

MN2050 Meeting Notes - Final

February 23, 2018; 9:00-11:00

Attendees: Jeff Oliver (CEAM), Jim Wafler (MAPA), Kristin Asher (APWA), Dave Oxley (ACEC), Tom Eggum (ASCE & MN2050), Joel Schilling (LMC), Russ Matthys (APWA), John Mazzitello, Brett Buckner (OneMN), Jason Staebell (ASCE), Jim Grube (Co Engineers), Amy Grothaus (APWA), Ross Bintner (Edina), Beth Engum (APWA), Carol Kaszynski (AWWA), Jeff Freeman (PFA), Alex Jordan (APWA), Greg Stonehouse (MN2050), John Maczko (MN2050), Brad Henry (MN2050)



Meeting Summary: The purpose of the meeting was to update MN2050 partners on our progress in the past year; introduce our new MN2050 Steering Committee team; discuss 2018 MN2050 priorities and initiatives; review initiatives including social media, advocacy; and to present our White Paper.

Meeting Details: Below are the detailed discussions.

Call to Order: Greg Stonehouse called the meeting to order, explained he was replacing Dan Gage as chair due to business commitments, and introduced new steering committee members Alex Jordan (social media), Jeanine Clancy (Met Council) and Renee Willette (Stantec); and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Introductions: 20 MN2050 members and partner reps attended; their affiliations are shown above. New attendees included Jim Wafler (Mn Asphalt Pavement Assn and Trans. Alliance), Jason Staebell (Hennepin Co and ASCE Report Card), Carol Kaszynski (Bloomington and AWWA), Jeff Freeman (Public Facilities Authority), and Alex Jordan (Lakeville and MN2050 Social Media).

2017 MN2050 Recap: Tom Eggum described MN2050 outreach efforts including: U of M presentation, wastewater operators presentation, the 2016 PWX presentation which helped spur the 2017 APWA spring conference advocacy session and the current ASCE Report Card. Brad described reports from our current infrastructure survey and talked about a new IAM (Institute of Asset Management) group and funding efforts for a new 2019 'State of the Infrastructure' Survey, including outreach to the City and County Engineers. John Maczko described the 2016 Precinct Caucus initiative and results, including the fact we need compelling and succinct stories about how we manage unique facets of Minnesota's extensive infrastructure. Greg Stonehouse briefly described our MN2050 advocacy mission with our 3 audiences: professionals (using our 10,000+ partner professionals to document our infrastructure and create talking point stories), public (help them to see the infrastructure purpose and value – consequences of inaction) and policy-makers (help them see the condition and funding need).

Meeting Discussion: Following that recap, extensive discussion ensued including:

Jim Grube: Jim described the different infrastructure management responsibilities for different Minnesota agencies he has seen during his career, ranging from Truman (1000 pop), Fairmont (10,000), Brooklyn Center (30,000), St. Louis Park (50,000), Hennepin County (1.2M), and MnDOT. The smaller agencies rely on their consultants to quantify, manage and advocate their infrastructure; the larger agencies generally manage and identify their infrastructure condition and need, but rarely advocate for their infrastructure. City Councils and County Boards need to be convinced of the need to address their aging infrastructure. The largest agency does

not advocate for their infrastructure. The Minnesota Transportation Alliance unofficially takes on advocating for transportation infrastructure.

Jason Staebell: ASCE, Mn Section will have a MN Report Card (first time) draft in the next month or two. The final version will be released in Sept. Tom Eggum mentioned that the Duluth Section is working on a separate report card for their part of Minnesota and NW Wisconsin and Jason indicated that their Report Card will be released in March.

Jim Wafler: Jim described how the Transportation Alliance advocates for Minnesota highways and bridges, including the March 7, 2018 Transportation Day at the State Capital and the May Washington Fly-in. Jim also noted that this year we have only 5-6 weeks to impact the legislature because the 2018 legislative session started Feb 20 and ends by May 21. Jim described the Transportation Alliance's \$3M outreach initiative from three years ago; in 2018 similar funds are not available. Jim also described Alliance outreach after the session but before the election.

Beth Eggum: Beth suggested a unique annual outreach opportunity that cities and counties have with the public is the annual Public Works week; May 20-26, 2018. Beth, and others, noted outreach activities they sponsor that week.

Jeff Freeman: Jeff described initiatives, of the PFA and others, that have identified the large infrastructure funding need, for example \$11B, but this large estimate scares 'the h - - - out of people'. Jeff described steps the PFA is recommending asset management to agencies including knowing the condition and replacement cost of their current infrastructure so that they can create a capital budget to explain needs to public officials. He indicated that some small cities have an asset management initiative, including a pilot project sponsored by the Minnesota Rural Water group. Jeff described one problem is the wide variety of asset management systems. Jeff said he felt asset management is an important tool, but is reluctant to 'require' asset management contingent on receiving funding.

Separately Brad noted that the MN2050 asset management survey results showed: a) 15 of the 17 infrastructures surveyed had less than 25% utilization of asset management systems, and b) over 100 different types of asset management systems are used in Minnesota.

Jeff Oliver: Jeff described grassroots efforts that the City of Golden Valley does and every infrastructure profession can do, including engaging friends, family and neighbors explaining the extent and value of infrastructure. Jeff also mentioned the three MN2050 videos that can be divided into 'bite-size' pieces and incorporated into MN2050 presentations tailored to our message.

Jim Grube: Jim suggested that as public employees, we have a higher duty to help people understand the condition and value of infrastructure and seconded the point that Public Works week presents an excellent opportunity to do so.

Joel Schilling: Joel mentioned his new role as an LMC 'ambassador' and that this presents another opportunity to get the MN2050 infrastructure message out.

Dave Oxley: Dave, with his tongue firmly in his cheek, opined that one possible strategy would be to turn off every piece of infrastructure for one day'. More seriously he sided with the need for an asset management plan by agencies.

Ross Binter: Ross mentioned that Edina regularly does infrastructure outreach to elected public officials and that helps them receive infrastructure funding support. Coincidentally an example of their outreach appeared in the Strib: <http://www.startribune.com/visually-appealing-water-treatment-plant-in-the-works-for-edina/474519113/>

Russ Matthys: Russ seconded the opinion that every agency has the opportunity to more fully utilize Public Works Week.

Tom Eggum: Tom, and John Mazzitello, reminded the group that the 2016 Caucus initiative prompted 100 professionals to attend and that 11 or the 12 infrastructure 'planks' were approved. Tom asked the group what is the preferred frequency of the MN2050 Partners meeting: one, two or four yearly meetings? Consensus is four meetings this year.

Greg Stonehouse: Greg turned the discussion to the MN2050 White Paper handed out at the meeting. Several comments were voiced including: Who is the White Paper audience? Perhaps it should be a one-pager? It should describe how agencies can maximize asset management. It should quantify the asset management problem.

Kristen Asher Supported a one-pager and suggested a query: "Do you know the 'state' of your infrastructure".

Greg said one next step is for meeting attendees to suggest changes the current White Paper and return those edits to Greg. The Draft White Paper was distributed to all attendees on February 23rd.

Next Step: Our next steps include editing the MN2050 White Paper; moving forward on our Infrastructure Advocacy initiative, including content, tools and training; and developing support for the 2019 survey.



MN2050 White Paper: *Take Action in 2018*

There is growing acknowledgment that US infrastructure is not being adequately managed and maintained. Consistent with this national trend, Minnesotans are inadequately investing in public infrastructure, hindering the State's economy, thwarting our ability to ensure public safety and degrading Minnesota's quality of life. A 2008 challenge from APWA national president, Larry Frevert, compelled the Minnesota Chapter of APWA to action through the formation of MN2050, a partnership consisting of 19 professional associations.

Clarity of Purpose

MN2050 organized around three objectives; documentation, education and engagement, with the goal of educating Minnesotans of the consequences of ignoring aging infrastructure that is failing at an increasing rate. Our story was built around five asset categories: Roads & Bridges; Water, Wastewater & Stormwater; Freight & Passenger Rail; Aviation; and Ports & Waterways. Funding support from partners and skilled craftsmanship from Twin Cities Public Television enabled the creation of videos highlighting the vital role of public infrastructure and the risks that come with failed management of these critical assets. We maintain a website providing access to infrastructure data, messaging that quantifies the problem and initiatives to serve as a resource for education activities. We also support STEM efforts to educate future generations about infrastructure and related careers. The accumulated documentation and education messages developed position MN2050 to elevate our engagement, both with the public and with policy makers. ***This document is a call to drive public awareness and policy action toward development of sustainable infrastructure for Minnesota.***

Recent surveys validated assumptions that the use of Asset Management systems, procedures and tools is inconsistent at best, and not used at all by many Minnesota cities and counties. Asset management technology fosters quantification and qualification of infrastructure and improves ability to prioritize investment of increasingly limited funds. Improving awareness and quality of asset data should provide encouragement to political leaders with the vision and will to support development and implementation of sustainable infrastructure.

Our 19 MN2050 partners represent over 10,000 Minnesotans involved in providing services through infrastructure. We need broad partner action to educate our fellow citizens and political leaders about the consequences of continued inaction. We must multiply our industry's preference for 'hands-on' professional work with improved awareness of our message and a vigorous engagement campaign to drive political involvement. A 2016 effort to drive partner attendance at statewide political caucuses was very successful in both attendance and outcome. We learned Minnesotans will listen to public works professionals, and they trust us. But, we must reach out to them. Most elected officials are good people, but they lack a sound understanding of the consequences of inaction, so we must increase the grass roots pressure necessary to force a response.

An enhanced 2018 Social Media initiative will update our public information plan and broaden our efforts beyond our

website and LinkedIn platforms. We expect to take our messages and recraft them to much more effectively inform, educate and motivate our partners, voters and elected officials to take the actions necessary to finally begin to fund a more sustainable infrastructure system.

Pivoting toward Political Advocacy

Over the past ten years, MN2050 has consolidated and organized infrastructure information for political advocacy efforts of others. Advancing our initiative demands we transition from background support toward a more active form of political engagement. In 2018, we ask MN2050's partner members to get more personally involved in Minnesota political decision making. We will organize our network to align advocates specific to each Minnesota State legislative district. With our partners we have the numbers, the talent and the will to make a difference. It is time we organize that will into action.

We will also continue to promote expansion of asset management tools and systems statewide. By taking advantage of data gathered in past surveys and supporting asset management expansion, we will work collaboratively with the Minnesota Chapter of the Institute for Asset Management (IAM) helps all levels of government attempting to optimize management of facilities despite limited staff and budgets.

Sustaining Collaborative Momentum

Initiatives of other Minnesota advocacy groups will magnify the impact of our MN2050 engagement approach. APWA as a 501(c)(3) organization enables an engagement effort that aligns nicely with efforts at the federal level. The Minnesota Transportation Alliance, one of our early partners, is known for their effective political advocacy, while the Minnesota Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers is finalizing Minnesota's version of an Infrastructure Report Card in 2018. The Minnesota State Auditor's office has partnered with the University of Minnesota to produce interactive, web-based utility maps that visually present local infrastructure needs in a dashboard format. Even OneMN, a social equity initiative, is linking the impact that failing infrastructure has on Minnesota's low-income communities. Other partners, like the American Council of Engineering Companies and the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers, have done political advocacy for years.

This Year, We Must Make a Difference

The organization, documentation and messaging that has developed over the past ten years makes 2018 a year of opportunity for MN2050. With State legislative elections, a gubernatorial race, and every single one of Minnesota's US congressional seats on the line this year, we must align our members within every district to communicate, inform, education and influence the perspectives of our elected officials.

2018 is the year we make a difference. We need you to be committed and engaged in the effort!