Rethinking I-94: A New Vision for Integrating Transportation and Community

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AMPO
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Enhance safety and mobility for people walking, biking, driving and using transit.

Rethinking I-94 has three main purposes

- Develop a community-based approach focused on reconnecting neighborhoods, revitalizing communities and ensuring residents have a meaningful voice in transportation-related decisions that affect their lives.
- Make it easier to travel to, along and across the I-94 corridor and establish a sense of place for the communities that live, work and play there.
- Enhance safety and mobility for people walking, biking, driving and using transit.
History: Behind the Initiative

Then

- **1920s** MHD envisions road connecting St. Paul and Minneapolis
- **1940s** MHD begins formal development of potential route alignments
- **1945** The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* publishes MHD’s final alignment
- **1950s** Federal funding sought to redevelop neighborhoods near Capitol and make way for I-94
Effects

• Construction of Interstate 94 in the 1960s destroyed homes and businesses and disconnected neighborhoods

• Those most affected were predominantly lower income, minority or immigrant communities

• Led to a pattern of community distrust with the Minnesota Highway Department (now MnDOT)
Now

• MnDOT is committed to doing better

• In 2015, MnDOT acknowledged past transportation policies that dismantled neighborhoods and apologized to the Rondo community

• Rethinking I-94 is a long-term effort to improve MnDOT’s engagement and relationships with communities
What Have We Done So Far?

- Researched existing transportation conditions
- Conducted initial engagement with stakeholders
- Developed ideas for improving safety and traffic congestion
Fast facts

• 15-mile corridor
• 250,000 people live within 1-mile of I-94
• 9 St. Paul District Councils
• 14 Minneapolis neighborhoods
• Economically and racially diverse
• 6 primary ethnic communities:
  American Indian, African-American, Latino,
  Euro-American, Asian-American, Recent African
  Immigrant
32.6% Of households live in poverty

12% Of households primarily speak an African language other than English

5% Of households primarily speak Spanish other than English

2% Of households primarily speak Hmong other than English
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers markets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhoods</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
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<td>Stadiums/arenas</td>
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<td>Theaters</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/green spaces</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of worship</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit users per year</td>
<td>2+ million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miles of infrastructure</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lane miles of pavement</td>
<td>80+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average hours of</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>congestion per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freight trips per day</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunnels</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles per day</td>
<td>150,000+</td>
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</table>
Our intentions

• Engage more voices in transportation planning

• Focus on the communities in the corridor impacted by the project

• Improve diversity and inclusion of underrepresented voices

• Interact with those impacted earlier in the process

• Engage with purpose to build resilient relationships
Opportunities to be Involved

- People-centered
- Adaptable approach
- Impact where people live, work and gather
- Early – Often – More
## Engagement Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline surveys</th>
<th>Visioning workshops</th>
<th>Listening sessions</th>
<th>Phone interviews for segmentation study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>800+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online surveys for segmentation study</td>
<td>Comments from interactive map</td>
<td>Community events</td>
<td>One-on-one interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,200+</td>
<td>325+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>250+</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Key takeaways

• Community members are interested in issues beyond the freeway

• Community members value involvement early and continuously, and want accurate, timely information

• Community members want their values and visions to be reflected in designs
What Have We Learned?

Ethnic diversity and cultural competency

The ethnic make-up of the Rethinking I-94 corridor is significantly different than Minneapolis/St. Paul and the state of Minnesota as a whole.

Ethnic diversity is distributed throughout the corridor and not concentrated in a specific location.

Cultural competence among MnDOT staff is essential to design and implement effective engagement in this historically, socially and geographically complex corridor.
Guiding Commitments for project teams

MnDOT developed these commitments based on what people expect from MnDOT. They will guide how we work with communities in the future.
Livability Framework for communities

MnDOT developed this framework based on what people expect from the project work. It will guide how we work design and evaluate projects in the future.
Rethinking I-94 will continue ...
MnDOT’s Role

Leader

Partner

Facilitator
Manifesting a Vision

Takes the culmination of several efforts.

A. Doing what is required as part of the NEPA process (documented in the corridor environmental document)

B. Looking for opportunities with FHWA that may not be “business as usual” but are within our shared missions and could be federally funded (documented in a white paper or stewardship agreement)

C. Developing a parallel plan(s) that captures goals not part of the NEPA process and outside of FHWA’s mission and involvement, but within MnDOT’s mission, values and strategic operating goals (documented in a series of presentations and potentially integrated in other appropriate plans, i.e. freight plan)
Next Steps

• Complete scoping required by state of Minnesota

• Prepare environmental documentation and necessary approvals for NEPA

• Propose a program of projects

• Implementation period 10 or more years

• Public engagement continues

• Collaboration with public, governmental entities, businesses, academic institutions and additional stakeholders
Your Agency Has Made Commitments – Make them Stick!

Your agency developed these commitments based on what people expect from you. They will guide how you work with communities going forward.
You work for a transportation agency that is making a major investment in the freeway that goes right though the most at risk community. An area with significant portions of the population working fulltime positions but at wage rates that make it difficult to absorb increases in day to day expenses.

While the project will improve the freeway, it won’t benefit the neighborhood directly. However, construction impacts will be noticable.

You want to involve the community in the project and build trust.

There is a history of distrust with this community and a complex demographic, including young professionals who don’t get involved, old-timers who remember the past, ethnically diverse groups with an expectation of the “American Dream” and recent immigrants.
Your Job: Make Good on Your Commitments!

1. What does the commitment actually mean?
2. What would you do differently in or with the community?
3. What would you do differently within your agency?
4. Would the project need to change? If so, how?
5. If this will cost more money, how do you find the extra money?

5 minutes per question
Your Agency Has Made Commitments – Make them Stick!

Your agency developed these commitments based on what people expect from you. They will now guide how you work with communities.
More Information at

• Visit http://www.dot.state.mn.us/I-94minneapolis-stpaul/

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