

Goal Setting Workshop Summary

TRUNK HIGHWAY 36 AND LAKE ELMO AVENUE/CSAH 17
INTERSECTION STUDY



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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

The TH 36 and Lake Elmo/CSAH 17 intersection has experienced safety and capacity issues. The intersection has been studied in the past by the County, MnDOT, and City of Lake Elmo to identify potential improvements. With the award of federal funds and need to complete the environmental process, a fresh and comprehensive look at the intersection is being conducted. As a result, Washington County has identified this project to investigate options for access and intersection types. Through a combination of technical analysis, education, outreach, and collaboration, the alternatives developed will be vetted with the stakeholders. The project will culminate in the selection of a preferred alternative to achieve municipal approval and a preliminary design that sets the stage for final design and construction projects to bring the intersection safely and efficiently into the future.

1.2 Goal Setting Workshop Purpose and Key Stakeholders

On October 13th 2021, Washington County convened staff and elected officials from partner agencies to share their background on the project area and discuss goals and priorities for the TH 36 and Lake Elmo/CSAH 17 intersection. Representatives from the following agencies were in attendance:

- City of Lake Elmo
- City of Grant
- Washington County
- MnDOT

2. Goal Setting Workshop

The workshop was kicked off with a review of the meeting purpose and project overview. The meeting then transitioned into small group exercises where the agencies had discussion amongst themselves, and then came together as a whole group to present the outcomes of their small group discussions.

2.1 Small Group Exercise #1

Small group exercise #1 asked attendees to identify issues, needs, and preferred project outcomes by asking the following questions:

Issues and Needs

- What problems do you observe?
- What have you heard from others?



Outcomes

- How will the future intersection be different from today?
- What will be the same?
- What does project success look like?
- What does the area look like in 5 years? 25 years?

2.2 Small Group Exercise #2

Small group exercise #2 asked attendees to identify priorities and tradeoff/limiting factors by asking the following questions:

Priorities

- What is your primary goal for the intersection area?

Tradeoffs and Limiting Factors

- Are there any barriers that may prevent project goals from being achieved?
- Are there competing priorities?

3. Workshop Results and Outcomes

3.1 Workshop Results Format

Discussion from the small group exercises were recorded by group facilitators, and report-outs to the full group were documented using a flip chart. This section of the report summarizes the key results of the meeting. Detailed table notes are reported in **Appendix A**.

3.2 Summary of Themes

The information below summarizes the key themes identified in the report-out as a part of the large group discussion. The detailed flip chart notes can be found in **Appendix B. Figure 1** further summarizes key words and phrases in a word cloud, with the largest words representing themes that were mentioned most frequently.

Issues and Needs

- Safety, crashes
- Delays and congestion related to intersection
- Flooding on south side of TH 36
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety and access (existing and future)
- Preserve Grant business district, access and frontage road
- Maintain Keats Avenue and address safety



Outcomes

- Improve mobility and accessibility
- Improve safety; zero deaths or injuries
- Efficient access from communities to TH 36
- Maintain Grant business district, access, and frontage road
- Minimize City costs
- Minimize impacts to properties
- Provide safe pedestrian, bicycle and snowmobile access across TH 36
- Find solution for Keats Avenue and maintain access
- Adequate, multimodal design of CSAH 17 north and south of TH 36

Priorities

- Safety
- Preserve north side frontage road (60th Street)
- Minimize business and property impacts
- Minimize city cost
- Maintain expressway vision
- Efficient, balanced access
- Keats Avenue
- Cost-feasible project
- Community support

Tradeoffs and Limiting Factors

- Available funding, including County, MnDOT and cities funding
- Time and other constraints due to federal funding and approvals process
- Right-of-way impacts and cost
- Balance between access and mobility
- Wetlands, terrain, and utilities
- Relation to Keats Avenue

Appendix A

DETAILED TABLE NOTES

CITY OF LAKE ELMO

CITY OF GRANT

WASHINGTON COUNTY



City of Lake Elmo Table

- Attendees: Mayor Charles Cadenhead, Councilmember Jeff Holtz, Councilmember Lisa McGinn, Councilmember Katrina Beckstrom, Kristina Handt, Molly Just, Jack Griffin, Commissioner Gary Kriesel
- Facilitator/Note Taker: Steve Weser (Alliant Engineering)

Issues and Needs

- Safety
- Efficient flow of traffic eastbound/westbound
- Improve timing to turn – mobility
- Efficient flow of traffic north and south – through and to access Highway 36
- Close proximity of frontage road on north side is problematic
- No frontage road on south side
- Flooding on south side – property owner concerns
- Consideration for businesses on south side
- Keats – from Keats westbound have to U-turn at CSAH 17 to go westbound on 36
- Outstanding safety issues
- Maintain good access to Bergmans – heavy traffic to this property in the fall, the signal serves them now
- Lack of proper right turn lane on northbound CSAH 17 onto 36
- Right of way and property impacts

Outcomes

- Improve safety for all
- Minimize cost to cities
- Provide frontage Road on south side for access, prefer it to be MNDOT owned
- Improve grades – cars currently get stuck on the south side in the winter (steep grades) with too much grade
- Frontage road on north side will look different
- How far down on Lake Elmo will the improvements go?
- Won't have a signalized intersection,
- Preferably an underpass for CSAH 17 to go under Highway 36 (less impacts to CSAH 17)
- Success is Lake Elmo residents have adequate access to and from Highway 36
- Residents at Keats have safe access to eastbound and westbound Highway 36 – currently speed concerns on Highway 36 (expressway)
- No interruption to businesses, increase business opportunities, have adequate compensation to businesses if they are impacted, provide safe and efficient access to businesses.
- Change in lighting and noise levels
- Desire shoulders carried through on Lake Elmo Avenue – if not dedicated bike/ped facility that extends south, and for vehicles to pull over safely



Priorities

- Safety
- Efficient movement of traffic
- Costs – keep costs to cities down
- Adequate access to serve the area
- Solution for Keats (provide safe access at Keats)
- Movement to westbound Highway 36 – provide safe access
- Minimize impacts to the community on both sides
- Underpass on CSAH 17 to minimize grading along CSAH 17 and impact to transmission lines
- Minimize long term costs to the City – Keep long term maintenance needs minimized

Tradeoffs and Limiting Factors

- Looked at multiple options already
- ROW costs
- Long acceleration lane is needed at Keats
- Wetlands
- Utilities
- Storm water runoff
- Septic field at church
- Upcoming MnDOT project should address Keats intersection
- Proximity to Keats intersection and needs at Keats
- Competing needs between community and MnDOT

City of Grant Table

- Attendees: Mayor Jeff Huber, Councilmember Jeff Schafer, County Commissioner Fran Miron
- Facilitator/Notetaker: Tim Burkhardt (Alliant Engineering)

Issues and Needs

- Safety is #1 – fatal accidents - more traffic with the Stillwater bridge
- Traffic flow – both in and out of Grant as well as the TH 36 corridor
- More traffic now on Lake Elmo Ave due to Manning being under construction
- Explore bike/ped crossing
- Business district – this is Grant’s only business district – nowhere to expand – businesses are close to the frontage road – must maintain access – frontage road is critical - don’t want to lose businesses
- Keep Lake Elmo connected to TH 36
- Keats – north side – this is a main artery into Grant – would prefer to keep – has good sight distance but may be hard to see signal – Keats is also important to Lake Elmo
- Snowmobiles – need safe crossings of TH 36 – but maybe another location is better?
- Get residents in and out in a safe manner



Outcomes

- Overpass with bike lanes
- Entrance ramp going WB for sure
- OK if entrance ramps not on N side
- Maintain robust access to businesses
- Success = safety, access, maintain businesses
- Businesses/access at corner could be different
- Try to get bikes and ped across safely (but there is no good facility on south side)
- In 5 years/25 years -- maybe not that different – not that much possibility to grow
- Business density? All on wells and septic – won't change that much. But biz expansion eastward toward Manning? Need to maintain frontage road for future growth
- It's key to keep 60th robust street access
- Continued large lot residential within the corridor
- Expressway concept
- Grant has mostly ag and residential tax base – City participation in cost especially for bike and ped will be very minimal

Priorities

- Safety #1
- Preservation of 60th Street/biz access
- Cost to both the City and to businesses Minimal impacts to the business district and fair compensation if there are impacts
- Preservation and upgrading of Keats on both sides – consideration of Keats should be part of this project

Tradeoffs and Limiting Factors

- Barriers/limiting factors
 - Money – Grant doesn't have money
 - Impacts on businesses, residents and Grant
- Competing Priorities
 - Figuring out tradeoffs would be a Council discussion based on what engineer's propose
 - Could you modernize Keats and not have Lake Elmo access at TH 17?

Washington County Table

- Attendees: Wayne Sandberg, Frank Ticknor, Joe Gustafson
- Facilitator/Notetaker: Joe Gustafson (Washington County)

Issues and Needs

- Congestion (long delays, all directions), especially during peak hour
- Access to TH 36 – driveways and frontage road access often blocked by vehicles
- Safety – crash severity and lack of pedestrian crossings/infrastructure



- Lack of right-of-way – major impacts for any improvement
- Drainage/flooding at Sunnybrook and Bergman
- Operational issues – turn lanes fill up, or are blocked, or are needed and are not existent
- Signal visibility issues
- Lack of turn lanes at nearby intersections (e.g., Discovery Crossing)
- Buberl pit traffic and mud tracking
- Growth in traffic on CSAH 17/65th, 69th Street
- Country Sun Farm is very busy sometimes – driveway is not safe
- Will be the only signal between Century & OH
- Power line easement
- Concerns about TH 36 & Keats Avenue as well
- Lake Elmo to Mahtomedi/Willernie Route
- Fear of impacts/noise
- Proximity to Manning, Keats conflict points
- Difficulty of access to businesses
- Parking overflow
- Snowmobile crossing of TH 36

Outcomes

- High capacity/efficient/convenient access to TH 36 for the area
- Convenient north/south travel/continuity for CSAH 17
- Minimize impacts to private property
- Improve safety for driveway access to businesses
- A solution for Keats Avenue
- Not add county maintenance mileage
- Maintain community character, yet meet community needs
 - Hearing loudest concerns from City of Grant residents
- Improved Safety – zero deaths & injuries
- Efficient east-west travel
- Transit compatible
- Importance of TH 36 to the region
- Compatible with pedestrian/bike plan (future off-road trail)
- In Summary:
 - No signal
 - Businesses still there, thriving
 - Pedestrian access and facilities
 - Up to communities, but TH 36 will continue to grow regardless

Priorities

- No signal for TH 36 (safety & efficiency)
- Provide safer access for properties
- Ensure project is cost-feasible
 - With funding comes requirements
- Community buy-in/consensus/support



Tradeoffs and Limiting Factors

- Funding
- Right-of-way impacts
- NEPA Process and Agency Approvals
 - Federal, state, local watersheds
 - DNR/MPCA
 - FHWA
 - MnDOT Metro AND Central Office
- Terrain/elevation constraints



Appendix B

LARGE GROUP REPORT-OUT FLIP CHART NOTES





The notes below capture the large group report outs as recorded on a flip chart by the meeting facilitator during the meeting. Comments from all four agencies are included. A “(+2)” or similar notation indicates more than one participant had a similar comment.

Issues & Needs

- Safety
 - EB/WB
 - Time to turn
 - Efficient flow North/South
- Crashes
- Maintain Keats Avenue as an important artery
- Need a south Frontage Road for access
- Capacity
- Mitigate flooding on the south side of TH 36
- Visibility of signal – signal lights sometimes get lost in taillights
- Safety at Keats Avenue getting onto TH 36
- Maintain Expressway vision for TH 36 (versus Freeway)
 - Expressway – managed access
 - Freeway – no at-grade access
- Limit right-of-way impacts
- Increased traffic on Lake Elmo Avenue has been noticeable
- Bikes on Lake Elmo Avenue
- Grant Business District access
- North Frontage Road is too close to TH 36
- Maintain north Frontage Road from Manning Ave to Keats Ave
- Maintain acceleration lanes at Keats Avenue
- Lacking turn lanes onto TH 36 cross roadways
- Driveway access on TH 36 is not safe
- Trucks on shoulder from Buberl pit, trucks track dirt onto roadway
- Safety with single TH 36 signal
- Pedestrian maintenance on North side of TH 36 – need for regional funding
- Signal visibility
- Delays
- Congestion
- Access/Frontage Road blocked by traffic
- Crash Severity
- Powerline Easement
- Lacking pedestrian crossings
- CSAH 17 traffic growth, residential access, practical route
- Proximity to Manning Ave / Keats Ave is a constraint
- Not enough right-of-way
- Flooding at Bergman parcel & Sunnybrook Lake



Outcomes

- Fear of noise impacts
- Parking
- Improve mobility & accessibility – acceptable LOS on TH 36
- Improve safety – reduce number and severity of crashes
- Overpass with bike lane
- Reduce commuter travel delay
- On/of ramps on the north side may not be needed
- Large lot residential growth in Grant
- Maintaining access to 60th Street is key
- Maintain business district in Grant
- Expressway, not freeway
- Safe, efficient connections
- Bike/ped access across TH 36, along TH 36 regionally
- Snowmobile access across TH 36
- Address lighting & noise
- Minimize/manage access
- Remove signal
- Improve safety, capacity, and mobility for TH 36 through traffic while keeping expressway vision for corridor and meeting community needs
- Safety
- Minimize city costs (both communities indicated this as a priority)
- CSAH 17 underpass
- Future south side Frontage Road to be owned by MnDOT
- Address grade differentials (cars get stuck NB on CSAH 17 especially during winter)
- Access, shoulder width on CSAH 17 far enough North & South
- Access to NB & SB
- Keats Ave access
- No business interruption
- Zero deaths or injuries
- Efficient, high-capacity access to TH 36
- Recognize TH 36 regional importance – traffic will continue to grow on TH 36
- Convenient North-South travel/continuity for CSAH 17
- Minimize impacts to property
- Maintain business access
- Solution for Keats Avenue
- No mileage added to county maintenance
- Maintain community character
- Meet community needs, especially along CSAH 17
- Transit compatibility



- Compatible with county bike plan

Priorities

- Safety (+3)
- Preserve 60th Street
- Minimize business and property impact (+2)
- Expressway vision
- Minimize city cost (+2)
- Efficiency – which cannot be achieved with a signal (+2)
- Keats Avenue
- Safer property access (+2)
- Ensure project cost is feasible
- Balanced access
- CASH 17 underpass = least amount of impact
- Community support
- Mobility improvement

Tradeoffs and Limiting Factors

- Available city funding
- Funding process takes time
- Keats Avenue needs – alternatively, could be complimentary or provide opportunity
- Funding overall, including MnDOT \$ (MnDOT is in preservation mode) (+3)
- Approvals
- Right-of-way impacts and cost
- Terrain
- Balance access & mobility
- Acceleration lane versus Frontage Road
- Wetlands
- Utilities
- Septic field at the church