

# MAKING PROGRESS

## One Courageous Conversation at a Time



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### What is DEI?

DEI stands for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. DEI is an initiative created to build a sustainable work environment that is equitable and works for a diverse population.

### DEI at SRF



SRF cultivates a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where all individuals feel respected, acknowledged, and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work. Our diversity drives our innovation; our inclusivity drives our approach.

### Action-Oriented Committee

- Works toward mitigating and ending prejudice within our workplace and greater communities
- Bring a wide-range of experiences from personal and professional lives

### Value-Driven Goals

- Build a staff representative of the communities we serve through active recruiting and engagement
- Include and engage

### Growth & Accomplishments

- Calendar Observance Emails to boost awareness of and respect for religious obligations, ethnic and cultural festivities.
- Met monthly with special meetings during times of social trauma
- Developed a DEI Plan stating our core values and goals for a more inclusive workplace
- Posted internship position with Step Up program
- Supported diverse businesses in the community and expanded our pool of diverse teaming partners
- STEM volunteer opportunities in diverse schools
- Five “Courageous Conversations” to foster workplace discussions on subjects like implicit bias, racial inequality, disability awareness & accessibility, and working with Tribal Nations.

*And much more to come....*

## SRF DEI Courageous Conversations

### Why the Name “Courageous Conversations”

- Borrowed from education (looking outside the transportation industry)
- It’s easy to go with the flow but takes courage to talk about equity and oppression in our highly-politicized moment
- The news cycle impacts us as individuals and as employees – staff demand for a space to ask ‘dumb’ questions and share their perceptions and experiences without judgement
- Events include small group discussions to process presentation materials

### The Making of Courageous Conversations



Touches on the work we do and decisions we make – provides a lens to look at deeper subjects together



Unrecorded so people feel open to talk and learn



Presentation – may be a live speaker or a video



Judgment-free zone to promote dialogue



Sometimes requires reading or viewing beforehand



Provide further resources and links after session



Small group discussions

### Series of Courageous Conversations

SRF’s Courageous Conversations started in 2021 out of a desire to foster discussions about DEI in the workplace. Our company strives to create an environment where we celebrate differences and foster change to long-held beliefs and biases. Sparking transformation demands a level of honest dialogue that may make people uncomfortable. But to stand on a platform of shared understanding, we must be willing to have courageous conversations that change hearts and minds.

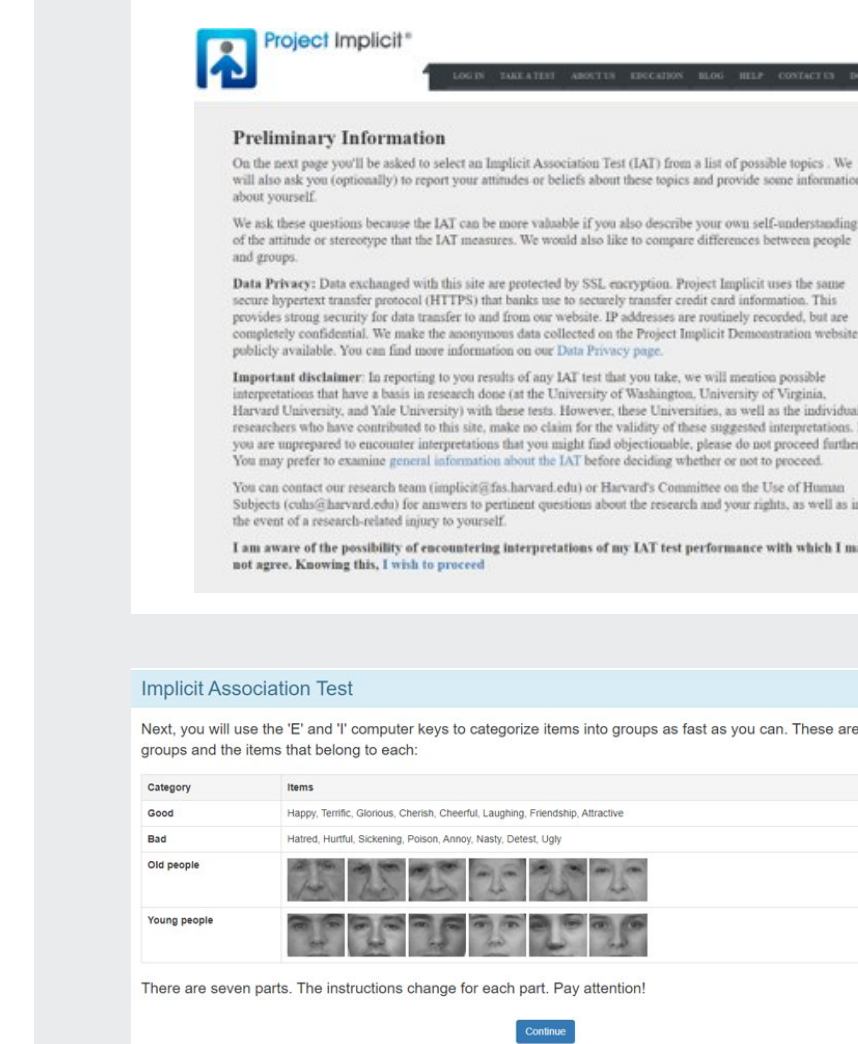
#### Jim Crow of the North

- Participants watched PBS documentary beforehand
- Discussed racial covenants
- Mapping Prejudice Project
- Fair Housing Act
- Small and large group discussion
- Provided additional resources



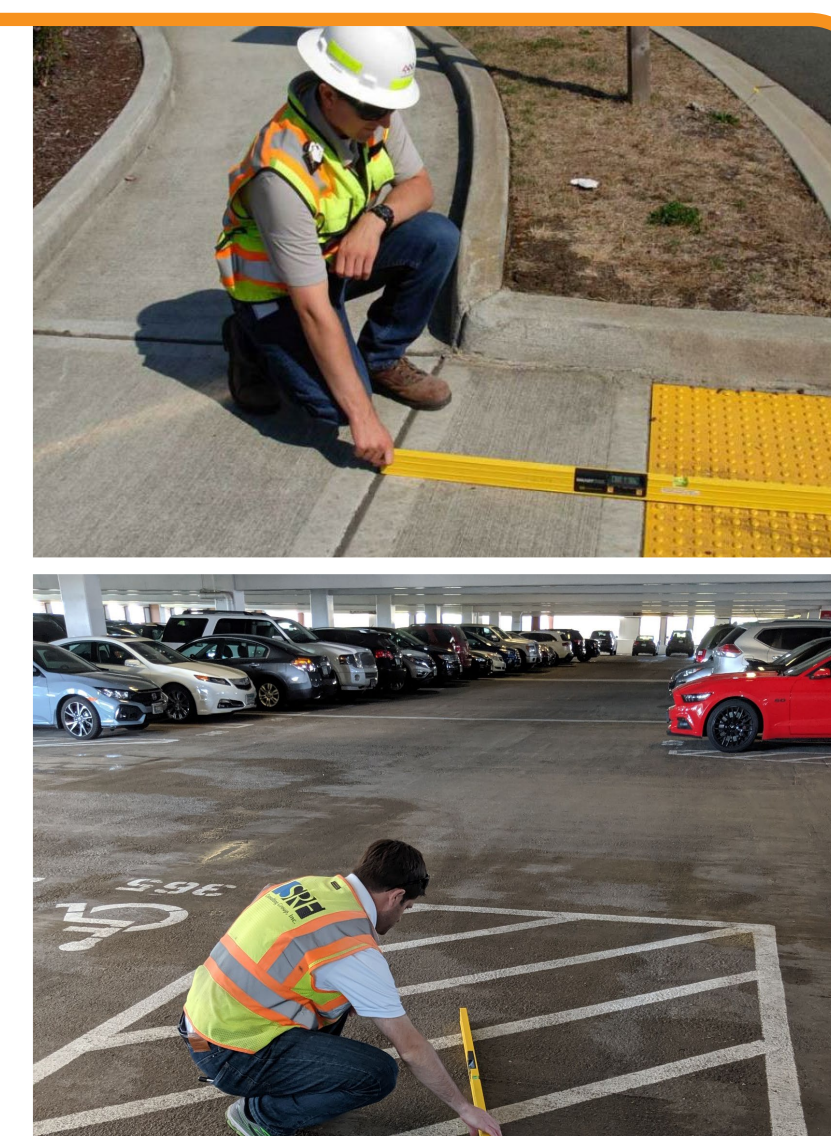
#### Implicit Bias

- Zoom based
- Participants took Project Implicit test and read a related article beforehand
- Small group discussions on gender and age bias
- Large group feedback
- Provided further resources



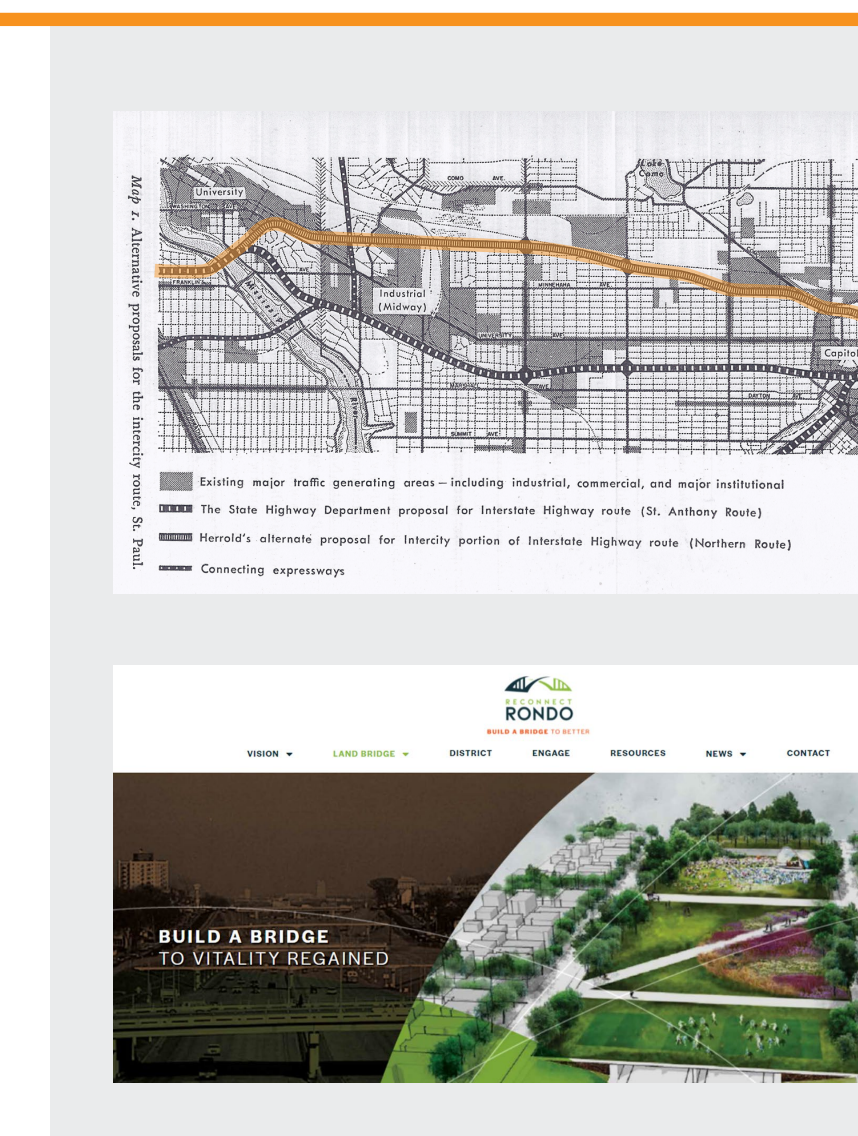
#### Planning for Disabilities

- What is a disability?
- Visible vs. Invisible disabilities
- Tips, considerations, and suggestions
- Language DOs and DONTs
- Small and large group discussions
- Provided additional resources



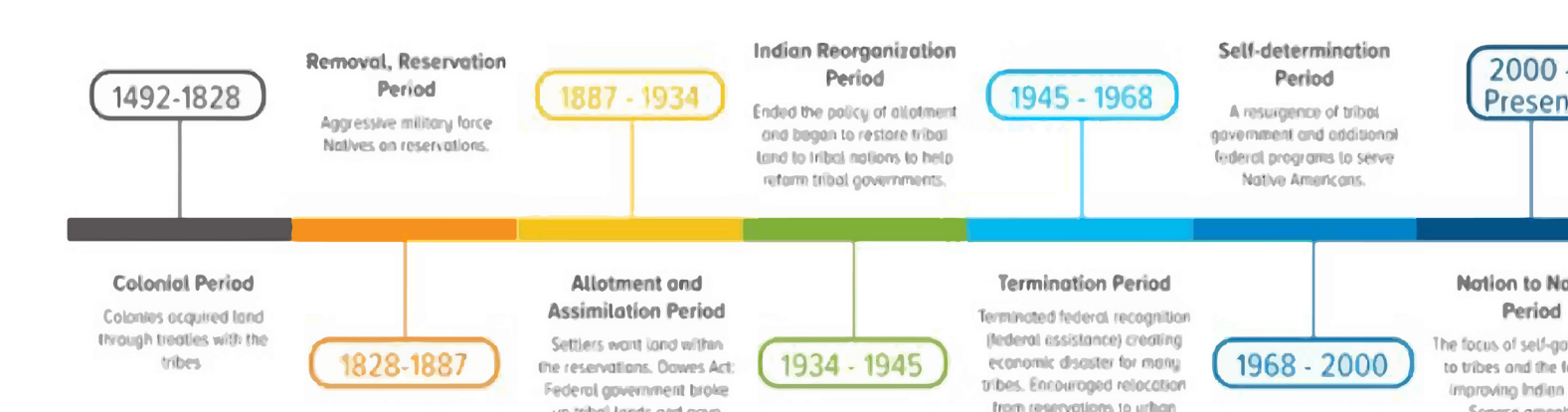
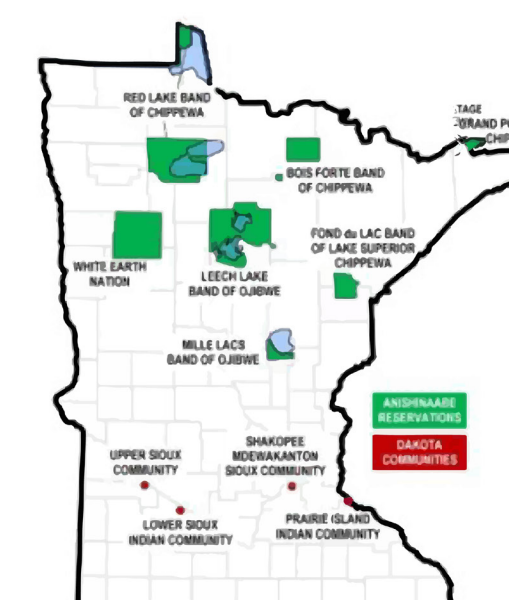
#### Rondo: Beyond the Pavement

- First hybrid session – both in person and Zoom
- Ice breaker question
- Watched video together
- If you were in a decision-making role about alignments for I-94, what other information would you seek?
- Provided additional resources

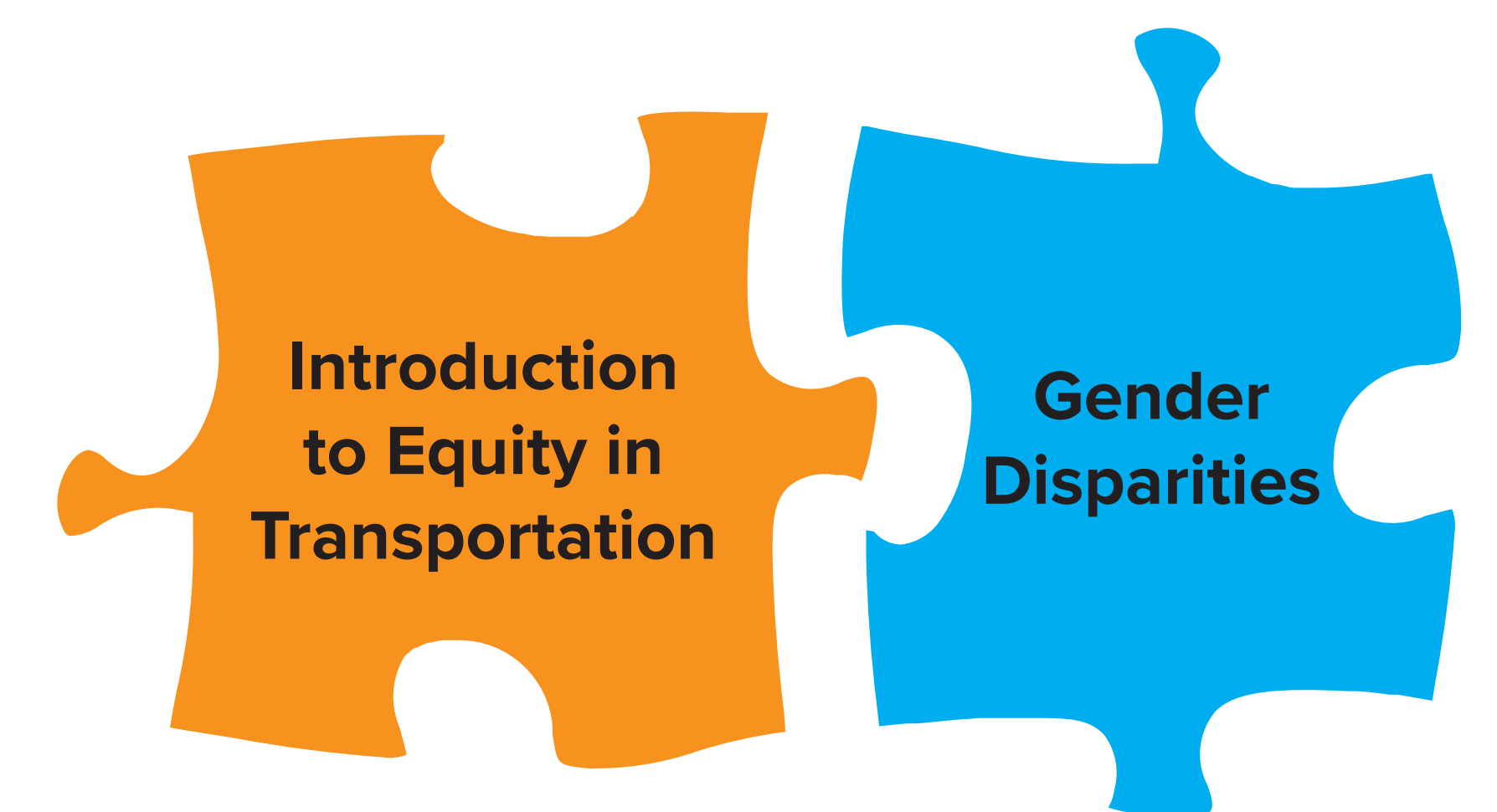


#### Tribal Nations

- Land Acknowledgment
- Tribal Sovereignty
- Tribal Nations in the Midwest
- Building Relationships & Best Practices
- Breakout Questions
- Provided additional resources



### Future Courageous Conversations



### Insights

- Support from and attendance by leadership demonstrates company commitment to DEI
- Finding balance between background / high-level conversations and technical skills and knowledge
- Team effort – committee members and subject matter experts
- Excited to continue this series in person/outside of Zoom!
- Sometimes the dialogue is awkward, but that discomfort sparks growth and progress

Learn more about  
SRF’s DEI Initiative

