

# 1ST AVENUE N

Reconstruction Project



## 1ST AVENUE NORTH RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT Public Engagement Plan

Last updated: April 2024



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## Project Overview

The 1st Avenue North (1st Ave N) corridor is located within the highly urban context of the Downtown Destination District in Minneapolis. The character of the area weaves in a mix of the old and new with contemporary hotels, parking ramps, and the iconic First Avenue music venue on one end. On the opposite end, historic buildings in the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District give the street a more intimate scale compared to elsewhere in downtown. The corridor is home to a mix of repurposed historic buildings and newer structures with larger facilities and employers including Target Center and Mayo Clinic Square. While the street corridor itself has been the subject of various pilot projects and operational adjustments within the past two decades, working within the existing curb lines has only allowed for retrofit adjustments over time. Post-pandemic, this entertainment corridor represents a key driver of what it means to be downtown and the current opportunity to redesign and modernize is critical to the future vitality of 1st Ave N.

Last reconstructed in 1994, the infrastructure and public realm is outdated and pre-dates the construction of Target Field Stadium and the two light rail transit lines with direct service to the corridor. The uses along and adjacent to the corridor have adapted to changing conditions, however, the existing facilities cannot safely or effectively support the crowds and multimodal demands via walking, rolling, biking, and transit that travel to and through the corridor for concerts, sporting events, and late-night fun.

The reconstruction of the 1st Ave N corridor is intended to improve the right-of-way for all people in all the ways they move around. Once completed, the project will encourage commerce, retail activity, and safe, comfortable, and accessible multimodal travel. Every day, on an average, between 1,903-6,375 people walk, 178-497 people bike, and 5,844-27,807 people drive on this street (2022 MioVision). This street is a key corridor for people traveling to destinations proximate to the corridor as well as going to:

- Sporting events at Target Field and Target Center
- Concerts at Target Field, Target Center, and iconic music venues including First Avenue and Fine Line
- Evening crowds for people visiting restaurants and bars
- Commuters parking in nearby parking ramps
- Service workers

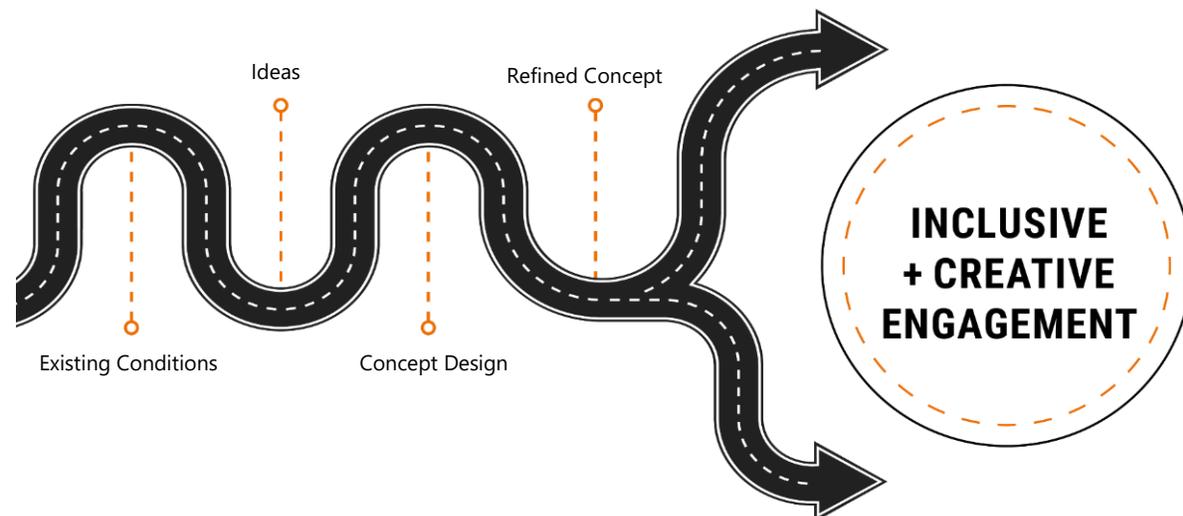
The City of Minneapolis defined draft objectives for the design and function of the street redesign that include:

- **Objective 1:** Reduce crashes and severe injuries by improving traffic safety at this documented high injury street.
- **Objective 2:** Make sidewalks wider and accessible for all.
- **Objective 3:** Improve the availability of and quality of multimodal travel options for people of all ages and abilities to connect to jobs and other opportunities, particularly for historically under-represented populations.

- **Objective 4:** Invest in dynamic multimodal transportation system that allows for public realm activation to attract and retain businesses, visitors, and residents.
- **Objective 5:** Address the unique needs of this corridor as an entertainment and nightlife destination that serves different purposes during different times of the day.
- **Objective 6:** Explore innovative stormwater solutions to treat and reduce water run-off and add trees and sustainable landscaping to the corridor.

Beyond the direct benefits to the people who live, work, and visit the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N corridor, this project can support the efforts by the Minneapolis Downtown Council, City of Minneapolis, and innumerable partners in their downtown recovery efforts in our post-pandemic world. The City of Minneapolis hopes to create inviting, vibrant public spaces that will draw more residents to downtown and more visitors on a regular basis. Downtown recovery is essential to the health of not only the immediate area, but to the city, region, and state economy. Efforts like the Vibrant Downtown Storefronts Work Group, strategies focused on supporting conversions of vacant office space to residential, Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI-TAP), [Downtown Next](#) by the Minneapolis Foundation which is an action strategy for Downtown Minneapolis, [Building an Inclusive Recovery for Downtown Minneapolis](#) by SEIU Local 26, and many other initiatives will be the backbone of the redesign of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N.

With expertise in the areas of real estate development, architecture, urban planning, finance, and the arts, the ULI-TAP panel reviewed the briefing materials provided by the City, toured the Warehouse District with civic leaders, and interviewed community stakeholders, ultimately arriving at a series of recommendations the City and civic leaders can consider in discussions regarding the future of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N and the district. The anonymous interview summaries and recommendations from the TAC will be a piece of input into the process that has created buzz and excitement around this street redesign project.



## Project Corridor Facts

### Events in 2023

- 81 home games at Target Field
- 32 events and 322,000 guests at Target Center
- 700 events at First Avenue/7<sup>th</sup> St Entry
- 430 events in the Hennepin Theatre District
- 40 evenings of Warehouse District Live
- Numerous other events: Minneapolis Aquatennial, Taste of MN, Downtown Thursdays, and Pride

### Pedestrian

- 1,903–6,375 pedestrians per day (MioVision 2022)
- Corridor has inadequate pedestrian infrastructure
- Identified as part of the Pedestrian Priority Network (Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan 2020)

### Bicyclist

- 178–497 bicyclists per day (MioVision 2022)
- Absent protected bicycle facilities
- Existing Connector Bikeway

### Transit

- Approximately 2,000 daily riders at the Warehouse District/Hennepin Avenue METRO light rail station (Metro Transit 2022)
- 27 transit routes cross 1st Ave N
- 3 METRO bus rapid transit routes (Lines C, D, and forthcoming E) cross the corridor
- Northstar Commuter Rail station is 0.6 miles away from the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N corridor

### Vehicle

- 5,844–27,807 (MioVision 2022)
- More than 6,600 public parking spaces available at the ABC ramps, with additional parking available on-street and within surface lots along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N

### Traffic Safety

- High Injury Street and High Concentration Crash Corridor (Vision Zero Action Plan 2023)
- Project corridor intersects with four other city identified High Injury Streets

## Assumptions

There are a few characteristics that are assumed to be part of the redesign of 1st Ave N even before we start to engage stakeholders. The City will set expectations about these foundational elements being included:

- A premier pedestrian corridor able to accommodate high pedestrian volumes
- Closed frequently to car traffic and open to public programming and events
- Open to car traffic and business deliveries for some times each day
- Dynamic, fluid, and functional

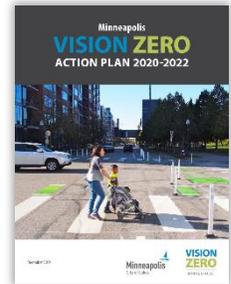
## Applicable Policies and Other Efforts

Policies and other efforts applicable to 1st Ave N include, but are not limited to:

- Vision Zero Action Plan (2023)
- Racial Equity Framework (REF) for Transportation (2023)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan for Public Works (2022)
- Minneapolis Street Design Guide (2021)
- Complete Streets Policy (2021)
- Transportation Action Plan (2020)
- Minneapolis 2040 (2019)
- Blueprint for Equitable Engagement (2016)
- Minneapolis Climate Action Plan (2013)

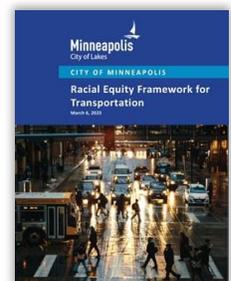
### [Vision Zero Action Plan \(2023\)](#)

The 2023-2025 Vision Zero Action Plan outlines the City's commitment to end traffic deaths and severe injuries on city streets by 2027. To work toward this goal, the City has prioritized a set of key strategies and actions for the next three years that focus on using street design to improve traffic safety, supporting and encouraging safe human behavior when travelling streets, regulating and maintaining safe vehicle fleets, and using a data driven approach. Notably, the Plan identifies High Injury Streets, such as 1st Ave N, where the most severe crashes happen and encourages proactively engaging with communities along those streets on street safety improvements. The City's efforts to improve traffic safety will shape our approach to planning and designing 1st Ave N. as a street where everyone can move safely, efficiently, and equitably.



### [Racial Equity Framework \(REF\) for Transportation \(2023\)](#)

The City is committed to reversing the legacy of racist policies and practices in Minneapolis. The REF represents a commitment on the part of Public Works to support that vision by incorporating community-informed strategies and actions in the planning, designing, building, and maintaining of street and other transportation projects. Specifically, the REF recommends standardizing several practices for elevating community engagement to facilitate equitable outcomes. These practices prioritize including historically underrepresented communities throughout engagement efforts, developing engagement materials that meet the unique needs of the community, reducing barriers to engagement, and building trust with communities of color, among others. The REF also identifies Transportation Equity Priority Areas as a standard way to consider geography-based transportation-related equity in the city.



### [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Transition Plan for Public Works \(2022\)](#)

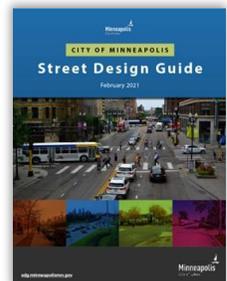
The City's ADA Action Plan addresses accessibility in citywide programs and services and fulfills the Title II legal requirements for local governments. This Plan is supplemented by the ADA Transition Plan for Public Works, which addresses accessibility needs and priorities within the City of Minneapolis' public right of way

for both residents and visitors. The Plan identifies barriers to accessibility, establishes priorities for improvement, and develops an implementation plan for removing those barriers. The 1st Ave N reconstruction project will be informed by input from people with disabilities using the corridor and build on the Plan's recommendations for improving access to the public right of way in relation to sidewalks, street crossings, curb ramps, and accessible pedestrian signals, among others. These are crucial steps in creating a more accessible and welcoming environment for users of all ages and abilities along 1st Ave N.



### [Minneapolis Street Design Guide \(2021\)](#)

The Street Design Guide (SDG) informs the planning and design of all future street projects in the city, including street reconstructions and street retrofit projects. More specifically, it provides design and operations guidance for specific street types, based on the envisioned character of streets, including planned land uses, built form, street users, and uses. The Guide also provides additional detailed guidance in relation to the design of sidewalks, boulevards and furnishing, bikeways, transit stops, roadways, and intersections. The SDG aims to maximize benefits for people walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit; improve traffic safety; enhance greening, including green stormwater infrastructure; and provide equitable access. The SDG will shape our approach to reconstructing 1st Ave N, particularly in the conceptual design phase of the project.



### [Complete Streets Policy \(2021\)](#)

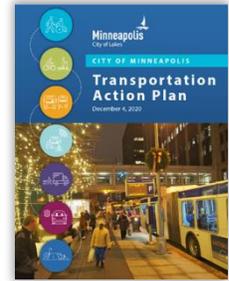
This Policy outlines the City's commitment to building a complete and integrated transportation network where everyone can use our streets safely and comfortably. It establishes a modal hierarchy that prioritizes the safety of the most vulnerable street users – people walking, rolling, biking, using scooters, and taking transit – as they are most at risk of suffering severe or fatal traffic crashes. The Policy recognizes that while the City offers multi-modal options through networks of interconnected routes, there will also be streets that do not have accommodations for all modes, such as car-free streets, trails, streets without transit facilities, and streets without dedicated bicycle facilities. The Complete Streets Policy will inform all transportation related decisions related to 1st Ave N throughout all phases of the project. And the implementation of Complete Streets will encompass all elements within the public right of way, including landscaping, lighting, signs, traffic lights, bikeways, parking, green stormwater infrastructure, furniture, and more.



### [Transportation Action Plan \(2020\)](#)

The Transportation Action Plan (TAP) is the City's 10-year action plan to guide future planning, design, and implementation of transportation projects for all people however they choose to move around. The strategies and actions included in the TAP are guided by six goals: reshaping the transportation system to address

climate change, reaching zero traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries by prioritizing traffic safety, building a transportation system that contributes to equitable outcomes for all people, providing reliable mobility options that support economic prosperity, embracing innovation to improve mobility and access, and achieving shared goals and responsibilities through active partnerships. The project and engagement goals for 1st Ave N will build on the TAP's goals and aim to support the three major metrics that would reflect reaching these goals in 2030: having 60% of trips taken by means other than a car, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing vehicle miles travelled by 1.8% per year.



### [Minneapolis 2040 \(2019\)](#)

This is the City's comprehensive plan that will guide the future growth of Minneapolis for the next 10 years. Our approach to planning and designing 1st Ave N will support the overarching theme of the comprehensive plan's goals, which is that "Minneapolis' growth must be managed so the city works for everyone and existing disparities between white people and people of color are eliminated." Our work will build on the Plan's policies and action items for establishing an equitable civic participation system, eliminating disparities, creating a high-quality physical environment where the physical attributes of the city reflect its history and cultures, while supporting a healthy, sustainable, and diverse economy, among others.

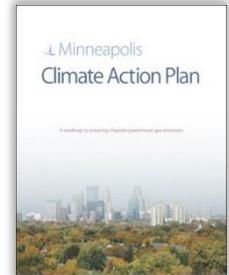


### [Blueprint for Equitable Engagement \(2016\)](#)

The City's Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) department helps the City involve all residents in communication and decision-making processes. NCR firmly believes that "When residents are informed, connected to their community and feel represented in City government, they are empowered to influence decisions that impact their lives." In 2016, NCR developed a five-year plan for an innovative and equitable community engagement system. The Blueprint includes five multi-pronged strategies for promoting and increasing public participation and a data-driven approach for tracking progress. The Blueprint also identifies a model developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as a method for approaching public engagement in a consistent way across City departments. More recently, NCR developed an Engagement Plan Template and Guidance to help organizations think through important components of an engagement plan, such as demographics, barriers to engagement, outreach and engagement strategies, resources needed, partners, timeline, quantitative and qualitative goals, and outcomes of engagement, among others. The engagement plan for 1st Ave N will build on these recommendations and guidance to facilitate an equitable and inclusive public engagement process.

## [Minneapolis Climate Action Plan \(2013\)](#)

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a roadmap to reducing Minneapolis' climate impact. Some of the target goals for 2025 include, raising the bicycle commute mode share to 15%; increasing transit ridership and supporting safe, walkable neighborhoods; and reducing citywide greenhouse gas emissions by 30% (from 2006 emissions levels). To help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the CAP presents specific goals and greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies for multiple sectors, including transportation and land use. It also presents short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes for each goal. This work has shaped the development of the Transportation Action Plan and other City policies and documents such as the Street Design Guide and Complete Streets Policy which will also inform our approach to planning and designing 1st Ave N.S



## Document Purpose

The project team has drafted a Public Engagement Plan to guide the new street design from ideation through construction. The purpose of this plan is to identify when the project team will engage and communicate with the community about the project and the frequency with which we will distribute key messaging throughout its duration.

This engagement plan details community demographics, who will be engaged, and how they will be engaged through customized engagement strategies to gather input and ask for feedback to achieve overarching City and project specific goals. The process will help inform stakeholders on the broad factors that influence the function and design of 1st Ave N, as well as how street redesigns can positively impact the city and region through placemaking. The process of redesigning 1st Ave N has a significant contextual role in reinforcing the City's vision for the future of downtown. The City of Minneapolis intends to establish a vision for the future of 1st Ave N that enhances perspectives on downtown as the community continues to evolve post pandemic and in the aftermath of the civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd. While the reconstructed street is what people will see, how this engagement process reflects broad and diverse perspectives is a critical factor in its success.

**Stakeholder:** individuals (sometimes called the “public”) and organizations who are impacted by redesign and reconstruction of 1st Ave N, including residents, business owners, and decision-makers. See following report for more information.

Through this engagement process, our goal is to uncover the needs and demands of area stakeholders and foster discussions to inspire a 1st Ave N that serves visitors, businesses, residents, property owners, workers, and the day-to-day users of the corridor now and into the future.

The Public Engagement Plan is a living document that will be updated prior to each public engagement phase with substantive details. The engagement scope coincides with four phases in the design process to ensure stakeholder input influences each progressive element of the design. Each phase will have an engagement period prior to milestone decisions so the public's feedback can influence any design recommendations. The purpose of the engagement period in each phase is to allow technical work to happen behind the scenes and then all the engagement activities occur during the same period with the same engagement questions and the same engagement material. The result of each engagement period will be a summary and analysis of feedback from all engagement activities during that segment of the process.

## Engagement Team

The following consultants are supporting the City of Minneapolis with public engagement with expertise in the arts, placemaking, nightlife operations, and other specialties unique to the needs of this project and process.

 **Stantec** | Project and Engagement Management

The Stantec team has unparalleled experience in working with stakeholders to build public acceptance and support around complicated issues and divergent perspectives on issues that affect a street redesign—public realm components, land use needs, modal priorities, safety concerns, activation, and more. We are committed to an engagement process that is focused on listening to people, asking questions to understand community perspectives, building the support needed to achieve layout approval and commitment toward a final design that can be implemented on time and on budget.



*Project highlight: Upper Harbor Terminal*

 **RHI** | Property Owners & Businesses Engagement

Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI) brings decades of experience of nightlife and social economy management, including in the Minneapolis Warehouse District. A private non-profit organization founded in 1983, RHI is the leading source for events, resources, and consultation services. We help cities plan safe and inclusive places to socialize by convening diverse stakeholders to achieve a common vision.



*Project Highlight: Warehouse District*

 **MODERN DAY ME** | Modern Day Me | Engagement Focused on Users of the Corridor

Modern Day Me curates tasteful environments and experiences that bring people together and create lasting impressions.

Where others see problems, we visualize solutions. Where others see an empty space, we imagine future gatherings.



*Project highlight: The Alley Project*

Where others see a blank canvas, we envision the big picture. Through downtown work such as The Alley Project and Warehouse District Live, we show through experiential & artful design that we can enhance connections, transcend barriers, and build community.

**Gehl** | Gehl | Public Realm Engagement

Gehl is an urban design and research consultancy offering expertise in the fields of architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, and city planning. We address global trends with a people-focused approach, utilizing empirical analysis to understand how the built environment can promote well-being. We apply this analysis to strategic planning and human-centered design to empower citizens, decision-makers, company leaders, and organizations.



*Project highlight: 6th Street Mall Redevelopment*

## Engagement Mission and Goals

Truly effective engagement is about customizing a process to meet the needs of the community as well as the objectives of the project. This engagement plan builds on the [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation's](#) strategy of designing a process to match the level of public participation with milestone decisions in each phase of the project.

IAP2 identifies five levels of engagement where the public can have increasing impact on the decision – Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower. The engagement process is expected to move across the spectrum throughout the different phases of engagement with Collaborate as the highest level on the spectrum this project plans to achieve. The redesign of 1st Ave N will eventually result in a recommended design by the project team with the final design approved by the Mayor and City Council after an extensive and inclusive engagement process.

### Visualizing the levels of engagement

*Diagram adapted from the Health Canada Public Involvement Continuum.*



**INFORM**  
The foundation to meaningful engagement. Focus on interactive, effective, accessible and culturally relevant communication processes.



**CONSULT**  
Putting forward options and seeking feedback. Carefully consider what you hear, and demonstrate how this feedback was taken into consideration.



**INVOLVE**  
Inviting input and ideas from community, participation early in the process. Community plays a significant role in developing outcomes.



**COLLABORATE**  
Partnering and sharing power. Community works with the City to define the scope of the decision, develop options, and assess options against agreed criteria.



**EMPOWER**  
Delegated decision-making. The City agrees to do what the community decides. Community develops and defines outcomes, City implements.

The engagement team is proposing a one-sentence Mission Statement that can be referred to succinctly when engaging with stakeholders and decision-makers and that will accompany key engagement goals. This framework will be the backbone of the engagement process and will help to shape the tools we use to connect with stakeholders. In other words, every interaction and engagement touch point will be derived from and contribute to the mission statement and goals.

Project Focused:

**Objectives:** specific, measurable targets for reconstruction

**Vision:** inspirational description of what we want for the future of 1st Ave N (to develop in phase 2)

Engagement Focused:

**Mission:** overarching purpose of engagement (see following section)

**Goals:** desired results of engagement process (see following section)

## Mission Statement

*Engagement focused on positive, forward-thinking aspirations for the future.*

## Goals

In the 2016 *Blueprint for Equitable Engagement* document, approved by City Council, the City of Minneapolis' Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations defined "equitable community engagement" as "a process that includes multiple strategies to promote participation of all Minneapolis residents in the communication and decision-making processes of the City".

The following goals listed below were crafted based on best practices influenced by:

- [IAP2 Spectrum](#) of Public Participation
- [Transportation Equity Priority areas score](#)
- Unique demographics of the area (described below under Audiences)
- [Minneapolis Blueprint for Equitable Engagement](#)

Engage in meaningful and relevant dialogue that supports the next phase of work and the overall vision for the corridor. (Metric)

Continually recognize diverse perspectives and embrace tensions. (Metric)

Incorporate art and other creative methods into outreach activities to spark inspiration and garner broader participation.

Design engagement methods to always be welcoming and meet the needs and comfort levels of the intended audiences.

Validate that the goals are reflective of the needs identified by the community along the corridor.

Provide transparent access to project information, feedback received, and engagement opportunities through both traditional and non-traditional communication methods.

## Timeline

The focus of the timeline for engagement is an approved layout for 1st Ave N. This will require up to two years of detailed analysis, so the schedule has been broken into four phases of engagement to align with the needs of the design process. The current engagement schedule attempts to accommodate a compressed timeline, approximately 18 months, for potential earlier layout approval. This schedule will be evaluated and adjusted throughout the engagement process to accommodate practical efficiencies where/if possible. We will start high-level in Phase 1 where engagement should be wide and broad with each subsequent phase getting more and more specific.



### **Phase 1: Existing Conditions (anticipated December 2023 – March 2024)**

We will introduce the public to the project, garner observations on the corridor’s existing conditions, and collect ideas for the project’s goals and objectives.

Outcomes: Understanding of project, building excitement for future conditions

### **Phase 2: Ideas, Visioning (anticipated May – August 2024)**

We will work with project partners on generating ideas for the public realm plan including streetscape elements.

Outcomes: Collecting input on vision and streetscape priorities

### **Phase 3: Concept Design (anticipated October – December 2024)**

We will work with project partners on engaging the public and stakeholders on concept layout designs for 1st Ave N, including modal elements and streetscape options.

Outcomes: Narrowing down design alternatives to a preferred street design

### **Phase 4: Refined Concept (anticipated February – April 2025)**

We will work with project partners on engaging the public and stakeholders on refining the concept layout based on input and further analysis.

Outcomes: Preferred Concept/Layout approval: Refining the preferred street design concept to the approved preliminary layout

#### ***Public Realm Plan:***

development of policies and guidelines for design and management of public spaces – including sidewalks, roadways, parks, plazas, and other publicly-accessible areas.

#### ***Concept Layout:***

preliminary design that illustrates the proposed arrangement and configuration of a road.

## Audiences

1st Ave N is a key corridor in downtown Minneapolis so many people have a stake in and are interested in its success – residents of the blocks immediately surrounding 1st Ave N, residents throughout downtown, residents within all of Minneapolis, the Metro region and beyond, local business owners, employees of those businesses, people that work and advocate on the street and even tourists – many people are impacted and have a voice in the redesign and reconstruction of 1st Ave N.

The project team plans to proactively engage stakeholders who live, work, or regularly visit the corridor. Compared to street redesign projects in other parts of the city, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N is unique because it is highly influential to people beyond immediate residents, businesses, property owners, and everyday users of the corridor. The demographic summary below (source: Census American Community Survey 2017-2021) provides insight into the opportunities, barriers, and needs of those who live near 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N as a key audience. Additional demographics will be analyzed as part of further project existing conditions work, including for people who may visit the corridor.

For the demographic analysis, we defined two influence areas.

1. Census blocks surrounding project corridor (block groups defined by visible features like streets and standard number of housing units)
2. Half-mile radius surrounding project corridor

These two areas show distinct differences in the percentage of people of color with 60 percent in the immediate blocks around the corridor and only 31 percent in the half-mile radius. The lower percentage of people of color aligns with a similar percentage in Hennepin County, and even lower in the state overall (20 percent). Similar characteristics are present for low-income populations. Within the immediate blocks, 69 percent of residents are low-income while the half-mile radius, Hennepin County, and the state are 22-23 percent low-income. And while there are only 656 households in the immediate blocks compared to 8,667 within the half-mile radius, no residents own their own home within the adjacent blocks compared to 26 percent in the half-mile radius.

Additionally, 19 percent of residents within the immediate block groups identify as having a disability, and 40 percent of low-income residents have a disability. It will be important that engagement events are in accessible locations and that the final design accommodates people with accessibility needs.

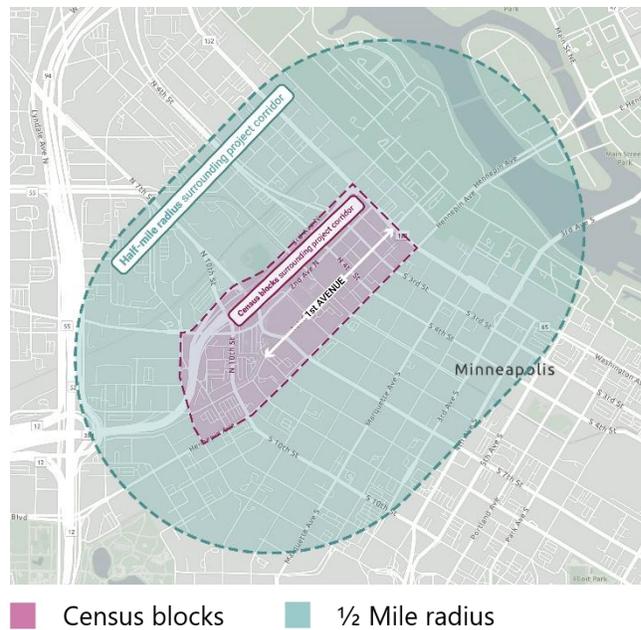
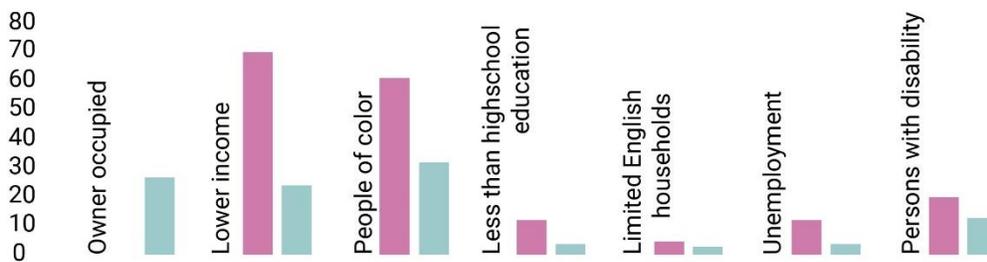


Figure 1: Demographic influence areas

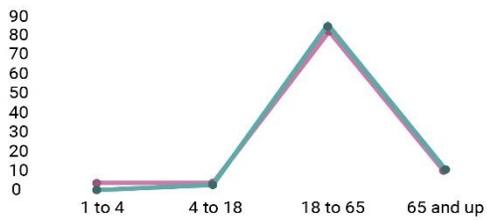
One more important point relates to potential language needs in the project's engagement process. Within the adjacent blocks, 4 percent of residents have limited English proficiency with small percentages of Spanish speakers and those who speak Indo-European and Asian and Pacific Islander languages. For the process to be as inclusive as possible and considering many users of the corridor beyond residents may speak languages other than English, we will work with the City's Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations on best practices for interpretation and translation throughout the engagement process.

The graphic below depicts additional demographic characteristics.

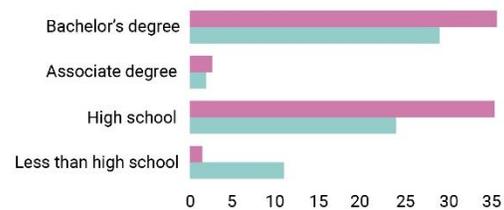
■ Census blocks    ■ 1/2 Mile radius



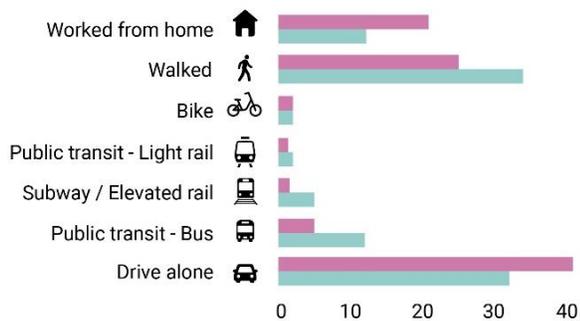
### income + race + education + employment + disability



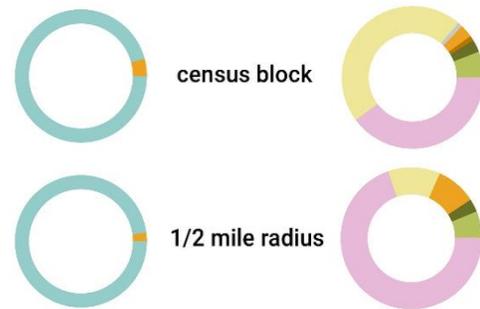
### age composition



### educational level attained



### transportation taken to work



### limited english household

■ English speaking  
■ Limited English

### racial composition

■ White    ■ Asian  
■ Black    ■ Two or more race  
■ American Indian    ■ Hispanic  
■ Hawaiian

Figure 2: Demographic quick facts

Along with nearby residents, a wide variety of additional diverse audiences are impacted by the redesign and reconstruction of 1st Ave N in various capacities. Key audiences to consider when designing public engagement activities are listed below. This list is not all encompassing and will change throughout the process as new information is attained.

- **Night life patrons.** People going to or coming from bars and nightlife attractions
- **Night life operators.** People owning or operating bars and nightlife attractions
- **Game patrons.** People attending sporting events and associated activities/events
- **Tourists.** People visiting with or without knowledge of the area
- **Residents in neighborhood.** People who live in surrounding neighborhoods and walk to get daily needs met
- **Unhoused neighbors.** People who stay outside and/or in temporary shelters nearby
- **Employees.** People who commute to and work on or around 1st Ave N
- **Daily users.** People who access businesses or services on or around 1st Ave N
- **People of color.** People that may not be supported by previous urban design
- **LGBTQA+.** People that may not be supported by previous urban design
- **Women.** People that may not be supported by previous urban design
- **Youth.** People that may not be supported by previous urban design
- **People without vehicles.** People who rely on walking, biking, and transit
- **Downtown Ambassadors.** Ambassadors who monitor downtown streets and support users, staff who maintain streetscape, plantings
- **Safety enforcement compliance.** Police, First Responders, Emergency Services providers, safety and security officers
- **People with accessibility needs.** Residents, employees, and visitors that require level surfaces, enhanced features, and other design considerations
- **Transportation advisory committees.** Disability, pedestrian, bicycle advocacy groups, committee on aging
- **Delivery/Curbside users.** Drivers and support workers delivering goods to/from area businesses, tour and event operations
- **Building/property owners, management.** People with vested interest in property along and adjacent to the corridor
- **Leasing/realtors.** People leasing commercial or residential space
- **Potential future tenants.** People who could lease residential/commercial space
- **Potential future event operators.** People who may host future events
- **Neighborhood/community groups.** Representative(s) of North Loop and Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Associations
- **Business groups.** Representative(s) of business interests with the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Warehouse District Business Association
- **City Staff.** People who are responsible for 1st Ave N from planning and operations perspectives
- **Minneapolis Renaissance Coalition.** Group focused on revitalization of downtown
- **Local unions.** the SEIU Local 26 union Minneapolis Chamber
- **Nightlife Implementation Committee.** Group focused on Downtown nightlife economic

## Project Advisory Structure and Decision-Making Process

The project team will use existing City policy, professional knowledge and experience, technical analyses, leaderships' perspectives, elected officials' insights, and public feedback to make recommendations to the City Council for this project. The team proposed a project advisory structure noted below. The final recommended layout will be brought to the Climate & Infrastructure Committee for final approval, which will then be voted on by the full City Council and then advanced to the Mayor for approval.

The project is guided through two types of advisory groups, detailed in following section:

1. Vision setting – outward facing collaboration to meet desires of diverse stakeholders
2. Technical feasibility – vetting solutions that are possible to implement

Coordination and clear direction amongst the project team is important for successful community engagement and the subsequent layout approval. In addition to an external engagement process that will include various stakeholders as identified throughout this plan, an internal structure for project delivery will be executed to ensure that City staff has an opportunity to be intimately involved with the project and ultimately is behind the City's recommendation for the layout of the corridor. This internal structure includes but is not limited to:

- Regular check-ins that include various members of the City's project team and consultant team – these meetings cover a wide range of topics including logistics, technical details, graphics, communications, etc.
- Regular consultant team design meetings – These meetings allow for the consultant team to coordinate on studies and plan delivery as noted in the scope of work.
- Project Management Team (PMT) meetings – Internal City meetings that allow for coordination amongst staff and City leadership.
- City Council/Mayor briefings – Briefings allow the City's project team to keep key City leaders in the know about all topics related to the redesign.
- Capital Project Task Force (CPTF) Meetings – These meetings occur at key project junctures (0%, 15%, 30%, etc.) and give the City's key discipline leaders/experts an opportunity to review and comment.
- Core Team Meetings – These smaller group meetings allow for the City project team members to meet throughout the project on technical and logistical matters that arise during design.
- City Department Meetings – These meetings will occur on a case-by-case basis and may include the Department of Public Works, Community Planning and Economic Development, Neighborhood and Community Relations, and other relevant departments.

Each of these touch points will build on subsequent meetings to rectify technical issues, address engagement needs, and then to narrow the focus of the design. They will work in concert to arrive at the eventual concept layout.

## Engagement Methods

The mission statement and goals identified in this plan are the primary benchmarks for which engagement methods will be the most effective to achieve a layout design that has buy-in and support from the community and City officials. The engagement methods that will be used in the process have been designed to encourage participation in a variety of ways. Participants will have an opportunity to attend community workshops if that is of interest to them, engage in listening sessions and focus groups about various topics, see the design team at local destinations or events, or learn and interact using technology. These methods will be fun, easy, and engaging.

### Traditional Methods

These are conventional methods that most design processes already use.

- **Public Meetings.** Workshop-style, creative engagement that offers a variety of ways for people to provide feedback, are family friendly, and minimize barriers to participation.
- **Neighborhood/Business Group Meetings.** Attending regular scheduled North Loop Neighborhood Association and Warehouse District Business Association meetings to vet project design information for input as well as to evaluate success of reaching targeted engagement audiences.



*Figure 3: Traditional Methods - public meetings, neighborhood group meetings*

- **Minneapolis Downtown Council (MDC)/Downtown Improvement District (DID).** Meeting with downtown business and placemaking organizations to vet project design information for input.
- **Advisory Committees.** Meeting with Minneapolis advisory committees including Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC), Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), and the Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities (MACOPD) to vet design details particularly relevant to their purview (also under Targeted Methods).

## Targeted Methods

This will be outreach to specific groups that may not otherwise participate in the planning process.

- **Listening Sessions.** Hear from service workers, business owners (retail/hospitality), police, venue management and/or security staff at key project milestones – may be on site.
- **Advisory Committees.** Attending the City's PAC, BAC, MACOPD committees, to vet design details particularly relevant to their purview (also under Traditional Methods).
- **Intercept Surveys/Street Interviews.** Short interviews taking place where people naturally gather, leaving participants with more information about getting involved in the project. This will be geared toward event and bar patrons, transit riders, pedestrians, and other users of the corridor.



Figure 4: Targeted Methods - listening sessions, street interviews

## Innovative Methods

These are creative and unconventional outreach methods to help collect information, increase awareness of the planning process, and boost participation.

- **Pop-Up Events.** Encouraging interactions and a sense of belonging while gaining valuable sentiment and desires through in-person or virtual platforms. Pop-ups are geared toward everyday users of the corridor visiting for an event or night out, riding transit, or running errands.
- **Walking and Biking Tours.** Guided experience as a pedestrian and/or bicyclist to understand transportation issues and opportunities. The focus can be on the historical context, current transportation modes, adjacent building uses, and other topics. May be targeted to certain audiences, committees, or the public.
- **Art/Creative Engagement.** Additional art installations and mobile art pieces to translate technical ideas into meaningful public input opportunities. This will be geared toward everyday users of the corridor that might walk or bike past the installation but can also be featured in public meetings.
- **Storefront.** A vacant commercial space or storefront can be designed to be interactive with games and activities that help guide the design process during special project events or on a daily basis as



Figure 5: Innovative methods - pop ups, walking tours, live events

people pass by on the corridor. A temporary brick-and-mortar location will increase awareness of the project and create a place for discussion when and where users experience 1st Ave N today. This will broaden engagement input opportunities and further follows the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel (ULI-TAP) priority to activate storefronts with local businesses.

- **Warehouse District Live.** As a pilot in 2023 delivered in partnership with the Minneapolis Downtown Council and Downtown Improvement District, Warehouse District Live activated one block of 1st Ave N closed to traffic on weekends from Memorial Day through the middle of October. Warehouse District Live will be administered through the City of Minneapolis Public Works in 2024 and presents a valuable opportunity to partner on engaging nighttime users on the future of the corridor through arts, sports, and other creative pop-up activities. The ULI-TAP also identified a piloted street closure on an ongoing basis as an opportunity to “incorporate learnings, reduce friction and costs of activations/events, and inform the future redesign of 1st Ave. The area should easily convert for events throughout the year, without the erection of barricades or bollards.”

## Virtual Methods

Virtual engagement in online formats allows a participant to interact with the project’s content and questions at their speed, but it often lacks the context someone would gain during in-person engagement. Stantec and Modern Day Me will work together to produce fun and impactful content for social media promotion and then develop interactive virtual tools to gain broad-based input.

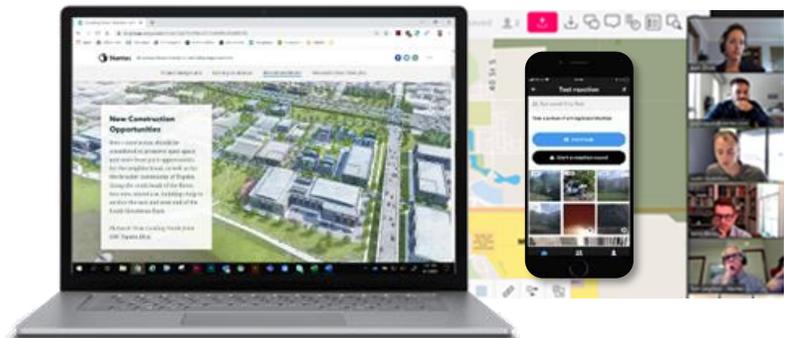


Figure 6: Virtual Methods - Storymaps online survey

- **Storymaps.** Online equivalent to each Public Meeting to diversify opportunities to participate through narratives, maps, graphics, and surveys. This is promoted with stakeholders who may have barriers to attending an in-person meeting.
- **Social Media.** Compelling content from people and places along the corridor to promote engagement opportunities. Social media will be critical to getting the word out about the project broadly in Minneapolis and larger region. The engagement team will coordinate with the City’s communication team to deploy.
- **Online Survey.** Pollfish, a survey program, will help us solicit feedback on the project at key milestones from wide online audiences and direct users of the corridor using geographic cell phone data. Survey opportunities will be promoted with the help of the City’s communication team.
- **Eye Level App.** Invites different groups of people to take photos, annotate, and reflect on how the city functions for them, helping designers map through the eyes of users.

## Audience/Methods Matrix

The matrix below provides some initial thinking about how to match each audience with the best engagement methods. This will be a work in progress as the project moves forward and we will evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach methods and target audiences as part of the engagement process.

	Traditional			Targeted			Innovative			Virtual				
	Public meeting	N'hood / biz groups	DT Incl. / DID	Advisory Cmte.	Listening Session	Intercept survey	Pop-up events	Walk/bike tour	Art/creative	Storefront	Storymaps	Social media	Online survey	Eye level App
Nightlife patrons						X	X		X		X		X	
Nightlife operators	X	X	X	X	X						X			
Game patrons						X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Tourists						X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Residents in n'hood	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Unhoused residents					X	x				X				
Employees		X			X						X		X	X
Daily needs	X					X	X	X		X	X		X	
Women	X				X					X	X		X	X
Youth										X	X	X	X	X
People without vehicles										X				X
Downtown Improv. Dist.				X	X					X			X	
Safety enforcement					X							X		
People w accessibility needs.	X			X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X
Transportation advisory				X						X				
Delivery/curbside users						X	X							
Property owner, mgmt.		X	X		X						X		X	
Leasing, realtors			X		X						X	X	X	
Potential tenants											X		X	
Potential event opr.											X		X	
Neighborhood groups		X												
Business groups		X												
City staff	X			X						X				

Figure 7: Audience and Methods matrix

## Downtown Events

The below list identifies downtown events and potential opportunities in the engagement process to either collaborate with event organizers or active pop-ups to get input from participants or users.

- Chalk Art Festival
- Aquatennial
- Fine Line concert
- Life Time Fitness
- Pizza Luce
- Loews Hotel lobby
- Timberwolves game
- First Ave concert
- Gold Room Nightclub
- Loon Café happy hour
- First Avenue concert
- Warehouse District Live
- Twins game
- Target Field concert
- Target Center concert

## Engagement Phases

This section will be updated prior to and after each phase of engagement as a detailed work plan. This detail will include schedules/agendas, engagement questions, key messages, specific audiences, and finalized activities.

This engagement process has been designed in four phases:

**Phase 1:** Existing Conditions

**Phase 2:** Ideas, Visioning

**Phase 3:** Concept Design

**Phase 4:** Refined Concept

## Phase 1: Existing Conditions (January – March 2024 est.)

We will help build momentum and interest in the project, garner observations on 1st Ave N regarding existing conditions, and collect ideas for the project's goals and strategies. Questions will be geared toward the experiences people want to have on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N. The anticipated engagement methods are listed below and described in more detail where needed.

- One-on-one meetings
- Door knocking or canvassing
- Public meeting
- Neighborhood/Business Group Meetings
- Minneapolis Downtown Council / Downtown Improvement District Meetings
- Listening Sessions
- City Advisory Committee Meetings
- Walk/bike tours
- Pop-up events
- Storymap
- Social Media
- Pollfish online survey

The descriptions of some of the activities below is a starting point for identifying unique opportunities to engage diverse audiences. A more comprehensive strategy for each engagement activity will be fleshed out closer to the date of engagement.

## LISTENING SESSIONS

Our team will use listening sessions as an opportunity to target engagement with specific stakeholders in places and at times that best meet their needs. A critical audience will be nighttime operators. We propose scheduling social venue operator meetings in an actual venue (e.g., bar, restaurant) on a weekday, preferably Monday through Wednesday, no earlier than 2:00 p.m. Scheduling in this manner acknowledges our understanding that social venue operators work late in the evenings, early mornings, and throughout the weekend. We understand that they feel more comfortable meeting in a space similar to their own venues, rather than a more formal meeting space.

The ideal approach is to identify a prominent and well-respected operator who can assist us and host the meeting inside their venue. We intend to provide non-alcoholic beverages and light appetizers. There are often screens and sound systems available if we need to show a PowerPoint or use a microphone.

Listening sessions with other audiences will be similarly tailored.

## POP-UP EVENTS

Modern Day Me will be focusing on gaining insight and feedback from the day-to-day users of 1st Ave N. Our team is proposing an initial set of pop-up engagement opportunities in Phase 1 that can serve multiple project purposes. For example, we can conduct street interviews similar to the links below that will capture quick sentiments while also producing video footage that can be used in social media and on the webpage to further promote the project. We will work with City staff in each phase to identify other pop-up opportunities that will reach our key audiences.

These are some methods we could use to get quick, meaningful feedback during pop-ups in Phase 1:

- <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/qFljrHFwUs4>
- <https://www.instagram.com/doseofsociety/>
- <https://www.tiktok.com/tag/streetinterview?lang=en>

## POLLFISH ONLINE SURVEY

The intent of this survey is to understand what draws people to 1st Ave N and/or what might keep them from using the corridor today. The survey should focus on understanding perceptions of the quality of the public realm and amenities along the 1st Ave N corridor and how 1st Ave N offerings complement the overall system of public space and amenity offerings in the downtown and in the neighborhoods, city, and region beyond.

The survey is designed to collect data from a random, representative sample of current and potential visitors downtown. These insights will support the desktop and on-site research and analysis the Gehl team is conducting to understand the public realm design and placemaking opportunities along the corridor.



Questions geared toward:

- **Access:** Understanding how people arrive or depart from 1st Ave N
- **Experience:** Understanding what draws people to 1st Ave N today, what they love about it, and what they find challenging related to moving and spending time on and along 1st Ave N (and how this varies by demographic groups, modes used)
- **Activity Patterns:** Understanding current and desired uses (how often people visit, times of year and times of day people visit, who visits and who does not, populations not currently invited, what makes visiting difficult, what people do when they visit, what people find is missing/what they would like to see in the future, to what degree do visitors feel attached to this place)

To ensure a demographically representative and statistically significant sample, the survey will be hosted and distributed through Pollfish, a third-party market research platform.

Organic, random sampling targets people within a specific geographic area and considers demographics to ensure the sample is representative of the population. It also prevents “river sampling” which can come about when a survey is distributed to a listserv or contact list of stakeholders. Simultaneous to the distribution of a survey via Pollfish, we can distribute an identical survey digitally accessible via public link and using paper surveys, provided to key public locations, to ensure any/all interested participants have the opportunity to provide a response.

Surveys are distributed through partnerships with mobile apps participants already use. Specific, non-cash incentives for participating in the survey are determined and provided by the app developers. For example, in the case of a news app, the incentive provided “might be a premium article, or in a fitness app, access to a free yoga lesson.” The survey distributed through Pollfish will be in English. A Spanish language version can be made available via Google forms.

## Phase 2: Ideas, Visioning (May – August 2024 est.)

We will work with project partners on generating ideas for the public realm vision. The anticipated engagement methods are listed below.

- Public meeting
- Neighborhood/Business Group Meetings
- Coordinate with downtown entities
- Listening Sessions
- City Advisory Committee
- Pop-up events
- Storefront
- Storymap
- Social Media
- Eye Level App

## Phase 3: Concept Design (October – December 2024 est.)

We will work with project partners on engaging the public and stakeholders on concept designs for 1st Ave N, including modal elements and streetscape options. The anticipated engagement methods are listed below.

- Public meeting
- Neighborhood/Business Group Meetings
- Coordinate with downtown entities
- Listening Sessions
- City Advisory Committees
- Pop-up events
- Storymap
- Social Media

## Phase 4: Refined Concept (February – April 2025 est.)

We will work with project partners on engaging the public and stakeholders on refining the concepts based on input and further analysis. The anticipated engagement methods are listed below.

- Public meeting
- Neighborhood/Business Group Meetings
- Coordinate with downtown entities
- Listening Sessions
- City Advisory Committees
- Pop-up events
- Storymap
- Social Media

## Promotion

Advertising events and boosting engagement efforts can be done in a variety of ways – through both print and digital. The Stantec team will work with the City Project Manager and the City's Communications team on a plan for communications through the already-established City channels and resources.

- Social media – City and partner platforms may be used to share concise info and link to the project Storymap. Paid posts may also be used to connect with people within a set geography.
- Project Newsletter – People who subscribe to project updates via GovDelivery

- Photography/videography – Modern Day Me is positioned to do engagement through photography and live video/interviews. This content will be edited to create more project buzz on social media and a project website.
- Online advertising – Pollfish or similar methods may be used to drive online users to complete surveys.
- Radio, TV – Local stations may be tapped to introduce the project and announce upcoming meetings.
- Business cards – Distribution of branded cards may introduce the project and provide a link to more information, survey.
- Corrugated signs – Pedestrian-oriented signs may be posted near transit stops and/or along corridor with concise info and link to Storymap.
- Sidewalk decals – printed stickers that adhere to pavement and are durable, may include drive to action with QR/URL to website.

## Evaluation of Engagement Efforts

Documentation of each step of the engagement process will be critical in defining the direction and priorities for the redesign of 1st Ave N as well as a better understanding of which stakeholder groups are being reached.

## Transparency through Documentation

For each event or activity, the Stantec team will document:

- Who was engaged?
- What methods were used?
  - Who participated?
- What information was provided?
- What questions or issues were identified?
- What feedback was received?
- How was the feedback collected and analyzed?  
What decisions did this input influence?

This documentation will shape the content process for each successive phase of engagement. At the end of each phase, an Engagement Summary will be written to answer the questions outlined above which will be posted on the project website and email to the GovDelivery list. The techniques outlined below are several methods intended to be used through the engagement process to document the process. Informal engagement methods such as Pop-Ups will require unique documentation techniques based upon key audiences and the types of events that are held.

Methods to document the engagement process and subsequent stakeholder and community feedback may include:

- Comment cards
- Sign-in sheets
- Meeting summaries
- Debriefing with the Project Management Team
- Photography/videography
- Surveys
- Visual preference surveys
- Social media documentation
- Mapping
- Flip chart

## Contact us

### Planning

**Jasna Hadzic-Stanek**, Transportation Planner – Public Works  
**Leoma Van Dort**, Associate Transportation Planner – Public Works

### Design

**Menbere Wodajo**, Project Engineer – Public Works

### For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats

contact Leoma Van Dort at 612-673-2390 or  
[1stAvenueNReconstructionProject@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:1stAvenueNReconstructionProject@minneapolismn.gov).

People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850. Para asistencia, llame al 311. Rau kev pab 311. Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay 311.

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