



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

October 2020

Virtual open houses on the Hennepin South Reconstruction project were held September 22 and September 30, 2020. The following represents the most frequently asked questions from those engagement efforts.

Pedestrian Experience

- **Is the City taking into consideration that the high proportion of "through trips" on Hennepin Ave may be because the street isn't currently welcoming for pedestrians and bikes?**

Looking at origins and destinations within the city and where people are traveling, Hennepin Ave and Lyndale Ave form the backbone for north-south travel. The Hennepin Ave corridor will likely always have a high component of through traffic that wants to connect to I-94 or downtown. However, in the design process the city doesn't just analyze vehicle counts, but also considers person throughput in the corridor. The allocation of space considers how the city can make other modes, such as transit, more attractive in order to move more people.

- **To make intersections as safe as possible for vulnerable users, what are the City's plans for implementing traffic calming measures?**

The project will consider curb extensions or bump outs at every intersection, on both Hennepin Ave and cross streets. The use of curb extensions on Hennepin Ave will depend on the chosen design for the street. For example, if there is a transit through lane at the curb then curb extensions would not be feasible. The street design will look for every opportunity to influence the speed of vehicles and how vehicles interact with pedestrians and bicycles.

- **How will this reconstruction address turning vehicles to ensure that pedestrians of all ages and abilities can safely cross the street at every intersection?**

As part of this reconstruction, the city is looking to make pedestrian improvements throughout the corridor. One of the most helpful things that the design can do to reduce vehicle speeds and increase safety at intersections is to tighten the intersection corners so that vehicles must travel slower when they are making a right or left turn. The location of pedestrian crossings is also very important. Making the pedestrian more visible and forcing the driver to see the person crossing and turn at a slower speed helps reduce conflicts and crashes. At traffic signals, the city will also consider leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs) that give pedestrians the opportunity to cross before vehicles get the green light. It's too early to know what signal phasing will be used for turning vehicles but this will be a consideration.

- **Is it possible to move all traffic signals to the near side of the intersection to keep vehicles farther back and allow for safer bike and pedestrian crossing?**

Since every traffic signal will be rebuilt as part of this reconstruction, the city will look to make the intersections as safe as possible. At this point in the design process, it's too early to know signal location and this will be part of the detailed design process.

- **Will all intersections have push buttons on the traffic signals?**

This project is a complete street reconstruction which includes every traffic signal. Each new traffic signal has push buttons in every direction because this is necessary to meet ADA standards. For a person who has limited or no vision, the locator tone on the push button helps them to find the crosswalk and the audible message during the crossing time helps them to safely cross the street.



In environments with high levels of pedestrian activity, the city can run the pedestrian phase without requiring pedestrians to push the button. Either type of pedestrian operation at the signal does not change how the traffic signal is designed or built.

- **Were the pedestrian traffic counts at the southern end of Hennepin Ave collected before or after the construction on Hennepin Ave from 36th St to Lake St?**

The pedestrian counts were taken just before the Hennepin Ave construction south of Lake St or around the time of construction. There have not been updated counts at the intersection since the reconstruction south of Lake St.

- **On the stretch of sidewalk between Franklin Ave and Douglas Ave, pedestrians often have to contend with bicyclists. How will these designs provide safe spaces for both pedestrians and cyclists in this area?**

The city has identified the best route for bicyclists to downtown as using Bryant Ave and the Loring Greenway. Whatever alignment is chosen for the bikeway south of Franklin Ave, the city would guide cyclists to Bryant Ave to continue north into downtown.

Transit Operations

- **How do these design concepts incorporate the enhanced BRT stops that are part of the E Line project?**

The space for the BRT stations would be located in the sidewalk zone. For these design options, the city is looking at how to fit the BRT stations and maintain adequate space for a pedestrian through zone. There will continue to be local bus stops throughout the corridor and space for the local stops will also be needed.

- **Is there a design option that combines bus and bike facilities? This informally happens on Nicollet Avenue and seems to work well.**

A facility with buses and bikes sharing space is unlikely on Hennepin Ave. A big difference on Nicollet Mall is that it has a speed limit of 10 miles per hour. With buses traveling at a much slower speed on Nicollet Mall, bicyclists can safely share the street with them. On other high frequency and arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) routes in the city, buses and bikes are typically separated to provide safe operations for both.

- **Would it be possible to run a two-way busway down the center of Hennepin Ave?**

The project team is looking at several creative transit options like a two-way busway. A two-way center-running busway does have some challenges with pedestrian access to stations and signaling at intersections. Transit ridership is high in this corridor and making improvements to transit facilities and operations is critical to the city being able to achieve its mode share goal.

- **Will the bus-only lanes be designed to have a barrier between the car lanes and bus lanes?**

One of the design options being evaluated has physical separation between the vehicle lanes and bus lanes because this reduces conflicts and reduce the ability for vehicles to enter the bus lane. This is one element that will be considered as the city determines how to best move transit through this corridor.

Bicycle Facilities

- **What protected opportunities exist for bike lanes?**

Any bikeway on Hennepin Ave would be a protected bikeway behind the curb. These facilities could be at sidewalk level or street level. Because they are behind the curb, the bikeways are protected from being used for parking and other curbside uses. Through intersections, bike lanes would be marked with green conflict markings that parallel the crosswalks so bicyclists are visible through the intersections.



- **Why aren't bikes put on residential streets?**

The City has developed a draft All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network that consists of 286 miles of low-stress bikeways and looks to put bicycle facilities where there is the highest demand. In addition to every residential street that allows for biking, the AAA network looks to connect origins and destinations throughout the city which is why Hennepin Ave is on the AAA network. The AAA network doesn't preclude bicycle facilities on residential streets, but the city also wants to look at putting bicycle facilities on major streets.

- **Do any of the bikeway options consider a bike facility on other streets like Humboldt Ave, as an alternative to Hennepin Ave? Why consider a bike lane on Hennepin Ave when Bryant Ave has a well-known bikeway that runs parallel to Hennepin Ave?**

Several bikeway options are being considered and they include a bikeway entirely on Hennepin, entirely on Bryant, or a hybrid between Hennepin and Bryant. The intent is to provide a designated bikeway alignment that would have facilities consistent with being on the AAA bikeway network.

One of the considerations when looking at a bikeway alignment is that there are many destinations along Hennepin Ave, and a bikeway should help people to access these destinations. Humboldt Ave is already on the city's AAA bikeway network. However, the best connection to downtown is via the Loring Greenway bridge, so a bicycle boulevard west of Hennepin Ave would still require all bicyclists to travel east-west to Bryant Ave and cross Hennepin Ave, which can be challenging.

- **Since there will be off-street bike lanes on Hennepin north of this project area (in downtown), doesn't it make sense to just extend the off-street bike lanes to this section of Hennepin?**

There are several different types of bikeways on Hennepin Ave. The segment in downtown is a protected bikeway behind the curb and is currently under construction. The segment on Hennepin Ave south of 12th St (near Minneapolis Community & Technical College) has on-street bike lanes. Then there is also an off-street two-way bikeway on the segment through the Hennepin-Lyndale Commons. The connection from Uptown into downtown that is the safest for cyclists is via the Loring Greenway bridge. South of Franklin Ave, the proposed AAA bike network is on Hennepin Ave but there are tradeoffs with space which is why it's currently being evaluated.

- **For the Hennepin Ave design option without bike lanes, where are bike users expected to go?**

Bikeway alignments on Bryant Ave are also being considered. The city's AAA bicycle network also identifies Humboldt Ave as a low-street bikeway. We know that any bike facility not on Hennepin Ave adds extra distance for a trip that has a destination on Hennepin Ave, and this is one of the criteria we are considering as we evaluate the different bikeway alignments.

- **If bike lanes will be added, will a better connection between Hennepin Ave and the Midtown Greenway be made?**

The Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) recently developed a master plan for all the parks in the southwest part of the city. One identified improvement in the master plan is an improved connection to the Midtown Greenway and Hennepin Ave at The Mall (north of Lagoon Ave). MPRB has funding to construct a portion of that connection next year. The Hennepin Ave project team is coordinating with MPRB on what an interim connection to Hennepin Ave would look like, and, as a protected bikeway is considered on Hennepin Ave, what the long-term connection would look like.



Vehicle Operations

- **Do any of the design options reduce vehicle travel lanes or storage space for vehicles?**

The city is in very early stages of the design process, and there are many different design options under consideration, including options that reduce the space for vehicles. The draft Transportation Action Plan (TAP) includes an ambitious mode share goal to reduce single occupant vehicles and this is taken into consideration in the street design. Safety is also a primary issue that will be weighed in design and the number of vehicle lanes impacts the safety of the street for pedestrians and bicyclists. In some parts of the city, it's been appropriate to implement a 4-to-3 lane street conversion but that has not yet been determined for Hennepin Ave.

- **Traffic entering and exiting I-94 causes congestion in this corridor, especially around the Hennepin/Franklin intersection. How will this be addressed in design?**

The design team is very aware of the congestion in this area and is taking a look at the corridor to identify issues and evaluate allocation of space. In the coming months, a lot of work on the project will focus on those end points and connections, including near Franklin Avenue. The project will be looking to balance transportation network needs to safely accommodate multiple modes in this area, including vehicles.

- **If the design on Hennepin Avenue includes a reduction in vehicle travel lanes, how will the city plan for impacts to local streets? How can you divert through-trips off Hennepin and make Hennepin a destination rather than a thoroughfare?**

The City isn't looking to intentionally divert through trips off Hennepin Avenue. The new Hennepin Ave will prioritize and provide facilities for other modes, which may result in through trips shifting to parallel routes. The traffic impacts of the preferred design will be studied as part of this process, including traffic impacts to local streets.

- **Is it possible to put left turn restrictions throughout the entire corridor, at least during rush hour?**

The ability to implement left turn restrictions depends on the selected design. Not all of the concepts have left turn lanes; some are similar to what is there today. During peak traffic hours, the city will evaluate if it makes sense to restrict left turns. Currently, at most of the signalized intersections in the corridor, left turns are banned during peak hours. If left turns are included, we know from the Vision Zero Study that left turns are one of the most significant causes for crashes with pedestrians and bicyclists. Whether or not left turns are allowed, we will prioritize how we manage left turns and conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclists.

- **How has the project accounted for the expected decrease in vehicle use/ownership that will take place over the next 10-20 years as vehicles become better self-driving?**

The draft TAP addresses strategies and actions related to technology and shared mobility to achieve the city's transportation goals. It is difficult to know what changes will happen in transportation in the next 10 years, but the city recognizes the need to design streets for dynamic and flexible spaces so we can continue to adapt as technology advancements occur. The city's mode share goal also reflects fewer trips being made by single occupant vehicle.

Parking and Loading

- **How can we ensure that vehicles parking, making deliveries, etc. do not block transit lanes and bike lanes?**

The city has experience with other corridors throughout the city where bus and bike lanes coexist with delivery trucks and parking. The bus-only lanes implemented last fall on Hennepin Ave are working well, but not perfectly. There have been vehicles parked in the lanes during the designated bus lane hours and Public Works has worked



with Minneapolis Traffic Control and Metro Transit Police to enforce the parking restrictions. As the city continues to implement more dynamic and creative uses of right-of-way space, this is going to be one of the challenges that needs to be worked through. Facility design, operations, and enforcement must work in harmony for an effective solution.

Stormwater Management/Greening

- **Will all trees in the corridor be removed as part of the project?**
The 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. All efforts will be made to retain as many trees as possible during reconstruction, which will be informed by MPRB's inventory and staff recommendation.
- **Do the design options include more greening throughout the corridor (e.g, intermittent planted median)?**
Greenery is an important consideration on many of the city's reconstruction projects and the city will be looking for opportunities to add more greening to this corridor. Adding green infrastructure, in addition to street trees and potential improvements to pocket park areas, is something the city will include in this corridor where possible. This corridor is a challenge because there is a lot of competition for use and space.
- **Will the gardens on 22nd St and Hennepin Ave be removed?**
There are several green space/pocket park areas along the corridor that are likely not within the scope of this project because they are mainly not in the public right-of-way. At this time, the city is not looking to remove or disturb those areas outside the right-of-way. However, the city is engaging with the special service districts throughout this process to determine whether there is a desire to contribute funds to make improvements or changes to those areas.

Business Considerations

- **Have you analyzed how the reconstruction will impact corridor businesses if parking is eliminated?**
Through the engagement for this project, the city has heard from many business owners and corridor users about current parking challenges. As part of the data collection process, the city conducted a count of existing parking spaces and usage in the corridor prior to COVID-19. The parking data included parking supply and parking demand throughout the corridor and on nearby side streets. As the project continues in the design process, providing on-street parking will be considered – whether all-day or during off-peak hours.
- **How will this reconstruction handle curb cuts for businesses with parking lots?**
The project team is evaluating curb cuts through this design process – that could include driveway closures, driveway consolidation with an adjacent property, or reductions in driveway width. The city will be working closely with businesses to improve curb cuts along the corridor.
- **What coordination will you conduct with businesses to determine their delivery needs?**
The project team will be conducting outreach through the Uptown Business Association and through one-on-one meetings with individual businesses over the coming months to help understand and document specific delivery, loading, and parking needs. You can also leave specific feedback on business access, parking, and delivery needs on the interactive map available on the website as part of this round of engagement.

<https://wikimapping.com/Hennepin-South-Reconstruction.html>



Other Design Considerations

- **Are there plans to reconstruct the entire Lake Street intersection during this project?**
Yes, the entire intersection at Hennepin Ave and Lake St will be reconstructed as part of this project.
- **When will the 1.5 blocks of Franklin west of Hennepin be reconstructed to be narrow like other nearby blocks?**
This area is planned to be resurfaced next year. When a street has an improvement project that is not a full reconstruction, the city looks to implement spot pedestrian improvements. There's no plan at this time to narrow the 1.5 blocks of Franklin west of Hennepin, but the city will be evaluating the street for safety improvements as part of the resurfacing.
- **Is this a building front to building front reconstruction?**
Yes, this reconstruction will include work within the entire public right-of-way, which is 88 feet for nearly the entire length of the corridor. On roadway reconstruction projects the city will typically try to save some elements (e.g. sidewalk panels, trees, etc.). This is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and depends on what the final design looks like compared to the existing conditions.
- **Will Public Works be incorporating lessons learned from the reconstruction of Hennepin Ave south of Lake St?**
Yes. One of the takeaways from the project south of Lake St was the competing demands in the corridor as they relate to curbside use. The city knows there have been operational issues, specifically on the block from Lake St to 31st St, because there isn't on-street parking/loading provided and vehicles frequently use the bike lane instead. We understand there are demands at the curb, not just for bus lanes, but for parking, loading, and deliveries that serve businesses along the corridor. As we look to reconstruct Hennepin Ave north of Lake Street, we will consider how those same curbside use needs can be accommodated.
- **Was the City's data collection performed pre-COVID 19?**
Yes, all of the data used in the analysis was collected before the pandemic.
- **Will the project keep or remove the existing human scale streetlights, which are lower than city standards?**
The lighting design will be evaluated once a design for Hennepin Ave has been chosen. The city's Street Lighting Policy identifies standard light levels for a pedestrian street lighting corridor (PSLC) like Hennepin Ave and the number and height of street lights in the new design will be based on meeting these criteria.
- **Is there any consideration to making Hennepin solely a bike/ped/bus corridor?**
Looking at origins and destinations within the city and where people are traveling, Hennepin Ave and Lyndale Ave form the backbone for north-south travel in the area for all modes of travel. The allocation of space considers how the city can make other modes, such as transit, more attractive in order to move more people but does not plan to eliminate vehicle traffic entirely.
- **Who decides which design option will be implemented?**
Ultimately, the City Council approves the design for street reconstruction projects in the city.

Construction

- **How long is the project projected to last?**
Utility construction is anticipated to begin in 2022. We expect that the reconstruction of the corridor will take two years to complete (2023 and 2024).



- **Will the prep work in 2022 affect driving lanes or parking? If there will be impacts, during what months would the work occur?**

The utility work that is planned for 2022 will likely have some impacts. Public Works tries to ensure that the impacts are localized but at this time we don't know what the impacts will be or their duration. There will be engagement with property owners and corridor users to ensure they are aware of construction impacts before they occur.

- **How will the project team ensure access to businesses throughout construction?**

It is always the city's intention to work with local businesses on these corridor reconstructions to ensure that access is maintained. Given that the design for the street hasn't been determined yet, we don't know yet what the staging plans will be. But, as the design materializes, a key consideration of the construction staging plan is that that businesses are well served during construction.

Policy Considerations

- **How do the design concepts fit in with the City's Climate Action Plan? Will one design concept better reduce emissions than another?**

The project is early in the design process and we don't yet know what the design of the corridor will look like. Considering this, it's difficult to say what the comparison would be between cross sections. With that said, the Climate Action Plan is integral to the work the city is doing and a key policy document. One of the main initiatives of the Climate Action Plan is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in all of the different sectors – with transportation being an important one and with policy direction to favor low carbon modal alternatives.

- **Is the City considering the potential lasting effects from COVID-19 in this design?**

In the past few months, the city has seen traffic volumes return to their pre-COVID 19 levels even though many people are still working from home. Some of the travel patterns are a bit different, but the overall levels of traffic are similar.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the city has also seen an increase in demand for curbside use – for example, curbside pick-up at restaurants and stores and increased deliveries to residences. The city recognizes that we need to design for these uses. If we don't, people will use the spaces other than how they were intended. The project design will need to accommodate these curbside uses and account for how people actually use the street.

Project Funding

- **Will there be assessments for this project?**

Yes, adjacent property owners will be assessed for this street reconstruction project using the city's uniform assessment policy. For the Hennepin South Reconstruction, assessments account for 10-15% of the total project cost. The City's Assessor Office has prepared estimates of assessments for this project. If you have questions about what your assessment might be, please contact the project team. More information about assessments can be found on the City's website, search word 'Assessments.'

- **Are assessments for Hennepin Ave addresses only?**

No, the City uses an "influence area" assessment method. If you are close to Hennepin, but your address is on the cross street, part of your property may still be assessed. If you are unsure, please contact the project team. Project staff can look up your property and determine whether you will be assessed and give you an estimated assessment amount.

Public Engagement

- **How do you balance the interests of property owners and renters?**
The city doesn't give preference to any particular stakeholder group and needs to balance many interests – businesses, residents, commuters (by all modes), etc. A corridor stakeholder committee that represents a range of stakeholders has been formed to help provide input on how best to engage all these interests. For this open house, the city sent project mailers to property owners as well as tenants and residents that occupy buildings. Specific to renters, the project team is also working with landlords that own properties along Hennepin Ave to get the word out to their tenants. It's always a challenge to engage with all stakeholders in the corridor and we are open to suggestions on how to improve. If there's a group you think the project should be communicating with, please let us know.
- **When will we be able to engage with staff in person again?**
To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, city staff are currently not hosting or attending in-person meetings. However, you can still engage with us now! If you have any questions or comments, you can reach out via:
 - Project email: hennepin.south@minneapolismn.gov
 - Becca Hughes (City project manager), Rebecca.hughes@minneapolismn.gov, 612-673-3594

Please visit the project webpage to find more information on the project, sign-up to receive email updates, and see the ways you can participate remotely: <http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/cip/futureprojects/HennepinSouth>