E from the next phase review and move forward. Seconded by Michael Potter. Motion failed 2-5 with Monticello and Wright County voting aye, and the City of Becker, Becker Township, the City of Big Lake, Big Lake Township, and Sherburne County voting nay.** The motion failed because any action must have at least one affirmative vote from both sides of the Mississippi River.

Tim Dolan stated his concern that the EIS could potentially bring option E back, and whether entities on the south side of the river would stand in the way at that time. Dolan discussed substantial cost implications if this were to happen. Dolan also stated that he wants to keep the integrity of the study, which levels the playing field based on data.

Jeff O'Neill stated that we have more power as a group and that Monticello would be hard pressed to continue with a viable option E.

Darek Vetsch noted that we all did our due diligence, and knew the voting structure going into the Coalition.

Andrew Witter recognized that there are detriments/benefits to all communities in the Coalition, noting that now is not the time to consider specific community concerns.

Michael Potter stated that past Coalition minutes reflect that only the top 2, with up to 3, options would move forward.

Tim Dolan stated that he feels the City of Monticello and Wright County are not lending themselves to the process.

Claudia DuMont discussed the Municipal Consent process that would allow communities an option to not consent. Potter asked for clarification that Municipal Consent would allow a city to opt out further into the process. It was clarified that Municipal Consent is a MN Statute (MS 161.162 – 161.167).

Larry Alfords discussed his concern that the Coalition seems to be moving towards the City of Monticello and Wright County versus the remaining members of the Coalition. Alfords reviewed the work group that formed years back in hopes of establishing a Coalition that would work to improve transportation in the region. Alfords stated that he feels there are no members of the Coalition that would purposefully seek to harm another member community. Alfords also noted that in order to enter NEPA, funding has to be identified.

Tim Dolan questioned if it is necessary for the group to push forward specific options, or let them all move forward with equal footing. Josh Maus explained that we can review improvements in order to enter NEPA, but that funding has to be identified.

Jeff O'Neill again asked the Coalition to move forward with all options other than option E, recognizing that option E might come back.

Tim Dolan recommended the group close out the study, and move forward with NEPA.

**Motion made by Tim Dolan to move forward with Option 2 identified by SRF Consulting Group, Inc. in their letter to the Coalition dated August 23, 2018. Seconded by Raeanne Danielowski. Discussion followed.**

Jeff O'Neill requested that the City of Monticello be given time to review Option 2 in detail before voting on this motion. Clay Wilfahrt noted that a description of Option 2 was included in the packet that was distributed to the full membership prior to the meeting.

**Tim Dolan withdrew his motion to allow the City of Monticello time to review Option 2 until the September Coalition meeting.**

**Michael Potter motioned to table item no. 6 (Highway 25 Area Study) until the September 27, 2018 Coalition meeting to provide time for the City of Monticello to analyze option 2. Seconded by Tim Dolan, unanimous ayes, motion carried.**

Raeanne Danielowski stressed the need for the Coalition to stay unified and continue to grow into the future.

**7. *Consideration of Approval of the 2019 Highway 25 Coalition Work Plan and Budget (tabled from 07/26/18 meeting)***

**Brian Kolbinger motioned to table item no. 7 (Consideration of Approval of the 2019 Highway 25 Coalition Work Plan and Budget) until the September 27, 2018 Coalition meeting. Seconded by Tim Dolan, unanimous ayes, motion carried.**

**8. *Consideration of Authorizing Expenditure for Development of Highway 25 Coalition Website (tabled from 07/26/18 meeting)***

Jeff O'Neil presented potential concepts and preliminary costs for establishing a Highway 25 Coalition Website.

**Tim Dolan motioned to table item no. 8 (Consideration of Authorizing Expenditure for Development of Highway 25 Coalition Website) until the September 27, 2018 Coalition meeting. Seconded by Brian Stumpf, unanimous ayes, motion carried.**

**9. *Transportation and Related Economic Development/Land Use Updates***

Due to time constraints, the City of Becker, Becker Township, the City of Big Lake, and Big Lake Township opted not to provide updates. The City of Monticello provided a status update on their Fallon Avenue Overpass which is expected to be completed in November 2018. Sherburne County discussed their upcoming Long Range Transportation Plan open house events scheduled in September, and reviewed the Local Option Sales Tax that will be presented to their Board in September. Wright County reviewed their Long Range Transportation Plan currently underway.

**10. *I94 Coalition Update***

Michael Potter thanked MNDOT for submitting a \$10M grant application for improvements needed on I94.

**11. *Other Updates*** – No other.

**12. *Adjourn***

**Motion made by Michael Potter to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 a.m. Seconded by Tim Dolan, unanimous ayes, meeting adjourned.**

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, September 27, 2018 at 7:30 a.m. in the North Mississippi Room at Monticello City Hall.

**4.**

10/15/2018

801 HWY 25 CORRIDOR TRANSP STUDY

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<b>Receipts:</b>			
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Other Financing Sources:</b>			
Capital Contributions	0.00	150,000.00	150,000.00
<b>Total Acct 397</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>
<b>Total Other Financing Sources</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>			
Traffic Engineering Expenditures	0.00	49,632.17	(49,632.17)
<b>Total Acct 426</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>49,632.17</b>	<b>(49,632.17)</b>
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>49,632.17</b>	<b>(49,632.17)</b>
<b>Other Financing Uses:</b>			
<b>Total Other Financing Uses</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Beginning Cash Balance</b>		<b>121,219.43</b>	
<b>Total Receipts and Other Financing Sources</b>		<b>150,000.00</b>	
<b>Total Disbursements and Other Financing Uses</b>		<b>49,632.17</b>	
<b>Cash Balance as of 10/15/2018</b>		<b>221,587.26</b>	

# Memorandum

**To:** Highway 25 Coalition

**From:** Clay Wilfahrt, City of Big Lake City Administrator

**Date:** July 26, 2018

**Re:** Work Plan and Budget

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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