



Public Engagement Plan
WENTWORTH AVENUE PROJECT (CP 8-21)
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT - TRANSPORTATION

4/24/2017



1. Introduction

Public engagement is a critical aspect in ensuring that all Dakota County government services are performed efficiently, effectively and in a responsive manner. Dakota County strives to ensure that the proper level of public engagement is realized in all projects. To identify this proper level of engagement, the County utilizes a public engagement process tool that is standardized across the organization and results in consistent approaches and outcomes. If a project scores a 1-3 a public engagement plan must be created. The levels of engagement and what each entails in terms of description and specific examples can be seen in the table below.

Level	Description	Examples
Level 1 – Inform and Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain, educate or gather information. • Use when priorities and decisions are still being shaped. • Can explain the issue, while gathering information to understand and perspectives and ideas of citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meeting with information presentation and collection of comments. • Open houses. • A webpage with information about a project but also provides an email address for people to submit questions or comments.
Level 2 – Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally involves two-way information exchange in which the public discusses a policy, issue, or research priority. • Discussion among and with different stakeholders is encouraged. • Can deepen knowledge by exploring and responding to ideas and concerns described by individual participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meeting with information presentation and collection of comments. • Open houses. • A webpage with information about a project but also provides an email address for people to submit questions or comments.
Level 3 – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different perspectives are shared and parties can influence each other and develop consensus. • Allows the organization and participants to explore and work through issues together, understand each other's perspectives and values, and consistently address concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meeting with information presentation and collection of comments. • Open houses. • A webpage with information about a project but also provides an email address for people to submit questions or comments.

1. Introduction (cont.)

Project Description:

This project includes the reconstruction of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 8 (Wentworth Avenue) from Delaware Avenue to Humboldt Avenue in the City of West St. Paul. The project includes the addition of turn lanes at major intersections, the construction of pedestrian facilities, and drainage improvements.

Wentworth Avenue is an important east-west roadway in the northern part of the County that links Mendota Heights, West St. Paul, and South St. Paul. The purpose of the project is to improve safety along the corridor and accommodate existing and future traffic volumes on CSAH 8.

Engagement Level:

2 - Discuss

Based on the above engagement level score, this plan will utilize certain methods and tools to reach stakeholders based on the table from the previous page.



2. Public Engagement Objectives and Approaches

The purpose of this Public Engagement Plan is to serve as a means of process planning and engagement designing in order to achieve a desired level of public engagement. An important aspect in achieving this is identifying the key objectives and potential outcomes and then deciding which approaches are best suited to achieving those outcomes. The following lists the key objectives and approaches for this Public Engagement Plan.

Key Public Engagement Objectives:

Share purpose and need as part of building public support for project.

Discuss and gather input on project needs, schedule and construction staging.

Consider feedback from stakeholders pertaining to design decisions where appropriate.

Keep stakeholders updated throughout project design and construction.

Public Engagement Approaches:

Open houses

One-on-one meetings with property owners

Focus groups with stakeholders and partners

Newsletters

3. Major Groups to Engage and Methods

A holistic public engagement process requires a diverse group represented by various populations that are involved from start to finish. A process that involves diverse stakeholders assists in achieving a project that is reflective of the County’s diverse interests and ever-changing population. However, in order to effectively reach and involve various stakeholders different types of specific engagement methods need to be used as their effectiveness can vary from one group to another. Major groups to engage and methods of engagement most likely to be successful are listed in the following table.

Groups to Engage	Scientific Survey	Workshops	Focus Group	Open House	PMT Meetings	One-on-One
City of West St. Paul		X	X	X	X	
Area school districts		X	X	X		X
Area businesses		X	X	X		X
Area residents		X	X	X		
Private utility owners		X	X			X
Dakota County staff		X		X	X	
Environmental agencies			X			X

A PMT has been assembled to discuss specific issues, design options and planning. This team currently includes Dakota County Project Managers, Dakota County Engineers, City Engineers, Watershed Representatives and Water Resource Engineers. Representatives for private utility groups and environmental agencies will be brought into the discussions as the project develops. Newsletters will go out periodically to nearby and adjacent residents and business owners. This newsletter will include key project information and will act as an invite to any open houses. Directions to our website will be spelled out in the newsletter where anyone can go to find further details on the project. For those directly impacted by ROW acquisition or drainage, one-on-one meetings or focus groups may be pursued to go over the details.

4. Key Questions to Ask

Once the methods of engagement have been identified the questions that need to be asked then need to be created. Questions that are asked in the public engagement process must address the major concerns and issues of the proposed project. Questions that do not necessarily lead discussions towards the end goals of learning about the major issues can result in a more disjointed discussion that lacks effectiveness which is why it is important that questions are well thought out and refined. Questions needs to be asked in such ways where they encourage participation and dialogue amongst those people asked to respond. They should also be asked in a way to solicit responses from a variety of groups rather than only a limited amount. Similar to the methods of engagement, certain types of questions can be more effective than others in garnering a response from certain groups of individuals.

Project Issues to Address with Questions:

Potential right of way implications to impacted stakeholders

Improving pedestrian safety and access along the corridor

Construction staging and business/resident access

Unknown issues

Public Engagement Questions:

How can the project reduce the impact to area residents and businesses while still meeting future needs?

How can safety be addressed, particularly for pedestrians?

How can the construction of the project be staged to allow for access and minimized disruption to area residents and businesses?

What other issues should project staff be aware of?

6. Available Resources and Budget

Consultants are required to include public engagement activities, including open houses, agency meetings, and property owner meetings in their proposal. In addition, consultants were invited to evaluate the project and propose any additional opportunities for public involvement that they see. County staff time to support project development work, including public engagement, has been budgeted in the CIP under "CIP Reimbursement to Operations".

Briefly discuss any increased project costs, project delays and additional staff/consultant resources required by this public engagement plan, if any.

None.