

The purpose of this meeting summary is to document attendance and comments gathered at the Blue Earth County Fair held in Garden City from Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, July 30<sup>th</sup>.

Representatives from MnDOT and WSB were in attendance all three days from noon to 5:00 pm.

The event was publicized via a press release and posted on MnDOT's project website. In addition, a MnDOT representative was interviewed by a local news station at the booth on the 28<sup>th</sup> which was aired that night. Attendance at the fair was also posted to social media via Facebook.

Numerous project boards were set up at the booth with two additional boards set up at the Historical Society building to allow visitors to review the project information, provide input, ideas, and concerns regarding the Victory Drive Landscape project, and indicate their preferences for the landscape design approach for the roundabout. Comment cards were also available.

The information in this summary are the results of the information gathered during the event, from the comments provided on the boards, the comment cards, and the verbal discussions with the project representatives.

### ***Attendance***

Thursday was a low attendance day as this was a day mainly used for set up. Friday and Saturday had much higher attendance. It is estimated that more than 60 people stopped by the booth over the course of the three days.

### ***Verbal Comments from the Blue Earth County Fair***

The booth at the County Fair in Garden City was set up to invite attendees in during all three days of the fair. Having no formal presentation gave MnDOT and WSB staff the opportunity to have a continuous conversation with multiple attendees at a time. Fair attendees asked questions and provided comments. Comments and questions were responded to at the meeting by MnDOT and consultant staff in attendance. The following provides some generalized information on the verbal comments that were received from attendees.

- Hwy 22 Road Improvements:
  - Almost every person who stopped by the booth was familiar with the Hwy 22 corridor and the vast majority were in favor of the road improvements. Many indicated that more recent attempts to fix the road made the conditions worse and that it was in strong need of the improvements for both the surface condition, as well as safety.
  - Several people mentioned the difficulty in taking a left to get onto Hwy 22 from certain areas of the corridor and that sometimes they were sitting there for over 5 minutes waiting for traffic. One in particular mentioned the difficulty of the area by Pioneer Seeds (Hwy 90 intersection) and would appreciate the roundabout.
  - Several people mentioned how fast traffic goes along the corridor and constant passing on the shoulder of the road, which is unsafe and illegal. One person mentioned that people will go high speeds through Beauford and don't slow down according to reduced speed limits.
  
- Victory Drive :
  - There were several comments from people who did not know what the Victory Drive trees were even though they use the corridor a lot. They said the memorial aspect needs to be more prominent so people are aware of what the Victory Drive means.

- Many people indicated that trees along the corridor are unsafe, from hitting them to causing icy patches on the road.
- A couple of people mentioned that the trees are only nice if maintained properly and that the dead trees along the corridor that have been there for a long time and should be removed. Only keep trees if properly maintained.
- Some comments mentioned that the trees are a more prominent and vertical design approach and the corridor should keep that character.
- There were a several comments that a monument in the roundabout would be distracting and dangerous and that any monument should be in an area where you can get out and view it. A couple of people mentioned that they didn't know about the existing plaque in the wayside rest area.

### ***Written Comments from the Blue Earth County Fair***

Eighteen written comment cards were completed by fair attendees. Some comment cards included more than one comment. Comments are summarized below, with full comment cards attached to end of this memo.

- Four comments were in favor of removing all of the Victory Trees in the corridor.
- Two comments were in favor of replacing the trees that are to be removed with native deciduous trees and vegetation. Comments were in favor of wildlife habitat, pollinator species and for calming effects with notes to not spray chemicals by the plants. Comments included adding species such as clover, dogwoods, chokecherries, and milkweed.
- Two comments stating the Victory Trees were intended to honor and should be replaced with one mentioning the trees are historic and provide significant wind breaks.
- One comment mentioned to "keep it simple."
- Three comments suggested memorializing more than just the WWI & II vets. They suggested all military veterans, the Winnebago Reservation which used to be in the area, and the military significance of the area (Mankato).
- Two comments were in favor improving the wayside rest area and improving the safety. It was mentioned that the rest area was nice at one time but now it is not kept up.
- One comment specifically mentioned that getting in and out of the wayside rest area is very dangerous due to the speed of the traffic in all lanes and said it was like a racetrack.
- One comment suggested incorporating Mankato art and that roundabouts should have artistic notes – refer to Medford, OR.
- One attendee suggested that the roundabout be iconic and a place a significant tree to memorialize all of the Victory Trees.
- One comment requested to have flags in the roundabout.
- One comment requested that something that will be easy maintainable be planted.

- One comment mentioned to make sure people will know what the memorial is for.
- One comment requested to include stoplights with no more roundabouts.
- One comment requested a white speed limit sign in the roundabout.
- One comment requested tearing one road up at a time.
- One comment suggested incorporating more ponds.

### ***Comments on Highway 22 Roundabouts***

One of the boards that was presented at the Blue Earth County Fair sought feedback on 3 design approaches for the roundabout that will be constructed at the intersection of TH 22 and CR 90 (195<sup>th</sup> St.). Staff answered questions about the concept and encouraged attendees to provide comments about the three presented roundabouts. Comments received were recorded on the concepts presented or in notes taken by MnDOT and consultant staff in attendance at the fair. Comments are summarized below.

- Formal Design Approach:
  - 16 attendees were in favor of this approach
- Natural Design Approach:
  - 50 attendees were in favor of this approach
  - No trees (2)
  - Keep views open for traffic (2)
  - Plant native species (2)
  - Make it big enough for semis/trucks (2)

- Monuments/Artistic Elements:
  - 11 attendees were in favor of this approach
  - This would be a target to hit – Unsafe
  - This would be a distraction – better to have at wayside area (2)
  - Dangerous – two solid objects cannot occupy the same space

### ***Comments on Highway 22 Landscape Improvements***

Two boards that were presented at the Blue Earth County Fair sought feedback on 5 different ideas for the landscape design along the new Victory Drive corridor. Staff answered questions about the concept and encouraged attendees to provide comments about the three presented roundabouts. Comments received were recorded on the concepts presented or in notes taken by MnDOT and consultant staff in attendance at the fair. Comments are summarized below.

- Imagery / Memorial Ideas:
  - Memorial Park at a wayside rest area instead in the roundabout.
- Landscape Character Ideas:
  - Nothing that would look “weedy”
  - Trees are unsafe – remove (2)
  - Pollinator friendly
  - Get rid of trees under power lines
  - Native Prairie (3)
  - Trees are not unsafe if right ones are used
  - Balance trees for snow stopping and beauty/ diminish wind erosion
  - Trees need maintenance
  - Safety/visual trees block views (2)
  - Possible shrubs for snow/wind
  - Plant something that looks good in the winter
  - Clover for bees
  - Keep trees further from road
  - Provide seasonal colors and interest
  - Trees provide more substantial appearance / memorial- like to keep that image
- Signage / Marker Ideas:
  - Avoid monuments that would be a distraction
  - Make memorial a destination – not in the roundabout (2)
  - Improve signage outlining the limits of Victory Drive
  - Include signage that brings attention for the safety of bikers and pedestrians – make this more noticeable
- Gateway / Corridor Entrance Ideas:
  - Put a pond at the start and end with a fountain similar to what is at the Cambria campus.

### ***Attachments***

Display boards with feedback  
Written comment cards