

Otter Tail County CSAH 9 Corridor Study and EAW Study Review Committee (SRC) Meeting

Date: September 15, 2008
Time: 3:30 P.M.
Location: Scambler Township Hall
18799 State Highway 34
Pelican Rapids, MN

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

Everett Erickson, Otter Tail County Commission
Richard Evenson, Rural Landowner
Dennis Carlblom, Scambler Township
Rick West, Otter Tail County Engineer
Charles Grotte, Otter Tail County Assistant Engineer
Rick Lane, SRF
Brian Shorten, SRF

I. WELCOME

Members of the SRC were welcomed. Mr. Lawrence from the Lake Association was absent.

II. MINUTES OF THE JULY 29 and August 6, 2008 SRC MEETINGS

Brian distributed draft minutes of the first two SRC meetings and asked for comments, corrections or additions. The minutes for both meetings were approved by consensus.

Chuck indicated he would put the approved minutes on the project website.

III. PUBLIC MEETING INPUT

Brian provided a summary of all comments received at and after the public meeting held on August 16, 2008. Also mailed in SRC members packets were copies of comment sheets received.

Rick West felt the meeting was a success and that a good mix of constituents attended.

Everett felt SRF did a good job and had an excellent citizen process for the meeting.

All members felt the turnout was very good and the input was very helpful.

Brian noted the following as key new information generalized by the citizen input:

- Add layout concepts for the extension of CSAH 20, especially with one layout following the County line.
- An immediate and prevalent concern was addressing pedestrian safety and speed issues along CSAH 9 and 20.
- A strong interest in traffic calming along the existing alignment as a Phase 1 project.
- A need to gather more traffic count information during a weekday (versus previously counted weekend data).

IV. REVISED CRITICAL PATH PROCESS FOR STUDY

Based on this input and the SRC interest in following up on these citizen requests, SRF staff had prepared a revised study process plan that would address the new activities desired. Brian walked members through the Revised Critical Path graphic which had been mailed out earlier.

Rick West noted that the additional traffic count work described by SRF would be needed to address citizen comments. He also noted that the Lake Association had requested a meeting with its members in the spring of 2009. Rick explained that if traffic calming was introduced at this location, it was possible that many other areas in the County with similar needs may also request a calming program. Therefore, he felt it important that a new task – the preparation of a traffic calming policy be added to SRF's expanded scope.

The SRC concurred with Rick's comments and discussed possible criteria for a calming program (accident history, crash rate, density of driveways, possibly a local neighborhood cost participation level, etc.).

There was support expressed by the SRC for all the new activities suggested by SRF and Rick West.

V. ACCEPTABLE CALMING/SPEED REDUCTION OPTIONS

Rick Lane presented power point slides of calming measures typically used in neighborhoods, as well as education and enforcement practices. Rick discussed specific features of this "menu" of calming options, and their applicability to the corridor.

The SRC discussed the traffic calming information with the following key decisions:

- Even if a long-term new alignment was preserved and built in the future, current speed/safety issues along existing CSAH 9/20

require attention and citizens made it very clear this was their top priority.

- If speeds were lowered (via the establishment of calming measures) this may divert more through traffic off CSAH 9/20 and on to other roadways (SRF should recalculate the diversion values based on a proposed lower speed on the existing CSAH 9/20 alignment) and thus may help justify a future second phase long term project (e.g. a new alignment).
- The study process should be expanded to include a Phase 1: Traffic Calming Improvements and a long-term Phase 2: Future Alignment Identification, with possible corridor preservation of this long-term project in the interim period, in case it is needed.

The SRC and SRF then discussed various corridor preservation methods such as corridor signing, platting and official mapping.

VI. SCREENING CRITERIA FOR LONG RANGE ALIGNMENT ALTERNATIVES

Brian walked SRC members through a list of possible screening criteria that could be used to reduce the number of Phase 2 concept layouts down to a workable number for further geometric analysis. He presented information discussed at the July 29, 2008 SRC meeting on the Purpose and Need Statement for the project and suggested eight screening criteria. The SRC agreed with these criteria.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

With agreement among the SRC on the new and expanded study elements, Rick West asked Brian to present SRF's estimated budget for these activities.

Brian presented a draft contract modification that SRF had previously provided County Highway staff. He also discussed possible methods to save money or offset these new costs.

Both Everett and Rick West felt that it was important to continue doing the study in a comprehensive, high quality manner; and that by trying to trim a few SRF hours the integrity of the process could be diminished.

Brian noted he had talked with SRF environmental staff leaders, and a possible trade-off to reduce the amendment cost would be to defer work now on the EAW, and use these contract funds to partially offset the expanded tasks.

Chuck and Rick West indicated support for this idea, and noted they had done roadwork improvements along existing corridors without an EAW.

Because of the tight timeframe and weather events, the SRC provided verbal approval to SRF to initiate the new traffic counting work, and directed Brian to revise the draft contract amendment #2 to accommodate today's SRC input for County Board approval next week.

It was further decided by the SRC that the weekday counts should be done from 8 AM to 11AM.

VIII. ADJOURN

With no other business the meeting was adjourned at 5 PM

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