

Frequently Asked Questions

Pedestrian Facilities

1. How does the design improve comfort and safety for people walking?

Sidewalks on Hennepin Ave south of Franklin Ave will be 8 feet wide for most of the corridor, which is increased compared to the existing sidewalks that are typically 6 feet wide. The street will also be about 10 to 12 feet narrower, which shortens the crossing distance for people crossing Hennepin Ave. At intersections that do not have traffic signals, the median provides a stopping point for people crossing Hennepin Ave. Enhanced pedestrian crossings, including pedestrian signals, are proposed for the pedestrian crossings at Fremont Ave and 25 ½ St.

The design includes curb extensions (bumpouts) on all cross/intersecting streets where they are feasible, which shorten crossing distances. Raised crosswalks will also be evaluated for pedestrian crossings along Hennepin Ave that are not controlled by traffic signals.

Bicycle Facilities

2. Why are bicycle facilities needed on Hennepin Ave? Why not have a bikeway on another street near Hennepin Ave?

The city's Transportation Action Plan (TAP) identified Hennepin Ave as part of the All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network, which consists of 400 miles of low-stress bikeways. In addition to every residential street that allows for biking, the AAA network looks to connect destinations throughout the city which is why Hennepin Ave is on the AAA network. A protected bikeway is needed on Hennepin Ave to provide space for biking that is separated from pedestrians and vehicles and provides access to the many destinations on Hennepin Ave. Design options with bikeways on other streets were evaluated but did not meet the city's goals and policies.

3. Why is the bikeway only on one side of the street? Can the bikeway be wider?

The team evaluated one-way bike facilities on both sides of the street but given space constraints a two-way bikeway is proposed to best fit all the design elements into the Hennepin Ave corridor. The city's Street Design Guide identifies 10 feet as the preferred width for a two-way bikeway and this is maintained where possible. At constrained locations, the bikeway is reduced to 8 feet.

4. Why is the bikeway only being considered between Lake St and Franklin Ave? What about north of Franklin?

The AAA bicycle connection to downtown will be on Hennepin Ave to Bryant Ave and the Loring Greenway, consistent with the adopted Transportation Action Plan. With the constraints and land uses of the Hennepin Ave corridor north of Franklin Ave and with the AAA connection on Bryant Ave and the Loring Greenway, a bikeway north of Franklin on Hennepin Ave is not identified as a future bikeway connection and this is also reflected in the Transportation Action Plan.



Transit Facilities

5. Why are dedicated transit lanes needed on Hennepin Ave?

Transit lanes improve the efficiency and reliability of transit trips in the corridor to move more people to/from Hennepin Ave and along Hennepin Ave. The existing bus only lanes on Hennepin Ave between Lake St and Franklin Ave reduced transit travel times by 15-18 percent and increased transit reliability by 50-75 percent. This affects people riding through the corridor, but a significant number of transit riders have a destination on or near the Hennepin Ave corridor:

- *26 percent of all Route 6 rides end within the greater Hennepin Ave corridor making it the second most important/common destination for people using Route 6 (downtown is the most common destination).*
- *During the evening, 42 percent of all Route 6 riders are going to this portion of Hennepin Ave.*
- *Similar to other arterial BRT routes, ridership would be expected to grow 25 to 35 percent with the E Line service and much of the increased ridership occurs outside the peak hours, making full-time transit lanes important.*

Having full-time transit lanes also supports the City's Climate Action Plan and the transit mode share goals in the Transportation Action Plan. Arterial BRT routes have shown the strongest ridership throughout the pandemic and Hennepin Ave is a corridor where the transit mode share in the Transportation Action Plan can be exceeded in the future as transit ridership continues to recover from the pandemic.

6. Why are there fewer bus stops?

Whenever Metro Transit implements BRT in a corridor, they reevaluate the spacing of local bus stops and may increase the spacing between local bus stops to accommodate BRT stations. Metro Transit looks to strike a balance between transit speed and access.

7. Were curb-separated transit lanes or center-running transit facilities considered for this corridor?

Both curb-separated and center-running transit lanes were considered. However, these designs needed additional space in the street, created conflicts at intersections, and impacted the space available to provide a bicycle facility.

8. How will the city make sure that vehicles parking and making deliveries do not block transit lanes?

The city has experience with other corridors where transit operations coexist with delivery trucks and parking. One reason for the on-street parking/loading bays in the design, where they were feasible, is to provide designated places for delivery vehicles, Uber, Lyft, etc. Facility design, operations, and compliance checks must work in harmony for an effective solution.

Vehicle Facilities

9. How will traffic flow on Hennepin Ave with fewer vehicle lanes?

The design includes medians, left turn lanes, and additional traffic lanes near Franklin Ave and Lagoon Ave/Lake St that are intended to maintain traffic mobility to/from Hennepin Ave and along Hennepin Ave. The existing traffic lanes on Hennepin Ave are inefficient and traffic flow can be erratic due to lane



changing at bus stops and around vehicles turning left. The forecast travel times for Hennepin Ave between 31st St and Franklin Ave with the recommended design are within 1-2 minutes of existing travel times.

10. Why is there a median proposed?

Medians improve safety by reducing conflicts between vehicles turning left and pedestrians, bicycles, and other vehicles. Crashes involving left turning vehicles are more likely to result in injuries and are a common cause of pedestrian and bicycle crashes. Eliminating these left-turn conflicts will improve safety throughout the corridor.

11. How will people be able to access businesses? What about traffic impacts to neighborhood streets?

The proposed medians, left turn restrictions at some intersections, and parking strategies on streets other than Hennepin Ave mean that some traffic will need to use other streets in the neighborhood for circulation and parking/loading. The city has a number of neighborhood level tools that can be used to manage neighborhood traffic and parking. Between now and Hennepin Ave construction in 2024 we will further study these tools and will commit to implementing appropriate strategies. We will also commit to a robust program of documenting current traffic counts and traffic patterns before construction so we have a good baseline that we can use to monitor and identify issues.

12. Why are there so many vehicle lanes at Franklin Ave and Lake St?

The technical analysis identified two primary bottleneck locations for vehicle traffic, at Lake/Lagoon on the south end and the Franklin Ave intersection on the north end. On the south end, the concept layouts show similar traffic lanes to existing between Lake St and 29th St because of the short distance between intersections, to handle the high number of vehicles turning on and off the corridor, and to provide efficient transit operations for the B Line arterial BRT on Lake St and Lagoon Ave. On the north end, the recommended design optimizes the Franklin Ave intersection for all travel modes through narrowing the street width from 80 feet to 54 feet and reducing time for pedestrians to cross Hennepin Ave, provides a southbound transit lane, reduces the merging conflict from the I-94 ramp, and removes the northbound left turn lane.

13. Why is Hennepin Ave designated as a truck route?

The Minneapolis 2040 plan established a freight policy that the City will accommodate freight movement and facilities to support the local and regional economy. Identifying Hennepin Ave as a truck route means that freight traffic is expected on Hennepin Ave and that designs should acknowledge and consider that freight activity.

Parking

14. Why isn't there more on-street parking in the recommended design?

The city's Climate Action Plan and Transportation Action Plan prioritize the use of the street right-of-way for people rather than for parking and loading. The design of Hennepin Ave is looking forward 50 years



and reflects what the city envisions other streets in Minneapolis will look like in the future. There are also significant off-street parking resources along Hennepin Ave today.

15. How will businesses be impacted with less parking on Hennepin Ave?

Businesses and visitors will need to make use of existing off-street parking resources as well as on-street parking on streets that intersect Hennepin Ave. Additional management or sharing of off-street parking resources may be needed.

16. How will the city address increased parking in the neighborhood?

Parking management strategies will be evaluated and implemented, including short term loading/parking zones and parking meters. This manages parking turnover and keeps space available for deliveries and customers. The city is also updating its Curbside Management Policy which will inform the parking/loading strategies that will be used.

Trees, Greening, Streetscape, and Green Stormwater Infrastructure

17. Will all trees in the corridor be removed as part of the project?

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) owns and manages the urban forest within the public right-of-way. Public Works coordinates work closely with MPRB staff, which includes an inventory of trees by species and condition. Some trees will need to be removed as part of the reconstruction. We will try to keep mature trees where they are feasible within the recommended design, in consultation with MPRB.

18. How will greening be added to the corridor?

The design provides opportunities for green space in most blocks. Typically, a minimum width of 4 feet is needed for grass, plants (even native plants), or trees to be viable in an urban environment.

19. Will an enhanced streetscape be part of the reconstruction project?

The city is working through the Lowry Hill and Uptown Special Service Districts to understand property owners' desires for enhanced streetscape elements, which are funded and maintained by property owners.

20. What green or sustainability features does the design incorporate?

The stormwater requirements in the city's new stormwater ordinance will be met through a combination of surface and underground treatments. The specific types and locations of sustainability features will be determined during final design of the street.

Additional Topics

21. How does the design account for the impacts of the pandemic?

The city designs streets to last 50 years and the city policies guide the design process to align the street design with the city's values. Transit will continue to be important to Minneapolis's growth and working from home may help the city to achieve some of our transportation goals of reducing single occupant vehicle trips. In addition, recent traffic counts throughout the city have shown that daily traffic volumes have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, however the distribution of traffic during the day has



shifted. The recommended design considers these factors and has flexibility to make adjustments to future operations.

22. How was public feedback used in determining the recommended design?

We have heard and considered all the public feedback received. Examples of input that were used in the recommended design are parking/loading strategies to meet parking demand for businesses, circulation changes in the area between 24th St and 25th St, and enhanced pedestrian crossings at Fremont Ave and 25 ½ St. However, some of the suggestions, such as rebuilding the street with the existing configuration, were incompatible with city policies and plans. Comments and questions received from the public are one component of the design process, in addition to the city's policy guidance and the technical analysis.

23. How did the city engage underrepresented populations in this project?

Extensive outreach was conducted on the project to reach people where they are. A Corridor Stakeholder Committee (CSC) was formed with neighborhood and business representatives to provide input on how to best let people know about the project and seek their input. As a result, more than 400 yard signs have been posted on Hennepin Ave, at bus stops, and in the neighborhoods; individual business outreach was conducted by staff who represent Latinx and Black communities; geo-targeted social media posts were used for the corridor; and project information was posted at community destinations like libraries, grocery stores, and the YWCA. Engagement summaries are located on the project website and contain more detail about the outreach efforts.

24. What is the city doing to address the issues in the Activity Block (Hennepin Ave from Lake St to 31st St)?

Public Works is continuing to work with the council office to evaluate operations in this block and to determine if bicycle and vehicle spaces will be reconfigured.