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.

2. Why doesn't the layout show crosswalks at all crossings, such as at Girard Ave?
   The city has specific criteria for marking crosswalks, which include crossings at traffic signals and flashers, school crossings, and key crossings to parks, libraries, etc. Unsignalized crossings on Hennepin Ave would not have marked crosswalks.

Bicycle Facilities

3. Why are bicycle facilities needed on Hennepin Ave? Bike lanes aren't used in the winter.
   The city's Transportation Action Plan (TAP) identified Hennepin Ave as part of the All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network, which means that the bike facility is physically separated from vehicle traffic on busier streets. 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 bicycle facility is needed year-round, as reflected in the city's Complete Streets policy and Transportation Action Plan, to safely support all modes integrated into street designs. A connected network of protected bike lanes makes it feasible for people to bike year-round.

4. Why not have a bikeway on another street near Hennepin Ave?
   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. The options considered on other streets also had significant impacts on traffic flow and parking on those streets.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. What is the snow removal plan for the bike facility?
   The City's maintenance and operations staff are responsible for removing snow from city facilities including the bike facility. Research has found that bikeway width and buffer design have the biggest impact on winter bikeway maintenance operations. Wider bikeways can accommodate pick-up trucks with standard snow plows, while narrower bikeways require specialty equipment to navigate the constrained areas. Buffer zones provide space for snow storage in winter. Snow will be stored in the boulevard area, which is one reason why it's important to have adequate boulevard space along the corridor.

8. How will the bikeway connect to the Midtown Greenway and the Loring Greenway?
   At the south end of the corridor, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is planning a project to connect a trail from the Midtown Greenway to Hennepin Avenue via The Mall. The city is coordinating with MPRB staff on the planning for the connection.

   The Hennepin Ave project will extend the bikeway north of Franklin Avenue to connect directly to Bryant Ave, which leads to the Loring Greenway bridge to downtown.

9. Will there be bicycle parking installed as part of this project?
   Bicycle and micromobility parking are installed with all capital street projects in Minneapolis, per the Street Design Guide.

Transit Facilities

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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 driveways, and impacted the space available to provide a bicycle facility and other design elements.

13. 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.

14. How will local bus routes operate on Hennepin Avenue? Will they only stop at the BRT stations?
In addition to stopping at the BRT stations, local bus routes will also stop at the local bus stops at 24th St, 27th St, and Lagoon Ave.

15. Why don't the transit lanes extend south of the Uptown Transit Station?
A number of design options were evaluated between Uptown Transit Station and Lake St. The recommended design best balances the mobility needs for both transit and vehicle traffic. In addition, the METRO B Line arterial BRT will operate on Lagoon Ave and Lake St. The recommended design on Hennepin Ave resulted in the best opportunities to provide efficient transit service on both corridors.

Vehicle Facilities

16. 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.

17. How do vehicles make right turns with the bus lanes along the curb?
    Vehicles turning right at intersections or into driveways can use the bus lane for short distances. This will be indicated by the signs and pavement markings in the corridor. Right turns from the bus lane are better for traffic flow and are also safer than turning across the bus lane from the through traffic lane.

18. Where there are left turn lanes, will there be a dedicated signal phase (arrow) for left turns?
    Left turn phasing will be considered during final design where there are left turn lanes. Left turn phasing typically reduces conflicts between turning vehicles and pedestrians, which are a significant cause of pedestrian crashes.

19. 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. In the proposed design, vehicles will not be able to turn left into or out of driveways where there is a median. Eliminating these left-turn conflicts will improve safety throughout the corridor.

20. 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. Changes to other streets such as one-way/two-way or street closures were considered during the development of the recommended design. Fremont Ave S between Hennepin Ave and 24th St is proposed to be changed from one-way to two-way for vehicle traffic to improve access and circulation for businesses and residents. The need for operational changes on other streets have not been identified.

    The city has a number of neighborhood level tools, such as the new traffic calming process, 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. Can the vehicle lane widths be reduced to 10 or 10.5 feet to give more space for other uses?
    The proposed vehicle lanes are 10 feet wide, consistent with the guidance in the Minneapolis Street Design Guide. The lanes shown on the proposed layout include 2-foot gutters on the outside of the street and 1-foot gutters next to the median, which are also consistent with the Minneapolis Street Design Guide and are critical for stormwater.

24. How will the proposed design affect emergency vehicles?
    The proposed design has been reviewed with Minneapolis Fire and Minneapolis Police. The proposed median will alter access to some properties, however there are full access, signalized intersections with emergency vehicle preemption every 250-700 feet along Hennepin Avenue so the overall effect on emergency response times would be minor. Fire, police, and ambulance vehicles can also use the bus lanes in an emergency.

Parking

25. Why isn't there more on-street parking in the recommended design?
    On-street parking and loading spaces have been included where they fit. 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.

26. 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.

27. Can you elaborate more on what district parking means?
    District parking means that curb space in the bays along Hennepin Ave and along the nearby side streets will be managed to support the need for deliveries, pick-up/drop-off, and customer parking. This could include short term parking/loading zones, parking meters and other strategies. Typically, the city would evaluate these types of zones based on a request from an individual property owner; the intent of the district parking approach is to take a more holistic approach to managing the parking resources and this is a new process for the city.
    The city will also be developing a Curbside Management Policy in 2022-2023 that will help define the strategies to manage the on-street parking resources on and near Hennepin Ave.

28. How will the city encourage use of other parking resources, like surface parking lots and ramps?
    The city wants to work with property owners to creatively use and manage their existing parking resources to maximize the opportunities for these facilities to benefit customers and visitors to the corridor. The city intends to explore opportunities for wayfinding/signage to allow these resources to be better used in the future.

29. What accommodations are there for accessibility and people who rely on rideshare services for necessary travel? What accommodations about deliveries to residents and businesses along Hennepin Avenue?
    The street elements on Hennepin Avenue will all be designed to be accessible per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the proposed Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). Similar to today, in the future people will have the option to utilize off-street parking lots or available on-street parking along and adjacent to Hennepin Avenue for their parking, loading, and unloading needs.

30. 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

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. Does the median need to be so wide? If so, can it be utilized to provide greening?
The width of the median varies along the corridor. At the end points of the medians (near intersections), 4 feet is needed to accommodate required signs. Where there are pedestrian crossings through the median, the median is proposed to be 6 feet so that people can stop to look for gaps in traffic. At midblock locations, the median is reduced to a minimum of 2 feet to provide as much boulevard space as possible. Plantings in the median may be considered where the median is at least 4 feet wide, however the city will need to work through the maintenance of those spaces.

34. Will an enhanced streetscape be part of the reconstruction project? Will there be benches in the corridor?
Benches are included in the standard amenities at bus rapid transit stations.
The city will work 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.

35. What green or sustainability features does the design incorporate?
The City enacted a new stormwater ordinance in 2021 that requires more aggressive treatment of stormwater in terms of both water quality and water volumes. 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

36. 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.

37. 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.

38. 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 and participation. 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.

39. What is the role of federal funding in the project?
The federal funding accounts for about 25-30 percent of the project, offsetting local costs. The other funding sources include State Aid (gas tax) funding, city net debt bonds, and property owner assessments.
The federal funding does not have requirements in terms of specific design elements included in the recommended design. However, the federal funding does have a specific timeline when the funds need to be used. Further delays to the project could jeopardize the $7.5 million of federal funds for the project.

40. Who is assessed for this project and how do they find out what they are going to be assessed for this project?
Adjacent property owners, both homeowners and business owners, will be assessed for this street reconstruction project using the city's uniform assessment policy. For the Hennepin South Reconstruction, assessments account for about 5% of the total project cost.
If you have questions about whether you will be assessed or want to know the estimated amount of your assessment, please contact the project team at Hennepin.South@minneapolismn.gov
For general information about special assessments, you can visit the Special Assessments page of the City's website and we encourage you to watch the video on assessments for street reconstruction.

41. How will property owners afford the assessments?
Payment of assessments greater than $150 can be spread over 20 years. There is also a deferment program available for seniors 65 years or older, or persons who are permanently and totally disabled.

42. 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.