

Community Leaders Meeting

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2

August 24, 2021

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Livability update
3. Brainstorm of ideas (continued from previous meeting)
4. Recent and upcoming Rethinking I-94 outreach activities
5. Community Leaders outreach activities
6. Next steps

Today's Objectives

- Provide an update on MnDOT's Livability initiative
- Continue to brainstorm ideas that could be included as part of the project
- Provide an update on outreach and community engagement efforts – Rethinking team and Community Leaders

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Livability Update

- Health
- Trust
- Connectivity introduction

Key Takeaways - Public Health and the Environment

- Focus on communities of color
- Reduce or eliminate use of salt as a de-icing method
- Focus on transit as the solution to improving public health
- Consider and define the groups benefiting from MnDOT's decisions
- Increase the barriers to driving (possible removal of freeway entrances, eliminate additional capacity for single occupant vehicles).
- Establish a common set of goals across different agencies

Climate Initiatives from Local Partners

Minneapolis

- Reduction in vehicle miles travelled – decrease of 4 miles per person
- Support a car free or “car light” lifestyle
- Opposed to any increase in highway capacity for any purpose in the city
- Adopted an Environmental Justice policy

St Paul

- Climate Justice effort underway
 - Effort will address climate as its top priority
 - Focus on low income and some of the voices not historically represented in the decision-making process
 - The importance of and commitment to the reduction of vehicle miles of travel



Trust

Familiarity
good faith
collaborations

Trust Livability Paper

One on One Conversation

One on One Conversation Structure

- Method: in person, phone, or email. Depends on preference.
- When: Stakeholder or community member/leader decide and coordinate with the MnDOT representative.
- Who: Open to one on one, group or community sessions. MnDOT may bring one or two representatives.
- Duration: 15-60 minutes. Whatever works in their schedule.

Why Focus on Trust?

What's the purpose?

- To listen and learn from the community.
- To inform the livability initiative.
- To improve livability in the areas around projects before construction.
- To understand what the community needs in order to help us guide how we design and evaluate future projects.

Building Blocks of Trust

What aspects of trust were discussed?

- Support
- Open communication
- Community interest at the forefront of planning
- Collaborations
- Inclusivity

Questions Asked During Conversations

- How would you rate your collaboration with government agencies like MnDOT?
- How did you build connections with that government agency?
- How do you obtain government resources to support your communities?
- How would you trust that MnDOT is hearing your community?
- How can we better engage your community where they are?
- How can the state government build trust with their community and leaders?

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9GYLMMG>

Key Takeaways of “Trust” One on One Conversation



- Lack of transparency, accountability and consistency (as well as misinformation) contributes to mistrust.
- Participants, including local partners, feel that MnDOT will not use the information gathered and this results in lack of participation or making the initiative a priority.
- Others indicated that the information will not influence any decisions, as MnDOT “already has their mind made up” and/or nothing legal is tied to ensuring their input is incorporated.
- Lack of participation is also due to scared of ramifications of speaking out, small staff and need to prioritize efforts, no compensation for their time, turn-over of staff, time of day and too long of sessions.

More Key Takeaways of “Trust” One on One Conversation

State and other
Government Entities
need to address issues
that are concerns of
the public and
community as a whole

Changing and
enhancing policies
and restrictions
towards public
engagement and
involvement
(ex. dale street)

Develop on going
relationships and
engagement efforts
after the project o
construction is
finished.

Inform and update
content on website
(plain language)

Connectivity -- Definition

- *Connectivity is to have the physical infrastructure align with the social and cultural connections of the community*

Next Meeting Topics

- Summary of Trust and Connections “Workshops”
- Update on Livability Papers production and review schedule
- Update on NEPA activities
- Feedback from outreach efforts

Brainstorming – Continued from July Meeting

- Continuation of idea generation

Mainline

- Remove freeway - replace with low speed blvd, high speed dedicated transitways, high speed bicycle highways, additional developable space for housing/industry/commerce
- Less cars, more transit
- Lower vehicle speeds
- Roadway design that encourages lower speeds (<12' lanes, much smaller curve radii, trees along the travel way)

Previous Ideas

Previous Ideas

Mainline

- Reduce the footprint to increase developable space.
- Parkway-like setting for I-94 (similar to I-35E).
- Dedicated high speed transit
- Options that would have the biggest impact to reduce particulate pollution along the corridor

Access/interchanges

- Reduce speeds on TH 280 with interchange work
- Better freight connections on the corridor and not on side streets, particularly connecting from/to TH 280
- Work with local agencies to revisit frontage roads - make them more community oriented - not just connections to/from the highway

Previous Ideas

Access/interchanges

- Redesign highway off-ramps to reduce speeds before vehicles get to the local street system. Vehicle speeds at the ends of the ramp are significantly higher than posted speeds today.
- Speed/safety issues on connecting streets to I-94 - currently feel hostile
- Low-speed (i.e., tight) geometry and widths on side-streets.

Previous Ideas

Bike/ped

- A pedestrian scale corridor. Lighting, signage, speeds, vegetation.
- Pedestrian scale corridor - not just crossing as an afterthought
- Frontage roads - more human scale, pedestrian-oriented
- More pedestrian scale crossings (assuming highway remains)
- If trench remains, wider bridges with space allocated to non-car uses
- Dedicated bikeways

Previous Ideas

Previous Ideas

Streetscape

- Incorporation of art, green to soften, improve air and sound and sense of place. Know there is something above the trench.

Other thoughts/ideas

- Stipend for commercial and residential buildings to install air filters to increase indoor air quality
- Reduction in light pollution in the corridor
- Consider freight noise restrictions (ban internal combustion engines, EV only)
- Only allow EV freight
- Move freight off the corridor

Previous Ideas

Other thoughts/ideas

- EV freight infrastructure
- Small-scale, local, incremental development of newly developable land instead of one master developer
- On non-developed land, implement carbon sequestration and renewable energy generation
- Understanding cost of alternatives relative to new opportunities created for development (what value could be created?)
- Areas along the corridor welcoming to children - safe areas to play

Additional Ideas

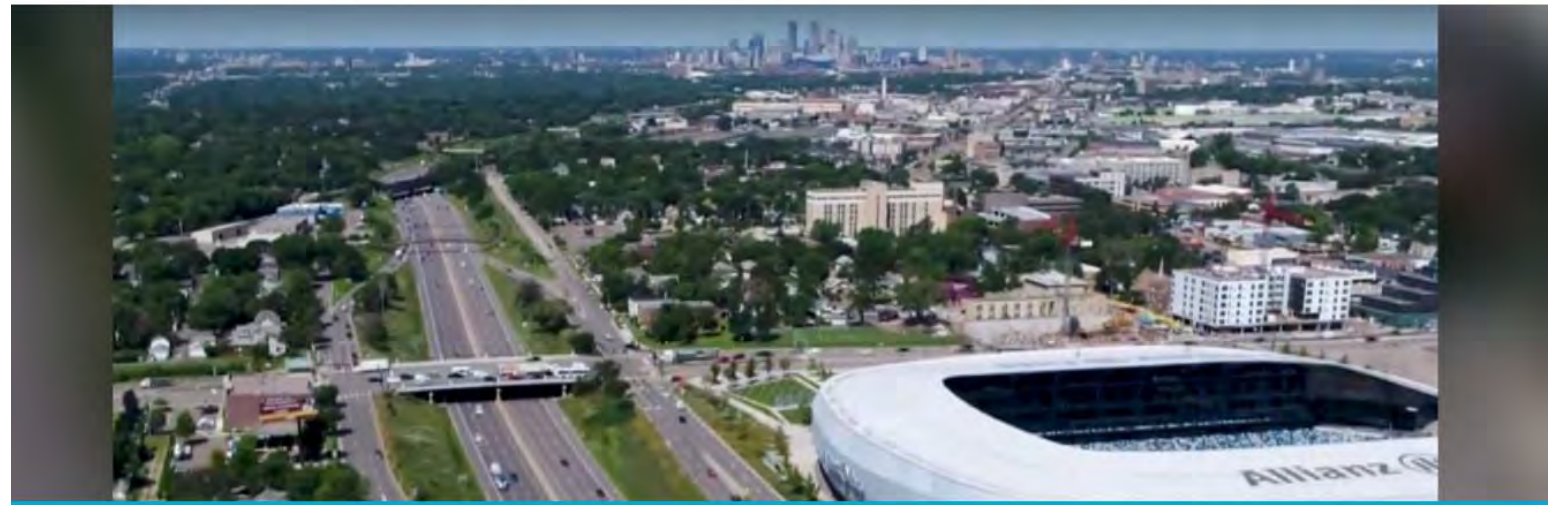
- Ideas brainstorming – virtual whiteboard

Recent and Upcoming Outreach Activities

Rethinking I-94 team outreach activities

- Virtual open house
- Signs and stickers
- Pop-up events
- Community meetings
- Future events

Rethinking I-94

[Home](#)[Statement of Goals](#)[Purpose and Need](#)[Evaluation Criteria](#)[Logical Termini](#)[Feedback](#)

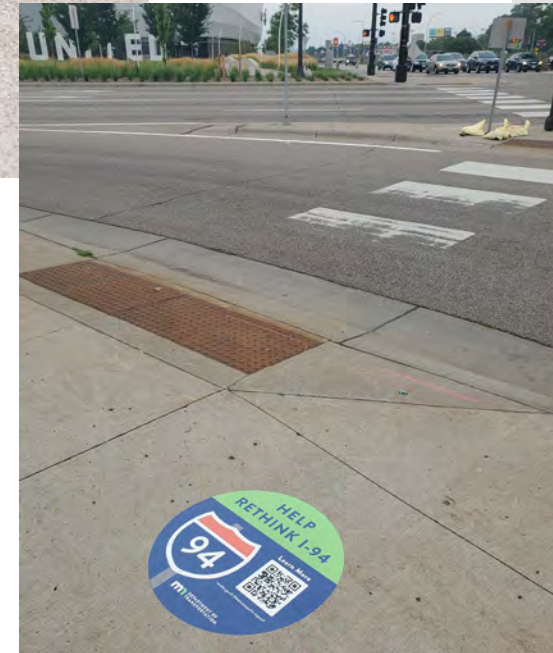
Welcome to the Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 virtual open house

Community feedback and engagement is important to a project's success. You have a voice in transportation decision making.

Virtual Open House

Signs and Stickers

- Signs and stickers placed throughout the corridor.
- A QR code and link bring people to the project website
- People at events reported seeing the signs and stickers



Pop-Up Events

- Chroma-Zone Creative Enterprise Zone in Saint Paul-
July 24th
- Black Business is Beautiful Local Market in Saint Paul –
August 14th
- National Night Out Prospect Park in Minneapolis –
August 17th
- Saint Thomas More Farmers Market in Saint Paul –
August 20th



Common Comment Themes

- Reduce traffic
- Increase safety at interchanges, entrances and exits of the highway
- HOV lanes
- Highway should respond to population growth in some way (increased transit, HOV, etc.)
- Increase native green space around highway
- Dedicated bus lanes/shoulders like prior to 35W bridge collapse

Common Comment Themes

- Increase/improve sound walls
- Increase walkability and bikeability over and around the highway
- Caps/Land bridges over large sections of the highway to reconnect neighborhoods and increase greenspace area
- Concerns about the environment
- Wary of large-scale construction projects for noise and air pollution, driving difficulty that happens with construction, similarly worried that their neighborhoods will become high-traffic throughfares leading to more air and noise pollution

Community Meetings

- **St. Anthony Park Community Council**

- 05/25/21

- Residents are concerned with how the project will affect Saint Anthony Park
- Residents want to see a decrease in VMT and an increase in multi-modal transportation along the corridor in the interest of environmental protection
- Want increased attention paid to the 94/280 interchange
- Concerned about truck traffic on neighborhood surface streets

- **Hamline Midway Council**

- 06/07/21

- Residents wanted to know if Purpose and Need and Evaluation Criteria could change
- Wanted to know when they could expect alternative proposals
- Brief discussion of VMT reduction, and statewide vs local needs that MnDOT fulfills

- **Council for Minnesotans with African Heritage**

- 07/13/21

- Group had a robust discussion around equity – what it means to them and how it needs to be a part of the mindset when developing and implementing projects.

Future Outreach Events

- Friday September 3rd – Saint Thomas More Farmers Market from 1pm to 5pm
- September 9th - Lowertown Sounds from 6pm to 9:30pm
- Saturday September 11th – Selby Avenue Jazz Festival from 11am to 7:30pm
- Saturday September 11th – Mac-Grove Fest from 11am to 4pm
- Sunday October 24th – Open Streets Minnehaha from 11am to 5pm

Recent and Upcoming Outreach Activities

Community Leader outreach activities:

- Neighborhood meetings
 - St. Anthony Park Community Council
 - Hamline Midway Council
- Other
 - Mac- Grove Fest (September 11th)

Next Steps

- Generating and testing ideas
- Continued engagement and outreach on Livability framework and NEPA items – purpose and need, goals, logical termini, evaluation criteria

Next Meeting

Next meeting: 09/28/2021

Time: 10:00 AM

Brainstorming – Continued from July Meeting

- Step 1: Brainstorming
- Step 2: Category assignments
- Step 3: Test ideas
- Step 4: Organize ideas into alternatives
- Step 5: Refine alternatives to be studied
- Step 6: Evaluate alternatives

Brainstorming

Needs

- Bridge condition
- Pavement condition
- Retaining wall condition
- Drainage condition
- Noise wall condition
- Safety
- Safety on intersecting streets
- Walkability/bikeability
- Mobility
- Drainage capacity

Brainstorming

Purpose

Projects within the Rethinking I-94 program will accomplish the following:

- Improve asset conditions of I-94 bridges, pavement and supporting infrastructure
- Enhance safety for people and goods on, along, and across the I-94 corridor
- Improve mobility for people and goods on, along and across the I-94 corridor

Brainstorming

Brainstorming activity

- Group idea generation – intent is to focus on transportation-related ideas
 - **Mainline:** Improvement “within the trench” that would apply to the entire corridor
 - **Access/Interchange:** Improvement that would apply to an interchange/intersection area, including on/off ramps
 - **Project Elements:** Improvements that do not rise to the level of a full alternative; they would be done in combination with one or more mainline and/or access/interchange ideas.

Discussion questions

1. What could be done to improve safety for people traveling on I-94?
2. What could be done to improve safety for people traveling across I-94?
3. What could be done to improve the condition of pavement, bridges, and supporting infrastructure on I-94?
4. What could be done to reduce delay in the corridor?
5. What could be done to improve travel time reliability in the corridor?
6. What could be done to improve safety on intersecting streets?
7. What could be done to improve freight movement in the corridor?
8. What could be done to improve drainage capacity?

Brainstorming