

# Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 Policy Advisory Committee

Date: 02/14/2024 (8:30 am – 10:30 am)

Location: Zoom Meeting

Participants: See List Below

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Melissa Barnes (MnDOT) welcomed the PAC members and introduced MnDOT Commissioner Daubenberger.
- MnDOT Commissioner, Nancy Daubenberger, welcomed PAC members and provided opening comments:
  - Extended welcome to new PAC Members
  - Renee Raduenz, Rethinking I-94 Communications and Engagement Manager took roll call
  - The Commissioner then reviewed the agenda as well as the role of Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) members.
  - The Commissioner provided opening remarks and discussed the opportunity for public to submit questions and comments via the Q&A. These comments and questions will be documented.
  - The Commissioner introduced Charles Carlson of the Metropolitan Council, speaking on behalf of the Metropolitan Council Chair Zelle.
- Charles Carlson (Metropolitan Council) opening remarks:
  - Met Council is working on 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), anticipating public review this summer.
  - 2050 TPP anticipates investment in I-94 corridor. Will not identify specific improvement – plan will be amended to reflect Rethinking I-94 preferred alternative. Current plan (2040 TPP) has a managed lane for I-94.
  - Transit ridership grew 16% in 2023.
  - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a good match for the post-pandemic travel market.
  - Met Council supports transit conclusions of the Rethinking I-94 process.
  - Charles Carlson introduced Metro District Engineer Khani Sahebjam
- Metro District Engineer Sahebjam opening remarks:
  - Thanked Commissioner Daubenberger.
  - Stated that this project has a long history going back to discussions many years ago about need to improve infrastructure.
  - There is a new focus on people and not so much on pavement and bridges.

## 2. Schedule

- Melissa gave an overview of the project schedule, noting that it will continue to be adjusted going forward. She noted that there is no funding for construction at this time.
  - Scoping phase: Through 2025
    - Narrowed range of potential alternatives (roadway + transit ideas combined)
    - Alternatives will be high-level with limited details
    - List of locations for access/interchange modifications
    - High-level analysis of corridor impacts
  - Tier 1 EIS: 2025 - 2028
    - Preferred corridor alternative – select roadway type (freeway or non-freeway), number and type of travel lanes, type of transit and associated stops.
    - Options for intersection/interchange modifications
    - Crossing and parallel bicycle and pedestrian improvements
    - Visual quality analysis (corridor aesthetics)
    - Program of projects
    - More detailed analysis of corridor impacts
  - Tier 2 environmental documents: 2029+
    - Follows Tier 1 EIS, completed as projects are designed and constructed.
    - Separate documents to independently analyze and construct the program of projects to implement the corridor vision
    - Will address specific project impacts at individual project locations within the corridor.
    - Greater detail will be provided about interchanges, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transit stops, landscaping, lighting, noise walls, and other roadway elements.
    - As designs become more detailed, opportunities for improved streetscaping (trees/vegetation), public art, and other uses of right of way will be better understood.

## 3. Purpose and Need Review

- Melissa gave an overview of the purpose and need and goals.
  - Project needs
    - Walkability and Bikeability. Comfort, mobility and risks for people walking, bicycling and rolling. Movement for non-motorists along and across I-94 is uncomfortable.
    - Safety. Safety for people in motorized vehicles – car, freight, and transit. I-94 exceeds crash rates for similarly designed roadways – there is a documented safety problem on the entire corridor.
    - Infrastructure Condition – state of repair. The roadway pavement and structure are breaking down and have reached the end of their lifecycle along with some supporting infrastructure (bridges, drainage, noise and retaining walls)
    - Mobility. Mobility for people in motorized vehicles – car, freight and transit. Congestion and unreliable travel times are a frequent occurrence and contribute to crash problems on the corridor.
  - Goals

- Incorporating the Livability Framework throughout the process to identify opportunities for establishing the following for the communities that live, work, gather, and play around the corridor:
  - a. a sense of place,
  - b. connectivity,
  - c. economic vitality,
  - d. equity,
  - e. safety/security, and
  - f. public health and the environment
- Develop and execute a community-based approach focused on reconnecting neighborhoods, revitalizing communities, and ensuring residents have a meaningful voice in transportation decisions that affect their lives.

#### 4. Alternatives Review

- Melissa provided a recap of the alternatives development process to date.
  - Potential roadway and transit ideas from public input and committee brainstorming.
  - Feasibility testing of roadway and transit ideas.
  - Combine viable roadway and transit ideas into high-level alternatives.
  
- Considerations
  - Intersection/interchange details not determined at this time – just general locations for study.
  - MnDOT is committed to walkability and bikeability improvements. Specific improvements will be determined during the Tier 1 and Tier 2 processes.
  - Streetscaping and aesthetic elements will be determined during the Tier 1 and Tier 2 processes.
  - ReConnect Rondo Land Bridge project will be considered in the decision-making process for the project alternatives.
  
- Melissa gave a brief recap of the alternatives that are being evaluated in Scoping.
  - General Maintenance (No Build)
  - Maintenance – A
  - Maintenance – B
  - At-Grade – A
  - At-Grade – B
  - Local/Regional Roadways – A
  - Reduced Freeway – A
  - Reconfigured Freeway – A
  - Expanded Freeway – A
  - Expanded Freeway – B

#### 5. Alternatives Feedback

- Renee Raduenz (MnDOT) gave an overview of the engagement activities that were conducted as part of the release of the alternatives from June–November 2023 (see slides for more details).

- Engaged with more than 280 stakeholder organizations via email, scheduled meetings and presentations.
  - Worked closely with the 63 representatives that make up our Community Leaders and Policy Advisory Committee.
  - Gave 25 presentations to different community and stakeholder groups and organizations.
  - Attended or had booths at 21 community events.
  - Distributed 9 e-newsletters via our GovDelivery email subscription system, each edition going to over 13,000 subscribers.
  - Online survey to gather feedback on the alternatives.
- Discussion
    - Councilmember Jalali:
      - Ridership on transit is not the same as demand for transit. Concern with data used for transit decision making in terms of not moving a light rail option forward.
        - a. Adam Harrington (Metro Transit): In addition to ridership, it is also important to consider the scale of investment for the corridor. There is a concentration of service in the corridor already with Green Line LRT to the north and B Line BRT to be opening soon to the south.
      - Request for more detailed information on what groups were in support or opposition to specific alternatives.
        - a. Renee: Engagement summary report will be provided. Can also provide additional supporting information.
      - Request for information in more plain language and better efforts to reach communities.
    - Commissioner Conley:
      - Would like demographic information to be collected at community events. There are ways to collect information to address this issue, such as exit surveys.
        - a. Renee noted that some demographic surveys were completed at public meetings, but they don't provide a complete picture.
      - Has heard from constituents that they don't want expanded freeway alternatives.
    - CM Wonsley:
      - Second comments from Commissioner Conley. Constituents are not interested in freeway expansion, they are interested in looking at other alternatives. Want to hear more about the difference between freeway removal (which was mentioned as not being studied) versus the at-grade alternative. What are the plans to seriously study non-freeway alternatives.
        - a. Melissa: Freeway removal would remove the freeway and not replace it with any roadway; this is not being studied. The at-grade roadway alternatives shown will be evaluated using the same criteria as the other alternatives presented.
      - Comment regarding a question on the survey that asked about modes used on I-94 – confusion about why biking and walking was an option.
        - a. Renee: There were two surveys, this issue was noticed on one survey and corrected.

- Question about Reconnecting Communities grant for ReConnect Rondo. Are there plans to apply for federal grants?
  - a. Commissioner Daubenberger and Melissa: ReConnect Rondo applied for this grant for further study of the land bridge, this was not a MnDOT effort. MnDOT may apply for grants in the future, but does not want to bias the process by applying for funding for a specific alternative at this time.
- Rep. Sencer-Mura:
  - It is harder to imagine/understand what an at-grade option would look like. Understand the concern about not wanting to bias the process, but would like more information about at-grade to understand what has been done in other places. Request to hear from freeway removal experts.
  - Looking for clarification on level of support for at-grade and expanded freeway alternatives among the public. Want clarification/reminder on why expanded freeway alternatives are included.
    - a. Melissa: Met Council TPP includes addition of managed lane on I-94, so a lane addition is being studied as part of this process.
    - b. Renee: The project team indicated they would provide additional information on survey responses for individual alternatives. Following the meeting, MnDOT is pulling together additional survey summary information that will be shared on the project website.

## 6. Alternatives Evaluation

- Melissa gave an overview of the alternatives evaluation that is currently taking place.
- Integrating public feedback
  - No new independent alternatives added.
  - The project will not be including rail transit as an alternative.
  - MnDOT will ensure space is available in project footprint for walkability and bikeability improvements within the I-94 corridor.
  - Many project elements that can be evaluated further in Tier 1 EIS and/or Tier 2 documents.
- Alternatives Refinement/Evaluation
  - Coordination with ReConnect Rondo on potential land bridge (all alternatives)
  - Opportunities for local / regional modifications
  - Opportunities for enhanced elements related to walking, biking and rolling
  - Opportunities for aesthetics
  - Opportunities for technology
- Alternatives Evaluation
  - Purpose and need
  - Social, economic, and environmental resources
  - Goals & Livability
  - Additional considerations

## 7. Similar Corridors

- Jack Corkle (WSB) provided an overview of other urban freeway corridor projects that were studied by the project team to investigate any lessons learned from these projects that could be applicable to the Rethinking I-94 project.
  - 30 freeway corridors identified that have implemented or considered capacity reduction.
  - 9 have been completed. Others are in process, under consideration/study (including I-94) or are no longer being considered.
  
- Characteristics for comparison
  - Route designation/type
  - Function within highway network
  - Segment length and traffic volume
  - New roadway design
  
- Completed projects (9)
  - 4 projects maintained equivalent capacity
    - 3 projects constructed a freeway in a new location
    - 1 project replaced an elevated freeway with a depressed freeway and lid over part of the corridor
  - 5 projects reduced capacity
    - Freeway segments replaced with at-grade roadways without increasing freeway capacity elsewhere
  
- Summary
  - Compared to most other locations where freeway capacity reduction has been implemented or considered, the Rethinking I-94 corridor between TH 55 and Marion Street is longer, carries a higher volume of traffic, and serves a more important function within the context of the regional freeway network.
  - Several of the 29 other corridors are Interstate Highways and/or trunk segments, but only two are longer than I-94 and only seven carry more traffic (or did prior to capacity reduction).
  
- Discussion
  - Rep. Sencer-Mura: Would like to learn about how I-94 compares to other areas in terms of context and terrain complexity. What to understand how to visually represent what different roadway types would actually look like. How did other projects explain the concepts to the public, especially with complex terrain or other elements? What is the potential for business and community development with an at-grade option?
  - Russ Stark: Want to understand what the goals were of other projects that considered freeway removal. Was the goal to reconnect communities, reduce car use, etc.
  - Rep. Sencer-Mura: Were any international examples studied?
    - The project team focused on examples within the United States for the purposes of this effort. International project examples were presented previously to the PAC during the July 2021 meeting ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/stakeholder-involvement](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/stakeholder-involvement)).

## 8. State Legislation Update

- Melissa gave an overview of Minnesota’s GHG legislation and the implications for the project.
  - Requirements for reducing emissions across sectors in Minnesota were adopted by the legislature in May 2023
  - Transportation sector is contributing the most to emissions.
  - To meet Minnesota’s climate targets, multiple strategies are needed to reduce carbon emissions in transportation beyond the transition to electric vehicles.
  - The legislature wants the transportation community to look more directly at the unintended emission impacts of large transportation investments and figure out how to mitigate impacts.
  - The legislation created new requirements to ensure transportation projects that increase capacity or add new interchanges conform with the State’s greenhouse gas emissions reduction and vehicle miles traveled reduction targets outlined in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP).
  - The legislation also directed MnDOT to establish a Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact Mitigation Working Group to assist MnDOT in developing new requirements and make further recommendations to the legislature. The working group will also address federal Council on Environmental Quality Greenhouse Gas Guidance and the NEPA process.
  
- Melissa shared a schedule for implementing the proposed guidance. Approach will be in place by February 1, 2025.
  - Projects that may be proposed as part of the Rethinking I-94 program of projects are anticipated to be evaluated based on this guidance, but the final guidance will determine which of the projects are subject to a greenhouse gas analysis.

## 9. Next Steps

- Melissa shared next steps for the project.
  - Technical activities
    - Refine and evaluate alternatives
    - Develop Scoping Document/Draft Scoping Decision Document
  - Engagement activities
    - Meet with partner agencies
    - Continue to meet with interested stakeholder, neighborhood, schools, and business groups to discuss the project
    - Community Voices
    - Community Ambassadors
    - High school interns
    - Community Leaders meeting

## 10. PAC Member Update

- Commissioner Daubenberger asked for an update from PAC members. The commissioner acknowledged PAC member comments regarding more use of plain language and additional visuals to help explain the project alternatives.
- Discussion
  - Russ Stark: Reiterated previous comments regarding reaching diverse voices in engagement. This process is complex, we may be exploring new things that are challenging. Litigation in Syracuse may be wrapping up. Importance of evaluating GHG emissions of alternatives. Need to be open and honest going forward about how context has changed. Alternatives will have pros and cons. Many would agree that freeway should not have been constructed in current location, however, some alternatives might have some benefits to local communities but would also make it difficult for people along the corridor to travel longer distances. Thanked MnDOT for being willing to work through the process.
  - Rep. Sencer-Mura: What is the best way for non-PAC members to get their questions answered?
    - Melissa: Written questions will be answered in the meeting summary.
  - Rep. Sencer-Mura: Possibility of doing something new is exciting. Looking for opportunity to wrestle with big questions about our communities. Would like to see MnDOT lean into challenging discussions about future of highways. Want to fully explore all options before we decide what is possible.
  - District Engineer Sahebjam: Was asked about this project by Commissioner in interview for District Engineer position. Want to look seriously at what we can do differently in this corridor. MnDOT is a leader in innovation among state DOTs.

## 11. Thank You and Closing Remarks

- Commissioner Daubenberger thanked PAC members, staff, MnDOT, and consultants and closed the meeting.

## Questions Posted During PAC Meeting Using Q&A Function

*Note: Comment text is presented exactly as submitted. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation have not been modified.*

- **Alex B.**
  - Why had MnDOT disabled the chat and removed the public comment period for this meeting? This is a major change and now community members can't engage directly with PAC members.
    - Response: MnDOT's goal for Policy Advisory Committee meeting was to provide elected officials that serve on the PAC with several updates including the alternatives review process, feedback received from engagement activities, and the upcoming alternative evaluation process. Community members can provide input through numerous channels such as: community events, public meetings, presentations, the project website, telephone calls and emails to staff, and other touchpoints. Additional opportunities have been provided through meetings and outreach events coordinated with neighborhood groups and organizations. We also encourage community members to



directly reach out to PAC members or any elected officials who serve you. We are responding to questions and comments from the community in the meeting summary.

- **Christian N.**
  - I'm curious when scoping will begin on the St Anthony and Concordia frontage roads and when feedback will begin for those options?
    - Response: The City of St. Paul is currently looking at maintenance on the frontage roads that is separate from Rethinking I-94 efforts. They will have their own engagement process. Please contact the city with questions on their work. The final configuration of the frontage roads will be part of the Rethinking I-94 process and explored more as part of Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement.
- **Alex B.**
  - When will MnDOT select a preferred alternative?
    - Response: MnDOT will select a preferred alternative at the end of the Tier 1 EIS process. The preferred alternative will be a footprint of the roadway mainline and some options at interchanges/intersections that would be further evaluated prior to construction. Approval of the final Tier 1 EIS is anticipated in 2028 following the formal comment period on the draft Tier 1 EIS. The project is currently in the Scoping process, which must be concluded before the Tier 1 EIS can begin.
- **Christian N.**
  - Was there discussion of sale or the roadway to local partners or just discussion of complete removal?
    - Response: The ownership of the roadway is a separate, but related discussion from the evaluation of alternatives. No formal discussions have taken place regarding potential transfer of the roadway to other jurisdictions.
- **Alex B.**
  - Are these renderings to-scale?
    - Response: The renderings are not drawn to scale, as the engineering details of each alternative (including the widths of lanes, shoulders, green spaces, etc.) have not been determined.
- **Mateo F.**
  - Thank you for this presentation. I'm glad to see health and environment as being key priority areas for this process. What specific health and environmental metrics are you using to evaluate alternatives? Are you working with MDH, DNR, and/or MPCA on evaluating the potential impacts of the alternatives?
    - Response: The proposed evaluation criteria for the Scoping and Tier 1 EIS phases of the project are available on the project website ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/evaluation-criteria](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/evaluation-criteria)). The referenced agencies are involved in the project as [Participating Agencies](#).
- **Christian N.**
  - How wide is each alternative?
    - Response: The engineering details of each alternative (including the widths of lanes, shoulders, green spaces, etc.) have not been determined. The project team has been working with partner agencies on potential dimensioning of alternatives. Because we are in scoping widths are not final and many other impacts (retaining walls,

maintenance, ponding, utilities, etc.) have not been determined and may impact the needs of the width of the future cross-section.

- **Samantha P.**

- Could MNDOT guarantee that the expansion proposal would not cause further displacement of residents currently living near the highway?
  - Response: The potential for right of way acquisition and relocation are included in the evaluation criteria for the alternatives in Scoping and the Tier 1 EIS. More information will be available once the evaluation has been completed. A preferred alternative has not been selected at this time.

- **Gregory H.**

- Why is the expanded freeway still considered despite the need to reduce vmt?
  - Response: As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, MnDOT must evaluate a wide range of viable alternatives that could address the purpose and need of the project. Alternatives that both reduce and expand the size of the roadway have been developed to understand the benefits and potential impacts of changes that are possible in the corridor. The 2040 Transportation Policy Plan for the region includes a managed lane addition to the corridor and good practice is to incorporate alternatives consistent with regional plans as part of the alternative development process.

- **Grant S.**

- If there's consideration for filling in the trench, has there been an option reviewed for adding a transit tunnel? Either with bus transit or regional rail?
  - Response: The transit options recommended by the transit feasibility study completed by Met Council and MnDOT (highway bus rapid transit, arterial bus rapid transit, and express bus) could be implemented without costs for a tunnel. The transit study evaluated shoulder bus operations and dedicated bus rapid transit options with zero, one, three and five stops to better understand transit demand in the corridor. It considered the existing and planned transit network - including the parallel LRT, BRT, and regular transit routes in the area and into the downtowns. As a result of public feedback, a sensitivity analysis was completed for transit ridership on I-94 if a second LRT option was available. Transit ridership was very low - approximately 6,800 users. Pre-pandemic ridership on the Green Line was 50,000.
  - MnDOT's rail office will be looking at a regional rail connection between the Twin Cities starting later this year.

- **Lisa N.**

- If the survey method wasn't designed to be and isn't representative of the state, metro, or study area, why are you using the results of this survey at all during decision-making?
  - Response: The survey is not being used to identify a preferred alternative. The survey was intended to understand what people liked and did not like about the various alternatives identified and to see if there was an alternative that was missing and should be considered for evaluation. The public provided some very helpful feedback on the things that they would like to see considered incorporated into the alternatives or to see as new alternatives. While no new alternatives were added as part of the review of public feedback, many ideas or project elements were shared that can be incorporated into one or more of the alternatives going forward.

- **Lisa N.**
  - Will the rethinking process and choice of alternatives incorporate results of that regional rail study?
    - Response: The project team will coordinate with MnDOT's regional rail study once that process is underway.
- **Christian N.**
  - Approx 36%, not 80% (refers to slide 33 in the presentation on survey responses)
    - Response: 80 percent referred to individuals that Strongly Agreed, Agreed, and Somewhat Agreed that they had the information they needed to participate in the survey and share their input and feedback. 36 percent referred to those that Agree.

- **Alex B.**
  - Isn't highway removal the same as the at-grade option? Why is MnDOT categorizing those comments as being different?
    - Response: MnDOT considers the removal of the existing roadway without replacement with another transportation facility a distinct alternative from replacing the freeway with an At-Grade roadway. Removal of the roadway entirely is not included in the current range of alternatives. The two At-Grade alternatives are included in the current range of alternatives. Some members of the public indicated they wanted the roadway removed in its entirety and replaced with other things.
- **Christian N.**
  - Why can't we see what the council member put in the chat?
    - Response: PAC members can select whether their messages can be seen by all attendees or only other PAC members and the project team.
- **Carly E.**
  - I am curious if you are misunderstanding "high removal" comments as complete roadway removal. "Highway removal" is likely support for at-grade options in the survey. Separating them out obfuscates the support for at-grade options.
    - Response: Some survey respondents indicated they wanted the roadway removed in its entirety without any roadway replacement. The project team identified these responses as roadway removal. MnDOT considers the removal of the existing roadway without replacement with another transportation facility a distinct alternative from removing the freeway and replacing it with an At-Grade roadway. Removal of the roadway entirely is not included in the current range of alternatives. The two At-Grade alternatives are included in the current range of alternatives.
- **Benjamin L.**
  - How will each alternative help achieve MnDOT's goal of reducing VMT by 20% per capita by 2050? Which alternatives reduce VMT and which increase VMT?
    - Response: In general, alternatives that increase capacity (more travel lanes, adding a managed lane) will increase the amount of vehicle miles traveled. They will also reduce person hours of travel and vehicle hours of travel. Alternatives that reduce capacity (fewer travel lanes) will decrease the amount of vehicle miles traveled on I-94 but could result in an increase in VMT as some trips will divert to other routes and have to travel further. Alternatives that reduce capacity will increase person hours of travel and vehicle hours of travel. Evaluating alternatives includes the balancing of the impacts/benefits among all criteria. VMT will be a measure in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement.
- **Christian N.**
  - Can that engagement report be sent publicly as well?
    - Response: The engagement report discussed during the meeting is available on the project website: [https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/alternatives](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/alternatives)

- **Sandra H.**
  - How do you justify NOT considering the option of removing the freeway because it “isn’t part of our project statement”, thus continuing the status quo of horrific motor vehicle emissions-the #1 contributor to global warming and community health problems, as well as to horrendous noise pollution and divided neighborhoods?
    - Response: MnDOT considers the removal of the existing roadway without replacement with another transportation facility a distinct alternative from removing the freeway and replacing it with an At-Grade roadway. Removal of the roadway entirely is not included in the current range of alternatives. The two At-Grade alternatives are included in the current range of alternatives. Removing a roadway in its entirety will not address the project purpose and need and is not considered a viable alternative.
- **Carly E.**
  - Can you explain why you're taking public comments in writing instead of a town hall style in front of decisionmakers, like in the past? Writing is obviously not "public"; it's obviously better engagement to allow truly public comment in front of the decisionmakers.
    - Response: MnDOT’s goal for Policy Advisory Committee meeting was to provide elected officials that serve on the PAC with several updates including the alternatives review process, feedback received from engagement activities, and the upcoming alternative evaluation process. Community members can provide input through numerous channels such as: community events, public meetings, presentations, the project website, telephone calls and emails to staff, and other touchpoints. Additional opportunities have been provided through meetings and outreach events coordinated with neighborhood groups and organizations. We also encourage community members to directly reach out to PAC members or any elected officials who serve you. We are responding to questions and comments from the community in the meeting summary. PAC members can view comments submitted in writing by the public by accessing the Q&A function during the meeting.
- **Samantha P.**
  - Ridership information has been addressed at every meeting, yet no firm statistics have been offered on diminished ridership. As Jalali stated, ridership may not indicate demand, so why not address demand before entirely dismissing the possibility of rail?
    - Response: Overall transit ridership in the region is small compared to overall travel in the model. This creates challenges in obtaining transit forecasts solely out of the regional travel demand model. The Metropolitan Council supplements the regional travel demand model with STOPS - the Federal Transit Administration's Simplified Trips on Project Software - for producing transit ridership forecasting. This model is more responsive to changes in transit service. It has historically proven to be effective for transit investments for the region. STOPS was used in the transit feasibility study to inform the scoping process. The STOPS model is reflective of the region's current transit markets. It includes all the transit service types in the region. The latest model of the Met Council STOPS (version 2019) was used for the ridership projections for the transit feasibility study (pre-COVID numbers for the existing system). As a result of public feedback, a sensitivity analysis was completed for transit ridership on I-94 if LRT was available. Transit ridership demand was very low - approximately 6,800 users. Pre-pandemic ridership on the Green Line was 50,000.

- **Carly E.**
  - Your survey was set up to fail from the start. Full of jargon, was so long it was inaccessible. I support Mitra in her comments asking to use plain language to get better results instead of throwing your hands in the air and shrugging
    - Response: Thank you for your comments.
- **Samantha P.**
  - When will the survey data be available for public view?
    - Response: The engagement report discussed during the meeting is available on the project website: [https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/alternatives](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/alternatives)
- **Samantha P.**
  - So individuals have had to come to you all to make their opinions known via survey, events, etc. As a canvasser on this project, I have had the privilege to talk with people from all over the corridor in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Most people I have talked to have not heard about this project which is concerning. I think you're all missing so much information by simply not getting on the ground and talking with the individuals you (MNDOT) are making decision for. I think each of the council members have spoken today reflect the concerns people have.
    - Response: MnDOT conducted a wide range of engagement activities on the alternatives beyond the survey, including in-person and virtual open houses, 21 community events, and 25 presentations to community organizations. The engagement report discussed during the meeting is now available on the project website: [https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/alternatives](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/alternatives)
- **Alex B.**
  - How is this project process considering air pollution, environmental racism and the health impacts of urban highways? There's been a lot of recent research on this: [https://abcnews.go.com/US/highway-traffic-pollution-puts-communities-color-greater-health/story?id=103340992&cid=social\\_twitter\\_abcn](https://abcnews.go.com/US/highway-traffic-pollution-puts-communities-color-greater-health/story?id=103340992&cid=social_twitter_abcn)
    - Response: The proposed evaluation criteria for the Scoping and Tier 1 EIS phases of the project are available on the project website ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/evaluation-criteria](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/evaluation-criteria)).
- **Carly E.**
  - When the community colloquially says "highway removal", they are often referencing the at-grade options. Because those aren't highway. Be serious! This is manipulative!
    - Response: Some survey respondents indicated they wanted the roadway removed in its entirety. The project team identified these responses as roadway or highway removal. MnDOT considers the removal of the existing roadway without replacement with another transportation facility a distinct alternative from removing the freeway and replacing it with an At-Grade roadway. Removal of the roadway entirely is not included in the current range of alternatives. The two At-Grade alternatives are included in the current range of alternatives.
- **Alex B.**
  - Why would MnDOT survey Minnesotans instead of impacted communities along the corridor? The people who are most impacted should have their voices prioritized
    - Response: The survey was opt-in and was available to all members of the public. As discussed during the meeting, zip code data can be used to better understand feedback from residents near the corridor. The purpose of many of the additional presentations,

community events, and other efforts was to prioritize feedback from residents near the corridor.

- **Carly E.**

- It's worth noting that Sencer-Mura and other PAC members requested this (experts and studies about at-grade options) at the PAC meeting in JULY.
  - Response: Comment noted. This is the first PAC meeting since the last meeting in July 2023. The project team researched a number of corridors to find ones similar to I-94 to help identify potential comparisons and share decision-making. As noted in the discussion, most of the corridors have different conditions and context than I-94. Feedback from today's discussion has helped the team better understand what type of information is desired by PAC members.

- **Trey L.**

- What data is being gathered on how an at grade boulevard will generate economic activity in terms of new housing / commercial space being made available? What about data for reduction in VMT in order to reach goals of reducing emissions?
  - Response: MnDOT is currently working with city and county staff to determine the amount of land that may potentially be available for other uses with each alternative. Results of this effort are not available at this time.

VMT is one of the criteria that will be used in the evaluation of alternatives in the Tier 1 EIS ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/evaluation-criteria](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/evaluation-criteria)).

- **Christian N.**

- Especially if complete removal isn't aligned, how is expansion?
  - Response: As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, MnDOT must evaluate a wide range of viable alternatives that could address the purpose and need of the project. Alternatives that both reduce and expand the size of the roadway have been developed to understand the benefits and potential impacts of changes that are possible in the corridor.

- **Mateo F.**

- Yes, we absolutely need a breakdown of that information
  - Response: The engagement report discussed during the meeting is now available on the project website: [https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/alternatives](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/alternatives)

- **Mary M.M.**
  - Will you update the health impacts on nearby residents and students to reflect microplastic PM 2.5 and new information/studies on dementia and traffic noise?
    - Response: The proposed evaluation criteria for the Scoping and Tier 1 EIS phases of the project are available on the project website ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/evaluation-criteria](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/evaluation-criteria)).

- **Jeremy W.**
  - Will MnDOT publicly acknowledge the existence of Induced Demand / Traffic Evaporation?
    - Response: Established practices for transit and highway modeling in the Twin Cities region for transportation improvements require the use of the Metropolitan Council's Regional Transportation Forecasting Model. Using the regional model is also consistent with federal practices. The model is built upon the land uses determined by cities as part of their comprehensive plans and includes the residents and the employees associated with those land uses.

The regional travel demand model includes automobile (including trucks, motorcycles, etc.), transit and non-motorized travel. It is sensitive to relative changes in travel times between the different modes (auto, transit and non-motorized) when assigning trips.

The regional model takes into account some induced demand causes, but not all. It provides valuable insight for many transportation questions but has limitations.

- It is not necessarily suitable to explore **major** shifts from auto to other modes.
- It is challenging to explicitly quantify how transportation investments induce new land use development.
- The model can tell us that there is more demand than the road can accommodate, but it does not get rid of trips.

MnDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Metropolitan Council, and local agencies have been meeting regularly to discuss traffic and transit modeling for this project. The traffic work is consistent with established processes and practices for the Twin Cities region and FHWA.

- **Christian N.**
  - Again, we can't see the chat.
    - Response: PAC members can select whether their messages can be seen by all attendees or only other PAC members and the project team.

- **Alex B.**
  - Why isn't MnDOT responding to any questions from the public?
    - Response: As noted, written questions will be responded to in the meeting summary.



- **Christian N.**
  - Did you consider freeway caps from other countries or just the United States?
    - Response: The project team focused on examples within the United States for the purposes of this effort. International project examples were presented previously to the PAC during the July 2021 meeting ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/stakeholder-involvement](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/stakeholder-involvement)).
- **Alex B.**
  - This is not true, the lawsuit in Syracuse was dismissed
    - Response: Thank you for the clarification.
- **Alex B.**
  - <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2024/02/ny-state-is-free-to-tear-down-i-81-in-syracuse-appeals-court-rules.html>
    - Response: Thank you for the clarification.
- **Lucy G.**
  - I-81 is no longer in litigation: <https://cnycentral.com/news/local/legal-challenge-to-i-81-tossed-out-massive-transportation-project-moves-ahead>
    - Response: Thank you for the clarification.
- **Lisa N.**
  - When looking at examples of highway projects, did you consider any projects that have happened outside of the United States?
    - Response: The project team focused on examples within the United States for the purposes of this effort. International project examples were presented previously to the PAC during the July 2021 meeting ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/stakeholder-involvement](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/stakeholder-involvement)).
- **Kyle J.**
  - Would it be possible to study highway removal projects outside the US?
    - Response: The project team focused on examples within the United States for the purposes of this effort. International project examples were presented previously to the PAC during the July 2021 meeting ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/stakeholder-involvement](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/stakeholder-involvement)).
- **Alex B.**
  - Seoul would be a good example to look at: <https://globaldesigningcities.org/publication/global-street-design-guide/streets/special-conditions/elevated-structure-removal/case-study-cheonggyecheon-seoul-korea/>
    - Response: The project team focused on examples within the United States for the purposes of this effort. International project examples (including Cheonggyecheon) were presented previously to the PAC during the July 2021 meeting ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/stakeholder-involvement](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/stakeholder-involvement)).

- **Lisa N.**
  - Could MnDOT voluntarily consider the greenhouse gas implications of all of the alternatives, even if it's not required?
    - Response: Requirements for reducing emissions across sectors in Minnesota were adopted by the legislature in May 2023. The legislation created new requirements to ensure transportation projects that increase capacity or add new interchanges conform with the State's greenhouse gas emissions reduction and vehicle miles traveled reduction targets outlined in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP). The legislation also directed MnDOT to establish a Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impact Mitigation Working Group to assist MnDOT in developing new requirements and make further recommendations to the legislature. The working group will also address federal Council on Environmental Quality Greenhouse Gas Guidance and the NEPA process. Projects that may be proposed as part of the Rethinking I-94 program of projects are anticipated to be evaluated based on this guidance, but the final guidance (anticipated February 2025) will determine which of the projects are subject to a greenhouse gas analysis.
- **Lisa N.**
  - At what point will alternatives be removed from consideration, and will that information be made publicly available when that happens?
    - Response: Some alternatives may be removed from consideration at the conclusion of the Scoping process, which is currently anticipated to be complete in 2025. The Scoping process includes a formal comment period where members of the public can comment on the Scoping process findings including the list of alternatives that will be evaluated in more detail in the Tier 1 EIS. A preferred alternative (which will include the mainline footprint – number and type of travel and transit lanes and options at interchanges/intersections) will not be selected until the conclusion of the Tier 1 EIS, which is anticipated in 2028. A formal public comment period also takes place prior to the final approval of the Tier 1 EIS.
- **Benjamin L.**
  - Our identity is the Twin Cities, and the I-94 corridor linking them is like our "living room". I urge you to replace the freeway with an at-grade boulevard. This would not only reduce GHG emissions, it would be a shining example of our forward-thinking state, and pivot us as a global leader that stays true to our ambitious climate goals. Let this be a Minnesota Moment.
    - Response: Thank you for your comments.
- **Christian N.**
  - Is there a CAC for this process?
    - Response: There is not a citizens advisory committee for this project. The Community Leaders group is the group that has been involved in this project. More information is available on the project website: [https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/stakeholder-involvement](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/stakeholder-involvement)
- **Lisa N.**
  - What motivated the change from a public comment period for these meetings, to only a written Q&A?
    - Response: MnDOT's goal for Policy Advisory Committee meeting was to provide elected officials that serve on the PAC with several updates including the alternatives review

process, feedback received from engagement activities, and the upcoming alternative evaluation process. Community members can provide input through numerous channels such as: community events, public meetings, presentations, the project website, telephone calls and emails to staff, and other touchpoints. Additional opportunities have been provided through meetings and outreach events coordinated with neighborhood groups and organizations. We also encourage community members to directly reach out to PAC members or any elected officials who serve you. We are responding to questions and comments from the community in the meeting summary. PAC members can view comments submitted in writing by the public by accessing the Q&A function during the meeting.

- **Pat T.**
  - The claim about lack of mobility for vehicles and the crash rate - that either would be improved is the issue. And that they can be achieved in balance with the other goals like livability.
    - Response: Thank you for your comments.
- **Alex B.**
  - The public has been completely shut out of the PAC process and that is shameful
    - Response: Thank you for your feedback. PAC members are able to view any question submitted by public attendees by accessing the Q&A function during the meeting. Comments from the public will be responded to in writing as part of the meeting notes.
- **Christian N.**
  - Send them to the zoom emails listed. Not just the PAC.
    - Response: The engagement report discussed during the meeting is available on the project website: [https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/alternatives](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/alternatives)
- **Pat T.**
  - What weight is given to livability vs. mobility of vehicles?
    - Response: The alternatives evaluation process is discussed in more detail on the project website: [https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/evaluation-criteria](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/evaluation-criteria).
- **Sandra H.**
  - After listening to today's PAC meeting, I am extremely disappointed in the lack of creativity and consideration of new approaches I see in this project to date, and the fact that international models have not been investigated is shocking. I have lived in several foreign countries and been wowed by what has been done.
    - Response: The project team focused on examples within the United States for the purposes of this effort. International project examples were presented previously to the PAC during the July 2021 meeting ([https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news\\_feed/stakeholder-involvement](https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/rethinking-i94/news_feed/stakeholder-involvement)).
- **Christian N.**
  - Thank you to the PAC
    - Response: Thank you for your comments.

## PAC Members

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
X	Daubenberger	Nancy	MnDOT Commissioner/PAC Chair
	Zelle	Charlie	Metropolitan Council Chair/PAC Co-Chair
X	Carlson	Charles	Metropolitan Council
X	Meyer	Wendall	FHWA Division Administrator
	Champion	Bobby Joe	Minnesota Senate
X	Varner	Alexis	Office of Minnesota State Senator Bobby Joe Champion
	Dziedzic	Kari	Minnesota Senate
	Dibble	D. Scott	Minnesota Senate
X	Ethier	Beth	Office of Minnesota State Senator D. Scott Dibble
	Fateh	Omar	Minnesota Senate
X	Meyer	Chris	Office of Minnesota State Senator Omar Fateh
	Mohamed	Zaynab	Minnesota Senate
	Murphy	Erin	Minnesota Senate
	Pappas	Sandra	Minnesota Senate
	Oumou Verbeten	Clare	Minnesota Senate
	Agbaje	Esther	Minnesota State House of Representatives
X	Noor	Mohamud	Minnesota State House of Representatives
	Hornstein	Frank	Minnesota State House of Representatives
	Gomez	Aisha	Minnesota State House of Representatives
	Hassan	Hodan	Minnesota State House of Representatives
X	Sencer-Mura	Samantha	Minnesota State House of Representatives
X	McGuire	Declan	Office of Minnesota State Representative Samantha Sencer-Mura
X	Her	Kaohly	Minnesota State House of Representatives
	Hussein	Samakab	Minnesota State House of Representatives
	Perez-Vega	Maria Isa	Minnesota State House of Representatives
	Finke	Leigh	Minnesota State House of Representatives
	Carter	W. Toni	Metropolitan Council
X	Conley	Angela	Hennepin County Commission
	Anderson	Kevin	Hennepin County Commission
	Moran	Rena	Ramsey County Commission
	Xiong	Mai Chong	Ramsey County Commission
	Frey	Jacob	Mayor of Minneapolis
X	Sobotka	Suzanne	Office of the Mayor of Minneapolis
X	Wonsley	Robin	Minneapolis City Council
X	Robinson	Celeste	Office of Minneapolis City Council Member Robin Wonsley
X	Qannani	Omar	Office of Minneapolis City Council Member Robin Wonsley
	Osman	Jamal	Minneapolis City Council
	Carter	Melvin	Mayor of St. Paul
X	Stark	Russ	Office of the St. Paul Mayor
X	Jalali	Mitra	St. Paul City Council
	Bowie	Anika	St. Paul City Council

## FHWA/MnDOT/Agency/Consultant Staff

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Barnes	Melissa	MnDOT
Raduenz	Renee	MnDOT
McCartney	Molly	MnDOT
Wilson	Ryan	MnDOT
Krueger	Christine	MnDOT
Sahebjam	Khani	MnDOT
Kauppi	Sheila	MnDOT
Goff	William	MnDOT
Goldfarb	Isabel	MnDOT
Berrens	Chris	MnDOT
Lindeberg	Mark	MnDOT
Clarkowski	Lynn	MnDOT
Collins	Kim	MnDOT
Austin	Lisa	MnDOT
Barnes	Melissa	MnDOT
Raduenz	Renee	MnDOT
Collins	Kim	MnDOT
Goldfarb	Isabel	MnDOT
Lohr	William	FHWA
Varney	Anna	FHWA
Cresap	Corey	FHWA
Harrington	Adam	Metro Transit
Bockheim	Adrienne	City of Minneapolis
Hyink	Jessica	City of Minneapolis
Nix	Noel	City of St. Paul
Newton	Randy	City of St. Paul
Isaacson	Brian	Ramsey County
Atkins	KC	Hennepin County
O'Connell	Sam	MET Council
Vennewitz	Amy	MET Council
Earp	Ryan	WSB
Corkle	Jack	WSB
Watson	Sammantha	WSB
Hauf	Austin	WSB
Karls	Jess	WSB

## Guests

Last Name	First Name
H.	Yasmin
M.M.	Mary
N	Lisa
S.	Philip
L.	Trey
E.	Carly
G.	Lucy
W.	Jeremy
C.	Joshua
H.	Paul
J.	Kyle
P.	Mary Anne
M.	Paul
L.	Benjamin
P.	Jiahong
H.	Hazzard
B.	Tina
H.	Sandra
S.	Kyle
B.	Alex
T.	Pat
A.	Karen
A.	Kent
C.	April
K.	Ethan
S.	Grant
W.	Joseph
L.	Owen
N.	Christian
W.	Peter
F.	David
P.	Samantha
H.	Joe
S.	Marta
H.	Gregory
S.	Jim
B.	Beth
F.	Mateo
B.	Scott
D.	Krystle
B.S.	Bethany
S.	Javk