



## Bring Back 6th! Frequently Asked Questions

**Why aren't we considering adding *more* lanes? I hate being stuck in traffic.**

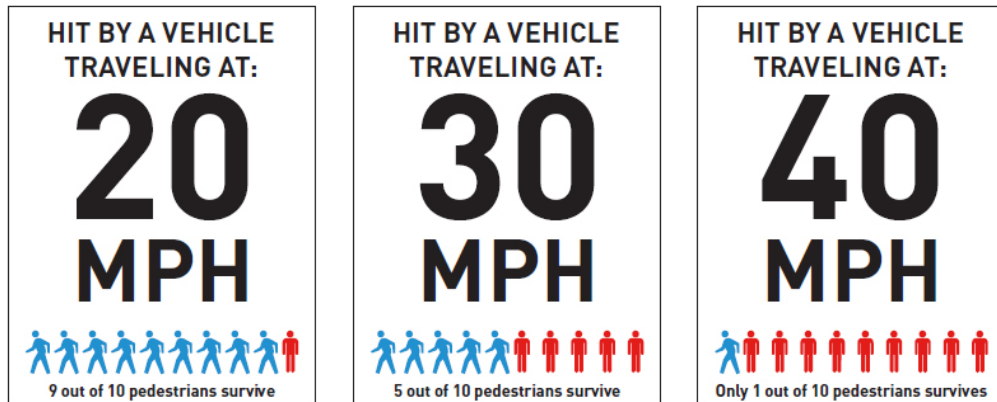
- Expanding highways does not work and [is proven to just cause more people to drive](#).
- This is because of something called [induced demand](#). It is why when North America's biggest freeway in Houston was expanded to 26 lanes, it only made traffic congestion [worse](#) three years later
- The best way to reduce congestion and improve travel times is to give people better transit options and walkable access to things in their neighborhood, allowing fewer car trips to be made

**Will removing Olson Memorial Highway and restoring 6th Avenue N slow down my commute?**

- Removing the highway and replacing it with a restored 6th Avenue North will only add a few minutes to driving time and will make transportation faster, cheaper and easier by:
  - Improving transit, biking and walking options will give people better, more affordable transportation choices.
  - This is of critical importance because the 55411 ZIP code has the highest percentage of transit-dependent households in the Twin Cities. 1 in 5 households near the highway does not own a car. Owning a car shouldn't be a prerequisite for fast and reliable transportation access.
  - While some people will continue to drive, others will choose new ways of getting around.

**Why are you proposing a slower speed limit?**

- The slower traffic speed may only add a minute or two to driving times, but it will be the difference that saves lives.
- Just a few miles per hour can be a difference between life and death for someone that is hit crossing the street



### Without the highway, will traffic just cut through my neighborhood?

- This is a common and understandable concern
- In all examples of past highway removal projects, overall traffic decreased and the feared traffic impacts on neighborhood streets [never came true](#)
- This is often referred to as “[traffic evaporation](#)”
- Traffic evaporation occurs for a few reasons. For Bring Back 6th, we predict the following:
  - Because the 6th Avenue N will be built to serve local needs, car and truck traffic that isn’t traveling to destinations within Near North will opt to take alternative routes like I-394, which is located less than a mile to the south
  - Other people will choose to drive less and walk, bike and take transit more, especially to new walkable businesses located within the community
  - The remaining car traffic is easily accommodated by the new 6th Avenue North and existing arterial streets
  - This is why in previous highway removal projects, including [in San Francisco](#), any new traffic congestion went away within weeks
- To summarize, people make decisions based on the transportation options that are available to them. We get what we build for.

### How will this project be paid for? Can MnDOT afford it? Will it require additional tax dollars?

- **Removing Olson Memorial Highway and restoring 6th Avenue N could be fully paid for by existing transportation funding and would not require additional tax dollars.**
- Every year, the State of Minnesota spends billions on highway projects, including [\\$900 million](#) on highway expansions in the metro area alone
  - This includes spending [\\$320 million to expand I-494](#) and potentially spending over \$100 million dollars to [expand I-94](#) through North Minneapolis
  - A [recent report](#) showed that MnDOT plans to ask for an additional \$6 billion to expand freeways in the metro area

- **Instead of spending billions on highway expansions that don't work and harm surrounding communities, this funding could be used to reconstruct 6th Avenue N**
- The recently passed federal infrastructure bill [will send an estimated \\$4.5 billion dollars to MnDOT](#)
  - The bill also included [\\$1 billion](#) to remove urban highways and reconnect the communities they divided
  - We are asking that some of this funding be used to study and implement the Bring Back 6th vision
- MnDOT has [publicly acknowledged](#) that they now have a surplus of funding
  - **Now is the time to commit those resources to reparative investments in communities that have suffered from past transportation decisions**

#### **Has a highway ever been removed and replaced with a local street before? Is it practical?**

- Yes, this has happened in cities across the country and world and momentum in the United States [has picked up in recent years](#).
- It has successfully occurred in cities like Milwaukee, San Francisco and Seoul and projects have been approved in cities like Syracuse, Detroit and Oakland
- **There has never been a highway removal project that wasn't a success and there has never been a highway that was constructed through city neighborhoods that wasn't incredibly harmful to surrounding communities**
- **In truth, the radical idea was demolishing 6th Avenue North and thousands of homes and businesses to build the highway in the first place**
  - It's unacceptable that we put the people who live near the highway at risk of cancer and asthma to save a few minutes of driving time for suburban commuters
  - It's unacceptable that kids can't cross the street safely and that residents of Harrison and Near North don't have access to walkable businesses
- What we are proposing is a common sense solution that addresses these issues

#### **How will the proposed changes impact transportation for working class people?**

- People who still need to drive will still be able to. Removing the highway will only add a few minutes to driving times
- It is also important to point out that the highway disproportionately serves the wealthiest commuters.
  - In Minneapolis, the average drive-alone commuter has an income 50% higher than the average transit commuter
- **Over 1 in 5 households along Olson Memorial Highway don't have access to a car**
  - The number of car-free households is [even higher](#) for Black, Indigenous and people of color
- This could be for a number of reasons, including:
  - They could have a disability or no longer have a license because of their age
  - Owning and maintaining cars is expensive and many people can't afford them
  - People who are undocumented aren't allowed to have driver's licenses

- For people without a car, the highway is largely inaccessible.
  - The bus only runs during certain times and is often slow and unreliable
  - Crossing the highway is dangerous and difficult
  - There aren't any safe places to bike along the highway
- It is unacceptable that the average transit commute takes almost twice as long as the average driving commute. We need to give these people better transportation options.
- By improving sidewalks, reconnecting streets, adding a bikeway and making the bus faster and more reliable, the Bring Back 6th vision improves transportation access for everyone

### **How will this project address potential consequences like gentrification and displacement?**

- We agree that development often doesn't benefit the community that already lives here.
  - That's why we're asking that publicly owned land along the Olson Memorial Highway corridor be placed in a public trust so that people that live here currently can determine its future
- We have also included strong local ownership demands to ensure that current residents are given the opportunity and supporting resources to become homeowners along the restored 6th Avenue North corridor.
  - We are asking that the majority of new housing built should be reserved for current residents.
  - In addition, we are asking for the creation of programs to accompany the project like free first-time homebuyer classes, credit repair services and access to capital so that people throughout the neighborhood can build wealth and transition from renting to owning
- [Read the full benchmarks here](#)

### **How will this project impact economic opportunity and create opportunities to build local home and business ownership?**

- The highway has existed for over 80 years. If it was going to bring economic vitality, it would have happened by now. Unfortunately all it did was destroy a thriving business corridor and incentivise investment to move away from Minneapolis communities and into the suburbs
- This project is our opportunity to bring local businesses and vitality back
  - Instead of a highway that serves the suburbs, we need more jobs and economic investment here in our communities
  - By restoring 6th Avenue North and returning highway land to a public land trust specifically designed to benefit Near North communities, we can create better employment opportunities locally
- Our vision expands beyond the highway and focuses on setting clear benchmarks to prevent displacement and ensure that this project primarily benefits Near North residents and businesses. This includes:
  - Setting robust local hiring goals for construction and creating training programs to help community members be hired into the trades

- Designating new commercial space for local businesses and entrepreneurs and creating an incubator program for local neighborhood talent to develop independently owned businesses in the restored 6th Avenue North
- The creation of robust affordable housing requirements to ensure that this project builds units that meet the needs of the community
  - This includes the construction of new public housing units to accommodate our residents' growing need for deeply affordable housing, with priority and preference given to current Harrison and Near North residents, residents who were displaced after the initial Blue Line Extension route announcement, and former residents of the Sumner-Field, Glenwood, Lyndale, and Olson public housing communities

### **Won't electric cars eliminate air pollution from traffic?**

- It is going to take decades to fully electrify cars and trucks. We can't sacrifice the well-being of people who live here now by hoping things will improve in 30 years
- The worst pollutants like fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) come from the wear and tear of tires and breaks in addition to tailpipe emissions.
- Recent research has shown that these pollutants [will continue and could worsen with heavier electric vehicles](#)

### **Won't electric cars eliminate greenhouse gas emissions?**

- It is going to take decades to fully electrify cars and trucks.
  - The average car in the United States is 12.1 years old and less than 2% of cars in Minnesota are currently electric
- Even with rapid electrification, the scientific consensus is that people also need to drive less and walk, bike and take transit more
  - According to the [Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change \(IPCC\) report](#), it will be impossible to meet the necessary emissions reduction targets without reducing driving
- While many people will continue to drive when they need to, it is critical that we improve walking, biking and transit options to increase use

### **Why should I care about bike lanes? I don't bike.**

- The Bring Back 6th vision is about much more than adding a bikeway, it is about repairing the highway's harms and investing in economic and environmental justice for our communities
- While biking may not be for everyone, it is important that people have access to safe biking infrastructure
- It is [especially important](#) for people who don't have access to a car. In Minneapolis, people with lower incomes are more likely to bike than wealthy ones.
- Additionally, [studies have shown](#) that many more people bike when they are provided with safe, accessible options to do so

**How will local residents and businesses deal with the construction impacts of this project?**

- Our demands include that businesses and residents are informed and supported throughout the project process
- This includes the creation of a fund to support businesses throughout the construction process

**These projects often talk about creating jobs and local businesses but I never see them. How is this project different?**

- Construction projects in Minnesota [often fail to meet goals](#) for contracting with local, minority-owned (MBE) and woman-owned (WBE) businesses
  - That's why we are advocating for strict public accountability and demanding MNDOT do more to ensure that these goals are met
- We are also including demands to ensure that the majority of business retail spaces are occupied by local business owners
  - We want to give the businesses who are already here the support they need to take advantage of this opportunity and help aspiring entrepreneurs from this neighborhood launch their business idea

**The highway is unsafe because the traffic laws aren't enforced. Why aren't you calling for more traffic enforcement?**

- [Traffic enforcement does little to improve safety](#)
- Traffic tickets disproportionately impact working class people who can't afford to pay the fines
- Increased traffic enforcement will amplify racial disparities in our city
- According to data from the [Minneapolis Police Department Stop Dashboard](#), we found that from January 1st to June 25th of this year, 45% of the people stopped for traffic moving violations in our city were Black or East African, while 38% were white and 5% were unknown
  - After police stopped someone in Minneapolis, sometimes they searched their vehicle. 70% of those searches were performed on Black or East African drivers
- Improving street design is a much more effective and equitable long-term solution to improving transportation safety

**When can we expect to see this vision implemented?**

- The safety improvements (Phase 1) that we have proposed are low-cost, quick build solutions that could be implemented in a matter of months. We are asking MnDOT to make these changes by 2023
- The longer term vision to replace the highway with a restored 6th Avenue North commercial corridor will take years to plan and implement, however there are steps that MnDOT and its partners can take immediately to begin the process. These include:
  - Publicly committing to the Bring Back 6th vision

- Placing public land along the corridor in a publicly held trust to ensure that decisions about the land's future aren't made until the larger vision comes together
- Using the abundance of federal infrastructure dollars to create and fund a project to restore 6th Avenue North
  - This would include commissioning a study to fully study how the project could be implemented
- We are asking that construction on this longer-term vision begins by 2026

**How can I help make this vision a reality?**

- [Take the Bring Back 6th Survey](#)
- [Sign and share our petition](#)
- [Email decision makers](#)
- [Come knock doors with us](#) to spread the word and build community power