Application

19831 - 2024 Unique Projects
20491 - Our Streets Minneapolis: Building Awareness of Transportation Impact on Environmental Health
Regional Solicitation - Unique Projects

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Primary Contact

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Name:* He/him/his (Pronouns) | Jose (First Name) | Antonio (Middle Name) | Zayas Cabán (Last Name)

Title: Executive Director

Department:

Email: jose@ourstreetsmpls.org

Address: 701 N 3rd St

* Minneapolis (City) | Minnesota (State/Province) | 55401 (Postal Code/Zip)

Phone:* 660-349-9294 (Phone) Ext.

Fax:

What Grant Programs are you most interested in? Regional Solicitation - Unique Projects

Organization Information

Name: OUR STREETS MNNEAPOLIS

Jurisdictional Agency (if different):

Organization Type: In-State not for profit

Organization Website: https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/

Address: 701 N 3rd ST
Suite 001A

* Minneapolis (City) | Minnesota (State/Province) | 55401 (Postal Code/Zip)

County: Hennepin

Phone:* 612-568-6227 Ext.

Fax:

PeopleSoft Vendor Number

Project Information

Project Name Our Streets Minneapolis: Building Awareness of Transportation Impact on Environmental Health

Primary County where the Project is Located Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington

Cities or Townships where the Project is Located: Minneapolis, Saint Paul

Jurisdictional Agency (If Different than the Applicant):

Brief Project Description (Include location, road name/functional class, type of improvement, etc.)	This public education and awareness-building project by Our Streets encompasses the entire Twin Cities Metro area, which is home to multiple, nearly forgotten, neighborhood corridors that were originally vibrant, walkable communities divided by the construction of inner city highways like Olson Memorial Highway and Interstate 94. Neighborhoods like Cedar Riverside, the most diverse neighborhood in Minnesota, Near North Minneapolis (the first black American neighborhood divided by a highway in Minnesota), Rondo, and Frogtown have been disrupted by highways, and left with the highest levels of carbon emissions in the metro area and limited economic opportunities. To address these historical and ongoing harms, our project will progress in three linked phases over the span of 24 months. Phase I features deep community engagement and outreach, including door-knocking residences around the region to gain a person-centered perspective on the harms that transportation and infrastructure decisions have had, and how we can center racial equity in creating community preferred alternatives to highway projects. Phase II includes visioning sessions, detailed studies, modeling for transportation and land use, and community partnership building as we move toward community-preferred alternatives that lift up the needs and goals of marginalized residents. In Phase III we will create a community preferred alternative to the current highway infrastructure that has harmed BIPOC and other marginalized communities. Through this approach, we will develop a replicable process for deep and authentic community engagement with communities harmed by transportation decisions. Through this deeply community-driven approach, this project will offer a unique lens on transportation planning that centers the histories, experiences, perspectives, and goals of residents who have not typically had a voice in regional decision-making. This people-first engagement will drive equitable co-created solutions that lead to environmental improvements, better air quality, greater connectivity and access to places for BIPOC communities, and more.
(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)	
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) DESCRIPTION - will be used in TIP if the project is selected for funding. See MnDOT's TIP description guidance.	Our Streets Minneapolis: Building Awareness of Transportation Impact on Environmental Health
Include both the CSAH/MSAS/TH references and their corresponding street names in the TIP Description (see Resources link on Regional Solicitation webpage for examples).	
Project Length (Miles)	0
to the nearest one-tenth of a mile	

Project Funding

Are you applying for competitive funds from another source(s) to implement this project?	Yes
If yes, please identify the source(s)	McKnight Foundation
Federal Amount	$2,640,000.00
Match Amount	$660,000.00
Minimum of 20% of project total	
Project Total	$3,300,000.00

For transit projects, the total cost for the application is total cost minus fare revenues.

Match Percentage 20.0%

Minimum of 20%
Compute the match percentage by dividing the match amount by the project total

Source of Match Funds McKnight Foundation, Our Streets Minneapolis unrestricted funds, Individual donations

A minimum of 20% of the total project cost must come from non-federal sources; additional match funds over the 20% minimum can come from other federal sources

Preferred Program Year

Select one: 2026, 2027

Select 2026 or 2027 for TDM and Unique projects only. For all other applications, select 2028 or 2029.

Additional Program Years: 2025, 2026, 2027

Select all years that are feasible if funding in an earlier year becomes available.

For All Projects

County, City, or Lead Agency Public entity sponsor to be determined after after project is selected to receive funding

Zip Code where Majority of Work is Being Performed

For Construction Projects Only

(Approximate) Begin Construction Date

(Approximate) End Construction Date

TERMINI: (Termini listed must be within 0.3 miles of any work)

From:
(Intersection or Address)

To:
(Intersection or Address)

DO NOT INCLUDE LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Requirements - All Projects

All Projects

1. The project must be consistent with the goals and policies in these adopted regional plans: Thrive MSP 2040 (2014), the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (2018), the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (2018), and the 2040 Water Resources Policy Plan (2015).

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

2. The project must be consistent with the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan. Reference the 2040 Transportation Plan goals, objectives, and strategies that relate to the project.

Briefly list the goals, objectives, strategies, and associated pages: The project's commitment to expanding multimodal transportation and repairing disparities also aligns with the 2040 TPP's goals. For example, each phase of our project aims to achieve this outcome in the 2040 TPP: "Plan, build and operate a transportation system that protects the natural environment as well as communities most affected by highway noise, compromised air quality, and splintered neighborhoods. This includes advancing equity for historically underserved and underrepresented people, and contributing to our communities' livability and sustainability."

Page 4: https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Publications-And-Resources/Planning/2040-TRANSPORTATION-POLICY-PLAN-(2020-version)/Chapters/Overview.aspx

Limit 2,800 characters, approximately 400 words

3. The project or the transportation problem/need that the project addresses must be in a local planning or programming document. Reference the name of the appropriate comprehensive plan, regional/statewide plan, capital improvement program, corridor study document [studies on trunk highway must be approved by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council], or other official plan or program of the applicant agency [includes Safe Routes to School Plans] that the project is included in and/or a transportation problem/need that the project addresses.

List the applicable documents and pages: Unique projects are exempt from this qualifying requirement because of their innovative nature. N/A for unique projects

Limit 2,800 characters, approximately 400 words

4. The project must exclude costs for studies, preliminary engineering, design, or construction engineering. Right-of-way costs are only eligible as part of transit stations/stops, transit terminals, park-and-ride facilities, or pool-and-ride lots. Noise barriers, drainage projects, fences, landscaping, etc., are not eligible for funding as a standalone project, but can be included as part of the larger submitted project, which is otherwise eligible. Unique project costs are limited to those that are federally eligible.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

5. Applicant is a public agency (e.g., county, city, tribal government, transit provider, etc.) or non-profit organization (TDM and Unique Projects applicants only). Applicants that are not State Aid cities or counties in the seven-county metro area with populations over 5,000 must contact the MnDOT Metro State Aid Office prior to submitting their application to determine if a public agency sponsor is required.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

6. Applicants must not submit an application for the same project elements in more than one funding application category.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

7. The requested funding amount must be more than or equal to the minimum award and less than or equal to the maximum award. The cost of preparing a project for funding authorization can be substantial. For that reason, minimum federal amounts apply. Other federal funds may be combined with the requested funds for projects exceeding the maximum award, but the source(s) must be identified in the application. Funding amounts by application category are listed below in Table 1. For unique projects, the minimum award is $500,000 and the maximum award is the total amount available each funding cycle (approximately $4,000,000 for the 2024 funding cycle).

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

8. The project must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

9. In order for a selected project to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and approved by USDOT, the public agency sponsor must either have a current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation or transition plan that covers the public right of way/transportation, as required under Title II of the ADA. The plan must be completed by the local agency before the Regional Solicitation application deadline. For the 2022 Regional Solicitation funding cycle, this requirement may include that the plan is updated within the past five years.

The applicant is a public agency that employs 50 or more people and has a completed ADA transition plan that covers the public right of way/transportation.

The applicant is a public agency that employs fewer than 50 people and has a completed ADA self-evaluation that covers the public right of way/transportation.

(TDM and Unique Project Applicants Only) The applicant is not a public agency subject to the self-evaluation requirements in Title II of the ADA.

Date plan completed:

Link to plan:

Date self-evaluation completed:

Link to plan:

Upload plan or self-evaluation if there is no link

Upload as PDF

10. The project must be accessible and open to the general public.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

11. The owner/operator of the facility must operate and maintain the project year-round for the useful life of the improvement, per FHWA direction established 8/27/2008 and updated 6/27/2017. Unique projects are exempt from this qualifying requirement.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

12. The project must represent a permanent improvement with independent utility. The term ?independent utility? means the project provides benefits described in the application by itself and does not depend on any construction elements of the project being funded from other sources outside the regional solicitation, excluding the required non-federal match. Projects that include traffic management or transit operating funds as part of a construction project are exempt from this policy.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

13. The project must not be a temporary construction project. A temporary construction project is defined as work that must be replaced within five years and is ineligible for funding. The project must also not be staged construction where the project will be replaced as part of future stages. Staged construction is eligible for funding as long as future stages build on, rather than replace, previous work.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

14. The project applicant must send written notification regarding the proposed project to all affected state and local units of government prior to submitting the application.

Check the box to indicate that the project meets this requirement. Yes

Measure 1: Significance

A. Describe the regional impact of the project. In the response, consider the following:

- *How many people does the project directly impact?*
- *What percent of the people (in a given community/area) are directly impacted?*
- *What is the project?s geographic reach?*

Response:

Geographically, our public education and awareness-building project encompasses the 7-county metro area, with a focus on inner ring suburbs and neighborhoods adjacent to highways. We will directly impact roughly 1,000,000 households through our canvassing in areas adjacent to Olson Memorial Highway and I-94. These households represent ~33% of the 7-county Metro population.

Regional Solicitation Grant funds will be instrumental in expanding our outreach to engage residents in all seven counties, helping us better understand the harms transportation has on communities and how we can equitably address these concerns through community co-created solutions.

Our proposed project unfolds in three progressive phases.

Phase I: Grant start date to 6 months

The first six months of the grant period will center on deep engagement, from urban center communities to rural agricultural areas. This will include door-knocking 1,000,000 residences to gain a nuanced perspective on the harms that transportation and infrastructure decisions have had, and how we can center equity in creating community-preferred alternatives to highway projects. Leveraging partnerships with Mapping Prejudice Project and UMN Heritage Studies and Public History, our canvassing will include education about racial covenants, the cultural significance of pre-highway 6th Avenue North and Cedar-Riverside, and the cycles of racial and environmental disparities linked to highways.

Phase II: 6 months to 18 months

Phase II will include more visioning events and engagement. During this period, we will work with planning consultants to generate traffic, land use, and other models to operationalize our engagement findings. To move toward community-preferred alternatives, Our Streets will coordinate visioning sessions, detailed studies, modeling for transportation and land use, and community partnership building. Because of the geographic diversity in different community designations around the Twin Cities, we will tailor this engagement to each community the project reaches to ensure that marginalized groups' perspectives are seen and heard.

Phase III: 18 months to 24 months

The third and final phase will culminate in creating a community-preferred alternative to the current highway infrastructure that has harmed adjacent communities. Through this approach, we will develop a replicable process for authentic engagement with communities marginalized by transportation decisions. These communities are also disproportionately BIPOC and low-income, further emphasizing the need to advocate for mobility justice moving forward. This will position our region as a leader in reparative engagement and planning practices, and will advance regional equity priorities.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

B. Describe the expandability of the project. If the project requires an adequate private market response, describe the characteristics of the market it could serve beyond the initial project. In the response, consider the following:

- *How can the idea be used regionwide?*
- *If not regionwide, is it a replicable project (i.e., could it be adapted elsewhere)? Describe the extent of the potential locations.*

Response:

Our project centers on engagement and developing educational materials, modeling, GIS mapping, and other dynamic content to better understand and center community perspectives in transportation planning. By its nature, this project can be scaled region-wide with adequate resources to hire staff, work with community, research, and planning partners, and fund events to engage with residents.

The strength of this approach is in centering community perspectives to address entrenched transportation inequities that affect marginalized populations across our region. The scalability of the project will result in engagement across the region to best understand community needs and center these in future highway and transportation planning.

Our approach would begin with canvassing 1,000,000 residences in diverse communities across the 7-county Metro. This approach ensures that our project touches the entire region and meets residents where they are to engage with them on the effects of transportation in their community, and learn how we can center their perspectives in future projects.

Further engagement in all types of communities, from urban communities such as Cedar- Riverside and Near North along urban highway corridors, to suburban and rural communities that may have different relationships with transportation infrastructure, will be conducted through events and surveys that will have regionwide reach.

The final phase, which is the creation of a community preferred alternative to highway projects, will encompass perspectives from affected communities around our region, expanding the regional reach and significance of our project. Across all phases of the project, Our Streets will focus on creating a replicable process for adaptable, nimble community engagement so that other communities can leverage our approach and learnings to reach new communities beyond our region.

Our Streets is confident that our approach will be successful in that it builds on proven community engagement we have already conducted. Our outreach team has recently knocked more than 70,000 doors, collaborated on historical studies and GIS story mapping, and hosted events that invite community members to envision thriving neighborhoods. We are also encouraged by the knowledge that other communities have seen healthy outcomes from projects involving highway alternatives. For example, when the city of San Francisco converted its double-decker central freeway to a boulevard option, the neighborhood around the former highway saw benefits in the form of housing upgrades, infill development, and commercial property development. (This and other examples are included in our supporting technical information attached with this proposal.)

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

C. Describe the new approach of the project to address existing and/or emerging challenge(s). Identify the challenge(s) that the approach is trying to address and discuss how the approach was developed (e.g., replicated from another region, created a new technology/idea). Also briefly describe the risk assessment of the new approach any mitigation strategies to manage risks, and who will mitigate the risk, if needed.

Examples of challenges include:

- *Problems that have been a long-term issue where progress has been limited*
- *Lack of opportunity for an emerging technology or innovation to penetrate the Twin Cities market*
- *Leveraging connected and automated (CAV) vehicle technology and infrastructure*
- *Outdated function or effectiveness of existing infrastructure*

Response:

Our project takes an innovative approach to addressing a longstanding challenge facing the region: the harmful effects of highway construction dating back nearly a century. Olson Memorial Highway has been disrupting and disenfranchising communities of color and other marginalized groups since its construction in the 1930s, while the construction of I-94 in the 1960s caused similar damage across both Minneapolis and Saint Paul, especially among majority communities of color like Cedar-Riverside and Rondo. The highways have created environmental harm, racial inequities, disconnected communities, and other harms we seek to repair.

Public engagement and community consent are key aspects of this project. BIPOC and other marginalized residents have long been asked to bear the burdens of highways that divided their communities without having a voice in solutions to those disparities. It is time to ask them what solutions will support their vision for streets and neighborhoods that improve their quality of life. Our contextual, person-centered approach is unique and will be additive through its focus on the historical experiences of marginalized residents with transportation disparities, and by centering their ideas for non-highway alternatives through an equity lens.

While entities in power, such as MnDOT, are becoming more willing to consider highway alternatives to outdated infrastructure, Our Streets will conduct meaningful engagement with communities to ensure "top down" approaches do not steer future work away from the community's vision. Our engagement will ensure local communities understand the opportunities of a highway to boulevard conversion, and can easily participate in the planning, decision-making, and implementation phases of our project.

This project centers traditionally marginalized communities through our unique approach, and would position the Twin Cities region on the cutting edge of inclusive and holistic community engagement. Our project is new in its plan to connect community engagement, co-creation, public history, and GIS mapping to generate solutions that can be adopted by MnDOT and the Met Council, and address the high-level VMT, climate, and infrastructure challenges we are all committed to solving. Our Streets will roll out the project in three phases:

Phase I: Conducting meaningful public engagement and education on the harms transportation infrastructure present to communities. This includes deep engagement with residents across the region through canvassing, visioning sessions and engagement events, surveys, and creating detailed historical and data-driven web and print content that creates a holistic understanding of the harms transportation causes on communities.

Phase II: Continuing to conduct visioning and other engagement events, with a focus on removing barriers to participation by providing food, transportation, childcare, and language translation to allow all residents to participate. We would also partner with research institutions like the University of Minnesota, national planning consultancies, and traffic modeling firms to model land use and transportation elements that centers the perspectives of the communities most affected by historical transportation system inequities.

Phase III: This project will culminate in creating a community preferred alternative

to highway projects in our region, which will allow the Met Council and MnDOT to better understand community needs and perspectives and prioritize diverse multi-modal transportation alternatives to highway projects. This will position the Twin Cities as a national leader in deep engagement to repair longstanding historical harms that transportation decisions have had on communities in and beyond our region.

Risk mitigation: Moving faster than the speed of trust is one risk in pursuing ambitious projects. We will mitigate this through our clearly phased and inclusive approach to engaging community members. Further, our studies with technical partners will integrate community feedback to ensure we address concerns through robust data and modeled non-highway solutions that truly reflect community voice.

(Limit 4,200 characters; approximately 600 words)

Measure 2: Environmental Impact

A. Describe how the project will improve regional air quality.

Applicants must describe their methodology for determining the project impact. Also, provide a description of the people/groups that will receive either direct or indirect benefits from the project. Examples of benefits include:

- *Reduction of single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips*
- *Access to electric vehicle charging stations*
- *Reduction of peak-hour auto trips*
- *Increase in non-motorized trips*
- *Increase in multiple-occupant vehicle trips*

Response:

Our community preferred highway alternative will prioritize a multimodal approach to regional transportation that improves air quality. Our community engagement and events prioritize feedback from residents to co-create grassroots movements that lead to more walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented communities and reduce SOV trips and the adverse environmental impacts of existing transportation infrastructures. With 52% of all vehicle trips being 3 miles or less (Bureau Transportation, 2021), we see an opportunity for people to choose walking or biking over car travel once informed about the environmental benefits.

Our Streets has already made strides to support multimodal solutions. Our Bring Back 6th advocacy led to a city resolution in support of decommissioning the Olson Highway. Similar community buy-in has grown around our Twin Cities Boulevard project. These developments are markers of success as they reflect structural commitments and action steps from key decision-makers.

Our education and engagement project will create awareness around how converting highways to multimodal boulevards can reconnect, repair, and revitalize communities. By promoting multi-modal transportation alternatives and centering on reconnecting once vibrant, we can give residents a viable alternative to car-based commuting.

These efforts will reduce regionwide VMT (already a goal of MnDOT) and SOV trips as commuters will have transportation options that produce lower greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), car traffic is a leading source of pollution in BIPOC and low-income communities along highway corridors. Any reduction in emissions from cars and trucks moving through the region will have regional impact in advancing climate resilient transportation and improving air quality.

These changes can have a measurable impact on community health as well as the environment of our region. The 55411 zip code neighboring Olson Memorial Highway and I-94 has the highest rate of asthma hospitalization in Minnesota. By improving air quality, our project can lead to lower asthma rates and reduced urban heat island effects associated with highway land use.

Our Streets will use a range of methods for measuring impact, including the tool we used to coordinate our canvassing, which allows us to track the success of our door-knocking and other engagement. Further, reaching a community preferred highway alternative by the end of Phase III will be an impact measure in itself, speaking to our success in deeply engaging communities and collaborating with partners to produce people-first modeling options. We will also work with partners like MPCA to track measurable improvements in air quality.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

B. Describe how the project will contribute to climate change improvement. Explain how the project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Response:

Through engagement with communities and urban planning partners, our project will build a deep understanding of the different transportation challenges facing our communities, challenges that will only be exacerbated by climate change. Our project will advocate for a rapid transition from driving to walking, biking, and transit, which the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and State of Minnesota have all determined will contribute to climate change improvement.

The city, county, and state have put goals in place for reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and advancing mode shift. Our project will conduct widespread engagement to ensure that this mobility transition happens equitably and, critically, that it centers traditionally marginalized communities in co-creating solutions.

The global impact of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation is clear, as transportation is the largest greenhouse gas emissions sector in the state of Minnesota. While electric cars are one solution to emissions issues from transportation, creating multimodal communities with diverse options for transit, biking, and walking best serve BIPOC and low-income communities who are already excluded from car ownership due to high costs.

MnDOT, like peer agencies across the US, has a legacy set of transportation planning and analysis tools that were developed and have evolved to plan highway systems for the convenience of motorists. While the agency recognizes the harms that past practices have created, there is a need for the planning and analysis tools to catch up to our current awareness of phenomena such as induced travel, mode shift, and future land use changes resulting from transportation investments. These are important tools to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, so addressing them accurately is imperative.

Our Streets will partner with nationally recognized consultants at Toole Design, Visible City, and Smart Mobility to ensure that current best practices in planning and analyzing urban transportation systems are incorporated into this project. Our Streets and our consultant partners are prepared to work with MnDOT to update and pilot these best practices and apply them to the same regional highway projects for which community preferred alternatives are made.

As shown in the extreme heat and growing shade story maps and web tools by the Met Council, communities along highway corridors are subjected to much higher impacts of the urban heat island effect due to highway land use and lack of tree canopy. This project will improve these local climate change impacts as well by engaging with communities to create resiliency and pragmatic responses to these emerging threats.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

C. Describe how the project will improve surface or ground water quality and management. Examples of improvements include:

- *Reduction of stormwater runoff and improvements to on-site stormwater management*
- *Improvements to the resiliency of infrastructure in response to stormwater events*

Response:

This project will improve surface and groundwater quality by incorporating design elements to remove impervious surfaces and add plants. Rather than running straight off the road and carrying pollutants to the Mississippi River and other surface and ground watersheds, planted boulevards and trees will filter surface water and improve water quality before percolation to groundwater or eventual runoff.

Stormwater runoff will be reduced in multiple ways. As shared above, these projects reduce the amount of impervious surface relative to what we have now. Stormwater runoff is so high in cities because of the large amount of impervious paved surfaces, transporting pollutants to our waterways and potentially creating flooding concerns. With the opportunity to redesign the corridor, we could resurface the corridor using permeable pavement and other innovative road and sidewalk surfaces. By piloting the use of these surfaces, we can reduce the traditional impervious roadway surfaces that lead to pollution through runoff and other ground and surface water issues.

By reducing impervious surfaces and replacing some of the paved surface area with vegetated boulevards, we will reduce stormwater runoff volume. Much of the water will slowly infiltrate into soil rather than moving fast over the land surface, reducing stormwater flow. It is well-established that increasing porous, vegetated surface area reduces runoff as compared to paved surfaces. Our project will also prioritize designing vegetated boulevards as rain gardens with native plantings to filter pollutants from precipitation and stormwater. Further, the addition of trees will result in canopy interception of precipitation, reducing the overall amount of water that reaches the ground.

These improvements are especially critical given that Twin Cities highway infrastructure was built before the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Clean Air and Water Acts. Without that oversight, there was little to no analysis of the impacts of the highways on surface or groundwater.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

D. Describe how the project will make other environmental improvements. Examples of other environmental elements include:

- *Protection of or enhancement to wildlife habitat or movement*
- *Protection of or enhancement to natural vegetation, particularly native vegetation*
- *Reductions in or mitigation of noise or light pollution*

Response:

Our highway alternative projects will have major benefits for wildlife habitat, along with other environmental improvements. Currently, Olson Memorial Highway and I-94 are barriers that restrict wildlife movement, limit access to greenspace, and subject surrounding neighborhoods to elevated levels of noise, air, and light pollution. Olson Memorial Highway separates North Minneapolis from portions of Theodore Wirth Park and Bassett Creek, while the I-94 corridor runs through many Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods that have limited access to parks and greenspace, and creates a barrier that limits access to the Mississippi River National River and Recreation Area.

Our highway alternative projects are an opportunity to build transportation infrastructure that addresses these environmental impacts. Our community engagement and education would allow residents to co-create project options that convert the highways into multimodal streets with enhanced walkability, bikeability, and public transit access. This would reduce vehicle miles traveled, along with their resulting air and noise pollution. These projects would also repurpose highway land to create new linear parks and trails, enhanced street connections, and new greenspace that incorporates native plant species that are resistant to future climate change.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

Measure 3: Racial Equity

A. Describe how the project will improve connectivity and access to places and opportunity for black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. Examples of improvements include:

- *Better connecting people to places, but also demonstrating an understanding of the places people want to go*
- *Connecting communities where known gaps exist (document why connection is needed and where that documentation was sourced from)*
- *Outreach to, and involvement from, BIPOC communities in project selection, development, or delivery*

Response:

Our project will center BIPOC and low-income communities in shaping transportation decisions that forever alter their communities and the built environment. This includes reconnecting the community with diverse transportation options that fit their needs and preferences and facilitating investment in community-driven redevelopment. This work will connect people to places by creating greater access to small business spaces, grocery stores, health care facilities, schools, community spaces, and other amenities that address social determinants of health. These improvements will improve connectivity as they repair historical harms and close gaps that have divided the community and broken connections.

Community partners and residents will be centered in this approach and engaged through the outreach phases of the project. In phase I, we will connect through canvassing and surveys, communicating with residents to identify transportation gaps in their community, preferred highway alternatives, and other emerging issues and opportunities in communities of our region.

Phase II will involve more engagement through inclusive and accessible visioning sessions.

Phase III will culminate in the development of community preferred alternatives to highway projects in communities across the region, helping the Met Council, MnDOT, and others make community centered policy decisions.

Generating community preferred alternatives is essential given the cultural erasure and community disruption brought on by the highway infrastructure. For example, Olson Memorial Highway in North Minneapolis was once a vibrant, predominately Black-owned business corridor called 6th Avenue North. The area was also a cornerstone of the Jewish community in Minneapolis and was one of the few neighborhoods in the city open to immigrants and people of color.

Construction of the highway was approved in 1933, making it the first example in the Twin Cities of an urban highway constructed to displace the communities living there. By the end of the 1930s, hundreds of businesses and homes along the route were destroyed and replaced with a wide highway cutting through the neighborhoods. The city justified both phases by labeling the neighborhood as "blighted," though the deterioration in the buildings and streets were largely due to long-term disinvestment in the neighborhood combined with systemic racism in employment and home loan practices.

This story is not singular in our region, where countless other communities have been marginalized by past transportation and infrastructure decisions. Our focus on studying both the past and the future through a lens of class and racial equity will bring a unique element to transportation planning that other groups are not equipped to provide.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

B. Describe how the project will remove or lessen barriers to movement, participation, or cultural recognition. Examples of improvements include:

- *Physical barriers being addressed (directly or indirectly)*
- *Cultural barriers being addressed (language, etc.)*
- *Engagement barrier being addressed (improving systemic outreach issues)*

Response:

Many highway facilities are unsafe for both drivers and non-drivers. For example, Olson Memorial Highway is included on the City of Minneapolis high injury street network, and the intersection of Olson Memorial Highway and Lyndale Avenue North has the highest crash and injury rate in Minneapolis. Crossing locations are widely spaced and pedestrians must cross six or more lanes of vehicle traffic. Imperiling pedestrians further, the design of the highway makes speeding common.

Accessibility is another concern, as many pedestrian ramps do not meet ADA standards. There is no bicycle infrastructure, and sidewalks are dimly lit. The Near North community has been seeking safety improvements for decades, and the lack of equitable solutions from MnDOT and the City has been a consistent theme during door-knocking conversations by Our Streets.

The Near North neighborhood is about one mile from any significant green spaces and outdoor recreational sites, yet the only connection is the highway, which accommodates only motor vehicles. Reconfiguration of this corridor would provide a safe, healthy, and equitable way for people in the Near North to access one of the most notable parks in the region, Theodore Wirth.

Cultural, Language, and Engagement Barriers:

Our Streets has a proven track record of conducting meaningful community engagement and education with communities in the Twin Cities Metro. We work across a spectrum of intersecting issues, from social determinants of health like transportation and housing to systemic racism and environmental justice, because marginalized communities face interlinked challenges connected to all these issues. Core to this work is building coalitions with key groups and local stakeholders, deeply engaging with community members, and empowering them with the tools to have agency in public processes that shape their community.

Our engagement approach lowers language, logistical, and cultural barriers to participation in meaningful education and outreach.

These efforts include:

Culturally sensitive engagement and events that create welcoming spaces for people of all cultural backgrounds to share their perspectives and stories, and to guide community preferred highway alternatives.

Lowering language barriers by translating content and engaging residents in English, Spanish, Somali, and other languages.

Reducing logistical barriers to participation by compensating community members and partners for their time and providing food, transportation, childcare, and other support that creates accessibility

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

C. Describe how the project will contribute to quality-of-life improvements for BIPOC communities. Examples of improvements include:

- *Placemaking or strengthening a sense of place*
- *A sense of safety or security*
- *Job creation, increased economic development*
- *Access to green space and recreation*
- *Improved public health (excluding environmental impacts discussed in criterion two)*

Response:

As part of our engagement in Phase I of the project, we will uplift BIPOC histories obscured by highway construction, time, and racial animus. By sharing these stories and giving residents a role in defining outcomes for highway alternatives, we will create a sense of community ownership in shaping transportation options and creating access to amenities such as greenspace, recreation, and urban services, all leading to quality-of-life improvements for BIPOC communities.

Community Health: Reduced air quality leads to higher asthma rates and highway land use often causes urban heat island effects in communities along highway corridors. Centering health and environment will allow for multi-modal development in the area, reducing negative impacts to health from transportation, and creating more resilience to health threats like extreme heat that will be exacerbated by climate change. Our project will also prioritize community driven development of highway land to bring more health services into traditionally underserved areas, including clinics, pharmacies, and nursing facilities.

Jobs and Economic Development: The restoration of 6th Avenue North would generate a large number of temporary construction jobs. The project would also create many new permanent jobs in new businesses along the corridor as we encourage entrepreneurship and inclusive development. We are organizing benchmarks and policies to ensure that new business and employment opportunities are prioritized for existing residents, with a focus on BIPOC community members who have traditionally been left out of wealth-building opportunities.

Opportunities: Community restoration, stabilization, and anti-displacement strategies are core components of community preferred alternatives. As work on transforming the highway advances, it is critical that intentional policies and programs are implemented to ensure the project does not cause further displacement and gentrification, and that repurposed highway land is prioritized for existing community members. We will accomplish this by working with community partners and policymakers to recommend community centered interventions to promote opportunities for existing BIPOC and low-income residents.

Access to Greenspace: Accessible greenspace and community health are intertwined priorities, both diminished by the presence of highway-dividing communities. For example,the Near North in Minneapolis neighborhood is about one mile from any significant green spaces and outdoor recreational sites, yet the only connection is the highway, which accommodates only motor vehicles. Reconfiguration of this corridor would provide a safe, healthy, and equitable way for people in the Near North to access Theodore Wirth, a great space for recreation.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

Measure 4: Multimodal Communities

A. Describe how the project improves multiple non-single-occupant vehicle (SOV) modes within the system (e.g., transit, biking, walking, carpooling). Examples of improvements include:

- *Creating interconnectivity between modes*
- *Creating structures or facilities that serve multiple modes*
- *Improvements to multimodal trip planning or ease of use*

Response:

Expanding multimodal transportation access is a core focus of this project. We seek to expand community engagement and input to co-create a vision and highway alternative solutions for the Olson Memorial Highway and Rethinking I-94 corridors. These community-led solutions will expand access to walking, biking, public transit, and car-sharing while de-emphasizing personal automobiles. Creating these easily accessible multimodal options will have wide-ranging benefits to our community, including greater social connectivity and more vibrant, thriving neighborhoods.

I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway and have divided neighborhoods and destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, restricting walkable access to small businesses, recreation, and daily needs. Today, both highways run through dense urban neighborhoods with high populations of transit dependent households.

Our project would ensure that impacted community members across the 7-county Metro have an opportunity to engage with realistic project designs that repurpose highway infrastructure with multimodal streets that reflect their transportation needs and goals. Visioning sessions would bring together engineers, planners, and artists to gather community priorities and answer questions about possible designs. This feedback will be used to create an iterative process that ultimately produces a community preferred alternative for both project corridors.

Increasing the number of walkable businesses and neighborhood amenities has consistently been mentioned as a desired project outcome in our community engagement to date. Replacing urban highways with multimodal streets allows the remaining land to be repurposed for new housing, businesses, parks, and other uses. Through both door-to-door engagement and community visioning events, we will identify community priorities for repurposed highway land to guide future land use decisions.

As our highways reach the end of their useful life, our region has the opportunity to define its transportation priorities for the next 100 years. Our proposed project centers equity, environment, multimodality, and community perspectives as we work to redefine our regional transportation future.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

B. Describe the land use and development strategies that the project directly influences or supports that help create walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly communities. Examples of strategies include:

- *Contributing to the growth of dense, mixed-use communities or neighborhoods*
- *Addressing the outcomes and goals in Thrive MSP 2040 and the 2040 TPP*
- *Reducing demand or need for automobile parking infrastructure (e.g., shared parking arrangements, parking management techniques)*

Response:

Our Streets Minneapolis has been working consistently with communities to understand local priorities for land use and development. We have conducted surveys with residents living along I-94 and Olson Memorial Highways in Minneapolis and Saint Paul to gauge their preferences for land use and development that reflect the values and needs for urban services and amenities of each neighborhood. This work will continue in Phases I and II of our project, culminating in the development of regional community-preferred alternatives to highway projects that reflect community-led land use priorities that create walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly communities.

Phase II will include visioning sessions, allowing community members to envision shared spaces that reflect their values and needs. We will gather and document these perspectives, while our research and modeling partners work alongside Our Streets to understand how the desired land use changes would impact urban and regional systems.

Our project will advance Thrive MSP 2040 Economic Development priorities and density targets for urban communities. Highways take up significant land use, leaving that space unproductive for providing urban amenities, parks, housing, access to services, and property tax generation. By promoting mixed use community development, our project aligns with mixed use development trends as identified in the Thrive MSP 2040 Comprehensive Plan Composites. Through community preferred alternatives, we can tailor land use and transportation decisions to respond to community needs and make progress in addressing disparities brought on by highway construction.

Working to repair intersectional transportation harms through participatory engagement and education will advance Thrive MSP 2040 equity goals, ensuring that communities traditionally excluded from regional policy and decision-making have a seat at the table.

The commitment of this project to expanding multimodal transportation and repairing disparities also aligns with the 2040 TPP goals. For example, each phase of our project aims to achieve this outcome in the 2040 TPP: "Plan, build and operate a transportation system that protects the natural environment as well as communities most affected by highway noise, compromised air quality, and splintered neighborhoods. This includes advancing equity for historically underserved and underrepresented people, and contributing to the livability and sustainability of our communities,

As the Metropolitan Council and the region prepare for the 2050 Regional Development Guide, our rich community engagement will shape transportation, land use, housing, and other regional system planning for the Guide and contribute to local comprehensive planning as well.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

C. Describe how the project supports first- and last-mile solutions for people connecting to places they need to go. Describe the destinations the project will connect and their level of demand. Examples of strategies include.

- *Mobility hubs and centralized connections for multiple modes*
- *Increasing shared trips/shared mobility*
- *Access to job centers not located on fixed transit routes*

Response:

This project will co-create community visions and design options for multimodal transportation corridors in the heart of the Twin Cities region. The Rethinking I-94 corridor spans downtown Minneapolis to downtown Saint Paul and all destinations in between. As such, our project has the opportunity to link destinations including Seward, Cedar-Riverside, Prospect Park, the University of Minnesota, Saint Anthony Park, Union Park, Midway, Frogtown, Rondo and the State Capitol complex. Meanwhile, the Olson Memorial Highway study corridor stretches from the Minneapolis and Golden Valley border, through Harrison, Near North and Heritage Park, to downtown Minneapolis.

The construction of the highways and resulting disinvestment and suburban sprawl left many of these communities isolated and lacking walkable access to daily needs. The upcoming highway projects present a critical opportunity to rapidly improve first and last-mile transportation options for people connecting to places they need to go. By encouraging mode shift to walking, biking, and rolling while also increasing accessibility to basic needs (medical, employment, food, education), we can support greater connectivity for all residents.

To that end, Our Streets will expand community outreach, engagement, and visioning to collect priorities for transportation infrastructure and land use on both project corridors. This follows the principles of the 15-minute city concept, which aims to create neighborhoods where community members can access daily needs, including employment, healthcare, education, shopping and recreation, during a 15-minute walk, bicycle, or public transit trip.

The reimagined streets will feature new walking, biking, and public transit infrastructure, in addition to new mobility hubs and key locations. Community input is essential for ensuring that new transportation investments are designed to meet the mobility needs of each neighborhood. We will also engage community members about their desires for repurposing land that was formerly occupied by the highway. This will ensure that the land is repurposed to increase proximity and access to daily needs. The land use modeling of Our Streets and our technical partners will allow us to show that repurposing available land will increase density and commercial development, creating closer proximity to new jobs within walking, biking, and rolling distance.

This engagement and community visioning will be supported by technical partnerships to model how transportation and land use could work on a reimagined highway corridor. This includes modeling how freight and deliveries could be accommodated in both the near and long term, supporting a transition to last-mile deliveries via smaller, urban scale vehicles.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

Measure 6: Partnerships

A. Describe the number of stakeholder groups that have helped or will help develop the project and their role in the project?s delivery. In the response, consider the following:

- *How many partners will be involved in the project?*
- *Will there be public/private partnerships (or 4P; Public, Private, Philanthropic, and People)*
- *What percent or number of partners are small or minority-owned businesses (e.g., disadvantaged business enterprise [DBE], targeted group business [TGB], Met Council underutilized business [MCUB])*
- *Are businesses or partners locally owned or run?*

Response:

This project will build on strong existing partnerships to create channels of engagement and collaboration among impacted residents, business owners, and community groups and stakeholders to co-create community preferred alternatives for the Olson Memorial Highway and Rethinking I-94 projects. Over the span of the project, we anticipate collaborating with 25 partners, six of which represent business interests or business coalitions. Four of those six are small and minority-owned.

We will partner with a wide variety of stakeholder groups to ensure that all community voices and perspectives are represented in the co-creation process. This includes neighborhood organizations, religious institutions, business organizations, schools, universities and youth centers, nonprofit organizations, and other community groups, while project study partners include Toole Design and Visible City. The McKnight Foundation is a key philanthropic partner with longstanding support for Our Streets. Across all these collaborations, Our Streets will engage 4P partnerships (public, private, philanthropic, and people).

We are currently working with many of these locally run partners. For example, we are collaborating with Green Garden Bakery and the Summit Academy Best Buy Teen Tech Center to incorporate youth voices, particularly young people of color, into the visioning process for our Bring Back 6th campaign.

On the Twin Cities Boulevard corridor, we have partnered with neighborhood organizations like the Union Park District Council, business organizations like the West Bank Business Association, and student groups like the University of Minnesota student government.

As reflected in our letters of support, Our Streets also has the backing and partnership of Representative Ilhan Omar, the Minneapolis City Council, the Minnesota House of Representatives, University of Minnesota Heritage Studies and Public History, and more.

Above all, our primary stakeholders are individual residents, who are often not represented by their neighborhood organization or prominent community groups. Door-to-door engagement is the best way to engage these residents and invite them into the process.

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

B. Identify the funding partners and amounts of local match provided.

Response:

Our Streets has secured a committed match funding partnership with the McKnight Foundation in the amount of $180,000. We are supplementing this match by committing $480,000 of Our Streets unrestricted budget dollars and individual giving funding. Across these sources, the match amount totals $660,000.

In addition to funding partners, Our Streets has support and collaboration from a diverse group of key partners that share our vision for developing community preferred highway alternatives. Reflecting that range of support, we have included formal letters of support from:

United States Representative Ilhan Omar

Minnesota House of Representatives

Minneapolis City Council

University of Minnesota Heritage Studies and Public History

University of Minnesota Students for Climate Justice

(Limit 2,800 characters; approximately 400 words)

Attachments

File Name	Description	File Size
Letters of Support - Our Streets Met Council Unique Projects Application.pdf	Letters of support from: McKnight Foundation (match), Minnesota House of Representatives, United States Representative Ilhan Omar, Minneapolis City Council, Heritage Studies and PublicHistiory, and Students for Climate Justice, Toole Design, and Visible City	2.1 MB
Project Budget - OSM Unique Projects Budget_Dec2023.pdf	Project Budget - OSM Unique Projects Budget_Dec2023 (2 pages)	68 KB
Summary - Our Streets Met Council Unique Projects.pdf	Summary - Our Streets Met Council Unique Projects application	34 KB
Supporting Technical Documentation OSM Unique Projects application.pdf	Supporting Technical Documentation (Hyperlinks) Unique Projects application	129 KB

McKNIGHT FOUNDATION

710 S 2nd St #400
Minneapolis, MN 55401
(612) 333-4220 | mcknight.org

September 13, 2023

Regional Advisory Board
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Regional Advisory Board members,

I am writing to express McKnight Foundation's strong support for the Regional Solicitation project, proposed by Our Streets, a nonprofit organization that works to make Minneapolis a city where biking, walking, and rolling are easy and comfortable for everyone. This project and its goals are well-aligned with our mission "to advance a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive."

Through this initiative, Our Streets will raise awareness of the harmful effects of highway construction in Minneapolis and other communities dating back nearly a century. Among other activities, the project will canvass the entire Twin Cities metro area to inform residents about the history and impacts of racial covenants and highways and engage stakeholders and community partners to re-envision an equitable, safe, and climate-smart transportation future.

McKnight has supported the work of Our Streets since 2015, and we have witnessed their significant achievements in advocating for safer and more accessible streets in Minneapolis. They have a track record of successful campaigns and collaborations and have developed deep relationships with key actors, including city officials, community groups, and local businesses. As such, we are confident that Our Streets has the expertise, experience, and capacity to successfully implement the project and achieve its objectives.

As a demonstration of our commitment to this project, we will provide $180,000 to Our Streets, contingent on their securing the full amount of funding requested from you. We hope that our matching contribution will help leverage your support and increase the impact of the project.

Thank you for considering this team's proposal. Please contact the director of our Midwest Climate and Energy program, Sarah Christiansen (schristiansen@mcknight.org), if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

Tonya Allen
President

Samantha Sencer-Mura
State Representative
District 63A

Minnesota House of Representatives

September 15, 2023

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to outline my support for the Regional Solicitation Unique Projects grant application by Our Streets Minneapolis.

The application seeks funding for critically important work regarding the future of Interstate 94 between downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul and Olson Memorial Highway in Minneapolis.

Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway have a long history of displacement, racial injustice, and environmental injustice. Olson Memorial Highway (MN-55) was Minnesota's first urban highway, and was built through 6th Avenue North, a thriving Black and Jewish commercial corridor. I-94 was constructed through dozens of Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods, demolishing thousands of homes, businesses and community institutions and disproportionately targeting communities of color.

Today, the highways divide the neighborhoods through which they run, subjecting residents to air and noise pollution, unsafe walking and biking conditions, extreme heat, and disinvestment. Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway are now nearing the end of their useful lives, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) Rethinking I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway projects will determine the long-term future of the corridors.

These projects must repair the injustices caused by the highway and improve health, mobility and economic opportunity in our community.

This application would ensure that Minneapolis and Saint Paul communities are engaged and can learn about each corridor's history, the upcoming project decisions, and the impacts to their lives. It would also increase community engagement capacity and create spaces where residents can co-create the future of these urban highway corridors. This work would go beyond the scope of MnDOT's existing evaluation processes and would better consider community priorities including racial justice, economic opportunity, public health, anti-displacement and climate.

This application is consistent with the program's goals of improving quality of life, supporting a less car-dependent transportation system, and improving connectivity in BIPOC communities.

417 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
651-296-0173 Email: rep.samantha.sencer-mura@house.mn.gov

We strongly endorse this application and encourage the Metropolitan Council to fund this work to help ensure equitable outcomes for these critically important projects.

Sincerely,

Samantha Sencer-Mura
State Representative, District 63A

Aisha Gomez
State Representative, District 62A

Esther Agbaje
State Representative, District 59B

Emma Greenman
State Representative, District 63B

Mohamud Noor
State Representative, District 60B

Liz Kaozouapa Lee
State Representative, District 67A

ILHAN OMAR
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
5TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

1730 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225–4755

310 E 38TH ST. – SUITE 222
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55409
(612) 333–1272

WWW.OMAR.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2305

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
SUBCOMMITTEES ON
HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR & PENSIONS
WORKFORCE PROTECTIONS

HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE
VICE RANKING MEMBER

November 3, 2023

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
Secretary, US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to outline my support for the Regional Solicitation Unique Projects grant application by Our Streets Minneapolis. The application seeks funding for critically important work regarding the future of Interstate 94 between downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul and Olson Memorial Highway in Minneapolis.

Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway have a long history of displacement, racial injustice, and environmental injustice. Olson Memorial Highway (MN-55) was Minnesota's first urban highway, and was built through 6th Avenue North, a thriving Black and Jewish commercial corridor. I-94 was constructed through dozens of Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods, demolishing thousands of homes, businesses, and community institutions and disproportionately targeting communities of color.

Today, the highways divide the neighborhoods through which they run, subjecting residents to air and noise pollution, unsafe walking and biking conditions, extreme heat, and disinvestment. Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway are now nearing the end of their useful lives, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) Rethinking I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway projects will determine the long-term future of the corridors.

This application would ensure that Minneapolis and Saint Paul communities are engaged and can learn about each corridor's history, the upcoming project decisions, and the impacts on their lives. It would also increase community engagement capacity and create spaces where residents can co-create the future of these urban highway corridors. This work would go beyond the scope of MnDOT's existing evaluation processes and would better consider community priorities including racial justice, economic opportunity, public health, anti-displacement, and climate.

This application is consistent with the program's goals of improving quality of life, supporting a less car-dependent transportation system, and improving connectivity in BIPOC communities. I urge a full and

fair consideration of the Metropolitan Council's application, consistent with applicable statutes and regulations, so that can help ensure equitable outcomes for these critically important projects.

Sincerely,

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Minneapolis
City of Lakes

September 12th, 2023

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to support the Regional Solicitation Unique Projects grant application by Our Streets Minneapolis. The application seeks funding for critically important work regarding the future of Interstate 94 between downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul and Olson Memorial Highway in Minneapolis.

Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway have a long history of displacement, racial injustice, and environmental injustice. Olson Memorial Highway (MN-55) was Minnesota's first urban highway, and was built through 6th Avenue North, a thriving Black and Jewish commercial corridor. I-94 was constructed through dozens of Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods, demolishing thousands of homes, businesses, and community institutions and disproportionately targeting communities of color.

Today, the highways divide the neighborhoods through which they run, subjecting residents to air and noise pollution, unsafe walking and biking conditions, extreme heat, and disinvestment. Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway are now nearing the end of their useful lives, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) Rethinking I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway projects will determine the long-term future of the corridors. The Minneapolis City Council has expressed positions of formal support for highway removal at Olson Memorial and for Rethinking I-94.

These projects must repair the injustices caused by the highway and improve health, mobility, and economic opportunity in our community.

This application would ensure that Minneapolis and Saint Paul communities are engaged and can learn about each corridor's history, the upcoming project decisions, and the impacts to their lives. It would also increase community engagement capacity and create spaces where residents can co-create the future of these urban highway corridors. This work would go beyond the scope of MnDOT's existing evaluation processes and would better consider community priorities including racial justice, economic opportunity, public health, anti-displacement, and climate.

This application is consistent with the program's goals of improving quality of life, supporting a less car-dependent transportation system, and improving connectivity in BIPOC communities.

We strongly endorse this application and encourage the Metropolitan Council to fund this work to help ensure equitable outcomes for these critically important projects.

Sincerely,

City Council Member Robin Wonsley, Ward 2

Minneapolis
City of Lakes

City Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, Ward 5

City Council Member Jamal Osman, Ward 6

September 20th, 2023

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to support the Regional Solicitation Unique Projects grant application by Our Streets Minneapolis. The application seeks funding for critically important work regarding the future of Interstate 94 between downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul and Olson Memorial Highway in Minneapolis.

As a student group with commitment to removing environmental inequities, we believe working against the oppressive history of both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway is essential to our mission. Olson Memorial Highway (MN-55) was Minnesota's first urban highway, and was built through 6th Avenue North, a thriving Black and Jewish commercial corridor. I-94 was constructed through dozens of Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods, demolishing thousands of homes, businesses, and community institutions and disproportionately targeting communities of color.

Today, the highways divide the neighborhoods through which they run, subjecting residents to air and noise pollution, unsafe walking and biking conditions, extreme heat, and disinvestment. The highways are direct acts of environmental injustice against the communities surrounding them. Conditions also deter University of Minnesota (UMN) students from engaging meaningfully with their Minneapolis neighbors. Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway are now nearing the end of their useful lives, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) Rethinking I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway projects will determine the long-term future of the corridors. The Minneapolis City Council has expressed positions of formal support for highway removal at Olson Memorial and for Rethinking I-94.

These projects must repair the injustices caused by the highway and improve health, mobility, and economic opportunity in our community.

This application would ensure that Minneapolis and Saint Paul communities are engaged and can learn about each corridor's history, the upcoming project decisions, and the impacts to their lives. It would also increase community engagement capacity and create spaces where residents can co-create the future of these urban highway corridors. This work would go beyond the scope of MnDOT's existing evaluation processes and would better consider community priorities including racial justice, economic opportunity, public health, anti-displacement, and climate.

This application is consistent with the program's goals of improving quality of life, supporting a less car-dependent transportation system, and improving connectivity in BIPOC communities.

We strongly endorse this application and encourage the Metropolitan Council to fund this work to help ensure equitable outcomes for these critically important projects.

Sincerely,

UMN Students for Climate Justice

Bde Óta Otúŋwe, Mni Sóta Makoce

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

*Crookston • Duluth • Morris • Rochester • **Twin Cities***

School of Architecture
College of Design

145 Ralph Rapson Hall
89 Church St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: 612-624-7866
Email: archdesk@umn.edu
Website: www.arch.design.umn.edu

September 18, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the Regional Solicitation Unique Projects grant application by Our Streets Minneapolis.

The application seeks funding for critically important work regarding the future of Interstate 94 between downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul and Olson Memorial Highway in Minneapolis. My students, faculty colleagues and I in the University of Minnesota graduate program in Heritage Studies and Public History have worked closely for the past two years with Our Streets Minneapolis to research and interpret how these road projects destroyed and divided neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities.

Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway have a long history of displacement, racial injustice, and environmental injustice. Olson Memorial Highway (MN-55) was Minnesota's first urban highway, and was built through 6th Avenue North, a thriving Black and Jewish commercial corridor. I-94 was constructed through dozens of Minneapolis and Saint Paul neighborhoods, demolishing thousands of homes, businesses and community institutions and disproportionately targeting communities of color. Our research at the UofM confirms that in 1960, 86% of the total Minneapolis Black population and 62% of the "other race" non-white population lived in census tracts where Minneapolis freeways were built, compared to 35% of the city's white population. Back then, residents had no meaningful opportunities to influence construction of these roads.

Today, the highways divide the neighborhoods through which they run, subjecting residents to air and noise pollution, unsafe walking and biking conditions, extreme heat, and disinvestment. Both I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway are now nearing the end of their useful lives, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) Rethinking I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway projects will determine the long-term future of the corridors.

Mounting research from across the United States indicates that BIPOC communities, particularly Black communities, have borne and continue to bear a disproportionate level of impact from freeways construction and implementation. Moreover, during this current freeway re-evaluation process, governments are allocating the people's tax dollars to study remediation, mitigation, or other land bridge projects, and therefore the public should know more about this history to facilitate robust debate in advance of making decisions involving major public investments.

This application would ensure that Minneapolis and Saint Paul communities are engaged and can learn about each corridor's history, the upcoming project decisions, and the impacts to their lives. It would also increase community engagement capacity and create spaces where residents can co-create the future of these urban highway corridors. This work must consider community priorities including racial justice, economic opportunity, public health, anti-displacement and climate.

This application is consistent with the program's goals of improving quality of life, supporting a less car-dependent transportation system, and improving connectivity in BIPOC communities.

I strongly endorse this application and encourage the Metropolitan Council to fund this work to help ensure equitable outcomes for these critically important projects.

Sincerely,

Greg Donofrio, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Associate Dean of Faculty
College of Design
University of Minnesota
Distinguished University Teaching Professor

TOOLE DESIGN

212 3RD AVENUE N.
SUITE 352
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

612.584.4094
TOOLEDESIGN.COM

December 15, 2023

Re: Our Streets Minneapolis, 2024 Regional Solicitation

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our support for Our Streets Minneapolis and their request for funding through the Met Council regional solicitation for outreach, engagement, and planning activities to bring deeper and more meaningful community input to two transformational projects, Rethinking I-94 and the Olson Memorial Highway/6th Avenue.

In both of these project, homes, businesses and community institutions were destroyed for their construction. Today, these highways continue to divide and impact the surrounding community. Those who are most impacted are disproportionately poor and people of color.

Toole Design is prepared to support the Our Streets Minneapolis initiative with technical and design expertise, to identify options that could enhance multimodal transportation, safety, accessibility and connectivity within the community. With over 200 technical staff across North America, and in Minneapolis, we are prepared to draw on a pool of highly talented professionals and provide assistance to evaluating a community-centric basis of design and options for this corridor. We anticipate our work will include:

1. Technical review, including traffic, data, safety and equity analysis, as well as multimodal travel volumes and flows
2. Environmental and community impact considerations
3. Concept layouts that are reparative and restorative
4. Engagement support

As a collaborative partner, we are ready to support Our Streets Minneapolis and the neighborhood in examining options to address disproportionate impacts of the corridor on those are poor, without vehicles, or people of color. Our work would go beyond the scope of MnDOT's evaluation process and would consider community priorities including racial justice, economic opportunity, public health, and climate. Expanded community engagement, coalition building, and the creation and adoption of community development benchmarks would help to prevent displacement and ensure that reclaimed highway land prioritizes the needs and goals of existing community members.

This analysis is urgently needed as MnDOT is now evaluating project alternatives.

Sincerely,

Ciara Schlichting | AICP
Midwest Regional Director

Mitzi Alex | AICP
Minneapolis Office Director

TOOLE DESIGN
212 3rd Avenue N., Suite 352 | Minneapolis, MN 55401
Email@tooledesign.com | 612.584.4094 x180

501 West Lynnhurst Avenue, Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55104
December 14, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support for the application by Our Streets Minneapolis, for a planning grant from the Regional Solicitation, for the purpose of expanding community outreach and visioning work for the Rethinking I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway projects.

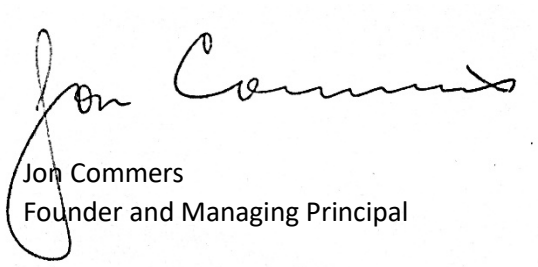
The intent of Our Streets is to develop a research-based boulevard concept for debate for each of these critical metro corridors, presenting a full range of outcomes: Health, economic and fiscal impact, climate change mitigation and resilience, productive use of urban space, racial equity and inclusion. The current infrastructure design has exacted costs on Minnesota communities for decades.

Data analysis and visualization are increasingly powerful tools to convey trends in demography, health, transportation (of many modes), property and development, employment, housing and household characteristics. Multiple phases of data analysis and visualization can inform consideration of the future of the I-94 and Olson Memorial Highway corridors. Examples include the following:

- Fine-grained context covering demography, employment, community health, residential and commercial property valuations and sales, land use and household characteristics (such as availability of cars, rental vs. ownership of home, etc.) for the corridor.
- An estimation of land capacity represented by potential phased infill development accompanying a boulevard format for the corridor. If acreage is deducted for boulevard (plus sidewalks) right of way, for parks, for other community priorities, the resulting land capacity for housing, employment, tax base and other benefits can be assessed.
- Bookends of estimated value, using multiple models of land use commonly found in Minneapolis. Using data for relatively low-, moderate- and relatively high-density land use patterns identified in neighborhoods in the two cities, the quantity of value and resulting local tax capacity can be assessed using spatial modeling. Corridors (and nodes) to consider as bases for comparison could include Payne, Robert, Snelling, Broadway, Central, Hennepin, or others.

We are engaged in the work of improving life in the world's cities, and have no higher priority than transforming urban highway corridors into links that complement healthy, prosperous, connected lives for city dwellers. If it's helpful to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me at our office at (651) 645-4644 or at discover@visible.city. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Commers
Founder and Managing Principal

Our Streets Minneapolis

2023 Regional Solicitation - Unique Projects - Project Budget |

Our Streets Minneapolis: Building Awareness of Transportation Impact on Environmental Health

FYs 2026 — 2027

Income	
Regional Solicitation Grant	$2,640,000.00
Individual Donations	$180,000.00
McKnight Foundation (Match)	$180,000.00
Our Streets Minneapolis Unrestricted Net Funds	$300,000.00
Total	**$3,300,000.00**
Expenses	
Direct Expenses	
Salary & Benefits	$1,990,799.44
Executive Director (FTE)	$123,860.00
Advocacy and Policy Manager (FTE)	$88,330.73
Community Engagement Specialist	$88,330.73
Communications Manager (FTE)	$88,330.73
Legislative and Community Engagement Specialist (FTE)	$88,330.73
Advocacy Coordinator (FTE)	$79,025.57
Events and Community Development Manager (FTE)	$88,330.73
Events Coordinator (.6 FTE)	$79,025.57
Community Organizers/Canvassers (20 FTE)	$1,267,234.65
Printing and Communications	$120,000.00
Community Engagement Events (12)	$350,400.00
Research & Studies	$360,000.00
Rent/Utilities	$28,800.00
Visual Renderings	$120,000.00
Total Expense	**$2,969,999.44**
Net	**$330,000.56**

2026.27 Overhead (Indirect Rate)	10.00%
Regional Solicitation Conditional Grant Total	$3,300,000.00
Overhead Expense - @ 10%	$330,000.00

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Our Streets Minneapolis

Project: Building Awareness of Transportation Impact on Environmental Health
Requested Award Amount: $2,640,000

Our Streets' unique approach to regional transportation solutions will deeply engage BIPOC, low-income, and other marginalized communities to ensure we are co-creating an equitable, community-led vision for our streets and neighborhoods.

Our community-led solutions will prioritize goals that align with Metropolitan Council priorities and those of other key regional partners so that we can co-create, with residents, improvements in social connectivity, quality of life, air quality, multimodal transportation options, employment opportunities, and more.

The construction of Olson Memorial Highway and I-94 divided and disrupted neighborhoods across the Twin Cities, leading to economic, health, and quality-of-life disparities that disproportionately harmed communities of color. To rewrite these historical harms and work toward solutions that can be scaled across the 7-county Metro, Our Streets' project will roll out in three phases:

Phase I: Through deep community engagement, outreach, and education—including door-knocking roughly 1,000,000 households around the region—Our Streets will gain a unique, people-first perspective on the harms of transportation and infrastructure decisions. This will help us center racial equity in exploring community preferred alternatives to highway projects.

Phase II: Our Streets will lead visioning sessions, detailed studies, modeling for transportation and land use, and community partnership building as we move toward solutions that spotlight the needs and goals of marginalized residents.

Phase III: Using everything we learn during Phases I and II, Our Streets will co-create a community preferred alternative to the current highway infrastructure that supports more walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented options. Through this three-phase approach, we will develop a replicable process for authentic engagement with communities harmed by transportation decisions.

The project's unique approach to centering marginalized communities will position the 7-County Metro area as a leader in inclusive and holistic community engagement to repair longstanding harms and build more vibrant, thriving neighborhoods.

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Supporting Technical Documentation – Unique Projects application

Traffic Impacts and Transportation Access

I-95 Collapse in Philadelphia Didn't Cause a Traffic Disaster, Data Shows, Vice, 2023
Traffic Evaporation: What Really Happens When Road Space is Reallocated from Cars?, TheCityFix, 2021
Disappearing traffic? The story so far, Municipal Engineer, 2002
What happens to traffic when you tear down a freeway?, Grist, 2019
Exploring traffic evaporation: Findings from tactical urbanism interventions in Barcelona, Case Studies on Transport Policy, 2022
Freeway Deconstruction and Urban Regeneration in the United States, UC Berkeley, 2006
Reduced Demand is Just as Important and Induced Demand, CNU Public Square, 2021
Reducing roads can cause traffic to 'Evaporate', Rapid Transition, 2021
Building Bigger Roads Actually Makes Traffic Worse, WIRED, 2014
Traffic Jam? Blame Induced Demand, Bloomberg, 2018
Generated Traffic and Induced Travel, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2022
Why the Concept of Induced Demand is a Hard Sell, Governing, 2022
Poor and Black 'invisible cyclists' need to be part of post-pandemic transport planning too, The Conversation, 2020
Racial disparities in traffic fatalities much wider than previously known, Harvard, 2022

Pollution, Health Impacts and Environmental Justice

Our Streets Environmental Justice Data Portal
Understanding environmental justice in Minnesota, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Asthma charts, Minnesota Department of Health
Life Expectancy by Census Tract, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Car tires produce vastly more particle pollution than exhausts, tests show, the Guardian, 2022
OECD Says Electric Cars Won't Save Us From Pollution, Treehugger, 2020
Freeway pollution travels farther than we thought. Here's how to protect yourself, LA Times, 2017
Infographic: Living Near Busy Roads or Traffic Pollution, USC Environmental Health Center
Living Near Highways and Air Pollution, American Lung Association, 2021
Childhood cancer and residential exposure to highways: a nationwide cohort study, European Journal of Epidemiology, 2015
Life and Breath Report: Twin Cities metro area, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 2022
Exposure to traffic noise linked to higher dementia risk, BMJ, 2021
If all the vehicles were electric, would it be quieter?, Erica D. Walker, The Conversation, 2022
The Quality of Life Effects of Highways, The Review of Economics and Statistics, 2022
Traffic pollution impairs brain function, The University of British Columbia, 2023
Local inequities in the relative production of and exposure to vehicular air pollution in Los Angeles, Urban Studies, 2023
Years of breathing traffic pollution increases death rates, study finds, the Guardian, 2023
Effects of Freeway Rerouting and Boulevard Replacement on Air Pollution Exposure and Neighborhood Attributes, International Journal for Environmental Research and Health, 2021

Climate Change

2023 Biennial Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Report, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 2023
Our Driving Habits Must Be Part of the Climate Conversation, Rocky Mountain Institute, 2021
To solve climate, we need electric cars—and a lot less driving, City Observatory, 2021
Growing Shade Data Portal, Metropolitan Council, 2022
EV reliance is sparking a dangerous mining boom. There's another way to cut emissions, study says, Boston Globe, 2023
Traffic restrictions during the 2008 Olympic Games reduced urban heat intensity and extent in Beijing, Nature, 2022

Racial Covenants and Highway Construction

Concrete River: A History of I-94 in Cedar Riverside
Lament for a lost intersection: A Public History of 6th Avenue North
Rondo: Beyond the Pavement, Saint Paul Almanac, 2018
Minneapolis, MN, Segregation by Design
A Public History of I-35W, Hennepin History Museum and UMN Heritage Studies and Public History Program, 2022
I-94 in the Union Park District: A History of Prioritizing Speed Over Community, Streets.MN, 2022

Economic Impacts

Median Household Income by Census Tract, United States Census Bureau
Economic Effects of the Potential I-35 Conversion in Downtown Duluth, University of Minnesota Duluth, 2023
Divided by Design: Quantifying the damage of our transportation program, Transportation for America, 2023

Water Quality and Stormwater Management

Stormwater to Street Trees: Engineering urban forests for stormwater management, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Minnesota Stormwater Management: MS4 Fact Sheet, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Strategies for Managing the Effects of Urban Development on Streams, U. S. Geological Survey
Effects of Rain Gardens on the Quality of Water in the Minneapolis–St. Paul Metropolitan Area of Minnesota, 2002-04, U.S. Geological Survey

Canvassing Dashboard

https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/7cdb4d930bd54f11bd0efee6e58a3610