July 18-19
St. Paul & Minneapolis, MN

"We believe it is imperative we raise awareness about how the bifurcation of neighborhoods is no longer our intent or priority, but rather the promotion of innovative practices that reconnect diverse communities, institutional anchors, and nodes of economic and local opportunities."

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Along the I-94 corridor between Minneapolis and St. Paul, several diverse historic communities suffer from impaired opportunity and mobility. One of those communities, the Rondo, stands adjacent to downtown St. Paul and once served as the heart of the city's largest African American neighborhood. The construction of I-94 in the 1960s displaced thousands of African American families and bifurcated that then-vibrant community.

Now, more than 50 years after its construction, I-94 is aging and experiences heavy congestion. Improvements are needed to not only repair the highway and restore mobility, but to also restore the sense of community and belonging once enjoyed in the corridor. The community would like to develop exemplary models of regional community design and engagement to guide future corridor planning efforts by focusing on two specific locations along the I-94 corridor: Dale Street and Prospect Park, in St. Paul and Minneapolis respectively.

CURRENT CONDITION

With 150,000 to 170,000 vehicles per day, 80+ miles of paved lanes, 145 bridges, 56 pedestrian crossings, and 26 bicycle facilities, the I-94 corridor is a hub of interconnectivity between cities, regions, neighborhoods, businesses, residents, and employers. Opportunities exist to enhance the following two projects and future work in the corridor through meaningful and equitable community and stakeholder conversations and partnerships.

Dale Street

The Dale Street interchange bridge over I-94 in St. Paul is functionally obsolete. The existing bridge lacks adequate pedestrian facilities as well as adequate accommodations for turning vehicles. The City suggests that lane widths are currently deficient at 10 feet. Proposed improvements include rebuilding the interchange bridge with two ten-foot wide sidewalks, two six-foot wide shoulders, two through lanes in each direction, and a left- turn lane at each ramp to I-94. The Dale Street project has close to $7 million allocated to tackle safety and operational issues, and reconstruction is scheduled to begin in 2018. It is identified as a priority in the City of St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan.

Prospect Park Trail

The Prospect Park trail project involves the acquisition of an abandoned railroad corridor between Franklin Ave SE and 27th Ave SE, and the construction of a multi-use trail. The Prospect Park Trail is shown in the 2011 Bicycle Master Plan as a connector between the Prospect Park Neighborhood and the University of Minnesota. It crosses I-94 in Prospect Park near the banks of the Mississippi River. A connection to the Midtown Greenway could be made in the future if additional railway easements were acquired.

PROJECT GOALS

Long-Term Corridor Planning

While the long-term scope of the project includes the entire corridor, the process must begin at a more localized scale, providing community partners, local governments, state and federal agencies with the opportunity to develop context-sensitive design solutions that react and incorporate the input of those impacted by the corridor. The workshop focuses on two locations—one in Ramsey County/St. Paul and another in Hennepin County/Minneapolis—to encourage communities to reimagine transportation projects, reconcile past mistakes, and ultimately serve as pilot projects for further planning efforts.

Improve Multi-Modal Connectivity/Prospect Park Trail

The Prospect Park Trail project is currently finalizing the acquisition of the abandoned railroad track. The project is regarded as highly important by the City of Minneapolis and local partners. Moreover, the project has submitted a capital budget request and is part of the City of Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan. Given that the design for the site has not been completed for this project, the Every Place Counts Design Challenge will help the community think through how to provide multi-modal connectivity between communities that are currently bifurcated by I-94.