



US Hwy 169 Corridor Coalition

Working together to enhance safety, reduce congestion and maximize economic development along the US Highway169 inter-regional corridor.

Membership Board Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Chair, Mr. James Hovland.

Members Present:

Name	Title	Agency
Lezlie Vermillion	Director of Public Works	Scott County
Michael Leek	Community Development Director	City of Shakopee
Jon Ulrich	Commissioner	Scott County
Mary Keen	Program Specialist	Scott County
Janet Williams	Mayor	City of Savage
John Powell	Public Works Director	City of Savage
Ronda Allis		Region Nine Development Commission
Jim Gates	Deputy Director of Public Works	City of Bloomington
Rod Axtell	City Council	City of Bloomington
John Schmitt	Mayor	City of Shakopee
Mark McNeill	City Administrator	City of Shakopee
Dave Christiansen	Freight Planning and Development Manager, Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations	MnDOT
Bob Oberle	Mayor	City of Le Sueur
Warren Erickson	City Council	City of Prior Lake
Jane Kansier	Building and Transportation Services Director	City of Prior Lake
James Hovland	Mayor	City of Edina

1) Welcome/introductions

Chair Hovland welcomed the group and requested each member to introduce themselves and their affiliations.

2) Adoption of minutes

Mr. Warren Erickson motioned to adopt the agenda for tonight's meeting, Ms. Janet Williams seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. John Schmitt motioned for the approval of the May 28, 2009 meeting minutes. Mr. Rod Axtell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) Special presentation

Mr. Dave Christianson, Freight Planning and Development Manager, from the MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations gave a presentation about the duties of his office and what some of their current activities have been in regards to the US 169 Corridor.

- Talked about the types of freight traffic that mobilizes around the state and where the heavy concentrations are located.
- US 169 is significant truck route – higher than what you might see going N to Duluth – 100-150 trucks per hour traversing US 169.
- 10% of overhead for plants is put toward transportation – ship by weight.
- Half of the ethanol produced in lower SW corner of state is adjacent to US 169 and TH 60.
- Minnesota is third largest producer of ethanol in country – a lot of it moving over US 169 from SW corner to refineries.
- US 169 class 1 IRC (I-35 South of metro/I-94 east and west of metro/I-35 to Duluth).
- 25% of manufacturing in Minnesota ships overseas – both train depots that send to larger ports on coasts are located in Minneapolis.
- US 169 is connected to the Ports of Savage via TH 13.

- All grain that comes from SW that doesn't go to overseas goes to the Ports of Savage.
- Western portion of Minnesota produces a lot of grain and is also a large producer of turkeys in country.
- The above significance is anticipated increase in agricultural movement of goods from west and south to Ports of Savage impacting US 169.
- We have as many acres being farmed today – we have not seen a decrease in recent years.
- His office (Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations) is completing a long-haul commuter rail study that is to be completed by December 2009. Mankato looks like a destination that will warrant further analysis.

Mr. Jon Ulrich stated that there is a debate happening at TAB in regards to the I-494/US 169 area and that the story Mr. Christianson just told us has not been presented to them. He feels that this story should be told at TAB and to Oberstar with the authority that MnDOT has. He's not sure how to make that happen but that it needs to happen.

Mr. Rod Axtell asked if there has been a study done where freight trips are compared to freight costs. Mr. Christianson said the average was calculated for the southwestern part of the state. Mr. Axtell then asked how it compared to entire state. Mr. Christianson stated that it is pretty well equal in value on a per truck load as the rest of greater Minnesota.

Mr. Christianson commented that the largest corridor for freight is from the Twin Cities to Chicago.

Mr. Warren Erickson asked if Hwy 2 from the Dakotas to Duluth is heavily used. Mr. Christianson stated that Duluth is the largest port but Hwy 2 is lightly used for agricultural purposes and only when a ship is being used for grain. Most grain activity travels to I-494 then to the Ports of Savage.

Mr. Jim Gates commented that a one-pager fact sheet on freight movement on US 169 Corridor may be beneficial. Ms. Ronda Allis has some numbers from MnDOT but they didn't include figures on freight. Mr. Christianson stated that he can get Ronda some of those numbers for a one-page brochure.

Mr. Ulrich stated that \$200 million of TIGER funds will go to TIFIA and asked Mr. Christianson if he knows anything about that. Mr. Christianson said that it's a source of immediate funds through a revolving loan fund not a permanent grant.

Ms. Rhonda Allis asked about the potential of passenger rail.

Mr. Christianson stated that Union Pacific upgraded so passenger trains could run 60 mph. There is a study started on Minneapolis to Mankato, which is a relatively strong travel corridor for all modes of transportation as compared to Hwy 52 by Rochester. Union Pacific runs non-stop up to Union Depot in St. Paul. The State Rail Plan, which should be finished by the end of 2009, shows US 169 as a viable route. The downside is that you would need several trains a day to increase ridership and there is a major bottleneck in Shakopee. Until that bottleneck can be mitigated you would have a hard time putting together a route.

Mr. James Hovland asked where US 169 falls in comparison for all modes of travel within Minnesota. Mr. Christianson said that the Twin Cities to Chicago is strongest; I-94S/I-94W are 1st and 2nd then I-35S; with US 169 being 4th.

Due to western agricultural growth, MnDOT is evaluating a bi-pass of I-494 ring to Ports of Savage. This includes TH 12 to TH 15 to Hutchinson down to Glencoe then US 212 to Chaska TH 41 then to US 169 to TH 13.

Union Pacific is a major player for freight going west for international trade (Los Angeles) but they don't have a terminal in the Twin Cities.

Ports of Savage is the only port in Minnesota that doesn't have a port authority, instead it is made up of all private grain companies. Tonnage is down 30-40% as compared to three years ago so the facility is adequate for now.

4) Membership status update

One membership resolution/agreement that we are still missing is from Mankato. We will need to touch base with them.

Mr. James Hovland spoke with Eden Prairie to get them to join. He will keep working on them. He will also work on Hennepin County.

Mr. Warren Erickson asked about Sibley County choosing no. Ms. Allis stated it wasn't high on their priority and could also have to do with funding.

5) Work plan discussion

Membership Board has not seen the work plan prior to this meeting.

TIGER funding was added. Mr. Ulrich stated that at TAB, it is still vague as to what MnDOT will submit for projects. There are three areas -- high cost projects/ tier 2 / tier 3. Khani S., MnDOT Deputy Commissioner, is an advocate for the I-494/US 169 project. The Metro District is trying to determine what projects will meet the funding criteria best for money nationwide. If Stillwater project is submitted and successful, then it would potentially free up some bonding money in 2012-2013 to go toward other projects.

Mr. James Hovland stated the TIGER applications are due in September. By end of June, MnDOT should have a rough outline of projects intended to submit. Mr. Hovland stated that Mr. Ulrich and he are still not getting full support at TAB meetings for the I-494/US 169 project. TAB is still discussing technical and legal issues involved with MnDOT payback for Crosstown loan being used on a regional project – discussion will continue at August meeting.

There was a brief discussion at the Eden Prairie hosted I-494 meeting of separate entities submitting their own TIGER applications.

Mr. Rod Axtell stated if there are other projects along the US 169 corridor that other communities are willing to submit projects that we should talk with them and look at those projects and support them too. If there are smaller projects that fit the bill we should encourage those communities to submit their application. TIGER funds are for projects over \$20 million but less than \$300 million and projects have to be substantially completed by 2012. US 169/Hwy 14 in Mankato might fit the criteria.

Mr. Jim Gates commented that performance based criteria is gaining ground at FHWA in Minnesota and in Washington DC.

Mr. Jon Ulrich motioned to approve the work plan for 2009. Mr. Bob Oberle seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6) Corridor advocate contract

Mr. John Schmitt motioned to adopt the Corridor Advocate job position. Mr. Jim Gates seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Mr. John Schmitt likes the idea to get the membership more involved.

Mr. Warren Erickson asked if the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) had been spoken to about becoming a member.

Mr. Michael Leek stated that, to his recollection, the SMSC did not fit within JPA guidelines as they are not a governmental agency as set forth in this purpose. They could, however, participate as an affiliate member and participate in meetings.

Motion passed unanimously.

The approval of the Corridor Advocate position will allow further discussion with Mr. Neil Peterson to see if he is still interested. We needed to make sure that we had the roles defined and clarified as to what the Board expects from that position.

Mr. Bob Oberle asked if entities can begin recruiting companies. Mr. Ulrich commented that doing recruiting too early can be harmful because not all materials/tools are developed yet.

Ms. Lezlie Vermillion stated that at one of the next meetings, the membership will need to put together recruiting categories (gold, silver, etc) for dues that affiliate members will be paying and how we expect them to participate.

Mr. Ulrich asked if we should set a target date for completing the tools to be used. Ms. Vermillion stated that September was the original target date. Mr. Schmitt stated that he sees the printed material as something being carried to people not mass marketed.

There was a brief discussion regarding the SCALE educational module with elected officials. The training module will educate elected officials on the relationships of land use and economic development and about putting together transportation services. More detailed modules will be scheduled for later in the year. The goal is to get officials thinking big picture and regional issues rather than just their individual areas. The educational meeting next week is meant for newly elected/appointed officials.

7) Corridor advocate update

No further updates.

8) Other business

- Development of website/graphics – At previous Executive Committee meetings, there was discussion on the options for developing graphics, website, and administrative support work. Mr. Jim Gates explored the graphics/website options. He stated that Bloomington is willing to finish the remaining one-pagers. We currently have about 10 layouts completed and approximately \$4,500 into it so far. Bloomington estimates that another \$2,300 is needed to complete rest of the one-pagers. The website design would be about \$2,600.

One-pagers will be used to present to our Legislative Delegation, potential members, and affiliate members.

Mr. Warren Erickson asked what benefit a website serves. Mr. Axtell commented that one would be able to download documents quickly for a presentation, a blog could be added, it could include visual material, fact sheets, and everything is in one area to access easily. Page 2 of work plan also gives several reasons why a website is needed. Agencies have come to expect a website to look up info.

Bloomington does not anticipate hosting or maintaining the website.

Mr. John Schmitt motioned to approve Bloomington for one-pagers and website design. Mr. Warren Erickson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- Administrative staff support from Scott County – Hourly pay, possibly OT, would be reimbursed by Membership Board. Fiduciary responsibilities would be covered by Scott County. Ms. Vermillion is still working out how many hours would be spent on minutes/agenda/etc.

Mr. Hovland asked for a motion to request Scott County to provide support; however, Ms. Vermillion suggested that she would come back in a couple months with a better cost.

Mr. Rod Axtell motioned to authorize administrative services from Scott County for a couple months in order to gather better cost information. Ms. Janet Williams seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- Draft letter to governor – Executive Committee recommend Membership Board to approve letter to request support for corridor funding with TIGER funds; however, some of the words still need to be softened before sending out. Mr. James Hovland is concerned that MnDOT would back off some due to the tone in the letter, especially if they believe they are doing the best they can for us.

Mr. Leek stated that there was also some confusion on what the actual request is of the letter. Executive Committee will need to clarify request better and to tone down language.

Mr. Jon Ulrich stated that the TIGER portion of the letter should be moved closer to the beginning of the letter. He also wondered if we should set up a meeting with MnDOT or with Governor.

Mr. Hovland offered to re-vamp the letter, so Ms. Vermillion will forward the electronic version to him.

Mr. John Schmitt motioned to direct the Executive Committee/Chair to re-draft the letter to the Governor and to re-circulate it for approval. Mr. Ulrich seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

9) Next meeting?

Third Thursdays do not work for Commissioner Tom McLaughlin from Blue Earth County. It was decided by the Board to try a Wednesday for the July meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 29, 2009 at 7 p.m. at the Scott County Government Center.

The Board will need to pick a more permanent date next month.

The Executive Committee will meet prior to the membership meeting on July 29 at 5:30 p.m. at the Scott County Government Center.

10) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Keen, Scott County Program Specialist.