



**WORK SESSION
RICHFIELD MUNICIPAL CENTER, BARTHOLOMEW ROOM
FEBRUARY 14, 2023
5:45 PM**

Call to order

1. Continued discussion on policy framework approach for regional transportation investment projects and evaluate City support for several proposed Corridors of Commerce project submittals.

Adjournment

Auxiliary aids for individuals with disabilities are available upon request. Requests must be made at least 96 hours in advance to the Acting City Clerk at 612-861-9712.



WORK SESSION STAFF REPORT NO. 04

WORK SESSION

2/14/2023

REPORT PREPARED BY: Matt Hardegger, Transportation Engineer

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REVIEW: Kristin Asher, Public Works Director
2/8/2023

OTHER DEPARTMENT REVIEW:

CITY MANAGER REVIEW: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager

ITEM FOR WORK SESSION:

Continued discussion on policy framework approach for regional transportation investment projects and evaluate City support for several proposed Corridors of Commerce project submittals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This work session will provide an opportunity for additional comments and reactions to the draft policy framework with some discussion, however, the pressing discussion will focus mainly on several Corridor of Commerce projects that will be on the February 28, 2023 Regular City Council Agenda for consideration of support.

Regional Transportation Investments Framework

The Regional Transportation Investments Framework will be used as projects are proposed in and around Richfield. The current draft (attached) reflects comments received and discussion items noted during the February 1, 2023 joint Transportation Commission and City Council work session. The consensus was for the policy to guide the City's cooperation as a regional partner, keeping Richfield's interest in the forefront. The policy will best serve the community by remaining flexible with key components focusing on meeting goals in Richfield's planning documents, improving the quality of life for Richfield residents, and minimizing any negative impacts to the community.

Discussion Items

Future Transit on I-494

Staff inquired with Metro Transit about plans for transit along the 494 corridor after the construction of EZ-Pass lanes. Metro Transit currently does not have transit on 494 and has no plans for transit on 494, however, Southwest Transit operates their SW Prime airport service on 494 and has used 494 for routes in the past. The EZ-Pass lanes will also provide a benefit to hotel shuttles, taxis, Jefferson Lines intercity buses, and charter buses traveling to and from MSP Airport or Mall of America. The primary local transit benefit of the project is to bring drivers currently using local roadways to avoid highway congestion back onto 494, improving service for the D Line and other local transit routes.

Induced Demand

Staff recognizes that induced demand is a consideration in any freeway expansion project. Staff's perspective is that induced demand occurs when roadway capacity exceeds existing demand, creating shorter travel times on the freeway system, encouraging additional trips from people who may not have

otherwise made a trip. In this specific instance, staff does not believe that construction of EZ-Pass lanes east of I-35W to Hwy 77 would create that excess capacity in the 494 corridor, as traffic modeling for the projects does not indicate better level of service at peak hours. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the proximity to the MSP Airport and employment center near the Mall of America, as well as the how this stretch of interstate serves 84 of 87 counties in the state on a daily basis, including Richfield residents.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Staff is still awaiting results of MnDOT's analysis of the corridors of commerce project applications for Greenhouse Gas Emission impacts. Results will be shared at the work session, if available.

Corridors of Commerce Projects

City of Bloomington - I-494 railroad bridge at Pleasant Ave and 82nd Street interchange at I-35W

This project completes two goals of the approved 494 Vision: reconstruction of the 82nd Street interchange on 35W and reconstruction of the railroad bridge over 494 at Pleasant Ave. It is necessary to recognize the importance of the 82nd Street interchange for the City of Bloomington's local plans and that this project is a critical element that is necessary to accommodate the changes caused by the upcoming 494 Project 1. The railroad bridge over 494 was constructed in 1959 and was most recently inspected in 2022 by MnDOT. The superstructure was deemed to be in "fair" condition and the bridge was determined to be "not deficient" on their report, but re-construction of the bridge is necessary for the 494 Commission EZ-Pass lane project from 35W to Hwy 77.

494 Corridor Commission – EZ-PASS lanes on 494 between I-35W and Hwy 77

This project completes two goals of the 494 Vision: EB EZ-Pass lane from 35W to Hwy 77 and WB EZ-Pass lane from 35W to Hwy 77. This project would complete the EZ-Pass lanes begun during 494 Project 1 (Hwy 169 to 35W) and would require the reconstruction of the railroad bridge at Pleasant Ave to be constructed as proposed by the City of Bloomington above. Traffic analysis has shown that 494 Project 1 will result in negative impacts to freeway operations east of 35W until the future addition of these proposed EZ-Pass lanes.

City of Richfield – Auxiliary lanes on Hwy 62 from Portland Ave to Cedar Ave

This project would add an auxiliary lane on EB Hwy 62 from Portland Ave to Hwy 77 and a northbound deceleration lane on Hwy 77. The WB Hwy 62 to SB Hwy 77 loop would be removed, and replaced by a controlled intersection north of the interchange. The 14th Ave pedestrian bridge would be replaced by an ADA-compliant pedestrian/bicycle bridge at 12th Ave. Noise walls would also be added to both the north and south sides of Hwy 62 from 11th Ave to Bloomington Ave. Staff recommends support of this project as it intends to reduce traffic volumes on local roadways (specifically Portland Ave and 66th Street) by retaining more eastbound traffic on Hwy 62, replaces an out of date regional pedestrian connection, and provides sound barriers along the freeway.

DIRECTION NEEDED:

1. Additional feedback and/or preliminary acceptance of the revised Regional Transportation Investments Framework.

2. Questions/discussion with City Council members present focusing on the three Corridors of Commerce projects that will be considered at the February 28, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The I-494 Vision is a long range plan for the I-494 Corridor developed by MnDOT, in cooperation with local agencies and elected officials through a Technical Advisory Committee and a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). Those committee's contributed to the I-494 Vision development and the PAC approved the long-term vision in September of 2021.

B. POLICIES (resolutions, ordinances, regulations, statutes, etc):

Resolutions of support are being requested from Council on each of the three individual Corridors of Commerce projects and will be brought forward for consideration at the February 28 City Council Meeting.

C. CRITICAL TIMING ISSUES:

Resolutions of support are due to MnDOT by March 1, 2023.

D. FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

E. LEGAL CONSIDERATION:

None

ALTERNATIVE(S):

None

PRINCIPAL PARTIES EXPECTED AT MEETING:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

| | Description | Type |
|---|-----------------|---------|
| ▢ | Draft Framework | Exhibit |

Framework Approach

Framework Purpose and Need

The City of Richfield acknowledges that proposed improvements on the regional system may be an opportunity to provide benefit to the local system, as well as improve livability for all Richfield residents, especially for populations that have traditionally been overlooked with these types of projects.

This framework is intended to be a flexible tool for analysis of projects during all stages of development. The detail of analysis will vary throughout project development and outcomes may change.

The purpose statement is consistent with the City's adopted goals and policies found in our 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Pedestrian Plan, and Bicycle Plan.

Framework Outcomes

The framework will provide needed flexibility to accomplish the following:

1. Evaluate projects on a case-by-case basis to determine their benefits.
2. Evaluate projects for their alignment with Richfield Goals and Policies.
3. Partner, coordinate and collaborate on projects with local and state agencies.
4. Leverage outside funding when appropriate.
5. Have a voice to shape projects without limiting ourselves with a policy that narrowly defines the type of projects we support.



Framework Approach

Draft Framework | Consideration Factors

| Consideration Factors | Description |
|---|--|
| Air Quality Improvements | Air quality is improved for Richfield residents in close proximity to the project. |
| Cost-Effective (low cost/high benefit) | The project is a cost-effective solution that provides safety, congestion, and mobility benefits. |
| Fills a Gap or Need | The project fills a gap or documented need outlined in (1) local and (2) regional planning documents. |
| Funding | The project aligns with known funding opportunities (e.g., grants). The type of funding may influence when a project is built - shifting its priority. |
| Local Congestion/Mobility Improvements | The project will provide congestion relief to the local system. |
| Local Safety Benefits | The project will help mitigate safety issues and conflicts between users on the local system. |
| Ownership and Major Maintenance | The City will not take on ownership or major maintenance of regional infrastructure components. |
| Project Support | The project has received community support (e.g., municipal consent) and/or approval from local, regional, and state agencies. |
| Promotes Multimodal Transportation Options | The project helps enhance multimodal transportation options. |
| Reduce Inequities | The project will help improve the quality of life for underrepresented populations. |
| Reduction Greenhouse Gas Emissions | The project will provide a net decrease in ongoing greenhouse gas emissions. |
| Property Impacts | The project uses flexible design practices to eliminate (ideally) or minimize any property impacts, including public park properties. |

Notes

1. Intended to help guide regional transportation investment conversations
2. Every project will have its own benefits and tradeoffs
3. The factors are directly/indirectly helping address our existing goals and policies
4. The framework will be a work in progress

