

Public Input

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Public and Steering Committee Involvement

Public input was obtained during each step of the planning process. An effective public involvement program was a critical element for the Washington Street Corridor Study. Success of the program required an open and participatory process keeping community members well-informed about the project through information sharing, while offering key stakeholders ample opportunities to express views and be actively involved in the decision-making process. Public involvement complements technical analysis and steering committee guidance in providing information to decision-makers. Based upon public input, decision-makers can weigh the results of both the technical analysis and public input and make a decision in the best interest of the community.

The primary objective of the public involvement program was to communicate the proposed project and gain feedback on particular community needs and concerns. The consensus-building approach has proven successful on numerous occasions and has avoided potential controversy and negative public opinion on projects. To work towards consensus, a number of tools were utilized for informing the public beyond merely publishing a legal notice in the newspaper. The public involvement process included several key components including:

- Sending direct mail to adjacent property owners and renters including newsletters and postcards
- Distributing news releases targeted to multimedia news agencies
- Providing informational handouts and posters to adjacent businesses frequented by road users
- Providing reader-friendly information and documents

Four public input meetings were held to involve key stakeholders, local residents, adjacent businesses and the traveling public in the information-sharing and planning process. The meetings provided an overview of the project, identified key traffic issues, solicited input regarding areas of concern to the community and obtained input on recommended improvements. In addition to the four public input meetings held for this study, two landowner meetings were held to actively solicit land owner input regarding proposed corridor improvements. All participants were provided an opportunity to engage in question-and-answer dialogue with the study team and provide verbal and written comments. Additional individual meetings were held with corridor stakeholders that would endure the greatest perceived impacts from the proposed improvements. This group included; the Fire Department, Xcel Energy and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

The following summarizes verbal and written input received during the Washington Street Corridor Study:

- Desire for reduced traffic delay at the intersection of Washington Street at DeMers Avenue particularly during the afternoon peak-hour.
- Support for improved bicycle operations along the corridor, specifically:
 - Improved bicycle safety. The bicycle community feels it is undesirable to ride on Washington Street due to the high traffic volumes and speeds and driveway density.
 - Increased bicycle mobility underneath the BNSF Railway Bridge structure. The bicycle community feels the existing bicycle facility underneath the bridge is undesirably narrow.
- Support for increased pedestrian mobility and accessibility. Specifically noted were concerns around utilities installed within the footprint of the sidewalk, snow piled around utilities further obstructing pedestrian mobility and poor conditions of the existing sidewalks.
- Desire to improve traffic operations and reduce crash susceptibility at locations with dense private driveway spacing. Particularly noted were locations that experienced driveway queues onto Washington Street causing congestion.
- 10th Avenue South realignment presented parking reconfiguration concerns.
- Desire for beautification measures on the the BNSF Railway Bridge structure if the underpass is elected for replacement.
- Proposed access management alternatives included business concerns regarding:
 - Driveway elimination and relocation affecting business accessibility.
 - Driveway elimination and relocation forcing patrons to utilize gravel alleyways. The general feeling is that increased travel on gravel alleyways may cause maintenance concerns.
 - Median installation affecting business accessibility.
 - ROW acquisition for boulevard or median installation affecting business functionality. This was noted at locations that only met the minimum City parking code requirements.