

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

Date: 09/26/2022 (1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

Location: 395 John Ireland Blvd, St. Paul (MnDOT Central Office) and Zoom Meeting

Participants: See List Below

Meeting Summary:

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Welcome and opening remarks by Commissioner Daubenberger (MnDOT)
 - Commissioner Daubenberger stated she was honored to be filling the role of the PAC Chair at today's meeting.
 - Noted that a verbal roll call would not be taken, as members were participating in person and virtually. Virtual PAC members to note they were in attendance in the chat and those in person to use the sign-in sheet.
 - Stated there is a lot of interest from the public in speaking today, so the meeting will be extended for an additional 30 minutes.
 - Indicated MnDOT released guiding documents for the project early to solicit public and stakeholder input.
 - Stated MnDOT has revised the guiding documents for Rethinking I-94 based on input received.
 - Reiterated commitment to engagement and thanked community leaders.
 - Addressed Federal Reconnecting Communities Grant and stated that since MnDOT is in the environmental review phase of the project and still identifying all possible alternatives, they are unable to seek funding for one alternative versus another at this time.
- Metro District Engineer Mike Barnes
 - Provided review and definition of PAC's role in the project.

Schedule

- Mike Barnes (MnDOT) provided a recap of MnDOT's engagement, identification of needs, document creation, and revisions completed to date.
- Provided an overview of new tasks MnDOT is working on, which include:
 - Testing highway and transit ideas.
 - Conducting a transit study with partners on feasibility of potential transit ideas.

- Provided an overview of next steps for the project, which include:
 - Developing and evaluating alternatives.
 - Preparing a draft scoping document identifying a reasonable range of alternatives to study in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
 - The scoping document does not select a preferred alternative but will eliminate alternatives not considered viable.
 - Beginning the Tier 1 process which follows completion of the scoping document.
 - Establishing a program of projects from the Tier 1 process.
 - Developing and finalizing specific improvements and elements in separate environmental documents as the program of projects is implemented.

Rethinking I-94 Document Updates

- Sheila Kauppi (MnDOT) presented revisions to the Purpose and Need, Statement of Goals, and Evaluation Criteria.
 - Noted that updates are the result of MnDOT's commitment to community feedback and expressed gratitude for the public's engagement.
 - Advised that revised documents will not be considered final until the scoping process is complete and noted MnDOT will consider potential project impacts from any parallel initiatives.
 - Shared revised list of needs:
 - Walkability/Bikeability – experience of people walking, bicycling, and rolling
 - Safety
 - Infrastructure condition
 - Mobility for people in motorized vehicles – cars, freight, and transit
 - Provided a revised Purpose Statement which seeks to improve mobility, enhance safety for people and goods in all modes, address aging infrastructure, and support transportation objectives consistent with adopted state and regional plans along the corridor.
 - Provided a revised Statement of Goals to incorporate feedback.
 - Revised the list the description of the Livability items to be consistent with current terminology. Revised format to make the list easier to read.
 - Made a minor language change to add "live, work, gather, and play around the corridor" and put that in front of the Livability framework
 - Discussed changes made to the evaluation criteria.
 - All needs are identified in the Scoping process and listed as needs – no primary or secondary needs
 - The Goals evaluation criteria and measures had originally been identified for use in the Tier 1 evaluation. They are now being considered in the Scoping phase of the process.
 - Revised and added measures and criteria based on public feedback on topics related to social, economic, and environmental resources.
- Questions from PAC Members

- Commissioner Conley – Stated everything in the revised Purpose and Need and evaluation criteria aligns with the community’s feedback, the goals of the Federal Reconnecting Communities Grant, and the needs of underrepresented communities. Wanted to know why MnDOT is not applying for the grant.
 - **Response:** MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives through the environmental process, which is already funded, and does not want to influence the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative.
- Commissioner Carter – Stated interest in hearing more about the potential to apply for grant opportunities and seeing how funding opportunities align with project timelines.
- Commissioner Wonsley – Asked whether this meeting will address how alternatives would be studied and was informed that MnDOT will conduct a study and be ready next year for grant opportunities. Also inquired whether equity analysis would be performed.
 - **Response:** Developing and evaluating alternatives is the next step in the process and will be discussed later in the meeting. Based on public engagement in Phase I, a Livability Framework was created to inform future phases of the project. Pillars of the Livability Framework include: sense of place, connectivity, economic vitality, equity, safety/security, and public health and the environment. Criteria and measures that align with these pillars, including equity, have been developed to evaluate the alternatives along with criteria based on the purpose and need and potential impacts to social, economic, and environmental (SEE) resources.
- Chris Meyer, speaking on behalf of Sen. Omar Fateh – Stated District 62 is a transit-dependent area, and there needs to be a stronger focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), greenhouse gas emissions, and addressing climate change with this project. Stated Senator’s position is that transit should be separated out, as those needs are distinct and different.
- Russ Stark, speaking on behalf of Mayor Carter – Thanked MnDOT for revising the Purpose and Need. Stated City of St. Paul does not believe mobility for cars is a need for this corridor and has goals for reducing VMT. Also, stated the city plans to partner with ReConnect Rondo or others in applying for the Reconnecting Communities Grant to study how a cultural enterprise district could fit within the potential I-94 alternatives.
- Commissioner Conley – Asked for a specific reason MnDOT was not applying for the Reconnecting Communities Grant. Reiterated that revised documents align with the grant program.
 - **Response:** MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives through the environmental process, which is already funded, and does not want to influence the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative.

- Mai Chong Xiong speaking on behalf of Commissioner Balenger – Stated their office has heard several different ideas and proposals. Asked if submitting a grant precludes pursuit of other opportunities or projects later?
 - **Response:** MnDOT has funded the existing process and is not ready to submit a grant application by the October 13 deadline. This would be asking for money on something that has not been fully vetted, and MnDOT will not be eliminating alternatives yet.
- Commissioner Wonsley – Asked what the process would be for other groups applying for the Reconnecting Communities Grant if they don't have the backing of MnDOT?
 - **Response:** Other public or non-profit groups may apply; further information is on grants.gov which includes details on eligibility.

Alternatives Development Process

- Sheila Kauppi (MnDOT) presented an overview of the process for developing alternatives, and shared examples of potential roadway and transit ideas that could be combined into alternatives (see attached slides).
- Questions from PAC members
 - Commissioner Conley – Stated that a highway to boulevard conversion was not listed in the presentation and asked if it was being considered.
 - **Response:** It was included as a conversion to at-grade roadway, which could have signals or a mix of signals and grade separation.
 - Chris Meyer, speaking on behalf of Sen. Omar Fateh – Asked if an underground subway or rail line been considered.
 - **Response:** Rail is being considered as part of the ongoing transit study.
 - Russ Stark, speaking on behalf of Mayor Carter – Stated there were some specific alternatives such as managed lane conversion or lane additions, which do not capture all options. Suggested leaving trench and having a different number of lanes or uses.
 - **Response:** This list includes draft ideas MnDOT will study but does not include all potential specific options. MnDOT will be studying managed lane options.

Upcoming Engagement

- Sheila Kauppi (MnDOT) provided information about two upcoming events to review transit ideas, solicit further input, and answer any questions the public has on transit considerations for the corridor:
 - Virtual open house on October 11, from 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.
 - All-day 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., in-person open house on October 12 at the Hallie Q. Brown Center.

Partner Update

- Mike Barnes (MnDOT) asked if PAC members had any updates or engagement events MnDOT should be aware of.
 - Mayor Carter – Noted they have enough information on the Reconnecting Communities Grant and is encouraged about the City of St. Paul and ReConnect Rondo’s application for the grant.

Next Steps

- Commissioner Daubenberger (MnDOT) provided an overview of next steps.
 - Technical activities: Refine and test ideas, develop alternatives, refine, and evaluate alternatives
 - Engagement activities: continue to collect input on ideas and alternatives

Next Meeting

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Location: TBD

Open Comment

A 45-minute open comment period was held. Comments shared are summarized on the following pages. Additional written comments submitted are included at the end.

- Guidelines on the open comment period shared with the group:
 - 45-minute time
 - Required advance registration to speak
 - Speakers will be called upon and then asked to unmute
 - Limit to 2 minutes per speaker
 - Comments will receive a reply in the meeting summary if applicable
- **Pat T.**
 - Resident of St. Paul and co-chair of the St. Anthony Park Community Council Transportation Committee. The new Purpose & Need acknowledges the climate crisis, but pivots to congestion and personal vehicle mobility instead. “Rethinking” seems to be only about improving engagement, not rethinking the highway itself. Wants reduced demand, decreased vehicle miles traveled, less carbon, less fine particulate matter output, and less noise.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Ashley A.**
 - Planners involved with this project should push back against your bosses and superiors; have a little courage when defining what feasibility looks like. Persons and goods, not motorized vehicles and freight.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Mike H.**
 - Member of Sierra Club. Is hearing a lot of comments and plans regarding traffic, automotive transportation in this project. Electric scooters and e-bikes starting to become viable alternatives to cars. These modes will use bike paths and trails in addition to bikes and pedestrians. What development plans does MnDOT have for where people will use all these modes to travel to and from bus and rail, and what considerations are there to accommodate this traffic?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review. MnDOT intends to study improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the program area as part of any build alternatives that may be proposed.
- **Skip F.**
 - Is opposed to the Boulevard concept. There are 162,000 daily vehicles using I-94. This corridor, as others had stated, is the quickest, shortest, and most convenient route for origins and destinations of residents and business' in the area. If we go to the Boulevard concept, not only do we increase time and carbon footprint, but also make most vehicles, especially commercial vehicles servicing the area incur circuitous miles. MnDOT has mentioned the need and programs needed to reduce VMT. The mere definition of circuitry directly opposes this concept of reduction. We can't have both, plus the burden it places on the businesses served in the area.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Keith B.**
 - With Reconnect Rondo. Appreciates discussion and questions being raised. Convened many people along the corridor to discuss livability. Reconnect Rondo has always thought forward asking, "how does this opportunity leverage benefits for communities along the corridor in St Paul?" It's important to be grounded in community process. Be responsive to neighborhoods and community, and rethink in broad terms, the corridor and uses.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Joshua H.**
 - With Sierra Club. Keep hearing this project is about mobility and considering that, we propose that the project area should be expanded to connect both downtowns. MnDOT documents continue to prioritize congestion and vehicle delay, but

widening highways only makes people drive more. Traffic evaporation, which has been documented, makes people drive less, and this should be considered in all the modeling in this traffic study.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Zack F.**

- Recently purchased home near freeway. Health impacts for those along corridor should be considered, due to harm. Current infrastructure is expensive to maintain. Entire corridor is 50 blocks – if developable, it would create positive economic impact for nearby communities. If I-94 rebuilt as is, MnDOT is committing to cars being primary mode of transportation for next 60 years. Any new infrastructure should be designed with the goal of reducing carbon emissions. Is a freeway the highest and best use?

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Brandon W.**

- Supports the Twin Cities Boulevard proposal. Wants focus on bike and pedestrian infrastructure along the corridor as it's difficult to get between the two downtowns in anything but a car, and the light rail takes too long. Whatever is built, wants those development benefits to go to community instead of developer from another state.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Rand C.**

- Transportation engineering student at NDSU. Supports Twin Cities Boulevard proposal, as it is the most equitable proposal. Wants to see development of land reclaimed managed by community land trust to benefit the community. Wants more transit ideas, such as rail in the trench instead of freeway. Cover the trench with the boulevard, to reduce negative health impacts.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Scott E.**

- Lives in Minneapolis. Hopes MnDOT staff have been listening to these conversations, and people don't trust them. You are acting as a department of highways. The revisions made are improvements, but the document presented indicates MnDOT continues to prioritize cars. Goal to reduce VMT doesn't appear to be a huge priority. North and South Dakota and Texas are not places we should look

at as examples, we should be looking at San Francisco and Seoul, South Korea. There would be a lot more trust by building what people want.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

- **Roger G.**
 - St. Paul commuter between the two downtowns. I-94 is part of the interstate highway system, built to support interstate commerce. VMT reduction lowering pollution is an assumption. Less hours driving, less pollution.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

- **Jarod K.**
 - Student at University of Minnesota living within bounds of project. Heavily supports Twin Cities Boulevard conversion project in terms of environmental injustice and public health. Some communities along the corridor have asthma rates three times higher than the state. Limiting car traffic and promoting BRT, regional rail should be MnDOT's priority.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

- **Joe M.**
 - Lives in Cedar-Riverside. The corridor and noise severely impact his life and impedes daily activities. Why aren't cars inconvenienced? Prioritize public transit, carpooling, and person-powered transportation for a climate friendly future. Grade separated freeway pollutes and is harmful. MnDOT needs to reduce car-related transportation choices and move towards people-friendly design for a climate positive future.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

- **Josiah G.**
 - Union Park in St. Paul blocks off of I-94. Breathe in the air every day and hear the traffic every night.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

- **Allie R.**
 - Lives near Highway 280. People will decide how to get from point A to point B based on efficiency, and the Twin Cities Boulevard proposal is the best way to create that efficiency. Highlighted public health issues as she has two kids and is worried about

their health. Hopes this can be a national example of progressive and socially responsible design.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Mags B.**

○ Program manager for Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate (HPHC). A known correlation between air pollution and negative health effects; residents near freeways have poorer health outcomes compared to neighborhoods with cleaner air. Wants a health equity assessment done for this project. Commented on a desire for environmental improvement; highways cannot be the solution. In favor of Twin Cities Boulevard proposal.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Jacob C.**

○ President of University of Minnesota Railroad Club. Supports Twin Cities Boulevard proposal. Wonders if building heavy rail line under the boulevard is being considered. Thinks this would be easy considering there is already a trench. Doesn't think BRT and LRT will be sufficient and noted a stronger transit connection is needed.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review. Rail is being considered as part of the ongoing transit study.

▪ **Jesse C.**

○ Vice President of railroad club at the University of Minnesota. Believes current plan will not improve quality of life, and reduction in vehicle miles traveled creates happier and healthier communities. Wants more inviting pedestrian environments. Highlighted benefits of the downtown Seoul example. Similar success seen in freeway removal projects in places like Boston, Seattle, Taipei, San Francisco. Highlighted the cost of current infrastructure, and economic benefits of highway removal. Highways do not belong in cities.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Soren S.**

○ Supports Twin Cities Boulevard or similar. Frontage roads and freeway should be become developable land held by cities for corresponding neighborhoods. Cities should be made for people, not just to drive through.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Serafina S.**
 - Encouraged framing of alternatives that focus on people mobility, instead of cement and vehicles. Didn't recognize Twin Cities Boulevard in alternatives. Believes rebuilding I-94 will not create a future benefit for community. Encouraged rethinking what this project means.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Philip S.**
 - Supports Twin Cities Boulevard option and its vision. It would be a great asset for the state to remove the highway and replace it with a walkable, bikeable, and transit accessible boulevard.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Debbie M.**
 - With Neighborhoods First. Purpose and Need has been updated, but project is still foolish consistency that's unsustainable for neighborhoods along corridor. Believes land bridge should cover the entire corridor, with boulevard conversion. Re-establish street grid along corridor to allow businesses and residents in the area to benefit.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Nahid K.**
 - Believes that the goal of TH 252/I-94 project in Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park, and Brooklyn Center is to expand I-94 through north Minneapolis and turn 252 to a 6-lane freeway with toll lanes (managed lane). Skeptical of MnDOT intentions – believes TH 252/I-94 and Rethinking I-94 projects are linked.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

The following individuals signed up to speak prior to the PAC Meeting but were not present during the Open Public Comment period:

- Jan W.
- Tyler B.

- Andre H.
- Tim B.
- Nicole E.
- Andrew L.
- Stuart K.
- Terry W.
- Nicholas L.
- Chris S.
- Anthony D.
- Katie J.
- Erik B.
- Jon R.
- Cody F.
- Amal J.
- Betty L.

Questions Posted During PAC Meeting Using Q&A Function

- **Mike H.**
 - Is there still an effort to dedicate attention to alternative transportation lanes along the I-94 corridor, especially for electric transportation vehicles that will be operating most likely at speeds of 20-25 mph?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, managed lanes (e.g., E-ZPass lanes) are one potential idea that has been proposed for inclusion in one or more project alternatives. Detailed discussions regarding potential vehicle speeds have not taken place at this time.
- **Brandon W.**
 - Will MnDOT, the city of Minneapolis, or the city of Saint Paul be applying for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant by the October 13 deadline?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT does not intend to apply for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant at this time. The City of St. Paul intends to submit a joint application with ReConnect Rondo.
- **Rand C.**
 - Have there been rail options considered along with BRT?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, rail is being considered as part of the ongoing transit study.
- **Jesse C.**
 - If a pedestrian and cycle-friendly environment is the aim of this project, why will heavy freight vehicles be encouraged on the boulevard?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. There are four transportation needs across all modes present on, along, and across I-94 to be addressed by the program of projects:
 - a. Walkability/Bikeability
 - b. Safety
 - c. Infrastructure condition
 - d. Mobility for people in motorized vehicles – cars, freight, and transit

- **Jarod K.**

- What is the plan to address the environmental injustice the communities along the corridor have been facing since the construction of I-94? Maintaining the freeway would continue that injustice for decades to come.
 - **Response:** MnDOT recognizes the history of I-94 and the lack of community voices in its construction. Throughout its outreach over the last six years, MnDOT has worked with partners to identify investments that are supportive of reconnecting neighborhoods and revitalizing communities. As the project moves forward, MnDOT will continue to work with local partners to bring underrepresented voices to corridor discussions and input.

- **Brandon W.**

- The FHWA's webpage for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program states that eligible activities include: "Planning studies of: current traffic patterns on the eligible facility proposed for removal, retrofit, or mitigation and the surrounding street network; transportation network capacity; alternative roadway designs or other uses for the right-of-way; impacts to the mobility of freight and people; impacts to the safety of the traveling public; cost; anticipated economic impacts and environmental impacts both human and natural.

Public engagement activities to provide the public opportunities to provide input into a plan to remove and convert an eligible facility.

Other transportation planning activities required in advance of a project to remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing eligible facility to restore community connectivity, as determined by DOT.

Is MnDOT currently engaging in any of these activities? If so, it seems as though Rethinking I-94 would qualify for a planning grant this year

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT has already funded the planning and environmental review process for Rethinking I-94. At this point in the NEPA process, MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives and does not want to bias the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative. Due to the need to preserve the integrity of the environmental review process, at this time the agency is unable to seek dollars that would specifically fund one alternative

versus another. There is much work yet to be done, and MnDOT remains committed to a transparent and inclusive process. MnDOT's efforts do not preclude other agencies or groups from applying for a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant.

▪ **Alex B.**

○ MnDOT conducted an equity & health assessment (EHA) for the I-94/252. Will they be doing the same for this project?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. At this time there are no plans to conduct a standalone equity & health assessment for Rethinking I-94. However, revisions made to the evaluation criteria include consideration of criteria associated with the pillars of the Livability Framework (which includes equity) in the Scoping phase of the process. These evaluation criteria and measures had originally been identified for use in the Tier 1 evaluation, which occurs later in the process. The decision to evaluate equity earlier in the process was based upon feedback from stakeholder groups and the public.

▪ **Jarod K.**

○ Applying for a grant shouldn't impact your chances applying for grants later, right? From my perspective there's no reason not to try.

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT has already funded the planning and environmental review process for Rethinking I-94. At this point in the NEPA process, MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives and does not want to bias the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative. Due to the need to preserve the integrity of the environmental review process, at this time the agency is unable to seek dollars that would specifically fund one alternative versus another. There is much work yet to be done, and MnDOT remains committed to a transparent and inclusive process. MnDOT's efforts do not preclude other agencies or groups from applying for a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant.

▪ **Zack F.**

○ Couldn't those grant dollars go towards making a more informed decision on which proposal to pursue further down the line, rather than waiting until we've already decided?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT has already funded the planning and environmental review process for Rethinking I-94. At this point in the NEPA process, MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives and does not want to bias the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative. Due to the need to preserve the integrity of the environmental review process, at this time the agency is unable to seek dollars that would specifically fund one alternative

versus another. There is much work yet to be done, and MnDOT remains committed to a transparent and inclusive process. MnDOT's efforts do not preclude other agencies or groups from applying for a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant.

▪ **Anonymous Attendee**

○ I still haven't heard a valid reason why we wouldn't apply for federal grant funds to explore exactly what we need to accomplish. Choosing not to apply is biased in itself. I want to hear specifics other than "we have too many alternatives".

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT has already funded the planning and environmental review process for Rethinking I-94. At this point in the NEPA process, MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives and does not want to bias the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative. Due to the need to preserve the integrity of the environmental review process, at this time the agency is unable to seek dollars that would specifically fund one alternative versus another. There is much work yet to be done, and MnDOT remains committed to a transparent and inclusive process. MnDOT's efforts do not preclude other agencies or groups from applying for a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant.

▪ **Ashley A.**

○ Has MnDOT directly discussed with federal partners these potential conflicts between NEPA process and the Reconnecting Communities grant? Or are these inferred conflicts?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, the decision to not pursue a Reconnecting Communities grant at this time was arrived at through discussion with project partners at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

▪ **Jon R.**

○ What specifically will MnDOT do to ensure that they will be prepared to make decisions next year, and not be in the same place we are right now?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, the next stage of this process is for the project team and relevant partner agencies to study different ideas and create alternatives that will be put forward for consideration. MnDOT will work with FHWA, our technical committees, policymakers, and the public on the development of alternatives.

▪ **Rand C.**

○ Should we not be attempting to reconnect the communities where I-94 serves as a barrier? Now would be the time to go for it. According to the website for the grant "Funding supports planning grants and capital construction grants, as well as

technical assistance, to restore community connectivity through the removal, retrofit, mitigation, or replacement of eligible transportation infrastructure facilities.” Would biasing the NEPA towards a more environmentally friendly option that connects communities not be the goal of environmental evaluation of alternatives? As far as my awareness of NEPA and EIS studies from transit projects, this would be the goal.

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT has already funded the planning and environmental review process for Rethinking I-94. At this point in the NEPA process, MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives and does not want to bias the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative. Due to the need to preserve the integrity of the environmental review process, at this time the agency is unable to seek dollars that would specifically fund one alternative versus another. There is much work yet to be done, and MnDOT remains committed to a transparent and inclusive process. MnDOT’s efforts do not preclude other agencies or groups from applying for a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant.

▪ **Jesse C.**

- Is it possible that the decision to not apply for this grant shows a lack of commitment on MnDOT's part regarding this project? The de-scaling of car-centric infrastructure speaks perfectly to the time-sensitivity of the climate catastrophe. A project such as this, especially with its climate-related goals, requires more prompt action.

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT has already funded the planning and environmental review process for Rethinking I-94. At this point in the NEPA process, MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives and does not want to bias the process by pursuing a grant that would create a bias towards one alternative. Due to the need to preserve the integrity of the environmental review process, at this time the agency is unable to seek dollars that would specifically fund one alternative versus another. There is much work yet to be done, and MnDOT remains committed to a transparent and inclusive process. MnDOT’s efforts do not preclude other agencies or groups from applying for a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant.

▪ **Mike H.**

- So you're saying that you have funded everything that you currently have planned, and you're holding off on asking for grant money for things that you haven't yet discovered?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. As discussed during the meeting, MnDOT has already funded the planning and environmental review process for Rethinking I-94. At this point in the NEPA process, MnDOT will be looking at many alternatives and does not want to bias the process by pursuing a

grant that would create a bias towards one alternative. Due to the need to preserve the integrity of the environmental review process, at this time the agency is unable to seek dollars that would specifically fund one alternative versus another. There is much work yet to be done, and MnDOT remains committed to a transparent and inclusive process. MnDOT's efforts do not preclude other agencies or groups from applying for a Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program grant.

▪ **Anonymous Attendee**

- A blanket of pollution covers all families near this highway. If the top priority isn't to improve the environment and lung health for those thousands of citizens with a higher risk of cancer due to I-94, what do you have to say to those families with children about your priorities?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. The evaluation of alternatives will include criteria designed to evaluate impacts to air quality as well as other social, economic, and environmental (SEE) resources.

▪ **Anonymous Attendee**

- I have concerns that there are a large number of white members of this PAC telling the POC members to stop talking and asking questions. This is a project that is aimed at correcting the many harms that this highway caused to communities of color. The optics of a group of white men and women saying no to the application of a grant that is being requested by POC members of this PAC is very concerning.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review. MnDOT recognizes the history of I-94 and the lack of community voices in its construction. Throughout its outreach over the last six years, MnDOT has worked with partners to identify investments that are supportive of reconnecting neighborhoods and revitalizing communities. As the project moves forward, MnDOT will continue to work with local partners to bring underrepresented voices to corridor discussions and input.

▪ **Jarod K.**

- How can you say all the alternatives will be objectively analyzed, when the criteria in the Draft Purpose and Need document is inherently biased towards alternatives that involve rebuilding the freeway?

- **Response:** MnDOT underwent careful analysis of the project corridor to identify project needs. Throughout this process, we have prioritized safety and livability. While there are certain items that MnDOT, as a transportation agency, cannot address by itself, it will work to support broader livability goals through this project. We need to identify and evaluate a wide range of alternatives as part of this process, including consideration of ideas from public engagement. As noted, a non-freeway alternative will be studied as part of this process.

- **Zack F.**
 - What do you mean by "no action at all"? Much of the freeway infrastructure is at the end of life and will need extensive repair over the next decade. How would leaving it as is be safe?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. The federal NEPA process requires consideration and evaluation of a "no build" or "no action" alternative as a comparison to a range of reasonable "build" alternatives. If a no build alternative was selected, routine preventative maintenance and critical safety repairs would still be conducted.

- **Rand C.**
 - Could we more closely follow the twin cities boulevard proposal with four traffic lanes with green space and brt lanes for the center area? This would make the most sense for total throughput of persons
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. The Commissioner committed to review a non-freeway alternative as part of the state and federal environmental documentation process, which Rethinking I-94 is currently engaged in. We need to identify and evaluate a wide range of alternatives as part of this process, including consideration of ideas from public engagement. As noted, a non-freeway alternative will be studied as part of this process.

- **Jacob C.**
 - Why is the possibility of doing nothing at all or rebuilding the freeway as is even being considered? This would be doing absolutely nothing for the community except for perpetuating car dependency and keeping the neighborhoods divided and inequitable.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question and comment on the idea of rebuilding the freeway as is. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review. The federal NEPA process requires consideration and evaluation of a "no build" or "no action" alternative as a comparison to a range of reasonable "build" alternatives. If a no build alternative was selected, routine preventative maintenance and critical safety repairs would still be conducted.

- **Brandon W.**
 - Would any of the at-grade alternatives be any less than six lanes?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. The Commissioner committed to review a non-freeway alternative as part of the state and federal environmental documentation process, which Rethinking I-94 is currently engaged in. We need to identify and evaluate a wide range of alternatives as part of this process, including consideration of ideas from public

engagement. As noted, a non-freeway alternative will be studied as part of this process.

- **Thomas M.**
 - Is MnDOT specifically and intentionally seeking input from the communities living along the I-94 corridor, who are harmed the most by the status quo and stand to gain the most from conversion to a pedestrian and bike-friendly boulevard?
 - **Response:** When I-94 was originally built, the voices of the communities most directly impacted were ignored. MnDOT and our partners are committed to doing better. As we have previously discussed, beginning in 2016 with Rethinking I-94 Phase 1, MnDOT has placed a high priority on outreach and proactively soliciting community voices. This includes numerous in-person and virtual events, mail and online surveys to community groups, "pop-up" events in neighborhood businesses, and ongoing engagement with a core group of Community Leaders who have provided their expertise in how best to engage more voices.

- **Mary M.M.**
 - Your current alternative review mentions a six-lane, at-grade roadway test. What other lane configurations will you test as part of an at-grade conversion?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. The Commissioner committed to review a non-freeway alternative as part of the state and federal environmental documentation process, which Rethinking I-94 is currently engaged in. We need to identify and evaluate a wide range of alternatives as part of this process, including consideration of ideas from public engagement. As noted, a non-freeway alternative will be studied as part of this process.

- **Soren S.**
 - Is included in these options a potential of returning much of the land being used for freeway and frontage roads to buildable land?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. MnDOT will continue to provide objective analysis of all options that have been considered in order to determine the best path forward.

- **Rand C.**
 - Could we potentially use the trench for another use such as running a several track S bahn style regional rail service for the metro area? This would involve a filling in areas not used for the tracks and putting a lid for reconnecting the street grid and building uses on top.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. Rail is being considered as part of the ongoing transit study.

- **Anonymous Attendee**

- A six lane Boulevard. You might as well just close it down. It will be dangerous for anyone trying to cross the street and will make this area back to 1950 when no one could get around.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

- **Carter B.**
 - With carbon neutrality by 2050 recognized as a goal by the federal government and leading climate scientists, is MNDOT considering this goal in the Reconnecting I-94 project?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. An analysis of potential greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will be included in the environmental review process. More information about MnDOT’s efforts to reduce GHG emissions can be found by visiting the website of the Office of Sustainability and Public Health: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/sustainability/index.html>

- **Jordan V.**
 - The Reconnecting Communities Program is a competitive grant application that is limited in funds. If St. Paul is already pursuing a Reconnecting Communities grant to study I-94, is it really realistic for MnDOT to be successful in pursuing another Reconnecting Communities grant to study the same stretch of the same facility?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. MnDOT is not pursuing a Reconnecting Communities Grant at this time.

- **Lisa N.**
 - Commissioner Daubenberger, in your May 6, 2022 letter to Our Streets regarding the Twin Cities Boulevard idea, you stated “I can commit to you that MnDOT will evaluate a highway-to-boulevard conversion alongside other proposals and alternatives for the I-94 corridor.” Considering only a 6-lane roadway as a highway replacement does not seem consistent with this statement.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comment. The Commissioner committed to review a non-freeway alternative as part of the state and federal environmental documentation process, which Rethinking I-94 is currently engaged in. We need to identify and evaluate a wide range of alternatives as part of this process, including consideration of ideas from public engagement. As noted, a non-freeway alternative will be studied as part of this process.

- **Roger G.**
 - It seems that there is an implicit assumption that reducing vehicle-miles will reduce air pollution and prevent global warming. I would suggest that reducing vehicle-hours is a better way to achieve cleaner air through reduced vehicle emissions.

Many of the ideas submitted seem likely to increase gridlock with many vehicles idling at stop lights or in the typical rush hour traffic jams.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Sean R.**
 - Much of the particulate pollution comes from vehicle tires, not the tail pipe. Reducing all driving is the only way to make an impact on pollution in our neighborhoods.
 - **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.
- **Thomas M.**
 - Given the support for Twin Cities Boulevard we are hearing, I advocate for MnDOT dedicating significant resources to studying this proposal and broaden the efforts to seek community input on the Twin Cities Boulevard proposal. Will MnDOT ensure this solution is given adequate consideration and community input?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. The Commissioner committed to review a non-freeway alternative as part of the state and federal environmental documentation process, which Rethinking I-94 is currently engaged in. We need to identify and evaluate a wide range of alternatives as part of this process, including consideration of ideas from public engagement. As noted, a non-freeway alternative will be studied as part of this process.
- **Jarod K.**
 - Another thing to note is that the population along the corridor is among the most likely in the state to not own a car. Why are these communities subject to all of the negatives that come with a freeway without reaping any of the (already few) benefits?
 - **Response:** Thank you for your question. MnDOT recognizes the history of I-94 and the lack of community voices in its construction. Throughout its outreach over the last six years, MnDOT has worked with partners to identify investments that are supportive of reconnecting neighborhoods and revitalizing communities. As the project moves forward, MnDOT will continue to work with local partners to bring underrepresented voices to corridor discussions and input.
- **Nahid K.**
 - Are the PAC members and MnDOT staffs etc. actually listening to these public comments (beyond having attended the meeting itself)?

- **Response:** Thank you for your question. MnDOT staff and PAC members have been actively engaged in shaping the revised project documents in response to public and stakeholder input.

- **Jon R.**

- I'd like to submit my statement then:

As someone who lives just a couple of blocks away from the highway, I want to personally urge you to consider recasting I-94 as a boulevard.

I frequently drive along I-94 to go to both downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul, Woodbury, and occasionally to reach 280. It's always the most dangerous part of my trip, given the short on-ramps, heavy traffic, merging, and disappearing lanes.

I'm also a cyclist, and would love for this corridor to be a safe place to ride, rather than be a place to avoid.

Additionally, it will allow my neighborhood, Lexington-Hamline, to have a better transition to Midway, making it easier for me to access shops and the light rail on University. I believe new businesses and residential zones where there are currently just slopes and on/off-ramps would flourish, and desegregating these struggling neighborhoods from those on the south side of I-94 will bring new prosperity.

Cities around the world often looked at as transportation utopias were not originally designed that way. They all made the difficult decision to prioritize people over vehicles. We can work adding the Twin Cities to that list of shining examples to others. It's important to act boldly, and make lasting changes.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

Comments Submitted Following the Meeting

- **Lisa N.**

When the route for I-94 was being chosen, some people knew that bad choices were being made. According to Politics and Freeways: Building the Twin Cities Interstate System, "George Harrold, the St. Paul city engineer, was opposed to freeways going through cities because of his concern about land use and the dislocation of people and business."

Still, the highway was built straight through neighborhoods. 60 years later, MnDOT officially apologized and stated "The Minnesota Highway Department built an interstate through the heart of the Rondo Community. We would never, we could never, build that kind of atrocity today."

The highway continues to cut through our neighborhoods. Rebuilding the highway again in its current configuration is a choice to build that same infrastructure again and to continue to cut through the heart of Rondo and other neighborhoods in St. Paul.

While the path may have been chosen to target the Rondo neighborhood and had the worst initial impact on the Rondo neighborhood, other neighborhoods were affected by the highway's construction and continue to be affected by its presence. The interstate highway as it is currently configured is a huge source of pollution, noise, and health and safety issues, all of which disproportionately affect residents of color throughout the highway corridor.

But even more important than the past or the present, is the future. In light of the climate crisis, continuing to prioritize cars at the expense of everything else would be another terrible choice. Choosing to rebuild car-centric infrastructure means ignoring the reality of climate change and the actions we should be taking now to mitigate it.

If the climate crisis and the negative health effects of the highway are not truly taken into account, and if we miss this opportunity to really "rethink" I-94, in 60 years someone who is a child right now is going to grow up and have to apologize for your actions today.

Thank you,

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Skip F.**

I am opposed to the Boulevard concept. There are, if I recall the data, 162,000 daily using I-94. This corridor, as others had stated, is the quickest, shortest, and most convenient route for origins and destinations of residents and business' in the area. If we go to the Boulevard concept, not only do we increase time and carbon footprint, but also make most vehicles, especially commercial vehicles servicing the area incur circuitous miles.

MnDOT has mentioned the need and programs needed to reduce VMT. The mere definition of circuitry directly opposes this concept of reduction. We can't have both, plus the burden it places on the businesses served in the area.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Pat T.**

I'm Pat Thompson, co-chair of the St. Anthony Park Community Council Transportation Committee

The executive summary of the new draft Purpose & Need statement starts off by acknowledging the climate crisis, but then pivots to mobility and level of service of Single Occupancy Vehicles.

I suppose this should have been expected when it also states that the term "rethinking" — in the name Rethinking I-94 — was defined only as improving engagement and relationships along the corridor... not as actually RETHINKING the highway.

The purpose talks about all modes moving across and along the corridor, as if all modes are equal, but then it highlights mobility and safety ON the corridor for motorized vehicles — cars and freight — with transit thrown in as an afterthought.

This is my need statement:

The transportation NEED is for the most PEOPLE — not single vehicles — to be able to move in a SUSTAINABLE WAY that does the LEAST health and economic damage to the people who LIVE near the infrastructure that gets built.

I want reduced demand, decreased vehicle miles traveled, less carbon, less fine particle output, less noise. That's the NEED. Conversely, the draft statement is a prescription for induced demand.

Finally, I would point out that there is no recognition that mobility for motorized vehicles as operationalized in this Purpose & Need statement is OPPOSED to safety for non-motorized users along and across. It's a fantasy to think you can have 60+ mph highway drivers and heavy trucks exiting to local streets, meeting with bike and pedestrian users who can be safe from those drivers.

Thank you.

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Nicholas L.**

I was unable to attend the Rethinking I-94 Policy Advisory Committee meeting, but I'd like to share my thoughts below:

I'm a resident of Prospect Park and live two blocks away from the junction of I-94 and Highway 280. I use I-94 at least three times a week for attending services at my synagogue, going grocery shopping, and visiting restaurants in St. Paul. As a regular user of I-94, I'd like to voice my strong support for transforming I-94 into the Twin Cities Boulevard promoted by Our Streets Minneapolis.

I-94 is a dangerous highway. Poor ramp designs, frontage roads that encourage speeding, and confusing signage make I-94 harrowing to drive on. On three recent occasions, I've witnessed crashes and come perilously close to being hit.

Considering the stress of driving on I-94, I'd prefer to walk, bike, or take transit to my destinations. Yet while I-94 provides a route for cars, it impairs all other modes of travel. North-south bike connections are broken by the freeway, while the only alternative east-west bike route is Summit Avenue, which is indirect and features unsafe painted bike lanes.

Walking in the neighborhoods near I-94 is also full of hazards. High-speed traffic coming off I-94 turns onto Franklin Avenue and University Avenue in Prospect Park, making it risky to cross the street or let kids play outside. And that's to say nothing of the 24/7 noise and air pollution. No matter the time of day, there's a dull roar coming from the highway that disrupts what would otherwise be a quiet neighborhood.

Despite my issues with I-94, I continue to use the highway. Why? Because I-94 necessitates driving. This freeway provides a direct route for cars, but it hampers every other transportation choice and has negative health and safety impacts on nearby residents like me.

Converting I-94 to the safe Twin Cities Boulevard will:

- Slow down and reduce neighborhood traffic volumes.
- Provide a protected and direct east-west bike route through St. Paul.
- Improve east-west mass transit reliability through dedicated bus lanes.
- Open up valuable real estate for new parks, housing, and businesses.
- Reconnect our neighborhoods that have been divided by I-94.

I hope you vote in favor of converting I-94 to a safe, modern Twin Cities Boulevard that better serves all residents.

Thank you for your consideration!

- **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

▪ **Nahid K.**

For the Monday, Sept. 26, 2022, Policy Advisory Council (PAC) for MnDOT's so-called "rethinking" I-94 project between Marion Street in downtown St. Paul and Hwy 55 / I-35W in downtown Minneapolis.

Submitted by Nahid Khan.

27-year resident of Brooklyn Center, MN.

Member, Highway 252 Safety Task Force of Brooklyn Center.

Member, Equity and Health Neighborhood Advisors group for the Equity and Health Assessment process for MnDOT's Hwy 252 / I-94 project Environmental Review in preparation for eventually starting a federal National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Note: My written public comment submitted here is based on my spoken comment during the public comment period of the PAC meeting (I spoke last).

The so-called “rethinking” I-94 project and the Hwy 252 / I-94 project are linked and are essentially ONE project.

The Hwy 252 / I-94 project begins at 4th Street North, just northwest of downtown Minneapolis, and includes I-94 through North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center, and Hwy 252 through Brooklyn Center and Brooklyn Park.

These three communities are predominantly lower income, working class and people of color communities. North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center have the state’s highest rates of asthma and COPD deaths and hospitalizations, caused by the high levels of air pollution produced by vehicle emissions on I-94, I-694 and Hwy 252. In the zip codes adjacent to these highways, the death rates and hospitalization costs far exceed number of crash deaths and crash costs: they are 7 times higher already. The Hwy 252 / I-94 project will make these harms and many others exponentially worse for our three communities. This is a fatal flaw.

MnDOT wants to expand I-94 and turn Hwy 252 (a signalized expressway with 6 local-access intersections) into an unsafe 6-lane freeway (with 3 dangerous limited-access interchanges), with Toll Lanes (euphemistically called EZPass or “managed lanes”). This expansion will more than double vehicle traffic on Hwy 252. Currently, truck traffic on Hwy 252 is low, but this plan to expand Hwy 252 into a 6-lane freeway will turn Hwy 252 in particular into a Tier 1 heavy freight truck route through a densely populated residential area where houses and apartment buildings come up right next to the current roadway. Up to 148 properties are at risk for seizure and encroachment, even larger numbers of properties will be devalued, and there will be severe disruptions and destruction to the adjacent neighborhood traffic patterns. This is all another fatal flaw.

Also, an issue for both I-94 and Hwy 252: they run through the Mississippi River National Park and Recreation Area (depicted in green on a Google map of the area), and Priority Conservation Area (to protect birds, animals, aquatic life and their habitats). On that basis alone, these highways should NEVER have been built in the first place. Yet another fatal flaw.

MnDOT wants the Hwy 252 / I-94 project to link with the so-called “rethinking” I-94 project from Minneapolis to St. Paul and wants to rebuild I-94 as is or in expanded form, and add Toll Lanes to it, just as it wants to do with I-94 and Hwy 252 through North Minneapolis, Brooklyn Center, and Brooklyn Park. Toll Lanes require taking more city lands and private properties (and any city tax revenues), which MnDOT will then monetize for their own financial benefit and to help replace their declining revenue stream: a clear instance of highway colonialism.

Essentially, MnDOT wants ONE continuous rebuilt and expanded freeway with Toll Lanes from downtown St. Paul to Brooklyn Park, despite their claims that they are considering a variety of project design alternatives and that no final decisions have been made on either project. Take such claims with a grain of salt and be skeptical: VERY SKEPTICAL.

The truth is, there is NO other project on the table but this vast combined Hwy 252 / I-94 and so-called “rethinking” I-94 freeway expansion project from Brooklyn Park to downtown St. Paul. It is a fantastic tax money spending opportunity for MnDOT and the highway industrial complex and is the only true Purpose for these two (in reality ONE) projects.

I appreciate hearing the elected government representatives of the people (and their staff people) speak, as guardians, protectors and watchdogs for their city residents, taxpayers, and constituents. I also appreciate the public comments presented today; they have been most inspiring. I thank you all.

I ask you all to please learn more about the Hwy 252 / I-94 project at the MnDOT web site and the Highway 252 Safety Task Force at highway252.org and get involved with this project also. We need your help, dear friends, elected government representatives of the people, community activities and allies, in opposing the MnDOT plan to turn Hwy 252 into a 6-lane freeway through Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center and expand I-94 through Brooklyn Park and North Minneapolis.

We the members of the Highway 252 Safety Task Force have asked for “reductionist” projects for Hwy 252 / I-94 similar to what you and your community organizations in Minneapolis and St. Paul are asking for in the so-called “rethinking” I-94 project. In that regard, I too support the vision of the Twin Cities Boulevard project.

However, we have learned that MnDOT does not take those concepts seriously despite putting on a show of briefly adding a few of them to the project design alternatives for the Hwy 252 / I-94 project. These included local roadway, transitway, boulevard and 4-lane expressway. They were presented to our own PAC in late March of this year, and then to our community open houses in late April and early May, and then rejected immediately afterwards.

This was discovered in the “Scoping Document & Draft Scoping Decision Document” Version 2.4 dated June 2022 with MnDOT reviewer comments dated July 2022, that we found at the MnDOT public eDocs web site in early August (since removed but copy available at the Highway 252 Safety Task Force web site). It recommends elimination of all project alternatives but the two 6-lane freeway project alternatives (with and without Toll Lanes / EZPass / “managed lanes” / pay lanes). In other words, the consideration of the other project alternatives besides 6-lane freeways by MnDOT was quite simply a hoax perpetrated upon the community and our PAC, plain and simple.

So be forewarned about how this process will truly unfold and plan for it. Again, the reality is, there is no other form of our two projects under serious consideration but freeway rebuilding, expansion, and Toll Lanes. This is what MnDOT is, this is what MnDOT does, as one public commenter pointed out in the PAC meeting public comment: MnDOT started out as the MN Highway Department and that mission has never changed.

Vehicle mobility is what they are all about: any claim that they are concerned about air pollution, health, environment, community livability and equity is just Public Relations work to get consent from participating and co-operating agencies, NOT consent from area

residents, community members and the public at large. The agencies all know this game as they play this game themselves in order to get their own predetermined outcomes for their own projects.

I end my comment with this thought:

It is time to fundamentally and truly rethink the whole notion of freeway rebuilding and expansion in the current context of

- (a) huge social inequities (MnDOT itself embodying inequity, disparity and power imbalance as an institution vis-à-vis the taxpaying and voting public),
- (b) the social changes wrought upon us by the Coronavirus Pandemic (their full impacts and implications not entirely understood), but clearly showing a permanent shift to working from home which means reduced roadway traffic and congestion (already seen on Hwy 252 and I-94 through BP, BC and North Minneapolis),
- (c) the political upheaval caused by the police killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Daunte Wright in Brooklyn Center, which shows that people are not willing to tolerate “the status quo” when it comes to civil and human rights, including public safety issues on our roadways and highways,
- (d) the overarching issue of the impacts of climate change, air pollution, human health, environment, and deterioration of community livability, when transportation is the NUMBER ONE contributor to the carbon emissions which are the main cause of global warming.

The time for business as usual and the usual modes of operation when it comes to freeway construction, rebuilding and expansion, as well as overall thinking about them, is over.

- o **Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Rethinking I-94 effort. Your comments will be recorded and will be considered as part of the Environmental Review.

Policy Advisory Committee Members

An “X” in the Present column denotes members attending the meeting virtually.

Present	Name	Organization
In-person	Commissioner Nancy Daubenberger	MnDOT
	Mayor Jacob Frey	City of Minneapolis
	Abdi Salah	City of Minneapolis - Alt for Mayor Frey
X	Council Member Jamal Osman (Sean Broom representing)	City of Minneapolis - Ward 6
X	Council Member Robin Wonsley	City of Minneapolis - Ward 2
X	Mayor Melvin Carter (Russ Stark Representing)	City of St. Paul

Present	Name	Organization
X	Council Member Russel Balenger (Mai Chong Xiong representing)	City of St. Paul - Ward 1
X	Council Member Mitra Jalali (Doua Yang representing)	City of St. Paul - Ward 4
In-person	Division Administrator Wendall Meyer	FHWA
X	Commissioner Angela Conley	Hennepin County - District 4
	Commissioner Kevin Anderson	Hennepin County - District 7
X	Council Member Kris Fredson	Metropolitan Council - District 14
In-person	Co-Chair Charlie Zelle	Metropolitan Council
	Senator Bobby Joe Champion	MN Legislature - District 59
	Senator Kari Dziedzic	MN Legislature - District 60
X	Senator D. Scott Dibble (Beth Ethier representing)	MN Legislature - District 61
In-person	Senator Omar Fateh (Chris Meyer representing)	MN Legislature - District 62
	Senator Erin Murphy	MN Legislature - District 64
X	Senator Sandra Pappas (Rachel Carlson representing)	MN Legislature - District 65
	Representative Esther Agbaje	MN Legislature - District 59B
	Representative Mohamud Noor	MN Legislature - District 60B
	Representative Frank Hornstein	MN Legislature - District 61A
	Representative Hodan Hassan	MN Legislature - District 62A
	Representative Koahly Her	MN Legislature - District 64A
X	Representative Rena Moran	MN Legislature - District 65A
	Representative Carlos Mariani	MN Legislature - District 65B
X	Commissioner Toni Carter (Beverly Hammond representing)	Ramsey County - District 5
	Commissioner Jim McDonough	Ramsey County - District 6 – alt for Com. Carter

Agency and Consultant Staff

Present	Name	Organization
X	Anna Varney	FHWA
In-person	Sheila Kauppi	MnDOT – Rethinking I-94 Project
In-person	Mark Lindeberg	MnDOT – Rethinking I-94 Project
In-person	Gloria Jeff	MnDOT – Livability Initiative
X	Cyrus Knutson	MnDOT
In-person	Michael Barnes	MnDOT
X	Kim Collins	MnDOT
In-person	Jacob Loesch	MnDOT
X	Sara Severs	MnDOT
In-person	Chris Krueger	MnDOT
In-person	Nancy Daubenberger	MnDOT
X	Jay Hietpas	MnDOT
X	Bill Goff	MnDOT
X	April Crockett	MnDOT
X	Melissa Barnes	MnDOT
X	Ricardo Lopez	MnDOT
In-person	Jean Wallace	MnDOT
X	Amy Vennewitz	Metropolitan Council
X	Peter Grafstrom	Metropolitan Council
X	Charles Carlson	Metropolitan Council
X	Sam O'Connell	Metropolitan Council
	Jennifer Hager	City of Minneapolis
X	Adrienne Bockheim	City of Minneapolis
X	Qannani Omar	City of Minneapolis
X	Suzanne Sobotka	City of Minneapolis
	Russ Stark	City of St. Paul
X	Randy Newton	City of St. Paul
X	Sean Kershaw	City of St. Paul
X	Brian Isaacson	Ramsey County
In-person	Jon Chiglo	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant

Present	Name	Organization
X	Jack Corkle	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant
In-person	Austin Hauf	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant
X	Joanne Cho	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant
X	Regina Burstein	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant
X	Karli McElroy	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant
X	Johnny Ware	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant
X	Ryan Earp	WSB – Rethinking I-94 Consultant

Registered Guests

Name	Organization (if applicable)
May M.	
Katherine P.	
Mark G.	
Erik R.	MnDOT
Kent A.	Kaskaskia Engineering Group
Alan R.F.	National Park Service
David J.	ReConnect Rondo
Thay B.	USDOT
Gibson B.	
Pat T.	St. Anthony Park Community Council
Grant R.	
Theresa N.	
Ashley A.	
Sandy M.	
Nieeta P.	New Life Possibilities, LLC.
David F.	Prospect Park Association
Mike H.	Sierra Club
Jessica O.	MnDOT
Joshua H.	Sierra Club North Star Chapter
H. Jiahong P.	Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder
Patrick S.	

Name	Organization (if applicable)
Gracie G.	
Zack F.	
Vera M.	
John P.	TCC Materials/Cemstone
Brandon W.	University of Minnesota
Rand C.	
McKenna A.	
Scott E.	
Roger G.	Retired
Margaret R.	
Jarod K.	
Alex B.	Our Streets Minneapolis
Tim B.	
Joe M.	
Stuart K.	
Sandy C.	University of Minnesota
Jamila P.	
Alex H.	GRAEF
Thomas M.	
Josiah G.	
Kaitlyn D.	
Skip F.	Freedom Companies
Keith B.	ReConnect Rondo
Allie R.	
Ethan O.	Ramsey County
Ian T.	
Andrew H.	
Mags B.	Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
Stephen H.	
Clay B.	CSDZ

Name	Organization (if applicable)
Ross C.	City of St. Paul
Anthony D.	
Jacob C.	
Jesse C.	
Soren S.	
Katie J.	
Serafina S.	
Ronald B.	Taste of Rondo Bar & Grill
Philip S.	
Spencer L.	MacGrove Community Council Transportation Committee
Jon R.	
Debbie M.	
Nahid K.	
Lisa N.	
Andrew B.	
Sarah O.	Hamline Midway Coalition
Glen J.	Elliot Park Neighborhood
Bethany B.	
John L.	Hamline Midway Coalition
Raquel S.W.	
Heidi S.	
Susan D.	
Marisa N.	
Dennis F.	
Steve R.	
Barb T.	Union Park DC
David V.	
John E.	
Mary M.M.	
Sean I.	

Name	Organization (if applicable)
Carl F.	
Laurie V.	
Jose A. Z.	
Jordan V.	
Scott B.	Union Park DC
Dan D.	
Deb A.	
Peter W.	Sierra Club
Alec A.	
Greg H.	
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