

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 Community Leaders Meeting (Meeting 3)

Date: 08/25/2020 (10:00 am – 11:30 am)

Location: Zoom Meeting

Participants: See end of document for list

Meeting Summary

1. Coordination Plan, Public Involvement Plan, Logical Termini, Purpose & Need, Evaluation Criteria

- The project team provided an overview of the intent of the Coordination Plan, Public Involvement Plan, Logical Termini, Purpose & Need, and the Evaluation Criteria.
- The project team shared details on how the environmental review process will proceed for the Rethink I-94 Phase 2 project. It was stated to the group that the draft documents provided to the group are not final. The group and the public will have the opportunity to share and provide comments to be incorporated into final versions.
 - In addition, it was stated that the project is in its early stages and no decisions have been made regarding proposed improvements; therefore, the range of alternatives have not been identified yet. The Community Leaders group was reassured that more analysis is needed, including assessing feedback from the group, the public, and other agencies, and further details on transportation needs. The current environmental document drafts serve as starting points that the public can review and provide comments.
- Several participants expressed their concerns regarding issues that were identified in Phase 1 (including some potential SEE impacts) that are not identified in the Purpose and Need. The project team clarified that evaluation of potential SEE impacts are an integral part of the NEPA process and would be used in evaluation criteria for the determination of alternatives, as well as other items identified as project goals. The project goals used in the evaluation criteria included some of the items (at a high level) that relate to the livability criteria identified in Phase 1.
- Participants were encouraged to submit questions in the Zoom chat box and MnDOT committed to providing answers to those questions. The list of their questions and has been provided below as part of the meeting summary.

2. Open Forum

- Some members of the group expressed that they would like future Community Leaders meetings to be less an overview of documentation more discussion based, providing a opportunity for the group to share feedback. The group also expressed concern on the identified primary and secondary needs.
- The project team assured the group that future meetings will focus more on individual components of the NEPA process and provide opportunities to discuss and give feedbacks. Currently, the project team is setting the stage for the public to better understand the environmental review process and its importance.

3. Additional Information

- After the meeting, the project team found an online tool that is hosted by the U.S. Census Bureau which allows for the public to access data for their neighborhood. The online tool provides mapping features that can help users select their area of interest and access demographic, socioeconomic, and housing statistics.
https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2020/how-to-access-data-for-your-neighborhood.html?utm_campaign=20200729mscacs1ccstars&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Meeting Chat Comments/Questions with Responses

Below are the virtual meeting chat comments and questions with post meeting staff responses.

1. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:09 AM – Items requiring coordination

Anna, can you provide an example of a document or item that would surface between agencies needing coordination? This will allow all on the call to better understand by example.

R1. We coordinate with the federal cooperating agencies throughout the process but have four formal concurrency points. 1. Purpose and Need 2. Range of Reasonable Alternatives 3. Selection of Preferred Alternative 4. Mitigation Measures

2. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:11 AM – SEE examples

Example: SEE? [social, economic, and environmental]

R2. SEE impacts are Social, Economic and Environmental. Some examples are air, noise, environmental justice, wetlands. The full list and short description of items commonly analyzed for highway projects are available at the following link under item G. Environmental Consequences.

https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/nepa/guidance_preparing_env_documents.aspx#conse

As noted, the list is not all-inclusive and there may be other impact areas that should be included on specific projects. The current scoping process will investigate the need for additional items beyond those listed by FHWA. The current outreach is a way of identifying community concerns on items that should be considered or a means by which a member of the community can provide information that is not readily available.

3. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:18 AM – Logical termini

What does setting logical termini do for this process? Scale, cost, scope?

R3. Logical termini identify the end points of a project and the limits of for environmental impacts. Educational material on logical termini were previously provided to community leaders.

4. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:24 AM – Purpose and need clarification

No sure that I heard correctly. Are you representing this as the draft P&N? Or are you merely using this as general examples & illustrations?

R4. The items covered are the draft versions of the proposed items for this project, not general examples.

5. From Lindsay Schwantes to Everyone: 10:24 AM – Infrastructure clarification

It is unclear to me if there is opportunity to evaluate if the existing infrastructure / corridor actually fulfills our transportation needs. What if we want to reduce some infrastructure?

R5. Potential alternatives (we will be asking for ideas on potential alternatives to consider when we get to that point – but we first must establish a purpose and need and evaluation criteria) could be identified and evaluated that would reduce infrastructure. Any input on how the reduction in infrastructure could meet the transportation needs of the I-94 project is appreciated. For example, the mobility analysis indicates that there is likely too much access onto I-94 that is contributing to safety and mobility problems.

6. From David Juliff to Everyone: 10:24 AM – Frontage roads

Do the frontage roads fit in to the primary needs or secondary needs?

R6. Frontage roads will be evaluated under the alternatives. They are not identified as part of the purpose and need. However, they do contribute to some of the safety problems noted in the purpose and need regarding intersecting streets.

7. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 10:26 AM – Interchange mobility

How does the Highway 280 interchange fit into this specifically, in terms of mobility?

R7. The highway interchange at the Highway 280 contributes to both mobility and safety problems on I-94. Improvements to the Highway 280 interchange will be evaluated as part of the project.

8. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:29 AM – Other projects

For MnDOT or other agencies, is there a list of other activities/project in process or in play that is available?

R8. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) lists upcoming projects in the next five years. The full purpose and need technical memorandum lists upcoming projects. This will be updated as projects are added to the list and projects are constructed.

9. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:29 AM - SEE issues as part of purpose and need

Are there examples locally or nationally where social, economic and environmental (SEE) issues have been included as part of the P&N?

R9. SEE issues are separate from the transportation purpose and need. The SEE issues are evaluated on projects going through the federal environmental review process. SEE issues are not purpose and need items. Community leaders were provided educational material about purpose and need documents in advance of this meeting. Please refer to that summary or review information on FHWA's website at:

https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/legislation/nepa/guidance_purpose_need.aspx

10. From Debbie Meister to Everyone: 10:29 AM – Role of purpose and need

If it isn't in the P&A, how binding is it? (referencing SEE Impacts)

R10. The purpose and need is only part of the environmental document. It denotes the transportation problems that are to be addressed as part of the project. The SEE impacts will be evaluated for all proposed alternatives. On the Rethinking I-94 project, there are also project goals identified that address the livability framework that MnDOT has been working on for the I-94 corridor. These will be incorporated into the project.

11. From Julia Tabbut to Everyone: 10:31 AM – Safety

If walkability and bikeability are secondary needs, whose safety and mobility is your primary concern?

R11. Walkability, bikeability and safety on cross streets are all identified needs for the project. Additional safety needs include crashes/safety problems on I-94. I-94 has some of the highest crash rates in the state for a freeway facility.

MnDOT's Highway Project Development Process webpage provides guidance and overview on primary and secondary needs. The Purpose and Need guidance can be accessed at the following link: https://edocs-public.dot.state.mn.us/edocs_public/DMResultSet/download?docId=613472

12. From Peter Musty, CAAPB to Everyone: 10:31 AM – Mobility and Primary/Secondary Needs

Please define "mobility" (primary need) vs "walkability and bikeability" (secondary need)? Thanks!

R12. Mobility is defined as the ability of people to travel from one place to another. Mobility may vary by transportation mode (walking, biking, transit, freight, or car), time of day, and the location a person is moving from and to.

Walkability and bikeability is the quality and availability of walking and biking facilities and how they provide access for walkers and bikers to travel from place to place within the corridor study area. The purpose and need document evaluates what is called multimodal level of service (MMLOS) which gets at the user experience. The project utilizes the Oregon method.

For the primary need, the main purpose of the I-94 corridor is the mobility of transit, freight, and cars, which has been identified as the main transportation problem that led to the initiation of the project. Secondary needs are additional transportation problems that can be addressed while addressing the primary need. In this case, improvements to the quality and availability of walking and biking facilities at crossings and in the vicinity of I-94 could be addressed while improving mobility on I-94.

Both primary and secondary needs will be addressed as part of the project. Primary and secondary do not denote importance. The educational information handout related to purpose and need provides an overview of this information. We will look to further clarify primary and secondary needs.

13. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 10:32 AM - Mobility

Mobility appears to be defined as vehicles on the highway, not as walkability and bikability

R13. See response to question/comment 12.

14. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 10:32 AM - Mobility

Having "mobility" listed as primary then listing walk/bike under secondary would seem to imply that "mobility" is defined as "other than walk/bike"

R14. See response to question/comment 12.

15. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 10:35 AM – Health and Economic Conditions

Nowhere in the purpose and needs are "Health Impacts" and "Improving health and economic conditions of neighborhoods negatively impacted by the construction of I-94." In this category are things like improving air-quality for neighborhoods that have higher rates of asthma and other illnesses caused by much higher levels of particulate air pollution, climate change, making up for property tax revenue and lost property that was obliterated by the construction of I-94, etc. These should be primary needs. MnDOT "apologized" for what it did but has made zero effort to make amends.

R15. Health impacts and improving health and economic conditions are not included in the purpose and need. They are not transportation needs. The federal process requires that transportation projects are to address a transportation purpose and need.

Because of its commitments, MnDOT has gone an extra step and is doing two additional things. First, it has the Livability Framework approach that is on a parallel track to the federal environmental document. MnDOT is working with agency partners to define issues, resources, and investments

MnDOT recognized in that the apology and acknowledgment that the decision-making process in the 1960s led to impacts to surrounding communities and has vowed to do better with the Rethink I-94 initiative.

16. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 10:35 AM - Congestion

Why do we have to address congestion? "Mobility" = "Congestion"?

R16. Congestion has been identified as a problem (need) for vehicular traffic along I-94. Congestion not only causes delay for single occupant vehicles, it increases travel time and decreases reliability for the hauling of freight and for transit vehicles. This is an economic cost. In addition, congestion increases crashes and safety problems.

17. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 10:35 AM – Study Limits

Marion as terminus is confusing to me. I-94 is a functional wall between Capitol and Downtown St. Paul. This segment has poor mobility in my opinion as a direct result of I-94.

R17. The logical termini document outlines the justification for the eastern terminus at Marion Street. In that document, it is stated that the segment east of Marion Street is beyond the scope of the current project; however, MnDOT is committed to working with its partners to develop scopes of work for studying I-94 in greater detail from Marion Street to TH 61 in Saint Paul.

18. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 10:35 AM - Congestion

You can't keep chasing "Level of service" for cars (aka "Congestion mitigation.")

R18. The project is not chasing level of service. LOS is a measure, and it measures transit and freight movements as well as passenger cars. The project will not eliminate congestion – the project will not attempt to achieve that end. However, if some of the congestion problems are not addressed, safety will worsen, travel times will increase, trip reliability will decrease, and traffic will shift to local routes.

19. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 10:35 AM - Mobility

How is mobility defined? It is defined by speed? Free flow of vehicular traffic? This is concerning as it seems in direct opposition to "livability".

R19. Mobility is defined as the ability of people to travel from one place to another. Mobility may vary by transportation mode (walking, biking, transit, freight, or car), time of day, and the location a person is moving from and to. For I-94 it includes how the freeway works (for cars, freight and transit) as well as the walkability and bikability on the intersecting streets. Mobility alternatives will have to consider all modes and the context of the community.

Part of mobility is looking at travel times/speeds on the freeway. There is no expectation of free flow vehicle traffic on I-94 or intersecting roadways.

20. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 10:36 AM – Crashes

of crashes vs. # of serious crashes is a very important distinction to track

R21. Agreed. Both have been reviewed for the corridor.

21. From Amy to Everyone: 10:36 AM – Connectivity

Connectivity is in the Purpose and Need statement but is not listed here as a primary need, is this an omission?

R21. Connectivity is in the Purpose and Need statement. Connectivity is a component of mobility. Connectivity describes how the number and quality of connections in a transportation network allow people to travel from place to place.

It was intended that connectivity be conveyed as a component of mobility on I-94 and include walkability and bikeability off the corridor; however, we will review materials to better communicate this since connectivity is incorporated into both primary and secondary needs.

22. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 10:37 AM – Connectivity

Agree with Amy - how is connectivity operationalized in the primary list?

R22. See response to question/comment 21.

23. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 10:37 AM – Safety

Also confusing having "safety" listed as primary and then "safety on intersecting streets" secondary. Therefore, the trunk is primary and all crossings are secondary? As a local resident I disagree strongly.

R23. You are correct. The primary safety need is identified on the interstate and at the interchange locations as the main transportation problem that led to the initiation of the project. The secondary needs are improvements that will be incorporated into the project on the roadways outside of the interchange areas.

As noted previously, both primary and secondary needs will be addressed as part of the project. Primary and secondary do not denote importance – they denote the primary reasons for initiating a project and additional transportation problems that are to be addressed. We will look at ways to clarify this in the documentation. Please refer to the educational information handout related to purpose and need.

24. From Theresa Nelson to Everyone: 10:40 AM – Mobility and Transit

Can you please define mobility? How does transit between the downtowns fit into the definition?

R24. As noted in the response to question/comment 12 - Mobility is defined as the ability of people to travel from one place to another. Mobility may vary by transportation mode (walking, biking, transit, freight, or car), time of day, and the location a person is moving from and to.

In the primary need, it is the experience of travel for those (transit, freight, car) on the I-94 corridor. Transit is addressed in terms of travel times, travel speeds and travel reliability between the downtowns and for other transit routes using I-94 in the project area.

25. From John Levin, Hamline Midway to Everyone: 10:40 AM – Climate Change

Is climate change and/or total carbon emissions included in the P&N and/or evaluation process?

R25. Environmental items are not included in the purpose and need. They are included in the evaluation criteria. Air quality is one of the measures that is evaluated. Greenhouse gas emissions are also required to be evaluated by the state.

26. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 10:41 AM – Primary and Secondary Needs

Continually upgrading our highways to facilitate ever larger vehicles and traffic flows is directly at odds with the idea of livability. What statutory or regulatory authority do any of the agencies involved have to swap the primary and secondary considerations?

R26. Primary and secondary needs are both considered as projects are developed. FHWA and MnDOT have developed general project guidance for the types of primary and secondary needs that are addressed in projects. As the sponsor and delegate for the environmental impact statement, FHWA has the authority to determine procedures on the NEPA and agency decision making in accordance with 40 CFR 1505.1, and MnDOT has the authority granted under Minnesota Statutes 162.155 and Minnesota Rules 8820.

27. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 10:43 AM – Mode Subsidies

Agree with Debbie. Vehicles have been historically favored and subsidized by our infra. We should prioritize other modes to even things out at the very least.

R27. Comment noted.

28. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 10:43 AM – Primary and Secondary Needs

Move Minneapolis also agrees with that - making walkability and bikeability a primary need.

R28. As noted previously, both primary and secondary needs will be addressed as part of the project. Primary and secondary do not denote importance – they denote the primary reasons for initiating a project and additional transportation problems that are to be addressed. Please refer to the educational information handout related to purpose and need.

29. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:46 AM – Primary and Secondary Needs

Assuming permission has been given to bring this group to keep us in the loop... with this understanding, is the PAC and partnering agencies aware of concerns that primary and secondary needs may be out of order?

R29. Partner agencies have expressed the desire to have walkability and bikeability denoted as primary needs. The PAC will be having a discussion on the purpose and need. Primary and secondary needs will be a part of that discussion.

30. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 10:46 AM – Transportation Need

Jack: Who or what defines the existence of a transportation need? What rules are you using to define "needs"?

Federal guidance under NEPA regulation require the lead agency/joint lead agencies to establish the transportation problems or needs, which are to be addressed. FHWA guidance can be found in the Environmental Review Toolkit: https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/nepa/trans_decisionmaking.aspx

There are other FHWA NEPA reference documents that describe the elements of purpose and need and the overall NEPA process and project development within the link provided above.

31. From Debbie Meister to Everyone: 10:46 AM – Role of Purpose and Need

But if it is not in the formal document it is not binding—it can be ignored. That is my understanding.

R31. See response to comment/question 10.

32. From Theresa Nelson to Everyone: 10:46 AM - Transit

How would connectivity to the broader transit system be addressed? Such as new integrated transit stations in the corridor.

R32. Alternatives have not been identified yet. We first need to establish the purpose and need and the evaluation criteria. We will be asking for ideas on potential alternatives to consider when we get to that point. That being said, it is anticipated that transit services and/or facilities will be considered.

33. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 10:51 AM – Livability and Primary and Secondary Needs

So, by law, livability cannot be considered a primary or secondary factor that could guide this project? This is troubling since this project bears the historical yoke of having been responsible for destroying the livability of the area. Arguably, livability could be defined as encompassing the "safety" and "mobility" aspects, that are listed as primary. However, this characterization is belied by then listing bike/walk/intersections, etc. as "secondary."

R33. The livability goals are outside of the transportation needs and may be outside of agency's statutory authority (ex: economic development. Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has that responsibility). They are being used to guide the project and will be incorporated as part of the evaluation criteria as well as part of the goals. Beyond that, MnDOT has established its livability framework, where it will work with partner agencies to work together on areas for which it does not have legal standing.

As noted previously, both primary and secondary needs will be addressed as part of the project. Primary and secondary do not denote importance – they denote the primary reasons for initiating a project and additional transportation problems that are to be addressed. Please refer to the educational information handout related to purpose and need.

34. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 10:52 AM – Livability

Jeff: what you are saying is that livability is not part of the statutory regime and is merely gloss, correct? If this is the case, there is no legal basis for your agencies to prioritize livability, correct?

R34. MnDOT is committed to working to address the livability framework developed in Phase 1.

35. From Lindsay Schwantes to Everyone: 10:52 AM – Feedback

Speaking for myself, I still struggle with what exactly you want this group to provide input on. Explicitly where our input can be integrated.

R35. The project team wants input on the draft documents that have been prepared before being distributed to the public. Do the project endpoints make sense? Does the purpose and need address all the transportation needs? Is

something missing? Is something in the document not clear? Are criteria missing that should be included? Are criteria included that should not be?

Thoughts and feedback on the livability framework items and input to refine them and apply them to I-94 are desired. Do they get at the livability goals that have been developed thus far?

Then later the project team will seek your input on alternatives to consider, then identified impacts and proposed mitigation measures.

36. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 10:53 AM – Needs

Jack: Where are the needs being defined and by whom?

R36. The transportation needs have come from the analyses, surveys, and input provided as part of the public engagement process in Phase 1, from MnDOT staff and from additional investigations conducted as part of this phase (research on bridge condition, pavement condition, other infrastructure condition, traffic flows, multimodal level of service analyses, transit service, etc.).

Additional needs and requests identified in Phase 1 are being considered as project goals and in the livability framework activities and initiatives. The identification of needs and requests outside of the transportation purpose and need does not lessen their importance or MnDOT's interest in working with partners to attempt to address; however, many of the items identified in Phase 1 are outside of the purview and jurisdiction of MnDOT. MnDOT maintains its commitment to continue to identify ways to enhance community assets in the I-94 corridor, reconnecting neighborhoods, and revitalizing communities.

37. From Julia Tabbut to Everyone: 10:55 AM – Feedback

Agree with Lindsay. Telling us about the importance of engagement and how you have engaged and how you will engage is a poor use of all of our time. Get us together when you want to actually engage us.

R37. We realize we presented a lot of information today. As noted at the beginning of the presentation it was to provide context for how logical termini, purpose and need and evaluation criteria work together to establish the foundation from which to develop alternatives. The September, October, and November meetings are going to focus on conversations regarding these documents. We will be distributing the draft documents for your review in advance of the upcoming meetings. This will enable the group to have a conversation about the material with more context surrounding the information provided in today's powerpoint. There is simply a lot of material to cover in depth in an hour and a half, but without understanding how the materials work in conjunction with one another, it can be challenging to discuss the material more in depth. We hope the future meetings provide more meaningful discussion.

We are also asking for meetings with the community leaders and their groups to discuss this information.

38. From Pete1Nic to Everyone: 10:56 AM – Walkability and Bikeability

It would be helpful for folks to share more specifically the issues and "problems" you see/experience around walkability and bikeability. What are good ways to describe and measure those issues?

R38. Question asked by MnDOT's project manager of the group.

39. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 10:56 AM – Use of I-94

Understanding that past traffic studies have been conducted - are you relying on learning from those study that indicate that for Rondo and other communities I-94 is like a main street? There is as much cross use of I-94 as a community corridor.

R39. Rethinking I-94 Phase I found that 40 to 50% of the trips generated in the neighborhoods adjacent to I-94 use I-94 for a portion of their trip. That implies that 50 to 60% use other local roadways without using I-94. Both the trips using I-94 and trips using local roads will be considered in the analysis.

Rethinking I-94 Phase 2 analyzed a 15-mile-long segment along I-94 between Broadway Ave in Minneapolis as its western terminus and TH 61 in St. Paul as its eastern terminus. Traffic patterns on this I-94 study corridor were analyzed using the 2015 Origin-Destination (O-D) data, developed by Met Council, and supplemented using StreetLight data.

I-94 provides several access points to the Rondo neighborhood and nearby communities, including Lexington Pkwy to the west and Marion/Kellogg to the east. Traffic patterns within Rondo and nearby communities were observed as follows:

- Exit 241B (EB I-94 to 5th/10th St): This ramp carries heavy traffic with 1,600 vehicles during morning peak hour. Out of these volumes, about 320 vehicles (20 percent) are estimated to originate inside Rondo and nearby communities.
- Exit 239B (WB I-94 to Lexington Pkwy): This ramp is estimated to carry 600 vehicles during morning peak hour. Out of these volumes, about 150 vehicles (25 percent) are estimated to originate inside Rondo and nearby communities.

The difference between the Phase II percent and the Phase I percent is related to the denominator in the equation. The Phase I data uses the trips generated in the neighborhood. The Phase II information above used the trips on a specific ramp. I-94 is important for both local and regional travel.

40. From David Juliff to Everyone: 10:57 AM – Use of I-94

To Keith's point, 95% or more of the traffic on 94 here originates/ends between the 2 downtowns....

R40. The Phase I study found that about 80 % of the trips between Broadway Avenue and Highway 61 get on or off I-94 between the two downtowns. Some of the trips that get on and off may have origins and destinations outside of the neighborhoods adjacent to I-94. The study also found that only 1 percent of the trips between Broadway Avenue and Highway 61 pass through Broadway Avenue and Highway 61. The study also found that only 3% of the trips on I-94 at Snelling Avenue originate and end in the two downtowns. Again the percentages depend on the denominator. The above traffic study considered Broadway Ave in Minneapolis as its western terminus and TH 61 in St. Paul as its eastern terminus. There is also other major connections with I-35W, I-35E, and TH 280 that would be considered termini. Defining external trips as trips originating or terminating outside of the termini and internal trips as trips originating or terminating inside the termini, traffic patterns within the study corridor were observed as follows:

- External-to-external trips (trips originating and terminating outside the termini). These thru trips accounted for up to 25 percent of morning/afternoon peak hour trips.
- Internal-to-internal trips (trips originating and terminating inside the termini). These short trips also accounted for about 25 percent of morning/afternoon peak hour trips.
- External-to-internal trips (trips originating outside the termini and terminating inside the termini), and internal-to-external trips (trips originating inside the termini and terminating outside the termini) These trips account for 50 percent of morning/afternoon peak hour trips.

41. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 10:58 AM – Walkability and Bikeability

@Peter1Nic -- biking and walking around essentially the entire corridor is so dangerous I wouldn't take my kids near it. It's a hazard as a driver, and downright deadly for those not in cars. Hard to pin down just one issue since it needs a full "rethinking."

R41. Thank you for the comment.

42. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 10:58 AM – Walkability and Bikeability

Agree with Scott- the whole thing needs to be rethought if it is to be safe for reconnection

R42. Thank you for the comment.

43. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 10:58 AM – Purpose and Need

I would argue that livability should be at the top of the need. At Move Minneapolis, we promote sustainable travel so that everyone can benefit from a climate-friendly future, a vibrant, equitable economy, and ultimately, a world that we'd all like to live in. The intersection between transportation and livability is undeniable.

R43. Thank you for the comment. Please refer to previous discussions regarding transportation purpose and need and the importance of livability items to MnDOT.

44. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 10:59 AM – Engagement

Effect of 280 on South St. Anthony Park specifically needs its own community engagement process

R44. The MnDOT team is happy to meet with different groups as part of the overall public engagement process. We can schedule a meeting to discuss engagement opportunities.

45. From Pete1Nic to Everyone: 10:59 AM – Walkability and Bikeability Follow-Up/Clarifications

Scott - Can you describe dangerous? Is it how it feels? Is it actual incidents? Please elaborate...

R45. Question asked by MnDOT's project manager of Scott Berger. Follow-up to question/comment 38. See response 52 for more information.

46. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 10:59 AM – Primary and Secondary Needs

Your Tiers are backwards if you intend to consider livability. Livability will only ever be an afterthought under this regime.

R46. See previous responses to comments/questions: 12, 28, 30, 33

47. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 10:59 AM – Walkability and Bikeability

Nicole - I have a set of photos of Cretin bridge ped infra if you want to see them

R47. See comment 48 below.

48. From Pete1Nic to Everyone: 11:00 AM – Walkability and Bikeability

I am interested in better understanding what you are sharing.

R48. Please provide us with any photos that you may have that describe or show a condition you are concerned about within the project area.

49. From Keith Baker to Everyone: 11:03 AM – Community Needs

As I have indicated in past meetings. MnDOT and FHWA has defined the size of the box and the content within the box. It is my impression that consideration of community articulated "needs" (secondary) will be considered down the road, so to speak not clearly defined and acknowledged during Tier 1. Given the impact of I-94 construction on the community, for some this can work for Reconnect Rondo it does not.

I have another meeting I must leave to attend. Thank you. Looking forward to continued communication and discussion.

R49. Thank you for comment. Please understand that community "needs" and impacts are a constant consideration throughout the process. The identification of solutions and details of those solutions are indeed farther down in the process. Engagement and feedback throughout the process will ensure that the communities "needs" are fully communicated and integrated, as possible, in the ultimate projects identified.

50. From Lindsay Schwantes to Everyone: 11:03 AM – Feedback

Second what Keith said. I understand MDOT and FHA have process and required processes and have engineering expertise. I have not found this Community Leadership Group to be a fruitful use of my time. Would you like this group to continue to engage in these meetings? If so, I suggest starting meeting with asking the group questions that you need input on not presenting.

R50. Thank you for the suggestion. We will explore other ways of engaging this group as to make your time more fruitful and productive. Please see responses to comments/questions 35 and 37 for further feedback on engagement. The September, October and November meetings are intended to have discussions regarding the information presented today.

51. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 11:04 AM – Comments

Will your agencies accept and consider P&N statements from the community or is this a closed loop?

R51. It is not a closed loop. MnDOT is asking for and will be collecting comments on what has been written. We want comments. MnDOT and FHWA will review the comments and determine whether/how they get incorporated into the documents or influence the livability framework activities.

52. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 11:05 AM – Walkability and Bikeability - Follow-Up

@Peter1Nic - 1. Road condition is poor on cross-streets, 2. ped bridges are in inconvenient places and offer poor sightlines and lighting, 3. cross-streets are overcrowded and oversized, and lack shoulders or bike lanes, 4. sidewalks are too narrow and close to speeding traffic, 5. vehicle fumes are hazardous due to quantity and speed of traffic paired with close spacing, 6. freeway funnels cross-traffic into few connectors that are built to handle capacity at this points and grid is compromised, 7, sections are sidewalks are missing entirely, 8. lights are timed for vehicular flow not bike ped, 9. geometry of turns are generally high speed and do not grant adequate leading intervals in most cases, 10. bus stops are in poor locations and condition, 11. snow removal prioritizes vehicles not bike/ped, 12. noise from high-speed freeway makes hearing vehicles nearby more difficult, 13. speed limits remain too high on cross streets, 14. lack of street activation and greenery creates excessive heat and noise reverb

R52. Thank you – this is helpful information.

53. From Julia Tabbut to Everyone: 11:06 AM – Walkability and Bikeability – Follow-Up

Issues and 'problems' (why the quotes?) for non-motorized movement [I agree with Scott's list too]: 1) The whole freeway is a giant obstacle to freedom of movement. Imagine the worst construction detour you've ever experienced as a driver. Having to go far out of your way. Poor instruction and signage. Having to stop frequently to wait for other cars to clear. Bumps and holes and gravel that you have to off-road over. Now imagine it permanent. That's what the freeway is for people walking and biking.

R53. Thank you for your comment.

54. From Lyssa Washington to Everyone: 11:08 AM – Engagement

I think these first meetings are to address the components that go into this process -- please be patient (with how these first few meetings have been going), we will have opportunities with all of you and the larger community to provide input and feedback. We are looking for ways to meet in smaller groups so that we can better capture feedback from all of you, providing information and continue the dialogue

R54. Comment made by meeting facilitator.

55. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 11:08 AM - Alternatives

I am interested in seeing the project team evaluate the impacts of taking away one or two lanes of vehicular traffic. Is this in the scope?

R55. Alternatives have not been identified yet. We first need to establish the purpose and need and the evaluation criteria. We will be asking for ideas on potential alternatives to consider when we get to that point. That being said, it is anticipated that one of the alternatives will evaluate a reduction in general purpose travel lanes.

56. From Sheila Kauppi to Everyone: 11:09 AM – Walkability and Bikeability Follow-Up

@scott berger: your comments about specifics are very helpful for our project team.

R56. MnDOT response to information provided by Scott Berger.

57. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 11:09 AM – Walkability and Bikeability – Follow-Up

You're welcome. I had many, many more but ran out of characters. :)

R57. Comment noted.

58. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 11:10 AM – Alternatives and Purpose and Need

Again, you only consider "Livability" as it pertains to your "solutions" to "mobility" "Problems" ...not as it pertains to the existing transportation infrastructure. You say that this cannot be considered ...but this is what we want considered. So if OUR needs can't be considered, what's the point of your public process? It's garbage. All I'm hearing is "Level of service" for cars and trucks, "travel times", "congestion" bla bla bla-- the usual MnDOT garbage. You TOOK the shoulders that buses could have used in parts of 94 after the bridge collapse. This is the reality of the EXISTING infrastructure. But nowhere in the purpose and needs do you address this. So "taking out travel lanes" (which you just said, under your breath "no one is going to consider that") can't be considered because they wouldn't rate favorably on accomplishing your "purpose and needs".

R58. Nobody said "no one is going to consider that" about lane reduction. It was said about adding multiple travel lanes. See response to comment/question 55 regarding alternatives – they have not been developed yet.

Livability is a goal that will be addressed/considered as part of the project where it can be. There are also activities about the livability framework outside of the environmental process. The project certainly will not be able to address all non-transportation items. That does not mean that MnDOT is not trying to work with partner agencies on items that it does not have jurisdiction over – MnDOT is building connections with different state and local agencies to get at topics and issues that fall under the livability umbrella and for which it does not have control or authority to act. It can use its relationships and partnerships to help further additional community goals.

59. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 11:10 AM - Walkability and Bikeability

Anyone who studies this corridor I would URGE to both bike and walk across Snelling, Marion, Lexington, Cretin at very least. Studying this in a vacuum wouldn't do much good without context. Better yet, take your child with you and see how you feel doing it.

R59. Thank you for the comment. Some project team members have walked across the corridor. We agree that many locations have a poor multimodal level of service. This issue is reflected in the purpose and need document.

60. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 11:10 AM – Mobility – Alternatives

If there's a concern about transit and freight efficient use, close the highway to personal vehicles

R60. See response to comment/question 55 regarding alternatives.

61. From Julia Tabbut to Everyone: 11:11 AM – Walkability and Biekability

2) The transitions between freeway driving and city driving are extremely dangerous for pedestrians. It's psychologically difficult to transition between zooming freely at 60-80mph to sharing travel space with the slower-moving people suddenly in your way. I've experienced this as a driver too. We need design that reminds drivers that they're in a different kind of space.

R61. Thank you for the comment.

62. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 11:13 AM – Commitments

Scott Berger, MnDOT failed to put bike connections on Snelling at 94 when it had the chance and claimed in plan sets it was going to do. So, after all this process, MnDOT can make promises about what it's going to do ...and then just decide not to do them when it actually does the project.

R62. MnDOT sent email response to Andy Singer and Scott Berger

MnDOT would like to respond to your comments and discussion about the Snelling Bridge Project over 94 during the Community Leaders Meeting. We have dug back into the history of this project, and studies in the vicinity, to hopefully provide some context on why the less than desired connections across 94 on Snelling were implemented.

In short, the bridge project was not a full reconstruction of all the bridge components, but rather a redeck. The supports were able to be preserved, and the life of the bridge extended. Because it was a redeck, our ability to widen the deck was limited by structural constraints placed onto the existing foundations. The project was, however, able to significantly widen the sidewalks on both sides of the road within the project limits.

Following up on this project, MnDOT did conduct a study of Snelling in cooperation with the City of Saint Paul to look at a possible bike lane through this area. It was deemed by both the City and MnDOT that the potential development of a parallel bike facility in the local streets adjacent to Snelling was a better solution due to the many constraints on TH 51. In the peak hours, the level of service in this area is very poor, and with the intensity of the commercial and residential redevelopment since the study was done, it is probably only getting more constrained. Pascal and Aldine are believed to have better long-term potential for a parallel bike route.

I hope that provides some insight into our decisions at the time. Part of the exciting piece of Rethinking I-94, is that we do get to go back and “rethink” decisions, though there is a never a guarantee that we will arrive at different conclusions about the optimal routing for facilities.

63. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 11:13 AM – Transit

I would encourage the team to be very careful with the transit mobility data sources. I'm concerned that it's a bit of a chicken and an egg problem - the current transit service along I-94 is not great; therefore, it will show lower person throughput than it potentially could have (or has had in the distant past, as Andy mentions). And likewise,

depending on the years of data chosen, the mobility data could show great speeds for transit (pre-shoulders being removed) or poor mobility.

R63. We are not using pre-bridge collapse data from Metro Transit that would show speeds with shoulders in place along most of the corridor. We are using data from 2019 with the shoulders operating as they are currently configured. Transit ridership has to be associated with the travel time data from 2019 and the service provided at that time. Data was not used from the current Covid pandemic when service and ridership has been reduced.

64. From David Juliff to Everyone: 11:13 AM – Alternatives

Would there ever be an evaluation or consideration of reducing the speed on I-94 here (like 35E)?

R64. See response to comment/question 55. Alternatives have not yet been identified. We will be asking for input on potential alternatives when we get to that point.

65. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 11:14 AM - Commitments

@Andy and they just redocked that bridge, too. We have decades of that mistake to look forward to. That is why getting in at the ground level at the next project (this one) is essential so we don't repeat same mistakes again and again.

R65 – See response to comment/question 62.

66. From John Levin, Hamline Midway to Everyone: 11:16 AM – Transit and Traffic

Are the traffic/transit measures such as speed and reliability to be measured just at the peak of peak or across the entire day? How much of the evaluation will be driven by worst conditions vs. general conditions?

R66. We have and report data for peak periods and non-peak periods in the purpose and need technical memorandum. Evaluation criteria will look at addressing problem periods. On I-94, that can be outside typical peak times.

67. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 11:16 AM – Purpose and Need and Livability Goals

Do MNDOT and its cooperating agencies have statutory or regulatory authority to prioritize livability over traffic throughput?

R67. The livability goals were included to go beyond transportation needs and items normally incorporated into environmental documents. In the NEPA process, transportation needs must be addressed first. On I-94 this includes more than traffic throughput – there are many safety and infrastructure condition needs. Outside of the NEPA process, MnDOT is using the livability framework with partner agencies to work towards addressing community interests/livability items that are not incorporated into the transportation purpose and need.

68. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 11:17 AM - Engagement

I would like to see one of the engagement activities in the Public Engagement Plan be that the project team actively walks/bikes the bridges over I-94, both in summer and in winter. The importance of that experiential learning cannot be underestimated!

R68. That will be considered.

69. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 11:17 AM - Commitments

Scott Berger, We got in on the ground level on Snelling ...and it made zero difference. The agency just went ahead and ignored us and did what it wanted to do. From what I'm hearing now, I'm not optimistic about this much larger dumpster fire.

R69. See response to comment/question 62.

70. From Debbie Meister to Everyone: 11:17 AM – Purpose and Need

Primary to me is mitigating climate change and reducing the damage of I-94 on our communities. I think we are talking at cross purposes.

R70. For the NEPA process, the project must focus on addressing the transportation purpose and need. Please refer to the educational materials provided on the purpose and need.

MnDOT recognizes that is not enough and it is why the livability framework was identified as part of Phase 1 and why livability items are included as goals. It is why MnDOT is working with partners outside of the NEPA process to advance items important to the community. Where the two processes can intersect, they will. For example, “safety” was identified as part of the livability framework. This included issues related to transportation and other issues outside of transportation. MnDOT can work on the transportation items under both the NEPA and livability frameworks. It cannot lead other “safety” items regarding concern about personal safety (other than lighting as part of its projects). It needs its partners to help lead those efforts.

71. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 11:18 AM – Engagement

I would like to see the project team answer the questions posed in this meeting in a written format back to the group. Would that be possible in advance of next month's meeting?

R71. Responses have been provided. A limited number of questions have not been responded to due to being unsure of what the written comment/question was trying to ask or state.

72. From Pat Thompson, SAPCC to Everyone: 11:18 AM – Climate Change

Data: climate change

R72. We do not know what your statement was asking or commenting on. If you wish to provide clarification, we are happy to respond.

73. From John Levin, Hamline Midway to Everyone: 11:18 AM – Engagement

I agree with Becky. Responses to the issues raised in the chat would be really helpful.

R73. See response to comment/question 71.

74. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 11:19 AM – Alternatives

@Andy - I just want to hear some indication that MNDOT acknowledges even the remote possibility that the P&N might mean FEWER lanes, not MORE. I don't get that impression thus far. If we're not open minded to this possibility even at this stage, this might all be a waste.

R74. See response to comment/question 55. We are not at the alternatives stage. We will be asking for input on the alternatives to consider when we get to that point.

75. From Julia Tabbut to Everyone: 11:19 AM - Walkability and Bikeability

3) It's dehumanizing. The noise, the exhaust, the pavement. It all says, "You do not belong here, unboxed human." I feel like I'm being attacked just existing anywhere near the freeway. That's my summary! I don't know how to measure any of these things. Maybe by how high my blood pressure is right now even having this "conversation." AGREE WITH EVERYONE SUGGESTING YOU WALK IT YOURSELF. Preferably not in a herd all together, which totally changes the experience. Find a destination that you need to reach at a certain time and go walk it alone (or with a child, as suggested).

R75. Thank you for the comment. See response to comment/question 59.

76. From Chris McLaughlin - SNG to Everyone: 11:20 AM – Engagement

While this is a long-term process, the question is whether the affected communities were brought in for engagement a bit late. From your own process documentation, public engagement happens only after "purpose and need" have been defined.

EIS Process Overview

Step-by-Step Outline

1. Develop the EIS Statement of Purpose and Need
2. Develop a Public Engagement Plan

R76. MnDOT began Rethinking I-94 Phase 1 in 2016 with an engagement process that included 2,220 baseline surveys, 1,200 online surveys, 6 visioning workshops, 800 phone interviews, 250 one-on-one meetings and participation at 15 community events. Through this engagement and technical analysis, Phase 1 developed the livability framework, guiding commitments for project teams, and the Rethinking I-94 Engagement Toolkit. Phase 1 documents are available at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/i-94minneapolis-stpaul/toolkit.html>.

The technical documents that form the environmental process are developed by project staff and reviewed by committee before review by broader public. Information in the purpose and need began with the community input from Phase 1 engagement as well as additional technical studies to confirm/further document issues noted during Phase 1. Additional input on the purpose and need was provided by MnDOT and project partner (County, City, Metropolitan Council) staff. The documents are in draft form and will be revised as part of the public involvement process.

The Coordination and Public Involvement Plans were prepared in advance of the draft purpose and need. Please see the process that is being used in the MEPA/NEPA educational materials that were provided.

Please provide a reference point to the process documentation referenced.

77. From Becky Alper to Everyone: 11:24 AM – Engagement

I agree with Chris.

R77. See response to comment/question 76.

78. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 11:25 AM – General Comment

I agree with most of the non-staff comments.

R78. Comment noted.

79. From Scott Berger to Everyone: 11:25 AM – Comments

It's worth noting that the Community Leaders seem quite aligned in their stances and questions. Would be nice to see more acknowledgement and response to this. These aren't fringe voices.

R79. Comments have been noted.

80. From Andy Singer to Everyone: 11:25 AM – Comments

Yup

R81. Comment noted.

Meeting Participants

Community Leaders

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
X	Alper	Becky	Move Minneapolis
X	Armon	Alec	Hamline Midway Coalition
X	Baker	Keith	ReConnect Rondo
X	Berger	Scott	Union Park District Council
	Burns	Alex	Sierra Club North Star Chapter
	Cashman	Kerry	Seward Neighborhood
	Check	Nick	Saint Mark Parish
X	Golemo	Alexa	MacGroveland Community Council
	Gunderman	Amy	Lexington Hamline Neighborhood
	Haight	Vanessa	Elliot Park Neighborhood
X	Johnson	Glen	Elliot Park Neighborhood
X	Juliff	David	Be Civil – ReConnect Rondo
	Kershaw	Sean	Wilder
	Khalif	Farhio	St. Paul NAACP
	Klebsch	Angelica	Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio
X	Levin	John	Hamline Midway Coalition Transportation Committee
	Levins Holden	Olivia	Hope Community
	Liban	Mohamed	Somali American Partnership
	Morse Marti	Mary	Move Minneapolis
X	McLaughlin	Chris	Seward Neighborhood Group
X	Meister	Debbie	Neighborhoods First!
	Mudge	Kate	Hamline Midway Coalition
	Murray	Kathryn	St. Anthony Park
	Narayanan	Ashwat	Our streets Minneapolis
X	Nelson	Theresa	Move Minnesota
	Pleskovitch De Canedo	Amanda	Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio
	Royce	Caty	Frogtown Neighborhood Association
	Selle	Dawn	Hallie Q Brown
X	Singer	Andy	Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition
X	Schwantes	Lindsay	Hamline Midway Coalition
	Scott Knox	Tiffany	Wilder
	Smaller	Martine	Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
X	Tabbut	Julie	Prospect Park Association
	Thomas	James	Pastor – Mount Olivet Baptist Church
X	Thompson	Pat	St. Anthony Park Community Council, District 12
	Wako	Abdulrahman	Union Park District Council
	Watson	Shannon	St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
	Weinhagen	Jonathan	Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
	Werner	Jens	Summit-University Planning Council
	Wilson	David	Green Minneapolis

Technical Advisory Committee or Policy and Planning Committee Members

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
	Agosto	Kelly	Hennepin County

	Cox	Colin	Hennepin County
	Gottfried	Jason	Hennepin County
	Hager	Jenifer	City of Minneapolis
	Harper	Cyndi	Metro Transit
	Harrington	Adam	Metro Transit
	Hiniker	Cole	Metropolitan Council
	Isaacson	Brian	Ramsey County
	Kershaw	Sean	City of St. Paul
	Mandell	Paul	Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board
	Mazzitello	John	Ramsey County
	Musty	Peter	Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board
X	Newton	Randy	City of St. Paul
	Nix	Noel	City of St. Paul
	Schoenecker	Ted	Ramsey County
	Stark	Russ	City of St. Paul Mayor's Office
	Vanhala	Joan	Hennepin County
	Vennewitz	Amy	Metropolitan Council

FHWA/MnDOT/Consultant Staff

Present	Last Name	First Name	Organization
	Austin	Lisa	MnDOT
	Barnes	Melissa	MnDOT
X	Chiglo	Jon	WSB - consultant
X	Cho	Joanne	WSB - consultant
X	Corkle	Jack	WSB - consultant
X	Crockett	April	MnDOT
	Goff	William	MnDOT
	Hampton	Tori	MnDOT
X	Jeff	Gloria	MnDOT
X	Kauppi	Sheila	MnDOT
	Knutson	Cyrus	MnDOT
X	Peterson	Nicole	MnDOT
	Pfeiffer	Dan	WSB – consultant
X	Rank	Hannah	MnDOT
X	Varney	Anna	FHWA
X	Washington	Lyssa	4rm+ula - consultant