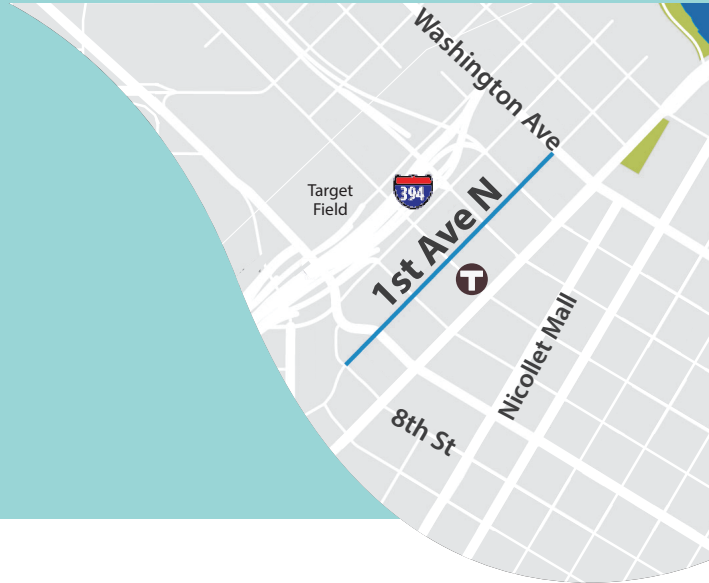


Phase 1 Engagement Summary

March-April 2024

The purpose of Phase 1 engagement was to introduce the project to the public, better understand the corridor's existing conditions, and seek input to help inform the project's vision and goals.



Project Overview

The City of Minneapolis is starting the redesign process of 1st Ave N with community input to re-envision the iconic corridor before reconstruction in 2028. We are at the beginning of a multi-phase engagement approach. In 2023-2025, we will evaluate the existing conditions, create a vision and ideas for the future corridor, and develop concept designs that result in a preferred layout.

By the Numbers

- 250+** Skyway Open House visitors
- 896** Online survey responses
- 40+** Street interviews
- 56** Participants in focus groups and walking tour
- 28** Property owners reached through site specific meetings
- 5** Presentations to neighborhood and business organizations
- 420+** Newsletter subscribers
- 2540** Postcards to residents/taxpayers
- 7** Media Publications

For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact Leoma Van Dort at 612-673-2390 or 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 ayuda, llame al 311. Rau kev pab hu 311. Hadio aad caawimaad u baahantahay wac 311.

What We Heard

Six key themes for the 1st Ave N future vision emerged across all the project input opportunities in this phase.



Pedestrian Focus

The entertainment district benefits from amenities for people walking and rolling.



An Exciting Destination

Vibrancy, color, lighting, public art, and wayfinding can enhance visible neighborhood identity.



Neighborhood Amenities

More food & beverage options, kid-friendly play spaces, seating, and restrooms for residents, workers, and visitors are needed.



Access

People use multiple options to access 1st Ave N like walking, transit, driving, biking/pedicabs, and Uber/Lyft.



Nightlife & Event Operations

A flexible design is preferred to handle street closures at peak times and for other special events like Warehouse District Live.



Greening the Corridor

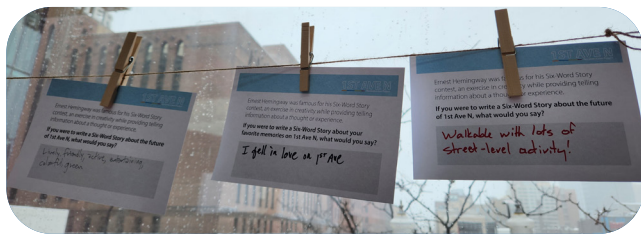
More natural features that fit a high-volume pedestrian destination and maintenance plans are needed.

Engagement Strategies

A Skyway Open House

The Open House was held from 4:30-6:00pm on a Tuesday evening to capture the peak evening rush of skyway foot traffic. At this location you can look out from the skyway onto 1st Ave N, providing an ideal vantage point to observe the existing conditions and generate ideas about the future. Promotions of the event were shared through:

- Signage on lamp posts along the corridor
- Mailers to nearby property owners & residents
- Digital signage within the City skyway system
- City of Minneapolis social media, project website, and e-bulletin
- Distribution in neighborhood channels
- Staff stationed at the street level
- Stakeholder meetings



Six Word Story

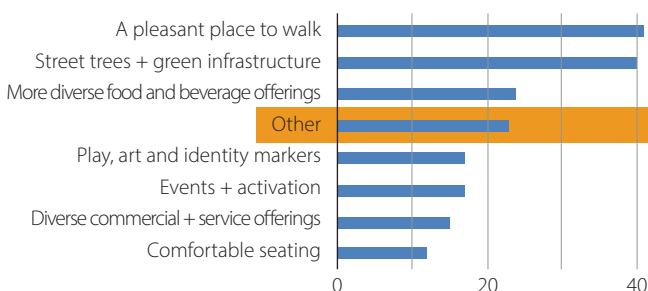
Participants were asked to write a six word story about their favorite memory or hope for the future of 1st Ave N.

- “Work day, party night, bike home”
- “Schubert Theater moving across the street”
- “Lively, friendly, active, entertaining, colorful, green”
- “Bringing our baby home for the 1st time”
- “Friends. Laughter. Sing-a-long. Purple. Candy. Stars.”



Minneapolis “Moo-lah” Prioritization

Participants picked what design features they would prioritize on 1st Ave N if they were in charge of funding the project. They selected three categories for investment, or wrote in their own.



Mapping Destinations

Participants identified destinations in the area – where they go when they use 1st Ave N.



Highlights

- work | late night food
- great alleys | concerts
- pedicab pickup
- outdoor movies
- daycare | events

Mapping Routes

Participants identified characteristics of the routes they use for all modes on and around 1st Ave N.



Highlights

- crossing timing issues
- speeding toward highway ramps
- potential bike connection to Cedar Lake Trail



Highlights

- more bathrooms | car-free street | ice skating | safety | climate resiliency park
- bike infrastructure | outdoor work spaces

Other Engagement Methods

Walking Tour



Highlights

- Sidewalks are narrow.
- Snow storage required.
- Enhanced lighting desired.
- Awnings drip on sidewalks.

Technical experts and the design team toured the corridor to identify opportunities to improve the multimodal experience while pointing out physical constraints and coordination challenges. The ongoing snow storm provided insight into operations in winter conditions. Attendees compared use patterns and maintenance with Hennepin Avenue.



Stakeholder Listening Sessions



Our team used listening sessions as an opportunity to target engagement with specific stakeholders in places and at times that best meet their needs. The sessions were held at Bulter Square over several days.

Daytime Businesses

Priorities include safe, walkable, accessible district with strong all-day amenities.

Nighttime Businesses

Stakeholders discussed flexibility for large events and peak weekend late night hours with a focus on safety and foot traffic.

Traffic & Operations Staff

Priorities include curbside management, event access, and leveraging partnerships to maintain enhanced elements like seating.

Safety & Security Staff

Staff identified opportunities for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, enhanced options for street closures, and security feature integration.

Story Map

A storymap has been available on the project webpage with a link to the online survey. It brings a user through a narrative of the project's backgrounds and priorities, mirroring information participants learned in the in-person open house.

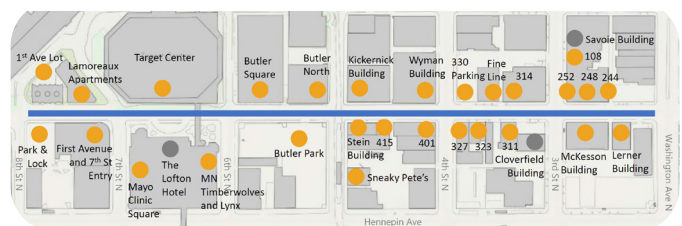
Street Interviews

Our team met users of the corridor on the street – bar and restaurant goers, hospitality workers, pedicab drivers, game patrons, and people walking, biking, and using transit. We conducted street interviews on key questions that captured peoples' stories and what they care about for the future street redesign. Compilations of the interviews can be found on the project webpage and on the City's social media platforms.



Property Owner Meetings

The project team met with owners and managers of buildings along the 1st Ave N corridor. In conversations with representatives of 28 properties, many shared their excitement for public investment in the corridor and early involvement in the design. The takeaways to inform next phases include detailed business access needs, leasing activities, and input on green infrastructure.



● Meeting Held with Property ● Not Applicable

Online Survey

The survey was designed to collect data from a random, representative sample of current and potential visitors downtown. To ensure a demographically representative and statistically significant sample, the survey was hosted and distributed through Pollfish, a third-party market research platform. The City also used sponsored ads on social media platforms to double the number of responses, with a focus on residents and workers.

The survey focused on understanding people's experiences using 1st Ave N, perceptions about the quality of the public realm and amenities offered, and their aspirations for the future street design.



How does Pollfish work?

Pollfish uses organic sampling which targets people within a specific geographic area by putting ads for the survey in mobile phone games and considers demographics to ensure the sample is representative of the population. It prevents oversampling specific groups, like when surveys only go to a contact list of stakeholders.



Number of Responses Received	Respondents who live nearby	Arrived to 1st by walking or rolling
896	48%	74%

01 Overall Themes from All Users

There are not huge shifts in responses between different demographic groups or user types (e.g. people who live nearby vs. those who work nearby) — there is a general consensus on what people perceive as challenges today and what they want to see on the corridor in the future.

02 Getting to 1st Ave N

While most people drive to 1st Ave N, a high share also walk, take the bus, or bike. Most people think it is easy to get to 1st Ave N today.

03 Access Challenges

Insufficient sidewalk space and a negative perception of safety are the main challenges reported for people walking and rolling. Lack of protected cycling infrastructure, vehicles in the bike lane, and nearby car traffic moving too fast, are the top challenges reported for people bicycling. Curbside uses like passenger pick up/drop off and truck loading also create conflicts.

04 Visiting 1st Ave N

Most people visit in the afternoon and evening. The morning and night time see similar lower shares of respondents visiting. North Loop is the most prevalent downtown location people also visit when they come to 1st Ave N. 1st Ave N is a social place - most visitors come with friends or spouses/partners.

05 Aspirations + Vision

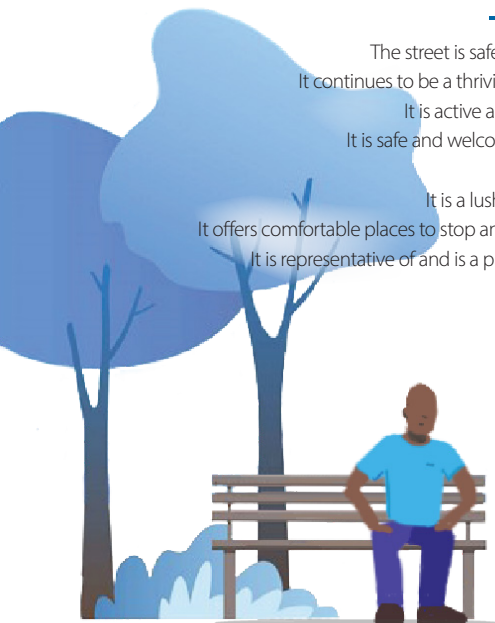
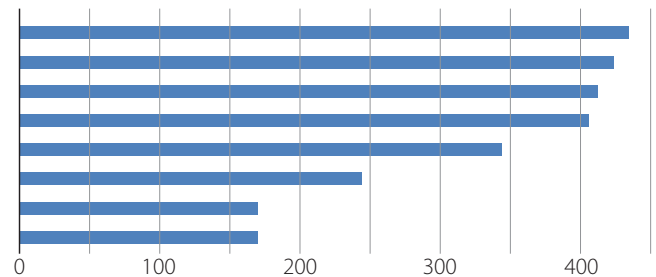
People want to see more local businesses and shops and more food and beverage options along the corridor. People aspire to a street that is safe, welcoming, comfortable, and active. "More street trees and plantings" was the highest ranking amenity people would like to see as part of the streetscape redesign.

06 Limitations + Gaps

Some demographic groups were overrepresented in our survey, including respondents who were white, adult, or male. In Phase 2 we will adjust engagement strategy to reaching those groups through multiple approaches, including social media ads.

Aspirations for 1st Ave N

- The street is safe, comfortable, and active across all seasons
- It continues to be a thriving entertainment and nightlife destination
- It is active and vibrant, with businesses and commerce
- It is safe and welcoming to all people moving along 1st Ave N
- Its historical character is maintained
- It is a lush and green street, with trees and plantings
- It offers comfortable places to stop and stay, for shorter or longer periods of time
- It is representative of and is a place for our local communities and cultures



Open Ended Survey Questions

We used a natural language processing algorithm to analyze the prominent overarching themes in survey respondents' answers to open ended questions.

Interestingly, there is overlap in the themes from people's favorite part of the corridor today and things they currently can't do but wish they could. See appendix for more.



What's the best thing about 1st Ave N today?

Nightlife & Entertainment

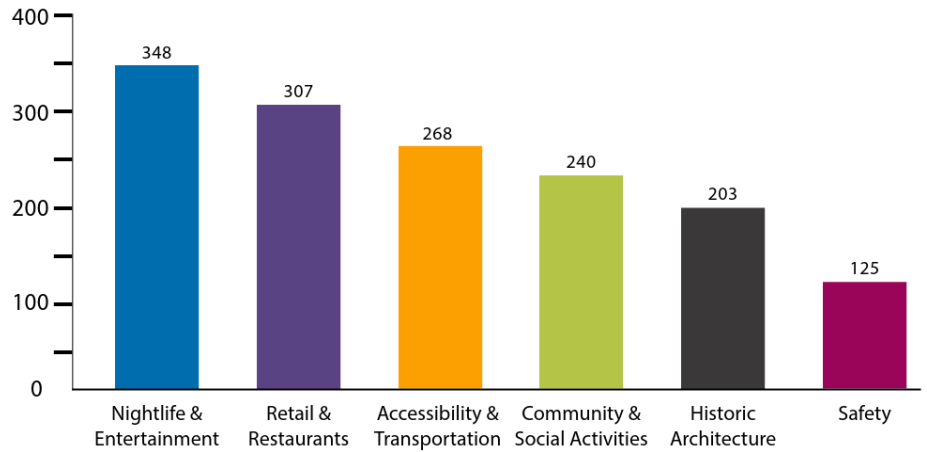
"There are places to go and visit! I like that there is nightlife, and sporting events nearby."

Retail & Restaurants

"The best thing about 1st Ave is the businesses along it. Places like First Avenue, the Loon Cafe, Runyons, and Red Cow make the street the place to be."

Access & Transportation

"Location! Right between two stadiums and the light rail / river."



Community & Social Activities

"The community and the people that live here and live along 1st Ave that make you feel welcome."

Historic Architecture & Cultural Significance

"One of the only parts of downtown where the historic architecture has been maintained."

What is something you wish you could do on 1st Ave N that you can't do there today?

Access & Convenience

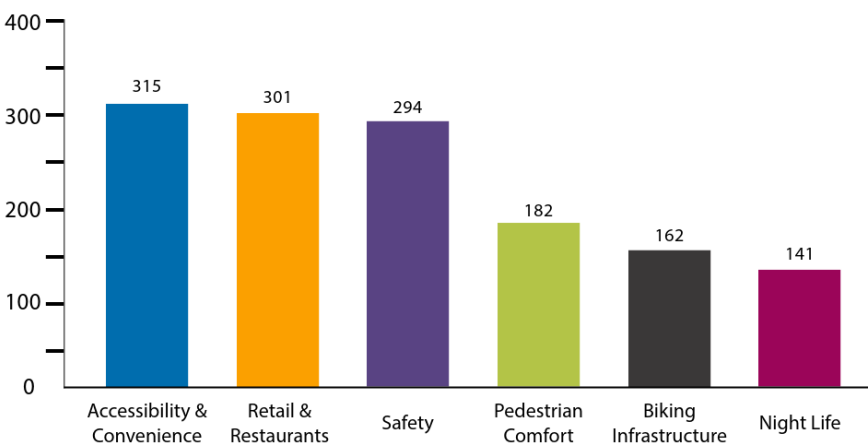
"Clearer understanding of ped and traffic operations at LRT crossings, vehicle lane assignments and where to turn is unclear for many."

Retail & Restaurants

"I wish I could have more variety of businesses and see people out enjoying the area."

Safety

"Feel safe walking on the street on non-event nights."



Pedestrian Comfort

"Walk along sidewalks and across intersections with better sense of safety."

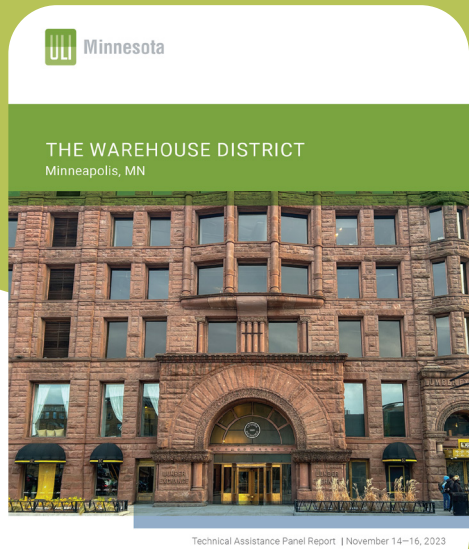
Biking Infrastructure

"I wish I could bike without having to deal with vehicles obstructing the bike lane and without worrying about getting hit by a car at intersections."

Concurrent Initiatives

The project team has reviewed the Downtown Next Plan, Warehouse District Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel Recommendations, Vibrant Downtown Storefronts Workgroup Report, Service Employees International Union Local 26’s Inclusive Recovery Report, Minneapolis Renaissance Coalition materials and other reports and noted the following recommendations that relate to 1st Ave N:

- **Support 1st Ave N businesses** – Construction will create challenges. The city should commit to corridor activation and support businesses during construction to ensure viability.
- **Install public enhancements** – Art installations, shade trees, and bike racks help create a welcoming environment. Reinforce policies that prioritize keeping older trees and enforce established requirements when older trees must be removed. Continue the work of the Park and Recreation Board and Public Works department to create successful tree and planning areas.
- **Emphasize identity** - Build gateways, signal the district entrance points for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Use wayfinding, signage, monuments, historic plaques and other placemaking actions.
- **Design for connectivity to and through the district** - Require intentional design at the district’s borders and gateways. Pilot a closure of 1st Ave N to cars to open space to people walking, rolling, biking, and accessing transit.
- **Georeferenced rideshare zone** - As people turn more frequently to ridesharing options, the city should consider defining a zone to track and better support this ubiquitous transportation option.
- **Install additional lighting** - Dynamic lighting can help further improve safety in the district. Install temporary lighting in pursuit of a district with “no dark alleys” and a greater sense of safety and security. As businesses enter the area and install their own exterior lighting, the temporary options can come down.



Technical Assistance Panel Report | November 14–16, 2023

Ideas & Visioning in Summer 2024

The project team will take the input received in Phase 1 to develop a draft vision and goals for the project, which will be brought back to the community for feedback in Phase 2 of engagement, starting later this summer. Other objectives of Phase 2 will include generating ideas for the public realm plan.

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.

