



PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL INTERSECTION CONVERSION STUDY

LOCAL PLANNING
HANDBOOK

WHAT DID THE STUDY ADDRESS?

Many local agencies have expressed a desire to pursue state and federal transportation funding to convert at-grade intersections (primarily busy intersections with traffic signals) to grade-separated interchanges to reduce congestion and increase safety. New interchanges are often costly and cannot be delivered in the foreseeable future due to funding constraints. **Given these financial limitations, the main objective of the Principal Arterial Intersection Conversion Study (2017) was to set priorities for potential grade-separation projects (high, medium, low) based on existing transportation problems, needs, and context.** The study focused solely on the most important roadways in the region called principal arterials.

The Study also recognized the importance of considering lower-cost/high-benefit at-grade treatments such as adding turn lanes that could improve intersection mobility and safety without the expense of a new interchange.

DOES MY COMMUNITY HAVE A PRIORITIZED INTERSECTION? WHAT DO THE PRIORITIES MEAN?

The map on the next page provides an overview of the results. This list was reduced from the original study list of nearly 400 intersections. Therefore, any of the priorities locations shown on the map have documented transportation issues. The results provide high-level guidance for the “right-sizing” of potential projects as follows:

- **High-Priority Intersections** – The High-Priority intersections often exhibit needs that can justify an interchange. They should be analyzed in more detail as part of a corridor study to determine the right-sized investments.
- **Medium-Priority Intersections** – The Medium-Priority intersections typically do not need interchange projects based on current demand. However, additional studies at these locations could show needs for high-capacity at-grade improvements or limited/emerging needs for an interchange.
- **Low-Priority Intersections** – The Low-Priority intersections are low priority for a future interchange, but have transportation issues. The scale of the problems that can most likely be addressed with at-grade projects like the addition of turn lanes. However, some Low-Priority intersections are located on corridors near Medium- and High-Priority intersections or may be in growth areas.

HOW DOES THIS STUDY INFLUENCE LOCAL PLANNING?

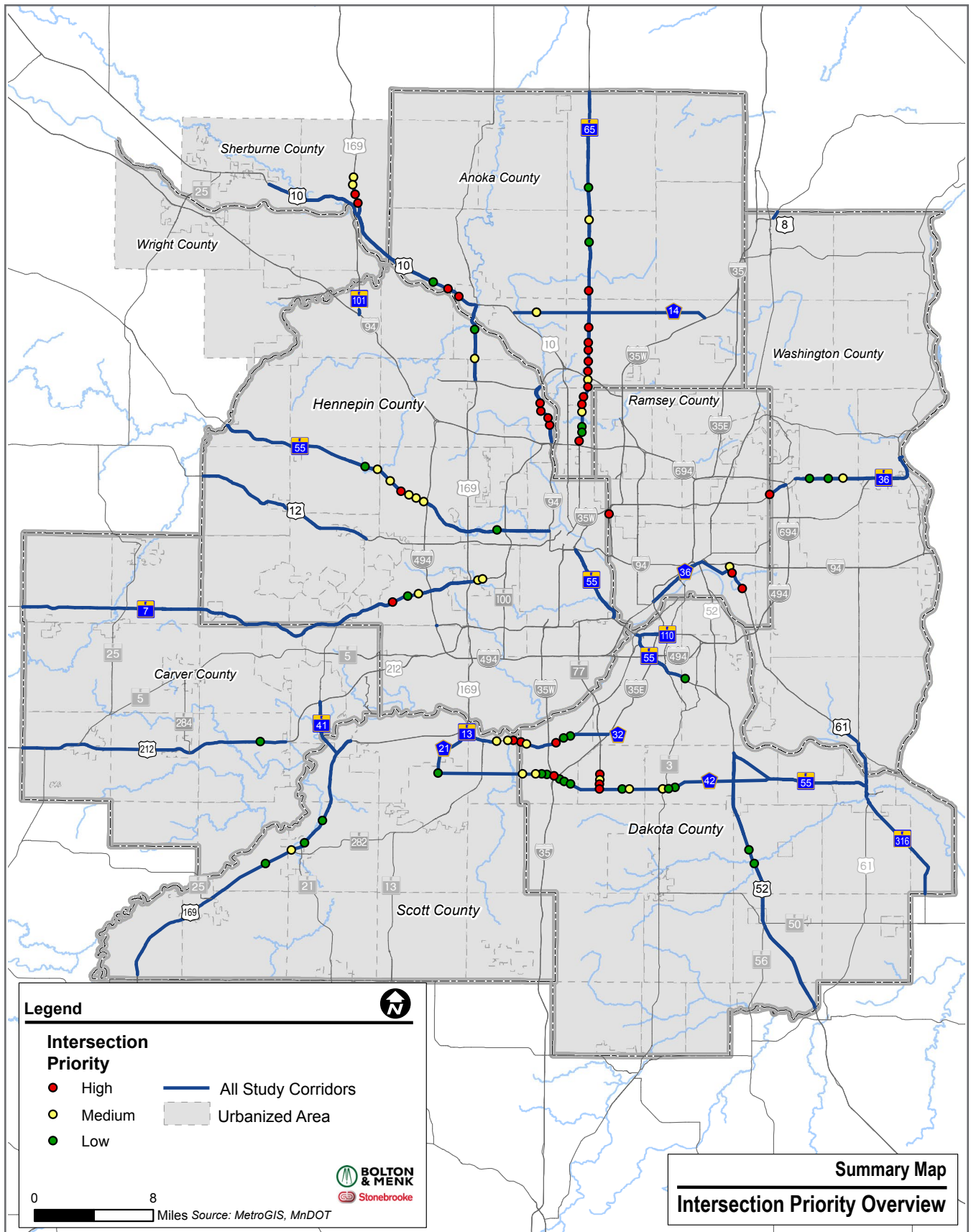
Intersection priorities were not included on the community system statements so there is no requirement to reference them in comprehensive plans updates. However, all of the prioritized intersections have documented transportation issues that local agencies may want to identify in their Transportation Plans. There is currently no funding source for the intersections, but the Council and MnDOT intend to use the study priorities to help select projects that apply for competitive funding sources such as the Regional Solicitation.

The results of this Study can provide the basis for additional corridor studies. In addition, the Study could be referenced to support transportation planning and project strategies in local transportation or comprehensive plans. Study results may guide community decisions including:

- Planning for frontage/backage roads and access modifications,
- Potential cross-street functional classification changes,
- The need or lack thereof for public agencies to hold right-of-way and easements around an intersection depending on priority level.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Additional details on the Study and intersection priorities can be found on the Council’s website: metro council.org/PAICS



July 2017