

Draft Project Objectives

Highway 252/I-94 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Brief Summary of Purpose and Need

As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) must establish the “purpose and need” for a proposed project. The purpose and need explain why MnDOT is undertaking the proposed project. The “need” identifies the transportation problems that led to the initiation of the project. The “purpose” is a broad statement of the intended transportation results to be achieved by the project. Projects developed under review from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must have a transportation purpose and a transportation need.

Summary of Needs

MnDOT has identified several factors justifying the need for the Highway 252/I-94 Project. The needs are the transportation problems that led to the initiation of the project. Three needs have been identified:

- Vehicle safety
- Vehicle mobility
- Walkability and bikeability

Additional Considerations

Additional considerations are elements that are not central to the purpose and need of the project but are important criteria for evaluating build alternatives. The additional considerations identified for this project include:

- Coordination with transit planning
- Regional transportation plans
- Minnesota Corridors of Commerce Program

Project Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Highway 252/I-94 Project is to improve the safe and reliable movement of people and goods across multiple modes on and across Highway 252 and I-94 between Highway 610 in Brooklyn Park and North 4th Street in Minneapolis.

Highway 252/I-94 EIS Project Objectives

Beyond the project purpose statement, project objectives have been identified for the Highway 252/I-94 Project that are transportation and community related. These objectives are not part of the purpose and need statement. The project objectives were developed with the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and reflect input received from past community engagement. Some of the objectives are related to criteria used in the alternative development and evaluation process.

MnDOT is also conducting a parallel process to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) termed an Equity and Health Assessment (EHA) of the Highway 252/I-94 corridor project area. This assessment includes intentional, enhanced engagement of affected communities on issues of equity and health. Information gathered from this process will help shape the Highway 252/I-94 project alternatives as well as determine the existing conditions of equity and health in the Highway 252/I-94 corridor project area, identification of potential equity and health benefits and impacts of project alternatives, and identification of equity and health objectives for use in the project's EIS. The EHA process is notable because it provides an opportunity to augment and enhance the EIS processes and analyses guided by federal and state regulation. These efforts are just the beginning, and more information will be available in the future as activities progress.

The following EIS project objectives reflect what is important to the community and provide context as the Highway 252/I-94 Project progresses:

- Achieve equitable social, environmental, and economic outcomes (equity means fair and just, taking into consideration the conditions and needs of persons/communities impacted).
- Reduce injuries and fatalities associated with crashes along Highway 252 and I-94.
- Promote public health by improving walkability/bikeability along and across Highway 252 and I-94, and by supporting reliable transit service through operational improvements.
- Minimize the need to acquire additional property.
- Ensure solutions are consistent with local planning and compatible with the existing roadway network.