



**THRIVING  
COMMUNITIES**  
PROGRAM

# Omaha | North Freeway

**Visioning Workshop**

02/13/2024

## Workshop Agenda

<b>9:00 a.m.</b>	Workshop Overview and Introductions
<b>10:15 a.m.</b>	Fifteen-minute Break
<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	Issues, Goals, & Vision Work Session
<b>Noon</b>	Lunch
<b>1:00 p.m.</b>	Tools & Ideas Work Session
<b>2:30 p.m.</b>	Conclusion of Workshop



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# Workshop Overview and Introductions



## Omaha Project Partners



ONE OMAHA



the practice  
of democracy

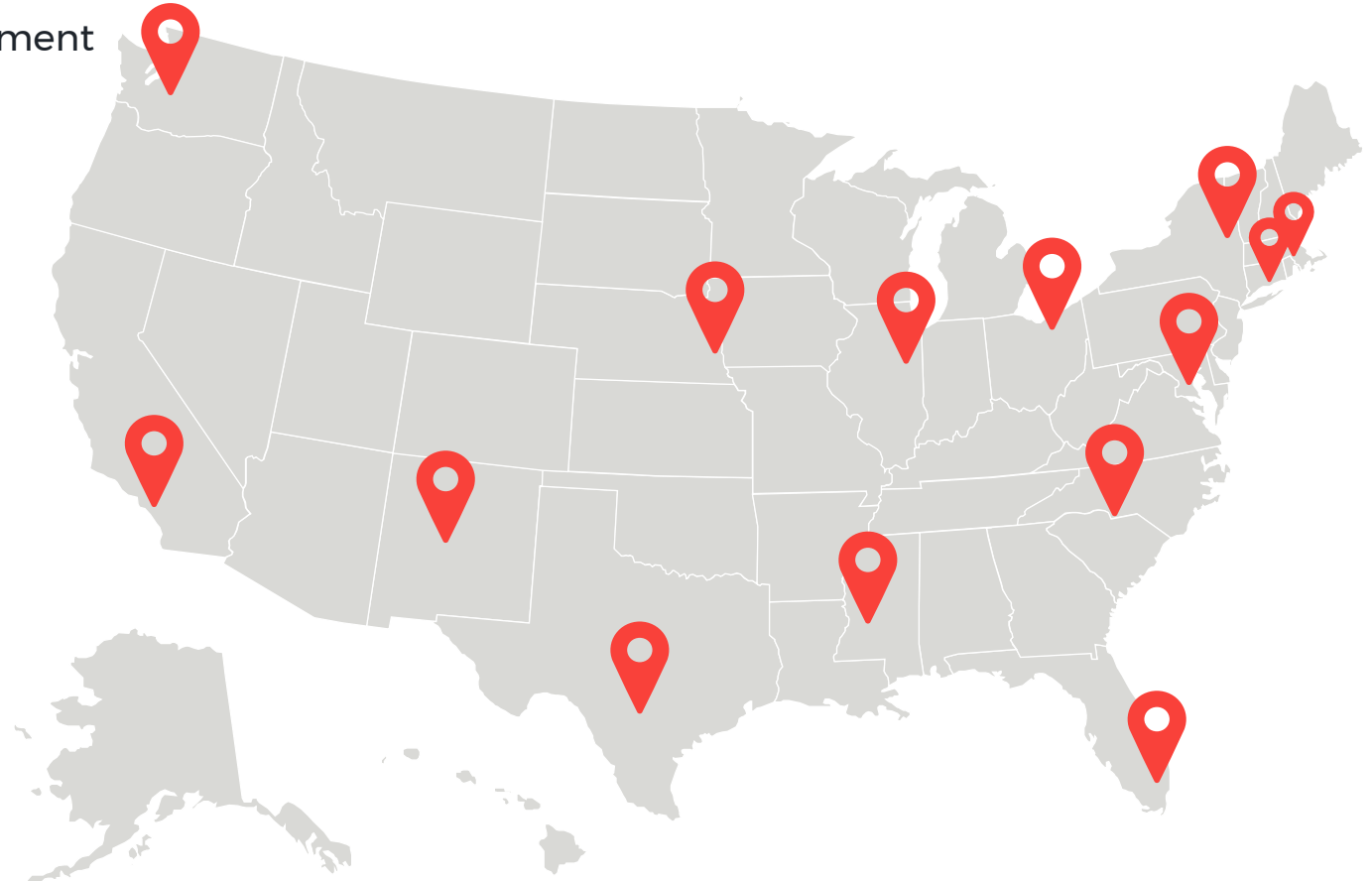




# Thriving Communities Program (TCP)

## 14 Communities with focus on:

- Affordable Housing and Anti-Displacement
- Complete Streets and Vision Zero
- Economic Development
- Land Use and Zoning
- Public Engagement



# Thriving Communities Program (TCP)

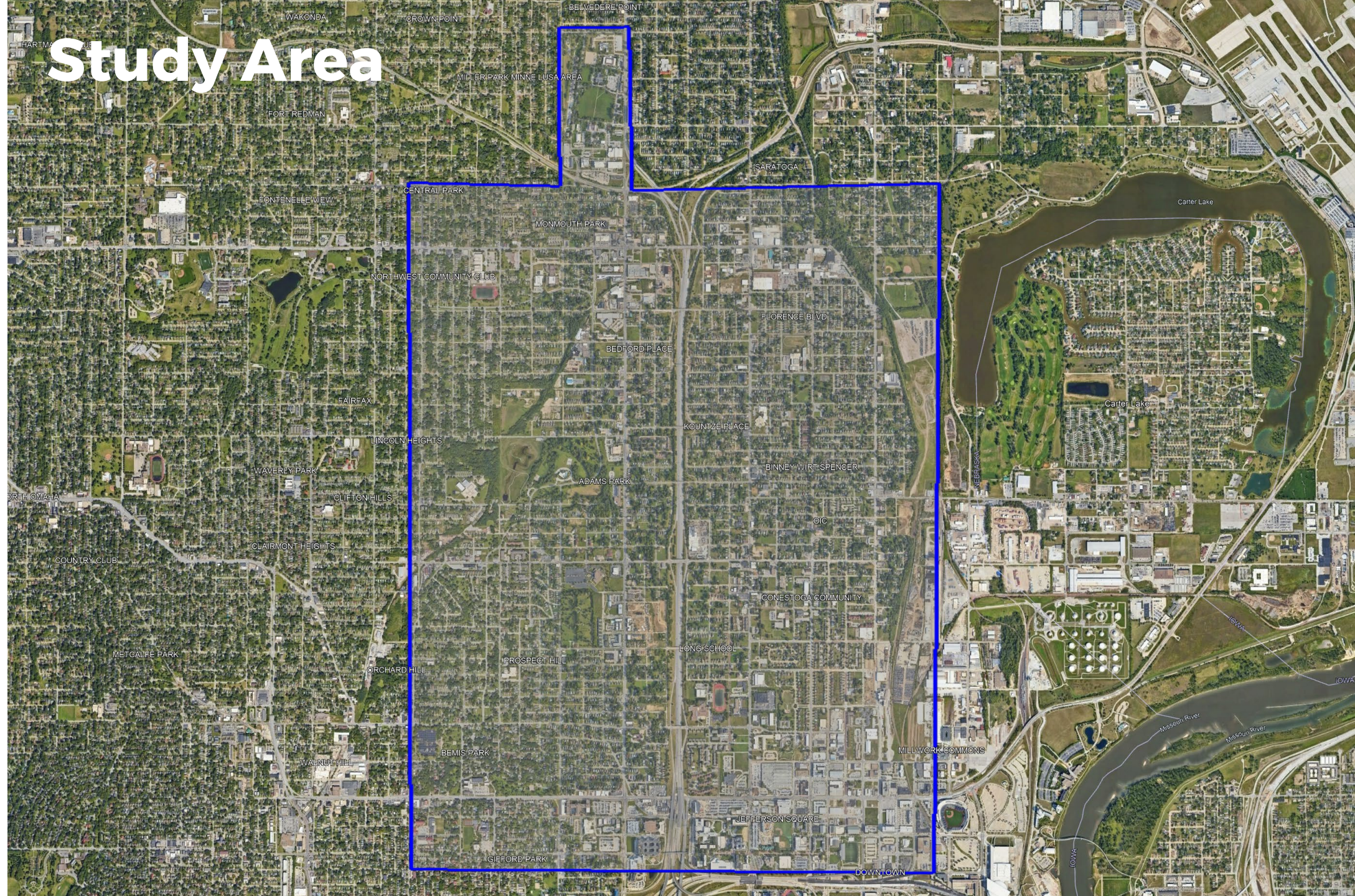
The inaugural USDOT **TCP Complete Transit-Oriented Neighborhoods**

- *The Thriving Communities Program funds tailored technical assistance to under-resourced and disadvantaged communities, helping them better access historic infrastructure investments and deliver transformative projects.*
- Program Goals
  - Technical assistance (TA) and capacity building support
  - Help communities plan and develop a pipeline of comprehensive transportation, housing, and community revitalization activities.
  - Enable communities to find and win funding to drive projects forward

## Workshop Overview and Introductions

- Goals of workshop
  - Co-create a broad set of conceptual “tools” or strategies that could help to mitigate the harm of the freeway
  - Foster conversations and collaboration between community partners around what “thriving” looks like for the area around the North Freeway
  - Provide momentum for potential future studies / projects along the corridor





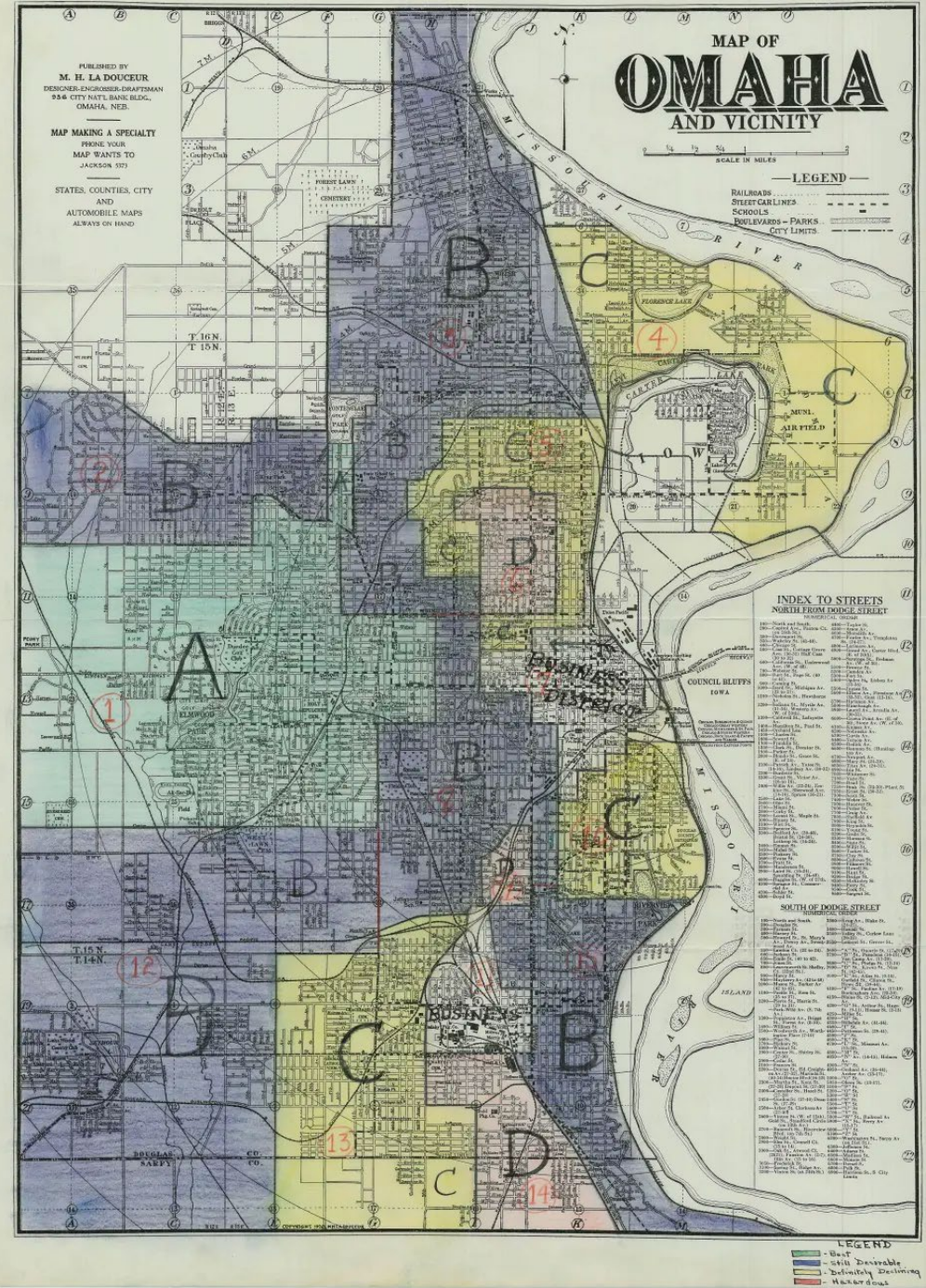


## North Freeway - Timeline

- **1956** – Idea for a “north expressway” was first conceptualized.
- **1960** – Phase 1 construction began on section from the I-480 interchange to Hamilton St. Neighborhood protests failed to stop project.
- **1973** – Phase 2 construction from Hamilton to Lake St began. Neighborhood protests failed to stop project.
- **1977** – Phase 3 construction from Lake St to Ames Ave began. Neighborhoods protested and successfully prevented construction northward to I-680.
- **1981** – Phase 4 construction from Ames Ave to interchange with 30<sup>th</sup>, Sorensen Pkwy, and Storz Expressway began.
- **1989** – Construction completed and highway dedicated.









## How have other communities addressed highway barriers?

### Connectivity Enhancements

**Long Street Bridge and Cultural Wall – Columbus, Ohio**  
**North Omaha Trail – Omaha, Nebraska**

### Highway Caps

**Central-70 Cover Park – Denver, Colorado**  
**South Loop – Kansas City, Missouri**  
**ReConnect Rondo – St. Paul, Minnesota**

### Highway Removal

**Park East Freeway - Milwaukee, Wisconsin**  
**Inner Loop East – Rochester, New York**

# Long Street Bridge and Cultural Wall – Columbus, Ohio





## Long Street Bridge and Cultural Wall – Columbus, Ohio

Before (2011)



After (2024)

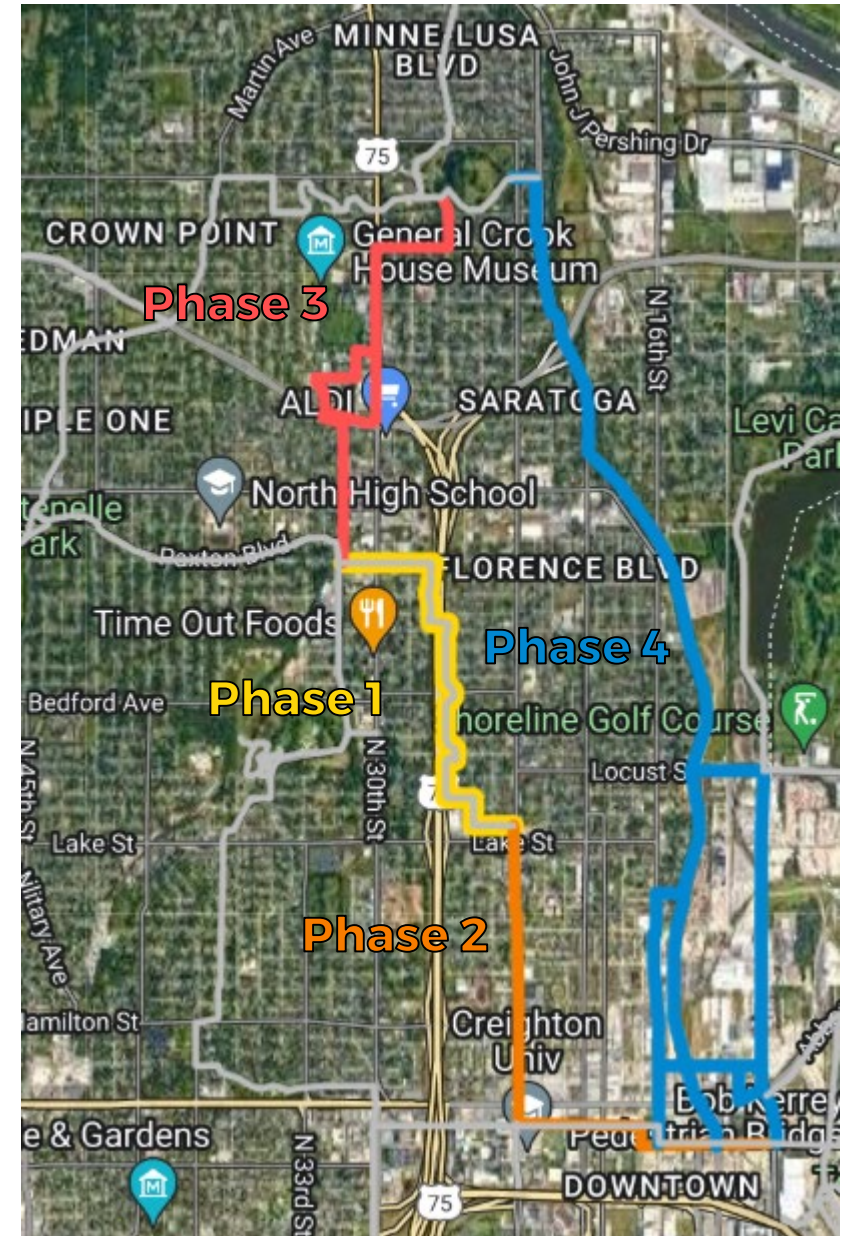
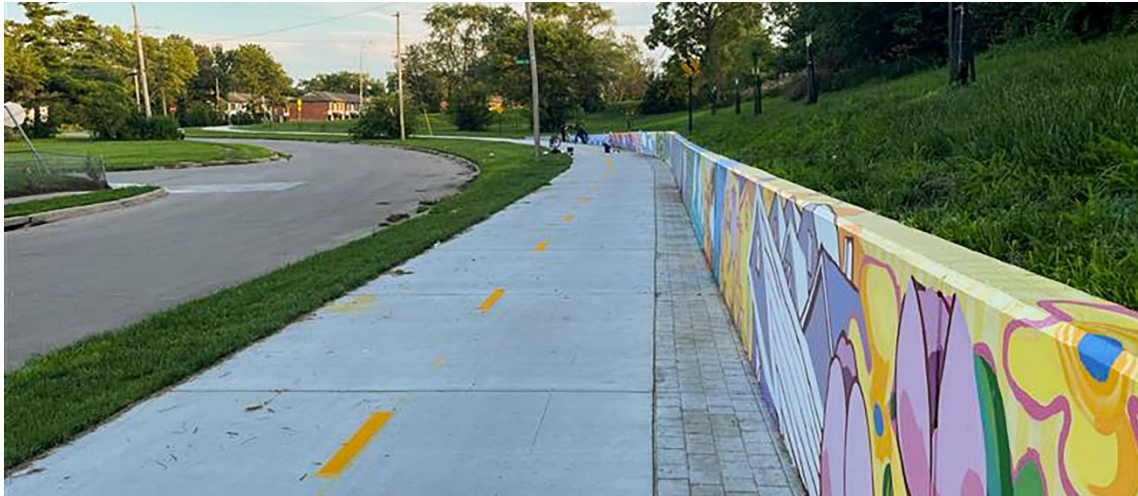




# North Omaha Trail

## Multi-phase project

- Phase 1 (Completed 2022)
- Phase 2 (In progress)
- Phase 3 – Planned
- Potential Future Phases (Currently Studied)





## Central-70 Cover Park – Denver, Colorado





## Central-70 Cover Park – Denver, Colorado





## South Loop Project – Kansas City, MO



- ~\$217 million highway cap topped with a 4-block long, 5.5 acre urban park
- Completion in 2026





## ReConnect Rondo – St. Paul, Minnesota: Goals

- **Neighborhood Reconnection**—Reconnect the neighborhood on both sides of I-94 in ways that serve as a catalyst for community-wide initiatives.
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Equitable Development**
- **Public Health/Green Space**
- **Community Leadership**





# ReConnect Rondo – St. Paul, Minnesota





## Inner Loop East Removal – Rochester, New York

- Year: 2012
- Goal: reconnect neighborhoods, spur economic development, and provide an appropriately-scaled, complete city street “grid”
- Highlights
  - Replaced highway with a boulevard with street parking and bicycle lanes on either side of the street
  - Created 5.7 acres of land for mixed-use development along a new, walkable boulevard.





# Inner Loop East Removal – Rochester, New York

Before (2014)



Before (2014)



After (2014)



After (2014)





## Park East Freeway Removal – Milwaukee, WI

- Year: 2003
- Removed underutilized highway spur and replaced with an at-grade, six-lane boulevard and re-connected street grid.
- Opened up 24 acres of downtown property for redevelopment resulting in over \$1 billion in total development
- Developed with a Community Benefits Agreement that required:
  - 20% of housing built on county-owned land be designated as affordable
  - 25% of the construction contracts go to Minority Business Enterprises, and
  - 5% of the construction contracts go to Women's Business Enterprises



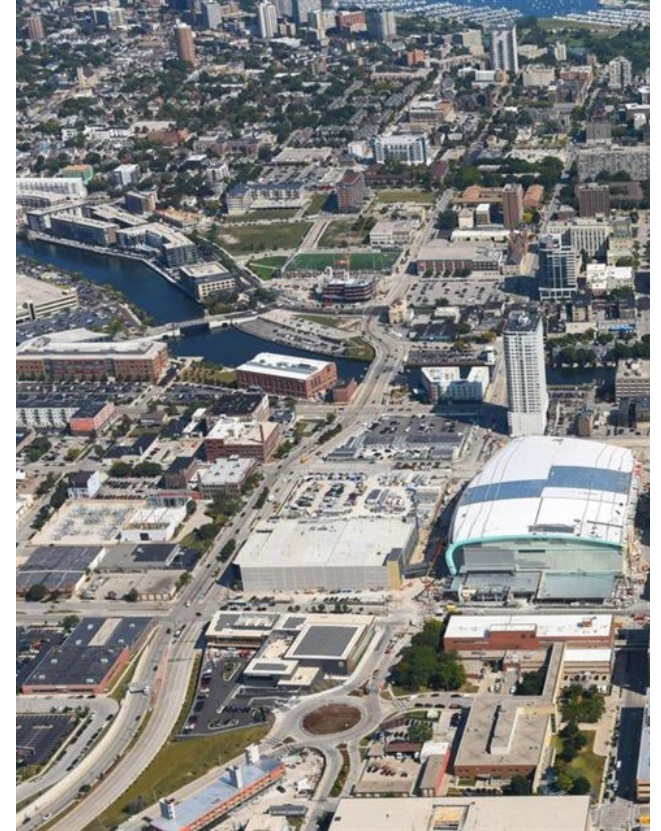


# Park East Freeway Removal - Milwaukee, WI

**Before**



**After**





# Break



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## Reconvene at 10:30



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# Issues, Goals, & Vision Work Session



# Instructions



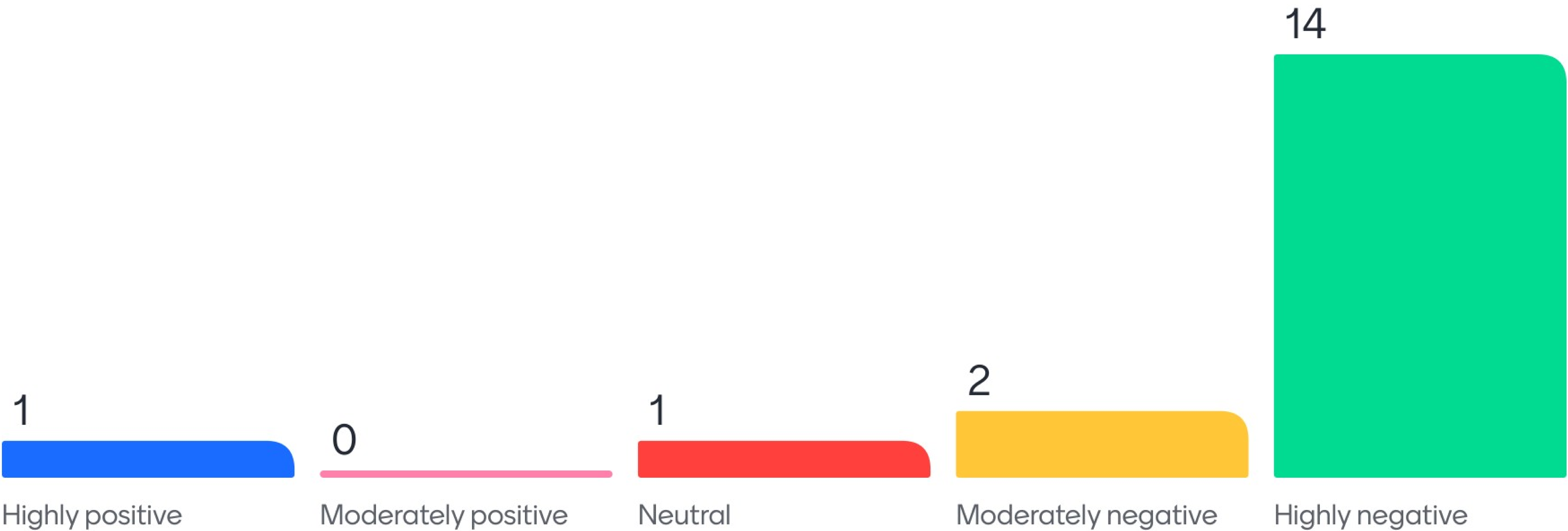


# Issues





Overall, the North Freeway's impact on the community has been...



Please give us an issue that is affecting the North Freeway area that must be addressed.

Accessibility

East-West Connectivity

Safety

Displacement, economic  
development

Connectivity and  
Access for multiple  
modes of transportation

Equitable development

Lack of Transit

Displacement, affordable  
housing, equitable  
redistribution of reclaimed  
land



Please give us an issue that is affecting the North Freeway area that must be addressed.

CONNECTIVITY

The lack of economic development and growth from large commercial business like grocery stores to small businesses that create a healthy economy.

Environmental/air quality impacts

Transportation and access resources

sustainable living

Economic development

Displacement/Removal of Housing/Removal of Communities

Connectivity

Please give us an issue that is affecting the North Freeway area that must be addressed.

Connectivity

Economic and housing  
development. Displacement  
and equitable  
representation

Connectivity and  
access

Lack of connectivity

Opportunities

Walkability

healthy environment

Air quality



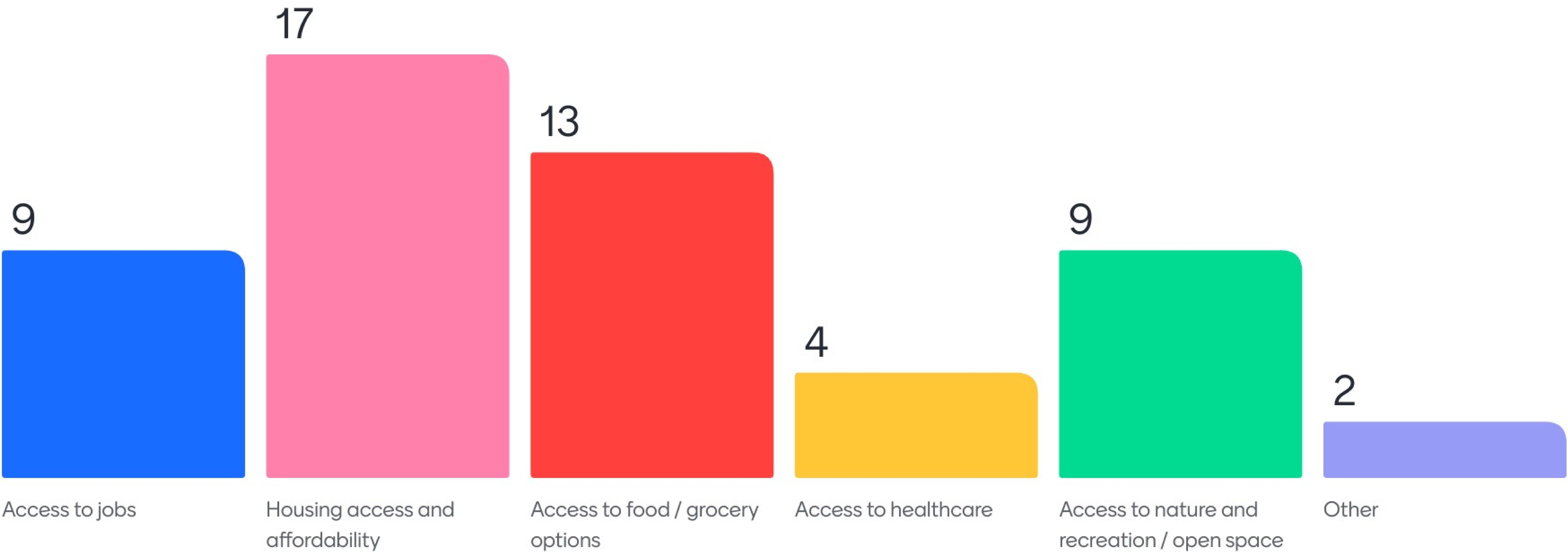
Please give us an issue that is affecting the North Freeway area that must be addressed.

Equity

Access

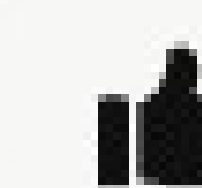
Investment

What daily needs do you think most need to be addressed for the community in the North Freeway area? (Select your top 3)





# Goals



What impacts would you like a reimagined or improved North Freeway corridor project to have on the surrounding community?

Redesign through a lens of the Principles of Environmental Justice

3

Popular

Health benefits- longer life expectancy + higher quality of life

3

Popular

Community led design. Increased connectivity.

3

Popular

Empowerment, prosperity, ownership

2

Create a space for businesses of color to thrive, create a space for people to gather, create space for art, create a space for agriculture

2

Unifying the community!

1

Revitalization!!

1

Huge positive community benefit

1

1



17





What impacts would you like a reimagined or improved North Freeway corridor project to have on the surrounding community?

Do no harm new projects.  
Example Truck Route  
Make N.O. look like thriving  
zipcides

1

Community  
sovereignty and self-  
determination

1

Climate change  
solutions oriented  
programming

1

Increasing the  
longevity and quality of  
life

1

A BLACK WALL STREET.  
BLACK BANKING.  
EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE,  
ARTS, STORE FRONTS.  
ENTERTAINMENT,  
AGRICULTURE,  
SUSTAINABILITY AND  
WEALTH BULDING  
EDUCATION AND SUPPORT  
CENTERS ETC WITH  
AWARENESS

1

Utilizing the Jemez  
Principles for Democratic  
Organizing as a model for  
community leadership +  
engagement

Reimagination of what the  
urban form can mean to the  
local community

Spurring community  
driven economic  
development

1



17



What impacts would you like a reimagined or improved North Freeway corridor project to have on the surrounding community?

Improving individual mindsets with visual improvement in the community

Walking and bike path.  
Lighting and shelter for walking paths

Increase in jobs, businesses and housing. Entryway that welcomes and encourages people to come to North Omaha

I would like a reimagined or improved North Freeway corridor project to address racial inequities in housing, health, and transportation.

Mixed housing, access to mental health health issues that affect the demographics of community. More businesses. Better public education and SAFETY.

Better public housing.



What impacts would you like a North Freeway project to have on the area's transportation network?

More options

Easier access to transit

Safety

Improved safety... from freeway traffic to pedestrian... from crossing the freeway to traveling through neighborhoods.

Light rail corridor

Increased safe access and options

Higher levels of connectivity, especially for pedestrian, Bicyclist, and transit.

Bike share access

# What impacts would you like a North Freeway project to have on the area's transportation network?

Positive impact on all modes of transportation

Multimodal Options

Multi modal modes of transportation

Bike trails, busing around the metro including Council Bluffs, Bellevue, Ralston, Papillion, Millard, Blair and throughout Omaha

Bus Rapid Transit

Multiple affordable and assessible transportation options.

Light Rail

Create a space for people to walk/bike with shelter from the elements, create a space for for people to wait for the bus with shelter from the elements including emergency call buttons and first aid



What impacts would you like a North Freeway project to have on the area's transportation network?

Off the street trails

Connectivity of projects

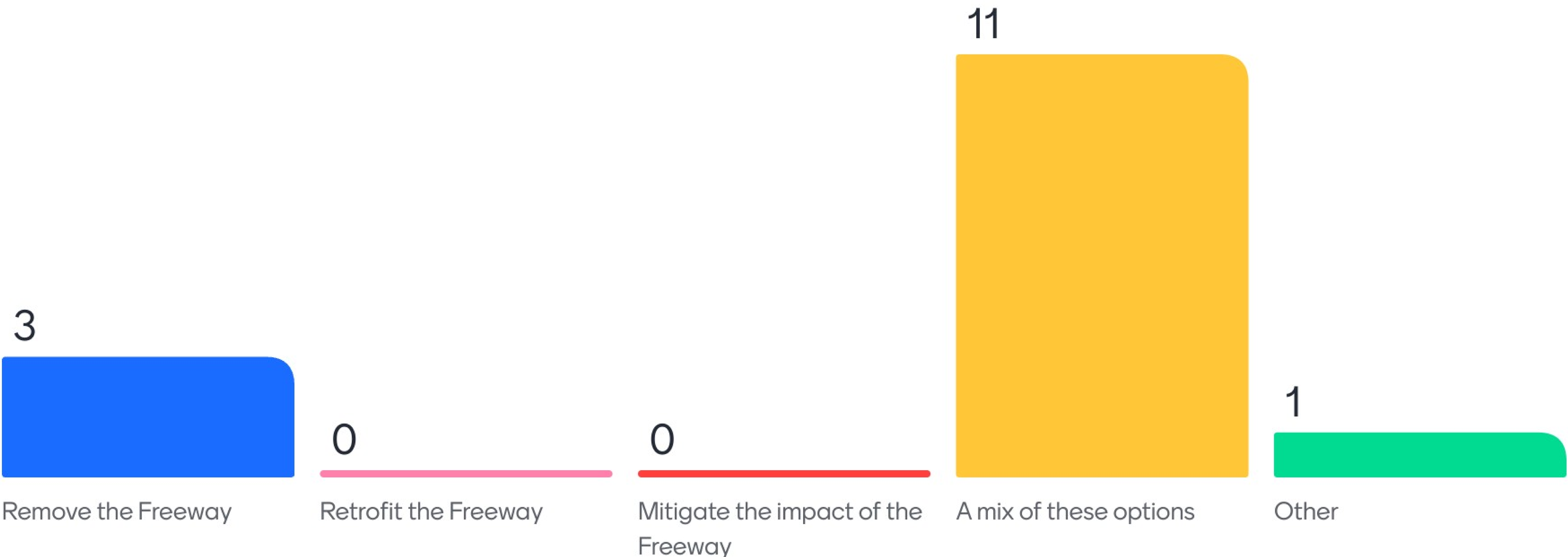
Less single occupancy  
vehicle travel

edible landscaping  
along trails

Pocket parks and green  
spaces inbetween

Shuttles to large work  
sites

What should be the focus or outcome of a potential future North Freeway project?





What are the locations or destinations in the North Freeway area that are most important to improve connectivity and access to?

North Omaha Transit Center, Metro Community College

9

Popular

North Omaha Transit Center

7

30th & Ames : thee Hwy 75 & Sorensen PKW knot

6

Equitable health care, food sourcing, community engagement centers

6

Along North 24th Street 24th and Lake area 75 North Housing units Eppley Airfield Parks and Schools Police Station Educational entities

6

Exits into neighborhoods are not spaced equitably

6

Highlander/75 North and potential development east of the freeway.

5

Missouri River

4

What are the locations or destinations in the North Freeway area that are most important to improve connectivity and access to?

Shopping venues

3

Blackburn High School  
and the Boys and Girls  
Club

2

North Omaha Transit  
Center

2

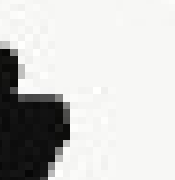
Grocery stores

2

Sorensen Parkway,

1

2



13





# Vision



Please give us one (1) word that you would use to describe the North Freeway area today?

44 responses





Please give us one (1) word that you would like to describe the North Freeway Area tomorrow?

47 responses



What is the most important aspect of the vision for the North Freeway Area that you would like the vision statement to contain?

Self determination

The community

Being community led

Community  
empowerment

community

Economically  
Empowering Area

Multimodal options for  
transportation

Community ownership  
and opportunity



What is the most important aspect of the vision for the North Freeway Area that you would like the vision statement to contain?

Redress harm caused by  
urban renewal

Being transformative for  
community

Climate justice

Community  
Empowerment

Preservation - physical,  
cultural, social

Reclaiming space for  
the existing community

Environmental Justice

Inclusive Community

What is the most important aspect of the vision for the North Freeway Area that you would like the vision statement to contain?

Reconnecting a community that was divided by greed and deception.

Reclaiming space for the existing community

Being an example to the nation on create sustainable communities

community based compact

Being climate friendly

Inviting and thriving

Wholistic

True community engagement, equity, and inclusion.



What is the most important aspect of the vision for the North Freeway Area that you would like the vision statement to contain?

Green!

Access, connectivity and welcoming are essential aspects. Leads to thriving communities.

Holistic and clean

Connection to destinations, resources and opportunities with continuous innovative approaches for progression and accessibility from our community with accountability measures to get needs met

Community participation

As soon as possible

Is there a timeline or horizon for accomplishing this vision that you would like to see in the vision statement?

5 years

2025

Within the next 10 years

Within the next 3-5 years

2030

3 - 5 years

By 12/2027

25 years



Is there a timeline or horizon for accomplishing this vision that you would like to see in the vision statement?

5 years

A promise for completion in 10 years.

The work will never be fully "accomplished" - needs to be ongoing

next decade

2030

Fair reasonable timeline for each goal to be achieved but continuously reevaluating how we can always improve is imperative and never ending

I would like to see it start immediately and have a end date, like 2028.

Continuous development as needed

Is there a timeline or horizon for accomplishing this vision that you would like to see in the vision statement?

As long as it takes to make sure that everything is square. The city is already plagued by rushed projects and endless construction.



# Lunch



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## Reconvene at 1:00



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# Tools & Ideas Work Session



## **General Agenda for this 90 minutes...**

- **15-minute presentation**
- **60-minute collective discussion / worksession**
- **15-minute report back**

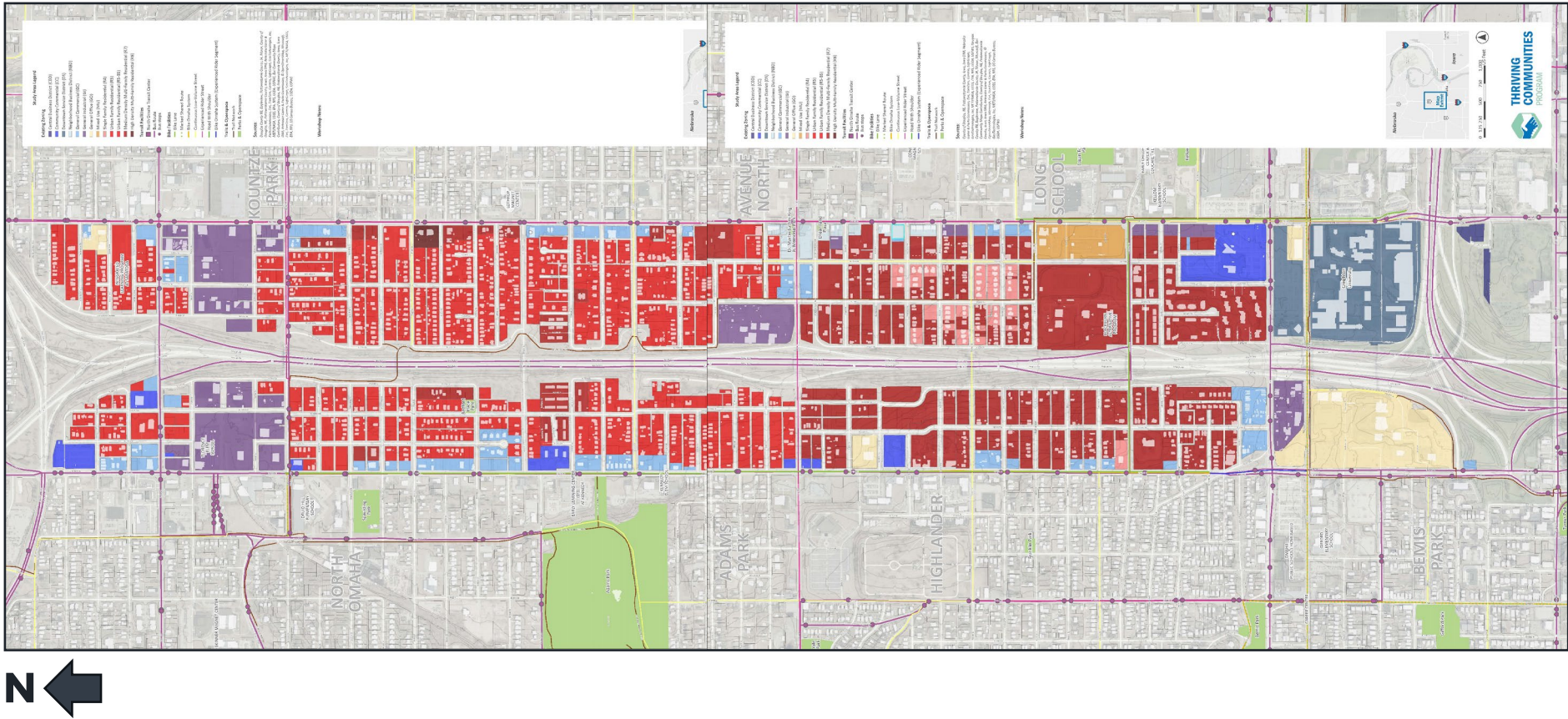
## Purpose of this Worksession...

- **Provide a brief overview of the maps and the tools that we'll be using today.**
- **Conduct a worksession with the maps and tools to develop a “concept”.**
- **Determine what / where tools are most appropriate along the corridor.**
- **Refine and identify preferences for tools or remove tools from consideration.**
- **Identify any tools or solutions that may be missing from this list.**
- **Document this discussion on the maps...**



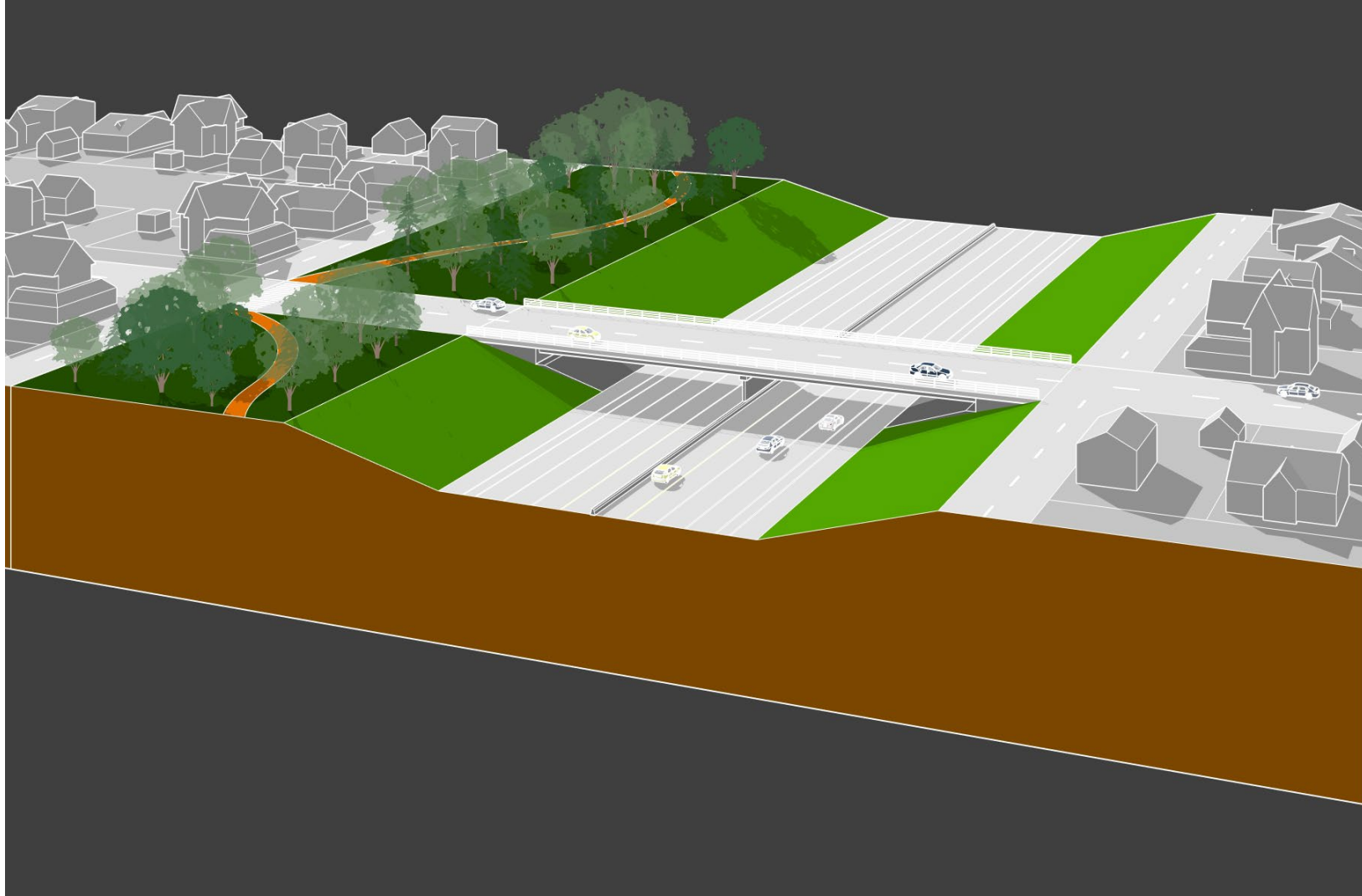
# Tools & Ideas Work Session

## Work-Session Boards



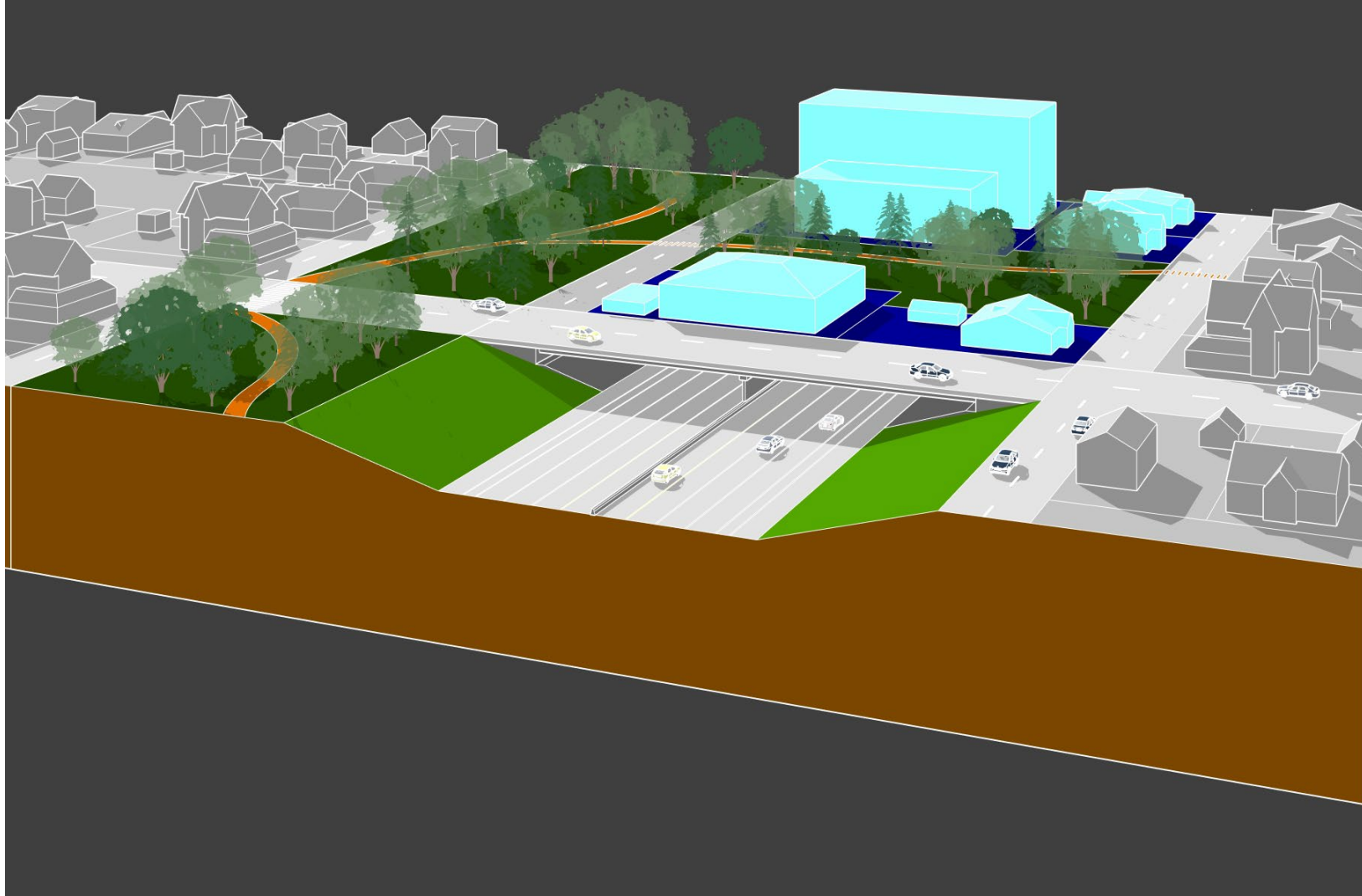
# Tools & Ideas Work Session

## Existing Condition



# Tools & Ideas Work Session

## LID Development





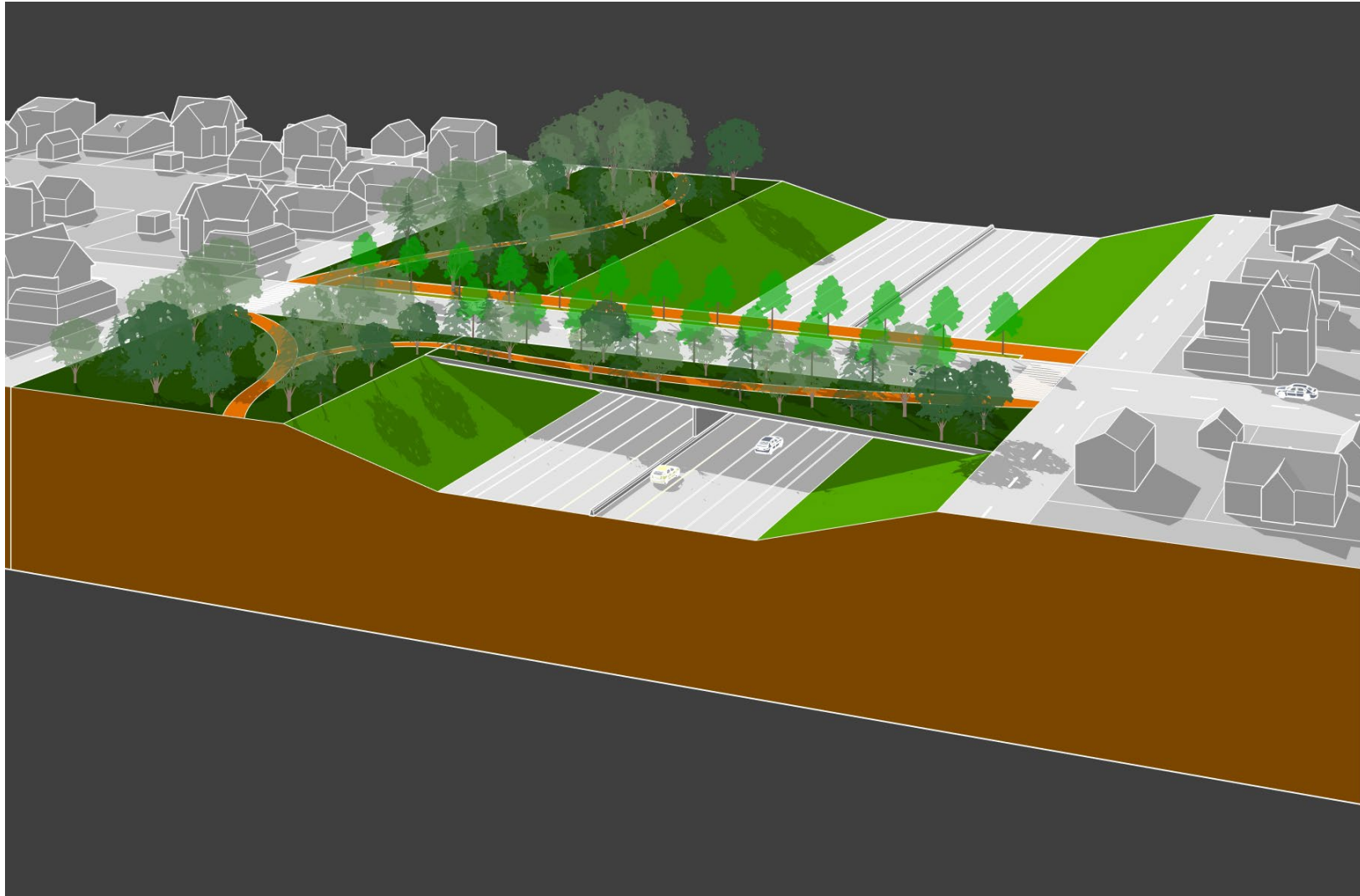
# Tools & Ideas Work Session

## LID Open Space



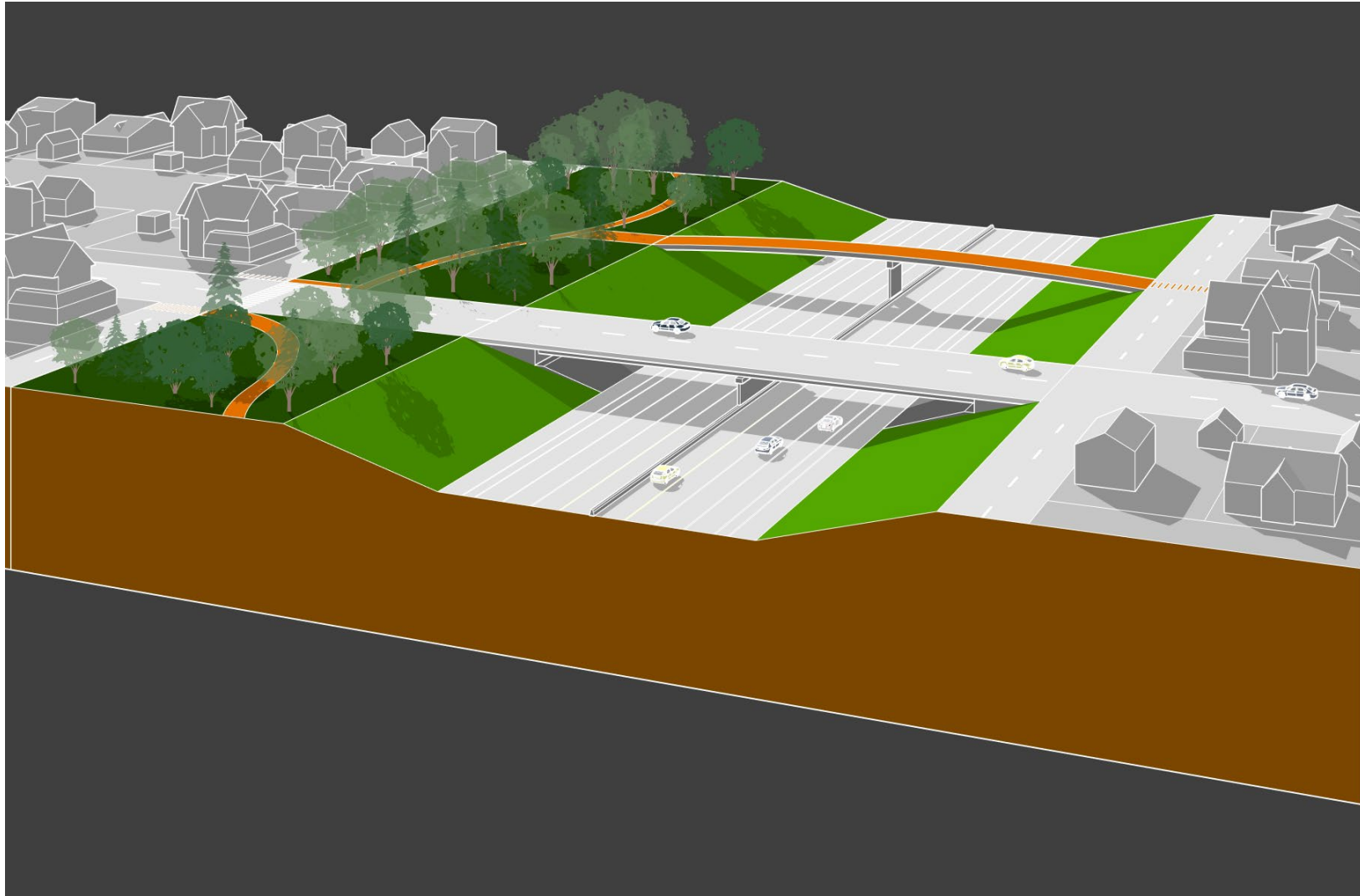
# Tools & Ideas Work Session

## Improved Bridge



# Tools & Ideas Work Session

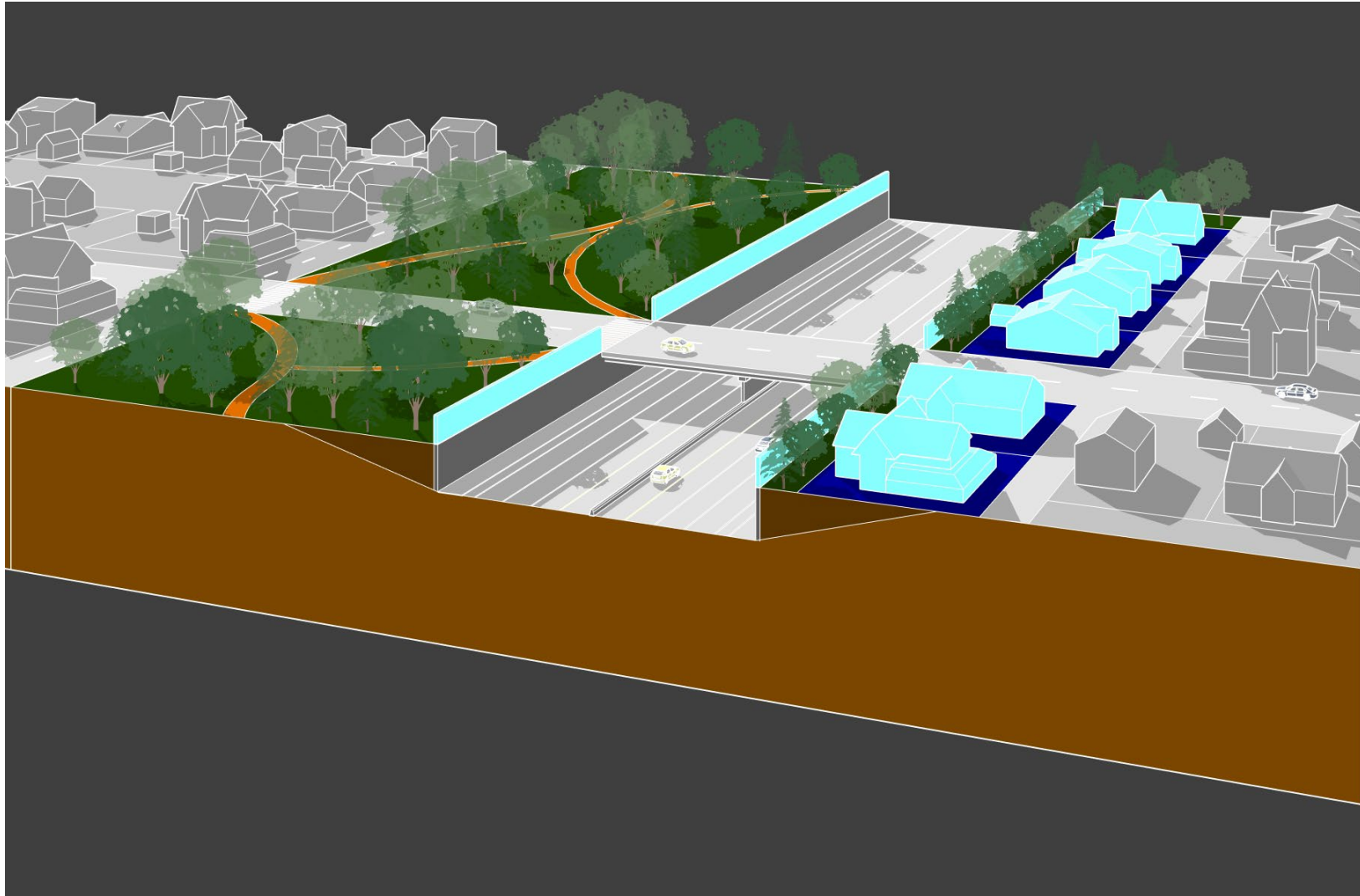
## New Pedestrian Connection





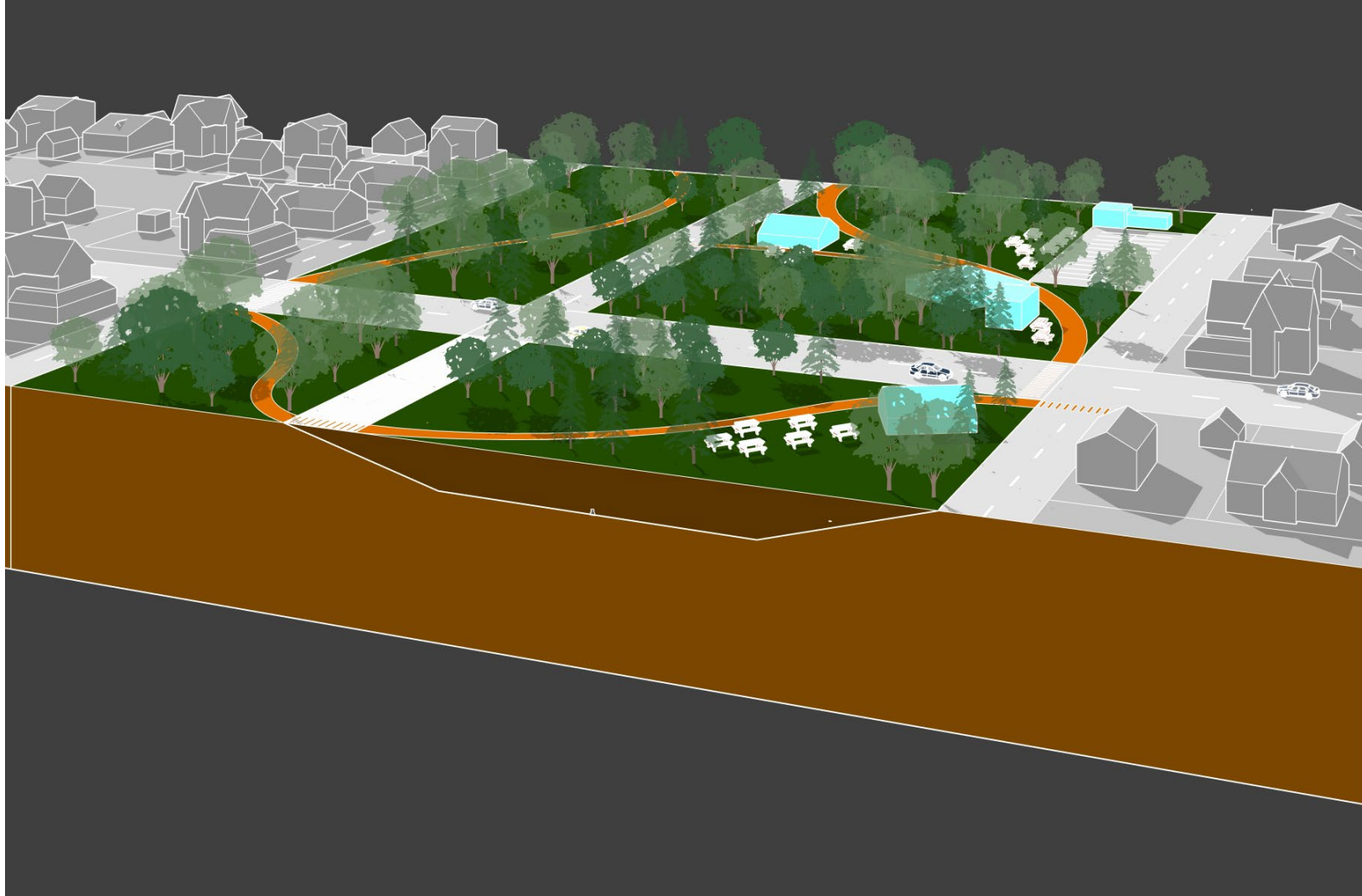
# Tools & Ideas Work Session

## Trench and Fill



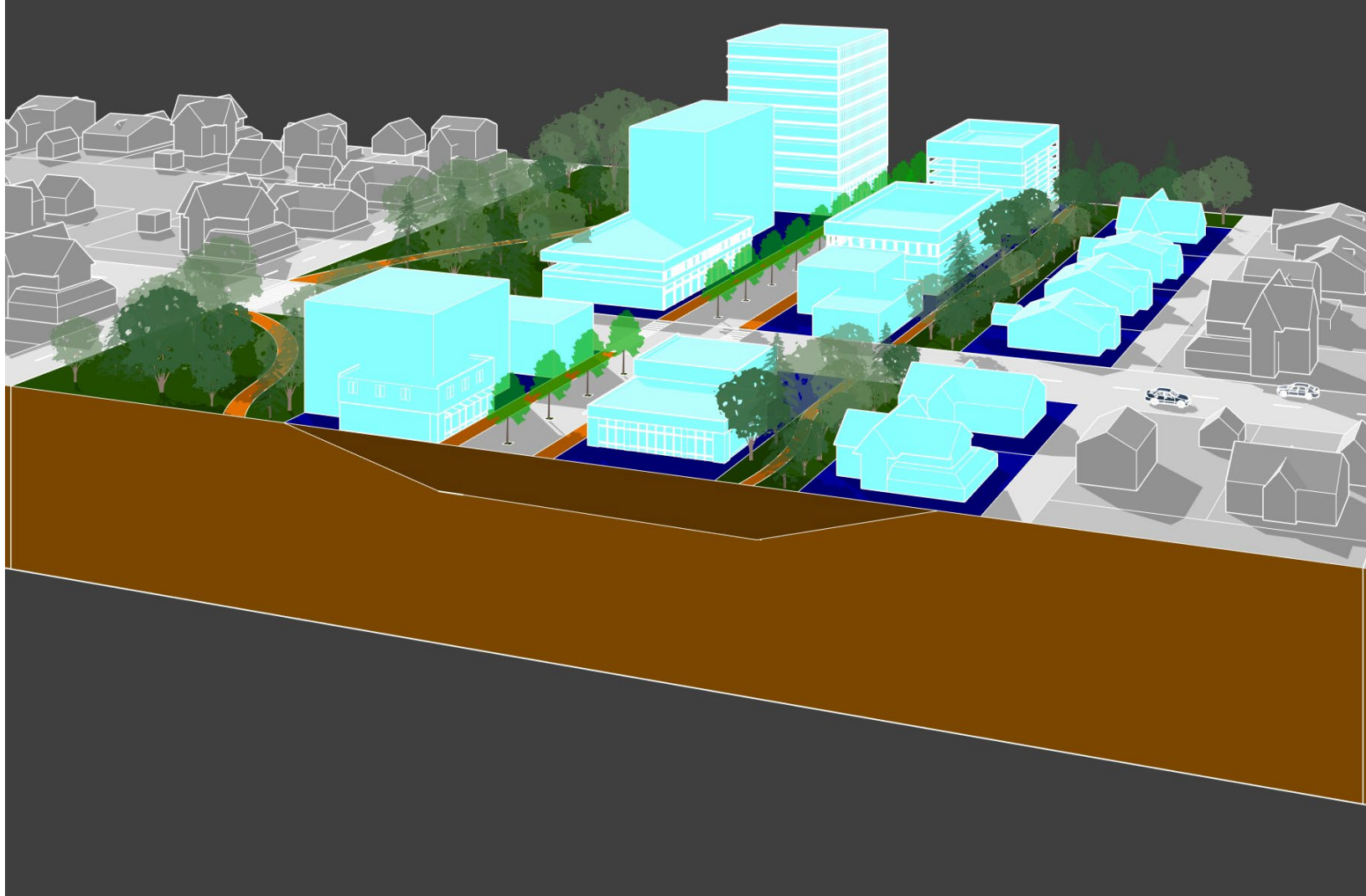
# Tools & Ideas Work Session

## Complete Removal



## Tools & Ideas Work Session

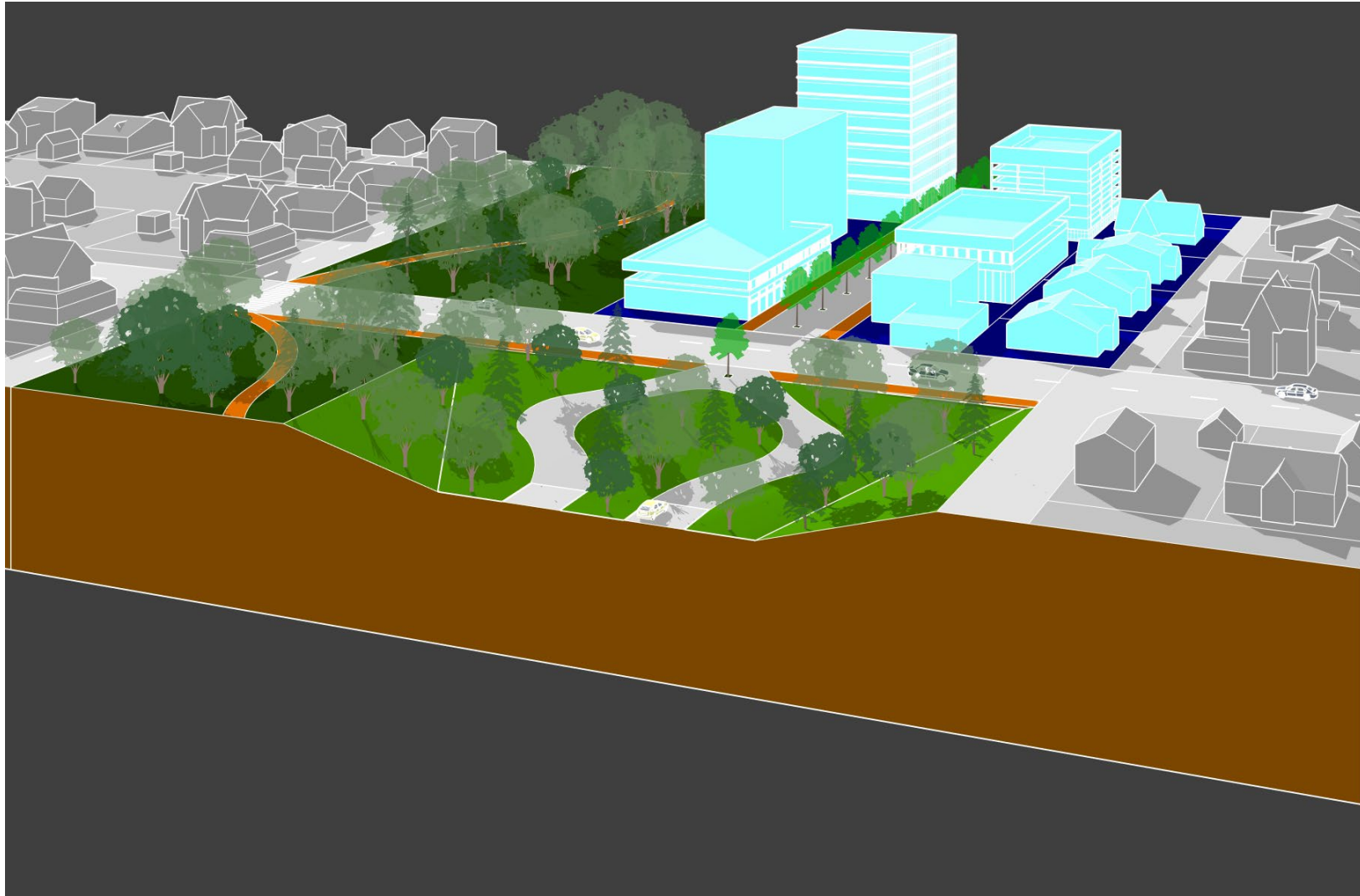
Complete Removal with Commercial > at-grade boulevard



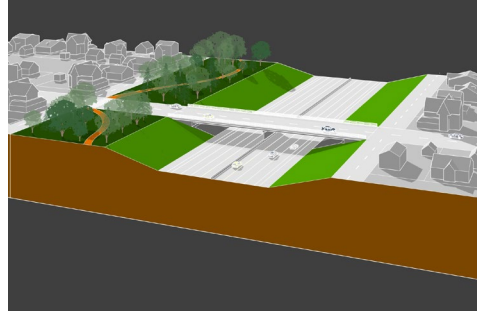


# Tools & Ideas Work Session

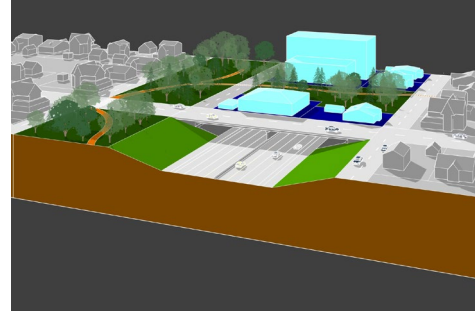
Transition > May apply to many tools



Existing



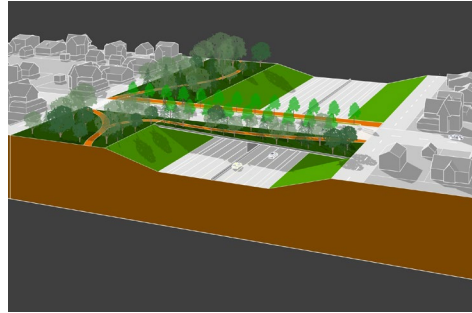
Development



Open Space



Improve Connection



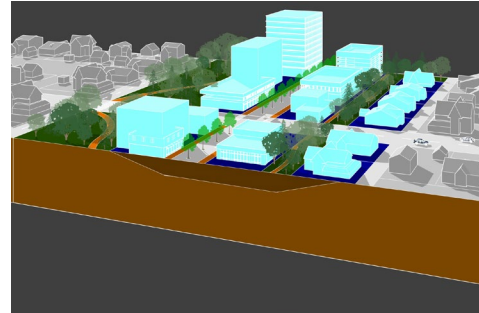
New Connection



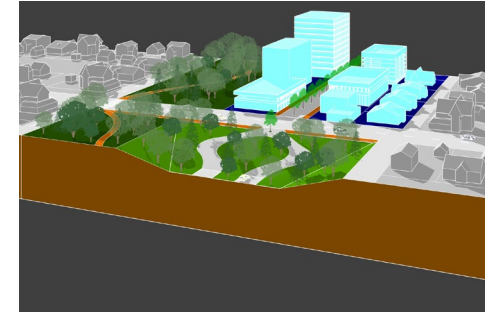
Removal



Removal (w/Infill)



Transition





## Document on the maps!





## Examples of questions we should be considering...

- **Show us where you see the major issues on this corridor.**
- **Do you have preferences on development VS open spaces? What are the pros and cons?**
- **Is there an ideal balance between development and open spaces? And are there locations that make more or less sense for these and why?**
- **Are there locations that are missing connections? Or locations with existing connections that need being improved? Any specific locations where widening a connection is most appropriate?**
- **What are the appropriate uses for connections? Walking? Biking? Transit?**
- **What about full removal? What are the best uses for new land if we consider this? Where are the most appropriate transition areas?**

# Thank You!

