

# Twin Cities Boulevard Study

Evaluating at-grade alternatives for Rethinking I-94

02/22/2024



**our  
streets**

MPLS

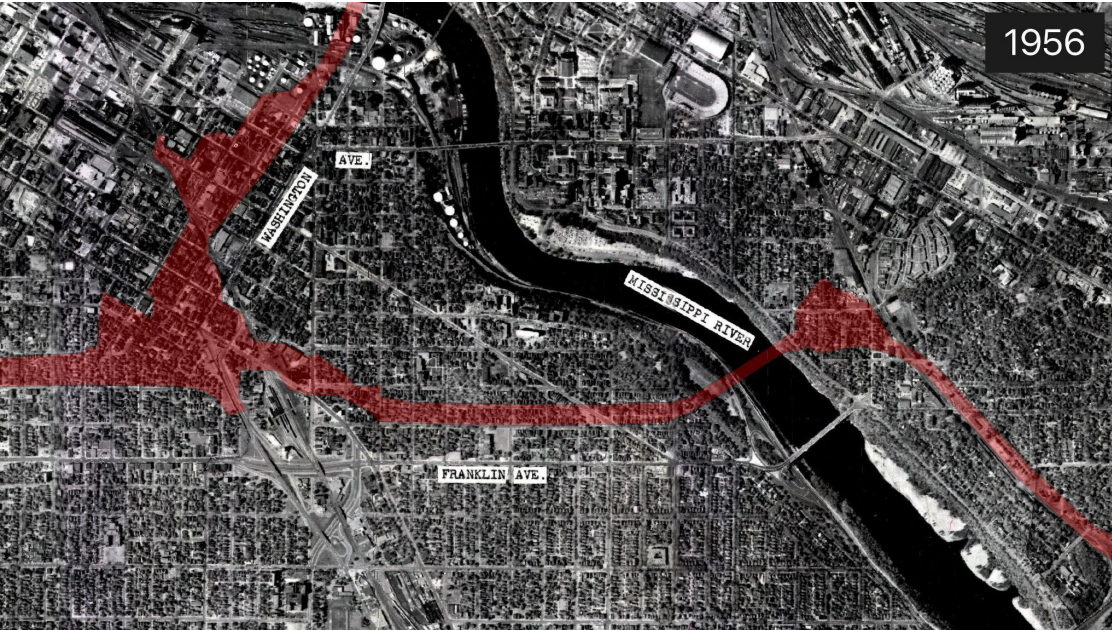
**TOOLE**  
DESIGN

# Introductions

- **José Antonio Zayas Cabán**, Executive Director, Our Streets Minneapolis
- **Lucy Gibson PE**, Principal Engineer, Toole Design
- **Jon Commers**, Managing Principal, Visible City



# 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***

# 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 25th 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. F. 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) 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.F. McFarland Atty in fact.



# Social Saga of Two Cities

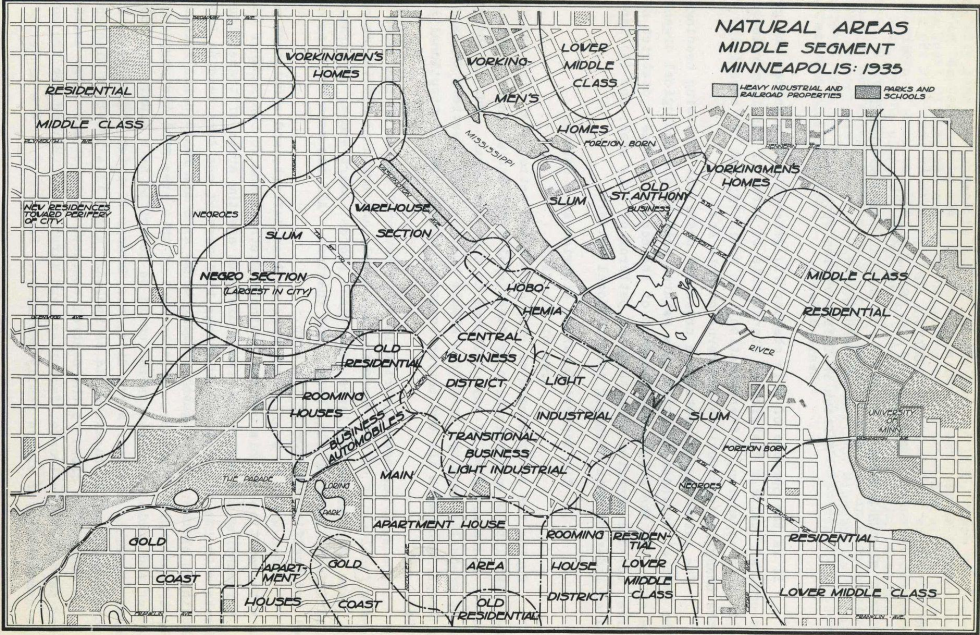


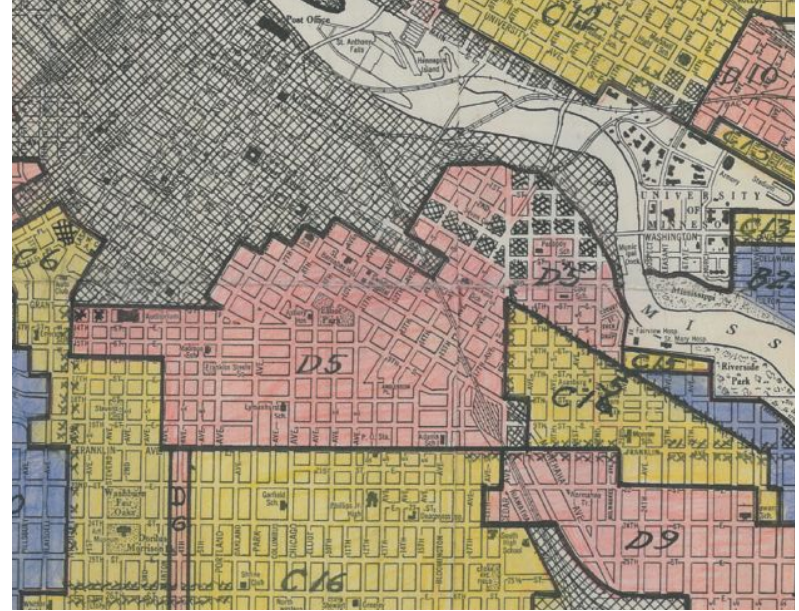
CHART 22

An ecological and statistical study of social trends in Minneapolis and Saint Paul by Calvin Schmid, 1937

# The Logic of Dispossession

Until the 1960s, Minneapolis used racially restrictive deeds, or covenants, which prevented the sale of housing to non-white people, concentrating minorities in specific neighborhoods.

In 1933, the federal Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) identified neighborhoods in U.S. cities that were risky for investment. If you lived in a “redlined” neighborhood, getting a home or business loan was nearly impossible.



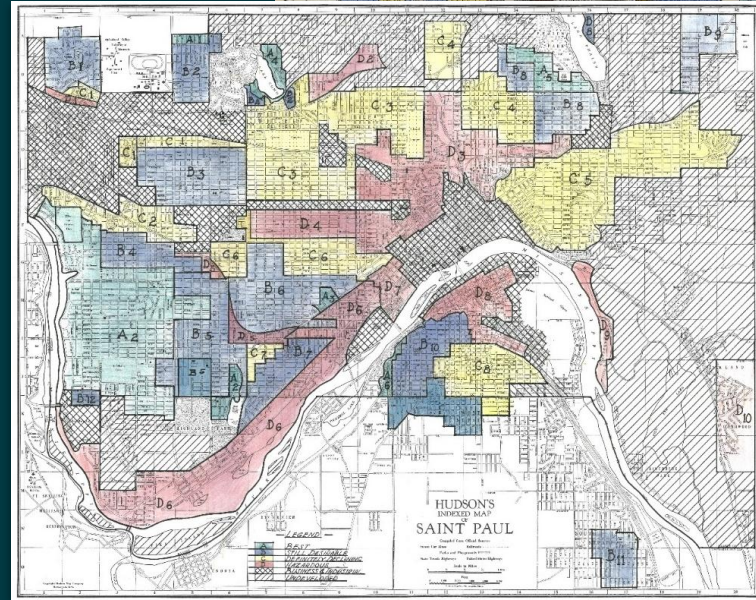
“For the past 20 years, there has been no new development... many Jews and Scandinavians and Negroes reside in the easterly half of this area. The westerly half has many of the shifting populations occupying the cheap apartments and rows... in the southeast corner of the area there is a considerably large Negro settlement.” - Excerpt from HOLC, 1936



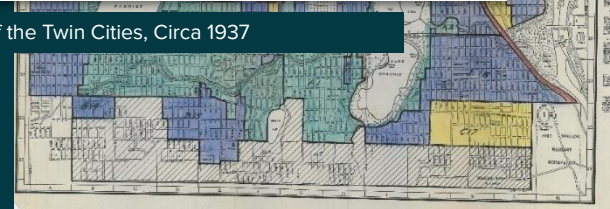
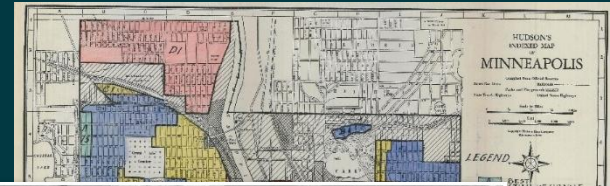
# Redlining

**“Most of the population today is of the poorer class of Jew and colored people... it is a most undesirable location for residential purposes.”**

Source: Minneapolis Redlining Map (HOLC) 1935, D3 Area Description.  
Accessed March 28, 2023



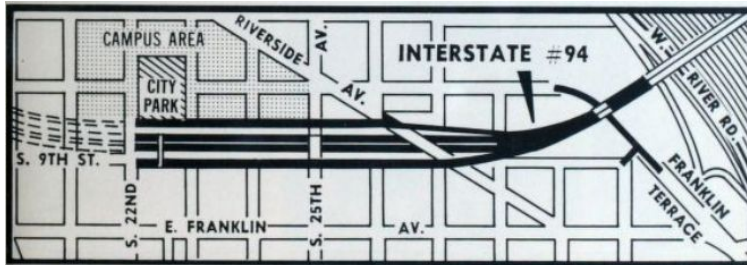
HOLC “Redlining” Maps of the Twin Cities, Circa 1937



# Urban highways promised renewal and access



**BRIEFLY**, the plan involves the people who must sell their homes to make way for the freeway and the University and a contractor who would cooperate in building new dwellings.



*"The freeway... will present Augsburg with a new panoramic campus view and provide exceptional identity to Augsburg's location..."* - Augsburg Contact, 1962



The Washington bridge built to connect East and West Bank also demolished several blocks to connect the campus to I-35W. (1966) University of Minnesota Archives

## **SAVE HOMES AND JOBS**

Freeways often enhance neighborhoods and land values. They remove congestion; they may separate industrial and residential areas; they preserve high-value downtown areas.

Minneapolis City Archives, 1960



# Highways Continue to Harm

## Promises:

Increased property values

Increased investment

Reduced neighborhood traffic

Reduced air pollution

Reduced traffic deaths

Reduced congestion

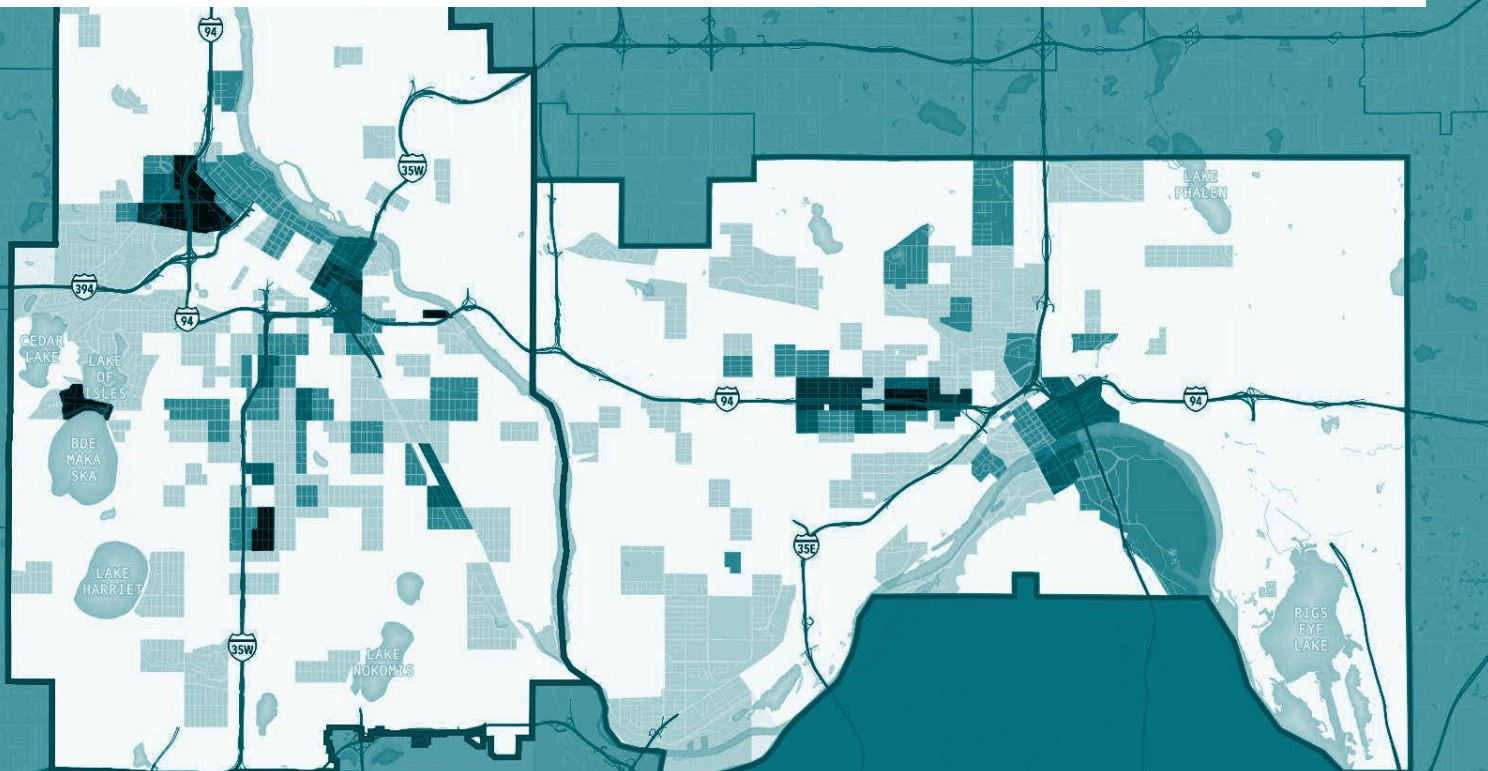
## Reality:

- **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

TWIN  
LAKES

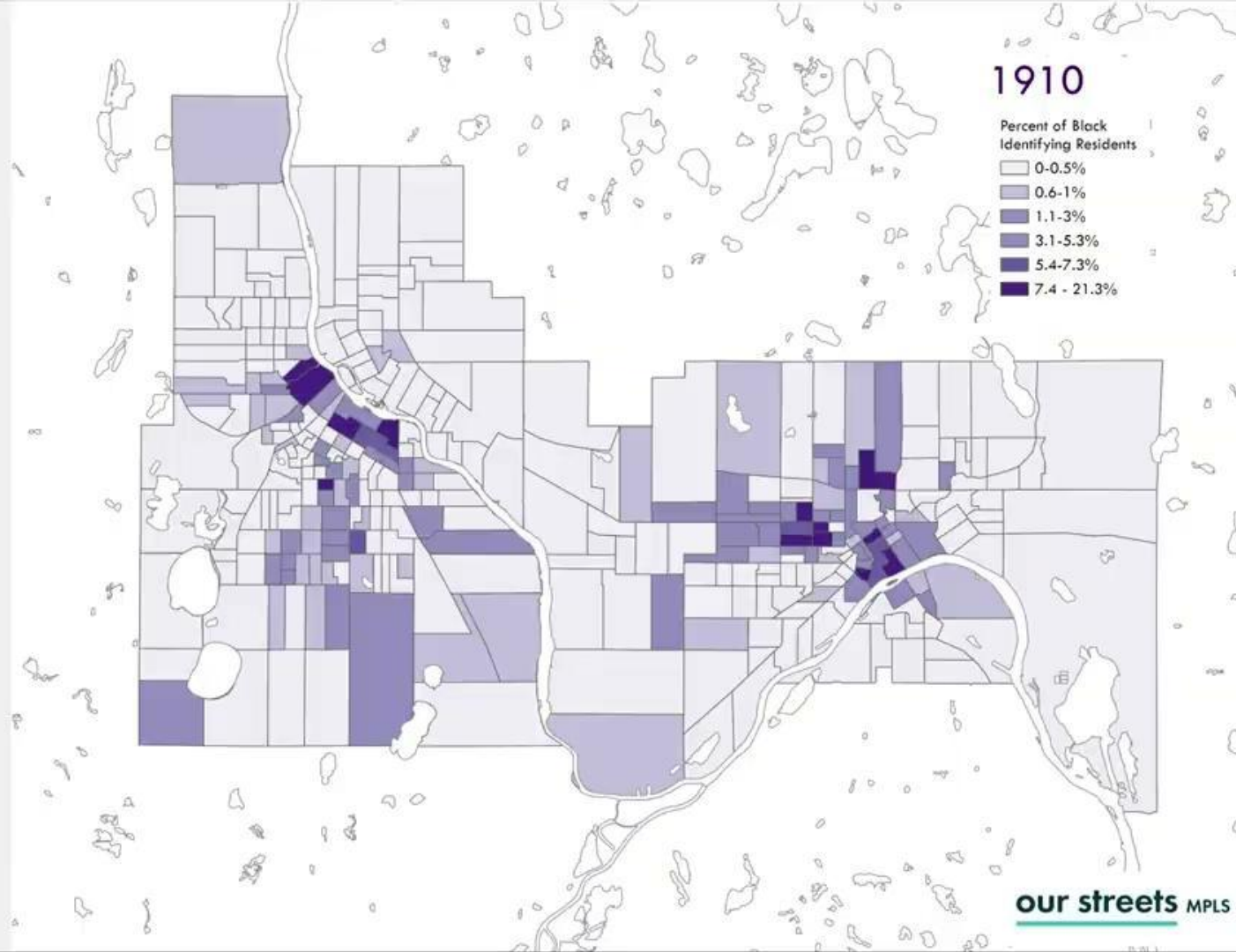
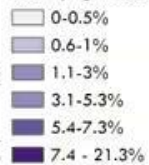
VADNAIS  
LAKE

# Black Neighborhoods & Freeways in the Twin Cities, 1940



1910

Percent of Black  
Identifying Residents



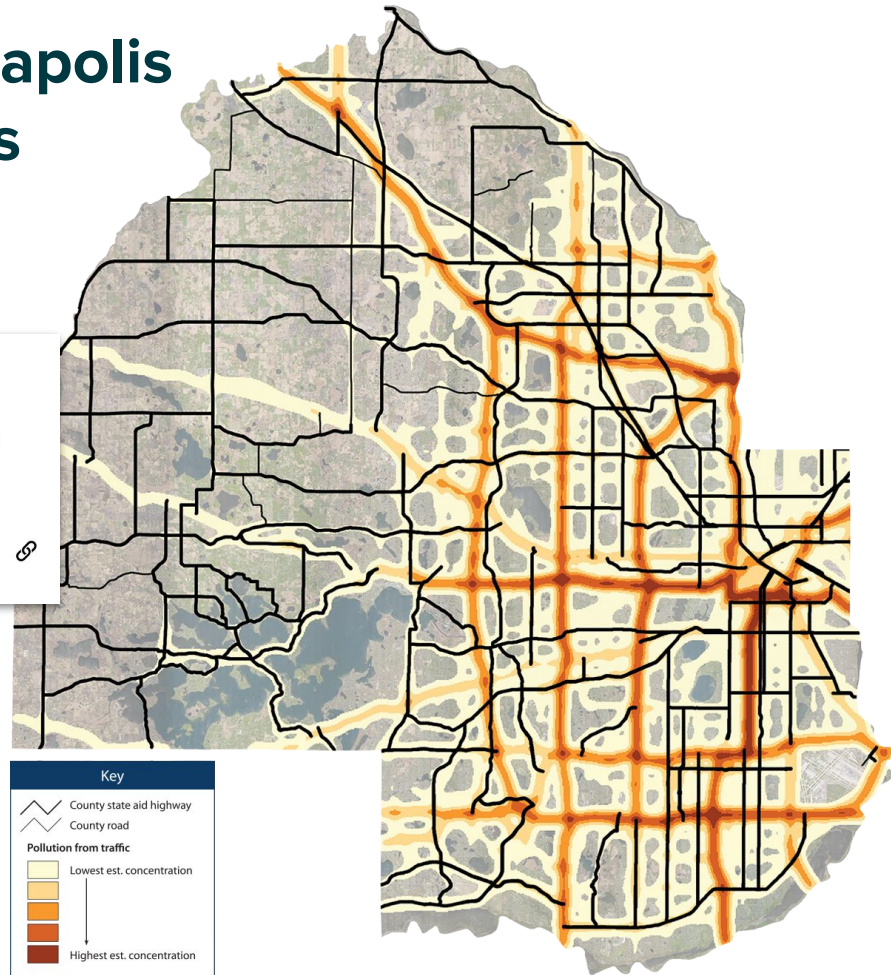
# I-94 continues to harm Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods

## 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.

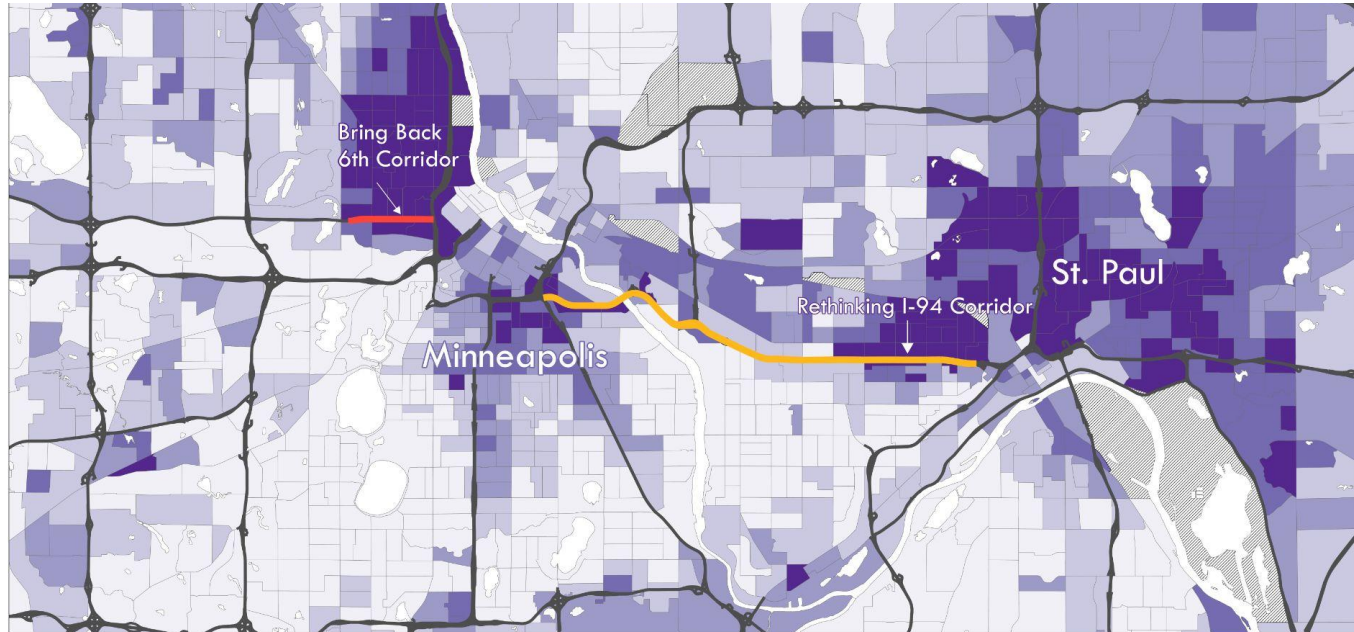
By [Mark Nichols](#)

September 20, 2023, 3:03 PM



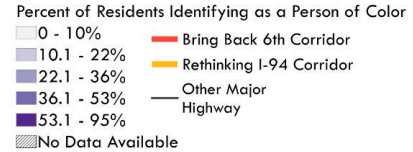


# Residents identifying as a person of color 2020

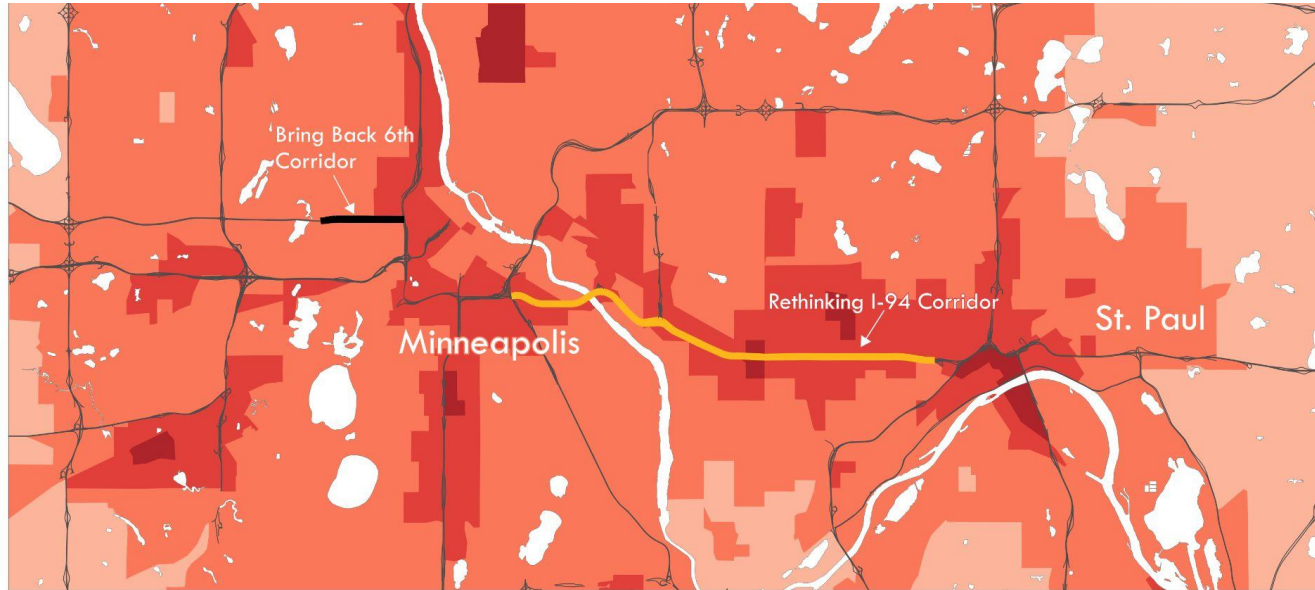


0 3 6 Miles

Sources: US Census 2020, Minnesota Geospatial Commons 2022, Metropolitan Council 2022, Minneapolis Open Data 2022  
Data is aggregated by 2020 Census Block Groups



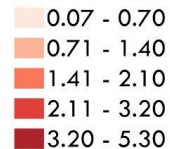
# MN Pollution Control Agency Air Quality Scores 2015



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

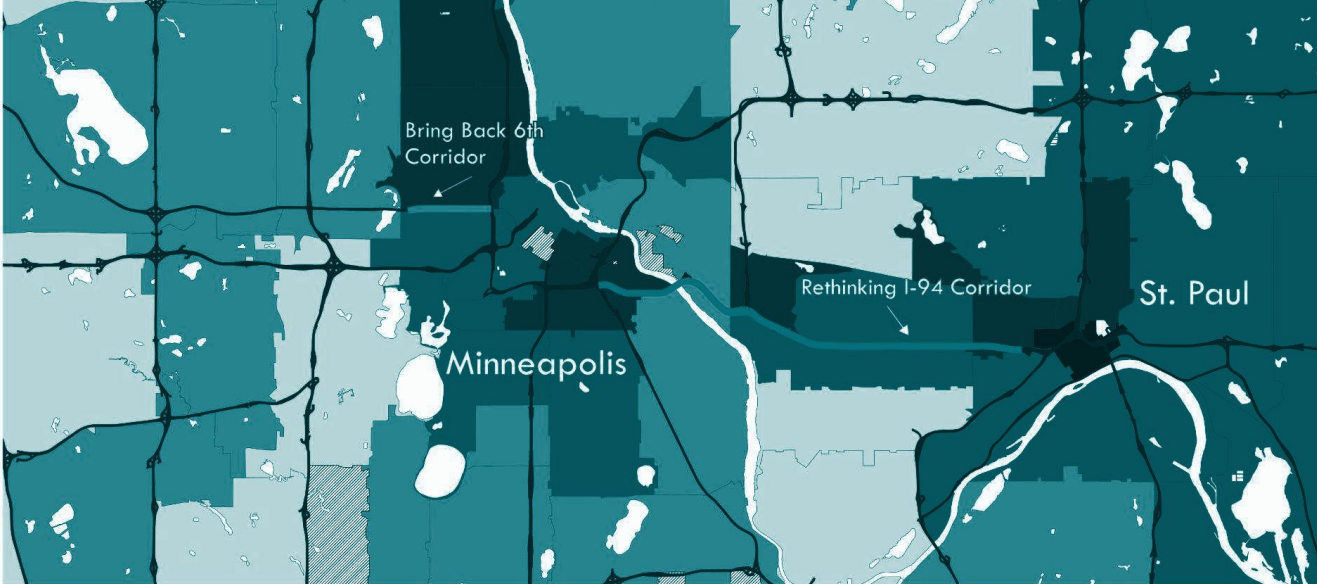
## MPCA Air Quality Score



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

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# Asthma Hospitalization Rate by Zip Code 2015-2019



0 3.5 7 Miles

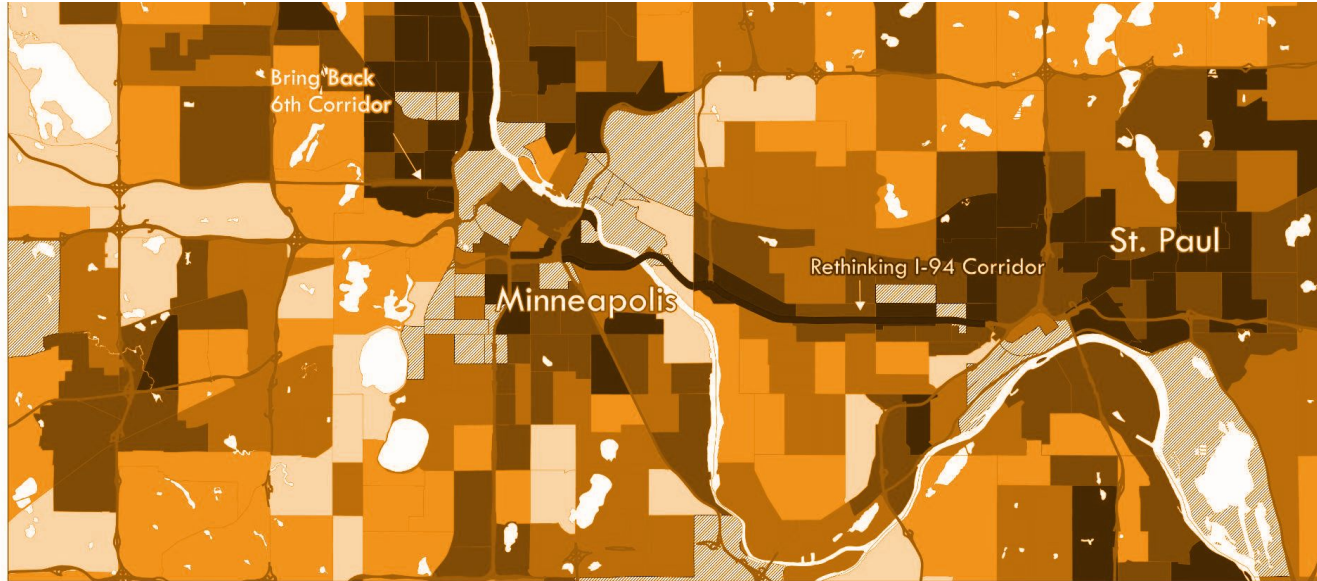
Sources: Minnesota Geospatial Commons 2022, Metropolitan Council 2022, Minnesota Department of Health 2019, US Census 2019

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

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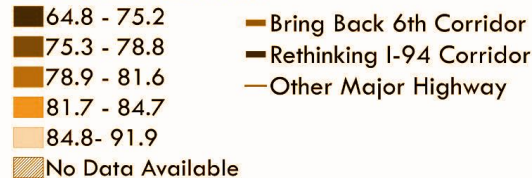
# Life Expectancy at Birth by Census Tract 2010-2015



0 4 8 Miles

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

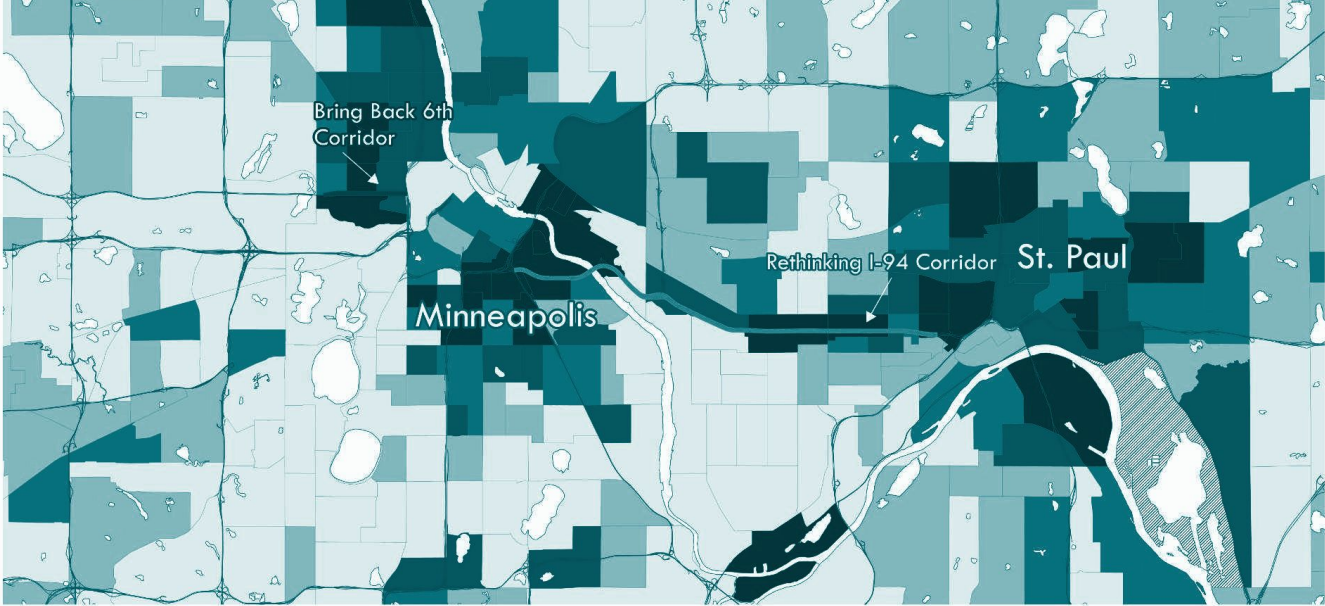
Life Expectancy in Years



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# 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

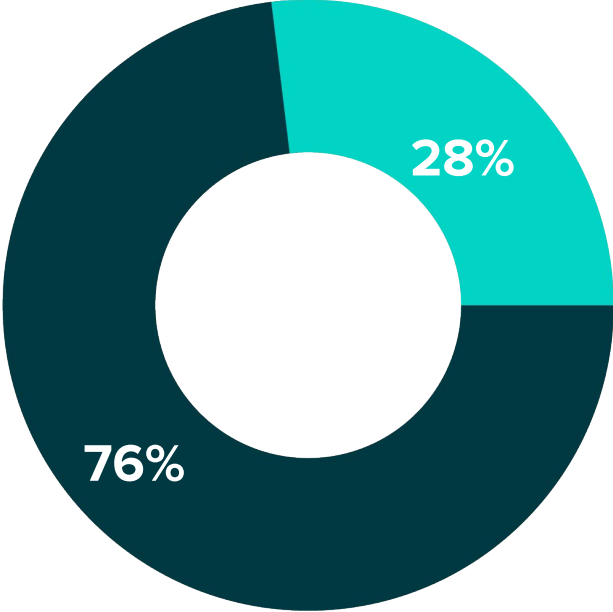
- 0- 3.6%
  - 3.7 - 9.2%
  - 9.3 - 17.3%
  - 17.4 - 28.8%
  - 28.9 - 61.4%
  - No Data Available
- Bring Back 6th Corridor  
— Rethinking I-94 Corridor  
— Other Major Highway

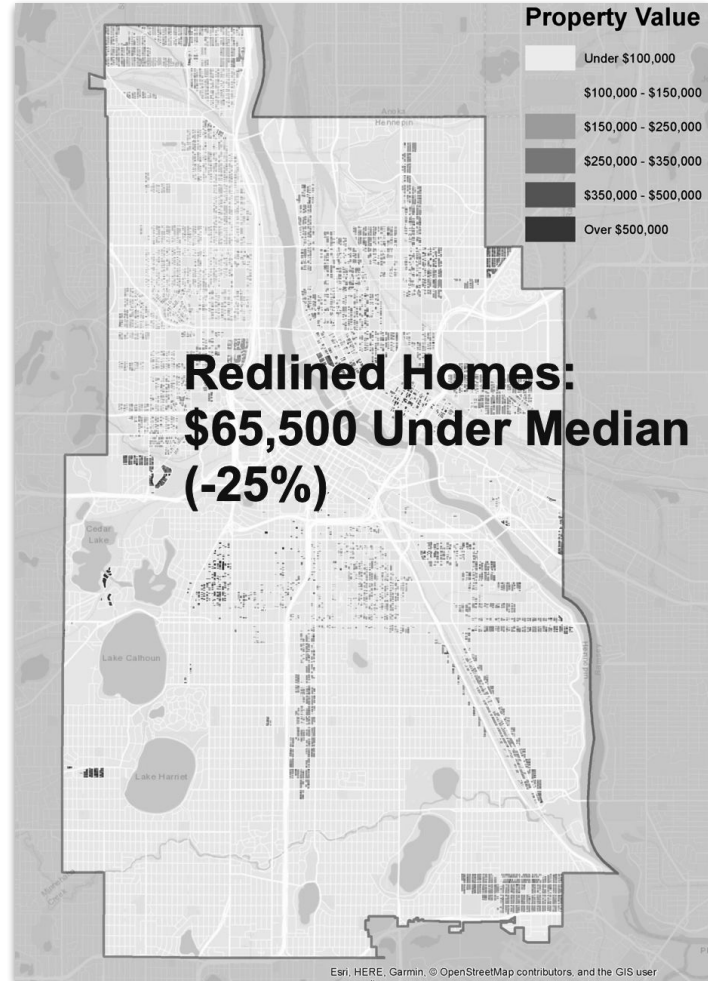
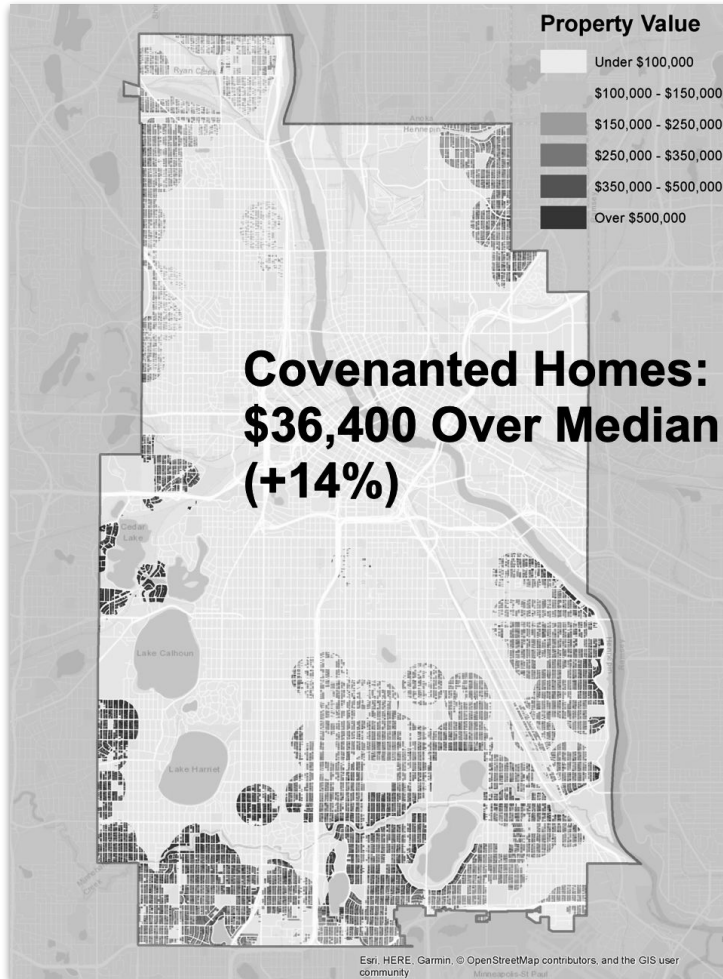
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# Twin Cities Metro Home Ownership

Among largest gaps in the nation:

- White Families 76%
- Black Families 28%





# The Twin Cities Boulevard Movement

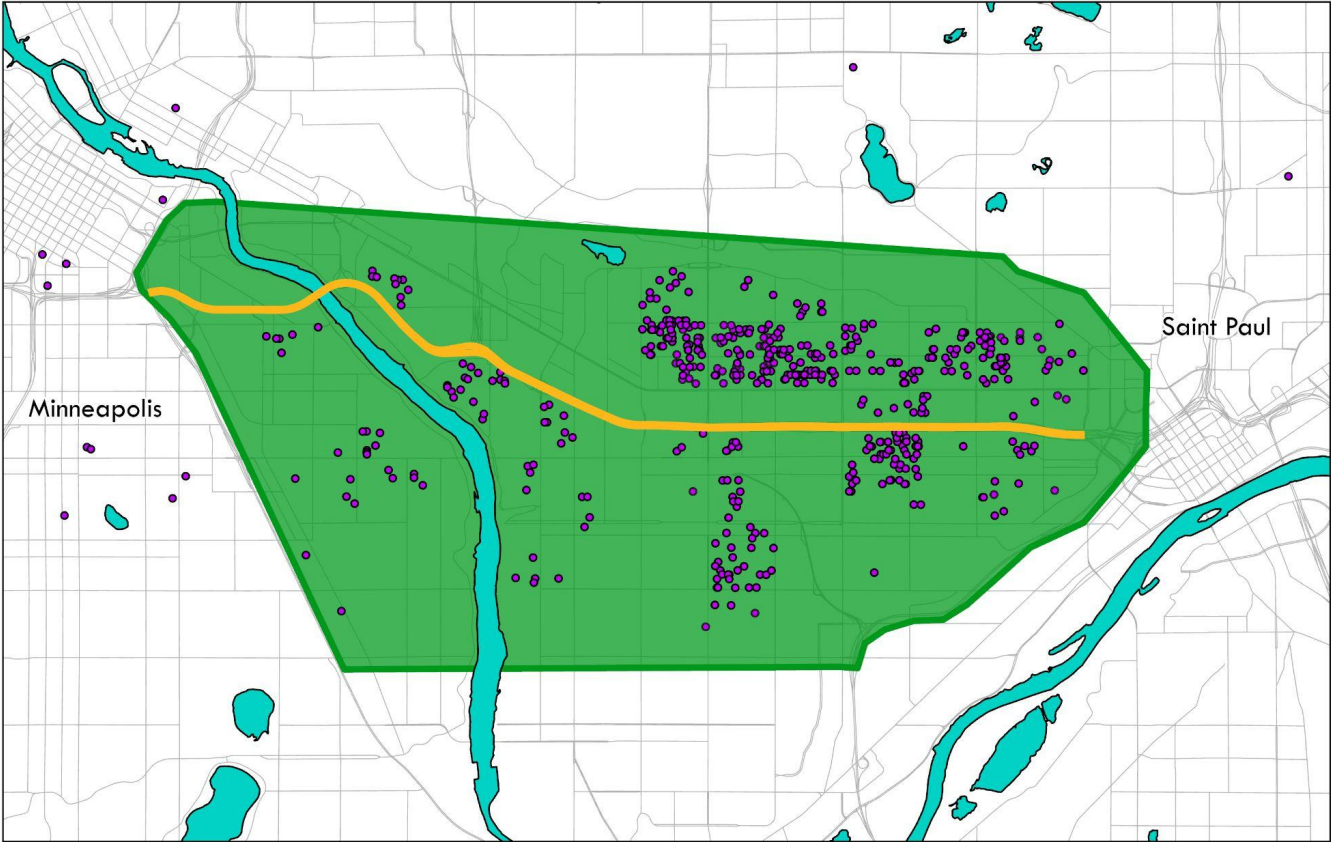
- The Rethinking I-94 project is a generational opportunity
- We are organizing to:
  - **Restore the I-94 trench to a multimodal street**, reconnecting all neighborhoods
  - **Use reclaimed highway land for new housing, businesses and parks** via a community land trust
  - **Implement policies to prioritize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





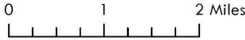


# Twin Cities Boulevard Supporters Identified While Canvassing



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

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



# 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





# Identified Gaps in the Rethinking I-94 Process

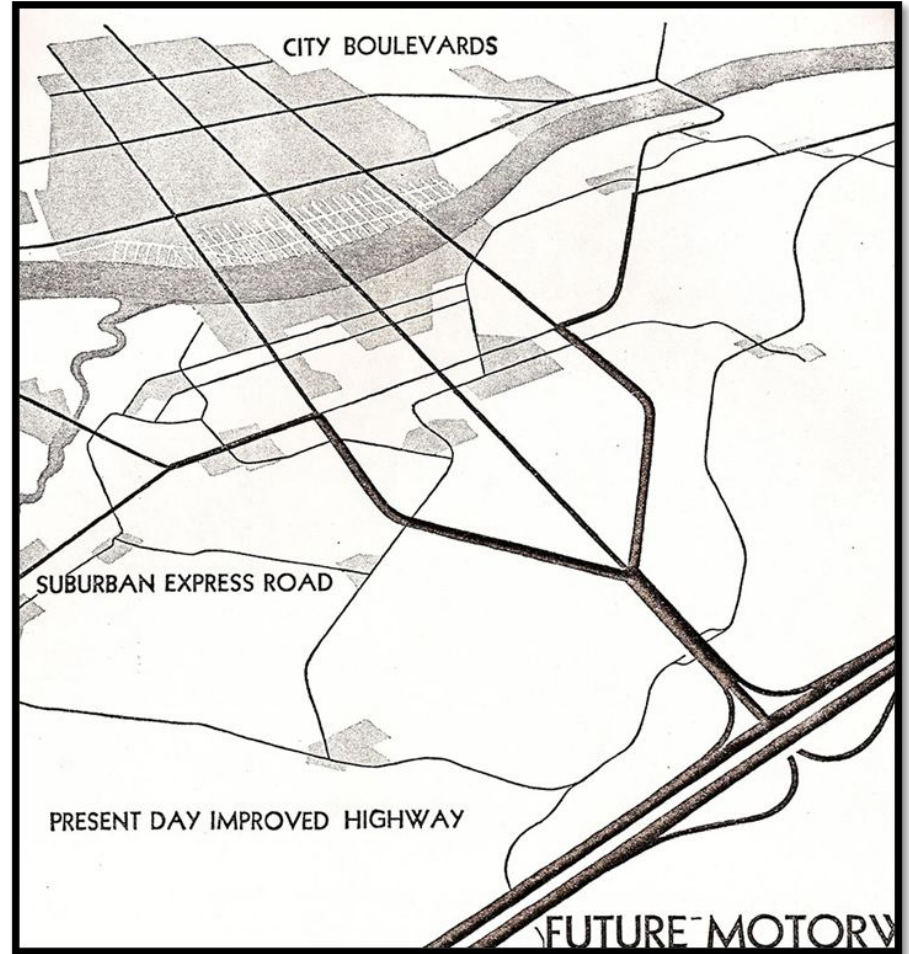
- **Lack of transparency**
  - Modeling assumptions
  - Project schedule
- **Traffic modeling does not reflect best practices**
  - Uses static versus dynamic approach
  - The results are not meaningful, especially for congestion and delay
- **Evaluation process does not reflect the wide-reaching impacts of this project**
  - Focus on vehicle delay rather than accessibility and community impacts
  - Does not consider the enormous benefits of highway removal

# Interstate Highways in American Cities

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

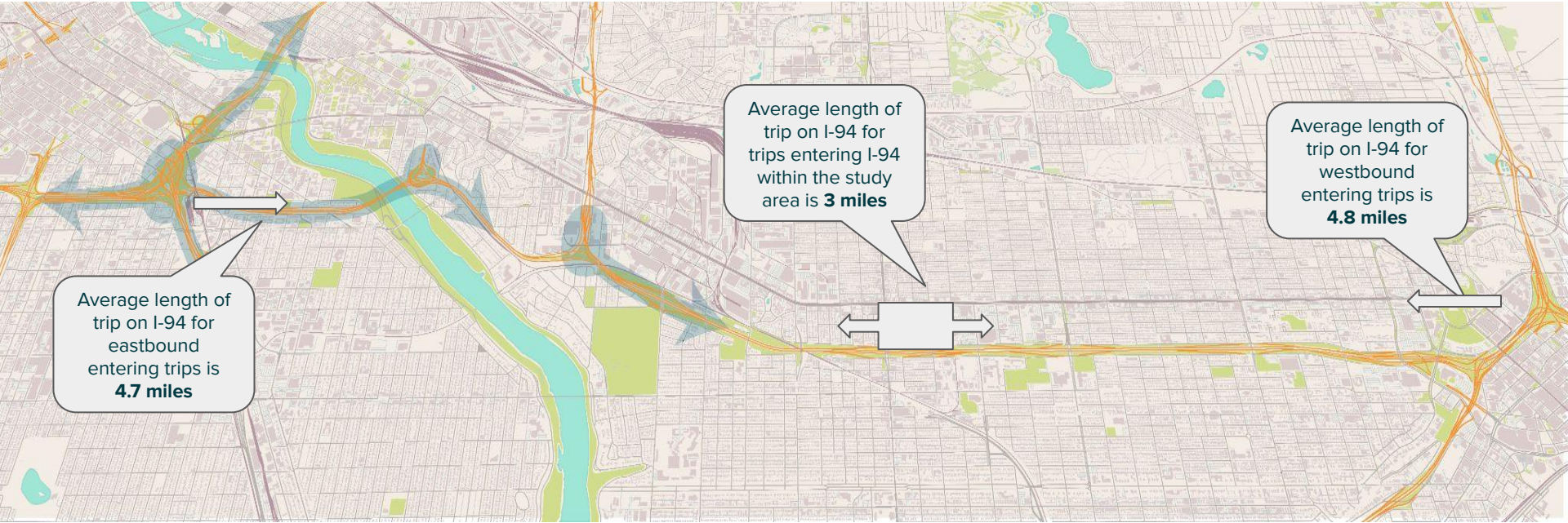
At that point a network of streets and boulevards would carry people into and through the city.

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



# Most trips on I-94 are relatively short.

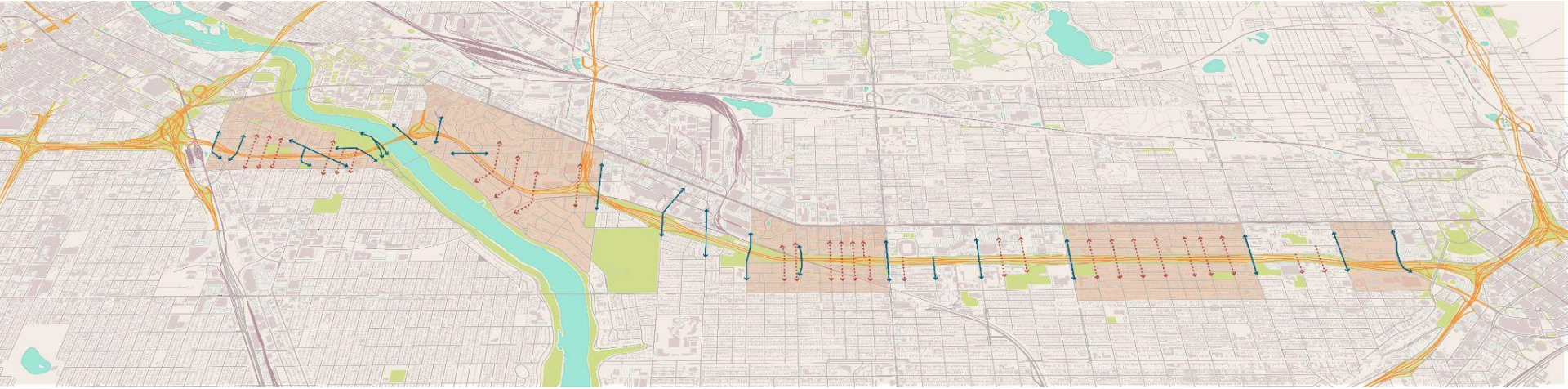
These trips can be made on a boulevard, restored street network or with other modes.



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



# I-94 is a mental and physical barrier.



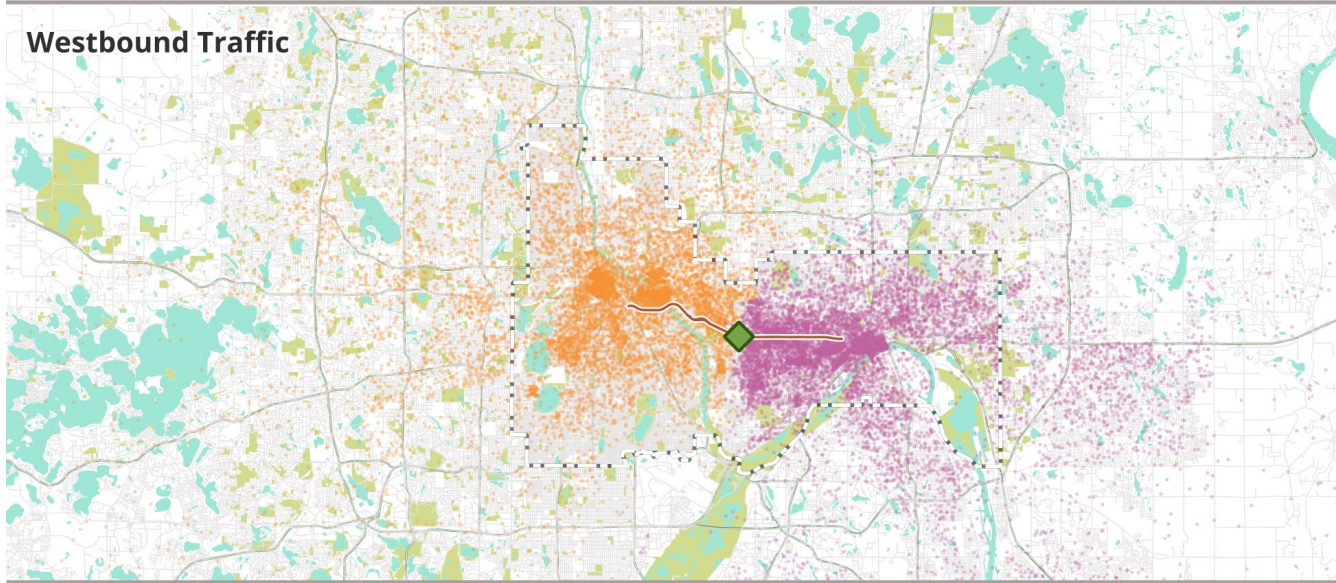
120,000 people travel across I-94 on a typical day by a variety of modes.

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.



- I-94 Study Area
- I-94 at Fairview Ave
- I-94 Trips Passing Fairview Ave (1 dot = 10 trips)
- Origins
- Destinations



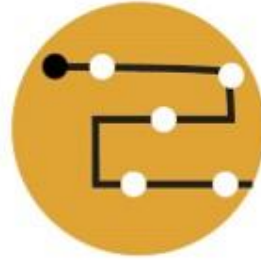
# Traffic projections for a boulevard conversion must consider how people will adapt to a changed network.



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

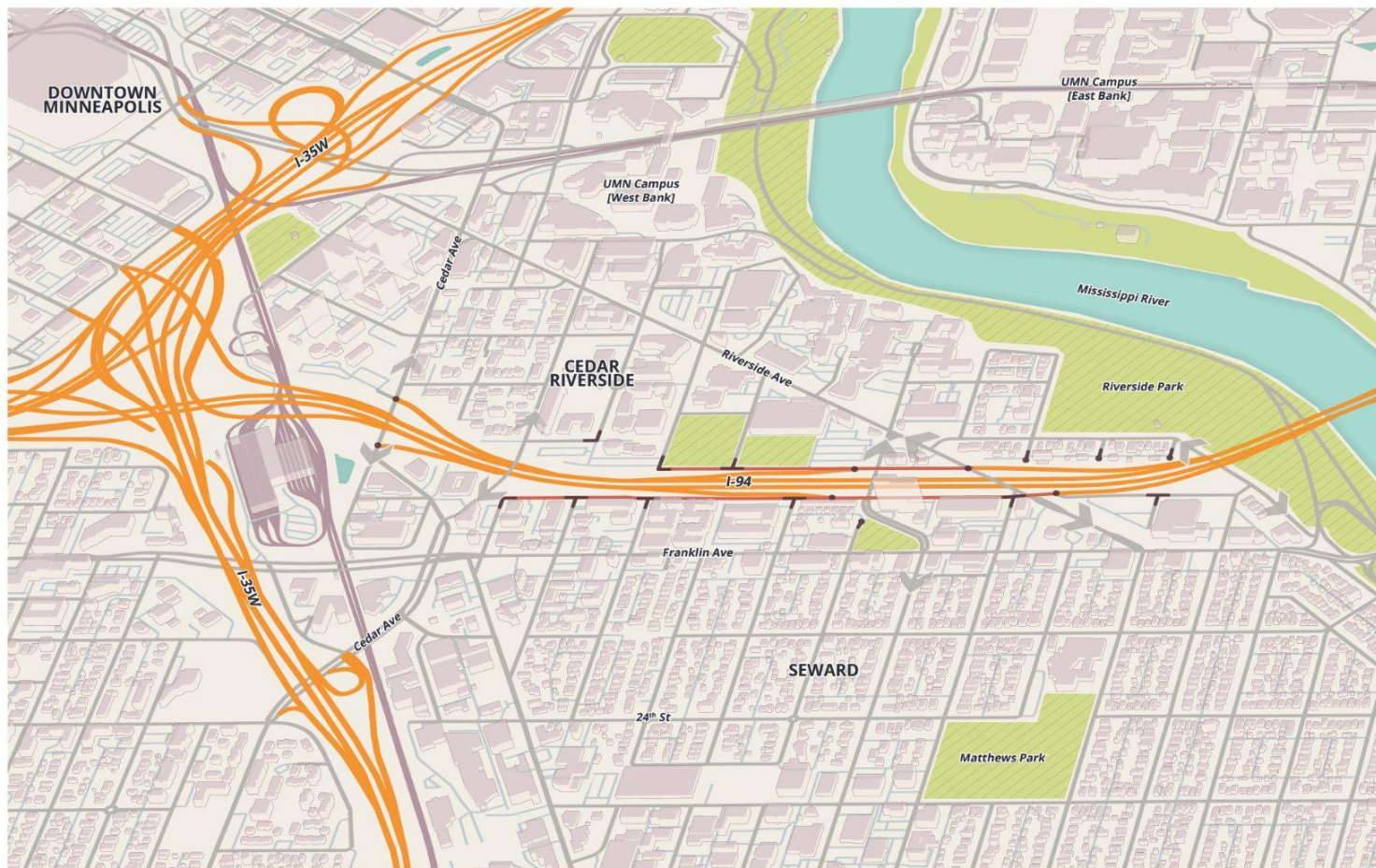


- Replaced the collapsed Central Freeway with a boulevard with side access lanes for parking, slow vehicles and active travel
- Caltrans predicted a commute times would increase by 2 hours, but congestion ended up **improving**
- Central lanes carry 900 vehicles per hour per lane



# STREET NETWORK

## CEDAR RIVERSIDE/SEWARD: EXISTING



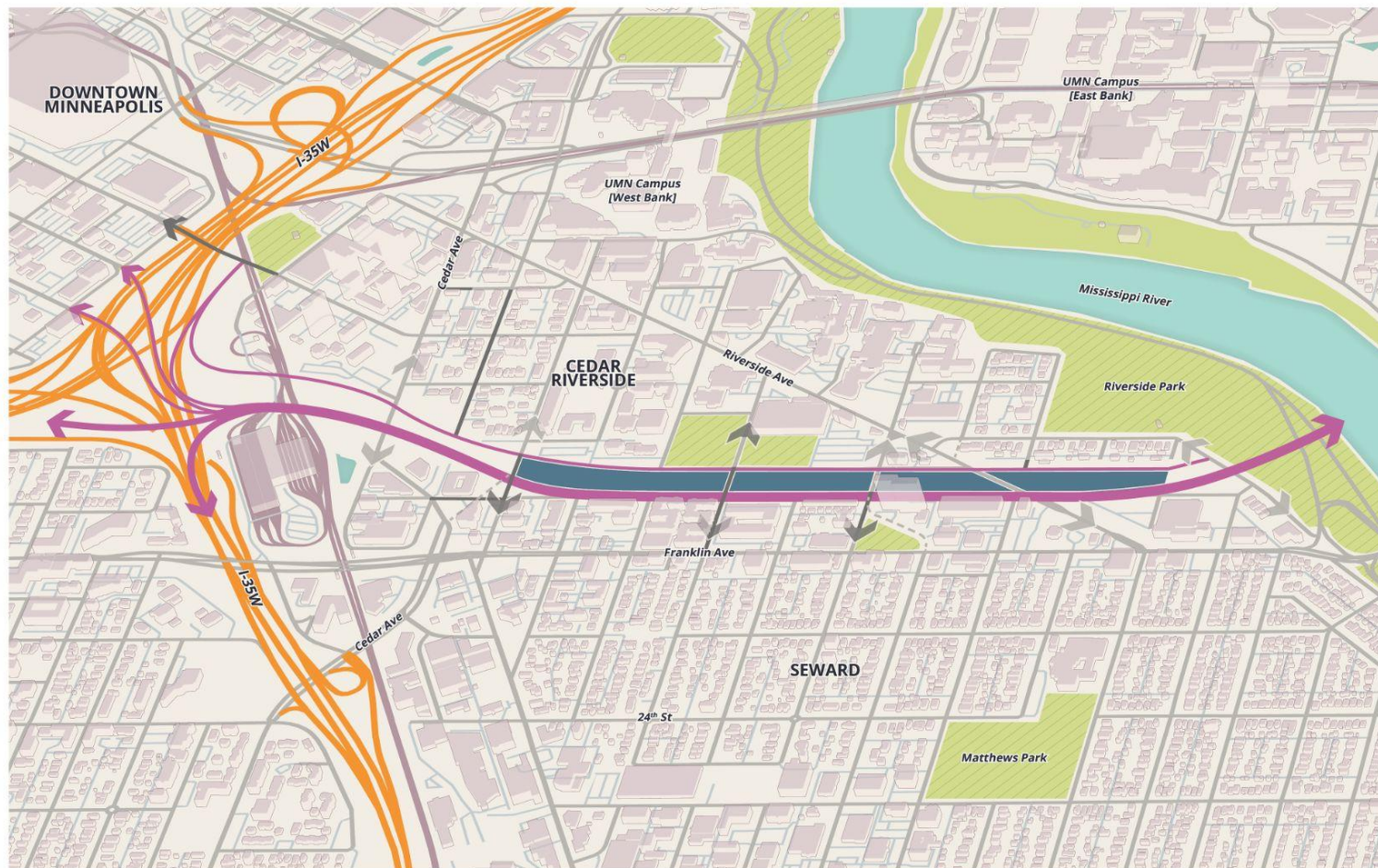
### LEGEND

- 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



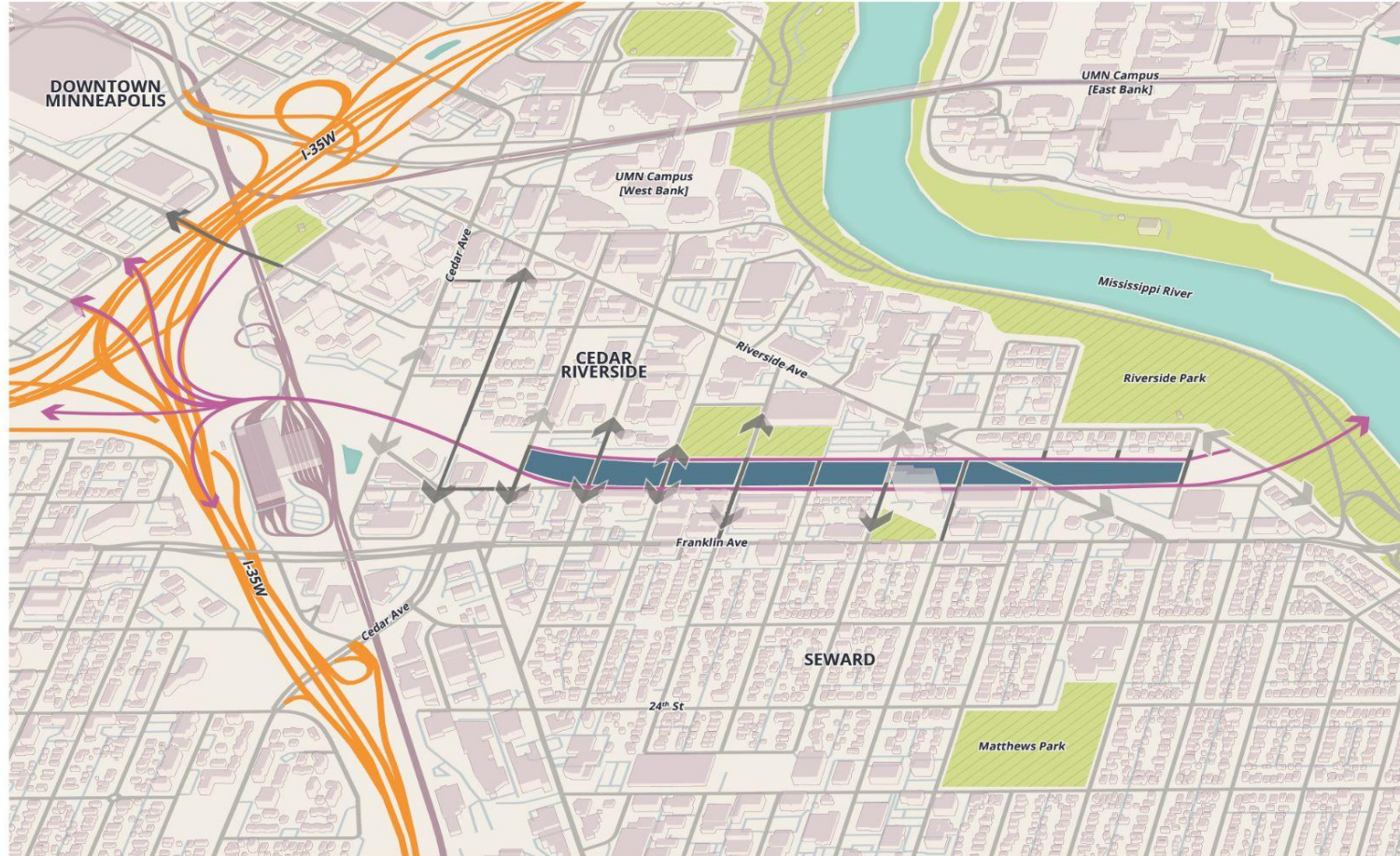
### LEGEND

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



# 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