

Meeting Notes

Project: Interstate Operations Analysis and Plan for Future Improvements

Subject: SRC - Kickoff Meeting

Date: Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Location: Webex

1. Introductions

a. Attendees:

- i. HDR - Brian Ray, Jason Carbee, Jacob Weiss, Brian King
- ii. Metro COG - Cindy Gray, Michael Maddox, Dan Farnworth
- iii. NDDOT - Wayne Zacher, Michael Johnson, Justin Staucer, Jon Ketterling, Jason Thoronson, Bob Walton, Jack Smith
- iv. MnDOT - Mary Safgren, Eli Ramirez, Jerilyn Swenson
- v. Cass County - Jason Benson, Tom Soucy
- vi. West Fargo - Andrew Wrucke
- vii. Moorhead - Jonathan Atkins
- viii. ATAC - Diomo Motuba, Kshitij Sharma

2. Project Objectives / Anticipated Outcomes

a. Presented already established objectives/outcomes:

- i. Determine the feasibility of potential ring routes
- ii. Present a clear menu of prioritized improvements
- iii. Provide operational and analytical data to assist with later project development phases
- iv. Have the study results that are intuitive and easy to interpret

b. Other objectives/outcomes discussed:

- i. Cindy Gray – Metro COG
 1. Need to go beyond a feasibility study for the ring routes. Looking at pros and cons of routes - can traffic be relieved on the existing system?
- ii. Mary Safgren - MnDOT
 1. Interested in the ring route analysis, is expansion of the interstate system needed, what is required for the Red River Bridge. This study should provide the basis for those future needs.
 2. Note that MnDOT has improvements planned in the near future for the Minnesota side Interstates.
- iii. Michael Johnson – NDDOT

1. Hoping for a menu of prioritized improvements - Recently developed Urban interstate priorities process for NDDOT is fed by studies like this one.
 2. NDDOT's biggest concern is local traffic using the interstate system – need outcomes that don't necessary increase local trips. He's interested in tracking who uses system with improvements - local versus regional trips. Noted that in the past, some have thought that increases in capacity can lead to more local traffic using the system (not necessarily through trips).
- iv. Bob Walton – NDDOT District
1. Several initiatives have pushed traffic towards the interstate
 2. Main Ave Reduction & One-Way Conversion Feasibility Study both have potential for some additional local traffic on Interstate.
 3. Cindy noted that one-way conversion study is a concept and no analysis or feasibility recommendations have been completed yet, and that the name of the project is being changed to “corridor study”, in which two-way segments or an entire two-way conversion will be studied. We don't expect uniform support for a conversion.
 4. Jon Atkins via chat noted that “as long as the interstate is easier to use than going through town, it will be used for in town trips. Traffic is like water, flows the path of least resistance.
 5. Michael Johnson Replied that – “Agreed Jonathan, but if we resolve ourselves to that determination in the planning and project development process we aren't appropriately planning and building the Interstate system for its intended use and function.”
- v. Andrew Wrucke – West Fargo
1. Wondering about the western limits of study area and how it relates to the western limits of West Fargo. HDR noted it was 165th Ave / CR 15
3. Study Review Committee Roles & Responsibilities
 - a. No comments or questions from the SRC
 4. Focus Group Roles & Responsibility
 - a. No comments or questions from the SRC
 5. Project Scope Discussion
 - a. Kshitij Sharma asked about data collection in terms of use in microsimulation
 - i. HDR noted the traffic counts will include classification, but for lane usage data we'll use visual inspection / local observations in areas of poor lane connectivity.

- b. Cindy Gray liked the idea of using StreetLight data to identify who is using truck stops along interstate as brief “stops”, since those trips could easily be substituted for a stop along ring route.
 - c. Cindy Gray noted: that the Joint Water Commission could start selling back some of the land acquired for the diversion in 2022 – it will be important for us to identify if routes are feasible and beneficial before then.
 - d. Bob Walton wanted to identify that NDDOT puts a lot of money into pedestrian crossings – looking ahead to public meetings where a portion of people will be bike / ped advocacy groups.
 - i. HDR should use available connection data to demonstrate that concepts support pedestrian / bike crossings.
 - e. Mary Safgren noted: District Freight plan is being developed currently for MnDOT. Will share results with study team
 - f. Cindy Gray noted: City of Fargo has sub-area land use plans and growth management plans that have some growth assumptions – should confirm the assumed travel model growth is consistent with those.
 - i. Verify plan accommodates opportunities for collector street crossings of interstate.
 - ii. 64th Street and 76th Street interchange questions
 - g. Jerilyn Swenson noted: Red River Bridges are aging – need a plan long term if expansion is needed over the Red River.
 - h. Jon Atkins noted: Potential future new MN interchange between 34th Street and Hwy 336 is proposed to be located at weigh station and near airport. MnDOT/State Patrol have recently upgraded weigh station.
 - i. City of Moorhead had Growth Area Plan (GAP) for growth in this eastern area. Interchange was part of that plan to support access to the area.
 - ii. Interstate Operations Study should see if the interchange makes sense.
 - i. Mary Safgren noted: Priority of this interchange in relation to other statewide priorities was not certain.
 - j. Cindy Gray noted: Comments from SRC should be routed to HDR, but please copy Cindy and Metro COG on comments.
 - k. Brian Ray discussed in-person meetings, and it was discussed that we would try and make these in-person / on-line hybrids to accommodate pandemic uncertainties. HDR will coordinate with Metro COG on logistics of this.
- 6. Project Schedule Discussion
 - a. No questions or comments from the SRC
 - 7. Other Items
 - a. No questions or comments from the SRC
 - 8. Next Steps
 - a. Finalize Data Collection

- b. Develop Existing Conditions Assessment
- c. Conduct Study Review Committee #2 – October 29, 2021, 10:00AM