

September 22, 2025

RE: Rethinking I-94: Scoping Alternatives Evaluation

Dear Cooperating/Participating Agency Partner,

As you may be aware, more than 90 Federal executive orders have been revoked or rescinded in recent months. The changes at the federal level impact MnDOT's environmental review process and associated documents, such as the Rethinking I-94: Scoping Alternatives Evaluation. The final draft document includes the FHWA Minnesota Division's changes, with the goal of continuing to move Rethinking I-94 into the Tier 1 EIS process while maintaining compliance with NEPA and currently effective Federal executive order. The following are a few examples of the changes that have been made to the Alternatives Evaluation Memo:

- Reference to Vulnerable people has been updated to Human environment, sensitive resources
- Reference to Livability has been updated to Community Goals
- References to Public Health and the Environment have been updated to Quality of Life

MnDOT's values and our mission to connect and serve all people through a safe, equitable and sustainable transportation system have not changed. We continue working with our federal, state and local partners on how to continue our work in all communities and how best to achieve our goals. We remain committed to working to build a multimodal transportation system that maximizes the health of people, the environment and our economy. In the case of Rethinking I-94, removing terms and language from the documents does not impact the outcomes of our alternatives' evaluation and our recommendations for which alternatives move forward. These recommendations would have only been enhanced by the consideration of Environmental Justice (EJ) factors.

As such, these areas of our environmental review process have not changed:

- We are still responsible for and committed to evaluating potential social, economic, and environmental (SEE) impacts of MnDOT transportation projects. We will continue to assess potential impacts in a holistic way; and
- We will continue to analyze demographic and census data to understand the experiences of the communities we work in and use community outreach to ensure robust public engagement and non-discrimination; and
- We must continue to comply with State of Minnesota environmental review laws that may conflict with the change in Federal direction.

MnDOT reaffirms our mission, vision and values for this project. This includes incorporating the Community Goals to identify opportunities for communities that live, work, gather, and play along the corridor. Our mission, vision and values also include developing and executing a community-based approach focused on reconnecting neighborhoods, revitalizing communities, and ensuring residents have a meaningful voice in transportation decisions that affect their lives. We will continue to hold true to these values during this and subsequent phases of this project.

To outline how this work will be achieved, MnDOT, along with project partners, will produce an “Additional State Commitments” document that will be available with the Scoping Decision Document (SDD) that will detail MnDOT’s commitment to community needs and values and how MnDOT will address items removed by the federal executive order. We will share additional information as we conduct public engagement along with asking for feedback while we are meeting with the public.

Thank you for your patience as we work through this process. Should you have any questions or have suggestions for MnDOT staff, please feel free to contact Mark Lindeberg, Rethinking I-94 Project Director, at mark.lindeberg@state.mn.us or 651-775-5485.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Lindeberg
Rethinking I-94 Project Director

Equal Opportunity Employer