

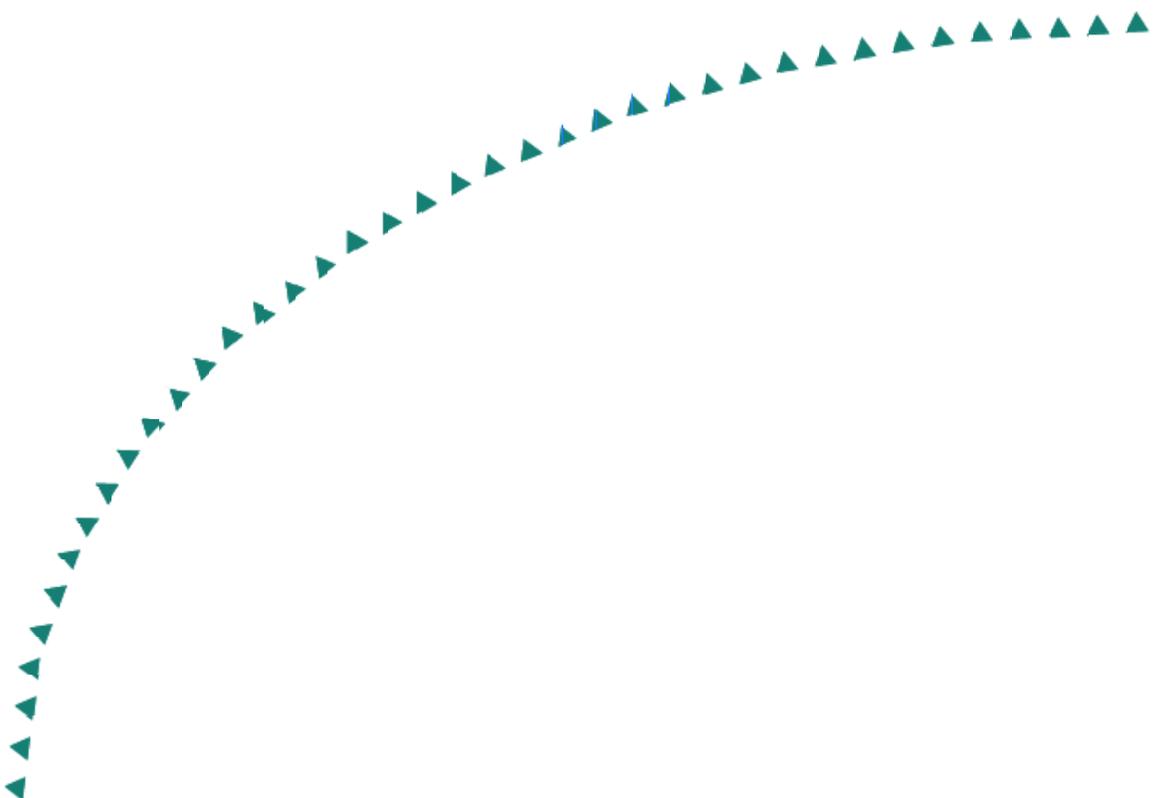
2004-20

Final Report

Increasing the Value  
of Public Involvement in  
Transportation Project Planning



# Research



## Technical Report Documentation Page

1. Report No. MN/RC – 2004-20	2.	3. Recipients Accession No.	
4. Title and Subtitle <b>INCREASING THE VALUE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSPORTATION PROJECT PLANNING</b>		5. Report Date March 2004	
		6.	
7. Author(s) Gary Barnes Peter Langworthy		8. Performing Organization Report No.	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs 301 19th Avenue SE Minneapolis, MN 55455		10. Project/Task/Work Unit No.	
		11. Contract (C) or Grant (G) No. (c) 81655 (wo) 12	
12. Sponsoring Organization Name and Address Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Research Services 395 John Ireland Boulevard Mail Stop 330 St. Paul, Minnesota 55155		13. Type of Report and Period Covered Final Report	
		14. Sponsoring Agency Code	
15. Supplementary Notes <a href="http://www.lrrb.gen.mn.us/PDF/200420.pdf">http://www.lrrb.gen.mn.us/PDF/200420.pdf</a>			
16. Abstract (Limit: 200 words) <p>The purpose of this project was to understand why public involvement in transportation project planning goes badly, and to determine how the process could be modified to reduce negative outcomes. The project examines these issues by studying public involvement efforts. The project examines how the potential for conflict can be anticipated.</p> <p>A local project had characteristics of having been well run with good intentions, of having been plagued by conflict, and of being documented in a neighborhood newspaper. It was the primary source of reasons why public involvement can turn out badly and was contrasted with three other projects that were more successful with their public involvement</p> <p>A new model is proposed in this report. The model proposes that conflict can derive from any or all of five independent dimensions, each with its own level of intensity or intractability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Size and distribution of local benefits or costs</li><li>• Disagreement about the nature and importance of local impacts</li><li>• Ability to accurately define and engage relevant stakeholders</li><li>• Perceived legitimacy of the project</li><li>• Degree of ideological issues</li></ul> <p>There are two key conclusions. First, situations with serious conflict are different from the typical public involvement effort; they require different tools and tactics built around the specific nature of the conflict. The second major finding is that “conflict” is not a standard problem to answer with a single solution, but each conflict does not have to be approached individually.</p>			
17. Document Analysis/Descriptors Public Involvement Model		18. Availability Statement No restrictions. Document available from: National Technical Information Services, Springfield, Virginia 22161	
17. Document Analysis/Descriptors Conflict Management Transportation Planning			
19. Security Class (this report) Unclassified	20. Security Class (this page) Unclassified	21. No. of Pages 95	22. Price

# **Increasing the Value of Public Involvement in Transportation Project Planning**

## **Final Report**

Gary Barnes  
Peter Langworthy  
State and Local Policy Program  
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs  
University of Minnesota

**March 2004**

Published by  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Research Services Section  
Mail Stop 330  
395 John Ireland Boulevard  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-1899

This report represents the results of research conducted by the authors and does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Minnesota Department of Transportation and/or the Center for Transportation Studies. This report does not contain a standard or specified technique.

The authors and the Minnesota Department of Transportation and/or Center for Transportation Studies do not endorse products or manufacturers. Trade or manufacturers' names appear herein solely because they are considered essential to this report.

## **Acknowledgements**

This research was funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT). The Mn/DOT Planners' Functional Group recognized the need for additional planning research. Using information from the Transportation Research Board's Conference on Refocusing Transportation Planning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Group developed a problem statement and submitted it for funding consideration resulting in this research.

The authors would like to thank project technical liaison Linda Zemotel, administrative liaison James Klessig, and the members of the technical advisory panel: Shawn Chambers, Ken Buckeye, Pat Bursaw (all Mn/DOT), Joe Kern (SRF Consulting), and Frank Loetterle (Metropolitan Council) for their many very helpful comments and ideas during the course of the project. We would also like to thank Lisa Radeunz (LJR, Inc.) for her work on the interviews of the Ayd Mill Road process participants, and for her insights more generally.

We spoke with a number of participants in the public involvement efforts that we describe as case studies in this report. These conversations added an important personal perspective to the written documents that we used as our basic factual sources. Mukhtar Thakur, Roberta Dwyer, and John Bray (all Mn/DOT), and Toni Botte Bates (San Diego Transit Authority) discussed their projects with us, and provided additional written documentation. We would also like to thank the many participants from the Ayd Mill Road process that we interviewed.

# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b><u>INTRODUCTION</u></b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	2
1.2	CURRENT MN/DOT PRACTICE	4
1.3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND REPORT OUTLINE	6
<b>2</b>	<b><u>THE AYD MILL ROAD PROJECT</u></b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	PROJECT BACKGROUND	10
2.2	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SCOPING PHASE (1993 – 1995)	13
2.3	DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (1996 – 1999)	15
2.3.1	ASSESSMENT OF TRAFFIC IMPACTS	16
2.3.2	FORMATION OF NEW GROUPS AND ISSUES	17
2.3.3	DETERMINATION OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	17
<b>3</b>	<b><u>OTHER PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CASE STUDIES</u></b>	<b>23</b>
3.1	PIEDMONT AVENUE, DULUTH, MINNESOTA	23
3.2	I-35E BRIDGE (MISSISSIPPI RIVER, ST. PAUL) REPLACEMENT	26
3.3	MISSION VALLEY EAST LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) EXTENSION PROJECT (SAN DIEGO, CA)	28
<b>4</b>	<b><u>A TYPOLOGY OF CONFLICT</u></b>	<b>31</b>
4.1	SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL BENEFITS OR COSTS	32
4.2	DISAGREEMENT ABOUT THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL IMPACTS	34
4.3	ABILITY TO ACCURATELY DEFINE AND ENGAGE RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS	36
4.4	PERCEIVED LEGITIMACY OF THE PROJECT	40
4.5	IDEOLOGICAL ISSUES	42
<b>5</b>	<b><u>CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION</u></b>	<b>45</b>
5.1	THE BIGGER PICTURE	45
5.2	FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS	49
	<b><u>REFERENCES</u></b>	<b>53</b>

**APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF CONFLICT TYPES AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES A-1**

**APPENDIX B: CHRONOLOGY OF AYD MILL ROAD PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT B-1**

**APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS OF AYD MILL ROAD PARTICIPANTS C-1**

## **List of Figures**

**Figure 2.1: Ayd Mill Road area 11**

**Figure 4.1: St. Paul Planning Districts 38**

## **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this project was to understand why public involvement in transportation project planning sometimes goes badly, and to determine how the process could be modified to reduce the likelihood of such outcomes. We address these issues through detailed case studies of both successful and unsuccessful transportation public involvement efforts. We conclude that there are a number of largely independent dimensions around which conflict can arise, and that some projects by their nature have a higher level of potential for conflict around one or more of these dimensions. We discuss how the potential for conflict can be anticipated, and how the public involvement process can be modified to better manage conflict and achieve a process and results that are more agreeable to both the transportation agency and the public.

We are interested in any public involvement process in which either the agency or the public is significantly dissatisfied with the process or outcome. That is, we do not presuppose that the agency is right, and that the objective is to convince the public of this. Our perspective is that agencies do public involvement because they genuinely care about soliciting the public's input. At the same time, agencies do not want worthwhile projects to be stalled or cancelled because conflicts with members of the public cannot be satisfactorily resolved. So the question is how to carry out public involvement processes so that the beneficial projects have the best possible chance of acceptance, and the public will feel that their opinions were fairly heard and considered.

Our methodology was to examine a number of examples of public involvement efforts with varying degrees and types of difficulty and different levels of success. We were fortunate from a research standpoint that a local project in St. Paul, Ayd Mill Road had the three characteristics of having been generally well run with good intentions, of having been plagued by many different sources of conflict, and of being extremely well documented in a neighborhood newspaper. This very complex process was our primary source of reasons why public involvement can turn out badly. We then contrasted the characteristics of this project and its public involvement process with three other projects for which the public involvement efforts were more successful. Two of these were Minnesota projects, which we studied through newspaper coverage and interviews with participants; the other was a project in San Diego for which we relied on published articles and interviews with a central participant.

We began this research with the presumption that when the public opposes projects, it does so because it does not understand them, and that better information, more clearly exhibited, could do much to solve the problem. However, our early study of the Ayd Mill Road project led us to conclude that information was not a problem at least there, and perhaps not a central problem in general. The larger issue seemed to be a lack of a structure for incorporating and resolving the many conflicts that emerged during the public involvement process.

Our next hypothesis was that projects could be categorized into various levels of conflict; the idea was that higher-level conflicts could be managed with a more formal structured process, while lower-level conflicts could probably be resolved through the normal procedures in place now. Again, however, this idea proved inadequate. For example, while the conflict level on the Ayd Mill Road project could certainly be characterized as “extreme,” it seemed to differ from other projects in type as well as in intensity. That is, there seemed to be two different issues: the intensity of the conflict, and the underlying reason(s) for it. An intense conflict around a single easily identified reason could be easier to manage than a situation where conflict is less severe but moves unpredictably from one issue to another.

Ultimately these insights led us to the model that we propose in this report. We develop a model in which conflict can derive from any or all of five independent dimensions, each with its own level of intensity or intractability:

- Size and distribution of local benefits or costs
- Disagreement about the nature and importance of local impacts
- Ability to accurately define and engage relevant stakeholders
- Perceived legitimacy of the project
- Degree of ideological issues

There are two key conclusions. First, situations with serious conflict are fundamentally different from the typical public involvement effort; they require different tools and tactics that are explicitly built around the specific nature of the conflict being anticipated or encountered.

The second major finding is that “conflict” is neither a standard problem for which a standardized method is appropriate; nor is it so diverse that every project has to be approached on its own terms. We find instead that there is a middle ground: conflict can arise for a number of different reasons, and the appropriate response depends on the reason(s), but the number of possible reasons is sufficiently small that a general theory of conflict anticipation and management seems like a reasonable long-term goal. While we do not fully develop such a

theory in this report, we do provide a basic outline of what such a theory might look like. More detailed development, based on additional case studies and insights from experts in the field, would be a worthwhile subject for further research.

A longer-term issue that we also address is the notion that different types of conflict may be best resolved at different levels of discussion. A potential problem with public involvement as it is practiced now is that issues are being discussed at the project level that are really of broader social significance. It is worthwhile to debate how many highways are needed and whether highways encourage sprawl, but it could be more useful to all sides to have a formal mechanism for holding that debate at a high level where the general public interest can be considered, and where the results of the discussion could actually have a broad impact on policy.

# 1 Introduction

The subject of this report is the process of public involvement in the planning of specific transportation projects. Some form of public involvement takes place on all transportation projects of any significance, and most of the time both the agency and the public come away satisfied with the results. However, in some small minority of cases, there is a significant degree of dissatisfaction on the part of either the agency or the public, or both. Our specific concern here is these situations: understanding why they arise, and developing methods for managing the process to minimize them.

While these problematic projects are a small part of the total, the failure of the public involvement process in these cases is still an important problem for two reasons. First, the odds of major irresolvable conflict tend to increase with the size and impact of the project; that is, it is more likely to be the big, important projects that suffer from this problem. Thus the significance of failed public involvement is far greater than its frequency would indicate. Second, dissatisfaction on either side resulting from a particular project has the potential to negatively impact future projects as well. An unhappy agency may seek to minimize the role of public involvement in the future, while a dissatisfied public may take out their frustrations through opposition to unrelated, and otherwise unobjectionable projects.

We are interested in any public involvement process in which either the agency or the public is significantly dissatisfied with the outcome. That is, we do not presuppose that the agency is right, and that the objective is to convince the public of this. Our perspective is that agencies do public involvement because they genuinely care about soliciting the public's input. At the same time, agencies do not want worthwhile projects to be stalled or cancelled because conflicts with members of the public cannot be satisfactorily resolved. So the question is how to carry out public involvement processes so that the beneficial projects have the best possible chance of acceptance, and the public will feel that their opinions were fairly heard and considered.

We began this research with the presumption that when the public opposes projects, it does so because it does not understand them, and that better information, more clearly exhibited,

could do much to solve the problem. However, our early results led us to conclude that information was typically not a fatal problem. The larger issue seemed to be a lack of an adequate organizational structure for recognizing and resolving the many types of conflicts that could potentially emerge during the public involvement process.

Our research ultimately has focused on using case studies of public involvement efforts in Minnesota and around the U.S. to understand the reasons why conflicts arise, and to develop new public involvement methods to anticipate and manage the different types of conflict.

## **1.1 History of Transportation Public Involvement**

From the 1920s through the mid 1960s, public involvement was not a significant component of transportation planning efforts. The primary method over this timeframe was to use the “systems approach” to estimate travel demand and to plan transportation systems which would adequately meet this demand. Increased levels of automobile use were widely seen as representing desirable societal progress, and the issues of social and environmental impact resulting from the associated facilities were not of great concern.

A watershed of the systems approach referenced above was the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), which was completed in 1955. Transportation networks were evaluated on the basis of economic efficiency, defined as the maximum amount of travel carried at the least costs. (1) The CATS study served as the standard for many other subsequent studies conducted by other cities.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 was the first federal legislation to mandate transportation planning as a condition for receiving federal funds in urbanized areas. Federal guidance associated with this act established the “3C” approach—planning should be “continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative.” This act also established community concerns as an element of planning; one of the ten basic elements of the 3C planning process was “Social and community-value factors, such as preservation of open space, parks, and recreational facilities; preservation of historical sites and buildings; environmental amenities; and aesthetics.” However, the overall approach was still technical analysis from a systems perspective, refining and using methods established with the CATS study.

As the 1960s progressed, two factors led to an increased interest in local impacts and public participation regarding the planning of roadways. First, the construction of the federal interstate system created significant impacts to local resources and neighborhoods. Second, society was becoming more aware of issues such as protection of the environment and concern for low-income and/or minority populations. (1) The Federal-Aid-Highway Act of 1968 incorporated several provisions that were designed to protect the environment and reduce the negative effects of highway construction. This included requiring public hearings on the economic, social, and environmental effects of proposed highway projects. [Weiner, page 74] Generally, these hearings were only held late in the project development process.

An important step regarding public involvement efforts for transportation projects involving federal funding was the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). This act reflected increasing societal concerns with impacts associated with large public projects. It required that Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) be prepared for substantial projects involving federal funding which have a potential for environmental impact. Under EIS guidelines, transportation authorities must seek comments from local jurisdictions on the EIS documentation, and must make these documents available for the public to review and comment upon. Public hearings are also an important part of the EIS process.

Another turning point in the development of public involvement efforts for transportation projects was the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The basic principles and goals associated with ISTEA were continued with the subsequent major transportation funding legislation, Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (1998).

An important component of the ISTEA legislation was to require more extensive public involvement transportation policy and planning efforts. Federal regulations implementing the planning provisions of ISTEA include the following language: “Public involvement processes shall be proactive and provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement.” This was a shift from the NEPA requirements for public involvement, which generally resulted in “end-of-the pipeline” PI efforts. (2)

## 1.2 Current Mn/DOT Practice

Federal guidelines do not recommend specific public involvement procedures or actions; rather, they allow substantial flexibility to state and local authorities to structure their efforts to meet the needs of the given project and the local issues to be addressed. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), jointly with the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), published *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision Making* in 1996. (3) This lengthy document provides information regarding a broad range of techniques that can be used in public involvement efforts. It also proposes five key guidelines for public involvement efforts:

- Act in accord with basic democratic principles.
- Provide continuous contact between agency and non-agency people throughout transportation decision making.
- Use a variety of public involvement techniques.
- Provide active outreach to the public.
- Focus public participation on decision points.

Subsequently, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) prepared a document titled *Hear Every Voice* (June 1999). (4) The stated document purpose is “To provide statewide guidance for Mn/DOT planners and project managers on designing and implementing public involvement programs to achieve Mn/DOT’s strategic vision of putting our customers first and balancing their interests to achieve the greatest public good.” This document provides guidance regarding public involvement efforts in light of the larger Mn/DOT planning, programming, and project delivery processes.

*Hear Every Voice* states that public involvement plans should be prepared for all Mn/DOT plans and projects.

Certain Mn/DOT personnel are responsible for overseeing public involvement programs for specific projects, and for various types of transportation plans. For these people, developing public involvement plans is a critical task. The level of detail of the plan will depend on the magnitude and potential impacts of the project or plan. [page 21]

Mn/DOT’s core elements of public involvement efforts are summarized in *Hear Every Voice* as follows:

- **Early and Continuing Public Involvement** opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process.

- **Timely Information** about transportation issues and processes to citizens, other interested parties, and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects.
- **Reasonable Public Access** to technical and policy information used in the development of the plan and the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).
- **Adequate Public Notice** of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, action on the plan and STIP.
- A process for demonstrating **Explicit Consideration and Response** to public input during the planning and program development process.
- A process for **Seeking Out and Considering the Needs of those Traditionally Underserved** by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households which may face challenges accessing employment and other amenities.
- **Periodic Review** of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.

Guidance information for preparing public involvement plans is provided under the following headings:

- Identify and assess stakeholders and their issues
- Define the objectives of your public involvement effort
- Identify public involvement activities
- Evaluation

Both of these documents have proven to be of value to project managers preparing and executing public involvement plans. However, from the perspective of this research, they are both incomplete, in that they focus primarily on the “logistics” of how to do public involvement, with little explicit guidance on how to manage conflict. That is, they more or less assume that conflict will be limited or easily managed, and thus focus more on specific public involvement techniques, and when, why, and how to use them. This is entirely appropriate; their aim is to serve as basic manuals for users who may have little experience in this area.

Thus our research here should be seen as complementary to the existing Mn/DOT guidance; we are assuming familiarity with the techniques of public involvement, and are concerned instead with the management of the process more generally. In particular, we are

interested in situations where significant conflict is likely to arise, and in how the public involvement process should be approached differently in these cases.

There is some existing guidance in this regard. For example, *Hear Every Voice* briefly discusses *Systematic Development of Informed Consent* (SDIC©). (5) The SDIC approach is a proprietary product of the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning, intended to be used to comprehensively guide public involvement planning. It aims to demonstrate the legitimacy of the public agency's role and the legitimacy of a given plan or project to address a serious need. The basis of the SDIC approach is that once legitimacy can be demonstrated in this way, the given agency can generally achieve informed consent.

Informed consent is usually far short of unanimous support or consensus. It is, however, enough of an agreement so that each interest or individual with the capability of vetoing a proposed course of action is persuaded that they can live with the consequences. [Page 50]

There are also a number of case studies in the literature in which significant conflict was successfully managed. Some of these will be discussed in chapter 3 of this report. However, the value of case studies can be limited in that every situation is different. There are likely general principles that are broadly useful, but it can be hard to discern these general principles from situation-specific tactics that might not be as successful elsewhere.

Ultimately our research identifies several different, largely independent types of conflict, each of which needs to be addressed in its own way. Thus this work moves beyond the hit-or-miss approach of using particular case studies for guidance. It also improves upon the one-size-fits-all approach of SDIC. By customizing conflict management to the particular type of conflict being experienced, it should be possible for public involvement managers to work more efficiently with greater probability of success.

### **1.3 Research Methodology and Report Outline**

Our primary methodology was to examine a number of examples of public involvement processes with varying degrees and types of difficulty and different levels of success. We were fortunate from a research standpoint that a local project in St. Paul, Ayd Mill Road had the three characteristics of having been generally well run with good intentions, of having been plagued by many different sources of conflict, and of being extremely well documented in a

neighborhood newspaper. We also discussed the public involvement process for this project with a number of individuals who participated in a variety of ways. This very complex process was our primary source of reasons why public involvement can turn out badly.

We then contrasted the characteristics of this project and its public involvement process with other projects for which the public involvement efforts were more successful. Two of these were Minnesota projects, which we studied through newspaper coverage and interviews with participants; the other was a project in San Diego, for which we relied on published articles and interviews with a key participant.

The remainder of the report is organized into four chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the Ayd Mill Road case study at considerable length, as this was our primary original source of information. Chapter 3 describes the other case studies from Minnesota and San Diego, in somewhat less detail.

Chapter 4 then draws on the information presented in these case studies and in interviews with participants to develop a framework for describing different types of conflict. The objective of this framework is to give public involvement managers the ability to reduce seemingly complex and unique conflicts to a short list of basic conflict types. Given this short list, it becomes possible to discuss systematically how to manage the public involvement process to address basic types of conflict; and by extension, more complex real-world combinations of them. This chapter contains the primary results of this research.

Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the research and suggests avenues for further development of the ideas that it has generated. It also moves briefly into the more theoretical and philosophical realm of how the broader system of transportation public involvement could be organized so as to provide formal mechanisms for dealing with different types of conflict at the appropriate level of discussion.



## 2 The Ayd Mill Road Project

Ayd Mill Road (AMR) is a 1.6-mile stretch of roadway that was initially planned to be a link between two major freeways a couple of miles from downtown St. Paul. The existing roadway was constructed in the 1960s but was not linked directly at the north end due to local opposition, or at the south end because the freeway was not complete. In 1987, the southern freeway was in place at the intersection with AMR, but no connection was built. From 1988 to the present, there has been an on-going decision process involving how to best provide linkage between the interstates and AMR, or whether AMR should exist at all.

The key considerations driving the public discussion of Ayd Mill Road were the following:

- There was no direct connection between I-35E south of downtown St. Paul and I-94 to the west. The three most convenient indirect connections were 1) AMR, 2) a sequence of streets on the periphery of downtown (the “official” connection), and 3) local streets roughly parallel to AMR.
- Because AMR was not directly connected to the freeways on either end, drivers wishing to use it needed to use about half a mile of local streets. This was a major issue on the south end because these streets were residential and already heavily traveled. Also, many drivers used the local streets for the entire distance between the freeways because AMR was relatively short and difficult to access.
- The connection through local streets on the north end was less problematic because these streets were mostly commercial and built to carry large volumes. However, while the present volumes were manageable, nearby residents opposed any increase in volume, such as might happen if the south end were connected.
- A direct south end connection (freeway-style ramp) was built in the early 1990s to support a separate bridge maintenance project and was subsequently closed with earthen berms once the maintenance project was completed. Thus, providing this connection would have simply been a matter of removing earthen barriers. Building an enhanced north end connection would have been much more costly and disruptive to the local area due to right-of-way needs.
- For most of its length AMR was in a wide, low trench; it was almost always separated by grade, distance, and vegetation from the housing on either side of it. There were active railroad tracks running the length of the corridor. Because of these characteristics, the corridor was well suited to be used as a highway; it did not seem as well suited for any other purpose.
- Given the configuration of the regional highway network, AMR served primarily trips that either originate or terminate near AMR. There were better routes available for longer-distance travel between the suburbs south of St. Paul, and

Minneapolis to the west. As a result, AMR was lightly traveled; many local arterials carried similar traffic loads.

The Ayd Mill Road project was selected as a case study because of the following factors:

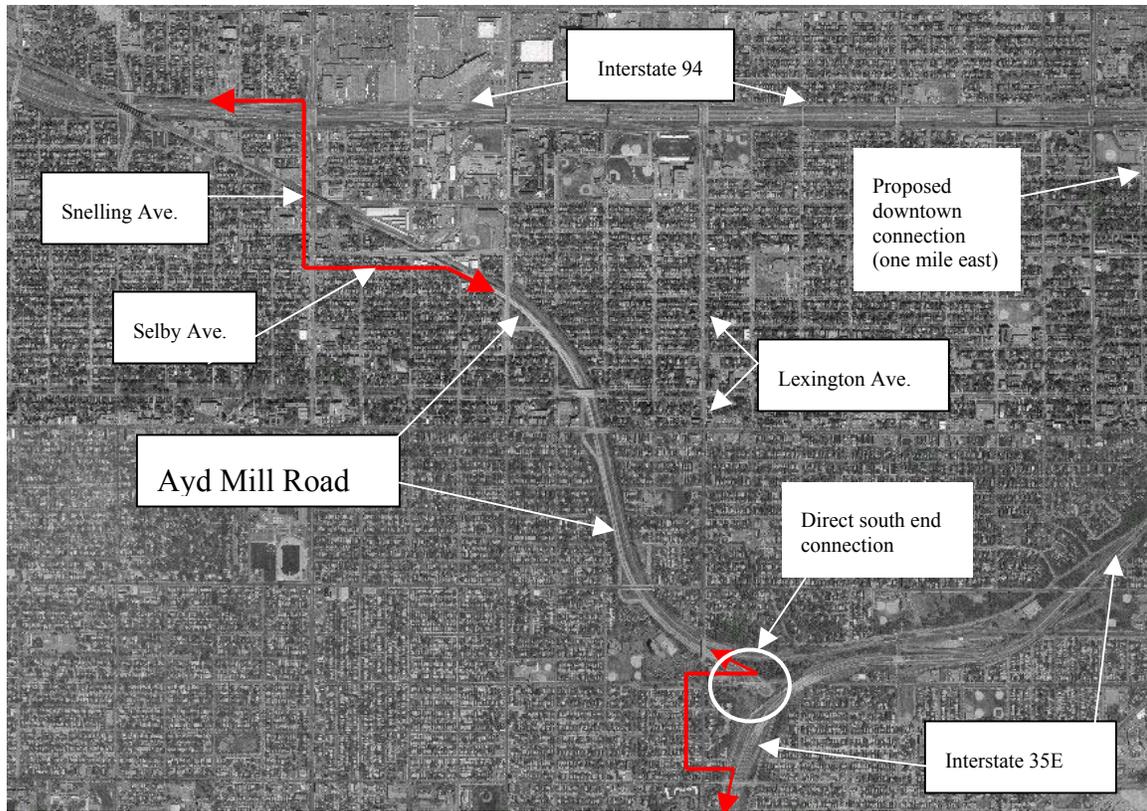
- It has involved very extensive public involvement efforts
- It has a broad range of stake holders with many different interests
- It has been a lengthy process with much activity, in terms of technical analysis, public involvement, and political action
- It has been quite controversial with a relatively high degree of conflict

In short, this project has involved many issues, groups, and actions. In ways it is a classic conflict of system improvements versus local impacts. However, it has other more complex and potentially illuminating aspects. It was also extensively and consistently covered in a high-quality neighborhood newspaper, thus allowing a detailed investigation of the events and issues associated with the project. Except where noted, the information presented here is summarized from numerous stories on the AMR project in the *Highland Villager*. (6)

## **2.1 Project Background**

Ayd Mill Road was constructed in the 1960s as a four lane divided roadway and was intended to provide a link between I-35E at the south and I-94 at the north (Figure 1). The connection to I-94 was to be in the vicinity of Fairview Avenue. However, this connection was not made due to strong local opposition, and travel between the two roads was through about half a mile of mostly commercial local streets. The completion of I-35E was delayed for decades because of local opposition. Thus, there was no connection, direct or indirect, to I-35E at the south end of AMR until I-35E was opened north as far as AMR in 1987. Prior to 1987, AMR served only local traffic.

Once I-35E opened, the level of traffic on AMR increased substantially. However, in an agreement made with opponents to the completion of I-35E, ramps between I-35E and AMR were not constructed in 1987. Thus, motorists wishing to move between AMR and I-35E had to follow a route of about half a mile through already heavily traveled residential streets. This caused high levels of congestion on these streets during the morning and afternoon peak traffic times with associated impacts to local residents.



**Figure 1: Ayd Mill Road area. Red lines are street connections between AMR and freeways.**

Mayor George Latimer took an active interest in the issues associated with Ayd Mill Road in 1987. In March of 1988 a task force began meeting to formally discuss possible options regarding the future of AMR. This task force was brought together by the City of St. Paul, and included representatives of four district councils, six community councils, three business associations, and a number of other neighborhood groups. In late 1988, the task force finalized a report with recommendations that it forwarded to the St. Paul Planning Commission. This report is of significant interest because it introduced and clarified some of the basic planning factors that have been at issue since that time.

The first recommendation made by the task force was that a connection be made between I-35E and westbound I-94 where the two interstates meet close to downtown St. Paul. The reasoning behind such a connection was that this would keep regional traffic from entering AMR and, thus, limit local impacts associated with the roadway. The task force also recognized that traffic congestion at the south end of AMR was a serious issue that had to be addressed. The report recommended that a direct connection be implemented between AMR and I-35E to

alleviate this congestion. However, the task force recommended that this improvement not be made until a way to address traffic issues at the north end of AMR was determined and implemented. Residents at the north end of AMR were concerned that opening the direct connection between I-35E and AMR would greatly increase the overall traffic levels on AMR, which would then be deposited onto the connection at Selby Avenue; this connection had not been designed for high traffic volumes. The task force had ruled out direct connections between AMR and I-94 because of concerns that this approach, combined with a direct connection between AMR and I-35E, would lead to freeway-like conditions on AMR. The task force did not recommend any specific north-end alternatives, but recommended that such alternatives be evaluated in an up-coming Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process.

The St. Paul Planning Commission essentially approved the Task Force's report and associated recommendations, but made one major revision. Citing high costs, design problems, and relatively low anticipated volume, the Planning Commission eliminated the option of connecting I-35E directly to westbound I-94. Task Force members, once they saw information provided by Mn/DOT regarding the cost and construction requirements associated with this connection, agreed that this was not a viable option. Minus the "downtown connection" of I-35E to westbound I-94, the Planning Commission passed along the recommendation of the Task Force to the St. Paul City Council in early 1989. The Planning Commission concurred with the Task Force that the issues in the study area were serious enough to warrant an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Later in 1989, the City Council concurred that an EIS process was warranted. However, funding was not available for this very expensive process.

During the 1991 Minnesota Legislative session Representative Art Seaberg introduced a bill calling for a direct connection between AMR and I-35E to be constructed. Such a connection had been estimated to cost approximately \$300,000. This bill came at the request of constituents who commute from Dakota County to St. Paul. The bill was not acted upon during the 1991 session, but a decision was made to start the hearing process in the fall of 1991. This hearing took place in the form of a public meeting of the state Surface Transportation Subcommittee meeting on October 1, 1991. Approximately 150 area residents attended the meeting, which took place at Concordia College. Almost all of the citizens who spoke were residents of the project

area; only one individual from Dakota County testified. As reported by the Highland Villager, the key points of the citizen testimony may be summarized as follows:

- Residents at the north end of AMR did not wish any direct connection at the south end of AMR, because of the additional traffic this would generate and feed through their neighborhood.
- Residents at the south end of AMR wanted the connection to be built because of the severe local congestion caused by motorists using local streets to access AMR from I-35E and vice versa.
- St. Paul residents resented the fact that they had to bear impacts associated with suburban motorists.

Also at issue at the public hearing was the question of who was responsible for paying for the work associated with the environmental impact (EIS) process which the St. Paul City Council had earlier determined was necessary to address the planning/technical aspects of the overall debate. Earlier in 1991, the City of St. Paul had approved \$250,000 for the EIS, with the recognition that this would only cover a portion of the costs, and holding the position that Mn/DOT should pay some or all of the rest of these costs. Mn/DOT's position, however, was that this was a city street, not a regional highway. Thus, Mn/DOT contended that it had no jurisdiction to spend trunk highway funds on such a study.

In 1992, Mn/DOT and the City of St. Paul worked out an arrangement whereby a direct connection between I-35E and AMR was constructed to accommodate additional traffic anticipated to result on I-35E from the closing of the Lafayette Bridge for extensive maintenance activities. This connection took the form of ramps from northbound I-35E to northbound AMR and southbound AMR to southbound I-35E. Mn/DOT agreed to restrictions regarding what types of vehicles could use AMR at what times, and agreed to pay \$300,000 towards an EIS for the AMR decision process. At the completion of the Lafayette maintenance work, which lasted approximately four months, mounds of dirt were placed over the direct connections, and the old system was put in place of routing motorists moving between I-35E and AMR onto city streets.

## **2.2 Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Phase (1993 – 1995)**

In 1993 the preliminary portion (the “scoping phase”) of the Ayd Mill Road EIS process was initiated. The basic function of this phase was to identify alternatives to be studied in the

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). A second AMR Task Force was formed in early 1993 to meet regularly and provide input into the scoping phase work. This second Task Force was initially headed up by representatives of the Saint Paul Public Works Department and the Planning and Economic Development Department, and had broader representation than the first AMR Task Force. The organizations represented in the new Task Force included (1):

- Nine city planning districts
- Five business-related organizations
- Metropolitan Council, Ramsey and Dakota Counties

Between September of 1993 and March of 1995, the AMR Task Force met regularly to discuss potential AMR alternatives. Over this period of time, technical analysis was routinely prepared and presented by the planning/engineering consultant hired by the City of St. Paul, SRF Consulting Group (SRF). With such a broad range of representatives, many alternatives were proposed and assessed. One of the options that was introduced and received much discussion was the linear park alternative, whereby the roadway would be removed and replaced by a park. In addition, there was much discussion regarding the “downtown connection” of I-35E to westbound I-94 that had been introduced by the first AMR Task Force but then rejected as being not viable by the St. Paul Planning Commission (see previous discussion). In the end, the following Alternatives were forwarded to the St. Paul Planning Commission as alternatives recommended to be studied in the DEIS:

1. No build
2. A downtown direct connection between I-35E and westbound I-94
3. Transportation system management/travel demand management
4. Removal of AMR roadway and construction of a linear park including a trail system for hikers and bicyclists
5. A two-lane street with a split diamond interchange at I-94 (using Pascal Avenue and a railroad spur between Pascal and Hamline), and a direct connection to I-35E
6. A four-lane expressway with a split diamond interchange at I-94 (using the same alignments as the previously-listed alternative), and a direct connection to I-35E
7. A four-lane expressway with a freeway-to-freeway interchange at I-94 (following the railroad spur between Pascal and Hamline), and a direct connection to I-35E
8. A limited access freeway with an interchange with I-94 at Fairview (following an existing railway alignment), and a direct connection with I-35E

9. Use of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in at least four of the above alternatives.

In April of 1995 the St. Paul Planning Commission reviewed the above alternatives, and eliminated the following from the list before passing it along to the City Council:

- Downtown I-35E/westbound I-94 connection (Alternative 2)
- Linear park (Alternative 4)
- Two lane alternative with indirect (split diamond) I-94 connection and direct I-35E connection (Alternative 5)
- Limited access freeway with I-94 connection at Fairview (Alternative 8)

At a May 10, 1995 public hearing for the AMR decision process, a number of residents reacted angrily to the removal of these options. There was a perception that much of the time and effort spent by participants of the AMR Task Force was wasted. One Task Force member complained of “blatant disregard” from the Planning Commission.

On May 24, 1995, the City Council voted to restore the linear park option and the two lane option to the list of alternatives to be studied in the DEIS. In addition, a limited access freeway option was added back to the list but with an I-94 interchange using the railway spur alignment between Pascal and Hamline, rather than an interchange at Fairview (this alignment would have had far fewer local impacts than the Fairview alignment). Thus, the most significant elimination was the downtown connection; the City Council justified elimination of the downtown connection alternative on the grounds of high cost, the difficulty in physically constructing the link, and the relatively low anticipated demand for such a link.

### **2.3 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (1996 – 1999)**

In late 1995, the City of St. Paul approved \$750,000 in Capital Improvement Budget to continue the EIS process. The phase to begin at this point was the preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). (7) This work began in spring of 1996, and was conducted by SRF Consulting Group. The Responsible Government Unit (RGU) for the DEIS was the City of St. Paul. The Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration were also signatories of the final DEIS document. The purpose of the DEIS was

to formally assess the environmental impacts, including traffic impacts, associated with the alternatives (including No Action) identified in the scoping process as discussed above.

Many events transpired between 1996 and 1999 as part of the DEIS process. Rather than present them in a strict chronological order, these events will be addressed under the following headings:

- Assessment of traffic impacts
- Formation/involvement of new groups and issues
- Determination of preferred alternative

### **2.3.1 Assessment of Traffic Impacts**

One of the key areas of analysis performed in the DEIS concerned traffic impacts associated with the various alternatives. SRF performed analysis of anticipated traffic levels on key roadway segments and intersections as part of the alternatives under study. Key findings from the DEIS analysis are summarized as follows:

- The Linear Park Alternative (which would remove the AMR roadway) would distribute existing AMR trips to parallel north-south streets, most notably Lexington, which would experience a “high increase” in traffic volume (DEIS, ES10). It would also preclude the two- and four-lane connection alternatives (see below).
- The two- and four-lane connection options would divert motorists from existing city streets, leading to a large decrease in peak hour traffic levels along Snelling, Pascal, Lexington, Selby, Jefferson, and Randolph. The four- lane option would divert significantly more traffic from city streets than the two-lane option. The two- and four-lane options would both lead to large increases in traffic levels on St. Anthony and Concordia Avenues, which serve as frontage roads for I-94. (DEIS, Table ES-2). The two-and four-lane AMR connection alternatives would do the most to relieve severe congestion levels in the vicinity of the Randolph/Lexington intersection. (DEIS tables 4.6 and 4.7)
- Under the No Build Alternative, six intersections would be operating over capacity (level of service F) in 2020: Snelling/St. Anthony (AM peak) Snelling/Concordia (PM peak), Snelling/Grand (PM peak), Lexington/Randolph (PM Peak), Randolph/I-35E West Ramps (PM peak), and Randolph/I-35E east Ramps (AM and PM peaks).
- Under the Linear Park alternative, three intersections would be operating over capacity in 2020: Snelling/Concordia (PM peak), Lexington/Randolph (PM peak), and Randolph/I-35E east ramps (PM peak).

- Under the Two- or Four-Lane Connected AMR alternatives, no intersections in the study area would be over capacity.

### **2.3.2 Formation of New Groups and Issues**

During the AMR DEIS process, three new activist groups were formed and have become important stakeholders in the overall decision process: Neighborhoods First!, Citizens for Safe Streets, and No Connect Coalition. Neighborhoods First! was formed in Spring 1998. Its primary issue was, and has remained, the promotion of the linear park concept. It has been a very active and organized group. It has been very vocal at public meetings.

Citizens for Safe Streets was formed in late 1998 and is made up primarily of residents along either side of Lexington Avenue. It was formed in response to growing discussion and consideration the linear park alternative. Citizens for Safe Streets has the position that closing AMR would only distribute AMR trips to other north-south roadways, most notably Lexington. Lexington is already one of the busiest north-south roadways in the study area and has a relatively high accident rate. Unlike AMR, Lexington is also residential along essentially its entire length. Accordingly, Citizens for Safe Streets is opposed to the linear park alternative.

The No Connect Coalition was formed in 1999 to oppose AMR alternatives involving the connection of AMR to I-35E and I-94. They supported the Task Force's eventual recommendation of removing AMR and replacing it with a linear park (see section 2.3.3. discussion). The No Connect coalition was made up of members of the Snelling Hamline, Merriam Park, Lexington Hamline and Midway district planning councils, Neighborhoods First!, the Sierra Club, the Clean Water Action Alliance, 1,000 Friends of Minnesota, and Transit for Livable Communities. It became very active in response to the St. Paul Planning Commission's vote in October of 1999 rejecting the AMR Task Force choice and instead recommending a four-lane AMR connection alternative to the City Council.

### **2.3.3 Determination of Preferred Alternative**

Under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) guidelines, a DEIS is used to evaluate a range of alternatives to narrow down to a Preferred Alternative. The Preferred

Alternative is then studied in more complete detail in a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

After being reviewed and approved by the AMR Task Force, the St. Paul Planning Commission, and the St. Paul City Council, the AMR DEIS was put on 30-day public notice in February of 1999. A joint St. Paul Planning Commission/City Council public hearing on the DEIS was held on March 24, 1999. The procedures were structured such that parties engaged in the planning process could use the analysis in the DEIS, as well as comments made during the public notice period and during the public hearing, to factor into the selection of a Preferred Alternative.

Even before the DEIS went on public notice, stakeholder organizations began to discuss and identify what they considered to be preferred alternatives. As of March 1999, stakeholder organizations had determined preferred alternatives as identified below:

- Merriam Park Community Council: No Build (leave AMR as is)
- Snelling-Hamline Community Council: Linear Park
- Lexington-Hamline Community Council: Linear Park
- Summit-University Planning Council: four-lane connected roadway
- Macalester-Groveland Community Council: two-lane connected roadway
- Summit Hill Association: two-lane connected roadway
- Highland District Council: two- or four-lane connected roadway
- Midway Area Chamber of Commerce: two- or four-lane connected roadway
- Snelling-Selby Business Association: two- or four-lane connected roadway, if access from Ayd Mill Road to Selby Avenue is preserved, otherwise No Build
- Grand Avenue Business Association: decided not to take a position

The DEIS public hearing on March 24, 1999 drew more than 120 people, and approximately three dozen people spoke. Supporters of the Linear Park concept presented a petition signed by more than 1,200 people. They repeatedly stressed the enhanced quality of life that would result from a park. “Parks make cities a more desirable place to live,” said one Merriam Park resident and Neighborhoods First! member.

Petitions in support of the two or four-lane connect alternatives were also presented. A Summit Hill resident and Citizens for Safe Streets member stated, “More and more cars are using Lexington Parkway today as a de facto freeway connection.” He urged the city to connect Ayd Mill Road and “disconnect Lexington.” Another member of Citizens for Safe Streets noted that “Nobody lives on Ayd Mill Road, but thousands of people live on or one block away from Lexington Parkway.”

A representative of the Midway Area Chamber of Commerce spoke of the importance of providing a connected AMR to support access to and economic activity in the midway area. Concordia University President voiced concern regarding the encroachment on University facilities, which the north AMR extension to Concordia/St. Anthony could have done.

After the public hearing the next step in the overall process was for the AMR Task Force to determine its choice of a Preferred Alternative. A vote was held on August 23, 1999. The system that was selected by the City of St. Paul is summarized below:

- Thirteen organizations were represented on the AMR Task Force. There were 21 total representatives (some organizations had more than one representative). Each representative got one vote, except for one of the Co-chairs of the Task Force who was also on the St. Paul Planning Commission (he abstained from voting).
- Each voting representative gave each AMR alternative a ranking of 1 (worst) to 3 (best). The AMR alternatives were: No Build, Transportation System Management/Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM), Linear Park, Two-Lane Connected AMR, Four-Lane Connected AMR (four sub-options).
- The alternative with the most points would be the Task Force’s Preferred Alternative.
- The linear park alternative received the most votes with 47. The remaining alternatives, in order of votes, were: TSM/TDM (42 votes), No-Build (42 votes), Two Lane Connection (40 votes), Four Lane Connection (28 votes—averaged from the sub-option grading).

There was significant discord regarding the outcome of the August 23 vote. While the supporters of the Linear Park Alternative were obviously pleased with the outcome, those opposed to the linear park questioned the result. Representatives of two neighborhood planning districts (Summit Hill Association and the West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road Federation) gave the highest ranking to the linear park alternative, even though their respective organizations had previously given the highest ranking to the two-lane connected AMR alternative. On the other hand, two

Snelling-Hamline District Council representatives voted for the linear park because that is what their organization favored, even though they reportedly did not personally support this alternative. A representative of the St. Paul Department of Public Works questioned the validity of the voting based upon changes in representatives to the Task Force relatively shortly before the Task Force final vote. Some Task Force members were frustrated with the points system used in the final vote, which they felt made it possible for park supporters to organize around a single option while road supporters split their votes among several.

On October 22, 1999, the St. Paul Planning Commission chose not to follow the recommendation of the AMR Task force, and voted in favor of a four-lane connected AMR alternative in which one lane in each direction would be dedicated to high occupancy vehicles (HOVs). A Planning Commission member stated during this meeting that the four-lane option was the best way to provide traffic relief for local north-south streets, especially Lexington. “If you get rid of the roadway, you don’t get rid of the traffic,” he said. “With the four-lane roadway, we have a very substantial opportunity to get traffic off of residential streets and onto Ayd Mill Road.” This individual said after the vote that usually the Planning Commission adheres to recommendations from its citizen task forces. However, he said that this task force’s recommendation was “substantially diminished” by the process used to arrive at it.

In December of 1999, the Mayor agreed with the Planning Commission and recommended to the City Council that it adopt the four-lane connection option.

At a City Council meeting on December 22, 1999, approximately 200 members of the No Connect Coalition filled the City Council chambers. Many coalition members in attendance held signs or wore tape over their mouths. In a letter to the mayor and the City Council, the coalition explained that this silence was a form of protest against what they perceived as disregard of their concerns at the public hearing, in environmental impact study comments, and at Planning Commission meetings. According to the *Highland Villager* account, the No Connect Coalition contingent dwarfed the half dozen members of Citizens for Safe Streets who attended the Council meeting.

At a City Council Meeting on April 12, 2000, the council voted 5-2 to select a two-lane connected roadway as its Preferred Alternative. The adopted resolution stipulated a 35 mile per

hour speed limit and a ban on trucks (except for local delivery trucks). Ayd Mill Road to be connected directly to I-35E with ramps at the south end and indirectly through existing I-94 frontage roads at the north end. This resolution had been put forth as a compromise approach between the linear park alternative formally recommended by the AMR Task Force and the four-lane connected roadway approach favored by the city Planning Commission.

More than 70 protesters, wearing red ribbons and waving signs, filled the council chambers prior to the vote. Many of the protesters were members of the No Connection Coalition. As stated in the *Highland Villager* account, “While they [the protesters] were not allowed to testify, they made themselves heard by boos, hisses and name-calling during the council’s deliberations...After the council vote, several coalition members chanted, “No Connect, we’ll be back.”

As a postscript, this resolution was never implemented. The highway continued in its existing unconnected state for two more years, at which point a new mayor unilaterally declared a one-year experiment in which the existing south end connection was opened, and north end traffic was partially rerouted to split it between two different routes to I-94. After several variations and measurement of impacts, a version of this general approach was continued indefinitely. A “permanent” solution has not yet been agreed upon as of the time of this writing.



## **3 Other Public Involvement Case Studies**

### **3.1 Piedmont Avenue, Duluth, Minnesota**

The Piedmont Avenue project will upgrade 1.3 miles of a two-lane roadway just southwest of downtown Duluth to four lanes. Piedmont Avenue is Trunk Highway 53 at this location; the project is being constructed by Mn/DOT. The southern terminus of the project is approximately one half mile north of the TH 53 exit off of I-35. From the project location, TH 53 continues north through Virginia, Minnesota to International Falls, and is a major route to the Iron Range and recreational destinations in the region. Thus, TH 53 carries a substantial amount of regional traffic, particularly during the summer months.

Due to on-going congestion and safety problems on this stretch of roadway, there had been discussions regarding its expansion and improvement for decades. In 1991 there were two major accidents on the project roadway, which focused added attention to the problem, and Mn/DOT started acquiring land for the expansion at this time. Construction was set for 1995, but the project was put on hold due to funding constraints. In 2000, funding was secured by Mn/DOT for the project, and final design and construction activities were commenced. The project is currently (spring 2004) under construction. With a current estimated cost of \$ 22 million, it is the largest road construction project in Duluth since the controversial project to complete I-35 through Duluth in the late 1980s and early 90s. The initial estimated cost in 2000 had been \$18.4 million.

The Piedmont Avenue project had potential to generate much controversy. It runs through an established and attractive neighborhood called Lincoln Park. It will widen the roadway from 40 feet to 80 feet. The widening and re-aligning required over 80 property acquisitions, most of them residential.

Public involvement for the project began in 1989, when Mn/DOT worked with a group of six prominent local residents (one of whom was a City Council member) to get local input to use in developing preliminary layouts (design plans). When the project was re-initiated in 2000, Mn/DOT used the layouts (design plans) from the 1989/90 process as their baseline design. They

met on various occasions with a group of 40 community leaders starting in August of 2000 to review and update the design. Preliminary revised layouts were presented at a public hearing in October of 2000 so Mn/DOT could receive comments. Mn/DOT met with a separate group (the “Focus Group”, with members appointed by a City Council member) three times in 2001 to discuss final landscaping and aesthetic aspects of the design. The final design was presented at a public hearing in November of 2001 and met with a generally favorable response.

A basic factor in understanding the public’s feelings toward the project is that there was widespread local sentiment that the existing conditions were unsafe and in strong need of improvement. As indicated previously, this stretch carries regional and local traffic, and often faces difficult congestion and safety problems, particularly during the summer months with recreational traffic. In 2000 one resident stated:

“I’ve heard about this so often and they have diverted funds before [as in 1995, see above]. Once I see the shovels start working, then I’ll get excited about it happening. They’ve got to do something soon. The traffic is getting worse and worse.” (Duluth News-Tribune, June 8, 2000) (8)

Contrary to the Ayd Mill Road Project, there do not seem to be significant distinctions between “winners” and “losers” associated with different locations within the project corridor. It appears most local residents, other than perhaps those whose properties were acquired, acknowledged the need for the improvements and even welcomed the project.

The primary concerns raised by the residents, thus, were not associated with the legitimacy of the project, but rather design aspects of it. While some of these issues did get relatively contentious, Mn/DOT was able to address them through effective public involvement efforts and discussions, and revisions to the project (with associated additional costs).

Probably the central issue raised by local residents was that they did not want the new roadway to split the existing neighborhood and disrupt its feel and context. Mn/DOT went to great lengths (and significant cost) to provide a design which: a) was aesthetically attractive, and b) maximized connectivity between the two sides of the roadway. While approximately 100 trees had to be removed as part of the project, they were to be replaced by about 1,000 trees. The bridges associated with the project will be constructed with molded concrete to look like

traditional bridges in Duluth, and “old-style” lighting and wrought iron accents will be used throughout the corridor. At the November 2001 public hearing the following comment was typical: “We were really impressed with the landscaping...I really love the lighting fixtures”.

Connection between the two sides of the roadway will be provided by a vehicle and pedestrian overpass connecting Fifth Street with Fourth Street in the southern portion of the project area, and a pedestrian underpass beneath the reconstructed roadway at 8<sup>th</sup> Street/22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in the central portion of the project area. To the north, Skyline Boulevard will be bridged over Piedmont Avenue. These crossings are particularly important because there will be no traffic signals (and associated protected pedestrian crossings) on the reconstructed roadway.

The Skyline Avenue Bridge was included into the project after local objections to having an at-grade crossing between Skyline and Piedmont. According the local Mn/DOT project engineer, the Skyline overpass, while costly, will improve the project from Mn/DOT’s perspective because it will enhance mobility on the reconstructed roadway. A cost benefit analysis on the overpass justified the its expense because of decreased delays on Piedmont.

Probably the most contentious issue in the project planning and design involved was the pedestrian underpass beneath the reconstructed roadway at 8<sup>th</sup> Street/22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Mn/DOT included this element to the overall project to address citizens’ concerns that the reconstructed road should not be a physically and psychologically divide the neighborhood. Initially, the underpass was to be at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which was a central location in the project corridor. However some local residents were alarmed that it would be a secluded refuge for anti-social and possibly illegal activity. The debate essentially became one between advocates of biking/walking and general connectivity on one hand, and those concerned with “hanging out” and delinquency issues on the other. The local Mn/DOT project engineer reported that the citizens worked out a compromise amongst themselves, which they then proposed to Mn/DOT. This position included the underpass, but moved it somewhat to the south so that it would open to a park rather than to directly adjacent homes. This approach was used in the final project design. (9)

### **3.2 I-35E Bridge (Mississippi River, St. Paul) Replacement**

The I-35E bridge over the Mississippi River was constructed in 1965. This crossing is approximately 5 miles south and west of the I-35E/I-94 interchange at downtown St. Paul. While the bridge is not extremely old, it has experienced significant structural problems due to the construction method used to build it (“welded bridge”). In addition, the bridge has in recent years become a substantial bottleneck during rush hour traffic. Prior to the current reconstruction project, had two lanes in either direction with essentially no shoulders. In 1975 the bridge carried 16,700 vehicles per day, and by 1998 this figure had grown to 72,000 with the opening of I-35E all the way north to I-94 at downtown St. Paul and rapid development to the south in Dakota County. In 1998, Mn/DOT projected that traffic levels would increase to 115,000 vehicles per day by 2015 and 131,000 in 2024. Due to the structural deficiencies and capacity shortage referenced above, Mn/DOT decided in the mid 1990s that the bridge had to be reconstructed or replaced.

From 1996 through the late 1990s, Mn/DOT held many stakeholder meetings and public hearings to discuss and assess planning issues associated with the project.

The basic debate regarding the appropriate bridge design may be summed up as follows:

- Those to the south (residents south of the River, the City of Lilydale, the City of Mendota Heights, the City of Eagan, and Dakota County) wished the bridge to be expanded to the greatest degree feasible. The primary perspective was to minimize congestion and safety problems by adding substantial capacity to accommodate existing and anticipated development in Dakota County.
- Those to the north (residents north of the river, the City of St. Paul, Ramsey County) wished the bridge to remain as close as possible to current dimensions and capacity. The primary stated reasons for this position were: a) concern that a large bridge would have undue impacts on Crosby Regional Park (a St. Paul park) which includes the area under the bridge on the north shore of the Mississippi; and b) concern that a large bridge would lead to future expectations that I-35E be expanded and de-classified as a parkway north to downtown St. Paul. (Stemming from earlier agreements with opponents to the construction of I-35E south of downtown St. Paul, the stretch of I-35E from the Mississippi River north to I-94 has been formally designated as a parkway, with extensive landscaping, a prohibition of heavy trucks, and a 45 mile per hour speed limit.)

The debate became quite heated. The St. Paul City Council unanimously passed a resolution in March of 1998 that a substantially expanded bridge would harm Crosby park, that

the new bridge should be as narrow as possible for minimal impact, that it should contain only four through lanes, and that it should fit the same footprint as the old bridge. On the other side of the debate, state Representative Tim Commers (R-Eagan, a city south of the bridge) stated, “We should not have (Mn/DOT) picking plans because it has been beaten up by St. Paul.” (Pioneer Press, April 2, 1998). (10) Stated Patrice Betaglia, a Dakota County Commissioner who represents Lilydale, Mendota Heights, and Eagan, “This bridge is not about whether the traffic will flow through to St. Paul. It is whether the traffic already flowing through St. Paul will be able to have safe passage.”

To address the conflict associated with the bridge design, Mn/DOT established “non-traditional stakeholders group meetings.” This process was unique in that there was broad representation of road users as well as local/activist groups. According to the Mn/DOT project engineer for the bridge project, the primary groups represented were as follows:

- Commuters
- Social travelers
- Emergency service providers
- Pedestrians
- Environmental advocates
- Trucking interests

The group members were informed that there would be four meetings only, and that after these took place, a preferred alternative would be identified. A key development in the planning process for the bridge was the statement at one of these meetings by an ambulance operator that more capacity and traffic by-pass ability was a critical need in terms of accessing the five major hospitals downtown from points south. (11) (The existing bridge had no shoulders, so drivers couldn’t get out of the way, and there was no way to get around them.) This perspective resonated convincingly even with those desiring a limited bridge design; ultimately a 132 foot wide design was selected. The original bridge was 68 feet wide and the alternatives under review ranged from 82 feet to 140 feet. The selected alternative had the following features:

- Two through lanes in each direction
- One auxiliary lane in each direction (from the first exit to the north to the first exit to the south)

- Four shoulders (two on the inside, two on the outside)
- Eight foot space between inside shoulders
- Eight to twelve foot bike/pedestrian trail

While the northern interests did concede a relatively large bridge design, the City of St. Paul was able to secure assurances that the new bridge design would not expand into Crosby Park, and assurances regarding Mn/DOT's intentions not to widen of I-35E into downtown St. Paul. The southern interests initially desired more through capacity than provided in the final design, but found the ultimate compromise acceptable.

### **3.3 Mission Valley East Light Rail Transit (LRT) Extension Project (San Diego, CA)**

In the early and mid 1990s, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) was in the planning phase of the Mission Valley East extension to link the two principal LRT lines serving the region (the Blue and Orange lines). At the time of this planning work there were approximately 40 miles of LRT route-miles in service. The Mission Valley East link, to be approximately 5.5 miles, was seen as highly desirable from a system perspective for a number of reasons including: a) it would close a loop of LRT service in the northeast portion of the greater San Diego area; b) would connect San Diego State University (with over 35,000 students, faculty and administrators) to the system; and c) would provide traffic congestion (and associated air quality) relief along Mission Valley, a major east-west development corridor approximately five miles north of downtown San Diego.

During the Mission Valley East planning phase two primary alternatives emerged; an LRT line, and an express bus line designed to replicate LRT service to the greatest extent feasible. There were two sub-alternatives for the LRT approach; one traveled along the north side of the San Diego State University (SDSU) campus near Interstate 8 (which traverses the length of the Mission Valley corridor), while the other looped to the south side of the campus through a tunnel. The "loop alignment" cost more but was projected to have higher ridership because the station could be located at the main campus entrance and in proximity to potential riders from the surrounding community. The loop alignment was strongly opposed by some highly motivated local residents.

MTDB staff tried for several years to address the situation and alleviate community concerns regarding the LRT loop alternative by disseminating information through project newsletters, information booths at shopping centers and other key locations, general public and community group meetings, and educational open houses. For this project, these approaches did not provide effective engagement with stakeholders to deal with diverse opinions. A public relations firm was then hired by MTDB to assist with the public communications and involvement process. Even with the utilization of this firm,

“MTDB found a small group of local and influential corridor residents was monopolizing the community and political dialogue. By working through established community organizations and political representatives, this small group of emotionally motivated opponents was able to seize the spotlight from the more complacent supporters.” (12)

The local LRT opponents took the step of supporting the bus alternative before the planning and environmental studies were completed, “not necessarily because they believed it would best meet corridor travel demands, but because they opposed LRT and perceived the bus alternative as preserving the status quo.” (13)

MTDB eventually found the situation to be untenable. The small group of highly motivated LRT opponents was influencing the decision-making process prior to the completion of technical analyses. The perspectives of less organized and less intensely motivated groups were not being represented. The MTDB thus established a Project Review Committee (PRC) to try to capture the diversity of opinions in the corridor. The PRC had 18 representatives and “was comprised of diverse corridor stakeholders (residents, businesses, students, transit riders, SDSU, public agencies) which included project opponents and proponents, in addition to those who came to the table without strong biases.” The PRC met regularly for seven months to review and discuss technical and community issues associated with the project.

The PRC process allowed for more balanced and reasoned discussion and deliberation than had been taking place previously. Similar to the I-35E bridge project discussed above, having all relevant perspectives represented at the table imposed discipline on the debate:

“Some very vocal opponents were forced to acknowledge that specific transit improvements do have supporters in the community. This, in turn, forced these opponents to abandon the impractical alignment and route proposals and focus their concerns on issues that, for the most part, could be rationally evaluated and dealt with.” (12)

The primary issues raised by project opponents were security, noise, and perceived intrusion into the neighborhood. As indicated to the authors by MTDB project staff, however, the actual core issue was a more generalized “fear of the unknown”. The PRC process facilitated the separation of non-issues from true concerns. For example, it was possible to establish noise as a non-factor. Also, discussions regarding security concerns were put within the realistic context of past experience with existing LRT segments in the San Diego metropolitan area. The MTDB then was able to ultimately achieve acceptance of the LRT loop alignment by earlier opponents through measures such as a thorough security plan (involving the SDSU security department) and LRT alignment adjustments (tunnel design) where feasible. The SDSU loop alignment was selected and is now under construction; it is anticipated to be operational by Spring 2005.

## 4 A Typology of Conflict

A common characteristic of much of the literature on public involvement in transportation project planning is that it is data-focused. That is, papers often describe the techniques used and the results obtained in a particular project. (12, 14, 15) This is certainly valuable information; more general understanding can only arise from specific knowledge of individual cases. However, case studies can be of limited use in helping other project managers with their own public involvement problems. The nature of the problems may not be similar enough for strong parallels to be drawn, or the success of particular techniques may have been dependent on the circumstances of the project.

In this chapter we use the case studies described in the previous chapters, and the Ayd Mill Road project in particular, to develop a prototype of a general theory of conflict anticipation and management in transportation public involvement. Our starting point is the observation that the process for Ayd Mill Road was not badly managed. In retrospect one can always point to specific things that could have been done differently, but in general this was the same process, executed by the same people, that had been used successfully in many other cases.

And in general, identifying possible missteps is only really helpful in the context of some more general framework that can be referenced by others to avoid making the same mistake in the future. Our hypothesis here is that public involvement needs to be approached differently in cases where the potential for serious conflict exists, and that in general the nature of the approach will depend on the type of conflict.

We contrast the circumstances and execution of the AMR process with those of the three projects with more successful public involvement outcomes to identify key differences and similarities. From this, we identify five dimensions of conflict:

- Size and distribution of local benefits or costs
- Disagreement about the nature and importance of local impacts
- Ability to accurately define and engage relevant stakeholders
- Perceived legitimacy of the project
- Degree of ideological issues

The essential finding here is that “conflict” is not a simple monolithic problem that can be handled with some standard set of procedures. On the other hand, it is also not something that is so variable that it can only be handled at a case-by-case level. We find instead that there is a middle ground: conflict can arise for a number of different reasons, and the appropriate response depends on the reason(s), but the number of possible reasons is sufficiently small that a general theory of conflict anticipation and management seems like a reasonable long-term goal. While we do not develop such a theory in this report, we do provide, in this chapter and the next, a basic outline of what such a theory might look like. The remainder of this chapter discusses each of the five dimensions of conflict in turn; the concluding chapter broadens the discussion to address how the public involvement process in general could be adapted to cope more effectively with the various possible sources of conflict.

#### **4.1 Size and Distribution of Local Benefits or Costs**

This type of conflict refers to situations where there is basic agreement between the agency and the public about what the impacts of a project are, and where the public generally concedes a general need for the project. However, the size of the impacts, or the way they are distributed among different areas or stakeholders, may lead to opposition to the project unless some kind of compensation is made. There are two possible forms of this problem. The simpler involves negative impacts throughout the project area. The more complex involves negative impacts in some places or on some groups and positive impacts on others.

This type of conflict is in some ways the simplest, if possibly the most costly to deal with. In perhaps most cases, conflicts of this type can be handled through mitigating design changes or compensating investments (such as the 1,000 trees on Piedmont Ave. replacing the 100 that were lost). This will generally be easier to implement if the negative impacts are uniform over the project area. In cases where there are simultaneous negative and positive impacts, it may be difficult to address the negative while preserving the positive.

Lack of conflict within this dimension is likely the reason why many local road projects provoke little controversy. When the parties that are impacted by a road are themselves significant or even the primary users of it, so that there are significant benefits to the impacted parties, then most other sources of conflict will tend to be diminished. When the impacted

residents are themselves deriving benefits in excess of costs, then their interest is in seeing the project move forward, even if they may dispute particular aspects of the design. In this case standard public involvement techniques are likely to be entirely adequate, although flexibility with regard to the project budget will likely increase the odds of success.

For example, the Piedmont Avenue project was seen as beneficial by local residents; while it is a major through highway, it is also heavily used as a local street to access the rest of Duluth. In addition, like Ayd Mill Road, Piedmont Avenue was creating local problems in its current state, so residents had an inherent interest in seeing it improved. But unlike Ayd Mill Road, the proposed solution had a uniformly positive local impact; the public did not break into factions and infighting. However, it is important to note that even here, acceptance of the proposed solution hinged critically on certain design compromises aimed at preserving neighborhood connectivity, such as the bridging of Skyline Drive, and the pedestrian underpass.

By contrast, on the Ayd Mill Road project, an early issue was that local residents resented having to bear the impacts of the highway for the benefit of suburban motorists. It is not obvious that this is true (St. Paul residents also use the highway, and suburbanites are generally using it to access St. Paul jobs), but there seemed to be no evidence presented that St. Paul overall would benefit from improvements to the highway.

Perhaps a more significant problem with AMR was the extremely localized nature of the costs and benefits; any scenario that provided improvements in one area invariably created new problems somewhere else. The most obvious example was the perception that easier freeway access at the south end (solving existing problems there) would add to already congested conditions at the north end (creating and exacerbating problems there). Another was that limiting traffic on AMR would increase traffic on Lexington Ave. and other parallel streets. Similar conflicts played out with regard to several other potential traffic diversion scenarios.

Because there was no general sense that the citizenry overall would benefit from a change to the configuration of AMR, there was little incentive for the citizens to cooperate in trying to find a solution. (While there were many years of cooperation during the phases of defining possible solutions, this all started to break down at the point of actually choosing between them.) This created an extremely difficult problem for the sponsoring agency to overcome.

On the other I-35E bridge and the San Diego LRT projects, the perception, at least at the beginning, was that “outsiders” would benefit at the expense of local residents. Thus the potential for serious conflict existed in principle. However, it eventually came to appear that the initial complaints about impacts were really doubts about project legitimacy, once this was established people in both cases seemed to be much less concerned about the possible size of the impacts.

This is an important point. Complaints that are superficially about impacts can really be fronts for some other type of problem; people may talk about impacts because this seems like more of a “hard” quantifiable objection than wondering about project legitimacy. This is especially the case where the public’s assessment of impacts seems very different from the agency’s. In this case it is probably worth spending some time exploring if the issue is really about the more general need for the project, or is ideologically based, before focusing in on trying to prove the point with hard facts. If there really is a genuine difference between how the public views the impacts of a project and how the agency does, then this becomes a conflict of the next type: disagreement about the nature and importance of local impacts.

## **4.2 Disagreement About the Nature and Importance of Local Impacts**

This type of conflict, while it sounds similar to the first type, is less about the size of the impacts, and more about situations where the agency and the public, or different factions of the public, disagree about how big the impacts will be, or how important they are. As before, there are two different manifestations of this conflict type. The first is a “measurement” problem, where there is disagreement about what the magnitude of impacts will be. The second, more difficult conflict is disagreement about how important or problematic a given impact will be.

At some level, “measurement” type conflicts are the classic public involvement problem; clearer and more targeted information may go far toward resolving these situations. However, if there is fundamental disagreement about the significance of a given impact, even extensive communication and information may not be enough to create a resolution. Such disagreements may arise out of ideological considerations, or they may simply reflect differing preferences among individuals.

For the San Diego LRT, initial concerns about impacts seem to have really been questions about the legitimacy of the project; once supporters were brought into the discussion and legitimacy was established, it was possible to discuss and deal with impacts in a systematic way. Similarly for the I-35E bridge, early complaints about impacts appear to have mostly dissipated once the need for the project was established. (13, 15) The critical event here was the testimony of the ambulance operator about being unable to reach downtown hospitals. In both these cases the residents seemed initially to see the impacts as much more serious than the agency thought them to be.

On Piedmont Avenue, there was a small dispute about the impacts associated with the proposed pedestrian tunnel; some saw it as a safe way to cross, while others perceived a potential refuge for anti-social behavior. This was actually a dispute between different members of the public, rather than between the public and the agency. An interesting aspect of the solution was that as Mn/DOT recognized that the conflict was not with them, they responded to this situation by stepping out of the way, letting the concerned parties settle the issue among themselves, and simply implementing the result. (9)

On Ayd Mill Road there seemed to be ongoing disputes, which at some level were never resolved, about which options were viable from financial, technical, and local impact perspectives. The planning commission's repeated efforts to remove options such as the downtown connection and the linear park, and the public's vehement insistence that they be put back in despite seemingly compelling reasons to remove them, have to represent at some level a failure of communication.

But perhaps a more significant dispute was between members of the public over the relative local impacts of the allocation of traffic to either AMR or local streets. However, in a curious way these impacts don't seem to have been disputed so much as they were ignored. Proponents of the linear park don't seem to have ever formulated a response to the claim that removing the highway would increase traffic on local streets, even one as simple as denying that this would happen. Their focus on the benefits of a park, while ignoring the possible side effects of removing the highway, appear to just bypass this whole realm of the discussion.

Their unwillingness to address the implications of the traffic forecasts seems to have been more because the forecast results were inconvenient rather than because there was any substantive objection to their accuracy. One participant from the “city” side of the process conceded in an interview that there is a legitimate question about the accuracy of a regional forecasting model when applied to such a small scale; but park supporters’ seeming indifference toward the implications of the traffic forecasts doesn’t seem to have been at this level of sophistication. Another possibility is that because the pro-park forces were not formally represented as such on the task force (see the next conflict type for a discussion of this problem), there was no mechanism for compelling them to respond to these issues. Their “outsider” position made it possible for them to focus on the good things about their idea while being under no formal obligation to defend it against criticism.

### **4.3 Ability to Accurately Define and Engage Relevant Stakeholders**

Guidance on performing public involvement generally emphasizes the importance of identifying and including a range of stakeholders. Here we advance beyond this general point; in situations of serious conflict it is critical that the different major points of view be accurately identified and represented in the discussions; failure to do so could seriously exacerbate existing problems. Even if conflict might not have arisen for any other reason, it could still arise over this issue alone; people who feel their perspective is being excluded or not taken seriously could choose to disrupt the process even if their substantive objections to the project are relatively minor.

It is notable that this source of conflict differs from the others in that while the other four types arise out of characteristics of the project, this one depends to a much larger degree on the execution of the public involvement process itself. Certainly the nature of the project influences who the relevant stakeholders are; but identifying them, giving them appropriate roles in the process, and keeping them engaged throughout, are problems for the public involvement manager to solve. Thus in principle at least, this source of conflict can be controlled to a much greater extent than the others; in practice this is easier said than done.

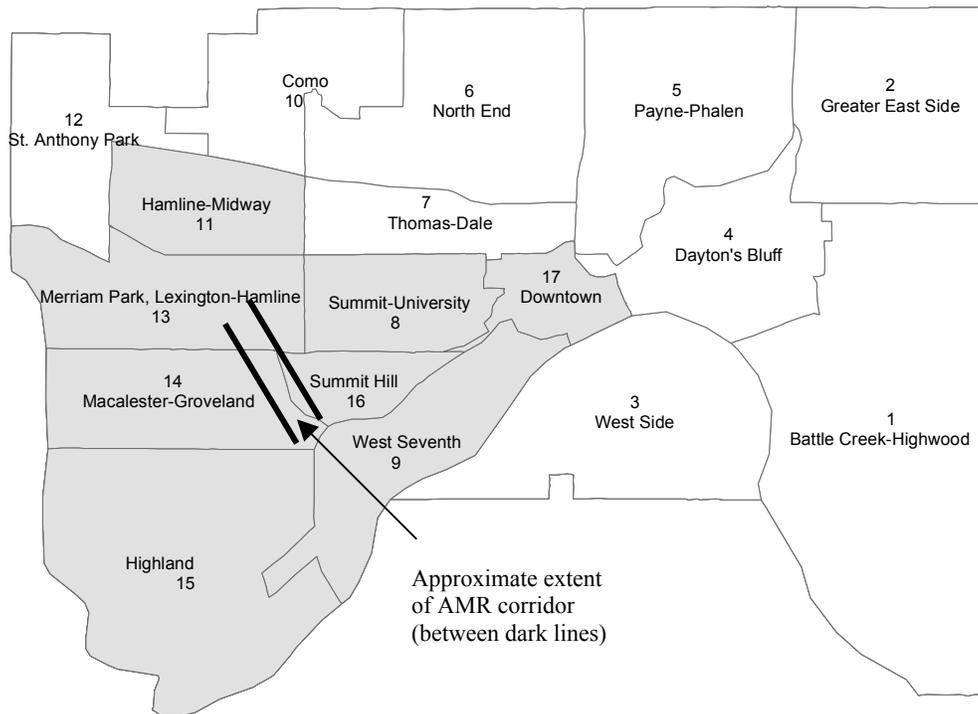
The critical point here is that the major stakeholder groups be identified and directly involved in the discussions. In an informal setting this should happen naturally. However, when

discussions are formalized through a task force or some other mechanism, it is necessary that the task force include direct representatives of major perspectives, rather than incorporating these perspectives indirectly through representatives of political entities. This can be relatively easy when there are one or two coherent positions, such as highway users and neighboring residents. It obviously will tend to become more complex as the number of different points of view grows.

For both the San Diego LRT and the I-35E bridge, identification of the relevant stakeholders seems to have been straightforward in that there were essentially two sides, each of whom spoke with a generally unified voice. And in both of these cases, the project managers credited the success of the effort in large part to the tactic of having the two sides sit down together to discuss the issue. On Piedmont Ave. the situation was even simpler; the public for the most part spoke with a unified voice.

However, the identification of stakeholders was a very significant problem on Ayd Mill Road. There were many different widely held points of view, some of which, such as highway users, don't seem to have been represented at all. But a more important problem was that voting seats on the task force were given out based in large part on arbitrary political boundaries rather than based on any relationship to the highway. This likely had much to do with all the "informal" groups springing up at the end of the process to promote particular solutions (and to attempt takeovers of the task force seats).

It is worth dwelling on this point. The number of people directly impacted by the potential solutions on AMR amount to a few dozen at each end who would be significantly affected, and a few hundred who live along AMR or local alternatives that would be marginally impacted. However, the land area covered by all the district councils and other organizations involved in the task force is a huge area; within which possibly 95% of the residents would not be noticeably affected one way or the other by any of the proposed solutions. Despite the absence of any direct impact, "No Connect" signs routinely appeared in yards that were miles from AMR.



**Figure 4.1: St. Paul Planning Councils. Shaded area is the total area covered by planning councils represented on the AMR task force. The area between the dark lines is the approximate extent of the AMR corridor.**

Including large numbers of people with no direct stake in the outcome has two undesirable effects. First, in this situation it becomes possible for ideology to play a much bigger role; it can be very hard to maintain a rational discourse in the face of this. Second, if the consequences of the different choices are merely theoretical to most of the participants, then the voices of the minority that are truly impacted can get subsumed by the personal preferences of the majority that will face no serious consequences one way or the other. (Lexington Avenue residents facing large increases in traffic wondered aloud whose Neighborhood was being put First by the group of that name.) Both of these were real problems for the AMR process.

This has significant potential to be a problem elsewhere as well. State law requires major projects to be approved by all affected *municipalities*, even if the project might only impact a handful of people in a given city. The inclusion of such a wide range of stakeholders on AMR,

and the way they were defined, was in large part because St. Paul public involvement procedures required it to be done that way.

Certainly the case could be made that if the point is to hold a dispassionate discussion of a range of alternatives, then it is desirable to have participants who are not entering the process with a particular point of view. At the same time, once clear points of view emerge and conflict or the potential for it begins to arise, it seems that it could be advantageous to formally recognize that situation and “internalize” the conflict by explicitly giving voice to the major perspectives, and ideally somehow giving more voice to the people suffering the greatest potential impacts. It is worth wondering whether Neighborhoods First!, if they had held a seat on the task force, would have felt the same need or desire to resort to the tactics of noise and disruption that they used instead.

A related issue has to do with keeping stakeholders engaged in the process once it begins. A problem that was mentioned as significant by several participants in the AMR process was that it dragged on so long that participants lost motivation. Another major issue was that the long process meant that task force membership turned over so that any consensus achieved early on would have been forgotten years later. An example of this was that the downtown connection was fully discussed by the second task force even though members of the first task force had ultimately been persuaded that it was not a viable option. This made it hard to limit the choices or narrow the discussion, so the range of possibilities being discussed in year twelve of the process was almost as large as what had been discussed in year one.

The major reason for this seemed to be that there was no money in place to actually do the highway work implied by whatever option was chosen. Even carrying out the DEIS and the associated public involvement was delayed for a couple of years due to lack of funds. Participants from the city pointed specifically to this delay, and the resulting turnover in task force membership, as a major reason for the apparent lack of progress in reducing the options and achieving resolution. Citizen participants complained as well; the sense that there was no predictable end to the process, and that whatever was decided probably wouldn't be done anyway, made it hard for citizens and businesses with other time commitments to stay motivated to participate.

#### **4.4 Perceived Legitimacy of the Project**

This is a critical point in organizing public involvement. Situations can arise where the impacts of a project are relatively small, and where there is basic agreement about what the impacts are, but yet people oppose the project because they are not convinced that it is worthwhile in some broader sense; even small sacrifices can feel intolerable if the project seems unnecessary to start with.

If there are sufficient local benefits so that it can be safely assumed that local residents will favor the project, as in the case of Piedmont Avenue, then this will not be an issue. Otherwise local residents are incurring excess costs; in addition to some kind of compensation, they must likely also be convinced that there are significant system-wide benefits to justify their sacrifice.

To accomplish this, at the very least, would involve making sure citizen supporters of a project are at the table where their perspective must be recognized. A perception that the only supporter is the government itself is a powerful motivator to project opponents, and with good reason, as governments arguably should not be doing projects for their own benefit. Another possible tactic would be discussing long-range plans, if possible with a regional planning agency or some other independent entity. A project that has been in the plans for some time, and fits in a clear way into a coherent long-term strategy, should stand a better chance of acceptance than one that is perceived as motivated by special interests or political opportunism.

A related point is making sure that the public is aware of any limitations on their power over the project. If not doing the project is not an option, for safety or other reasons, then the public must understand that in these cases legitimacy is not on the table, and that the discussion will be about what type of project, not whether there will be one.

Bringing supporters to the table was a significant element in the eventual success of both the San Diego LRT and the I-35E bridge projects. It is relatively easy to be inflexible and extreme in opposition to a faceless government agency, or in front of an anonymous crowd at a public hearing. It is another thing entirely to have both the opportunity and obligation to defend a position to a group of peers, with whom one must work over a number of separate occasions.

Also, on I-35E the public was made aware at the beginning that the need for the bridge to be reconstructed for safety reasons was not open to discussion; the debate could then focus immediately on what the characteristics of the rebuilt bridge would be.

On Ayd Mill Road, the sponsoring agency ostensibly did not support a particular solution, although their actions at the end rather belied this position. In any case, it seems again that once the major options had bifurcated into general categories of “improve the road” versus “remove the road,” that formally recognizing this dichotomy and organizing the discussion around it might have helped to focus the debate. As it was, efforts to discuss the pros and cons of different designs were constantly interrupted by arguments about whether the road even needed to exist. And the assumption of an improved highway which was at least somewhat implicit in this discussion and in how the results were handled, seemingly further motivated highway opponents who felt that their qualitatively different concerns were not being accommodated by a process that had seemingly already moved on to the next step.

Another practical concern about discussing project legitimacy and design details at the same time was that the park supporters were unified around the one anti-highway option, while road improvement supporters were divided and debating the relative merits of different solutions rather than defending the road option in general. This impacted the final vote as well; park supporters had a single choice to vote for, while road supporters split their votes among several options.

This was arguably the single most important point in the Ayd Mill Road process. While it is admirable that the project sponsors wanted to keep all the options on the table, the problem is that what an improved road would look like, and whether there should be a road at all, are two qualitatively different questions that can't be discussed at the same time. First the legitimacy of the project must be established, and if necessary, conditions on that legitimacy. Then the discussion of the nature and design of the project can focus on its own objectives.

In the defense of the AMR public involvement staff, the complaints about legitimacy did spring out of the blue at the very end of a process that had been going on for ten years. They certainly were justified in assuming that legitimacy had long been established. However, it is not clear that this was the case. They had tried to eliminate the linear park option several years

earlier; it had been put back in after strong public objections. Seemingly the citizen participants in the process had not so much conceded the need for an improved highway as they had “agreed to disagree,” moving on with discussions of different design alternatives while insisting on keeping the no-highway alternative on the table throughout.

#### **4.5 Ideological Issues**

The appearance of the specter of ideology might be the worst-case scenario for public involvement sponsors at the project level; the problem for which there is no solution. Questions of city versus suburbs, of car versus transit, of mobility versus environmental protection, and so on, are important questions. But they are not questions that can or ought to be resolved at the level of an individual transportation project. To attempt to do so will at best lead to suboptimal outcomes for specific projects while failing to produce any principles that can be applied more broadly; the battle has to be waged anew each time, with all the attendant consumption of government and citizen resources.

It is not clear that there is much that can be done when ideology starts to drive the discussion. If people believe, for example, that no highway improvement project is ever legitimate, then more information or discussion of opposing points of view is unlikely to make much difference. Aside from trying to convince participants that these types of issues would be better discussed in other forums, such as voting or regional planning meetings, perhaps the best hope is to reduce this problem to a “lower level” one. For example, ideological statements, especially at the beginning of the process, may in fact just be dramatic ways of questioning the legitimacy of a particular project, or of disputing the predicted impacts. It is probably reasonable to assume that this is the case, at least in the beginning.

Ideology was clearly not an issue on Piedmont Avenue, and it does not seem to have been in San Diego either; opposition seemed to be to a particular alignment rather than to light rail or transit more generally. (13) On the I-35E bridge ideology made a brief appearance at the beginning; one manifestation was a St. Paul city council member worrying that residents would use the improved bridge to “flee” the city. (10) But again, this seems to have largely dissipated with the ambulance operator testimony about the difficulty of reaching downtown hospitals; even the most fervent anti-sprawl advocates could not ignore the significance of this.

However, ideology became a dominant issue at the end of the Ayd Mill Road process. The two anti-connection groups were apparently not willing to even consider or discuss any alternative that involved a working highway. Nor, seemingly, did they defend the broader implications of their position with regard to impacts on residential streets. Part of this, as noted earlier, was that their status as “outsiders” to the process to some extent gave them *carte blanche* to talk about only what they wanted to. But part of it also seemed to be that they genuinely had no interest in negotiating a compromise; they do not seem to have ever argued for the mitigation of possible impacts, only for not allowing the impacts to happen at all.

It is worth noting that the corridor is not particularly appealing as a park; indeed, the St. Paul park board was not interested in it, in large part because of the active railroad tracks running the length of the corridor. This corridor is 1.5 miles long and in a trench; there is little of cultural or natural interest anywhere along the route or at either end. Even a slow cyclist could ride the length of it and back in 15 minutes. It is also worth noting that the Twin Cities are already well endowed with parks, and many miles of very scenic linear parks in particular; the proposed AMR park, because of its location, would not even have the advantage of serving as a way of connecting to or expanding this broader system.

The motivation for the linear park position in fact seemed to come from an anti-car and anti-suburb agenda; the linear park idea served the role of a convenient and positive-sounding alternative to a highway. The main group supporting this position was called “No Connect Coalition,” not “Linear Park Coalition.” Similarly, yard signs that appeared throughout the city did not refer to the proposed park, they simply stated “No Connect.” The support for the park seemed so vague and poorly justified given the unattractive nature of the corridor, that it is hard to believe that this was the true motivation behind this position. The fact that their negotiating tool of choice was “boos, hisses, and name-calling” illustrates the intractability of the problem facing the public involvement manager in these types of cases.



## **5 Conclusions and Discussion**

The objective of this paper was to develop a framework for understanding and addressing conflict in the public involvement phase of transportation projects. There are two key conclusions. First, situations with serious conflict are fundamentally different from the typical public involvement effort; they require different tools and tactics that are explicitly built around the specific nature of the conflict being anticipated or encountered.

The second major finding is that “conflict” is neither a standard problem for which a standardized method is appropriate; nor is it so diverse that every project has to be approached on its own terms. We argue that there are distinct, predictable dimensions around which conflict arises; a given project can suffer from any or all of them in varying degrees. The appropriate public involvement response needs to be customized to address the specific type and degree of conflict, but this is manageable because there are a finite number of conflict types. This research has identified five types; there are probably others that could be found through examination of other high conflict case studies. Public involvement managers, having identified the types of conflict they are encountering, or expect to encounter, can structure the process accordingly, as outlined in detail in Chapter 4, or in brief in Appendix A.

### **5.1 The Bigger Picture**

There are also implications that fall outside of the scope of the public involvement process for a project. In the five dimensions of conflict, the first two (size and distribution of benefits and costs, and disputes about the size or importance of impacts) are essentially local in nature, the main exception being cases where the assessment of the importance of an impact is driven by ideology. Because they are local in nature, they can reasonably be discussed and resolved at local meetings. Indeed, a large part of the point of public involvement is to tap into the more detailed understanding of impacts that can come from local residents.

Identification of stakeholders can also be a local issue when the project is small in scope and impact. But as projects become bigger and of wider significance, determining exactly who should have a say in the outcome, and how much say each person or group should have, becomes

a serious problem in its own right. And for large regional projects, a case could be made that almost everyone is impacted in some way. Expanding a heavily traveled urban freeway certainly impacts the immediate neighbors, but the construction process also significantly impacts the regular users of the highway, who may come from all over the region. It also impacts the companies these drivers work for and the stores that they shop at, who again may be located nowhere near the project itself.

A notable recent example of this problem occurred with the proposed reconstruction of the I-35W/TH62 commons between Minneapolis and Richfield. While Mn/DOT was successful in creating a design that minimized local impacts and received the approval of both cities, the planned four-year-long closing of TH62 provoked very vocal opposition from the businesses and residents in the southwest part of the metro region, far from the actual project site. The political fallout was such that the state legislature got involved, requiring Mn/DOT to develop a new design that would reduce some of these impacts on highway users.

When literally hundreds of thousands of people could reasonably be considered to be impacted by a transportation project, the very concept of “public involvement” becomes hard to define. Obviously not everyone can take part directly, but determining how to organize the various impacted parties into coherent groups and positions can be a significant problem. A real possibility is that the process can be taken over by people who are motivated by ideology, but who do not in fact have much direct stake in the outcome.

A related point has to do with defining and achieving consensus on exactly what the role of “the public” is in a public involvement process. The interviews that were done with participants in the Ayd Mill Road process highlighted the importance of this, as a substantial number of comments revolved around issues related to this point. Participants from the city side in many cases felt that the public had too much power; that the public perceived their role as decision making authorities, rather than as advisors to the city. This was reflected in the fact that the agency was repeatedly unable to rule out any options, no matter how good their reasons for doing so, without provoking citizen backlash and demands that the options be reinstated.

From the citizen perspective, by contrast, there was a general sense that they didn’t have enough power. This took two different forms. One was simply the opposite of the agency

perspective; that people believed that the results of their deliberations would necessarily be implemented, and were angered that this didn't seem to be the case. The other form of lack of power was that certain individuals and groups felt that within the category of "citizens," that some were more equal than others. A couple of citizens that were not members of the task force made a clear delineation between "citizens" and "task force members," implying that the task force members did not necessarily represent the views of their constituents.

Power differentials among citizens are to a large extent a manifestation of the conflict dimension of appropriate identification and engagement of stakeholders. However, the fact that there was apparently such a large gulf in understanding between the City and the public, regarding the power of the public to determine the outcome, suggests perhaps an additional conflict dimension. Even if stakeholders are identified and engaged, if there is not a consensus between the sponsoring government and the public regarding the purpose of the discussions and what will be done with the results, then there is likely to be conflict of some sort.

A difficulty in addressing this issue is that it is not clear who should decide what the role of the public should be. The motivation behind public involvement is that the transportation solutions created by professionals, which are based to a large degree on technical objectives, need to be tempered and supplemented with the more human and local perspective of affected citizens. Given this, it seems inappropriate in some ways for the agency to be able to place unilateral restrictions on the role of the public. At the same time, clearly there have to be some boundaries or nothing will ever get done. There is perhaps a need for a higher level discussion regarding the purpose of public involvement and exactly what role each of the two sides ought to play.

This leads into an important point regarding the last two dimensions, project legitimacy and ideology. As suggested earlier, while these issues are important and deserving of public discussion, their societal significance goes far beyond the relatively small number of people who are impacted by a given project, or who are able and motivated to attend public involvement events. The primary danger is that "big picture" issues keep delaying and even stopping individual projects, but without these issues ever being resolved or even systematically debated.

A possible solution is that somehow questions about which projects are legitimate and under what conditions or constraints, need to be answered from a broader and perhaps more neutral base of interests and considerations than is typically encountered at a “local” public hearing. This is true both from the perspective of the public and of the agency. Agencies performing public involvement often have a difficult conflict of interest: they are representing a particular position, typically that of the road or transit user, and they are also moderating the discussion. Locals might see this as a stacked deck and approach the whole process with cynicism. At the same time, the agency is constrained in that they can’t refuse to consider even extreme or unrealistic positions, because to do so would appear biased.

One possibility is that the public involvement process could be moderated by some organization, perhaps dedicated to that purpose, other than the agency in charge of the proposed project. Serious questions about project legitimacy could be heard by a standing non-partisan committee; project opponents would have a chance to make their case to a neutral “jury” rather than to a possibly biased transportation agency. At the same time, they would be forced to make their case with facts and reasoning rather than force of numbers and noise.

For example, a regional planning agency might be able to serve this type of role. They will not generally be involved in the actual construction of the project, thus they would not be perceived as having any self-interested motive in its implementation. Because of this, and because their interest in the project would be from a planning perspective, they might have more credibility in the sometimes difficult problem of establishing project legitimacy. And finally, because they would be moderating the process from a regional, long-term perspective, they might have more ability to neutralize ideological objections, by showing that big-picture objectives are being addressed at a regional level, even if not within the context of the particular project under discussion.

Another possible advantage of such an organization would be that it could provide a central and independent forum for these sorts of broader public policy debates to take place; discussions could more easily build on previous discussions, and over time possibly a kind of consensus could emerge, based on the accumulation of individual decisions. This kind of cumulative policy development is not possible in the current system of public involvement,

where issues are discussed and decided on an *ad hoc* project basis with no formal connection between different projects, and no opportunity for ongoing learning. While there are currently public discussions of long-term transportation plans, these plans have no binding authority over which projects are eventually done, or even what general principles will be followed.

A related although different type of system is used for example in labor relations; broad issues of contract negotiations are handled at one level through certain types of processes, while smaller issues of individual complaints are handled at lower levels through different processes. Two explicit points of this system that are relevant to transportation public involvement are: 1) it frees the company from the expense of negotiating thousands of individual contracts, 2) it gives the workers more influence than they would have by negotiating as individuals. A similar system for transportation, in which for example the various “ideological” stakeholders could have an explicit forum for presenting their perspectives, in exchange for refraining from doing this at the individual project level, could prove beneficial to both sides.

Researchers in other fields have discussed at length the difficulty of weighing bureaucratic technical expertise and broad societal objectives against the personal and political preferences of the impacted public (16, 17) That is ultimately the problem being faced here; agencies use their technical expertise to determine the optimal way to implement a particular transportation policy, but at some level the policy itself can be considered open to debate. Perhaps different aspects of transportation policy and its implementation, from the general to the local, should be discussed in different types of forums, and by different types of participants. With further research perhaps a clearer understanding of the various types of conflict and best methods for addressing them will emerge.

## **5.2 Future Research Directions**

The idea of viewing “conflict” as a multifaceted phenomenon with a range of appropriate solutions depending on the problem being encountered, represents a new way of approaching this issue. Standard public involvement guidance documents typically focus on tools and methods, implicitly assuming that conflict will not be significant. One popular method, the *Systematic Development of Informed Consent*®, (5) is explicitly geared around managing conflict, but tends to approach it from a single standpoint, one of establishing project legitimacy. While the model

described in this report recognizes the central importance of project legitimacy, it also incorporates a number of independent types of conflict that could arise even if legitimacy is not at issue.

Possibly the most interesting direction for future research would be to develop this framework into an explicit methodology for approaching public involvement. This methodology would not directly address tools, as these are well covered in other documents, but would instead focus on the various types of problems that might arise, how they could be anticipated based on the characteristics of the project, and how they could be avoided or managed. The general principle would be that effective conflict management depends on correct identification of what the true nature of the conflict is, and the use of appropriate information and procedures that depend on the type of conflict.

Two sources of information could inform the development of such a methodology. The first would be a greatly expanded set of project case studies and interviews with experts with experience in managing public involvement processes. This could help to refine and possibly expand the conflict types, and to provide additional evidence and insights on how conflict has been successfully (or not) anticipated and managed in the past. As public involvement professionals would be the ultimate users of such guidelines, their input into how they are developed would be critical for establishing their legitimacy (a public involvement problem in its own right).

A second source could be further study of public involvement practice and theory from other fields with a more extensive history and literature, such as labor relations, forestry, and hazardous facility location. (18, 19, 20) While the problems encountered in these situations are not exactly parallel to those in transportation, the general theories and insights that have developed over the years could have applicability here. The present research examined these other fields to some degree; however, it ultimately came to seem that the insights that could be gained from them would have more applicability within the context of a study of broader public involvement procedures, including non-project based discussions, rather than within a study of management of specific projects, as was done here.

Rules governing how to do transportation public involvement were crafted many years ago, and arose out of a situation where involvement was sometimes glossed over or not done at all. As such, they tend to focus on establishing requirements for who needs to be involved and in what way. With more experience, it is now becoming clear that these rules might in some ways be in some ways inappropriate. Successful public involvement efforts often achieve success as a direct result of including a wider range of participants than is technically required; other projects, such as Ayd Mill Road, can be hamstrung by rule-based inflexibility with regard to what stakeholders are included, how they are incorporated into the process, and how the process itself moves forward over time. Further research could provide a sound basis for modifying rules and institutions to more closely match what is now known about how public involvement is, or should be done.



## References

1. Edward Weiner. *Urban Transportation Planning in the United States: A Historical Overview* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Economics, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1992).
2. J. Lorenz and R. Ingram (1999). It's Not Just for Projects Anymore: KDOT's Innovative Agency-wide Public Involvement Program, Presented at 78th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, 1999.
3. Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates Inc. and Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade and Douglas. *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making*. (Publication No. FHWA-PD-96-031. Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, 1996.)
4. Minnesota Department of Transportation. *Hear Every Voice: A Guide to Public Involvement at Mn/DOT*, 1999.
5. H. Bleiker and A. Bleiker. *Systematic Development of Informed Consent* ©. Institute for Participatory Management and Planning. (Internet) Accessed May 5, 2003. [www.consentbuilding.com](http://www.consentbuilding.com)
6. Highland Villager, St. Paul, Minnesota. Various articles, 1988-2003.
7. Federal Highway Administration, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and City of St. Paul. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Ayd Mill Road*. (Federal Project #FHWA-MN-EIS-98-01-D, 1999).
8. Duluth News-Tribune, Duluth, Minnesota. Various articles, 2000-2001.
9. Roberta Dwyer, Minnesota Department of Transportation, personal communication, July 7, 2003.
10. St. Paul Pioneer Press, St. Paul, Minnesota. Various articles, 1998-2000.
11. Mukhtar Thakur, Minnesota Department of Transportation, personal communication, June 9, 2003.
12. T. Bates and D. Wahl. *We Can't Hear You! San Diego's Techniques for Getting Balanced Community Input in Major Investment Studies*. Presented at 76th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, 1997.
13. Toni Botte Bates, San Diego Transit Authority, personal communication, June 24, 2003.
14. D. Keever and G. Frankoski. *In the Possibilities are the Solutions: Assessment and Implications of the Public Involvement Process During the Environmental Impact Study of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge*. Presented at 78th Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, 1999.
15. D. Hale. *Creating a Successful Public Involvement Program for Major Investment Studies*. Presented at Transportation Research Board Mid-Year Meeting, 2000.
16. M. Kweit and R. Kweit. *Implementing Citizen Participation in a Bureaucratic Society* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981).

17. F. Laird. Participatory Analysis, Democracy, and Technological Decision Making. *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1993.
18. W. L. Ury, J. M. Brett, and S. B. Goldberg. *Getting Disputes Resolved: Designing Systems to Reduce the Costs of Conflict* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988).
19. B. Gray. *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989).
20. D. J. Brion. *Essential Industry and the NIMBY Phenomenon*, (New York: Quorum Books, 1991).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Summary of Conflict Types and Management Strategies**

# Summary of Conflict Types and Management Strategies

The following is a brief summary of the five conflict dimensions identified in this research. Conflicts arising in a public involvement process should in general be combinations of these five baseline types in varying forms or degrees of intensity.

## Size and distribution of local benefits or costs

**What it is:** Resistance arising out of negative impacts being imposed on an area or stakeholder group. Can become complex if impacts differ across groups, and if impacts depend closely on particular project characteristics.

**How it differs from other types:** Here the focus is on the impacts themselves, rather than arguments about what the impacts will be, which is the next conflict type.

**What can be done:** If there is agreement on what the impacts are and who is suffering them, then it may be possible to develop mitigation strategies, or to offer some kind of compensating investment, assuming the project budget can accommodate this. If strategies that solve one problem tend to worsen others, then it may be appropriate to let stakeholders decide among themselves how impacts should be distributed.

**Comments:** Complaints about negative impacts may be masking a deeper skepticism about the legitimacy of the project more generally. If this is the case, then compensation or mitigation may not really address the deeper issue. It is important to ensure that the project in general is accepted before discussing implementation details.

## Disagreement about the nature and importance of local impacts

**What it is:** Here the issue is not so much the size of the impacts *per se*, but rather that members of the public do not agree with the agency, or with each other, about what the impacts will be. In one form the dispute is about how big the impacts will be. In another form the dispute is about how important or costly the impacts are.

**How it differs from other types:** This differs from the first type because in addition to negative impacts, there is the extra problem of lack of agreement on what the impacts are.

**What can be done:** More precise or understandable information may address some questions about impact size. When importance, rather than size, is disputed, it may be appropriate again to find a way to let stakeholders settle this among themselves.

**Comments:** Appropriate mitigation strategies can't be discussed until everyone agrees on what needs to be mitigated, and how much needs to be done.

## **Ability to accurately define and engage relevant stakeholders**

**What it is:** In cases where discussions are formalized through a task force or similar mechanism, making sure that the major points of view have a direct voice in the debate, not just indirectly through political representatives.

**How it differs from other types:** This type of conflict is less about the project and more about the public involvement process itself. In some cases resistance to a project could be initiated, or magnified, solely because stakeholders feel that they are not being given sufficient opportunity to state their concerns.

**What can be done:** As major points of view emerge, make sure that they are formally represented in the discussions. If political entities are included, make sure that they do not have more influence than other participants, over the discussions or the outcome.

**Comments:** Including position-based representatives not only gives them a voice and reduces their incentive to disrupt the process in other ways, but it also forces them to defend their position through the same process that other points of view must be defended.

## **Perceived legitimacy of the project**

**What it is:** Local residents or other stakeholders do not believe that the project is necessary or of sufficient value to justify the costs being imposed.

**How it differs from other types:** This is opposition that manifests itself as assertion that the project shouldn't be done at all, regardless of any mitigation or compensation that might be offered. This could be intermingled with other types of conflict as well.

**What can be done:** Establishing that the project is legitimate in general is necessarily the first step in public involvement, before any more specific options can be discussed. Including stakeholder groups that will benefit from the project in the discussions, so that opponents must directly confront other citizens rather than an anonymous government agency, seems to be an appropriate and effective approach. Bringing in independent planning organizations that have no self-interested stake in the project to discuss its place in the regional long-range plan could also help demonstrate that it would provide value to the region.

**Comments:** The Institute for Participatory Management has developed a substantial course (SDIC©) primarily around the idea of managing conflict by establishing project legitimacy. Our approach here differs in that we assert that there are also other, independent types of conflicts that require different management strategies.

## **Degree of ideological issues**

**What it is:** Objections have more to do with general philosophical concerns about issues such as sprawl, city vs. suburb, car vs. transit, and so on.

**How it differs from other types:** The objections do not necessarily relate directly to characteristics of the project itself.

**What can be done:** In some cases ideological statements may be masking “simpler” concerns about project legitimacy or negative impacts. It may be helpful to start by assuming that the problem is really one of the other conflict types and attempting to address those before conceding that it is ideology. Again, bringing in regional planning organizations or other neutral groups may help to show that ideological concerns are being addressed elsewhere, even if not in the particular project under discussion.

**Comments:** Aside from trying to convince participants that these types of issues would be better discussed in other forums, such as voting or regional planning meetings, perhaps the best hope is to reduce this problem to a “lower level” one.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Chronology of Ayd Mill Road Public Involvement, 1988-2000**

# CHRONOLOGY OF AYD MILL ROAD PROJECT

Compiled by Peter Langworthy through reviewing stories from Highland Villager

January 22, 2002

NOTE:

AMR = Ayd Mill Road; WB = westbound, etc.; DEIS = Draft Environmental Impact Statement; FEIS = Final Environmental Impact Statement

## **BASIC PHASES:**

- HISTORIC BACKGROUND/OPENING OF I-35 E
- FIRST AMR TASK FORCE
- DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS) SCOPING PROCESS
- DEIS PREPARATION
- SELECTION OF PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (FEIS)

## **I. BACKGROUND/OPENING OF I-35E**

- Ayd Mill Road (AMR) was constructed in 1960s; it had always been intended to be a link between I-94 and the anticipated I-35E .
- Connection to I-94 was never completed because of local opposition at north end (the initial connection was going to follow RR tracks that cross over Snelling and tie into I-494 at Fairview. Merriam Park Community Council got its start fighting this connection.)
- Completing AMR was not an issue for decades because there was no I-35E to connect to, and traffic was local and relatively light. I-35E was delayed for decades because of local opposition.
- I-35E up to Randolph Avenue/AMR was opened in 1987. The last overall stretch of I-35E (West Seventh to downtown) was being strenuously opposed by RIP-35E and other groups. As concessions to these groups, the last stretch was to be a parkway with landscaping, low speed limit, etc, and an agreement not to provide direct connection to AMR initially.
- Once the stretch of I-35E to Randolph/AMR opened, substantial congestion problems appeared at the south end of AMR because motorists moving between I-35E and AMR had to make this connection through local streets (Lexington and Jefferson.). In general, more traffic was being fed into local system (primarily Lexington north to Midway, I-94). This congestion (primarily at south end of

AMR) leads call for a direct connection of AMR to I-35E. However, those at north end of AMR do not want connection at south because this will dump more traffic in their neighborhood, they say (12/16/87 story).

- In Early 1988, St. Paul City Council approves funding for the link of I-35E to I-94 in downtown. This link does NOT include a link to westbound (WB) I-94. Citizens in northern portion of AMR push for this downtown connection to WB I-94. However, city council defers this decision to the future.
- In early 1988, City of St. Paul begins to put a task force together to look at what to do with AMR.

## II. PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

March 1988	First AMR Task Force meets. It is made up of a broad range of representatives; “four district councils, six community councils, three business organizations, and an number of other neighborhood groups.” Not much information on makeup other than this. The two co-chairs are Dick Anfang and Linda Hirte.
November 1988	AMR Task Force determines that leaving AMR in existing conditions is NOT a viable option. They come up with five general options to be addressed. One of those is to connect I-35E to WB I-94 downtown (“downtown connection”). They determine that an EIS process is needed to evaluate these and possibly other options. They determine that, while something has to be done to alleviate the congestion at south end, nothing should be done about this until a way to address potential impacts of connection at north end is determined. AMR Task Force passes these recommendations to the City Planning Council.
January 1989	The City Planning Council accepts the Task Force’s recommendations EXCEPT the downtown connection. They view this as not being viable because of engineering difficulties (location of History Center complicates things, complexity of tying in with all other roadways, required takings, etc.) and cost of providing this connection. Dick Anfang of the Task Force acknowledges after Planning Commission’s determination and looking information provided by Mn/DOT that a downtown connection probably would not be viable.
1990	No significant AMR activity reported.
1991	City of St. Paul approves \$250,000 for conducting an EIS for AMR options. City assumes approximately \$1 million, total, will be required for the full EIS process. They request the balance from Mn/DOT. However, since AMR is technically a city street, Mn/DOT is limited in its ability to fund this type of project.
April 1992	In what appears to be a pretty clear “deal”, St. Paul allows the south end of AMR to be opened with direct link to I-35E during closure of Lafayette Bridge for repair, in return for Mn/DOT providing \$300,000 for AMR EIS process (Paula Maccabe, Ward 4, makes statement on proposed quid pro quo arrangement-- 3/11/92 article). St. Paul wanted \$750,000, but took what they could. City states that it will look to Dakota County for additional funds (4/92 article). The south connection is opened (only open for HOV vehicles) during the extensive

Lafayette Bridge maintenance activities without reported major problems. At end of bridge maintenance, south connection is closed with piles of dirt.

- September 1993 SECOND AMR Task Force holds first meeting to provide alternatives for SRF and TKDA to study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This is the “scoping phase” of the EIS process. Mike Klassen of Public Works and Lucy Thompson of Planning and Economic Development are key city staff representatives. More groups are represented in the Second Task Force than the First. Groups represented are: Summit Hill Association; Summit University Community Council; West Seventh-Fort Road Community Council; Highland Park Community Council; Mac Groveland Community Council; “downtown”; Lexington Hamline Community Council; Snelling Hamline Community Council; Merriam Park Community Council; Hamline-Midway Community Council (**see attached map of local planning districts**); Grand Avenue and Snelling-Selby business associations; Selby Avenue Community Development Corporation; Midway Chamber of Commerce; University UNITED. Also participating are Mn/DOT, Ramsey and Dakota County, Met Council, and the St. Paul Bicycle Advisory Board.
- January 1994 Significant Task Force meeting (covered in February 1994 article). All are in agreement that the situation at the south end is a big problem which must be addressed. There is discussion of a potential downtown connection (I-35E to WB I-94). Discussion of how AMR could be connected to I-94 at north--the options available have substantial right of way impacts.
- July 1994 SRF presents assessment to Task Force that a downtown connection to WB I-94 is not viable.
- August 1994 Connection of AMR to I-94 through Pascal eliminated by Task Force because of need this would entail to replace the brand new Selby Avenue Bridge. Connection through Hamline eliminated because of the need to keep Hamline as a through street for local traffic.
- First reference to the Ayd Mill Road Coalition in August 1994 article. “A neighborhood group that is monitoring the Task Force’s work.” It had been inexistence since at least Spring 1994. Later article indicates that they hired a consultant (Bill Smith, Biko Associates) and one of their pushes is a deck over AMR so a park could be created.
- September 1994 Mike Klassan of City states that it may, after all, be physically viable to construct a downtown connection to WB I-94. However, SRF analysis shows that this would not actually divert that much traffic off of AMR. This analysis shows that a relatively small percent of trips on AMR originate in Dakota County.
- December 1994 At December Task Force meeting there is significant discussion of the possibility of a downtown WB I-94 connection. Alternatives are firming up. Linear park is one of them.
- March 1995 Public Hearing is held on the Draft Scoping Document, which proposes alternatives to potentially be studied in DEIS. At this hearing there is significant hostility expressed towards suburban users of AMR. Point is made by those in AMR neighborhoods that suburban cars cause congestion, air quality impacts,

etc, but suburban residents don't pay any taxes supporting any AMR improvements or activities.

Concordia College makes statement at Public Hearing that they are concerned about losing their athletic fields and important parking areas with some of the options being looked at. They lost their football field with I-94. Don't want to lose more.

- April 1995 St. Paul Planning Commission takes the list of alternatives determined through the process to this time and eliminates: a) linear park alternative; b) two lane with indirect north connection alternative (presumably because it would not have enough capacity), c) downtown I-35E/WB I-94 connection; and d) limited access freeway connecting at I-94 at Fairview Avenue. Commissioner Mark Vauaght is quoted with a strong statement that linear park is not viable option. Task Force representatives express frustration regarding the fact that they feel that their work is being ignored.
- June 1995 City Council approves the options to be studied in the DEIS. They add back the linear park and two lane alternatives that the Planning Commission had eliminated. The approved options for study are: no action; linear park; transportation management systems (TSM); two lane city street (parkway) with split diamond interchange at I-94 and direct connection at I-94; four lane expressway with split diamond interchange at I-94 and direct connection at I-35E; a four lane expressway with a freeway to freeway interchange at I-94 (using RR spur between Pascal and Hamline) and a direct connection at south; and a limited access freeway with a freeway to freeway interchange at I-94 (using RR spur) and direct connection at south.
- Late 1995 City of St. Paul approves \$750,000 for EIS process. It appears that funding hung up the process until this 750k allocation was made.
- May 1996 AMR Task Force reconvenes after approximately a year of not meeting. The Task force is to meet regularly and keep abreast of the analyses and activities associated with the preparation by SRF of the Draft EIS (DEIS).
- July 1997 Results of traffic analysis presented to July 21, 1997. The analysis indicates that no action alternative would make already congested local roadways and intersections even worse in the future. A number of intersections would be "over capacity".
- Some task force members express opinion that the results are less serious than they would have expected. Wonder if it is worth it to make large investments when (what they feel is) only a limited number of intersections are over capacity. Mike Klassen replies that there is no way other than providing connection at AMR to significantly relieve existing congestion conditions which will only get worse.
- December 1997 Mn/DOT proposes a revised approach to connecting AMR to I-94 at north. This approach uses existing frontage roads for access to/from I-94 rather than whole new interchange. Mn/DOT and FHWA had concerns with too many interchanges within a short stretch of I-94. This approach would also eliminate the need for any residential right of way takings. However, commercial takings would still be required and Concordia University would lose athletic

fields/parking, particularly if access to Selby is maintained. [Note; this north connection approach ultimately becomes referred to as the “indirect connection” to I-94, is endorsed by the Task Force, and ultimately becomes the dominant approach.]

- April/May 1998      Neighborhoods First! Is established. Primary objective is to promote the linear park alternative. Michael Kline is quoted and seems to be a/the leader.
- July 1998            At the instigation of Neighborhoods First!, SRF looks at transit options to limit traffic in area and on AMR. Steve Wilson of SRF makes presentation at July 20 Task Force meeting. Looks at transit lines using Lexington Parkway and HOV on AMR. It appears from 8/5/98 story that the analysis did not indicate that these options would do much to limit traffic in the area (would primarily take riders from other transit lines). Point is made also that Lexington Avenue, being a Parkway, cannot have buses on it. “Some Task Force members were skeptical of the transit figures.”
- July 1998            Representatives of SRF make presentation regarding noise analysis relevant to AMR process. Based upon comments and questions, this is a significant issue for neighboring residents. SRF indicates that the DEIS will analyze anticipated noise outcomes assuming largest build alternative at noisiest locations, but will not recommend specific mitigation measures. Any decisions on mitigation measures would be made later in project with input from residents. They say that preliminary analysis indicates that state noise standards would be exceeded under the build alternative analyzed, but point out that these are commonly exceeded in the metro area. There was general discussion of potential mitigation measures such as noise walls, roadway design, and berms.
- October 1998        Midway Chamber of Commerce takes position supporting direct connection at south and indirect connection (through existing frontage roads) to north. Midway COC says it represents 360 businesses which represents one third of all jobs in St. Paul and one quarter of city’s commercial/industrial tax base. Midway COC is taking this formal position in response to Neighborhoods First! pushing for linear park.
- October 1998        Citizens for Safe Streets (CSS) is formed. This organization seems to have been in response to the push by Neighborhoods First! and Snelling Hamline Community Council for the linear park alternative. CSS focuses on Lexington as having too much traffic and being unsafe. Joan Nyberg has prominent quotes and seems to be the leader of the organization. Approximately 40 members of CSS, most of whom live on either side of Lexington, meet with Mike Klassen to voice their concerns. Joan Nyberg wonders whose neighborhood “comes first”.
- October 1998        Matt Entenza, District 64A state representative makes impassioned statements in support of linear park. Sierra Club, Transit for Livable Communities, others enter picture, framing this issue in terms of urban sprawl. Their position is that connecting AMR will make it easier for those in suburbs to move around and thus will add to sprawl.
- November 1998      Snelling-Selby Area Business Association (SSABA) releases statement supporting direct connection of AMR at south, indirect connection at north, and continued connection between Selby and AMR. They very much do not want linear park which is being promoted heavily by Neighborhoods First! and has been adopted by Snelling Hamline community council.

- Late 1998
- A number of organizations represented on Task Force formally identify their preferred alternatives:
- Hamline Midway Coalition: no build
  - Highland District Council: two or four lane parkway
  - Mac Groveland Community Council: two lane parkway
  - Merriam Park Community Council: no build
  - Midway Area Chamber of Commerce: two lane or four lane roadway
  - Snelling Hamline Community Council: linear park
  - Summit Hill Association: two lane parkway
  - Summit University Planning Council: four lane roadway
  - Snelling-Selby Area Business Association: two lane or four lane roadway, if access to Selby is maintained (with no access to Selby, they prefer no action)
- February 1999
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement is approved by City Council for publication and 30 day public comment period. This DEIS is released and identifies and evaluates six alternatives: no build; Transportation System Management; linear park; two lane roadway with direct connection at south and indirect northern connection (existing frontage roads) through RR spur between Pascal and Hamline; a four lane roadway with same direct connection at south and indirect connection at north; a four lane roadway with direct connection at south and “bridged ramps” for connection at north (more expensive than base indirect connection, but less congestion on frontage roads).
- March 1999
- A joint City Council/Planning Commission public hearing on the DEIS is held. 120 people attend, about three dozen people speak. No surprises, relative to positions outlined above. One thing that all agree on is that something should be done regarding the congestion at south end where connection is made from I-35E to AMR.
- (The next step in the EIS process is to select an overall preferred Alternative to study in more detail in the Final Environmental Impact statement [FEIS].)
- August 1999
- AMR Task Force votes (August 23) for linear park as preferred alternative. There are 20 voting Task Force members representing nine local district councils, two business groups, the Bicycle Advisory Board, and RIP-35E. They are not required to vote in accordance with the formal positions of their organizations. Each voter ranked each of the following alternatives from 1 (worst) to 3 (best): no build, Transportation System Management, linear park, two lane connected roadway, four lane connected roadway.
- September 1999
- Steve Gordon, a Planning Commissioner and co-chair of AMR Task Force says that he will not support the recommendation of the Task Force. While he put

forth the voting system used (it is a method used by the Sales Tax Revitalization Board), he later acknowledged that it might have been flawed (9/8/99 story).

A representative of Summit Hill Association (SHA) and a representative of the West 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road Federation gave the linear park the highest ranking, even though their respective organizations had voted for the two lane connected parkway. Conversely, the two Snelling Hamline Community Council representatives told Steve Gordon that, while they personally did not prefer the linear park option, they felt compelled to give it their highest ranking because that is what their organization favored (is unclear whether the council forced them to vote for linear park or if it was their decision) (9/8/99 story).

Mike Klassen (11/3/99 story) later suggests that the voting process was skewed by “numerous changes in Task Force membership” (Villager language) over previous six months. He said that several Task Force members were appointed after the release of the draft EIS and just prior to the final vote. He also noted that some of the organizations represented on the Task Force did not vote on August 23 because they could not come to agreement on a preferred alternative.

[PRL Note: it seems that another factor is that the two connection options “split” the connect vote. Had there been two linear park options, say one with an expensive created wetland and one without, this may have decreased chances for an overall outcome favoring a park under the voting system used.]

October 1999

St. Paul Planning Commission on October 22, 1999 votes to recommend building a four lane roadway. Steve Gordon, a Planning Commissioner, said that generally the Planning Commission follows the recommendations of its citizen task forces. “However, he said that the group’s recommendation for a linear park was ‘substantially flawed’ by the process used to arrive at it.” (11/3/99 story).

Gordon told the Planning Commission that the four lane option is the best way to provide traffic relief for local north-south streets, especially Lexington. “If you get rid of the roadway, you don’t get rid of the traffic”, he said. He said that removing AMR and replacing it with a park would increase traffic on adjacent city streets by about 10,000 vehicles a day. He added that building a four lane road would not preclude developing green space along AMR. (11/3/99 story).

The “bridged ramps” design was not selected for north connection. Mike Klassen suggests that while this design would have taken some traffic off streets (on or close to frontage roads), he did not think the additional cost for these ramps (\$9.3 million) was affordable.

December 1999

Mayor Norm Coleman supports Planning Commission’s recommendation for four lane connected roadway.

December 1999

200 members of umbrella group “No Connect Coalition” filled City Council Chambers December 22, largely to protest the vote of the Planning Commission. This group “dwarfed” the half dozen members of Citizens for Safe Streets who attended the council meeting.

April 2000

St. Paul City Council votes (5-2) for two lane connected parkway as its preferred AMR alternative at April 12 council meeting. Project would include ban on

trucks and 35 MPH speed limit. No residential takings would be required, but some business takings would be required. This compromise position was engineered by Patrick Harris (Ward 3). Jerry Blakey had always supported the two lane option. Harris got Dan Bostrom and Jim Reiter to “sign on” after they had previously supported the four lane alternative. Dan Bostrom’s position had been that he favored some connect alternative, either two or four lane. Jay Benevav (Ward 4, which includes Merriam Park and Snelling Hamline Planning Councils) and Kathy Lantry vote against.

Council directs Department of Public Works to develop funding and construction plans by June 2000.

Steve Gordon says that he can live with two lane option, although he prefers four lane.

No Connect Coalition very vocal at the council meeting. At a No Connect rally before the council vote, Jay Benevav called Harris’ plan “fiscally irresponsible and plain idiotic”.

No significant coverage in the Highland Villager after this point.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Summary of Interviews of Ayd Mill Road Public Involvement Participants**

## **Summary of Ayd Mill Road public involvement interviews**

We interviewed 11 total participants. Of these, 5 were “citizens”, 2 were neutral, and 4 were city representatives. In the pseudo-transcripts below, we work through the interview one question at a time. After each question we give a paraphrase of the answers from each of the citizen interviews, the neutral interviews, and the city representative interviews in turn. We identify the participants as C1-C5 for citizens, N1-N2 for neutrals, and SP1-SP4 for the St. Paul representatives. In two cases two people were in the same interview, and thus their responses are grouped together below. Our objective is to give as much detail as possible about the participants’ responses, while avoiding information that would identify a specific participant.

The citizen interviewees all participated extensively in the public involvement process, although not necessarily as members of the task force. The neutral participants were involved to different degrees, but in a context in which they did not take sides in the debate. The city participants were all involved in one way or another in managing the process, although not necessarily as city employees.

### **Questions**

- What was the problem that the process was intended to solve
- Who was the “champion” for the project
- Your understanding of what the process was intended to accomplish and what would be done with the results, was information adequate for this
- How the “official” participants were chosen and whether they were representative of the broader stakeholder base; the role of “unofficial” participants
- When are participants most involved
- How conflict was handled, formally or informally
- How much power participants had to shape the project, as opposed to just evaluating predefined alternatives
- Did a specific agency or group greatly influence the course of the debate
- Could things have been done differently

Some participants had more to say about some of these questions than about others. If a participant had no particular insight or opinion to offer about a question, we omit that response from the discussion below.

## **What was the problem that the process was intended to solve?**

### **Citizen**

**C1:** ... defined the AMR problem as “public involvement on a messy project”. ... stated that the main reason to get involved on the Task Force was because no one from the Grand Avenue Business Association had offered to sit on the Task Force and that the remaining make-up of the Task Force was “mainly residential”. ... felt that the “commercial neighbors” should also be involved in any neighborhood decisions that affect the traffic levels ... .

**C2, C3:** Both held similar but not exactly the same views of the AMR problem. C2 believes that the neighborhood (his) had to “get something out of” opening up AMR to more traffic, and supported the idea of a two-lane road open to the north end, but with the addition of a neighborhood park facility “as far east as possible” along side the roadway. C3 likes the idea of a neighborhood park, and wanted to see “more green space” in the neighborhood, but wasn’t sure about whether a two-lane or four-lane road connection on the north end of the neighborhood made sense. Both believed that other groups, particularly representatives of Neighborhoods First! and the south side groups who wanted to connect AMR at both ends, were “too extreme” and that a “middle ground and middle voice” was necessary in the AMR EIS Task Force representation. During the last Task Force for AMR, in the early 1990s, neither was named to represent an organization on the Task Force but both attended all formal meetings of the Task Force in their entirety.

**C4:** ... believed that a solution needed to be found that “met the needs of the region and the local neighborhoods”. ... described the problem as an outgrowth of the “nature of the City of St. Paul” in that the City wished to look at “different types of transportation systems” in the Ayd Mill Road corridor, and a possible modal switch in the Ayd Mill Road alignment. ... personally felt the Task Force “was stupid to exclude” the study of a commuter rail line on the AMR alignment, as it “already has Amtrak in place, is down in a trench and unlikely to offend neighbors, and in an underused corridor”. He now laments that because staff did not “want to look at commuter rail we are now at a point a mere ten years later where it makes sense to do so”.

**C5:** ... stated the problem as “interstate freeway traffic using Lexington Parkway as a connector when there was a viable alternative (Ayd Mill Rd) to take its place.” ... said that the increasing traffic levels made neighborhood streets such as Lexington Pkwy. “not safe for pedestrians, or neighborhoods” and said that it was “theory in practice to stop building new roads, but people are getting hurt in the neighborhood because of traffic increases”.

### **Neutral**

**N1:** ... defines the problem as “what to do with Ayd Mill Road”. ... further elaborated by asking whether the roadway should be connected, or non-connected (as it is today), and said that pedestrian and traffic issues are different on either end of the road and “no one will be totally happy” with the way it finally turns out.

**N2:** ... stated that the traffic issues on Lexington Pkwy by Ayd Mill Rd and the resulting noise were the main problems that needed to be solved as part of the Ayd Mill Rd. process. ... the primary point of concern for N2 is the impact traffic will have on north end connection points.

## **City**

**SP1, SP2:** ... indicated that the “problem” of the study was a pretty clean traffic problem. The intersection of Lexington and Randolph had a large volume of accidents caused by the increased volume of traffic on the narrow, two-lane roadway (20,000 vehicles/day). SP2 stated that the problem was compounded with the high number of access points for driveways, alleys, schools and businesses along the parkway, and that a “second stage area” where the same problems were occurring was at the intersection of Selby and Snelling Avenue on the north side of the project area.

**SP3:** ... defined the problem as “differences of opinion” and indicated that it was a “challenge to keep people focused on the transportation issues in front of them”. ... said that the City of Saint Paul was “very clear up front” about what the transportation problems where in the AMR area and that the study was NOT intended to find out “what to do with Ayd Mill Road”, but rather to find a “solution to transportation issues in this part of the city”. ... also indicated that there was an “underlying assumption” that Ayd Mill Road could help in some way with solving some of the transportation problems in the area.

---

## **Who was the “champion” for the project?**

### **Citizen**

**C1:** ... nominated Charleen Zimmer of SRF Consulting Group as the “champion” and said she did “a good job”. ... said that Mike Madsen (Merriam Park representative) “made sense” in the process, and compared Mike Klassen, the City of Saint Paul Public Works employee charged with overseeing the AMR process, as “John Wayne”.

**C2, C3:** C2 felt Mike Klassen of the City of Saint Paul “knew more than he let on” and grudgingly admitted that he might also be the “champion” of getting the AMR project through the EIS process. C3 did not feel the same way about Klassen and said “he did a good job for the City”, but also agreed that he should be considered the “champion” of the AMR project.

**C4:** The champions of the process were described by C4 as the City of Saint Paul and the City’s Public Works staff members. ... added that the process was begun under the auspices of Mayor Jim Scheibel during his term in office while asking the question “how shall we deal with the potential traffic problems in the future”, but that he “didn’t have much to do with it”.

**C5:** ... named several champions of the project, the primary being Mike Klassen of the City of Saint Paul’s Public Works department and lead staff person in charge of the Ayd Mill Rd. Task Force and Draft EIS process. ... stated that Klassen was the “fairest person” and “had all the

facts and really listened to participants”. ... called Klassen the “unsung hero” of City of Saint Paul municipal projects.

Other champions C5 later named within the interview included now Mayor and former City of Saint Paul Senator Randy Kelly and also Highland Villager columnist Jane McClure.

### **Neutral**

**N1:** ... response was “I don’t know if there is one” when asked this question, then elaborated by stated “possibly Mike Klassen, as he was with the process all the time, or Mike Casey (a member of the Task Force), who tried to be deliberative and fair, or even both AMR Task Forces, although they got frustrated at the end”. ... finally stated that the champion designation “would simply depend upon what you think the solution for the road might be”.

### **City**

**SP1:** ... felt that Klassen was the champion of this project for the way in which he “maneuvered” the project through the political process.

**SP4:** ... said that he (himself) was the “champion” of the Ayd Mill Road Draft EIS process, as he was “told directly” by members of the Planning Commission to “get the job done”.

---

## **Your understanding of what the process was intended to accomplish and what would be done with the results, was information adequate for this**

### **Citizen**

**C1:** The AMR process had “too much information, most of it useless”, according to C1. ... said that “people lost interest in the process as it took too long, and businesses did not want to show up”. ... felt that there was “no specific charge or goal to the project” and that the Task Force “floated lots of trial balloons to keep the process going for several years”. He characterized the entire AMR EIS process as “spitting in the wind”.

**C4:** ... stated that the product that resulted during the preparation of the entire EIS for AMR was a “reflection of the most aggressive and strident opposition to Ayd Mill Road”. ... added that the way in which the EIS Preferred Alternative selection took place created conflict by the choice of personnel the City of Saint Paul selected. ... indicated that the “style was counterproductive” of one particular Public Works staff person as he went “everywhere” and “knew everything” about what was going on about the project rather than letting participants make their own personal decisions about what was important in the alternative selection process. ... believes that an administrative decision was made early on to exclude other options for the AMR corridor like commuter rail, and that other alternatives, like the greenway/park alternative and the housing

options came up to a year later after other transportation modes along the corridor were discounted by St. Paul city public works staff persons.

... said he did not feel that “not enough information was the issue here”. ... stated that the only point in the process where information was not sufficient was during the discussion about a possible downtown St. Paul westbound connection from I-35E to WB I-94. At the time the members of the Task Force were considering this alternative, Mn/DOT was “unable” to provide documentation to the members of the Task Force that such a connection was possible, according to C4. ... indicated that it was only some months later, after the extensive personal investigation of another Task Force Member, Tim Kennedy of the Summit Hill neighborhood, that Mn/DOT “suddenly turned up documentation” about the possible westbound I-94 connection, including potential interchange designs showing that the connection was possible but expensive. ... said that the “issue got so contentious that a subcommittee was set up known as the “Design Subcommittee” to deal with the downtown connection issue, and that C4 ending up serving on the subcommittee when Mn/DOT demonstrated a design that had been presented during the construction of I-35E in the 1960s. ... said that the Design Subcommittee “was never given the option of voting for a downtown connection to westbound I-94”, and to C4’s knowledge, some members of the Design Subcommittee were “told by others higher-up” to not go any further with this alternative because of its cost implications and potential other factors.

**C5:** ... said that the City of Saint Paul representatives and SRF Consulting Group staff were “great and very respectful” during the process. ... elaborated by saying that staff members to the Task Force “showed the history and all of the details of the project to Task Force representatives” and the information and the way in which it was presented was “always available” upon request. ... said that Klassen would “review all the facts” for each representative and felt it was “my role to pull out and synthesize the relevant and significant information for my organization”.

## **Neutral**

**N1:** ... described the challenge of covering the story as a “ten-sided” event, and said it was very hard to cover. ... felt the AMR process “could not have been done any other way” as it fits the requirements for a “small area plan” that are required as part of the City of Saint Paul’s planning process for its long-term plan. ... said city officials “did it the best way they could” and went beyond what was required by offering other areas of the city, like the St. Anthony Park area, seats on the process, and they declined to participate. According to N1, the City cast a “wide net” on traffic and land use issues and will end up “probably getting sued over it anyway”.

**N2:** ... understanding of the Ayd Mill Rd Draft EIS process was to “take the traffic off of a 4 block area of South Lexington Parkway”. ... added that “funding problems” created a problem in obtaining results. ... felt the information that was presented in the process was useful, timely and at times “overwhelming”.

## **City**

**SP1, SP2:** Both stated that they believed that the “city’s approach was well-founded” with regard to the process used for the Ayd Mill Road Draft EIS. Neighborhoods were “ready for

something” at the beginning of the process, according to SP1, and “they treated each other respectfully”, but ended up “losing the focus of what was trying to be done”, mainly because of the time lags due to lack of funding.

The project started “grossly underfunded” according to both, and the “EIS cost way more than it should have”. Both indicated that the “political side of the problem” occurred as the project went through the Planning Commission process. City representatives went out and spoke with all major stakeholders in the process, most especially the District Councils. After speaking with those who appeared interested in the problem, city staff put together a list of those groups and/or organizations that would logically be involved in the discussions. This group, which ultimately became the Task Force of the project, included District Councils on the north and south side of the project area, local Business Associations, Ramsey County, Mn/DOT, and representatives from Dakota County.

According to SP2, the Task Force “worked quite well”. ... stated that staff from the City outlined the problem and provided the goals and objectives to the Task Force, then took the document, which ultimately became the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), to the Task Force and asked members “what do you see as solutions?” ... said that the process was “stepped”, and compared goals and objectives that ultimately led to the creation of ten alternatives for Ayd Mill Road. ... did state that despite this view of the “success” of the process of creating the Draft EIS, there “were some dissenters” as the process moved along “pretty cleanly in the scoping process”.

One of the biggest problems with the process, according to SP1 and SP2, was the lack of money available to make the project flow. It took another two years after the initial scoping process and alternative development to get the project moving again. Some of the issues that were identified by both as the project lagged due to lack of funding included a change in the makeup of the City Council members, a Mayor who was “not interested” in the process or problem, and the fact that a Final EIS did not end up as the main result of the process which occurred throughout the late ‘80s and early ‘90s. Both stated that “time and money” were the key components that seemed to be lacking in the Ayd Mill Road Draft EIS process and components that caused problems down the road for the entire project. SP2 stated that “he would never do it this way again”, indicating that first the money and a timelier process would have to be identified before undertaking such a process again.

When a preferred alternative was finally identified by the Task Force and City Council, there were no funds to finish the project, according to SP1. Since any potential funding for the Ayd Mill Road project was “way out in the future”, significant transportation industry changes would occur that may ultimately change the final alternative chosen, according to SP1. SP2 indicated that there were three groups who “predominantly opposed” the preferred alternative—“the park group”, the “anti-urban sprawl folks” (which included some “bikers”), and those who believe “transit is the answer to everything”. While these groups did not “stymie the project”, according to SP2, “the process seems more controversial if they have more time to complain”.

According to both, “Ayd Mill Road was not the number #1 priority for the Department of Public Works”. Funding had been identified and work had already started on both the Phalen and Shephard Road corridors and the department felt that those projects were critical as “public support and funding are very important”. However, they both indicated that they were “pretty

happy with how the Ayd Mill Rd. project turned out” and felt that the information that the Task Force received was “good and succinct”. During the Draft EIS alternative selection process, they broke the Task Force down into subcommittees—one to study design, one to look at traffic-related issues and one to look at property value changes based on alternative selection. City staff developed a weighted rating system at the request of the Task Force Chair, Steve Gordon, for the Final Alternative vote. SP2 stated that he believed that the “majority of Task Force members wanted the two-lane extension” alternative and that there “were enough votes to make that selection”. However, a “problem” in the process occurred when the City Council agreed to hold the meetings on the final selection alternative after the city council elections, SP2 stated. He said the linear park issue “made it difficult—if it would have been an urban sprawl issue, we would have attacked it differently, but it became a local project issue because Dakota and Ramsey counties ran away”.

In further discussion about the process, SP2 said that the linear park option, proposed by a District Council to include a downtown connection, “did not have a big benefit for the cost” as “lots of building would have to come down for a maximum benefit of about 1000 trips per day”. SP2 said that the Planning Commission “took the linear park alternative out of the process”, and other alternatives, such as the “unbuild vs. no-build”, light rail transit and busway options were also looked at but “did not survive in the final analysis” of potential Ayd Mill Road options.

**SP4:** ...understanding of the process was to “move forward alternatives” and to reach a “reasonable, informed process”. In response to a question from the interviewer as to whether there was an overall problem with the AMR process used, SP4 responded “no, the process was not the problem—the public participation at the end of the project was a good thing, and the alternatives that remained at the end of the process were narrowed and better-defined”. ... went on to state that earlier in the scoping process the Planning Commission had eliminated the linear park alternative as it “wasn’t reasonable” and “did not serve the best interests of the City Council”. But the City Council “put the alternative back in the Final EIS” according to SP4, who then went on to state “if the composition of the Task Force had been fair and balanced, there would not have been a problem with the AMR Task Force”.

---

## **How were participants chosen?**

### **Citizen**

**C1:** According to C1, each Community Council had the right to appoint its own member to the Task Force, as did the Selby-Snelling Business Association, the Grand Avenue Business Association and the W. 7<sup>th</sup>/Fort Road Business group. ... indicated that no other business associations located north of 94 wished to participate in the project, and C1 took on the role of reporting about the AMR project to the Midway Chamber of Commerce, which kept itself in the background and off of the official Task Force for most of the time that C1 sat on it as a member.

**C2, C3:** Both indicated that the Community Councils in the area designated specific people as their representatives in this process. C3 also said that “people had to insist that the last fifteen minutes of the Task Force meetings were open to the public”, and said that C3 had always

chosen to use the public time at meetings to voice concerns about the process and current Task Force proceedings. Neither felt that a “lack of information” was the problem with either Task Force or public citizen representation at meetings, and both indicated that they had received all of the information as members of the public that the Task Force members also had received.

**C4:** ... said that the local Community District Councils each had an appointment to make via recommendations to the City and then the Mayor formally appointed these members. ... thought the Mayor “stayed out of” the process for selecting candidates chosen by the “business associations” involved in the AMR process. ... “always wondered” who might have been behind the appointments to the Task Force, as between the years of 1995-1999 the “pro-connect forces didn’t do a very good job looking after their own interests”. ... felt that the residents on the north end “were not very active as they preferred to leave things the way they were” and that the south end residents were “key in getting things going, but they did not prevail and ended up with very little power on the Task Force”. ... said that the Neighborhoods First! and linear park alternative supporters did not get involved “until the very end of the process”.

**C5:** ... stated that official participants were nominated by the local District Council (or Community Council) as C5 was .... ... did not comment about whether or not they were representative of the broader stakeholder base, but did indicate feeling “outnumbered and not politically savvy” at AMR Task Force meetings and in community debate sessions. ... said that the Ayd Mill Road process was “vulnerable to politically-savvy people, especially those left over from the RIP-35E discussion in the 1960s and 1970s” and felt that “other voices needed to be heard”.

## **Neutral**

**N1:** In N1’s words, participants were chosen by the District Community Councils and “there were a ton of them”. ... indicated that some unofficial participants in the process, like the Ayd Mill Road Coalition members, “tried and tried to get involved in the process” but had no luck, as “people had stacked the meetings where votes were taken and major points discussed”.

## **City**

**SP3:** The Planning Commission appointed members of the Advisory Task Force, according to SP3. Representatives were chosen from each of the nearby District Councils, Midway Chamber of Commerce, Grand Avenue Business Association and other area stakeholders. City staff members and the Planning Commission members determined which groups would participate in the process and how it would be conducted. All meetings were open to the public. The last ten minutes of each meeting was designed to allow public comment on any matter before the Advisory Task Force. ... believes that the stakeholder representation was “good” with respect to the AMR process. “Unofficial” stakeholders had a role at the end of the process, according to SP3. ... believed they came into play after the Draft EIS was published, and specifically mentioned Neighborhoods First! as one of the “unofficial” groups in the process. SP3 stated that representatives from this group totaled about “one or two people who had not attended any of the meetings up to that point” and who “came into the process late”. ... felt that these representatives worked “outside of the process” and tried to bring in other environmental groups with them. ...

described the unofficial stakeholder process as one where unofficial stakeholders “would attend a public meeting where Ayd Mill Road was on the agenda and would speak out against the project as meeting spectators”.

**SP4:** ... said that the composition of the Task Force was “a major mistake in terms of process”. ... estimated that the total number of neighborhood organizational votes in the process were 16, “without a simple system for designating the same number of votes among district councils in the area”. Other organizations, such as the RIP-35E coalition, the Bicycle Advisory Task Force, the St. Paul Planning Commission and the local Business Associations, held a total of 9 votes toward the final alternative selection of the AMR process. ... also stated that there was a recurrent “problem compounded by the passage of time” in the AMR process. ... explained this as “some members would go on, some would go off the Task Force when their organization’s appointment had ended, and there was a constant re-education of Task Force members that needed to occur throughout the process”. ... also mentioned that the “lack of funding contributed directly to the length of time the process took”, as the City of St. Paul had funded the process through the official scoping phase, but had to “wait for more funding before a final alternative could be selected”. ... stated that “these things should not be started until all the funding is in place”.

---

## **When in the process were participants most involved?**

### **Citizen**

**C1:** ... felt that most people were involved in the AMR discussions when it was apparent a vote was to be made in the near future.

**C2, C3:** Both said that many more people became involved in the process when the voting for alternatives took place.

**C4:** According to C4, the room was “packed” to observe the voting for alternative selection, and a “couple of task force members still did not understand the point system up to the vote time”. ... also observed that the audience was packed with Neighborhoods First and South Lexington people. ... said that while those groups “finally showed up at the vote meeting, they never seemed to be able to pack a room otherwise, and were not organized into a pressure group of any kind”.

**C5:** ... felt that most participants were drawn into the Ayd Mill Road Draft EIS alternative selection process when the Linear Park option was chosen by the Task Force. ... said that a non-transportation alternative such as the Linear Park option was a “bad thing as it drew out the process” but also stated that it was a “good thing from the public participation process standpoint” as citizens were able to make their choice for a different option clear to policymakers.

## **Neutral**

**N1:** ... felt that participants were drawn in “all the way throughout the whole process” and that there was “behind the scenes stuff” going on in networking between and among neighborhood District Councils and during the monthly reporting of Ayd Mill Road Task Force meeting results.

**N2:** ... believes that in most situations like the Ayd Mill Road process, more participants are drawn in to the process when a final decision is being made by the Task Force.

## **City**

**SP3:** ... said that stakeholders had been involved in the process since the “beginning” or late 1980s, when traffic counts were first undertaken. ... indicated that scoping meetings were “open” from the beginning of the process, and that people in the neighborhood had the opportunity to also attend other meetings with District Community Councils in the area. All information was presented formally to the Citizen’s Task Force representatives in writing, and many subcommittee meetings were also held to review specific details on such things as travel demand modeling and other intricate and related details. All subcommittee and committee members were actively involved in reporting on findings and recommendations of these groups, according to SP3, who also stated that the process took “a fairly long time” and that it was intended “to bring along members of the Task Force every step of the way”.

... indicated that the “broader commission” was where things were “presented in summary” as they had already been intricately presented with full details at the subcommittee level. ... indicated that any persons in opposition to the findings of the subcommittees were allowed to ask questions and were provided with any detailed information from subcommittee meetings. ... named representatives of groups that requested additional technical information in this regard—Bill Smith of Biko, the consultant representing parties interested in a linear park alternative; the Midway Chamber of Commerce, the Selby-Snelling Business Association and the Grand Avenue Business Association. ... stated that there were “many opportunities” for any stakeholders in the process to receive sophisticated, technical information to further analyze available alternatives.

**SP4:** ... indicated that more participants tend to be drawn into the process “as the conclusion draws near”. ... said attendance at Task Force meetings peaked before the release of the Draft EIS, and then peaked again right before the final ranking of possible alternatives for the AMR project.

---

## **How was conflict handled?**

### **Citizen**

**C1:** “Lots of Task Force meetings were pretty divided”, according to C1. ... said there was a “great divide” between the issues of neighbors owning residences and the business access concerns of local businesses and shops.

**C2, C3:** Both said they felt that conflict was handled “officially” at Task Force meetings and that it did not “spill over” to elected officials. C2 did not think the “politicians cared very much” about the results of the EIS process.

**C4:** ... stated that “when conflict surfaced, it was handled by creating a ‘module’ like a subcommittee or additional report to be turned in by the consultant”, but that it was never dealt in a different manner. ... agreed with the idea that when a new member came on board it was easier to provide them with information that had been previously gathered and reviewed by subcommittee members rather than starting over again, as Task Force membership continually changed.

**C5:** When the Linear Park option was introduced, C5 said that it became a “rallying point” and “got the process into the public eye”. ... said it was a “wonderful igniter to get people to do something” but felt that the same attention that was given to the Linear Park alternative was not given to the rest of the alternatives offered to the Task Force. ... also indicated feeling “tangential to the neighborhood group who was supposed to represent me”, referring to neighbors who were becoming increasingly involved with the Neighborhoods First! group and a “no-connect” alternative.

... offered one clear example of how conflict had been handled. ... was “summoned” to a meeting called by Saint Paul City Councilmember Jerry Blakey and told to bring “only one other supporter from your side”. ... did as requested, indicating uncertainty of why the meeting had been called and what to expect. After arriving at the meeting, was in a room with “mostly Neighborhoods First! people”, who pressured C5 about views and position on the Task Force. ... indicated that Blakey remained “outside the fray” and simply called the meeting because others had requested him to do so. ... felt that there was much “outside influence” beyond Task Force meetings and that the conflict was “ugly”. ... said that the conflict has “trickled down” to even today, when neighbors on the other side of the debate still treat C5 “differently” because of views on the project.

## **Neutral**

**N1:** “It was handled both ways, in public and out of the public’s eye”, according to N1. ... said that the Planning Commission Co-Chairs were “never the same” and “things were not handled consistently” over the long term AMR process. ... praised city staff and the consultant used in the process for “handling conflict well” as the Chair of the Task Force could be “very aggressive” at times. ... asked the hypothetical question “what level of information does one present in these types of situations?” and indicated that “people in these neighborhoods are very savvy about the issue and clearly understand, in some cases better than the City and the consultant, what the impacts will be” as they tend to be professional persons and activists who are “in-tune with the Community Council process.” ... went on to explain that the City Council had a problem with credibility in the Ayd Mill Road process, as in 1992 the Council was made “part-time” and had fewer resources to work with in regard to issues like AMR. That lack of resources has been the key to the success of the District Councils, in N1’s opinion, as they are relied upon more heavily by neighborhood residents for up-to-date information.

**N2:** ... believes that conflict was handled “publicly” and “within the process.”

## City

**SP1, SP2:** ... indicated that conflict was handled formally, through votes on the Task Force. In some cases, they indicated that “outsiders” to the process “lobbed grenades” at public meetings, and came in late to the process. One group that was identified in particular was “Citizens for Safe Streets”. Despite the continually-changing group of stakeholders within this process, the City of Saint Paul “chose not to go on the attack” and “did not try to squelch” the information handed out in Task Force meetings or to the press.

**SP3:** ... said that under the leadership of the Task Force Chair “everyone had a say”. ... felt the process was “respectful” although there were some “heated conversations” after meetings. ... stated that if a person had a particular concern, the technical staff and consultants would “work directly” with the person to clear up any issues that arose during the process.

**SP4:** ... did not get many phone calls from members of the public about information that had been presented to members of the Task Force and general public, and that “lots of written information was consistently presented” to members. ... also stated that there was “a lot of information discussed outside of Task Force meetings” by Task Force members talking with each other, and described these conversations as “frenetic”.

---

## How much power did participants in the process have?

### Citizen

**C1:** ... stated that “people thought they had the power of the pope” and honestly believed that what actions they might have been taking during the process would be accomplished. ... cited a specific group, Neighborhoods First! as the controlling interest and the area where a lot of “controversy” was focused. ... called Neighborhoods First! a “Johnny-come-lately” in the AMR process, and an entity that pitted “business against residents” in the AMR discussions.

**C2, C3:** C2 said the neighborhood people “had no power” and “all the power was on the Task Force”. C3 said that all the power “went to the City people (staff), and especially to Mike Klassen”.

**C4:** ... felt that most of the power rested with those involved with the process, and indicated that there was no power outside of the process. ... amended that statement to say that “some power was outside of the process when the City Council voted to allow one lane in each direction because of the open space issue”. ... said that some participants who were for the linear park alternative “didn’t have power at the beginning but learned how to get it” by the time the process was complete, but then “they learned that the decision moved to the Mayor’s Office and they really didn’t have any power when the process was over”.

**C5:** ... had “only one vote” in the process, and felt “vastly outnumbered” during the voting process. ... perception of what occurred during the voting process was that “more people voted for a connection using Ayd Mill Road than not” but despite this the Linear Park alternative was

chosen. ... was unsure of how the vote could have been conducted differently except perhaps a vote between a “connect” and a “nonconnect” rather than between many alternatives.

When asked whether participants may have felt any of the spending areas might have compensated for a particular option loss, C5 said that at various times within the discussion of alternatives City of Saint Paul staff persons had discussed the option of a pedestrian bridge and walking path along Ayd Mill Road and decking over the Linear Park but said clearly that no funding was available for any of these enhancements. ... did not feel that the process had been constrained to a set of predefined options as C5 had suggested another alternative for South Lexington Parkway—one lane in each direction with a bicycle lane on the side—as a way to reduce traffic flow but provide bicycle access on the road.

## **Neutral**

**N1:** ... said that the participants in the AMR process “had more power than they thought they did” as the AMR process was part of a larger discussion about the City’s Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) and the neighborhoods and the District Councils were able to handpick residents to represent the views of their area, with those recommendations going to the Mayor and members of the City Council every two years.

**N2:** ... stated that the Task Force had the power to shape the process and its outcomes, and that there was some “frustration” by others who were unable to provide input into the process, but would not elaborate on this when asked.

## **City**

**SP1, SP2:** ... stated that the Task Force members all had power to make the final decision within the Draft EIS scoping process.

**SP3:** ... indicated that there were some problems the Ayd Mill Road process had going into the technical study. ... indicated that the initial request for ideas for alternatives from Task Force members was not restricted simply to transportation alternatives, but also included two environmental and park alternatives (the first, a redevelopment project for housing along Ayd Mill Rd; the second, the development of a linear park along Ayd Mill Rd). ... stated that the “housing folks” at the City of St. Paul were asked for their ideas, as were the Parks and Recreation staff persons at the City. After these ideas were offered, the City’s public works staff was opposed to both proposals; however, the Task Force recommended that the linear park proposal advance forward as an alternative in the scoping process that followed. Ultimately, the St. Paul City Council voted to keep the alternative in the process while bowing to neighborhood pressures, despite the best objections of public works officials who felt that the linear park alternative had “no transportation relevance”, according to SP3.

... said that the City Council should have been “up front” with the neighborhood groups and limited the review of “legitimate alternatives” to those that contained transportation system options. ... felt that at this point of the Ayd Mill Road process this juncture was a “clear point that could have moved the process forward” instead of letting it lag for a number of years to follow. ... also indicated that from a “design perspective” there was “nothing wrong” with

addressing neighborhood concerns, but that the whole point of the process was to “funnel down alternatives”, not add them. ... final point was that “every time a decision needed to be made by the City Council, they would not do so”.

**SP4:** ... felt participants in the AMR process had a lot of power, and that the process was “a legitimate one that got subjected to a lot of mischief that made it not work”. ... indicated that the voting process that was used to select a specific alternative was modeled after the STAR project rating system and that “Mike Klassen (public works staff person) has used a similar process in the scoping document”. ... also said that a “balanced composition of the Task Force would have prevented what occurred – the selection of the linear park alternative – as a product of the process”.

---

## **Did a specific agency or group influence the progress of the debate?**

### **Citizen**

**C1:** ... reiterated that Neighborhoods First! pretty much “controlled the agenda” of the AMR discussions and the outcome.

**C2, C3:** Both said that Neighborhoods First! heavily influenced the progress of the debate, and that they “shut out” other voices from voting for other options such as a two-lane roadway without a park option.

**C4:** The group that C4 felt was “most effective” was the Neighborhoods First! group, because they had the “most to lose or gain, were willing to put in the most time, did the most organizing and did more research than any other group”.

**C5:** ... said that that the group “Neighborhoods First!” definitely influenced the progress of the debate and that the local District Councils were “taken over” by the group. ... also said that neighborhood business associations, particularly the Selby-Snelling Business Association, also influenced the discussion because of their concerns about connection points on the north end of the Ayd Mill Road corridor.

### **Neutral**

**N1:** ... said that “everybody influenced the progress of the debate at some time or another in different ways” and that the neighborhoods had a “lot of sway” and the project “rocked bath and forth. Because of the influence of contrasting groups at different times, N1 believes that is why the final compromise, a two-lane road, was chosen, as it was the “middle compromise” among all the groups that were players in the process. ... added that most people would indicate that the media and local papers had power in the discussion, but the reality is that the AMR process was “one of the hardest and most difficult issues I have ever witnessed”.

**N2:** ... stated that there was “some confusion on the vote” and that the vote “favored neighborhood groups”. ... also stated that the “process was set up by the Chair of the Task

Force” to the best of his knowledge. ... added that city staff members, acting as “technical experts”, had ‘great influence on the process’.

## City

**SP2:** ... stated that the Task Force indirectly influenced the progress of the debate in this project through their contacts with City Councilmembers as the final decision about what to do rested with the City Council.

**SP3:** ... believed that the Task Force had “great” influence in this process. ... felt that discussion was held “on many different issues” and that some people were “more influential” than others, especially the “RIP 35E” group, which raised a “number of issues”, and, at the end of the process, the “Neighborhoods First” group, that had a “no progress” perspective.

**SP4:** ... said that the “Neighborhoods First!” group influenced the progress of the debate by “going around to all the local meetings and indicating that their members did not get the information that had been presented”. ... said the group wanted a “no-build” alternative in the AMR process. ... also said that the “public works staff and consultants influenced the progress of the debate in a positive way” and were “pretty responsive” to requests from the Task Force group and general public.

---

## Could things have been done any differently?

### Citizen

**C1:** ... said the voting process was “done poorly” and indicated that each organization had one vote per lead member, but alternates had no votes, according to recollection of the voting process. ... said that the “votes were there for a linear park” based on the way the point totals added up.

... suggested that neighborhoods and local businesses should only be involved in the conceptual planning of controversial projects like Ayd Mill Road rather than the technical planning for such a project (i.e., trying to determine if the road should be a two-lane vs. four-lane structure). ... also suggested that the Task Force should have been limited in size and structure, that separate subcommittees could report to the Task Force but that Task Force members should not have served in both capacities, and that the Task Force should have “a charge and power” to make the final decision stick.

Finally, C1 indicated that there should be money already allocated for the project, and it should not be “just a pipe dream”. ... summarized the interview by calling the AMR process “one of the worst he’s ever been on” and repeating that the Task Force was simply “a trial balloon put up by the City and a consultant firm”.

**C2, C3:** Both said that if the players would remain the same throughout the whole process it would work better. C2 added that “if the City knew that it couldn’t do the road for financial

reasons, they should have never started the process”. C3 would not have changed his viewpoint at all, and would have still pushed for a two-lane road connections with a park next to it on the east side of the railroad tracks.

As far as the voting system for the final alternative selection was concerned, both felt the system was “not good” and that the “points were off”. C3 said he felt that the Task Force Chair “misrepresented the opinions of the Task Force” when announcing the vote process and final results.

**C4:** According to C4, things could have been handled differently in that there were some citizens who were willing to do their own research, and they “should have been allowed to do so”, rather than thought of as “dumb committee members”. ... felt that the approach used by City staff members on the project was to “use the professional staff—the consultants—to do the work” as they did not want Task Members to “spend their time on these issues”. ... said that the AMR Task Force was “so structured” and “laid out in advance”. ... indicated it was “remarkable” in the level of attendance at Task Force and subcommittee meetings over a multi-year period, and attributed this to the way in which the Task Force was laid out, something like an “organizational chart” of a large agency. ... said that the City of St. Paul structured the Task Force by requesting appointed members from each of the affected Community District Councils and local business members, as the “District Councils have a reputation of attracting ‘gatekeepers’ through the funnel of district council organizational structures”. In a discussion about the makeup of the Task Force itself, C4 indicated that there is “a point where groups enter differently than other groups” and illuminated his point by remarking that “environmental groups pretty much start at the beginning of a process” while “business groups tend to wait until the end of the process when they see how it might affect them”. ... also felt that a basic problem exists with all transportation project public processes in that they “rarely attract basic commuters, or those without an axe to grind” ... “had never seen an EIS process involved with people who are simply trying to be mobile.”

... stated that the “Chair of the Task Force and Mike Klassen of the City locked themselves in a room and figured out a point system that was designed to be misleading”.

... “respected the structure of the task force” and could not recall a time when the votes were “altered”. ... added that the Task Force actually “mobilized and polarized the no-connect people” and they became “really energized”.

... stated that the AMR process was “unique, as it had an actual citizen process with its own organizational chart”, and that other projects, including the Stillwater Bridge process, only opened up the process to local communities rather than “ordinary citizens”. ...thought the AMR process “was good that it was done that way” and wished that “more EIS processes would confront the fact that there are existing groups that need representation”. ... believes that in most processes there is an “inability or unwillingness of the people to show up” and that people “don’t want to get involved until they see the threat”. ... said that the AMR process was different in that all task force members had assigned seats at each meeting. ... also indicated that the state’s TIP process is “change-making” and that “those impacted do not want change”. ... said that it is difficult to involve people who “don’t want change” and that transit advocates have “never

figured out a way to get regular transit riders involved”. ... said that a process “can be tweaked, but that’s not the whole problem, culture is the real issue”.

**C5:** When asked this question, C5 was unable to describe how things could have been handled or done differently in the Ayd Mill Road alternative selection process other than changing the way in which the vote was handled to a vote between a “connect” or “nonconnect” alternative and then a further vote between options under either of these two categories.

## **Neutral**

**N1:** ... said there was a problem with a lack of public information from either the Minneapolis or St. Paul newspapers, and that people will get “more organized” if they have information to depend upon in these processes. ... wished agencies would consider “not hiring public relations personnel to control the processes” and indicated that “people get upset when they see a dime wasted on public relations expenditures”. A final comment on this process was “when people know their roles and the project’s boundaries, they are okay with it and will act accordingly”.

## **City**

**SP1, SP2:** ... indicated once again that “money and time” were the two things that had a direct influence on the Ayd Mill Rd. Draft EIS process, and if anything else could have been done differently, they would have “spent more time in the offices of City Councilmembers” and would have made the scoping process of the Draft EIS “more personalized”.

**SP3:** ... said that a man who was representing the group “Neighborhoods First” felt that he was not getting representation from “anyone” during the process and that some groups were “very late” entrants into the process, which caused some angst with Task Force members, who had a “fairly decent consensus” at the final process stages. ... also indicated that the role of the City Council required “decision-making” that wasn’t “altogether popular” and that members of the Council did not “respond to the challenge”. ... added that another challenge occurred when north and south area neighborhoods had “vested interests” and were in competition with one another.

... summarized the Ayd Mill Road EIS process by stating that it was “a good process to look at” and the “most open public information process I’ve ever worked on”. ... felt that it was a “good, structured process” in that members of the “St. Paul community” were part of the Task Force and about 30 people showed up for each Task Force meeting. ... felt it was a “fair” process, and that the City set up the Task Force rules while the Chair of the Task Force set up the ranking and rating process for participants on the final EIS alternative selection vote.

**SP4** In retrospect, SP4 felt that there could have been some things, which, having been handled differently, would have made the AMR process flow “more smoothly”. ... suggested that the City of Saint Paul have a policy in place as to the formal composition of official Task Forces so as to keep the “balance of the task force equal”. ... also suggested that a formal attendance policy be established for members, in order to ensure that Task Force members were “all briefed on the same information at the same time”. ... said that “some Task Force members said they were never told what the rules were” which caused problems prior and during the alternative selection process. ... also stated that during the actual alternative vote “Task Force members publicly

stated how they planned to vote” and provided a copy of written meeting minutes that indicated this had been the case. ... felt that Task Force members should have voted “in private” and without “public input” at the final meeting for alternative selection.

The other thing that SP4 appeared to regret was the process used to assign votes for the final alternative. ... admitted that the process and point system designed for the vote “did not work properly” and that it was “a major problem with the whole process”.