

Reimagining I-94

Evaluating at-grade alternatives for Rethinking I-94



**our
streets**

MPLS

T'OOLE
DESIGN

Introductions

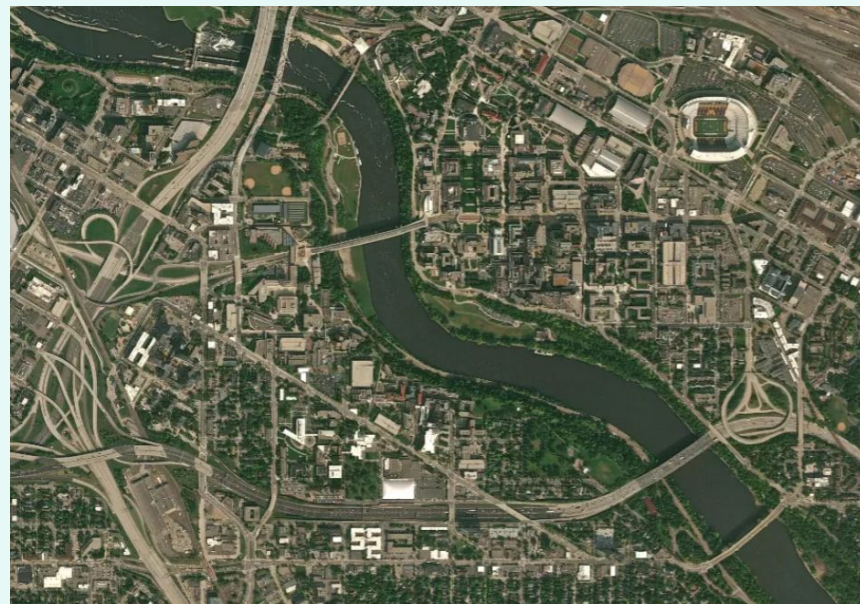
- **José Antonio Zayas Cabán**, Executive Director, Our Streets
- **Yasmin Hirsi**, Advocacy Coordinator, Our Streets



Cedar-Riverside Before and After the Highways

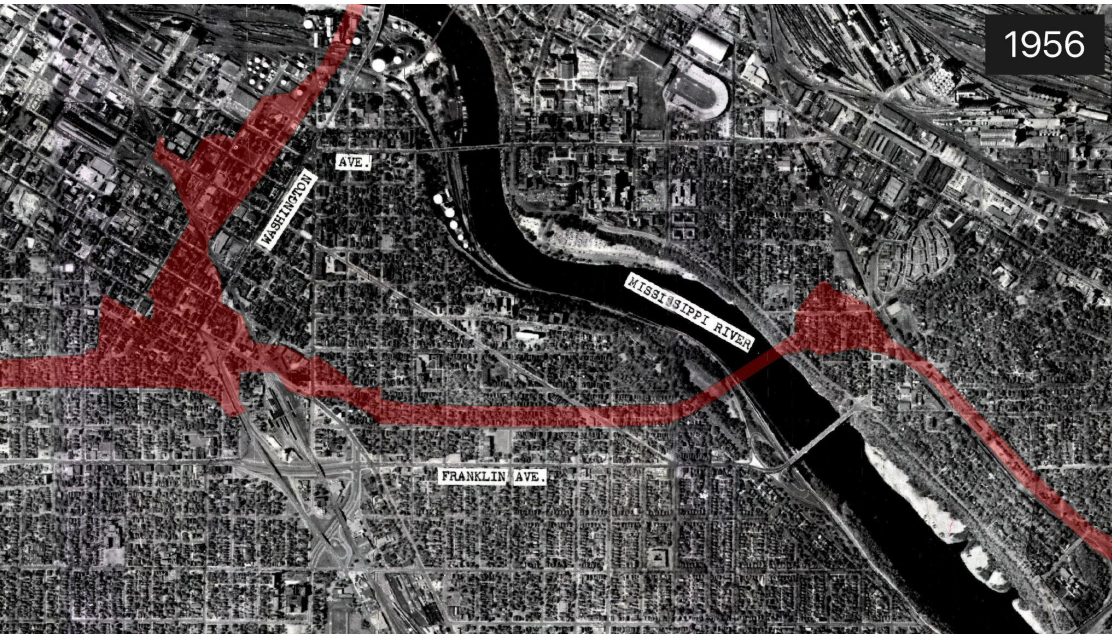


1956



2003

Historic Harms of Urban Highways



**“We know
that you are
reasonable people
and understand
that someone
has to pay the
price of progress.”**

*Highway Commissioner
Loyal Zimmerman*

*speaking to a Black congregation
at Pilgrim Baptist Church,
1957*

Graphic courtesy of Hennepin History
Museum “Human Toll” exhibit

Racial Covenants

538

Doc. No. 712111. Filed April 23 1914 at 12:35 o'clock P. M.

Henry B. Scott & Wf.
to
Wels A. Anderson

THIS INDENTURE, Made on the 26th day of May A. D. One Thousand Nine Hundred and ten (1910) by and between Henry B. Scott and Leonora C. Scott, his wife, by W. P. McFarland, her attorney in fact, of the City of Burlington, Iowa, parties of the first part, and Wels A. Anderson of the County of Hennepin in the State of Minnesota, party of the second part:

WITNESSETH, That the said parties of the first part, in consideration of the sum of Five Hundred Twenty-five and No/100ths (\$525.00) ¹⁰⁰ Dollars, to them paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do by these presents Grant, Bargain, Sell, Convey and Confirm, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, the following described Lots, Tract, or Parcels of Land, lying, being and situate in the County of Hennepin and State of Minnesota, to-wit:

The East One-half (E $\frac{1}{2}$) of Lot numbered Five (5), in Block numbered Eleven (11), Seven Oaks Acres, Minneapolis, Minnesota according to the recorded map or plat thereof on file and of

The party of the second part hereby agrees that the premises hereby conveyed shall not at any time be conveyed, mortgaged or leased to any person or persons of Chinese, Japanese, Moorish Turkish, Negro, Mongolian or African blood or decent. Said restrictions and covenants shall run

build a house to cost not less than \$1,500.00. In the event that the above conditions or any of them are broken by the grantee herein or his heirs or his assigns, then and in that case this conveyance shall be void.

It is further mutually covenanted that the premises hereby conveyed shall not at any time be conveyed, mortgaged or leased to any person or persons of Chinese, Japanese, Moorish, Turkish, Negro, Mongolian or African blood or descent. Said restrictions and covenants shall run with the land and any breach of any or either thereof shall work a forfeiture of title, which may be enforced by re-entry.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD THE SAME, Together with all the hereditaments and appurtenances thereto in anywise appertaining, and the said Henry B. Scott, one of the parties of the first part does covenant with the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns, as follows: That they are lawfully seized of said premises in fee simple, and that they have good right and power to grant and convey the same; that the same are free from all incumbrances whatsoever except special installments of taxes, if any, levied, but not paid and that the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns, shall quietly enjoy and possess the same; and that the said parties of the first part will WARRANT AND DEFEND the title to the same against all lawful claims.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said parties of the first part have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered
in Presence of
E F Hanbold
Edwin J Smith

Henry B Scott (Seal)
Leonora C Scott (Seal)
by W.P. McFarland Atty in fact.

Highways Continue to Harm

Promises:

Increased property values

Increased investment

Reduced neighborhood traffic

Reduced air pollution

Reduced traffic deaths

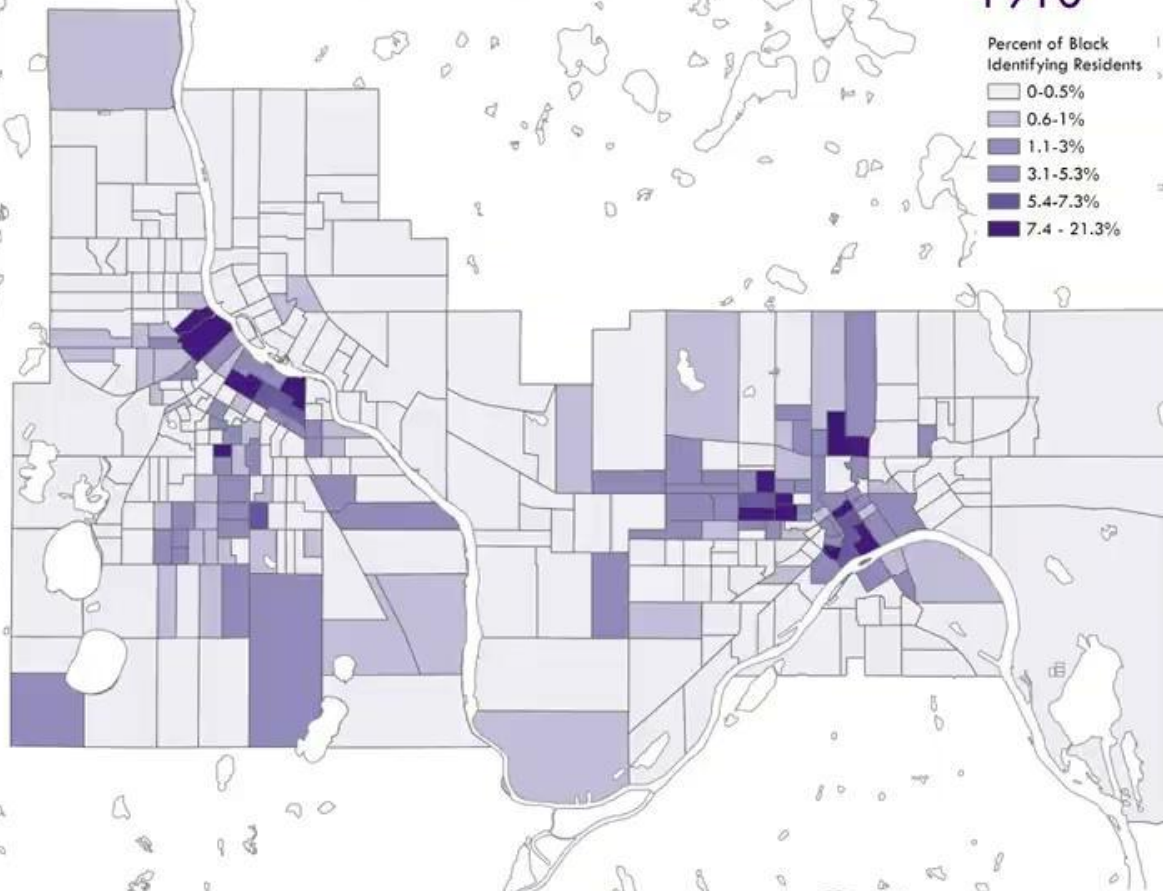
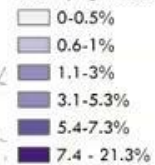
Reduced congestion

Reality:

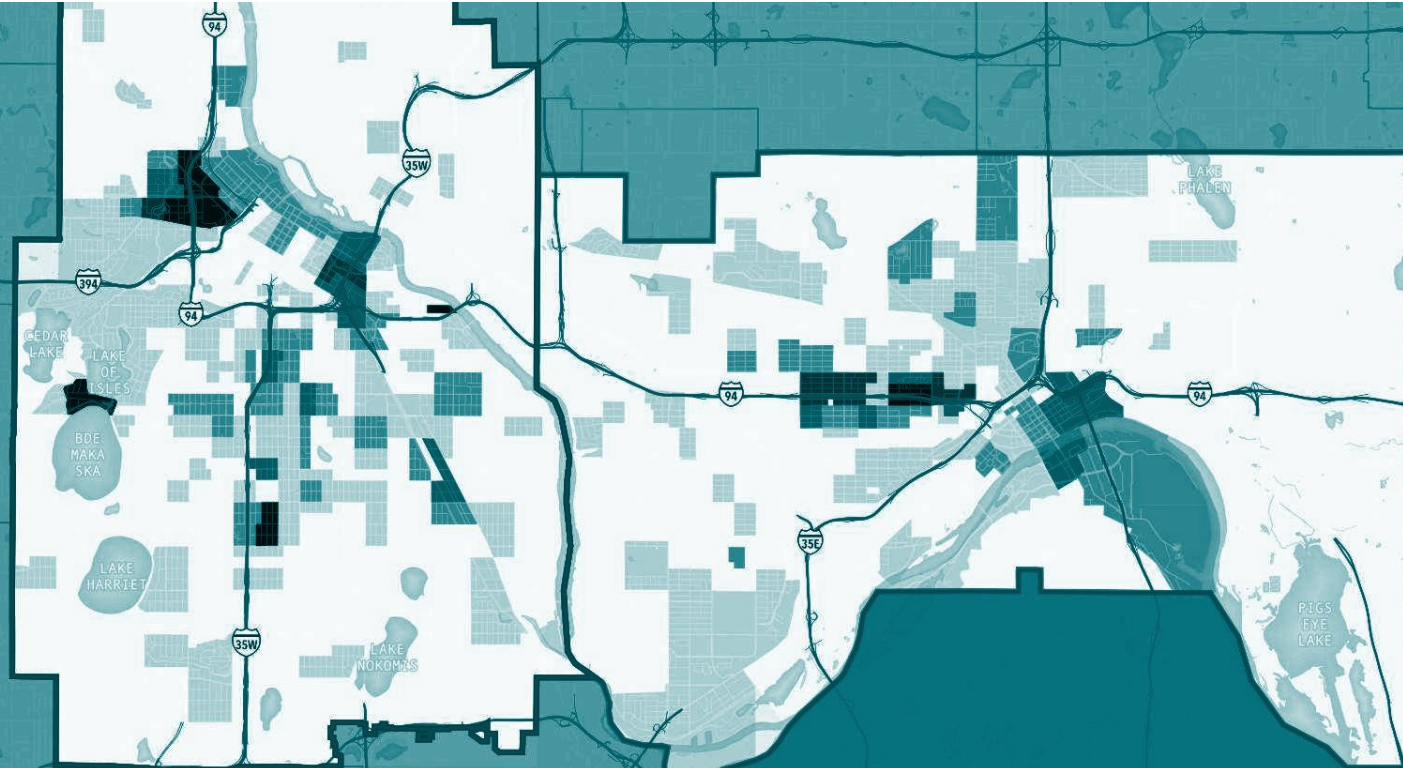
- **Disinvestment** and lowered property values
- **Air and noise pollution**
- **Health disparities**
 - ✓ Asthma
 - ✓ Dementia
 - ✓ Lower life expectancy
- **Divided communities**
- **Limited mobility** for transit-dependent households
- **Climate change** & extreme heat
- **Traffic deaths** & injuries

1910

Percent of Black
Identifying Residents

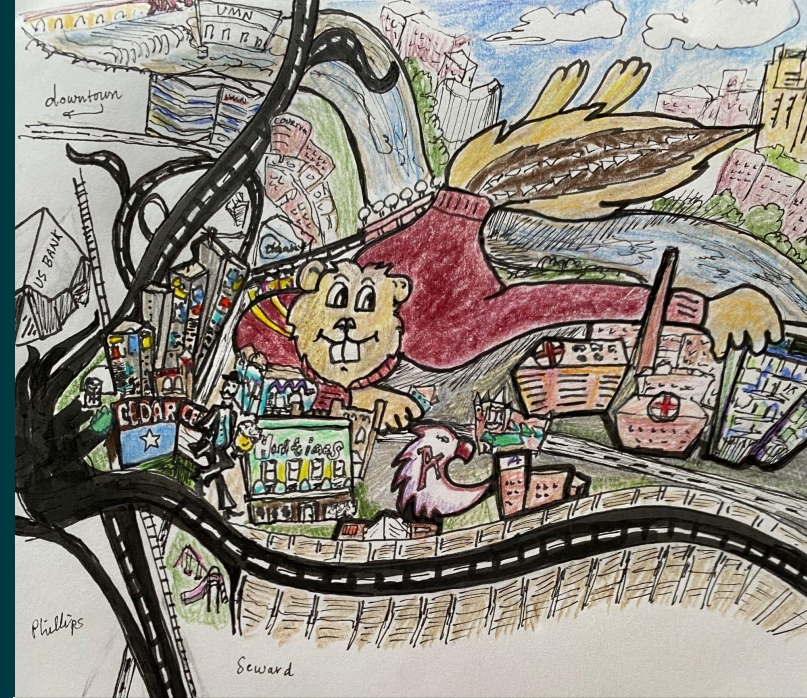


Black Neighborhoods & Freeways in the Twin Cities, 1940



It has survived waves of dispossession

- Pike's Purchase: 1805 (removes Dakota)
- Morrill Act land grants to University: 1862
- Bohemian Flats: 1920s and 1930s
- Highways: 1956-1969
- Urban renewal: 1960s-1970s
- University expansion: 1950-today
- New Town in Town/Private development: 1962-77 (Riverside Plaza built 1971-73)
- **Today: potential of I-94 and I-35 expansion**



Traffic and Transportation Committee Meeting -
Minneapolis Planning Commission - 1950s.
Courtesy Hennepin County Library

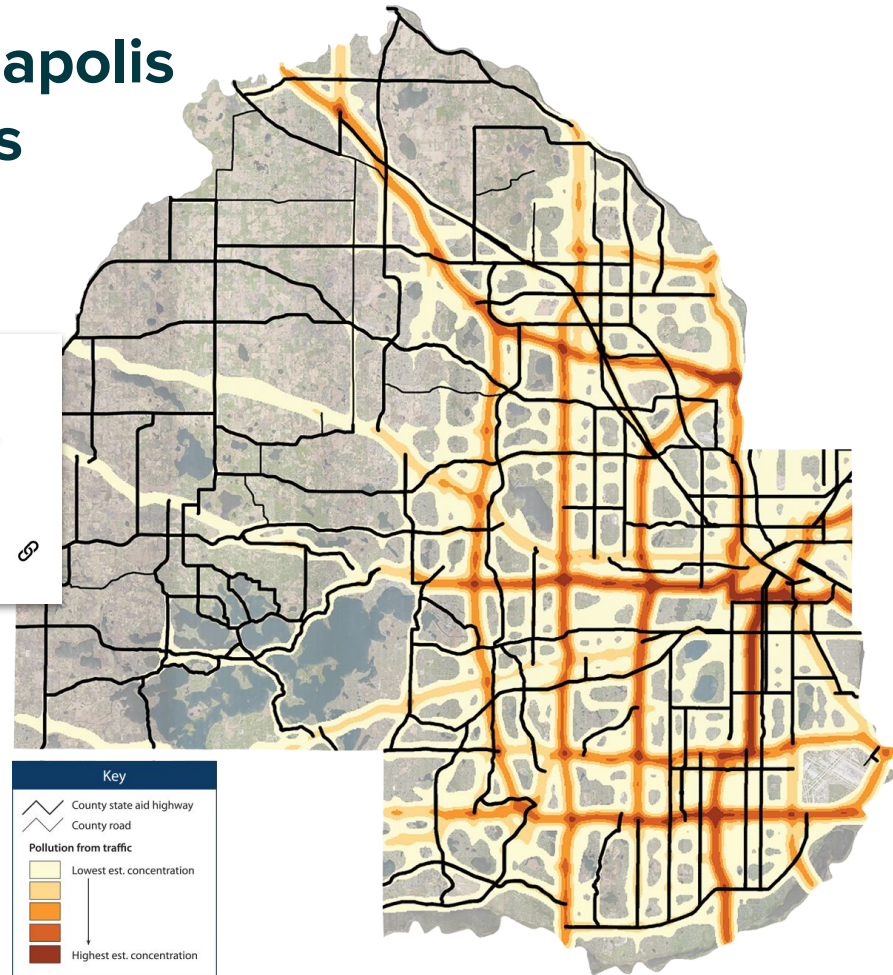
I-94 continues to harm Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods

Highway traffic pollution puts communities of color at greater health risk, data analysis shows

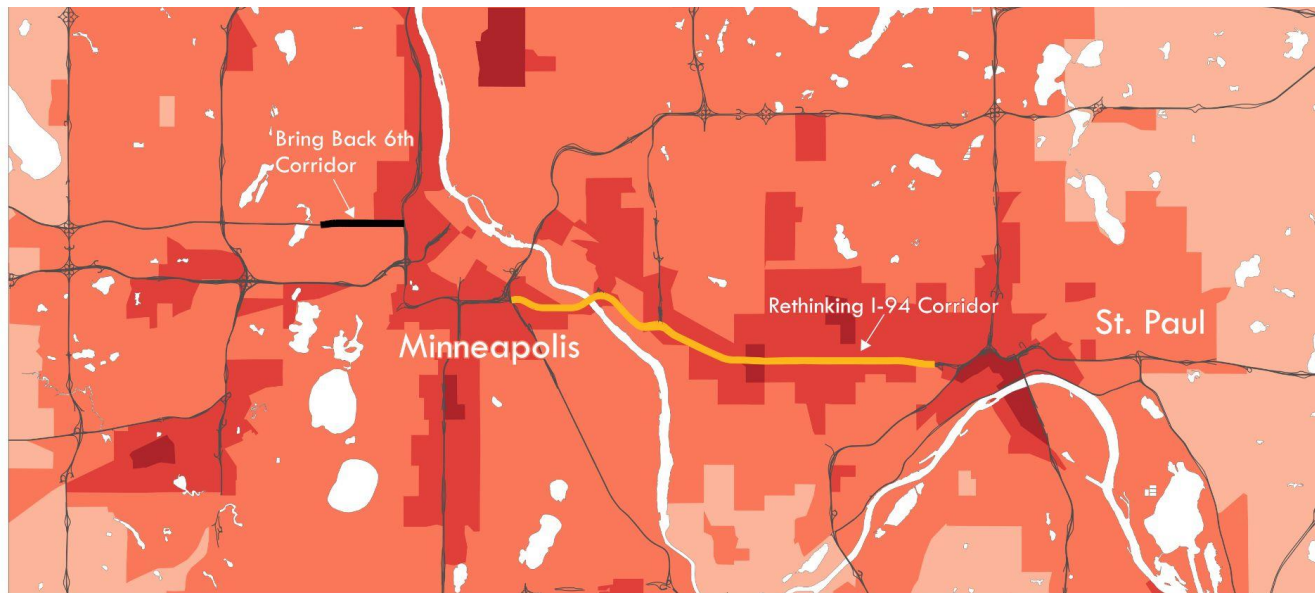
An ABC News data analysis examined health risks associated with major roadways.

By [Mark Nichols](#)

September 20, 2023, 3:03 PM



MN Pollution Control Agency Air Quality Scores 2015



0 3 6 Miles

Sources: US Census 2014, Minnesota
Geospatial Commons 2022, Minnesota
Pollution Control Agency 2014,
Metropolitan Council 2022
Data Aggregated by 2014 Census Tracts

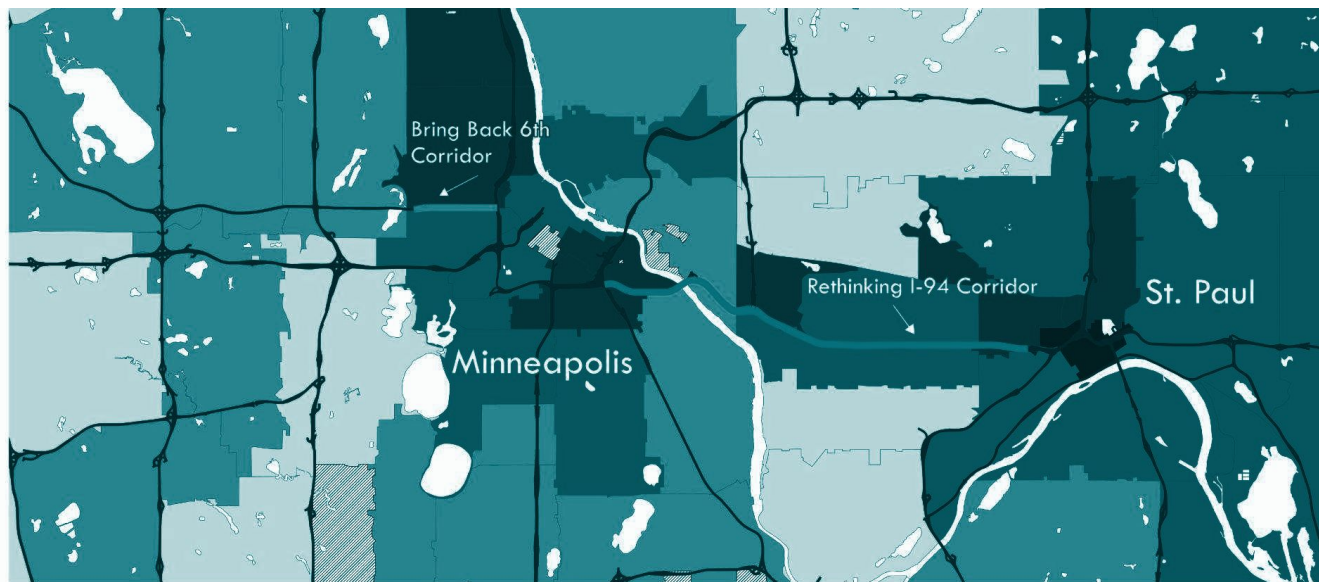
MPCA Air Quality Score

0.07 - 0.70
0.71 - 1.40
1.41 - 2.10
2.11 - 3.20
3.20 - 5.30

— Bring Back 6th Corridor
— Rethinking I-94 Corridor
— Major Highway

our streets MPLS

Asthma Hospitalization Rate by Zip Code 2015-2019



0 3.5 7 Miles

Sources: Minnesota Geospatial Commons 2022,
Metropolitan Council 2022, Minnesota
Department of Health 2019, US Census 2019

Age Adjusted Asthma Rate per 10,000 residents

1.1 - 2.6

2.7 - 4.9

5 - 8.7

8.2 - 16.7

16.8 - 48.1

No Data Available

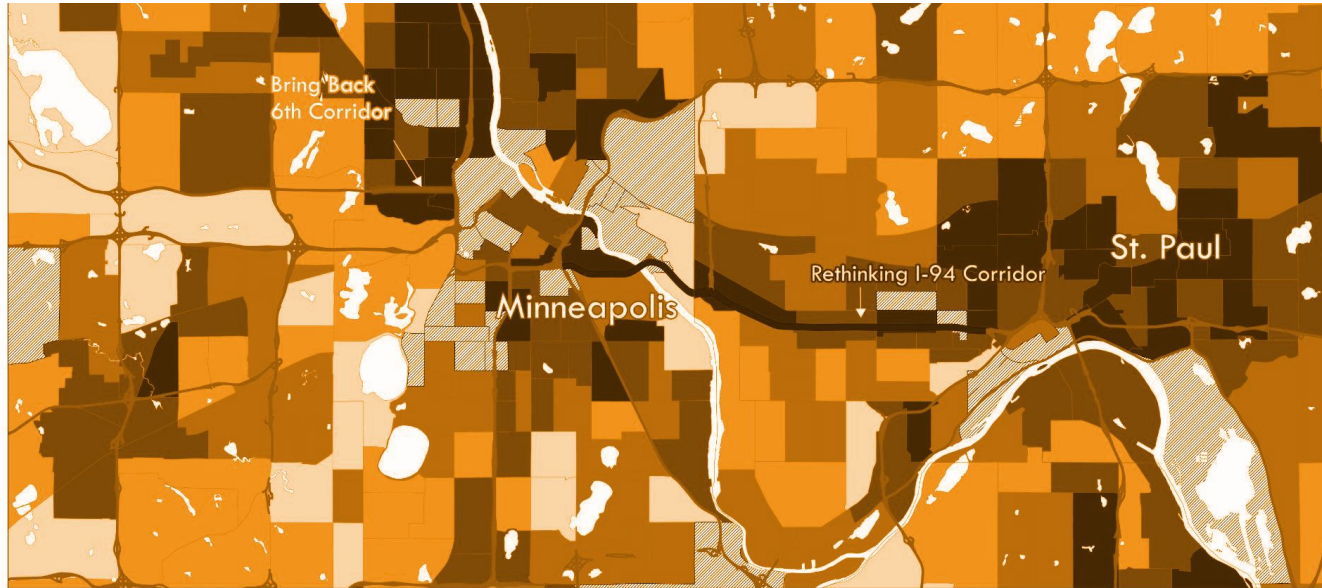
Bring Back 6th Corridor

Rethinking I-94 Corridor

Other Major Highway

our streets MPLS

Life Expectancy at Birth by Census Tract 2010-2015



0 4 8 Miles

Sources: US CDC 2018, US Census 2015,
Minnesota Geospatial Commons 2022,
Metropolitan Council 2022
Data is aggregated by Census Tracts

Life Expectancy in Years

64.8 - 75.2

75.3 - 78.8

78.9 - 81.6

81.7 - 84.7

84.8 - 91.9

No Data Available

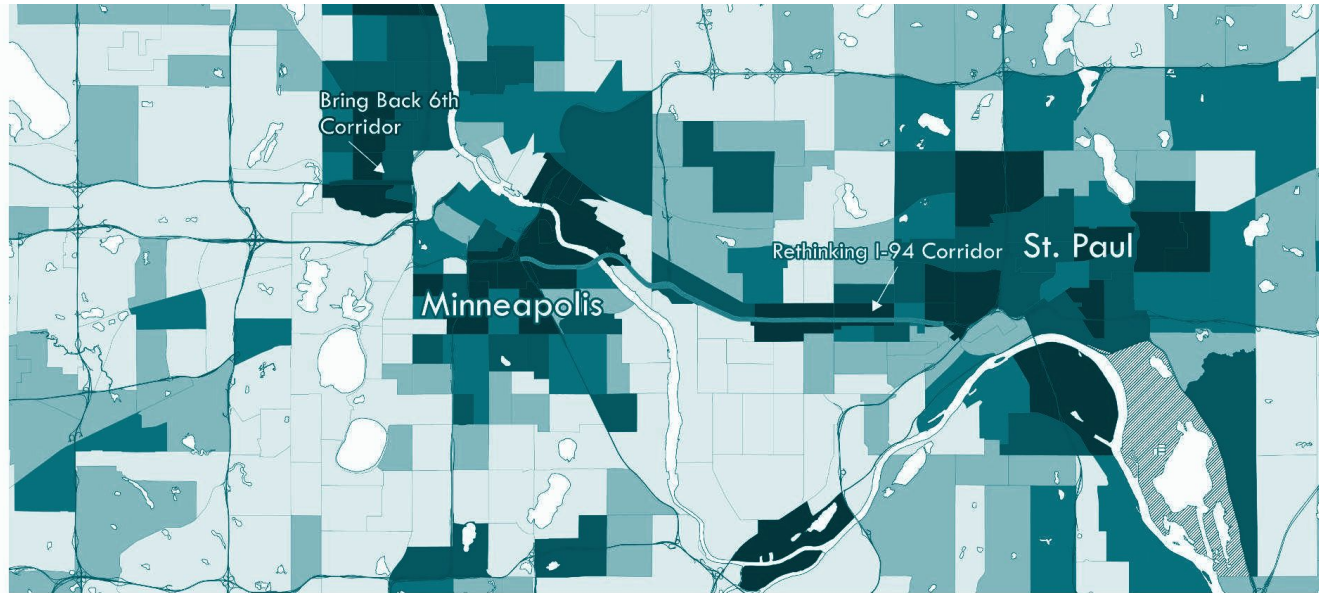
Bring Back 6th Corridor

Rethinking I-94 Corridor

Other Major Highway

our streets MPLS

Households in Poverty by Census Tracts 2019



0 3.5 7 Miles

Sources: US Census 2019, American Community Survey 2019, Minnesota Geospatial Commons 2022, Metropolitan Council 2022

Percent of Households at or Below the Poverty Line

0- 3.6%

3.7 - 9.2%

9.3 - 17.3%

17.4 - 28.8%

28.9 - 61.4%

No Data Available

Bring Back 6th Corridor

Rethinking I-94 Corridor

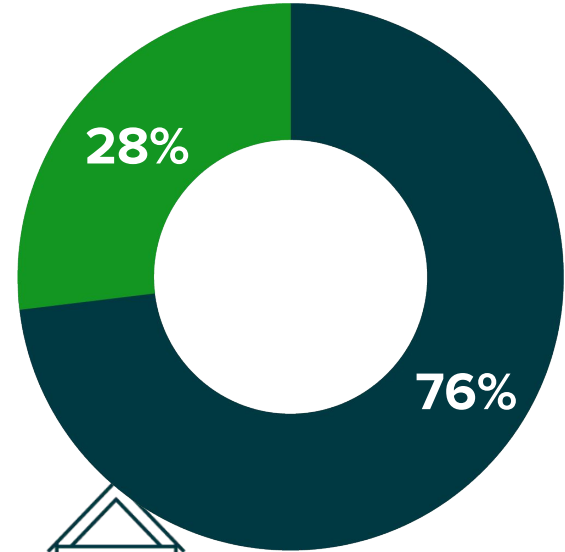
Other Major Highway

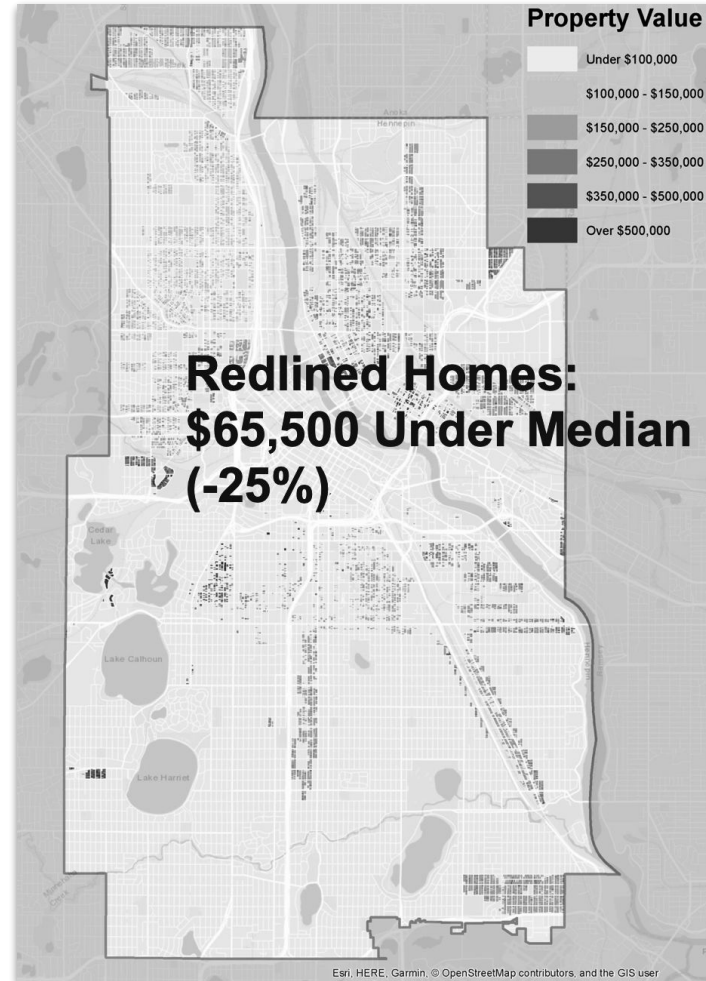
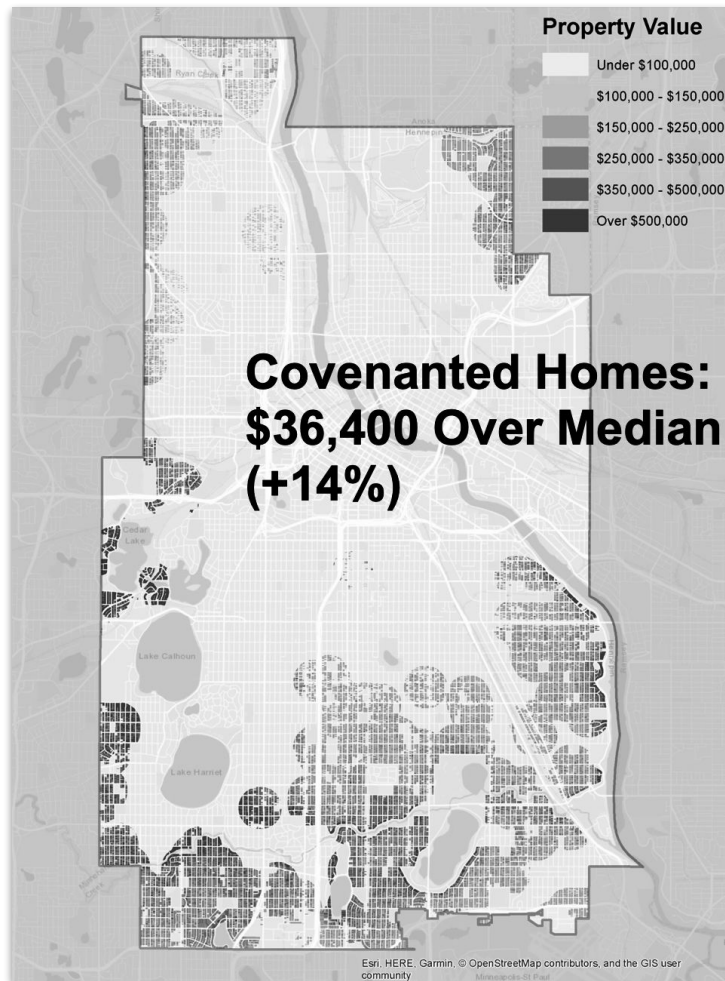
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Twin Cities Metro Home Ownership

Among largest gaps in the nation:

- **Black Families 28%**
- **White Families 76%**





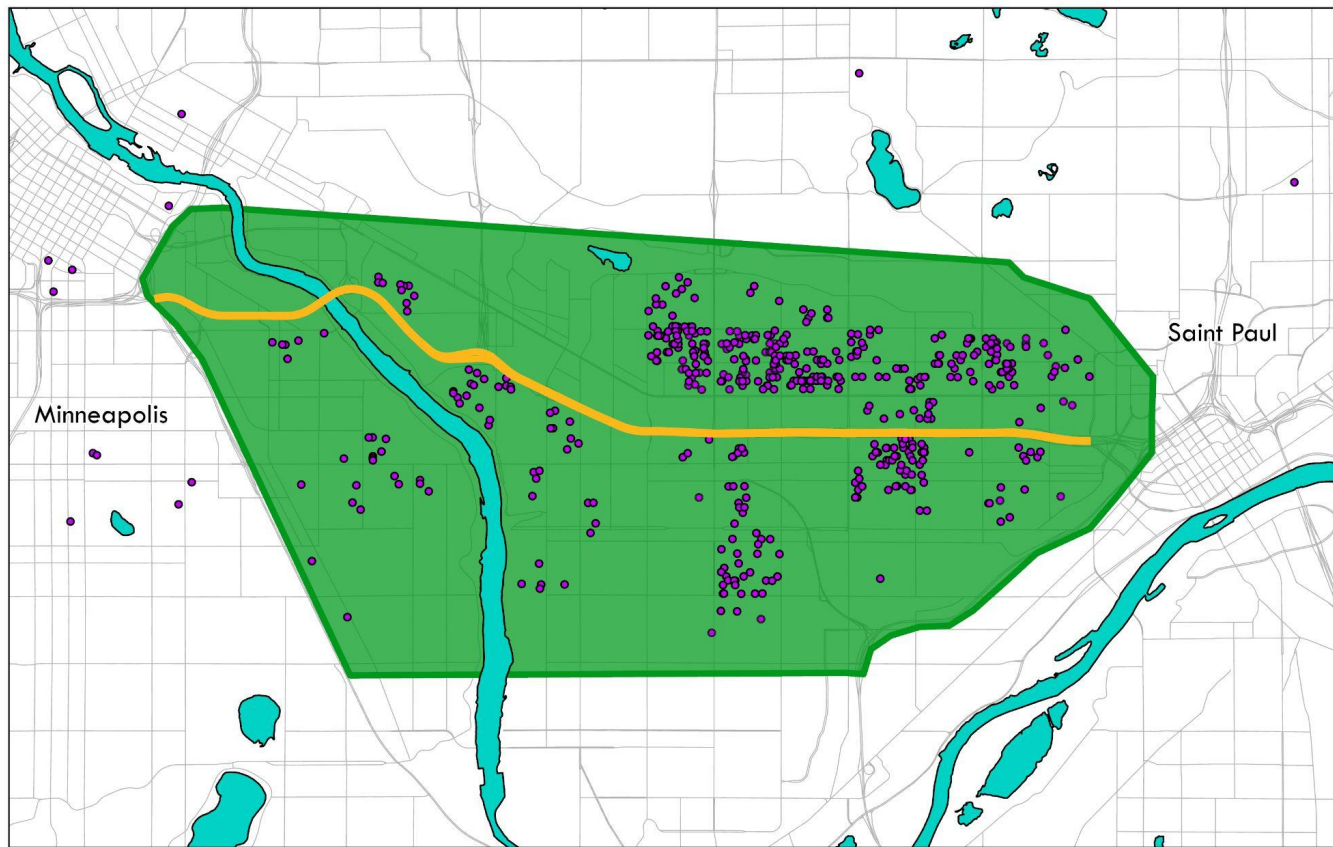
The Twin Cities Boulevard Movement

- The Rethinking I-94 project is a generational opportunity
- We are organizing to:
 - **Restore the I-94 trench to a multimodal street**, reconnecting all neighborhoods
 - **Use reclaimed highway land for new housing, businesses and parks** via a community land trust
 - **Implement policies to prioritize those who have been most impacted**, ensure affordability, and prevent displacement





Twin Cities Boulevard Supporters Identified While Canvassing



- Our Streets MPLS Supporter Identified While Canvassing
- Rethinking I-94 Corridor
- Twin Cities Boulevard Canvassing Area

0 1 2 Miles

our streets MPLS

*Note: mapped supporters are from October 2023 - February 2024

Building a Community Vision

- Going door-to-door along the project corridor to raise awareness and collect community ideas
 - Over 30,000 doors to date
 - Significant support for the Twin Cities Boulevard vision can be found in every neighborhood along the corridor
 - Support for a completely new vision for I-94 grows stronger the closer you are to the highway
- We commissioned this study to ensure that community members can legitimately consider highway conversion options and the potential benefits to their lives

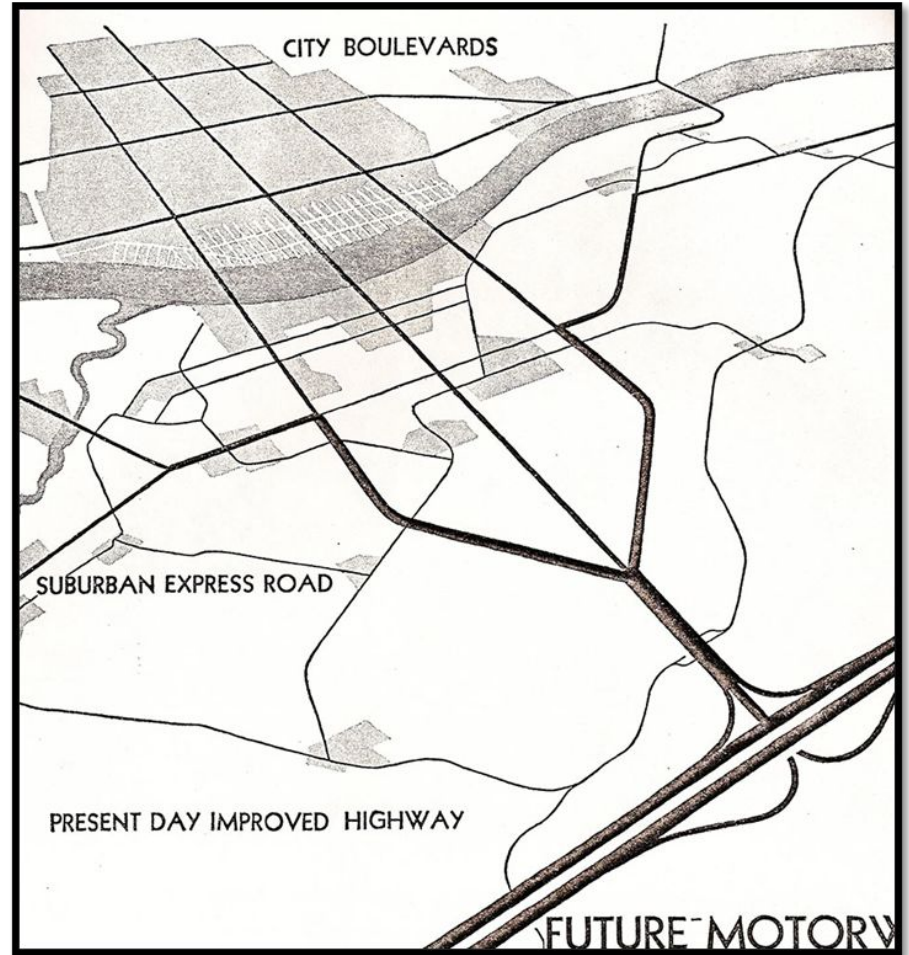


Interstate Highways in American Cities

The original concept of the US highway system was to bring people to the edge of the city.

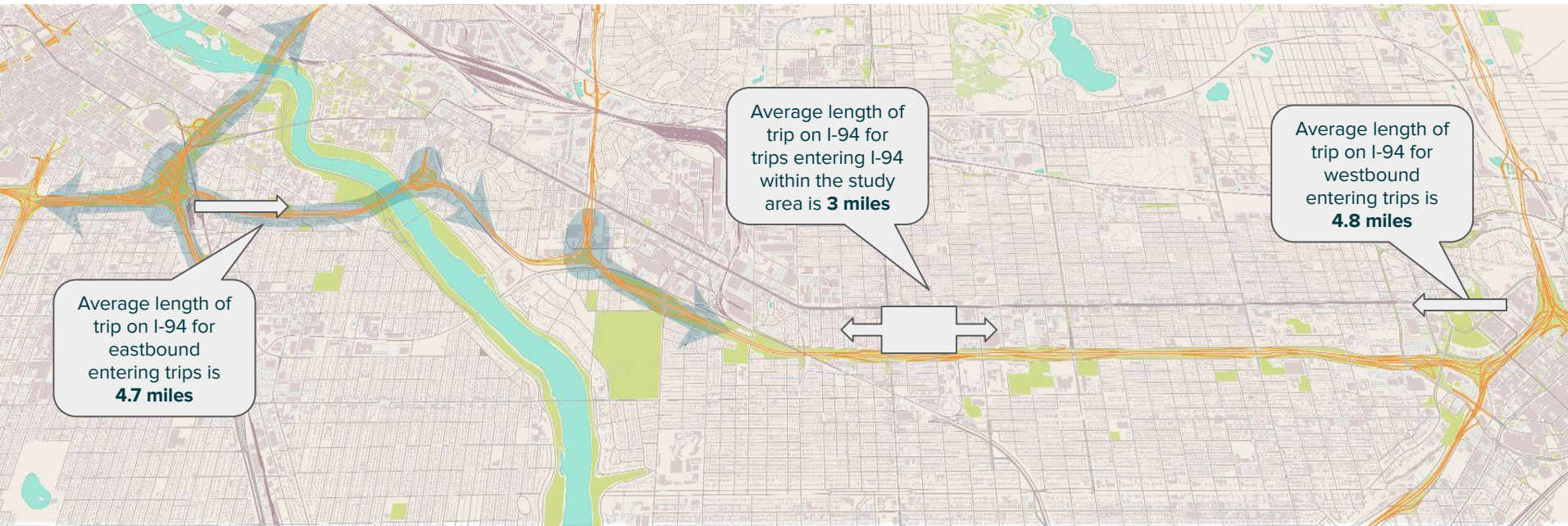
At that point a network of streets and boulevards would carry people into and through the city.

Plans changed and freeways like I-94 were built through urban neighborhoods.



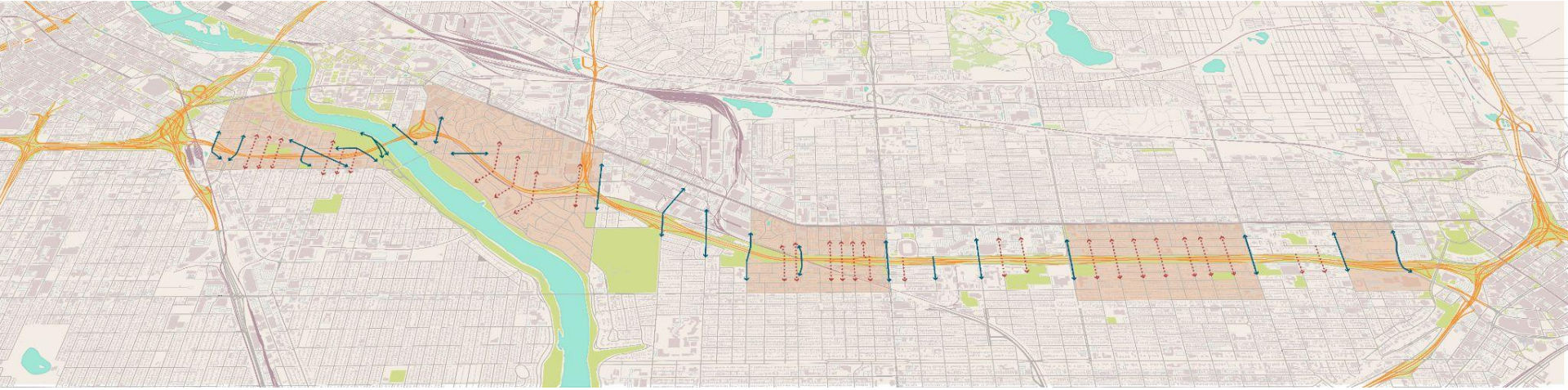
Most trips on I-94 are relatively short.

These trips can be made on a boulevard, restored street network or with other modes.



25% of trips on I-94 are less than 2 miles

I-94 is a mental and physical barrier.



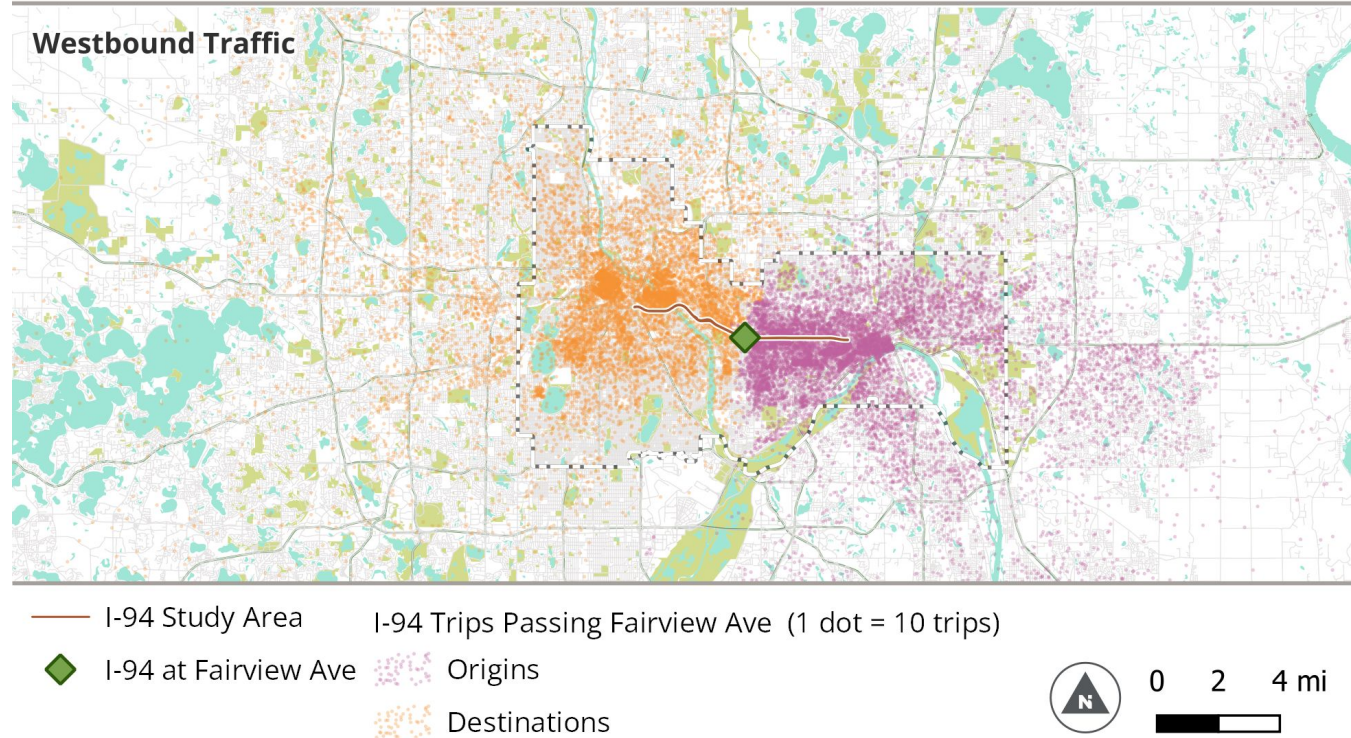
120,000 people travel across I-94 on a typical day by a variety of modes.

Vehicular traffic is concentrated on select streets, exposing people walking or biking to aggressive freeway-bound traffic, noise and pollution.

Thinking Beyond the Fence

Trips do not begin or end on I-94.

Many people go out of their way to use I-94 for a short portion of their trip.



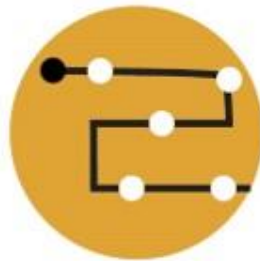
Traffic projections for a boulevard conversion must consider how people will adapt to a changed network.



Route Change



Time Shift



Chain Trips



Mode Change



Shorter Trip Lengths



Move Closer



Trip Substitution



Trip Elimination

I-81 Syracuse, NY

- I-81 will be removed through downtown
- I-481, which runs outside of the city, will be redesignated as I-81
- Project is approved and funded, and will begin construction this year



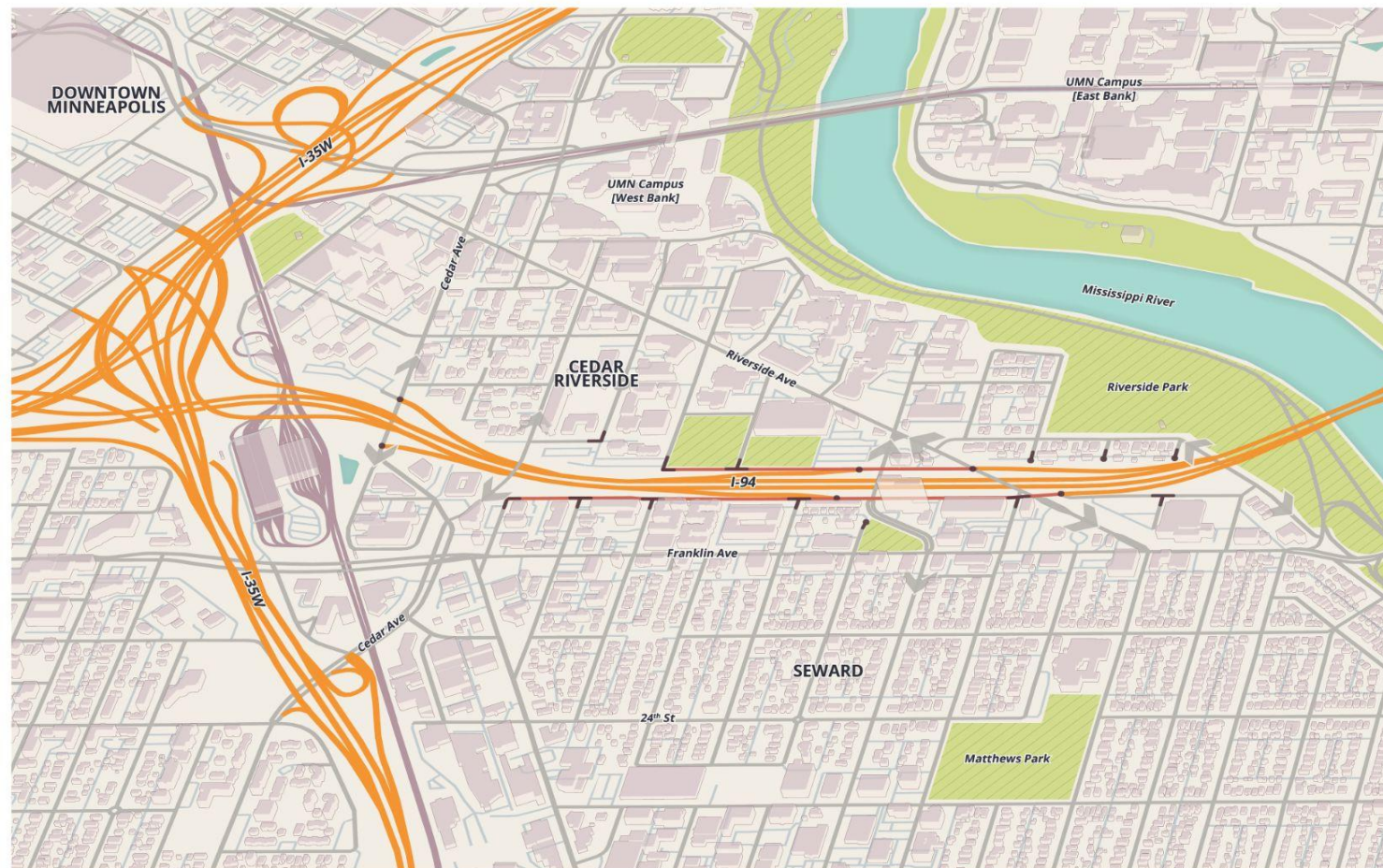
Octavia Boulevard San Francisco, CA



- Replaced the collapsed Central Freeway with an at-grade boulevard, side access lanes for parking, slow vehicles and active travel
- Caltrans predicted commute times would increase by 2 hours, but congestion ended up **improving**
- Over half of the car traffic “evaporated”

STREET NETWORK

CEDAR RIVERSIDE/SEWARD: EXISTING

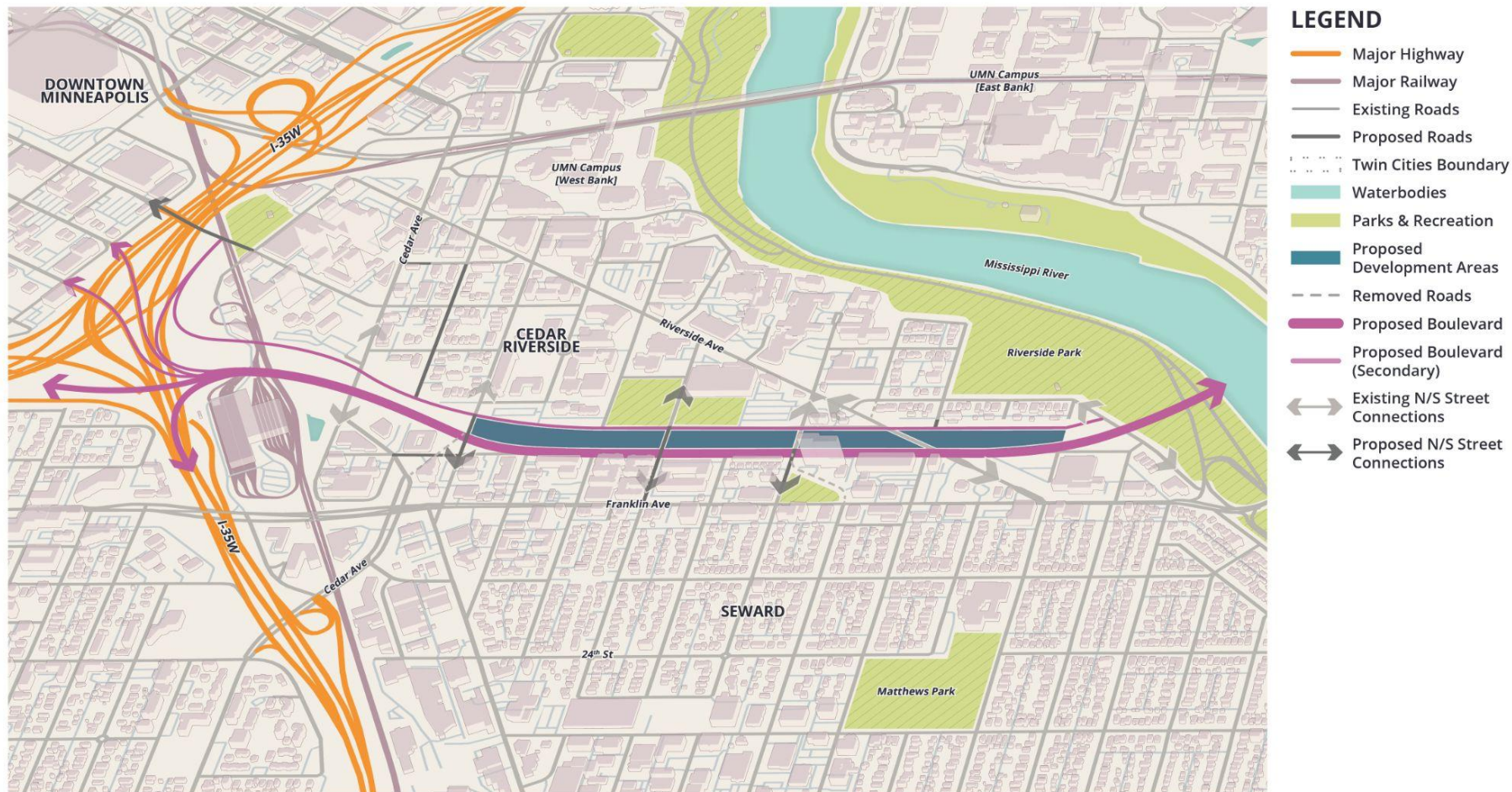


LEGEND

- Major Highway
- I-94 Frontage Road
- Major Railway
- Existing Roads
- Twin Cities Boundary
- Waterbodies
- Parks & Recreation
- Existing N/S Street Connections
- Disconnected N/S Streets
- I-94 Entry/Exit Points

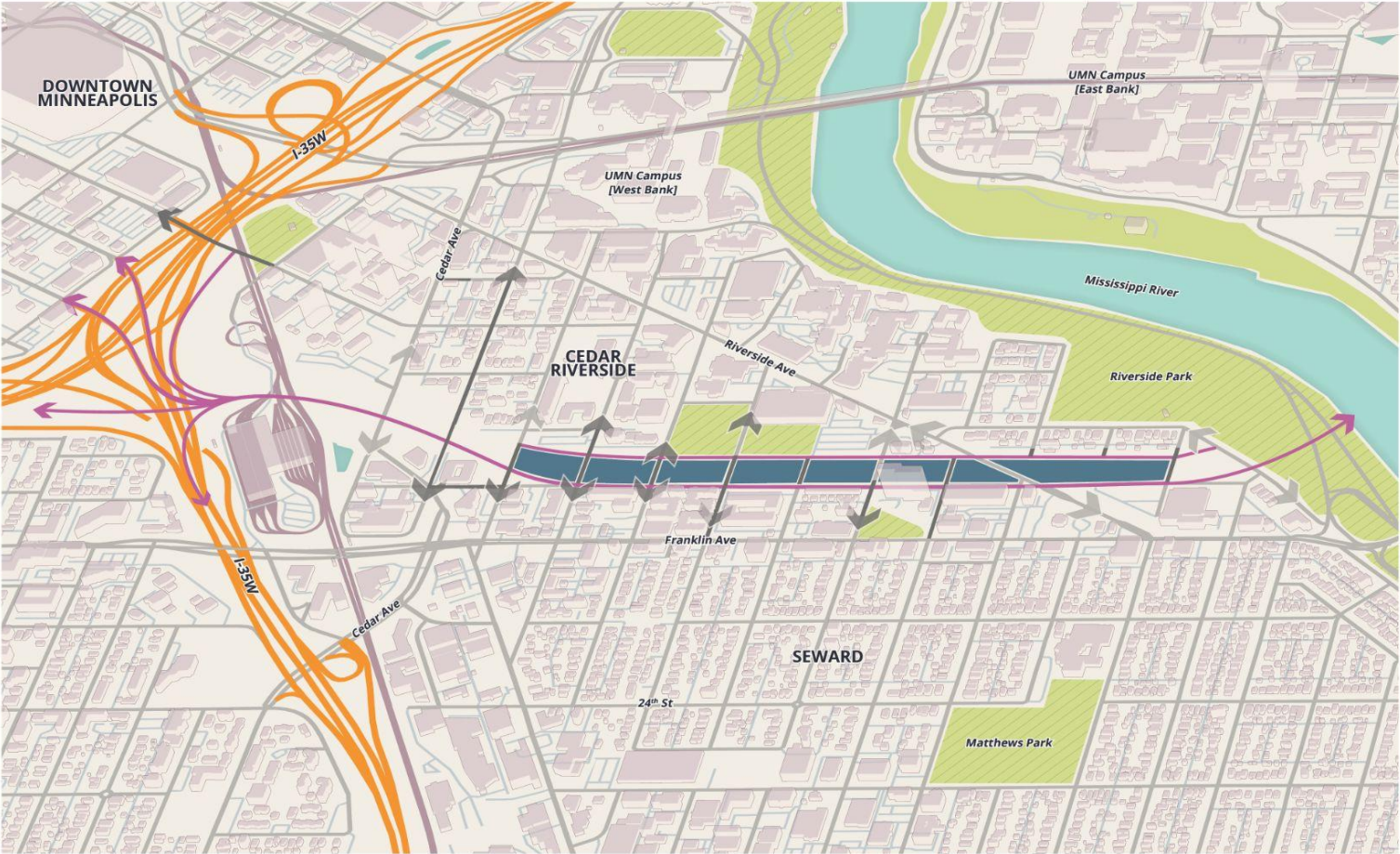
STREET NETWORK

CEDAR RIVERSIDE/SEWARD: BOULEVARD



STREET NETWORK

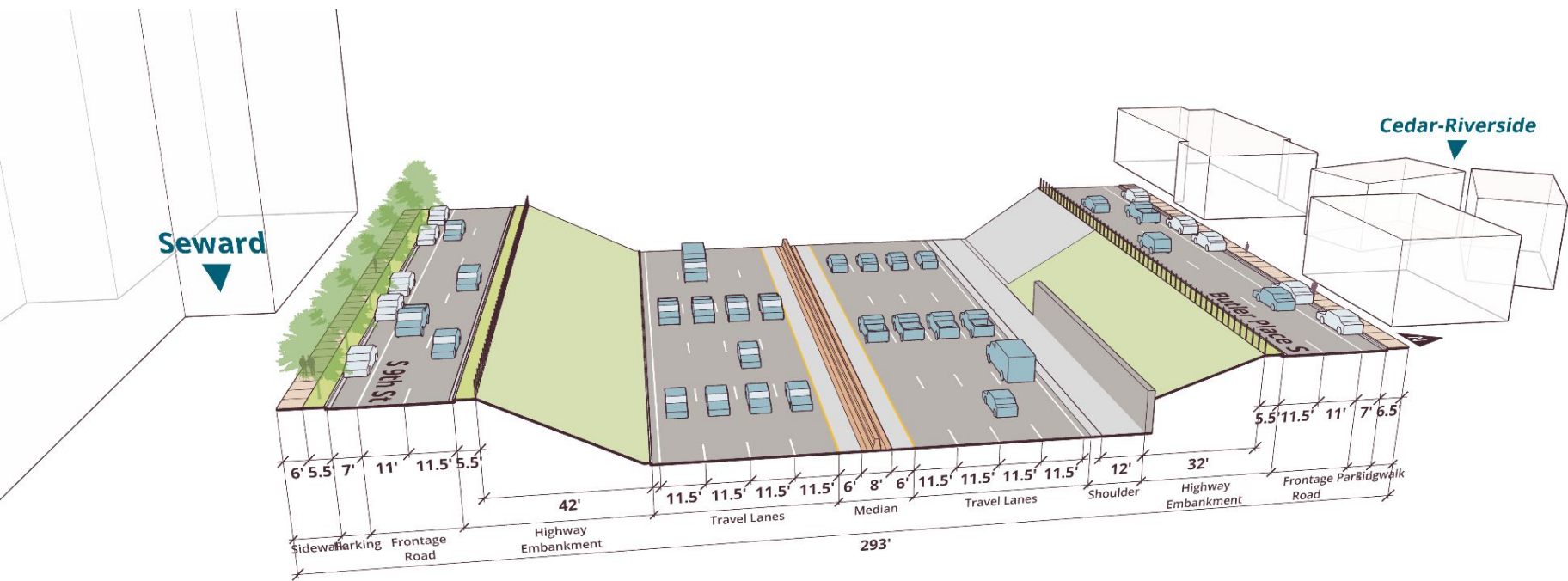
CEDAR RIVERSIDE/SEWARD: RESTORED



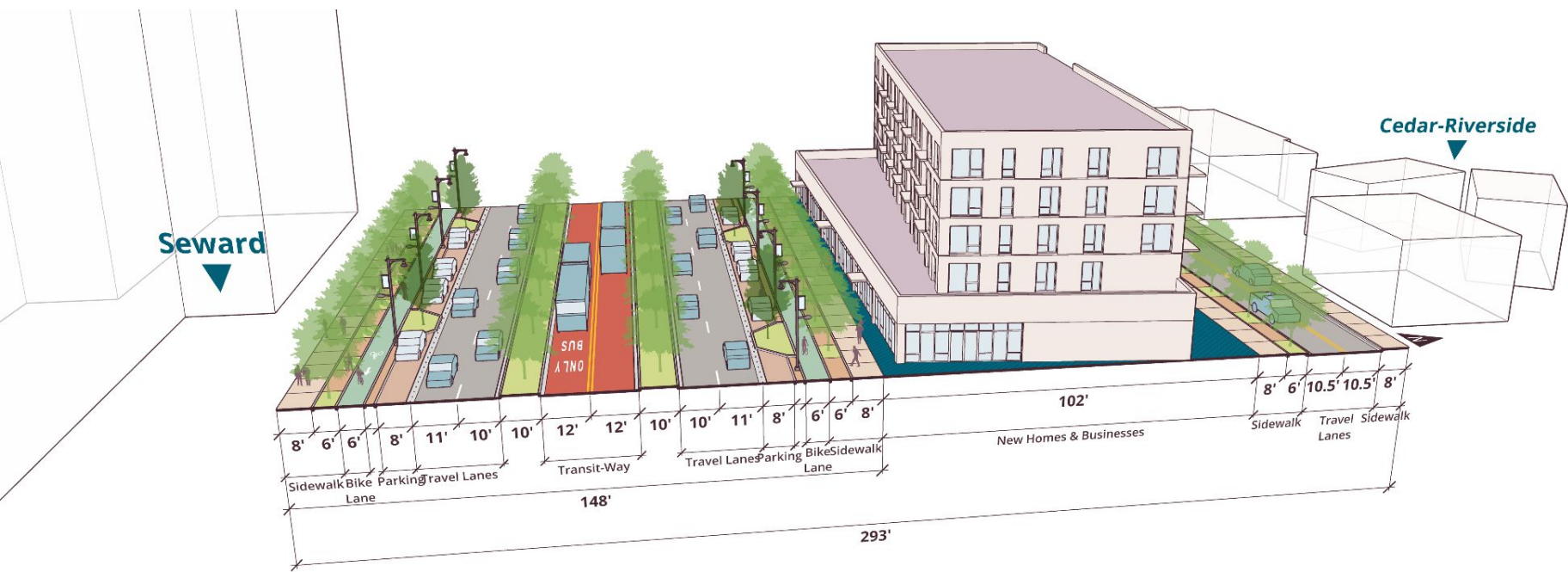
- LEGEND**
- Major Highway
 - Major Railway
 - Existing Roads
 - Proposed Roads
 - Twin Cities Boundary
 - Waterbodies
 - Parks & Recreation
 - Proposed Development Areas
 - Removed Roads
 - Proposed Boulevard (Primary)
 - Proposed Boulevard (Secondary)
 - Existing N/S Street Connections
 - Proposed N/S Street Connections

Existing Conditions

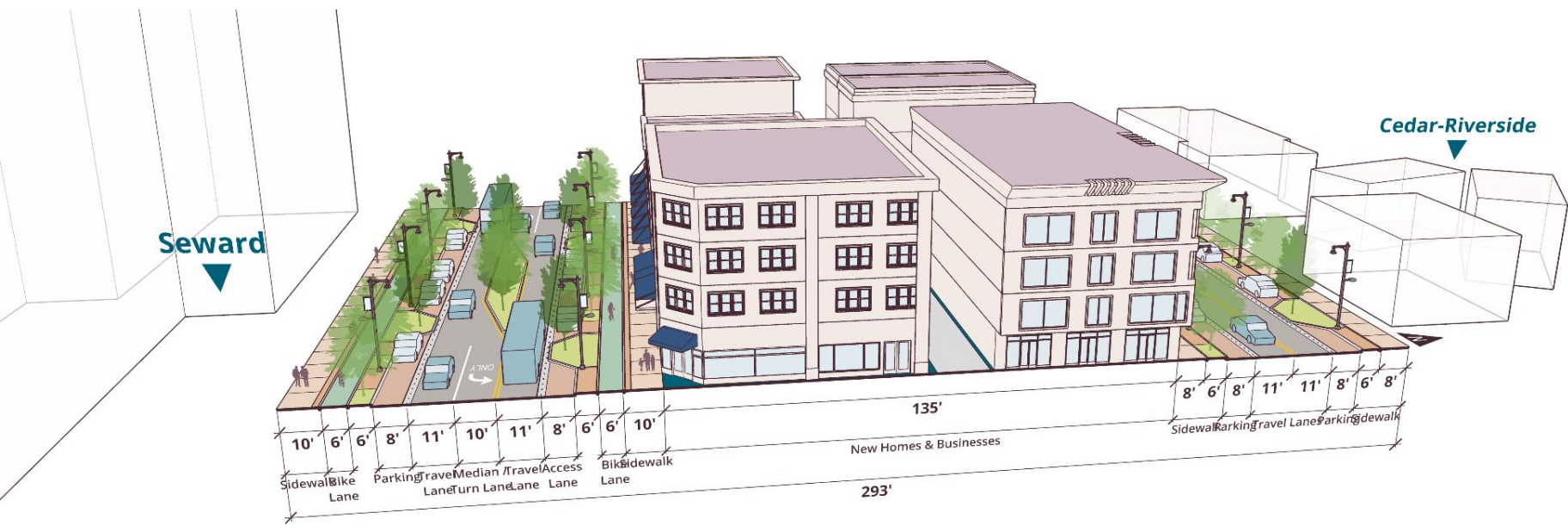
Cedar-Riverside/Seward



A-Boulevard

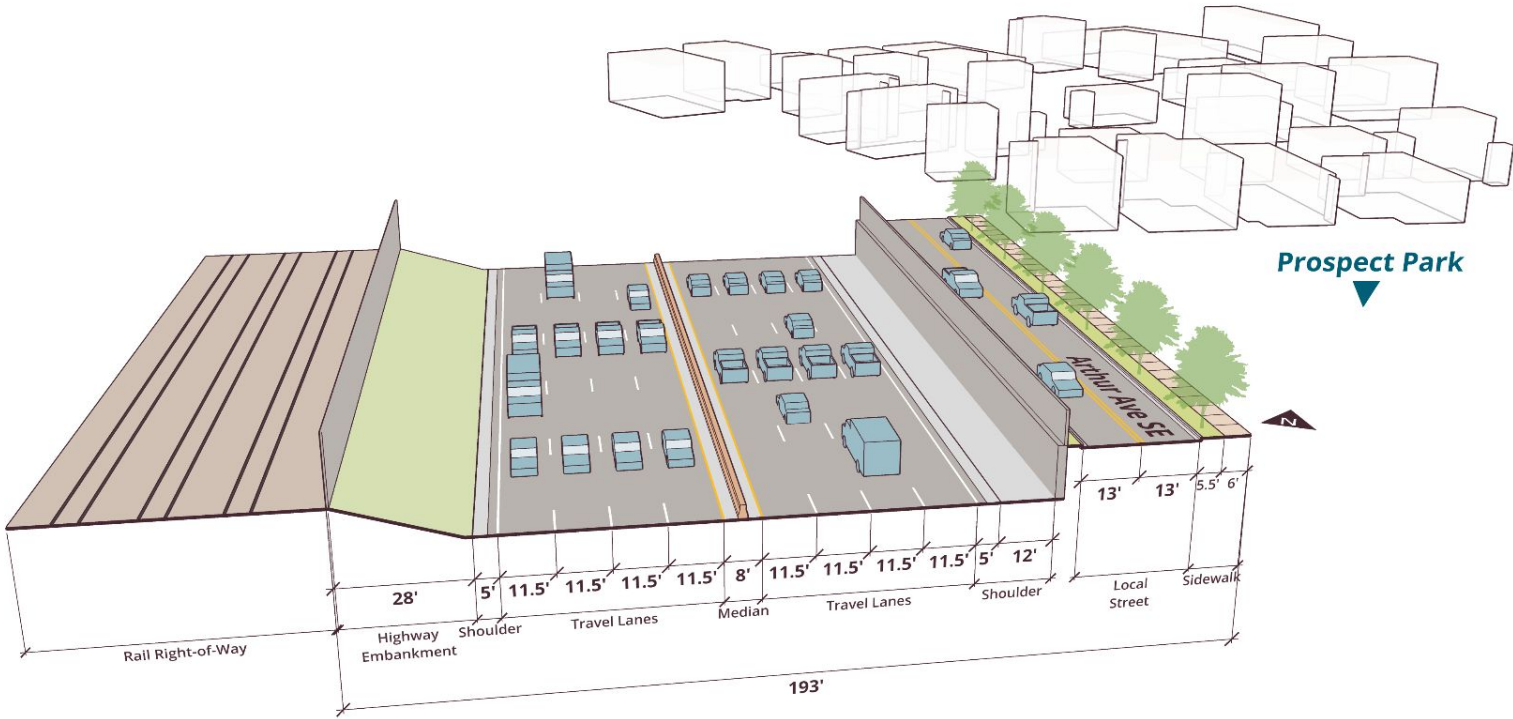


B-Restored

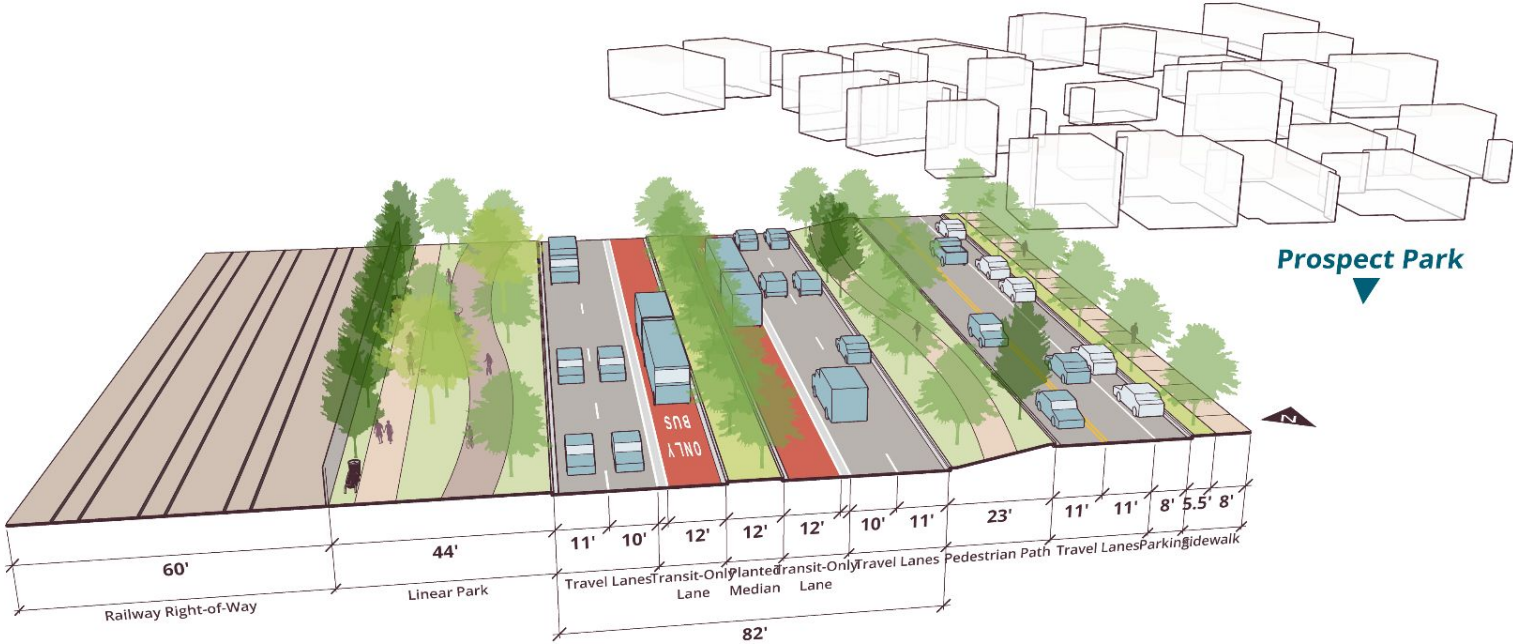


Existing Conditions

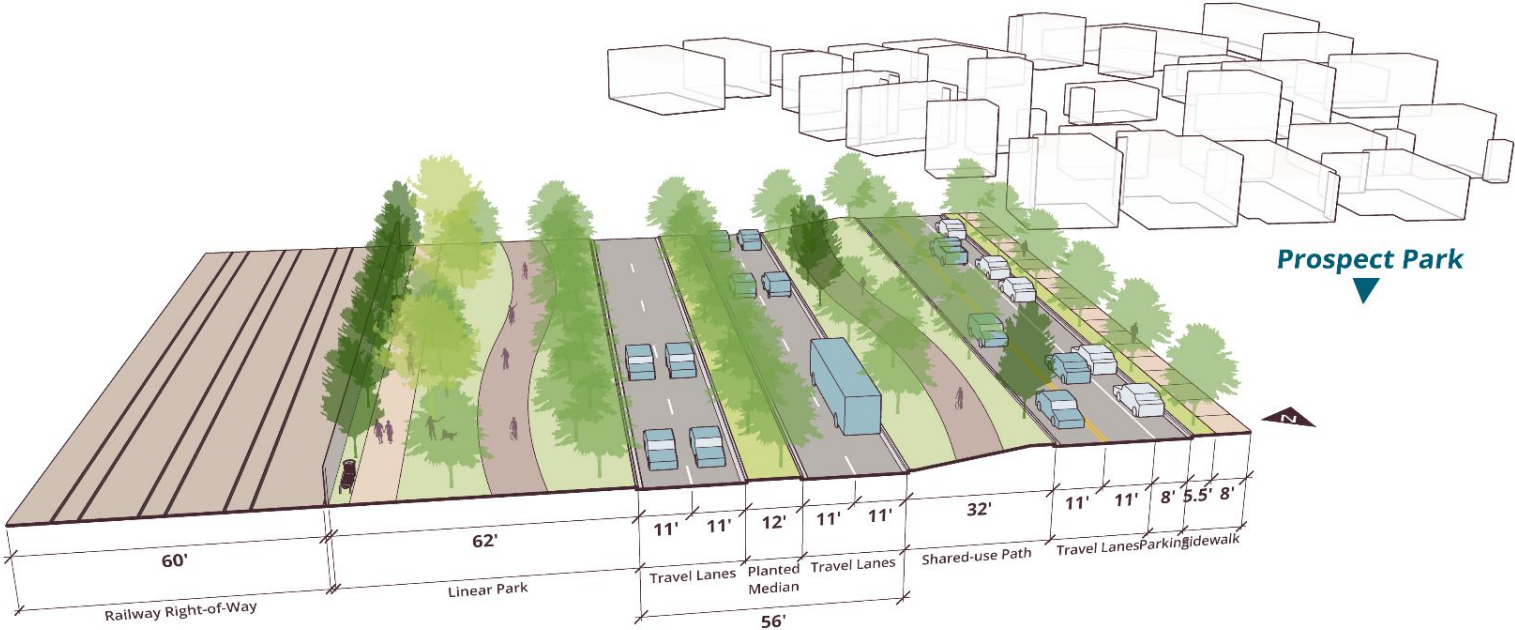
Prospect Park



A-Boulevard

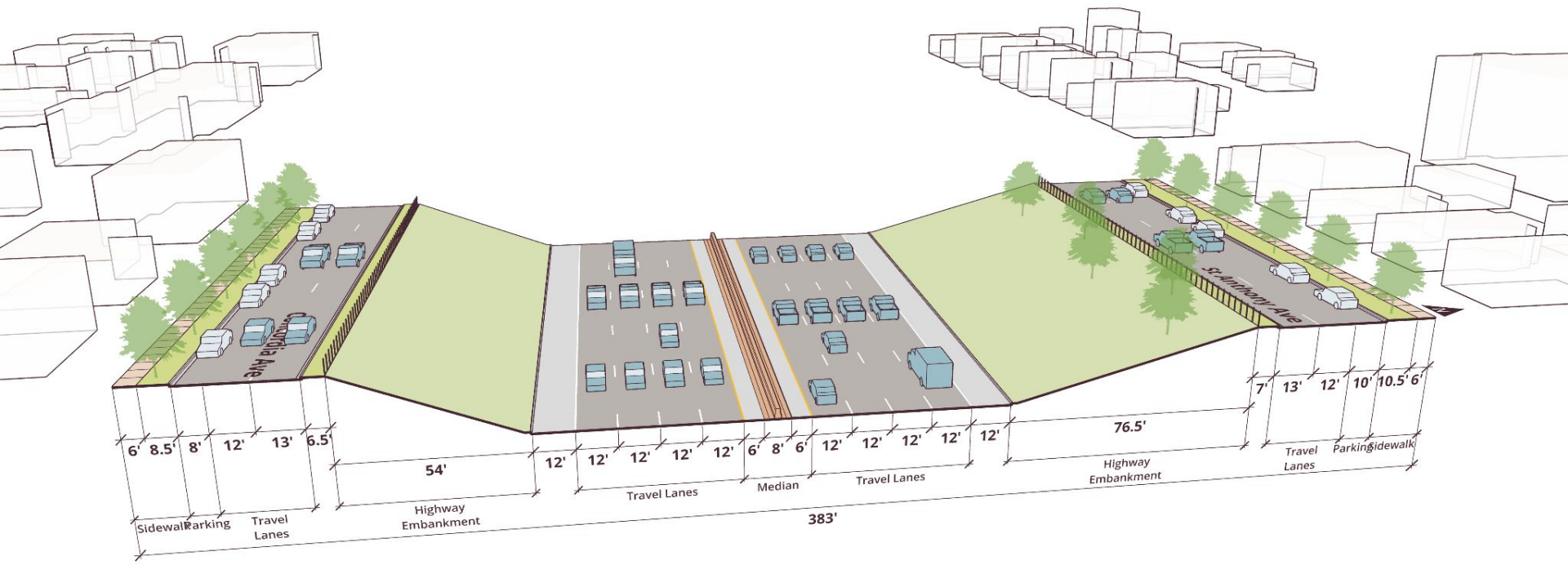


B-Restored

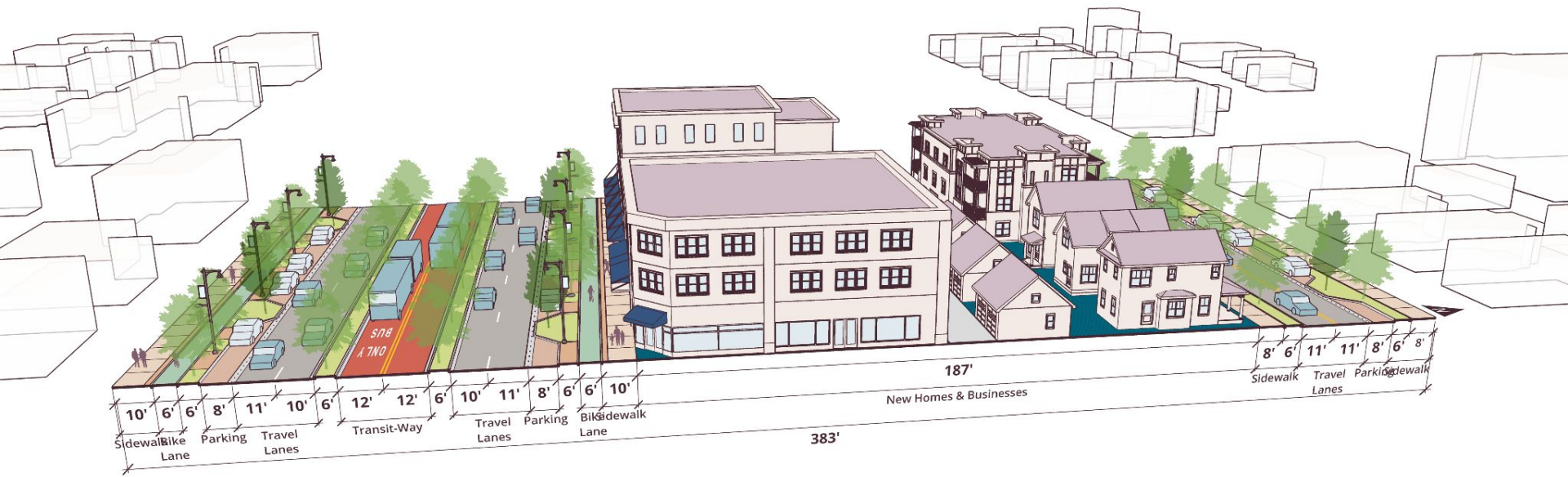


Existing Conditions

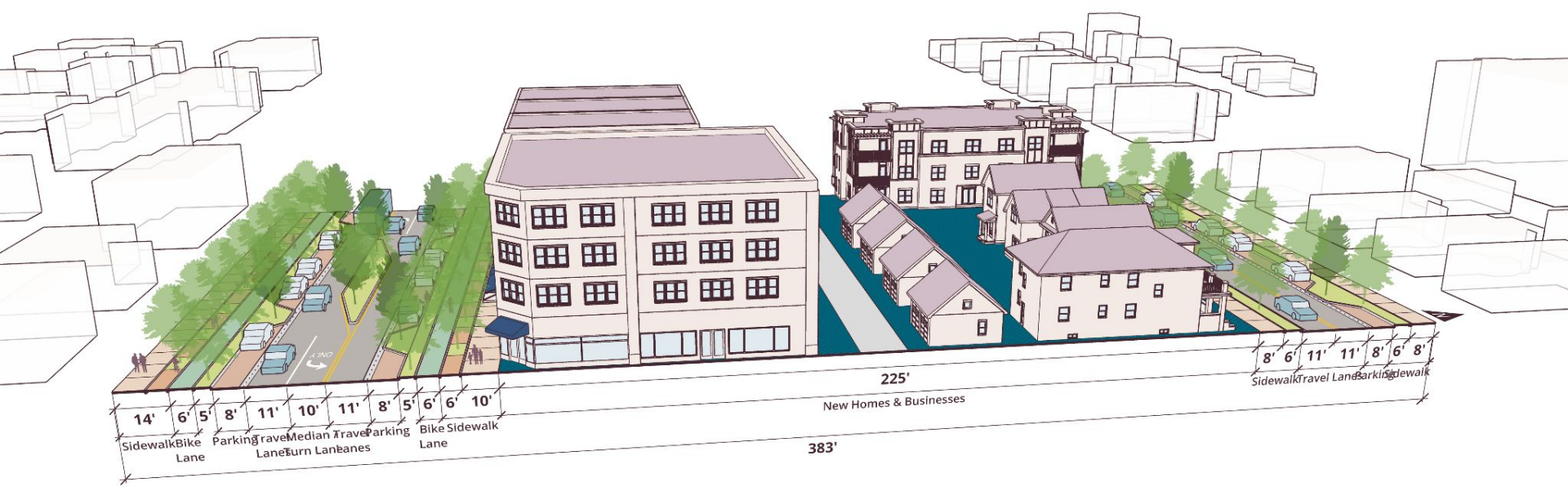
Rondo



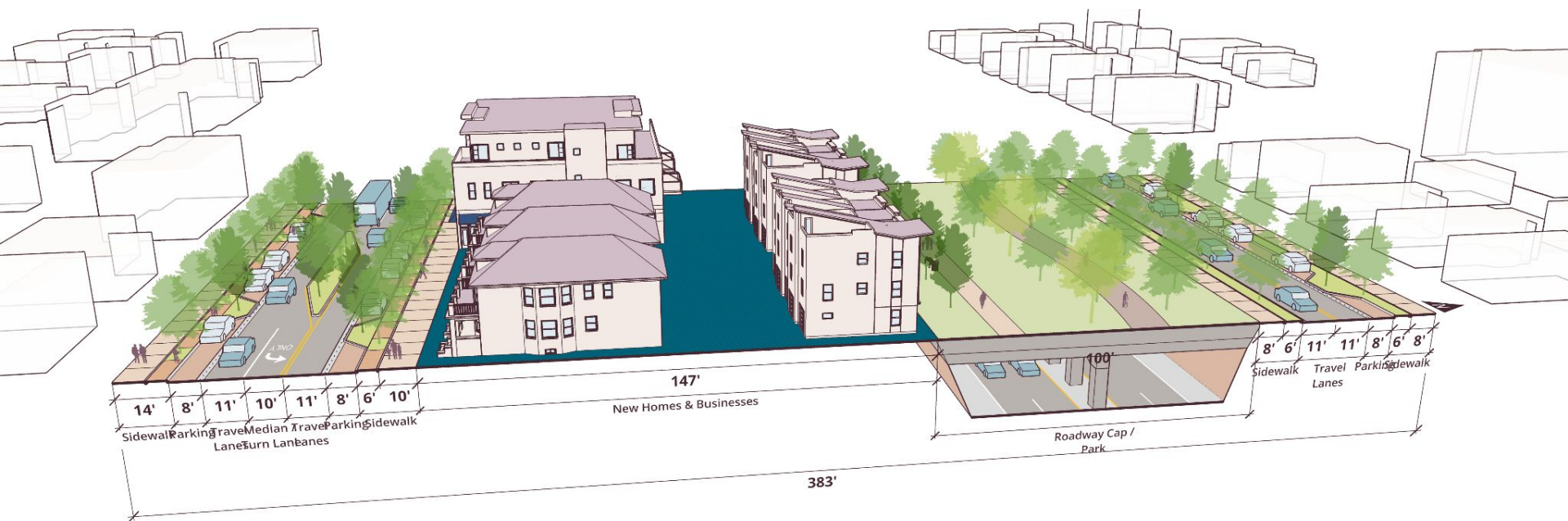
A-Boulevard



B-Restored



C-Boulevard conversion with land bridge













© 2022 Google

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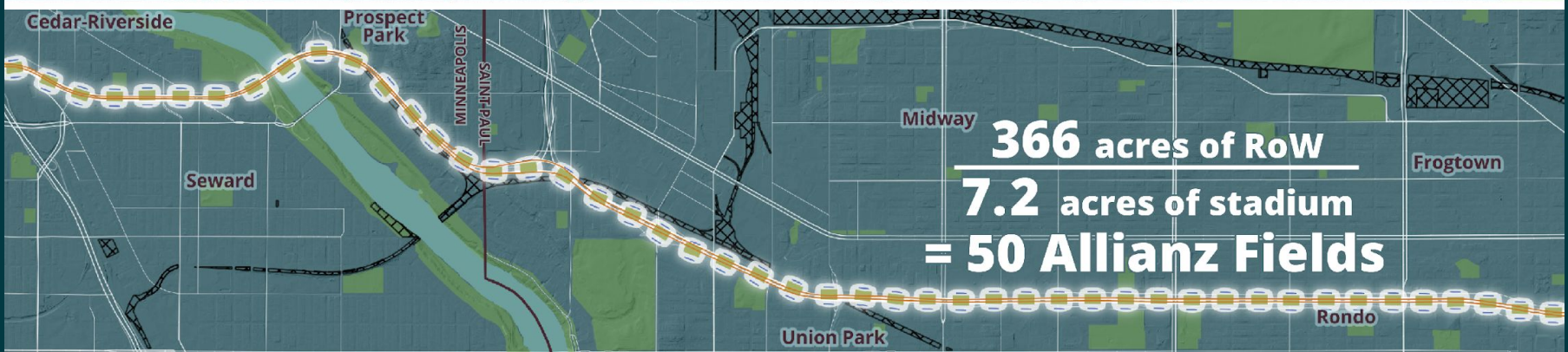
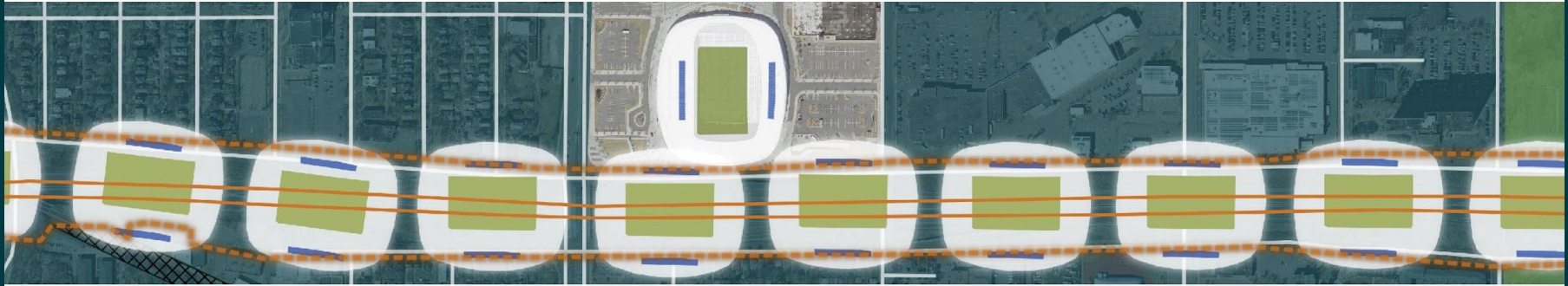


Gauging the Scale of the I-94 Corridor

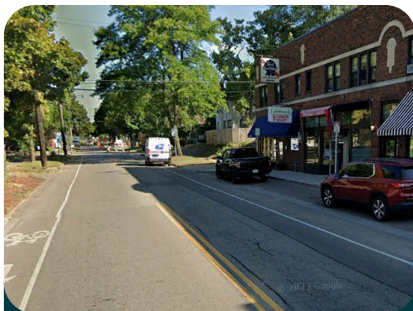


Existing RoW

Approx stadium footprint: 7.2 acres

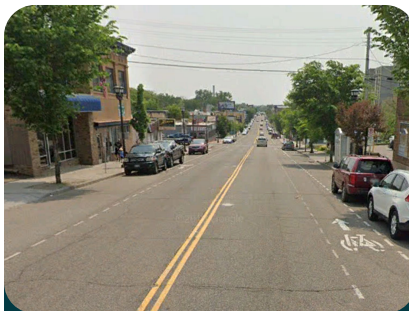


Land Use Density Sampling from Local Commercial Streets



**Low
Density:**

Cleveland Ave
(5.9 du/ac)



**Modest
Density:**

Payne Ave
(7.5 du/ac)



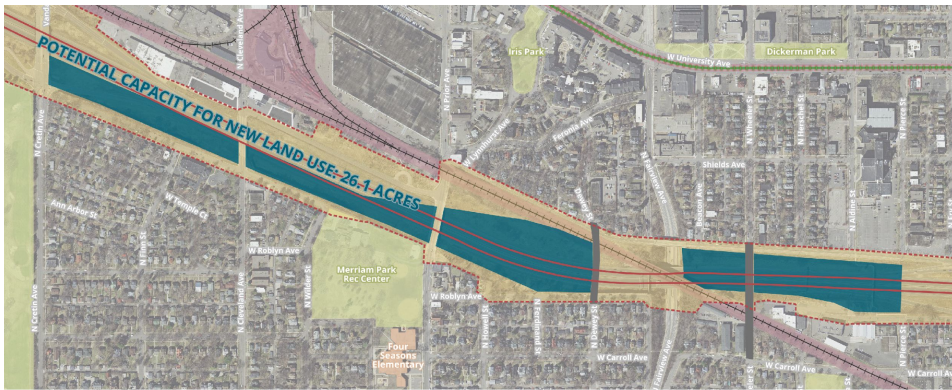
**Moderate
Density:**

Franklin Ave
(19.2 du/ac)

Land Capacity for New Community Development by Neighborhood



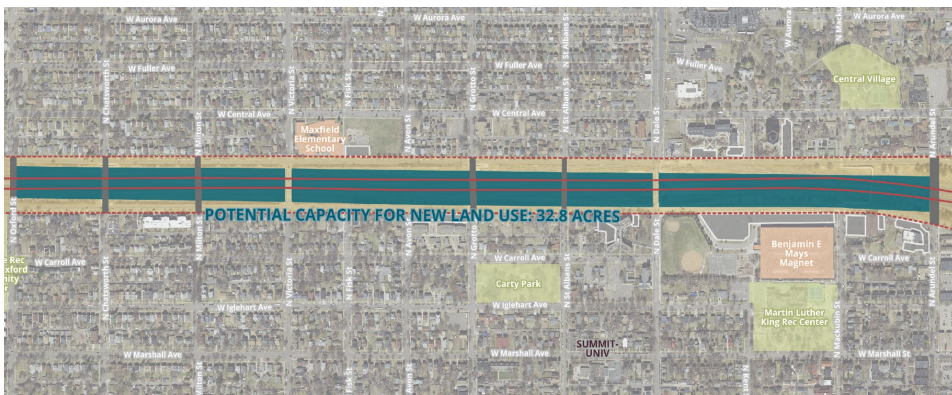
Cedar-Riverside



South St. Anthony Park/Merriam Park

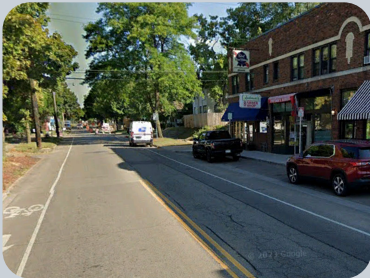




Midway



Rondo

Summary of Prospective Boulevard Conversion Outcomes

	Low Density	Modest Density	Moderate Density
			
Additional Housing Units	510 - 565	650 – 720	1,665 – 1,840
Permanent Jobs	230 – 255	870 – 965	1,665 – 1,845
Added Market Value	\$202M - \$223M	\$153M - \$169M	\$267M - \$295M
Additional Local Property Tax Revenue	\$3.2M - \$3.6M	\$2.3M - \$2.6M	\$4.7M - \$5.2M

Identified Gaps in the Rethinking I-94 Process

- **Lack of transparency & meaningful engagement**
- **Traffic modeling does not reflect best practices**
 - The results are not meaningful, especially for predicting congestion and delay
- **Evaluation process does not reflect the wide-reaching impacts of this project**
 - Focuses on traffic capacity rather than community well-being
 - Does not consider the enormous benefits of highway removal

Key Conclusions

- **I-94 is not serving its intended purpose of long-distance, inter-city travel**
- **MnDOT's model is inaccurate and the misleading results should not be trusted to predict future speeds and travel times**
 - Traffic projections do not reflect real world examples
 - A boulevard conversion can adequately serve transportation needs
- **Repurposing highway right-of-way would have significant economic benefits** by new housing, businesses, parks and growing the local tax base
- **Minnesota has an opportunity to set a national standard**

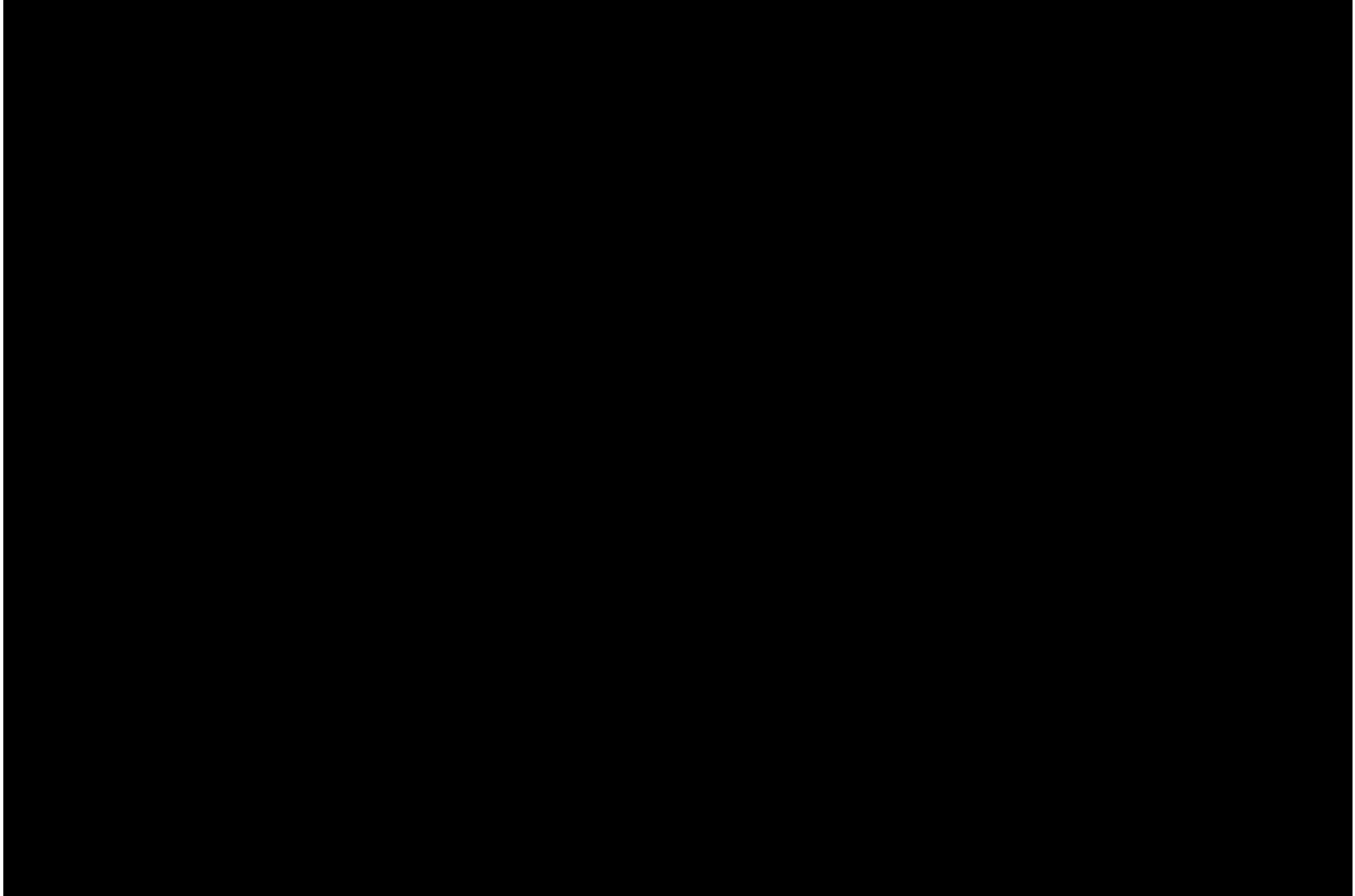


Recommended Changes to the Rethinking I-94 Process

- **Create a working group to implement anti-displacement & community benefit policies and to study opportunities to repurpose highway land**
- **Broaden the study area**
 - Include both downtowns and additional parallel streets
 - Add the portion of Highway 280 south of Energy Park Drive
- **Add a “Restored Network” option to the alternatives analysis**
- **Fix misleading traffic models**
 - Model should account for short-term behavior changes and long term land use changes following highway removal

Recommendations cont.

- **Improve community engagement**
 - Create neighborhood specific concepts that show potential for repurposing land
 - Disclose the full range of social and environmental impacts of each project option
- **Create a working group on highway conversion projects**
- **Update the evaluation process to reflect the priorities of impacted communities**
 - Social and environmental harms should take precedence over travel times
 - Cost considerations must include maintenance and the economic potential of repurposing highway land



Righting Wrongs

Many homeowners **still benefit** from the racist redlining practices that displaced and further disenfranchised Black Americans and other marginalized residents.

Thousands permanently lost their homes and businesses to urban highways.

Neighboring communities **continue** to suffer from health issues due to highways

We know this is wrong.

Can you give up a few minutes of driving to help repair what was lost & create a better future?



A Generational Opportunity

Ramming I-94 through city neighborhoods was a **mistake that we should not perpetuate.**

We must look out 50 years and think about the consequences of this decision.

Minnesota can set the standard for infrastructure that advances reparative justice.

MnDOT has a moral obligation to build a project that advances reparations in Rondo, reconnects all neighborhoods, and addresses ongoing social and environmental harms.

