Minnesota Trunk Highway 10 Anoka County Business Stakeholder Involvement Process

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ABSTRACT

Trunk Highway 10 (TH10) is a major arterial roadway connecting the Minneapolis/St. Paul and St. Cloud metropolitan areas in Minnesota. TH10 (signed as U.S. Highway 10) runs parallel to Interstate 94 along this entire route, but the two are separated by the Mississippi River. River crossings are limited. The TH10 corridor is developing rapidly as suburban growth radiates rapidly outward from Minneapolis/St. Paul. The highway is a freeway from its junction with Interstate 35W and for several miles to the northwest toward St. Cloud. However, at the city of Anoka it becomes a multilane expressway with at-grade intersections and some nearly direct accesses for commercial businesses. An overall planning study for the corridor completed in January 2002 recommended major capacity increases along the TH10 corridor, particularly in the Anoka area. One possibility for increasing capacity is an upgrade of part of TH10 from an expressway to a freeway with full access control and interchanges rather than at-grade intersections. This sort of conversion typically raises the hackles of commercial businesses and developers alike.

During 2006 and 2007, a team of consultants, local governments, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation collaborated on a detailed planning study and stakeholder involvement process for a one-mile long section of TH10 through the city of Anoka. This planning process included tasks designed to understand the needs of commercial businesses along the study corridor and to directly involve them in the design and evaluation of project alternatives for the corridor. The process involved the development of a corridor economic profile, a business inventory and classification study to determine the businesses most likely to be impacted by access changes, a set of detailed business interviews, a business forum, and
a business-oriented design charette. The entire process was designed to understand the concerns of businesses, educate them, and also to fully engage them in the planning process. The results of this process led to significant modifications in project alternative concepts and a surprising lack of local business and citizen objections to freeway conversion alternatives. The freeway design alternatives would involve significant changes in roadway access for businesses adjacent to the corridor, including the elimination of all direct access from the roadway mainline.

Key words: business involvement—Minnesota—project stakeholders