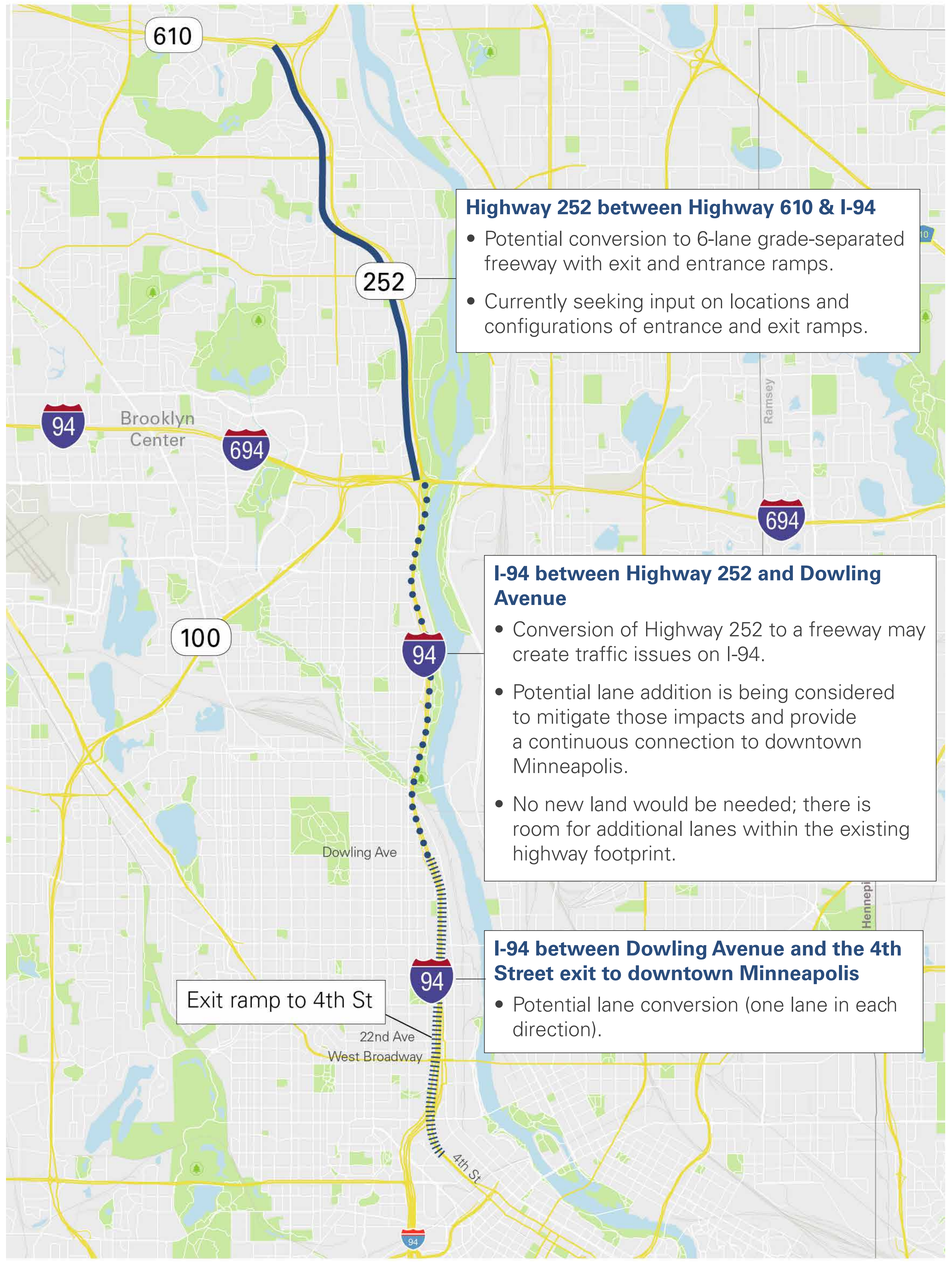
About the Highway 252 / I-94 Environmental Review

The Highway 252 Conversion Study is now the Highway 252/I-94 Environmental Review

- Hennepin County, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the cities of Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park and Minneapolis are developing solutions to improve vehicle safety and mobility along Highway 252 and I-94, and walkability/bikeability across and near Highway 252 and I-94.
- These solutions are being evaluated as part of the environmental review process and then will move forward into design.
- Corridors under study are:
  - » Highway 252 between Highway 610 in Brooklyn Park and I-694 in Brooklyn Center.
  - » I-94 from I-694 in Brooklyn Center to the 4th Street exit to downtown Minneapolis.

The purpose of this open house is to:

- Communicate the purpose and need for the project.
- Share project information, and input gathered so far.
- Outline **four key questions** to be addressed and decided during the environmental review.
- Communicate alternatives under consideration.
- Gather input on alternatives.



Schedule

Overall project schedule

Previous Studies

System Planning & Concept Study
Summer 2017 - Spring 2018

Environmental Documentation & Preliminary Layout Design
2018-2019

Detailed Plan Development
2020-2021

Construction Targeted 2023

Environmental review schedule

2018
PURPOSE & NEED
- Mobility
- Safety
- Connectivity

2018
CONFIRM GOALS & OBJECTIVES
DEVELOP EVALUATION CRITERIA

2018
DEVELOP CONCEPTS
- Hwy 252 Corridor Alternatives
- I-94 Corridor Alternatives

EVALUATION

2019
IDENTIFY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR HWY 252 AND I-94

EVALUATION

2019
PREPARE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION AND PRELIMINARY LAYOUT DESIGN

2019
FINAL RECOMMENDATION

WE ARE HERE

Schedule subject to change

Public Engagement Activities

- In spring and summer 2018, the project partners spread the word about potential changes to Highway 252:
  - » **Two workshops** in Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center
  - » More than **10 listening sessions** and **pop-up events** in the two cities
  - » An **online survey** with ~250 responses
  - » **Social media** posts
  - » **Media** coverage

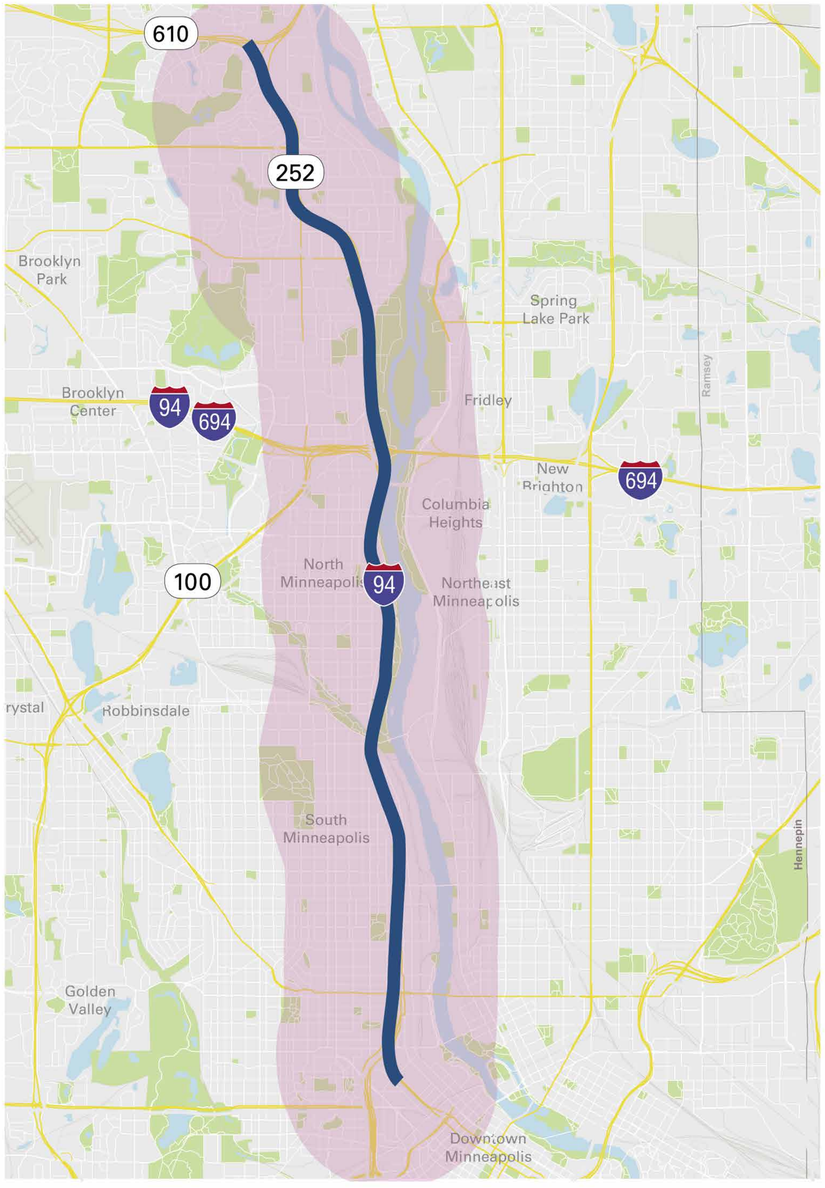
- Since then, I-94 in Minneapolis has been added to the project.
- Don't worry if you are just learning about the project now. There is a lot of information here to take in, and there is plenty of time for you to have input. Please visit the boards, ask questions of staff, and make comments on your comment card.
  Thank you for coming!

Understanding the Project Area

The project area encompasses portions of Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center and Minneapolis, and includes a great diversity of assets, populations and systems. Here's a brief introduction to some of its characteristics:

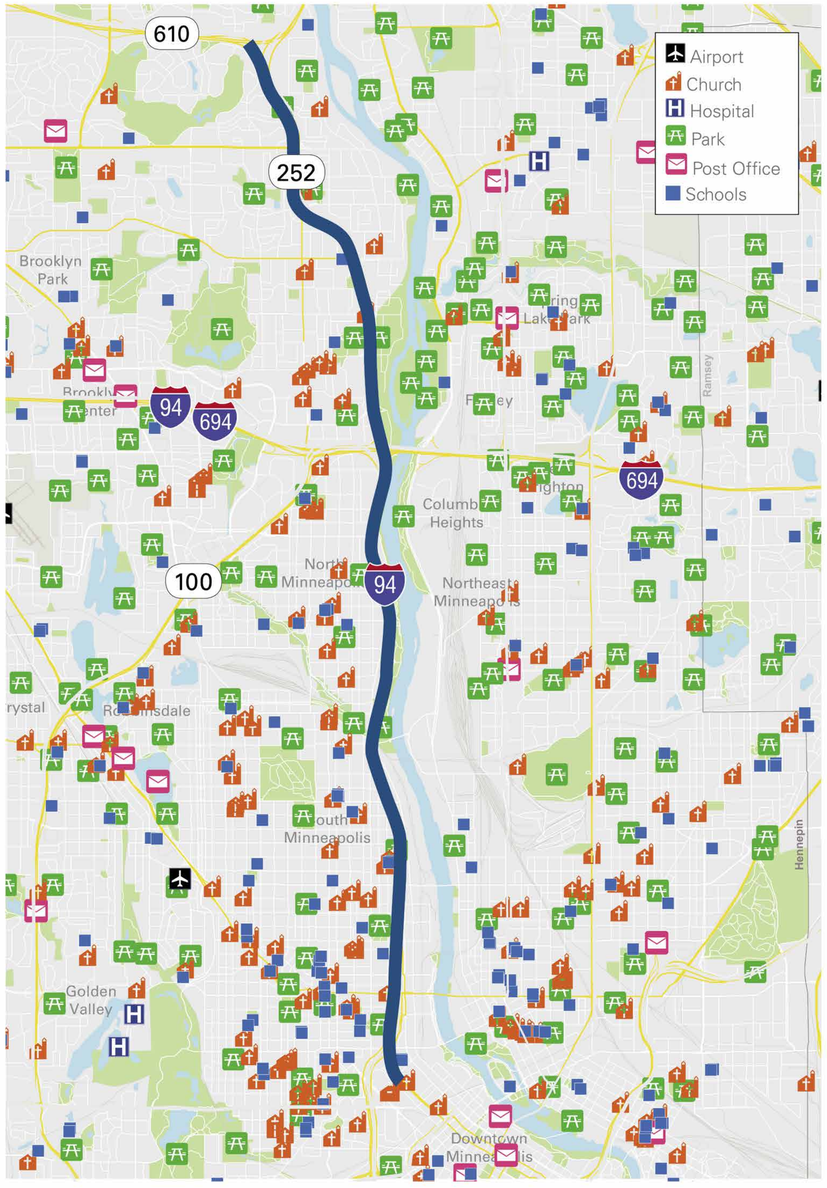
Map 1: General project area and surrounding cities

This map shows the area within 1 mile of the project as well as surrounding cities. In this and the following maps, the actual location of Highway 252 and I-94 is shown in solid blue.



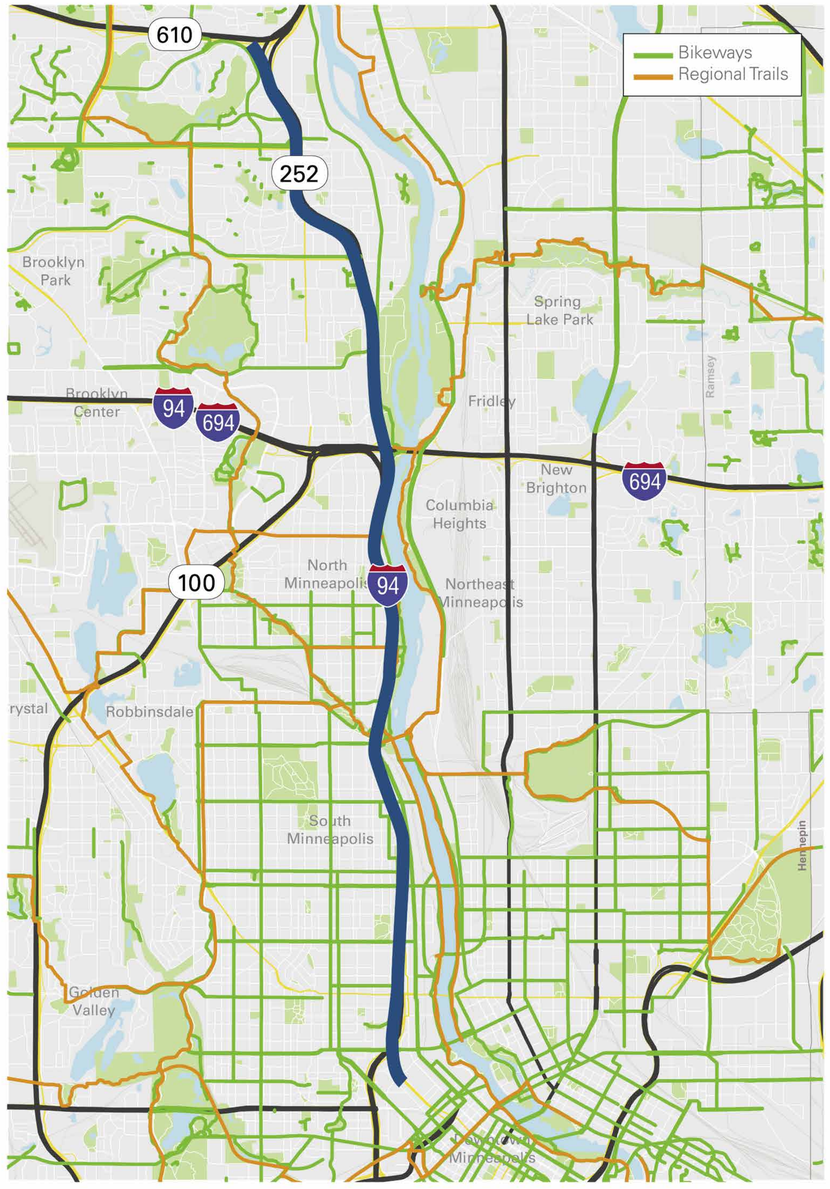
Map 2: Neighborhoods and popular destinations and landmarks

This map shows nearby civic and community destinations.



Map 3: Regional and local walking and biking trails

There are several key regional walking and biking trails in and around the project area. This map shows the general location of several of these assets. This is an important consideration when discussing the movement of people walking or biking across Highway 252 and I-94.

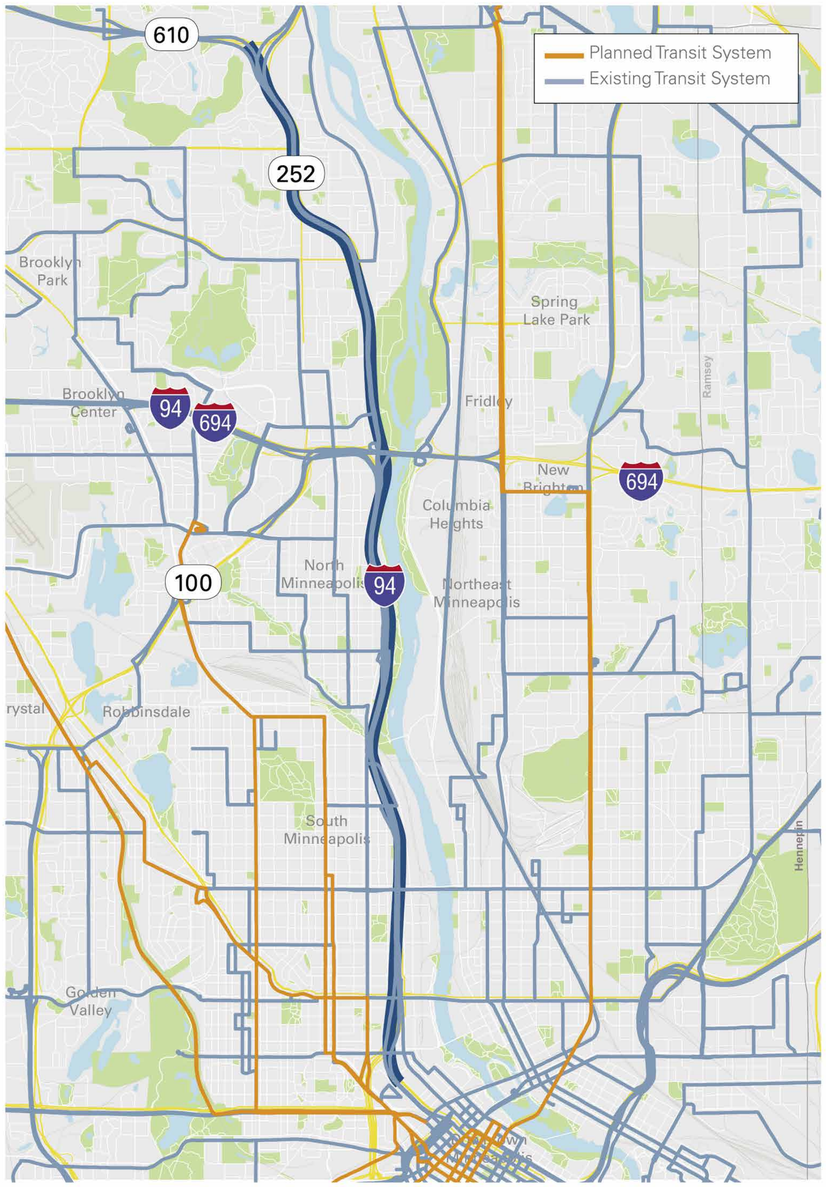


Understanding the Project Area

The project area encompasses portions of Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center and Minneapolis, and includes a great diversity of assets, populations and systems. Here's a brief introduction to some of its characteristics:

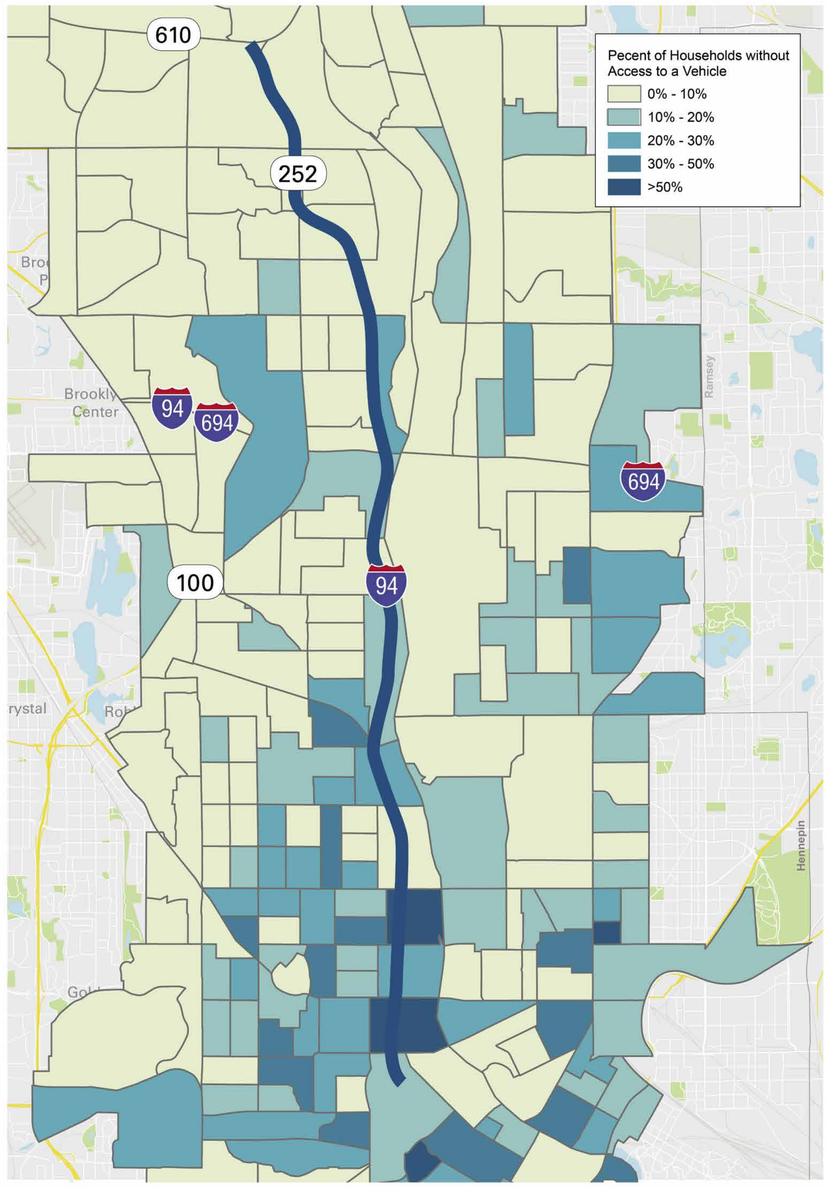
Map 4: Existing and planned transit system

Many people use the project corridor to access transit. In addition, several transit lines are planned in the vicinity of the project area. This map shows the existing and planned transit system. This is important because transit riders need to walk across or along the corridor to access transit service.



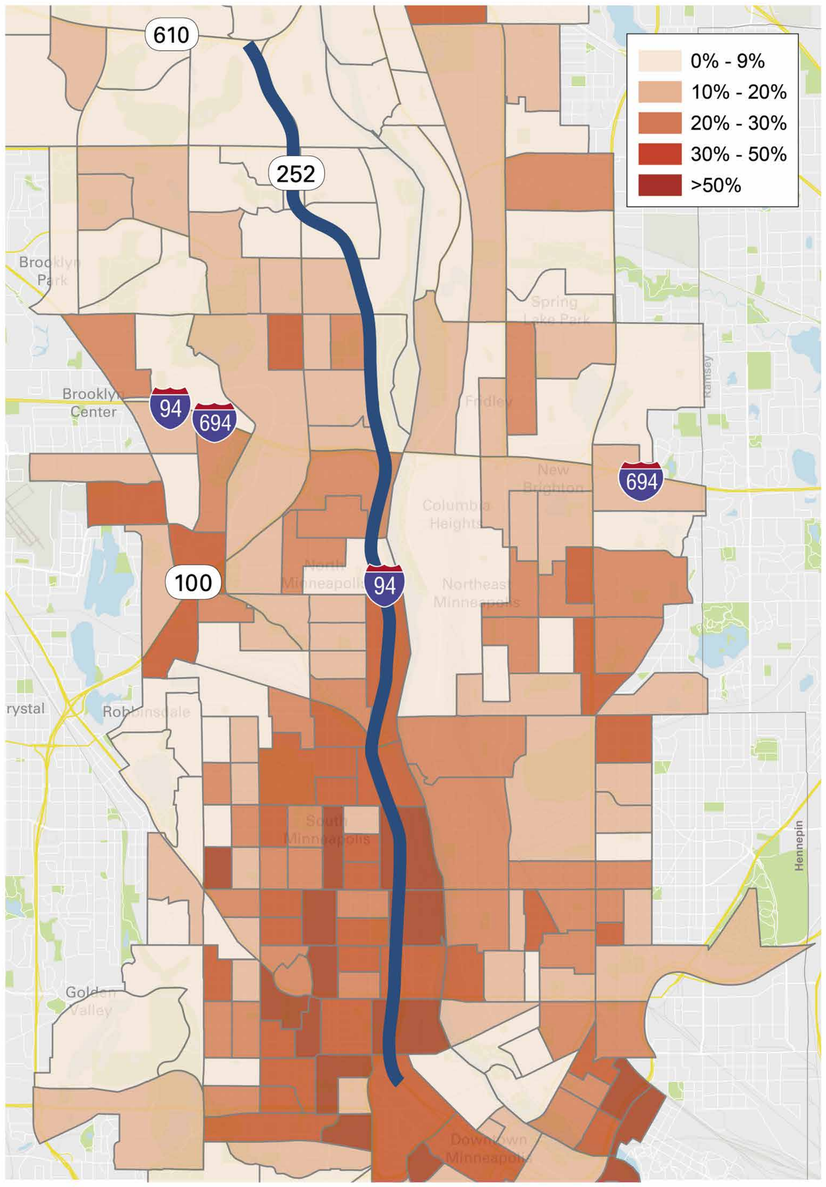
Map 5: Transit-dependent populations

Many people living in and around the project area have no or limited access to private motor vehicles, and depend on transit (and walking) to travel to work and meet their daily needs. This map shows the relative concentration of households without access to a car.



Map 6: Low-income households

An important component of the environmental review process is making sure that no adverse effects disproportionately affect low-income or minority populations. This map shows the general location of households living under the federal poverty line in the areas in and around the corridor.



Project Needs*

Driver safety

611 recorded crashes on **Highway 252** between 2011 and 2015. More than half of these crashes occurred at the **85th Avenue** and **66th Avenue** intersections.

★★★★★★

5 of the 6 intersections on **Highway 252** are in the **top 100 statewide for crash costs**.

Many of the crashes at **Highway 252** intersections are **rear-end crashes**. **Rear-end crashes** are often associated with areas of **congestion**.

Vehicle mobility

Traffic volumes on **Highway 252** and **I-94** are projected to **increase by 8,000 to 12,000** vehicles per day by year 2040.

Transit ridership is projected to **increase by 1,850** riders per day on **Highway 252** and **increase by 5,100 riders** per day on **I-94** by year 2040.

Highway 252 experiences **congestion and delays** during the morning and afternoon peak periods. **Westbound I-94** south of **Highway 252** also experiences **poor operations and congestion** during the afternoon peak period.

The average travel time from Brooklyn Park to downtown Minneapolis is projected to increase by **5 minutes** during the morning peak period and **11 minutes** during the afternoon peak period by year 2040.

Travel times on **Highway 252** are also projected to **become less reliable** in the future, requiring travelers to increase their planning time to account for potential delays.

Walkability/bikeability

Highway 252 can be **challenging to cross** for pedestrians and bicyclists due to the number of lanes and crossing distances.

Pedestrians and bicyclists experience **nearly 2 minutes of delay** when waiting to cross **Highway 252**. This delay is because most of the traffic signal "green time" is allocated to Highway 252.

Walkability/bikeability along **I-94 is being evaluated** and will be incorporated into the project needs where appropriate.

**Project needs based on existing roadway configurations*

The Environmental Review Will Address These Four Key Questions

Q1

What is the best way to improve vehicular safety and mobility along Highway 252 and I-94?

Q2

Where should access to and across Highway 252 be provided for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists?

Q3

What is the best type of access for each location on Highway 252?

Q4

If additional lanes are necessary on Highway 252 and/or I-94, what is the most effective way to use those new lanes?

Q1 What is the best way to improve vehicular safety and mobility along Highway 252 and I-94?

Highway 252 has a lot of crashes

Highway 252 and I-94 are congested and unreliable.

So, what's the best way to improve safety and mobility on these highways?

We're considering five different options. Let's take a look at what works best.

Q1 What is the best way to improve vehicular safety and mobility along Highway 252 and I-94?

1 No changes

- Does not address safety concerns.
- Hwy 252 will still have long backups at intersections.
- I-94 would be congested near Dowling Avenue.

2 Convert Hwy 252 to 6-lane expressway with no changes on I-94

- Reduces overall number of crashes at intersections.
- Does not address rear-end crashes.
- Hwy 252 would still have long backups at intersections.
- I-94 would still be congested near Dowling Avenue.

3 Convert Hwy 252 to 4-lane freeway with no changes on I-94

- Reduces overall number of crashes at intersections.
- Reduces potential for rear-end crashes.
- Hwy 252 would still be congested.
- I-94 would still be congested near Dowling Avenue.

4 Convert Hwy 252 to 6-lane freeway with no changes on I-94

- Reduces overall number of crashes at intersections.
- Reduces potential for rear-end crashes.
- Congestion would be addressed on Hwy 252 but I-94 would still be congested near Dowling Avenue.
- There would be poor lane continuity between Hwy 252 and I-94.

5 Convert Hwy 252 to 6-lane freeway with an additional lane on I-94 from Hwy 252 to Dowling Avenue

- Reduces overall number of crashes at intersections.
- Reduces potential for rear-end crashes.
- Congestion would be addressed on Hwy 252 and I-94 with good lane continuity.
- Best overall travel time for transit users.

Benefit No Benefit

Hennepin · Brooklyn Center · Brooklyn Park · Minneapolis City of Lakes · MnDOT

Q2 Where should access to and across Highway 252 be provided for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists?

If a freeway is constructed, where will pedestrians and bicyclists cross the freeway?

…and where will vehicles be able to enter and exit the freeway? What streets will cross the freeway?

This hasn't been decided and a few options are being considered. If you have a reason you prefer one or the other, please write it on your comment card.

Q3 What is the best type of access for each location on Highway 252?

I see access options that have interchanges, crossings, and pedestrian bridges in various locations. How do you decide what type goes where?

They use a bunch of criteria, including your input if you write it on your comment card or tell it to someone who isn't a two dimensional character :)

Q4 If additional lanes are necessary on Highway 252 and/or I-94, what is the most effective way to use those new lanes?

If a lane is added on Hwy 252 and I-94 between Hwy 610 and Dowling Avenue, how could the lane be used?

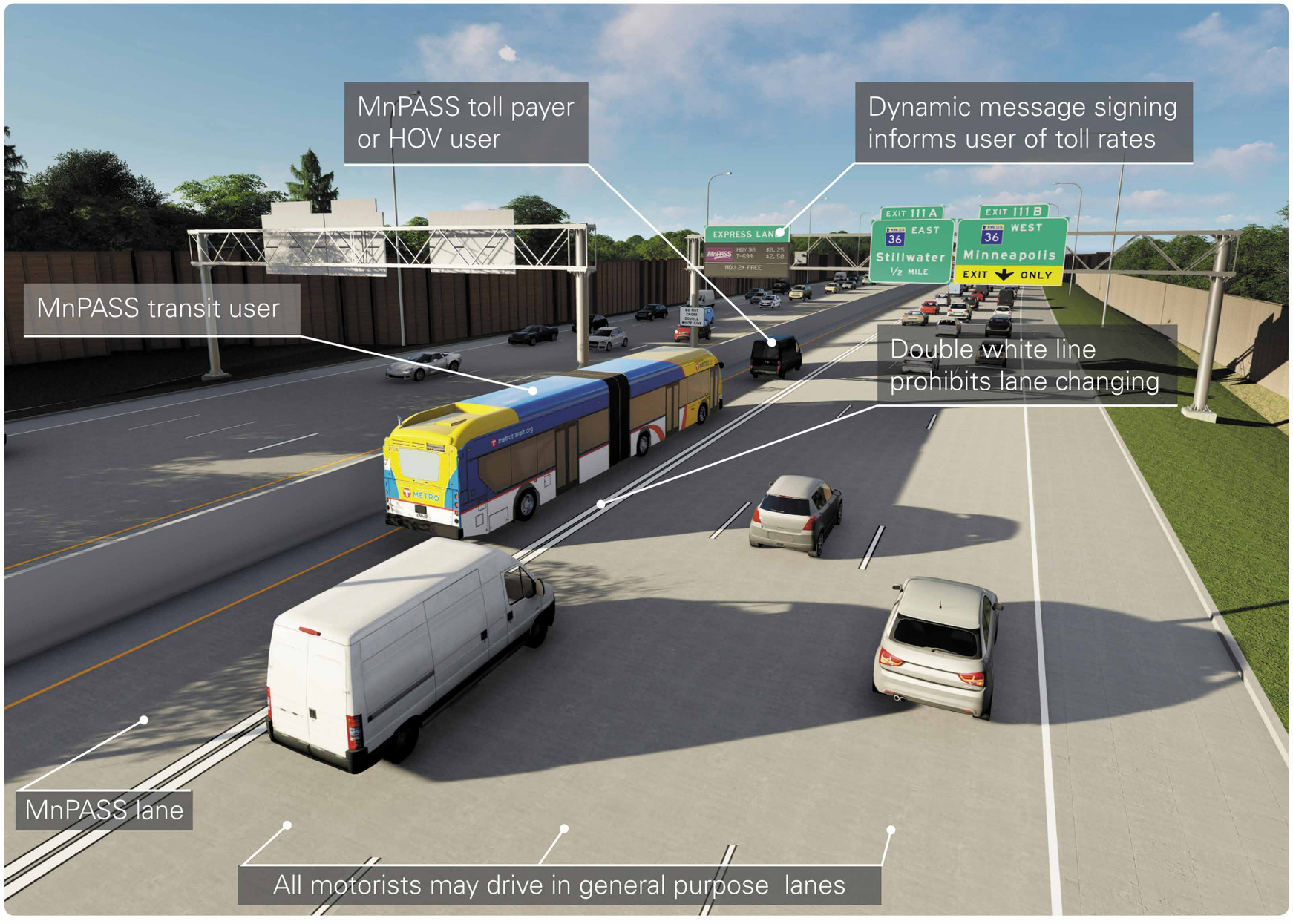
There are several options that we are going to evaluate, they may include a MnPASS lane.

Can you tell me more about what a MnPASS lane is?

Q4 If additional lanes are necessary on Highway 252 and/or I-94, what is the most effective way to use those new lanes?

MnPASS

MnPASS is a system of high-occupancy toll lanes on Twin Cities highways. During peak travel times buses, motorcycles, and vehicles with two or more occupants (including children or infants) may drive in the designated MnPASS Express Lanes for free. Solo motorists who have a MnPASS account and a MnPASS tag must pay a fee to drive in the MnPASS Express Lanes during peak-travel times. During non-peak travel times MnPASS lanes are open to all vehicles. MnPASS lanes are currently on I-394, I-35W south of downtown Minneapolis, and on I-35E north of downtown Saint Paul.



Decision-Making Process

- The alternatives you've seen here will be evaluated according to several criteria, including your input.
- The results of the evaluation will be considered by the Technical Advisory Committee, a group of engineers and planners from the project partner agencies.
- The Technical Advisory Committee will recommend a defined project to the Policy Advisory Committee, which is composed of elected and appointed officials from the project partners.
- The project definition will specify where and how many lanes the highway would have, locations of access, and access configurations.

Evaluation Criteria

- **Vehicle safety**
  - » Qualitative assessment
  - » Crash cost savings per year
- **Vehicle mobility**
  - » Roadway operations and levels of service
  - » Volume to capacity ratios
  - » Access to Hwy 252 and local connectivity
  - » Intersection/interchange spacing
  - » Changes in local travel times (emergency response time)
  - » Number of people per day
  - » Travel time savings
- **Reliability**
  - » On-time performance for Hwy 252 and I-94
- **Pedestrians and bicyclists**
  - » Connections across Hwy 252
  - » Access to destinations and transit
- **Transit and HOV**
  - » Transit ridership for Hwy 252 and I-94
  - » Consistency with state and regional plans
- **Impacts**
  - » Environmental justice
  - » Right of way
  - » Parks and trails
  - » Return on investment (benefit cost analysis)

What is an Environmental Review?

Once the definition of the project has been set, all of its potential impacts to the natural and built environments will be documented in the environmental assessment.

Potential impacts of the project to be studied in the environmental review include:

- Historic/cultural resources
- Parks
- Low-income populations
- Minority populations
- Water and stormwater
- Hazardous/contaminated sites
- Land acquisitions and relocations
- Vehicular traffic
- Transit
- Biking
- Walking
- Noise
- Air quality

How Would Improvements to Highway 252/I-94 be Funded?

Current Funding Sources*

- Corridors of Commerce state highway bonds – $119M
- Funding allocation includes:
  - » Converting Highway 252 to a freeway
  - » Interchange locations at: 66th Avenue, Brookdale Drive, and 85th Avenue
  - » MnPASS from Highway 610 to Dowling Avenue
- Local funding sources
  - » $17M for the 66th Avenue interchange (state and federal grants)
  - » $1.9M for the 70th Avenue pedestrian overpass (federal grant)
  - » $5.5M for the 66th Avenue interchange (City of Brooklyn Center)
  - » $7M for the 85th Avenue interchange (Hennepin County)

*Funding allocated through Corridors of Commerce and other competitive funding programs requires the projects to match the original intended project definition to receive funding.