

Union Park I-94 Community Conversation

6:00-6:15 - Sign in, get food, find a table with someone new!

6:15-6:25 - Welcome - UPDC Transportation Committee

6:25-6:45 - Presentations: Union Park I-94 history &
current highway impacts

6:45-7:00 - Discussion at tables

7:00-7:15 - Overview of MnDOT's proposed options

7:15-7:45 - Discussion at tables

7:45-8:00 - Report back from small groups; next steps



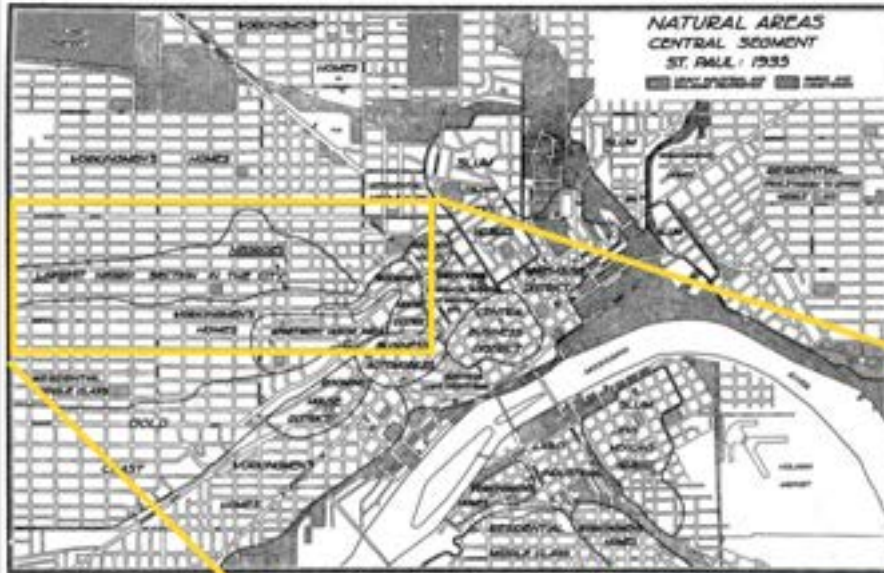
Highway history

- **1947:** I-94 route approved
- **1956:** Federal highway funding approved
- **1957:** Demolition along I-94 route began
- **1968:** I-94 opened to traffic between Saint Paul & Minneapolis



Highway history

I-94 History - Route choices



Map of Saint Paul from the Schmidt study

1935

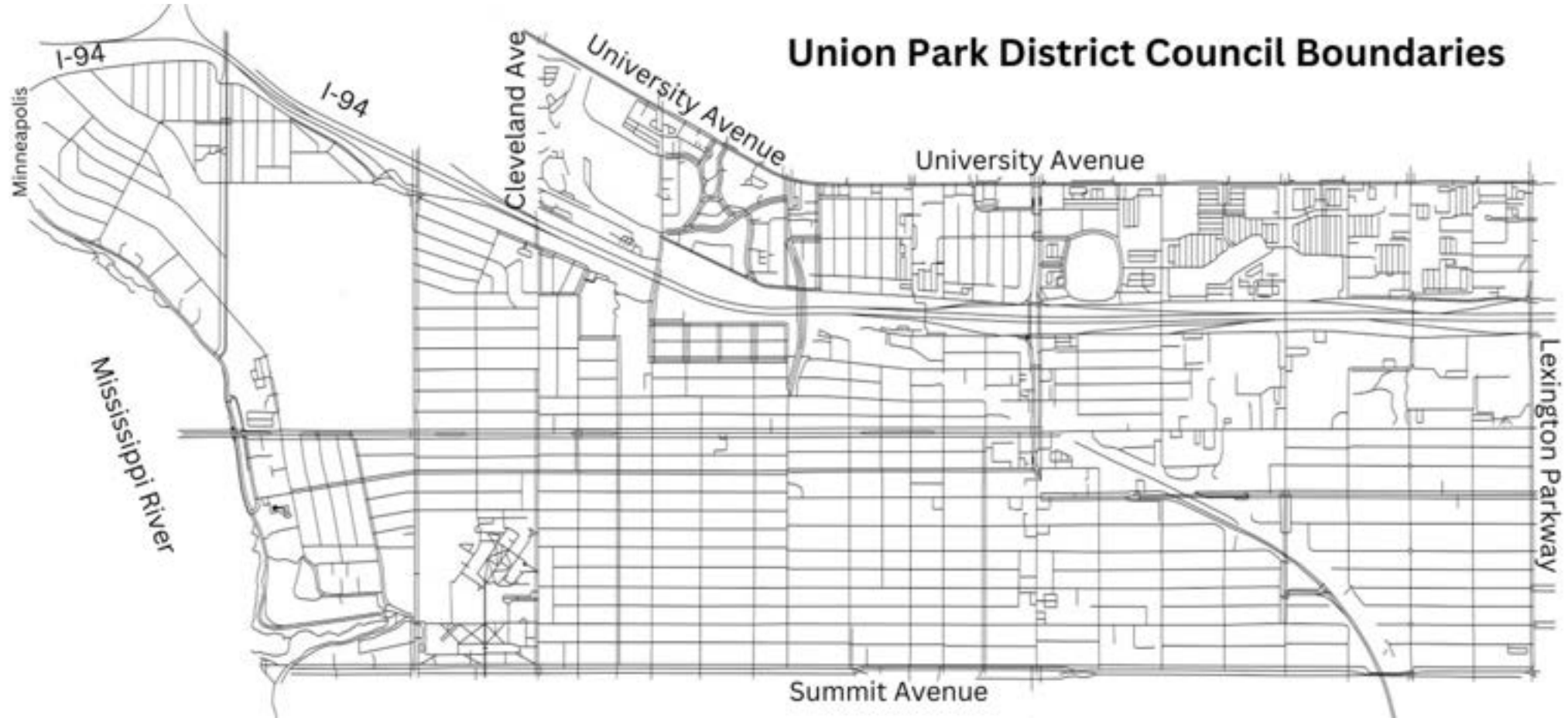
St. Anthony Ave
Rondo Ave



Related to the alignment discussion was the push for **federal urban renewal funding**. This was obtained in 1949 because of the efforts of St. Paul Mayor Edward Delaney, who pushed for project approval, which required demonstration that there was a need for the land once it was cleared. MHD officials assured him that funding for the freeway would be forthcoming, and **local officials believed land adjacent to the freeway would increase in value**. Moving ahead with the **urban renewal project west of the state capitol** solidified the freeway location.

Politics and Freeways: Building the Twin Cities Interstate System.
Patricia Cavanaugh, 2008

Highway history - within UPDC



Nearly 400 structures removed within boundaries of Union Park District

Highway history

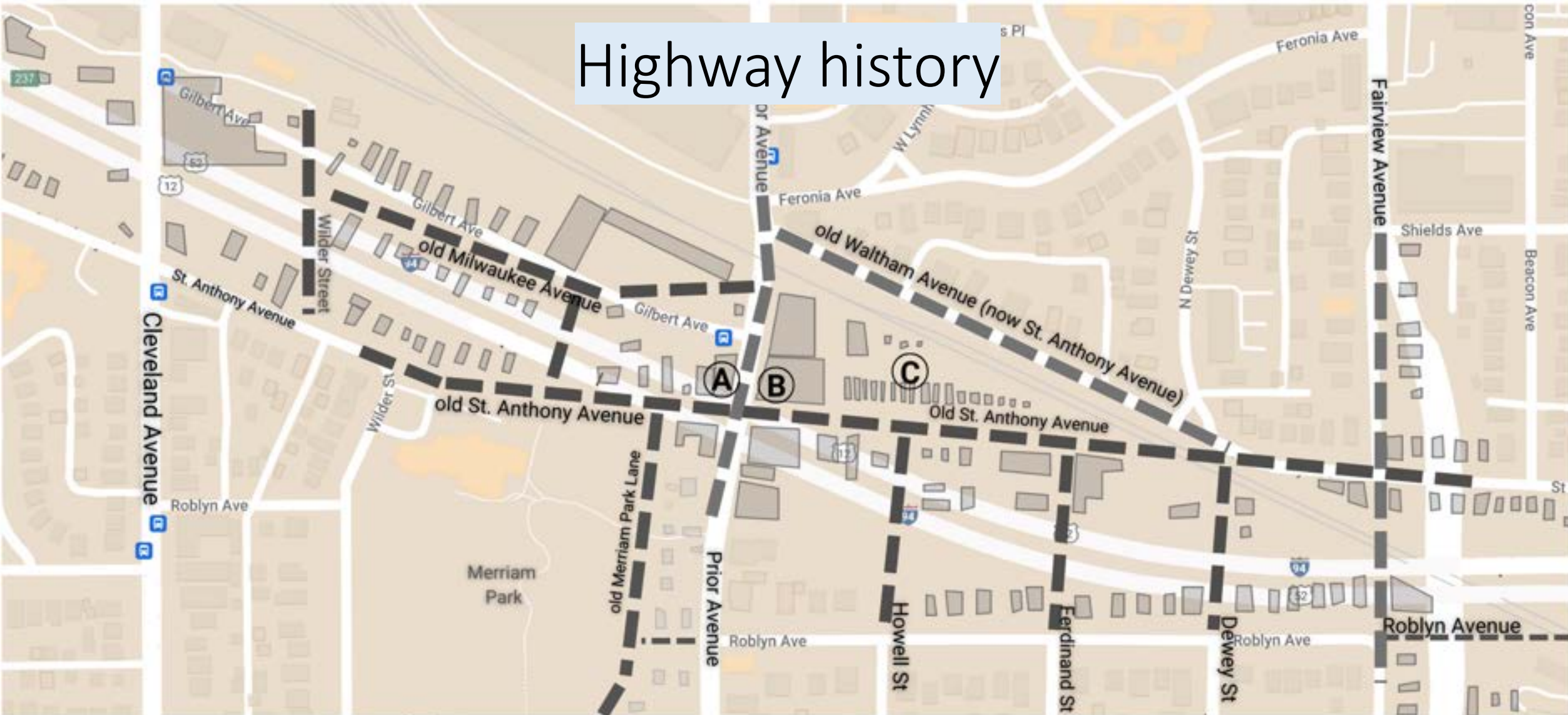


Highway history



- 14 local connecting streets severed
- Heavy traffic on streets with on/off ramps to I-94 – Cretin, Snelling, Lexington

Highway history



Close up of small section of neighborhood showing structures removed.
A and B were a major commercial corridor at Prior and Old St Anthony Ave

Highway history

396 N Prior Ave Strandy's Bakery, 1960

B



1927, 1925, 1921, 1919 Old St. Anthony Avenue, ca. 1910

C



Highway history




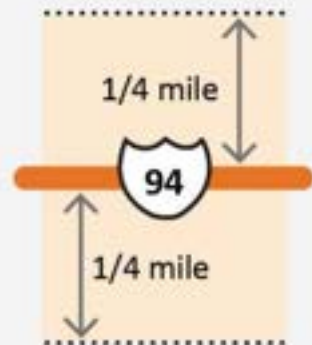
Before and After - Major commercial area at Prior and old St Anthony Avenue

Rethinking I-94 Study Corridor



Rethinking I-94

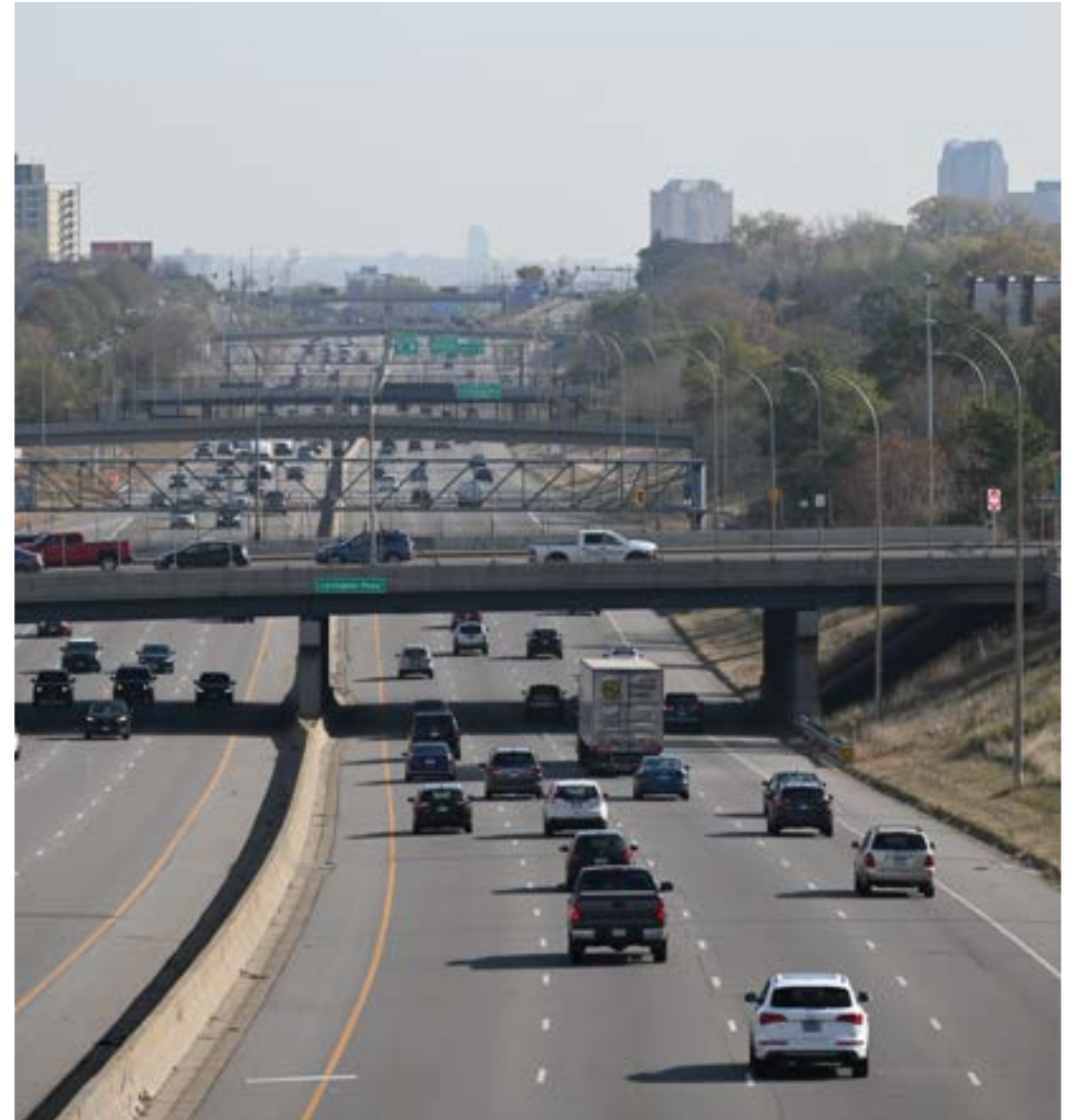
 Study Area



Study corridor is 7.5 miles from east to west

Highway conditions

- Roadbed is failing and frequent resurfacing required
- Aging bridges, retaining walls, noise walls
- Not to standards for bike/ped, ADA access, drainage, and more



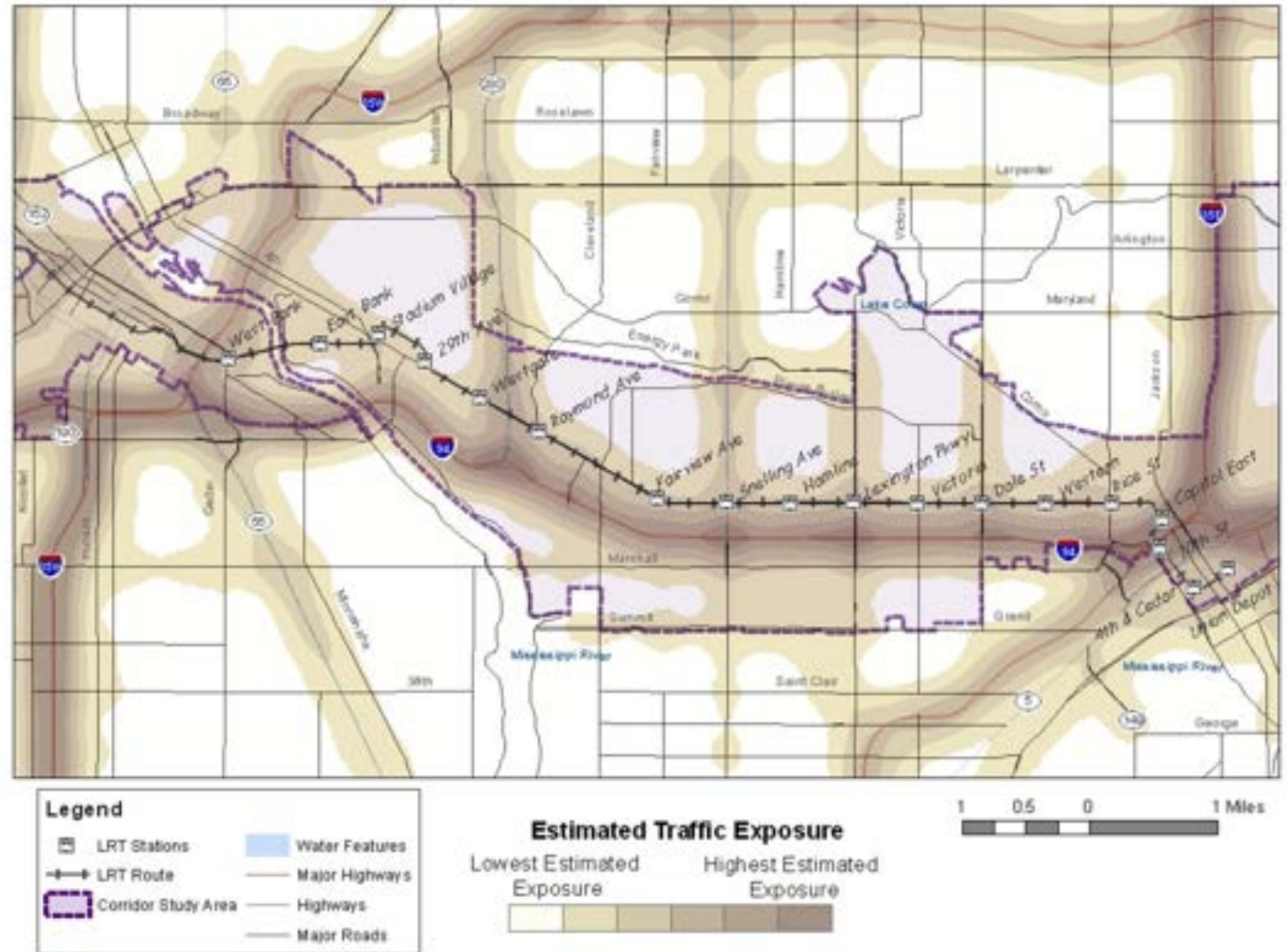
Highway impacts today

- **Daily traffic volume** on I-94 in our neighborhood has changed little over the past 20 years (about 160,000 vehicles per day).
- **Air quality** – Still hazardous despite cleaner fuels, engines, and lower emission vehicles.
- **Noise** – Unhealthy levels.
- **Walk/bike** - Many dangerous crossings and routes.



Traffic and health - air pollution

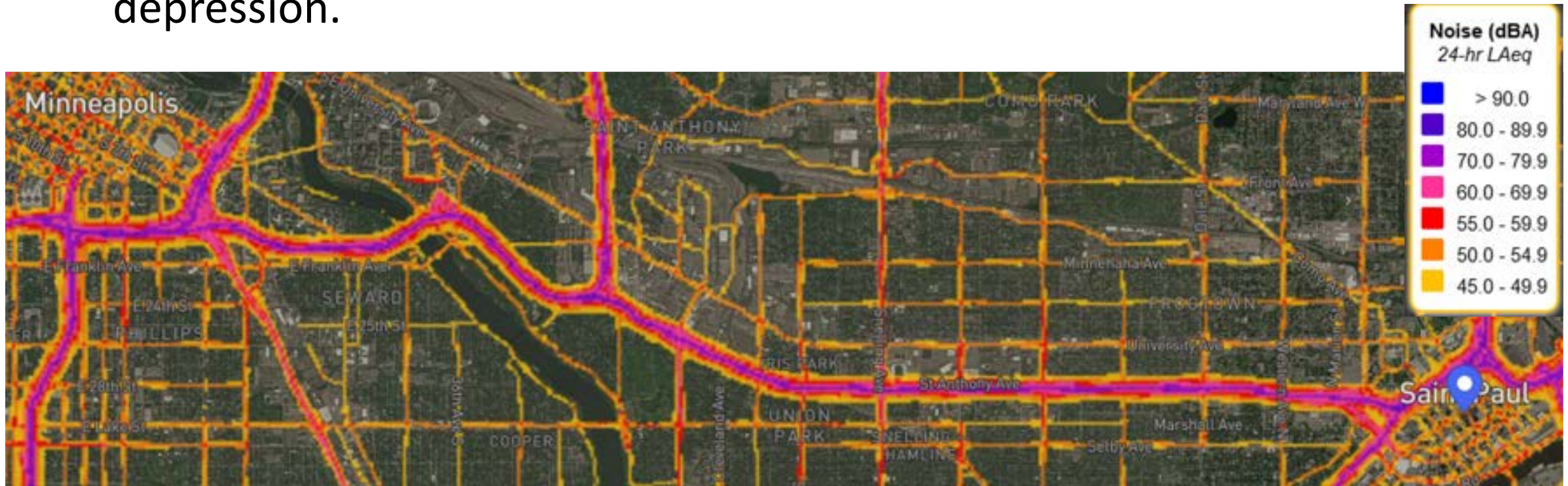
- Air pollution from vehicle traffic is associated with **increased health risks** including asthma, heart disease, low birth weight, respiratory disease, and higher risk of dementia.
- **Greatest risk** up to 1000 feet out from the highway centerline.



Graphic from presentation on Traffic Air Pollution and Socio-Economic Status by Gregory Pratt, PhD and Kristie Ellickson, PhD.

Traffic and health - noise pollution

- Noise pollution is associated with sleep disturbance, heart disease, stroke, reduced workplace productivity, and even depression.



Source: USDOT, National Transportation Noise Map - 2020

Vehicle crashes with fatality or serious injury

- The vast majority of vehicle crashes where someone is killed or seriously injured occur on city streets (including frontage roads) not the interstate highway.

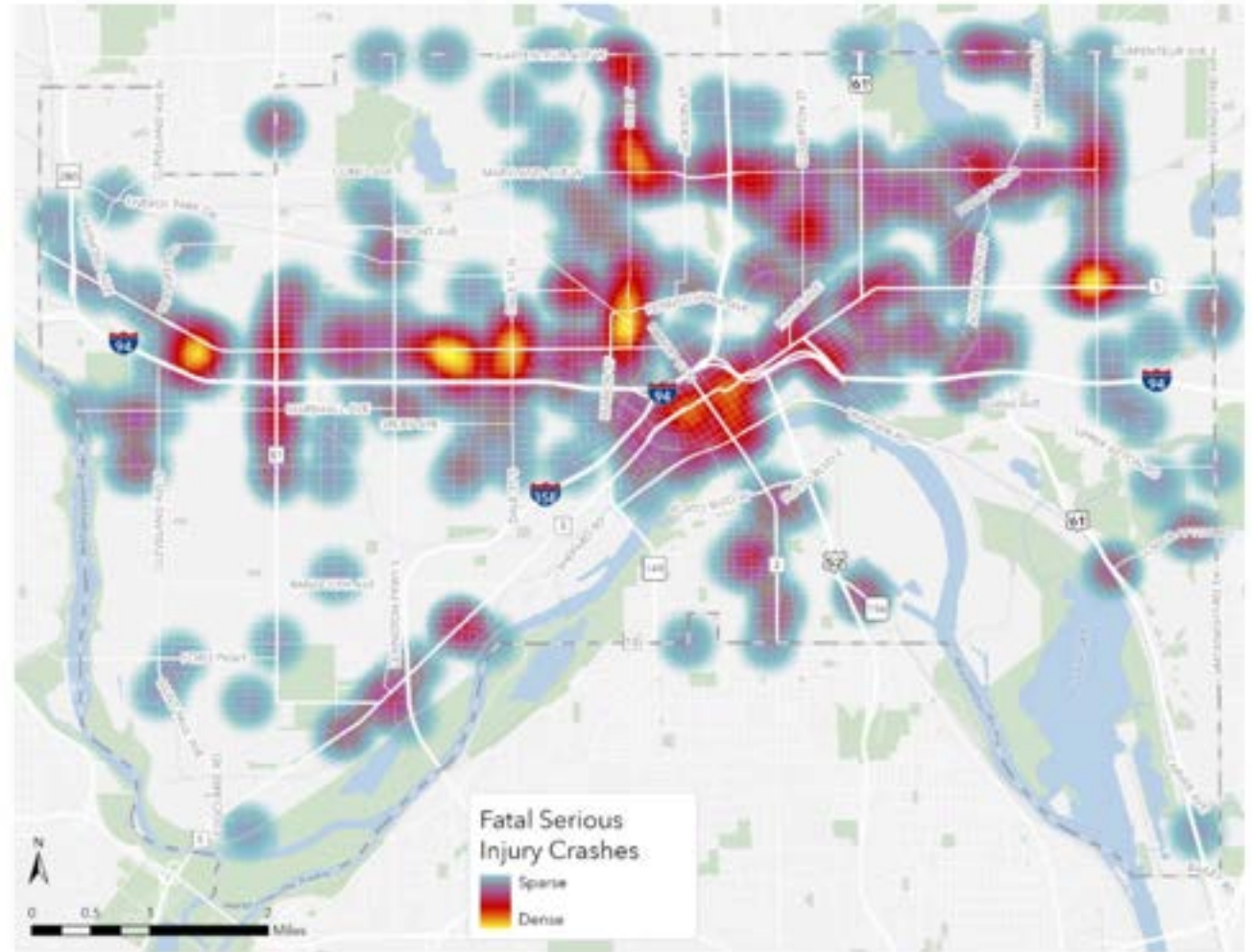


Figure 13: Heat Map of Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes, 2018-2022. Source: MnCMAT2.

Source: St Paul Transportation Safety Action Plan. Appendix A. Page 11. June 2023. Data from 2018 - 2022

Planning by MnDOT 2016 - 2021

Phase I of Rethinking I-94 from 2016 to 2018

- Included historical, cultural, economic studies and community engagement including with Union Park neighborhood.
See MnDOT web site.

Phase 2 - 2020 through 2021

- Release of draft Statement of Purpose and Need for the corridor
- Continued study of corridor needs
- Selection of PAC, TAC, and community leaders
- Development of Livability Framework
- Partnership with Reconnect Rondo on Land Bridge idea with grant funding from federal government

Planning by MnDOT Phase 1: 2016-2018

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

I-94 is a congested, aging freeway that requires significant investments. Community members and travelers highlighted the following I-94 concerns most frequently:



**Congestion
issues**



**Poor safety for bicycles,
pedestrians and motorists**



**Noise and air
quality concerns**



**No identity or
sense of place**



**Lack of
job opportunities**



**Poor connections
across freeway**



**Lack of inclusivity
in future planning**

Actions taken by neighborhoods and community organizations

- **Community flyer** outlining priorities signed by 27 groups Nov. 2020.
- **Letter** to MnDOT Commissioner about priorities signed by 25 organizations December, 2020.
- **Comment letter** to MnDOT (50 pgs) signed by 27 organizations Oct. 2021.

The recommendations are minimally reflected in MnDOT's purpose and need and proposed alternatives



Actions taken by city officials

Saint Paul and Minneapolis each adopted resolutions regarding the rebuild of I-94



Saint Paul in Feb. 2021,
and Mpls in Dec. 2020

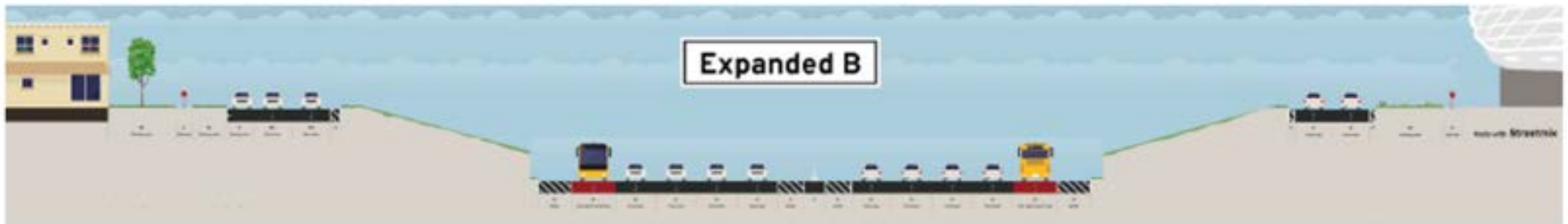


Some points in the resolutions:

- No new lanes, even for carpool
- Reduce traffic volume and reduce vehicle miles traveled in the corridor
- Improve air quality, better health outcomes, and reduce noise
- Extend the Midtown Greenway
- Bus Rapid Transit and station at Snelling
- Reduce fatalities and injuries in the corridor
- Prioritize the voices of Rondo residents (in Saint Paul resolution)

Recent actions taken by MnDOT

- In October, 2022, MnDOT adopted a Purpose and Need Statement for the project with a focus on:
 1. Improved infrastructure
 1. Mobility for vehicles including freight
 1. Improved conditions for bike/walk and ADA
 1. Safety for people in motor vehicles
- In July, 2023 MnDOT released big picture **design options** (10 of them). Topic for table discussions.
- MnDOT has a **survey** open until October 31 asking for input on these big picture options.



Expanded freeway B: 8–10 lanes, plus widened shoulder for BRT. (Expanded freeway A: 8–10 lanes, including a managed lane with BRT.)

Rethinking I-94 Overall Project Schedule



What is happening now.

Schedule subject to change (updated 6-28-2023)



MnDOT Design options 1, 2 & 3: No-Build, Maintenance A & B **Status Quo**

Currently 6-8 lanes, plus bus on shoulder in some places



MnDOT Design options 4 & 5: At-Grade A & B **Surface Streets/Boulevard**

4 Lanes, plus separate Bus Rapid Transit lanes



MnDOT Design option 6: Local Regional Roadways A **Fewer or Rearranged Highway Lanes**

4 Lanes plus bus on shoulder, more lanes on frontage roads



MnDOT Design option 7: Reduced Freeway A **Fewer or Rearranged Highway Lanes**

6 lanes including MnPass lanes (converted general purpose lanes)



MnDOT Design option 8: Reconfigure Freeway A
Add Lanes for HOV / Transit
8 Lanes, including MnPass lanes



MnDOT Design options 9: Expanded Freeway A
Expand the Highway
8-10 Lanes, including MnPass lanes



MnDOT Design option 10: Expanded Freeway B
Expand the Highway
to 8-10 Lanes (plus bus shoulder)



Below-grade transit?



Linear Park with canal?



Regional Rail?



Your ideas here!



More Lanes on top?



Start charging tolls?



Bike skyway?



turn I-94 into Summit Ave?

MnDOT Survey Question 30:
What other options should be considered?

Remember to take the official MnDOT Survey:

Scan the QR code now or go to: **bit.ly/94survey**



After taking the survey email info@unionparkdc.org

with the subject line:

“I took the MnDOT I-94 Survey”

to be entered into a drawing

for a gift card to a local business!

Thank you for joining us!

