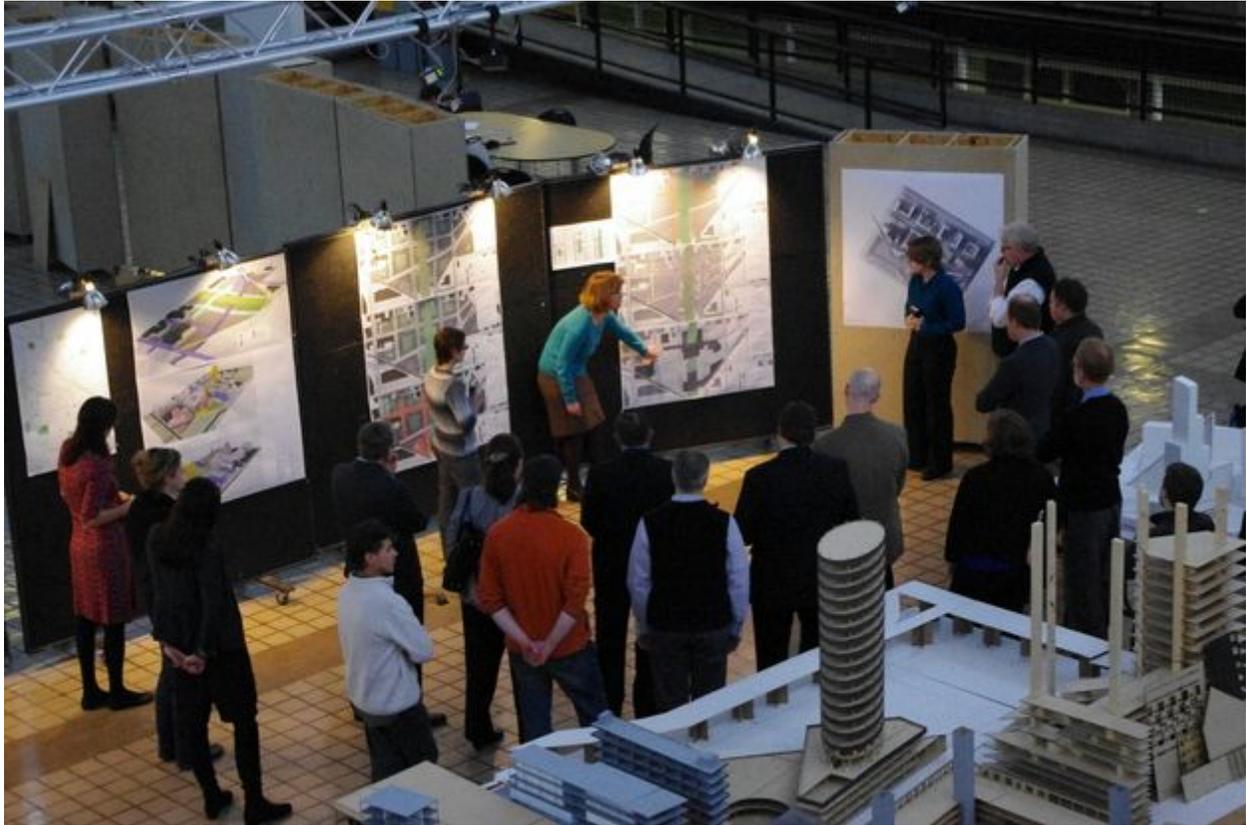


On Display: I-35W and the Future of Minneapolis?

POSTED BY JOLENE BRINK

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Nearly sixty years ago the United States funded the construction of the interstate highway system, influenced by Germany's autobahns. But unlike the European model, our highways didn't just run the edges of cities. They ran through them and around their downtown districts.

NEWS: [Stitching Minneapolis Together Again](#) (MinnPost)

PHOTOS: [I-35W and the future of Minneapolis?](#)

"The process demolished hundreds of blocks of real estate, divided neighborhoods and degraded the quality of life for thousands of urban residents, creating enormous amounts of noise and air pollution," explains **Mic Johnson**, interim director of the [Metropolitan Design Center](#). "The time

has come to repair these self-inflicted wounds and stitch our cities back together if we hope to thrive - socially, environmentally, and economically - in the 21st Century."

Last fall students in the **School of Architecture** worked with the Metropolitan Design Center to create a vision for a lid over I-35W that would "cap" the highway and provide space for more parks, businesses, and people to enjoy the downtown area.

In place of a vast amount of unused open space around the highway, their plan would create a family friendly community for roughly 5,000 residents as well as office and research space for businesses that benefit from proximity to the University and from easy access to both light-rail lines as well as I-35W and I-94.

"The model also shows how we can do this without public funding," explains Johnson, "by returning 11 blocks of taxable real estate to the city, utilizing the air rights above the highway to generate revenue for the state, and creating public parks and district parking for a whole new neighborhood."



He will join the students involved with the project, along with University of Minnesota President **Eric Kaler** and College of Design Dean **Tom Fisher**, in presenting their work to the Minneapolis Downtown Council on Tuesday, April 8 at 5:00 PM in the IDS Center Crystal Court. To RSVP contact **Marilyn Weisberg** at mweisberg@downtownminneapolis.com.

You can see the model in the IDS Center April 7-11, 2014.