

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2

Pedestrian and Bicycle Working Group

Monthly Meetings Recap:

Last updated March 7, 2022

The following is a summary of topics, outcomes, and action items that were discussed at the Pedestrian and Bicycle Working Group meetings.

February 2022

- Project Updates
 - WSB provided an overview of the February 9 PAC meeting.
- Nonmotorized Crossing Framework: WSB shared responses received to several questions posed during the last working group meeting.
 - For standalone pedestrian crossings, is there a way to account for perception of comfort/safety? Visibility before and behind the user can be a concern.
 - Interest in discussing this further, no specific proposals
 - How to integrate traffic volumes? Do we want to highlight high traffic volume roads?
 - Not as independent factors, maybe as part of proactive risk factors analysis
 - Should access to other destination types be evaluated? (shopping, healthcare, gov't services, etc.)
 - Yes, discuss options and data availability
 - WSB gave an overview of data on additional destination types that can be incorporated into the access to destinations portion of the factors analysis. Group discussion had on the topics and feedback shared.
 - County service centers
 - Libraries
 - Met Council Job and Activity Centers
 - Grocery and convenience stores
 - Healthcare and social assistance
 - Pharmacies
 - The group was asked to provide additional comments and questions on the memo and discussion topics by March 3rd.
- Next Steps
 - Refine prioritization framework based upon additional input and feedback.

January 2022

- Project Updates
 - WSB provided a high-level project update.
 - Discussed announcement on changes to draft purpose and need.
 - Public comments overview provided as of 01/13/2022.
- Nonmotorized Crossing Framework

- WSB provided an overview of a new draft memo discussing the nonmotorized crossing framework. The purpose of the memo is to document background information, development of draft factors, proposed methodology, and draft results for the analysis.
- WSB outlined several comments that have been received and asked for input on how to address them in the draft memo.
- WSB proposed several discussion questions for the draft memo and received comments and feedback from the group.
- The group was asked to provide additional comments and questions on the draft memo by February 3rd.
- Next Steps
 - Provide comments on draft memo by February 3rd
 - Refine prioritization framework based upon additional input and feedback.

November 2021

- Project Updates
 - WSB provided an update on Rethinking I-94 public engagement activities.
- Nonmotorized Crossing Framework
 - WSB provided overview of comments on proposed approach
 - WSB presented an example approach for using the draft factors to prioritize pedestrian crossings
 - For this example, ADA compliance removed as a factor since there are deficiencies across the corridor that will need to be addressed at a minimum.
 - Several factors used as a high-level screening: nonmotorized safety issue locations, multimodal crossings with a sidewalk on only one side, and ped bridges missing a ramp connection. Crossings with these issues were assigned to Group 1.
 - The remaining crossings were assigned to Group 2. Following the high-level screening, a scoring system was applied to a selected group of factors and using to assign a score to the Group 2 crossings.
 - Based on percentile scores, the Group 2 crossings were assigned to four groups, Priority 1-4, with Priority 1 crossings scoring the highest.
 - WSB shared a map of the Group 1 and Group 2 results
 - The group discussed the example approach and results.
 - Next steps are to refine prioritization framework based upon additional input and feedback.

October 2021

- Project Updates
 - Bill Goff (MnDOT) provided an update on activities related to the Livability framework since the last working group meeting.

- Rather than a workshop format, MnDOT conducted outreach on the Trust pillar through one-on-one conversations with stakeholders and community members/leaders. Questions asked during the sessions related to the participants' interactions and collaboration with MnDOT and other government agencies, and how the state can better build trust and engage the communities.
- Workshop on Connectivity pillar conducted in September, featured presentation on unique urban roadway projects that address connectivity. MnDOT soliciting input on connectivity during the month of October via online survey.
- Next steps: Develop Livability papers to provide background, current practices and recommendations for MnDOT Metro District, cities, counties and Met Council, with a projected rollout of draft papers this fall.
- WSB provided an update on community engagement activities conducted and comments received since the last working group meeting. Upcoming pop-up events and Community Conversation Open Houses (live virtual webinar conversations between community members and project team).
- City of St. Paul Bicycle Plan update
 - Jimmy Shoemaker (City of St. Paul Dept of Public Works) gave a presentation on the City of Saint Paul's ongoing bicycle plan update. Primary purpose is to update network to include more separation between biking and driving and align with state and national guidance and best practices.
- Bicycle and pedestrian counts
 - WSB shared information on updated bike/ped count locations and schedule. Collection underway, all sites anticipated September-October 2021
- Nonmotorized crossing framework
 - WSB provided an overview of comments received on the draft factors and changes made in response. Several items are under discussion with MnDOT and FHWA.

September 2021

- No meeting.

August 2021

- Project updates
 - WSB provided updates on community engagement activities.
- Alternatives approach
 - WSB provided a recap of ideas discussed during the brainstorming session at the last meeting.
- Nonmotorized crossing framework
 - Discussion and feedback on draft crossing factors. WSB provided a brief background on the transition from Rethinking I-94 Phase 1 bike-ped work into the current effort, including the proposed improvement types.

- The group discussed the results of the draft evaluation based on the proposed list of factors for all nonmotorized crossings in the program area. City of Minneapolis provided additional background on the All Ages and Abilities network planning effort.

July 2021

- Project updates
 - Bill Goff (MnDOT) provided an update on the Livability workshops, including key takeaways from recent workshops on the topics of “Equity” and “Health and the Environment.” Workshops are monthly - the next topic is “Trust.”
- Alternatives approach
 - WSB provided a recap of ideas discussed during the brainstorming session at the last meeting, with ideas sorted into various themes.
 - WSB provided a brief reminder of the draft purpose and need and the idea categories for brainstorming (mainline, access/interchange, project elements).
 - The group brainstormed and discussed additional ideas.
- Nonmotorized crossing framework
 - WSB presented a proposed framework for addressing the walkability and bikeability need in the corridor through crossing improvements. Idea is to create a system for thinking through type of investment that may be needed for each crossing.
 - Rethinking I-94 Phase 1 proposed six potential crossing improvement types (none, minimum standard, low-cost additions, enhanced facility, unique treatments, new) and potential factors to evaluate each crossing.
 - Proposal is to create a matrix with each crossing and a set of criteria to determine what type of improvement is needed. Criteria examples include bike/ped analyses from purpose and need, existing/planned facilities, designations from other agencies, demographics of areas served, etc.
 - Proposed criteria for walking and biking were presented (some apply to both modes) along with example crossing evaluations in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.
 - The group was asked to provide feedback on the draft materials by August 5th.

June 17, 2021

- Crossing location maps and summary
 - WSB provided an update on changes to the nonmotorized crossing maps and matrix based on comments received and updates from recent planning documents.
 - The group was asked to provide any other changes needed by June 19th.
- Alternatives approach
 - WSB provided a high-level overview of the alternatives approach for Rethinking I-94:
 - Step 1: Brainstorming ideas
 - Step 2: Category assignments

- Step 3: Organize ideas into alternatives
- Step 4: Refine alternatives to be studied
- Step 5: Evaluate alternatives
- WSB provided a review of the draft purpose and need for the project.
- Reminder of Tiered EIS process for Rethinking I-94 - Will be getting into specific design details in Tier 2 projects.
 - Tier 1: Broad issues, changes to mainline and access, high level impacts of alternatives, identify program of projects.
 - Tier 2: More detailed design and analysis of impacts for projects within the overall program of projects.
- WSB introduced the idea generation/brainstorming activity and outlined several possible categories for ideas: mainline, access/interchange, and project elements.
- A series of discussion questions were posed to prompt ideas.
- Attendees participated in a virtual whiteboard activity to brainstorm potential ideas for how to address the issues identified in the corridor.
- It was noted that there will be opportunities at future meetings to continue brainstorming additional ideas, review ideas generated to date, and discuss idea categories.

June 3, 2021

- Project Updates
 - WSB gave an overview of key environmental process milestones since the last working group meeting.
 - MnDOT provided an overview of the Livability initiative at MnDOT, background on the Livability workshops, and provided a summary of the outcomes from the first three Livability workshops.
 - WSB provided an update on public engagement efforts and shared an updated schedule.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Existing Conditions memo and mapping
 - WSB provided an overview of key work completed to date and documented in the Pedestrian and Bicycle existing conditions memo. An updated version of the memo was provided to working group members prior to the meeting.
 - The bikeshed analysis, which had not been presented previously, was discussed in greater detail.
- Crossing location maps and summary
 - WSB presented new maps and a matrix of nonmotorized crossing locations in the corridor (provided prior to meeting).
 - Working group members were asked to review the maps and identify any needed changes to existing or planned facilities, or other information that would be useful to support future discussions of possible alternatives.
- Meeting Schedule
 - The group discussed meeting dates/times going forward.

- Proposal to meet again in June, set monthly meeting date for third Wednesday or Thursday of the month based on results of Doodle poll.

February 2020

- Updates Discussion: The Project Team provided an overview of various resources that were explored to help assist in identifying and describing pedestrian and bicycle needs. These resources included past studies/analyses, pedestrian and bicycle facilities design guides, online maps, and Walk Score.
- St. Paul Presentation: A presentation on Saint Anthony Avenue and Concordia Avenue 2021 Safety Improvements Project was shared with the group. The City of Saint Paul received complaints that high vehicle speeds and lack of pavement markings contribute to the discomfort experienced by non-motorized users crossing the streets.
- GIS Maps and Analysis Demonstration: The Project Team shared an analysis tool that was developed using ArcGIS to assist in identifying ped/bike needs. Additional ways in which the tool could be implemented was discussed by the group. For example, the tool has potential to be combined with other data (demographic data, existing/future land use and developments along the I-94 corridor) and analyses. The group was enthusiastic about the tool and its potential.
- Future Tasks: As of February 12, 2020, group meetings will be suspended until further notice. Pedestrian and bicycle counts will most likely occur in the fall of 2020 and the Project Team will continue to explore ways that would help understand crossing needs across I-94 better. The Project Team expects to conduct a Visual Impact Assessment and/or a Visual Quality Manual with a Crossing Design Guide once a Tier 1 preferred alternative is selected in 2021/2022.

November 2019

- Overview of City of St. Paul and its Neighborhood and Small Area Plans Discussion: The Project Team compiled and shared a list of pedestrian and bicycle related policies that would be applicable to the I-94 corridor. These policies were retrieved from St. Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, and other neighborhood or small area plans. The group acknowledged that crossing recommendations should be community driven and realistic. The group also identified the following themes within the list of pedestrian and bicycle related policies: improving connections, widened sidewalks, crash barriers between traffic and sidewalk, pedestrian-level lighting, decorative railing, beautification/aesthetics, street-tree planting, and artists' contributions.
- SPACE (Suitability of Pedestrian And Cycling Environment) Score: The Project Team introduced the SPACE tool and how SPACE score has been used by MnDOT to help estimate ped/bike demands in the past.
 - SPACE tool is versatile because it can be customized to incorporate any demographic characteristics into the high-level analysis as long as they are quantifiable. The group identified that the SPACE tool could be used to generate scores for bridges, identify underserved populations, and combine with other

analysis tools and datasets.

- Potential Future Topic Discussion: The group brainstormed the following list of potential future topics:
 - Overview of Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan
 - Presentation of Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) Comprehensive Plan Update
 - Case study for Pelham Bridge and other studies
 - MnDOT's cost participation policy
 - Funding programs and resources
 - MnDOT Highway Sponsorship Program
 - Understanding Cities of the First Class Agreement
 - Updates to MnDOT Metro District Pedestrian Plan

October 2019

- Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities Overview Discussion: The Project Team shared the Bicycle and Pedestrian Existing Conditions and Network Connectivity Memorandum with the group.
 - Based on the key takeaways from the memo, the group discussed how data on existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities can help identify ped/bike needs and perform origin-destination analysis.
- Potential Future Topics Discussion: Case study of Pelham Bridge and MnDOT's cost participation policy were potential future topics the group listed.

September 2019

- Rethinking I-94 Background and Update Discussion: This was the first Ped/Bike Working Group Meeting. The group was given an overview of Rethinking I-94, the project schedule, the project structure, and an update on Phase 2 environmental documents in progress. MnDOT also shared the five parallel path white paper topics with the group: sense of place, connectivity, economics, equity, and health & environment.
- Identifying Working Group Purpose and Objectives Discussion: The purpose and objectives of the group was discussed: develop a shared vision that will inform future projects; help identify and define what may be included in the NEPA process; and propose potential implementation pathways such as funding options and partnerships for goals outside of the NEPA process.
- Phase 1 Review Discussion: The group reviewed Phase 1 Appendix T13 "Parallel Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Opportunities" as a starting point to brainstorm Phase 2 ped/bike opportunities. Both Minneapolis and St. Paul have policies that prioritize enhancing connectivity across the freeway. The group noted that major intersections along I-94 act as barriers to creating safe east-west protected ped/bike facilities.