



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH natural resources district

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MEMORANDUM

Date: September 10, 2024

To: Lower Platte South Natural Resources District Board of Directors

From: Will Inselman, Resources Coordinator *WI*

Subject: Minutes for MoPac East – Lied Connector Subcommittee Meeting

On Wednesday, September 4th, 2024, at 5:31 p.m., the MoPac East – Lied Connector subcommittee met in the Large Conference Room. Subcommittee members present: Ray Stevens-Chair, Melissa Baker, Tom Green, Luke Peterson, Anthony Schutz, and Seth Hawkins. Director Bob Andersen was also present. LPSNRD staff in attendance were David Potter, Eric Zach, and Will Inselman. Andrea Gebhart and Lalit Jha (JEO Consulting Group), Alex DeGarmo (Cass County Commissioner), and five members of the public were in attendance.

First on the agenda was an overview of the July 30th public open houses. Andrea Gebhart from JEO provided an overview of the matrix presented to and scored by the public and discussed the public comments received on each alignment. She discussed the key strengths and weaknesses for each alignment that emerged from the written comments. Overall, the two open houses had 105 people attend in person, 100 people participated through online comment, and in total we received 164 comment forms.

Next, staff opened the floor up to the subcommittee Directors for thoughts and comments on their preferred routes to begin the discussion on trying to narrow in on a preferred alternative. The Directors had a clear, immediate interest in Alignments C and D. The Directors stated that Alignment C was the most cost-effective option and was the most direct route. However, there was some uncertainty with the route as Alex DeGarmo from Cass County shared that there would not likely be support from the County for a shared use trail that would close and gate the two, 1-mile minimum maintenance road sections for local traffic and trail traffic only. He also voiced the County's concern over liability of a designated shared use on the road. The sentiment was also mentioned by a couple Directors, stating that safety is a concern when sharing the road with farm equipment.

The conversation then shifted to exploring creative solutions to separate the trail from the road on these two stretches, and if something could be done at or under the 40% (~\$10,000,000 vs ~\$14,000,000) more expensive option of Alignment D. Andrea from JEO reached out to Nathan Boone from Toole Design Group, who conducted the trail design evaluation and asked him to explain why they recommended a shared use approach to the two minimum maintenance sections. Nathan explained that the steep slopes and topography of the existing ROW would not be feasible to separate the trail from the road unless additional ROW was acquired. Directors asked Alex DeGarmo if Cass County Commissioners would be supportive of attempting to purchase

additional ROW and Alex indicated that it would be extremely difficult to obtain additional ROW for these sections.

Despite its lower cost, safety risks, potential landowner resistance, and the need for Cass County's approval, Alignment C became a less feasible option. It was acknowledged by several Directors that these obstacles made it impractical to choose Alignment C at this time, especially at the risk of losing Cass County support.

The Directors then focused their attention on the next most favorable option, Alignment D. A few Directors indicated that while more expensive than Alignment C and less direct, Alignment D did make use of existing NRD property, was a less busy road, and impacted fewer driveways. It is also the current interim route being used by trail traffic so there was familiarity of this route with the local landowners and trail users. The concern of the estimated price difference between Alignment C and D remained a point of conversation for quite some time during the meeting. It was ultimately decided that the risk of delaying this project further and losing Cass County's support of a trail was not worth pursuing Alignment C and that Alignment D was seen as the more straightforward and achievable alignment at this time.

It was moved by Schutz and seconded by Peterson that District staff present Alignment D as the preferred alignment at the September 25th public open house for the final round of public feedback.

Motion Passed: 4-2 (Schutz and Stevens voting NO)

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

PC: MoPac East – Lied Connector subcommittee file