

Minneapolis Transportation & Public Works Committee
December 11, 2007

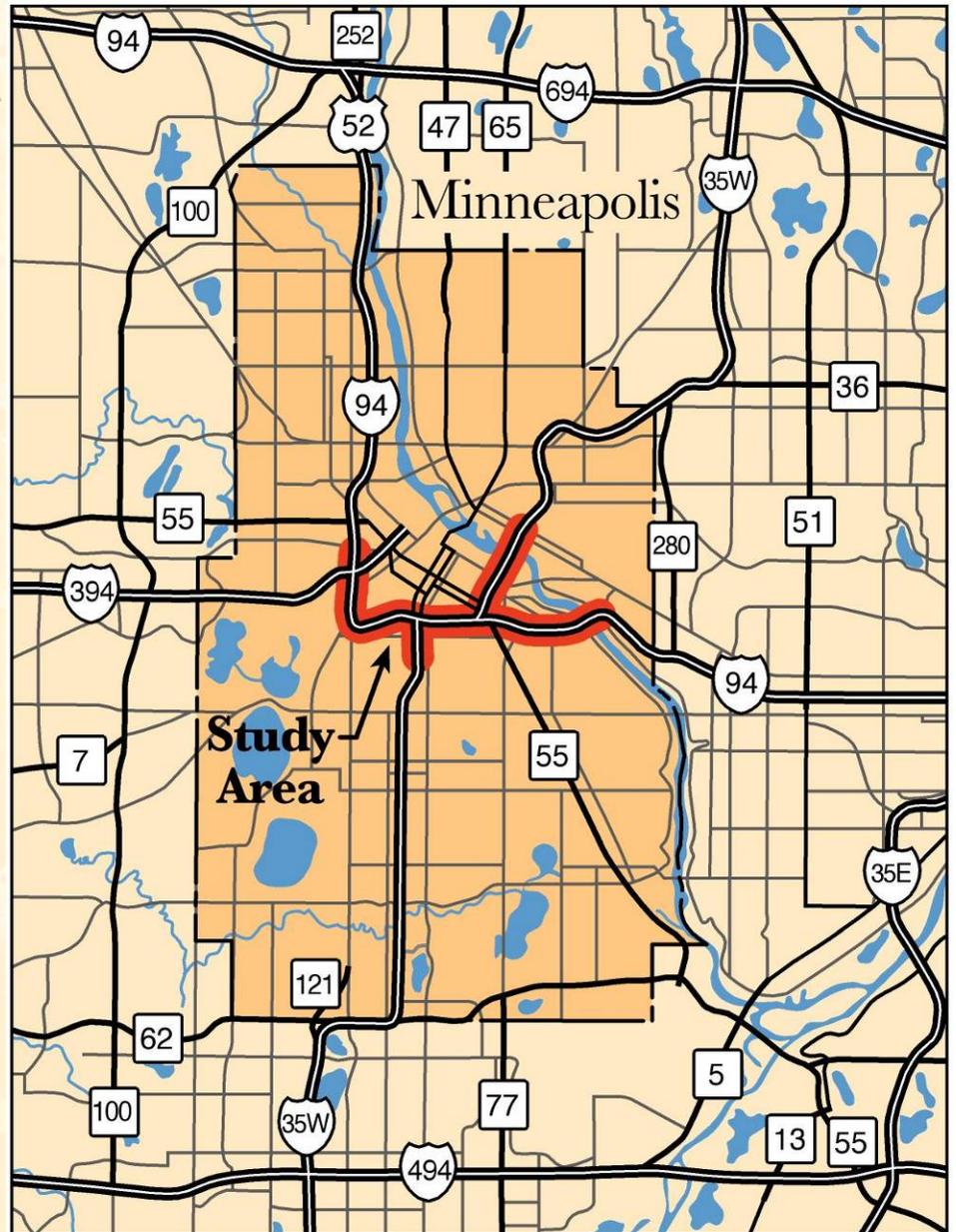


**Downtown
Minneapolis
Freeway Study**



Study Area

- I-35W from 28th Street to University/4th Street
- I-94 from Highway 55 (Olson Memorial Highway) to Riverside Ave.





The first step in a long process to develop major Downtown Minneapolis freeway projects ...





Background & Findings

✿ Freeway improvement concept study; technical work completed earlier in 2007

✿ Catalysts

- ❖ Other Planned Projects: I-35W/TH 62 Crosstown, Lake Street Access, others
- ❖ I-35W Mississippi River Bridge
- ❖ Lowry Tunnel—Considered a Bottleneck
- ❖ Infrastructure preservation/replacement
- ❖ Safety—Highest MN Freeway Crash Rate
- ❖ Managed lanes and bus rapid transit (BRT)
- ❖ Access Minneapolis Study (10-yr. Plan)

✿ Many Needs... (cont.)



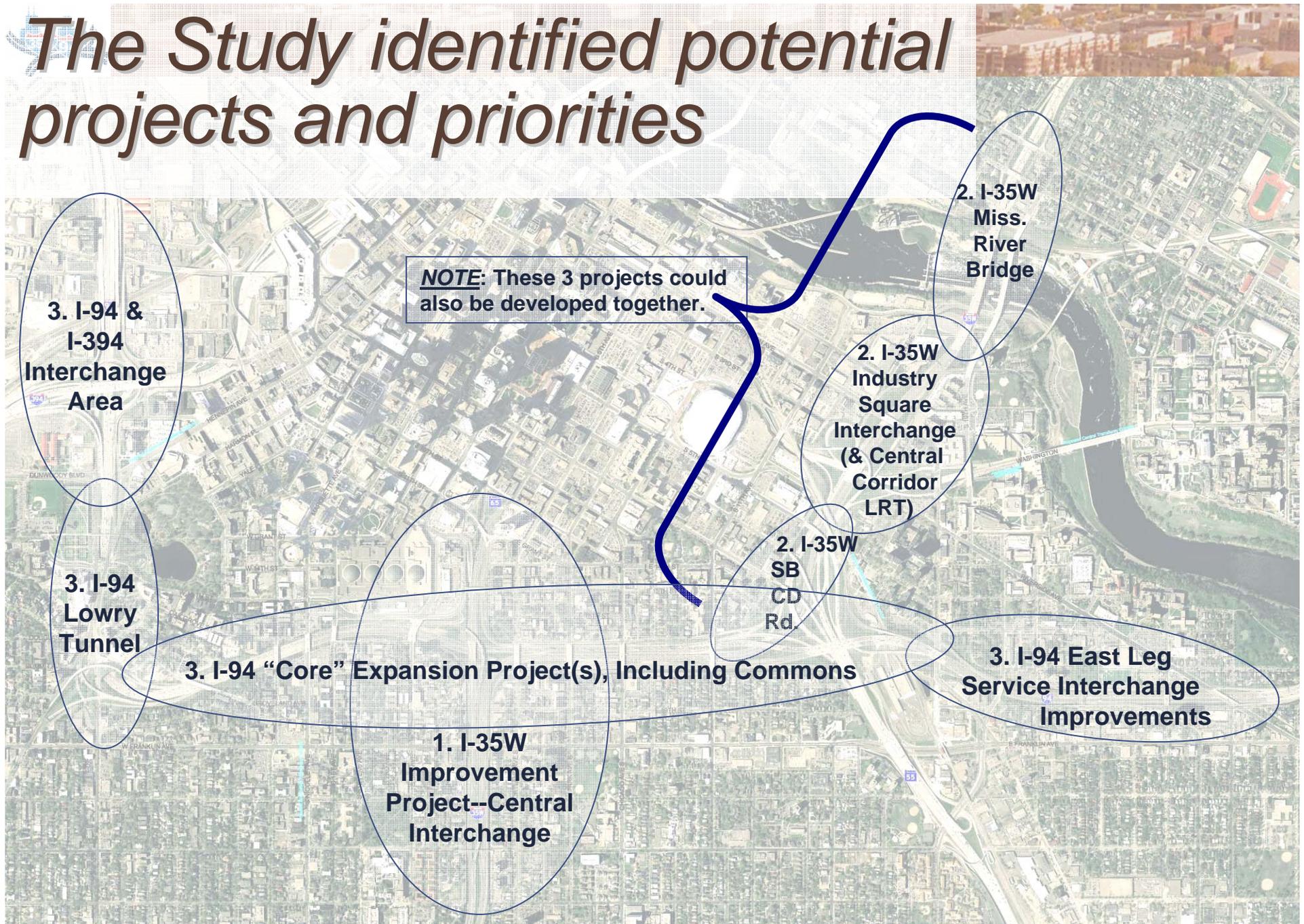
Background and Findings (cont.)

❁ Needs/Issues

- ❖ More than 500,000 vehicle trips per day
- ❖ More than 80 bridges and 12 interchanges
- ❖ Severe congestion—5 hours per day with speeds at or below 20 mph
- ❖ More freeway crashes than any other place in MN
- ❖ Major service/access into central Minneapolis
 - About 60% of the freeway trips begin or end in the study area
 - Growing demands, including more local development

❁ The study area needs quality transportation systems (all modes) to support the local, regional, and state economy

The Study identified potential projects and priorities





Vision Scenarios

- ✿ This example (part of Vision Scenario 3) shows the complexity of a complete long-term design concept.
- ✿ Vision Scenarios Explained:
 - ❖ **All:** Present a progressive and realistic range while addressing long-term capacity needs; respect the study area's context
 - ❖ **Vision 1:** Consolidate (limit) access; add capacity to I-35W, but not to I-94
 - ❖ **Vision 2:** Distribute access; add capacity to I-35W and some to I-94 (selectively, based on Lowry Tunnel)
 - ❖ **Vision 3:** Distribute access; add system capacity more completely than in VS 2
- ✿ No recommendations or decisions have been made on design details; this will take many more years



I-94 Lowry Tunnel Findings

Tunnel design concepts:

- ❖ Vision 1: no change
- ❖ Vision 2: partial expansion
- ❖ Vision 3: full replacement

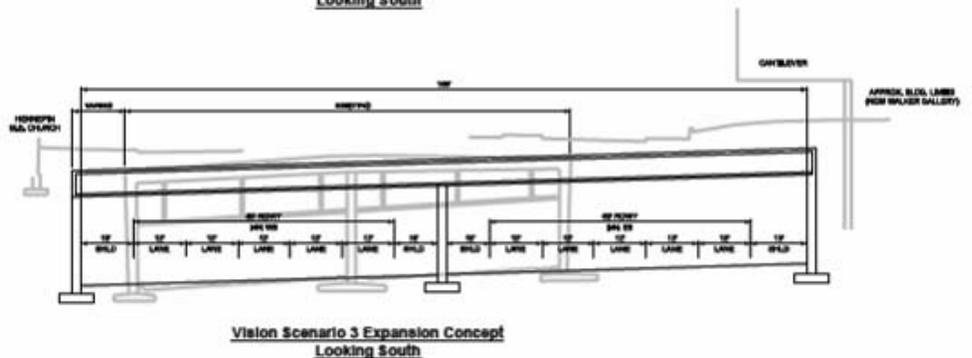
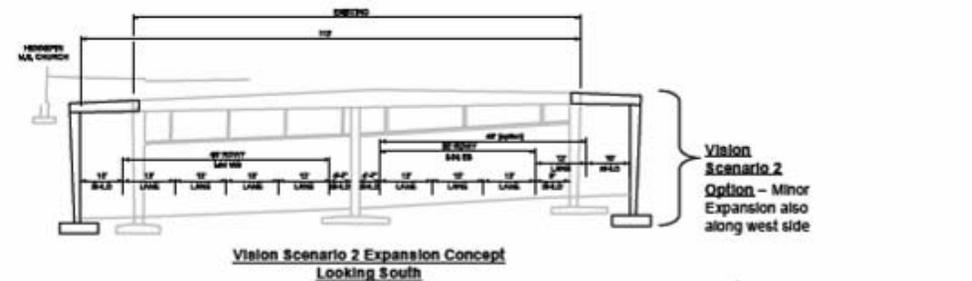
Concepts suggest expansion is feasible without need to acquire adjacent buildings

Still, engineering and community issues are considerable



Existing Lowry Tunnel Looking South

East (Downtown) ← → West (I-394)





Other Findings

- ❁ Even considering sensitive local context, there is some opportunity to add capacity (Vision Scenarios)
 - ❖ Visions are limited in scale, to respect constraints (physical and financial)
 - ❖ Vision 3 shows the scale most capable of meeting long-term mobility goals
 - ❖ Design features can be “mixed and matched” from one scenario to the other
- ❁ Transit and managed lanes will provide for efficient use of the freeway
 - ❖ Special/managed lanes are included in all Vision Scenarios
 - ❖ All traffic modeling accounted for transit use
- ❁ Setting preservation and project priorities is critical



Recommendations 1 & 2: Complete current projects; use the Vision Scenarios as guidance

✿ Current Projects

- ❖ I-35W / TH 62 Crosstown Commons and I-35W Mississippi River Bridge (under construction)
- ❖ I-35W from 46th Street to Downtown (UPA dynamic shoulder; full build corridor improvement)
- ❖ Other – Maintenance and small projects are ongoing and can benefit from reference to a long-term vision

✿ The Study provides a “Master Plan” for further design work—both short-term and long-term



Recommendations 3 & 4: I-35W/I-94 Central Interchange and Lowry Tunnel

- ❁ Eliminate or reduce weaving on crash-prone I-94 westbound
- ❁ Further studies should evaluate interchange designs both with and without Lowry Tunnel expansion
- ❁ There are many potential community challenges, as well as opportunities

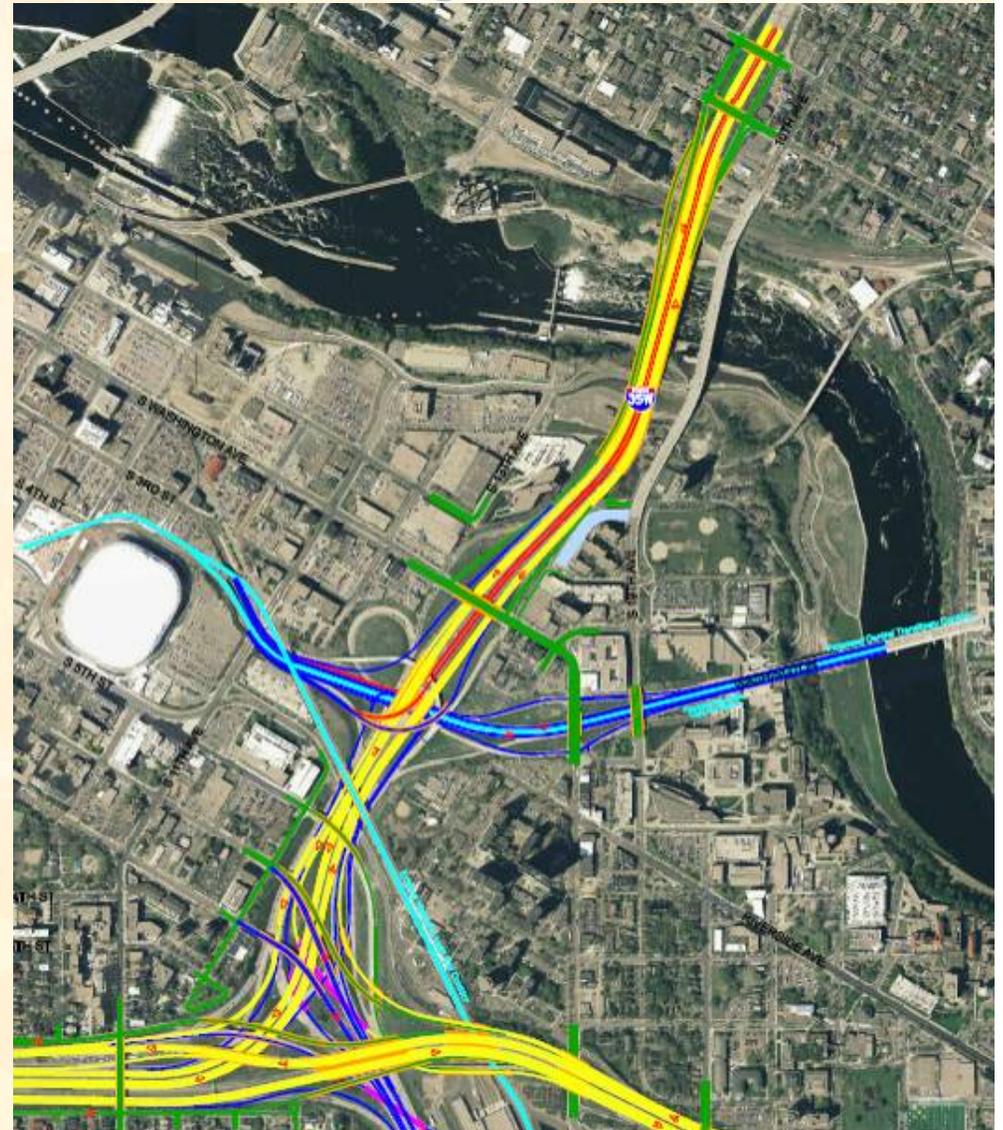


I-94 Lowry Tunnel – South End (curved)



Recommendation 5: I-35W Mississippi River Bridge and the adjacent interchanges

- ✿ The study's completed technical work provided input on river crossing capacity immediately after the bridge collapse on August 1, 2007
- ✿ Many alternative interchange configurations are possible in the long term
- ✿ Light rail lines (Hiawatha and Central Corridor)
- ✿ Metrodome/redevelopment issues; U of M; other
- ✿ Current work on the bridge demonstrates the value of having a "Master Plan"

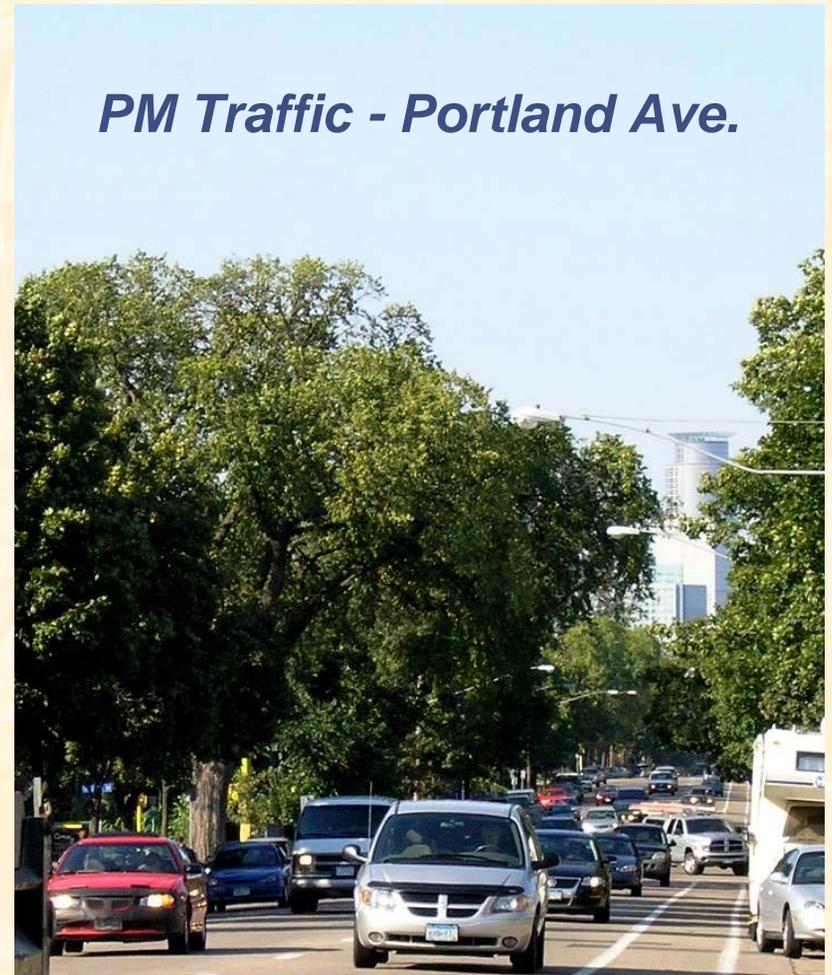




Recommendation 6: All future planning should incorporate consideration of project impacts

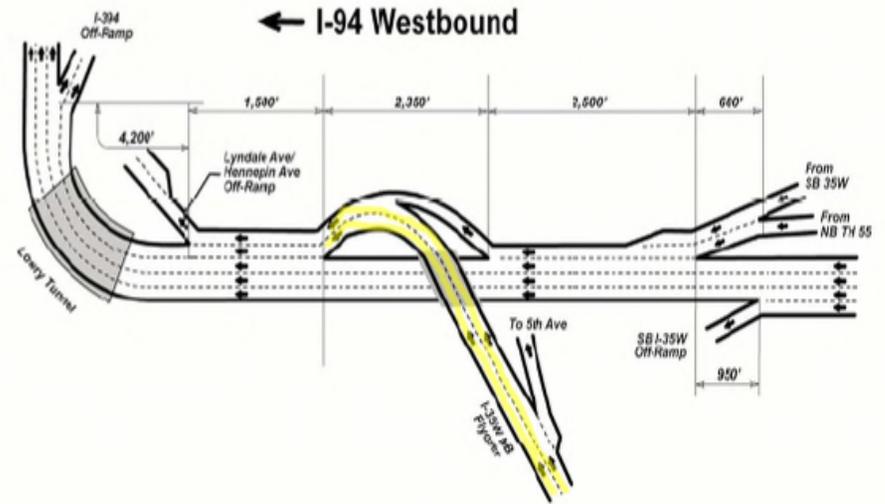
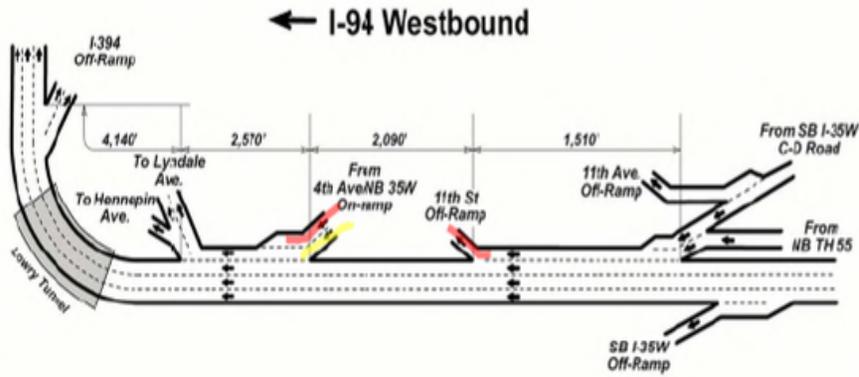
- ✿ Limiting potential adverse impacts and costs were fundamental goals for the Vision Scenarios
- ✿ Future design considerations must further address:
 - ❖ Local traffic (studies suggest that freeway improvements can help reduce cut-through traffic)
 - ❖ Existing/proposed access—impact on freeway flow and safety
 - ❖ Aesthetics and the area's vibrancy/image
 - ❖ Neighborhood connections and compatibility

PM Traffic - Portland Ave.

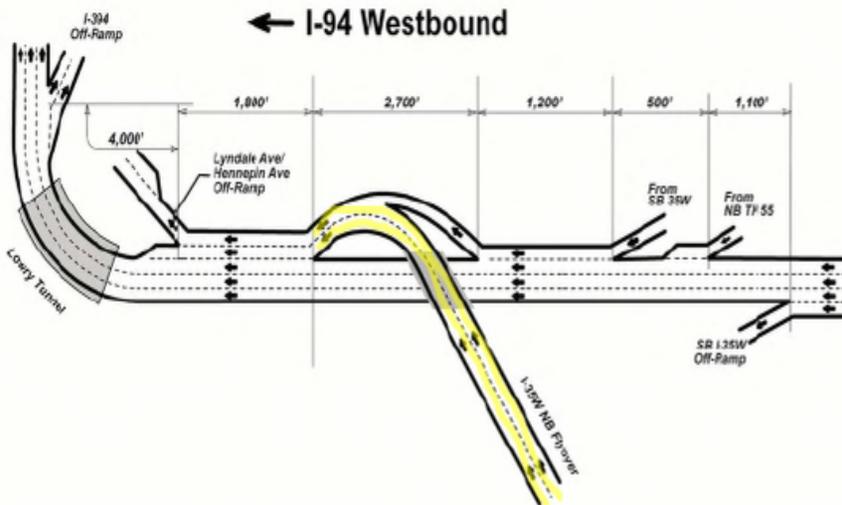




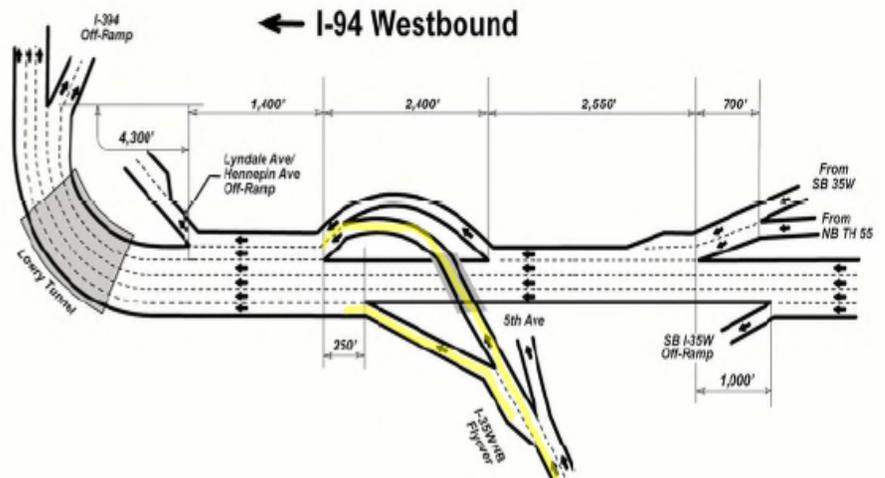
I-94 Westbound Schematics



Vision Scenario 1



Vision Scenario 3b





Epilogue

✿ I-35W Bridge Reconstruction

- ❖ Informed by Downtown Freeway Study
- ❖ Proposed new Northbound Entrance

✿ Urban Partnership Agreement

- ❖ Northbound Priced Dynamic Shoulder
- ❖ Council Resolution

✿ Principal Arterial Study

- ❖ Major Project Priorities



Discussion/Questions

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Vision Scenario 3





Interim Scenario: A Step Toward a Long-Term Vision

