

I-494: Airport to Highway 169 Public Engagement Summary

This document summarizes public engagement completed between Summer of 2018 to Fall of 2020.

So far, the engagement team has hosted in-person events, released an online virtual open house, posted fliers, connected with community leaders and organizations, and used social media platforms to engage the public. Thousands of stakeholders have been reached during the entirety of the I-494 project.

Reaching Underrepresented Communities

Engaging underrepresented populations, who may be impacted, is a top priority for this project. “Underrepresented populations” include minority and low-income groups. An Equity Analysis was completed in 2018 to identify impacted populations and ways to most appropriately reach them. Maps at the end of this document show where engagement events were hosted and fliers were posted in relation to areas with a higher percentage of minorities and low-income populations.

Comments from underrepresented groups were similar to the general population. **There were no unique challenges identified by minority or low-income individuals throughout the engagement process.** Comments focused on these key themes: 1) safety on I-494, 2) traffic congestion on I-494 and highway ramps, 3) exit and entrance highway ramps are too close together between Nicollet Ave, Portland Ave, and 12th Ave, and 4) pedestrian and bicycle connections across I-494.

What we’ve done so far

1. Communications

The engagement team has worked with project partners to inform the public of project background, updates, and events and activities. The following are ways the public was reached throughout the entirety of the project:

- Thousands of direct mailings sent to local residents and businesses
- Social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor (posted by MnDOT and partnering cities and organizations). This included paid Facebook ads to local stakeholders
- Regional television and print media articles
- Fliers and print materials were made available in both English and Spanish
- In-person fliers were distributed at local businesses, public buildings (e.g. libraries, education centers, etc.) nonprofit agencies, spaces of worship, office buildings, transit stops, and senior and low-income apartment buildings
 - Fliers were posted at a total of 33 locations
- Direct outreach to social services and non-profit agencies
 - This includes emails to Commuter Services’ 4,500 subscribers
- Direct outreach to local businesses
- Posting to the project website and online virtual open house

2. Engagement Events

In-person events included an open house, business listening session, and pop-up workshops. Pop-up workshops are hosted at public spaces or events where people are already gathering to reach individuals who may not attend a formal event.

In-person engagement has been restricted during the past months to follow MN Department of Health guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. To continue to reach the public during the pandemic, engagement will take place virtually through the open house website and live online meetings.

All outreach events were hosted at specific locations and events that attract diverse audiences. These were held in Bloomington, Edina, Richfield, and Eden Prairie. Here is a list of the all engagement events for this project:

- 1 Open House was hosted at:
 - United Methodist Church, 01.24.2019
- 3 Business Listening Session were hosted:
 - Great Wolf Lodge, 01.08.2019
 - House of Prayer Church, 01.30.2020
 - Focused on discussing changes to access at Nicollet Ave, Portland Ave, and 12th Ave
 - Online live meeting, 05.19.2020
 - Focused on discussing changes to the I-35W/I-494 interchange
- 18 Pop-up workshops were hosted at:
 - Penn Fest, 09.16.2018
 - Edina Open Streets, 09.23.2018
 - Bloomington Farmers Market, 10.06.2018
 - Bloomington Walmart (American Boulevard), 02.02.2019
 - Summer Fete, 07.03.2019
 - Kids Entertainment in the Park, 07.07.2019
 - Bloomington Walmart (American Boulevard), 07.13.2019
 - Phillip Sousa Concert at Centennial Lakes Park, 07.14.2019
 - Richfield Farmers Market, 07.20.2019
 - Centennial Lakes Farmers Market, 07.25.2019
 - Taqueria y Mercado Andale, 07.30.2019
 - Pop-up Splash Pad, 07.30.2019
 - Toro Wellness Fair, 07.30.2019
 - PeopleFest! International Culture Festival, 08.11.2019
 - Commuter Fair at Best Buy Corporate Campus, 09.11.2019
 - Penn Fest, 09.15.2019
 - 50th & France Open Streets, 09.22.2019
 - Commuter Fair at Best Buy Corporate Campus, 12.12.2020

3. Posted fliers

Fliers were posted at dozens of local businesses, community centers, parks, libraries, nonprofit organizations, religious centers, government buildings, and apartment complexes that reach diverse populations. Fliers were also placed at specific locations that primarily serve minority or low-income populations.

4. Created an Online Virtual Open House

The engagement team designed an online open house to share project updates on the screening process and criteria, design options being considered, and upcoming engagement opportunities. The site also had a short survey to identify best ways to reach the public. A total of 2,280 individuals visited the online open house during the summer 2019 engagement period. Out of those visitors, 151 participated in an online survey.

The online open house is updated to show the latest news. The website continues to receive traffic every month.

Here is link to the open house: <https://www.494openhouse.com/>.

5. Connected with community leaders and organizations

The engagement team consulted with local city staff, religious group members, non-profit staff, and business representatives. Some of the leaders and organizations the engagement team connected with include:

- Assumption Church Leadership (predominantly Hispanic)

- Commuter Services
- Dealerships located along the corridor
- Community Involvement Program
- Businesses that primarily serve African immigrant community members (Agape African Market, Aaran Halal Market)
- Businesses that primarily serve Asian community members (Groceries of the Orient)
- Businesses that primarily serve Hispanic community members (Andale Taqueria y Mercado, La Vaquita, El Chinelo)
- VEAP
- Cornerstone Advocacy Center

6. Provided translated and ADA accessible project information

Print materials and online survey questions were available in English and Spanish. Spanish translation services were also available at in-person events.

All documents on the project website were also made ADA accessible.

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The map below shows where engagement events were located and fliers were posted in relation to areas with percentage of minority residents above the Hennepin County average of 30.1%.



