VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONS

March 2021

The City of Minneapolis held two virtual public meetings on March 2, 2021 and March 4, 2021 for the Hennepin Avenue South Reconstruction project. The following summarizes the questions asked during the two meetings, including those that were not able to be answered during the live meetings.

Pedestrian Facilities

On average, what are the existing sidewalk widths along the project corridor? Do either of these design options reduce sidewalk width?

Existing sidewalk widths on Hennepin Ave vary somewhat but are generally 6 to 8 feet wide. The project team has set a desired sidewalk width of 8 feet wide between Franklin Ave and Lake St, and 6 feet wide north of Franklin Ave. This is consistent with the city's Street Design Guide.

In Option 1, there are 13 locations where the sidewalk is reduced from 8 feet wide to 5.5-7 feet wide between Franklin Ave and Lake St to be able to fit all the project elements. In Option 2, an 8-foot sidewalk width is maintained for the entire length between Franklin Ave and Lake St. The sidewalk is 6 feet wide north of Franklin Ave in both options.

How does the intersection design improve safety, particularly in ensuring pedestrian crossings are safe and comfortable at intersections?

The city's Pedestrian Crash Study and Vision Zero crash study identified that the most common cause of pedestrian and bicycle crashes is turning vehicles, and especially left turning vehicles. To improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, the crossings at intersections are shorter and the curb radii are smaller to slow turning vehicles. Where there are left turn lanes, there is the opportunity to use left turn phases, which separate the left turn movement from the pedestrian and bicycle movements. We also included a "bend-out" bikeway design at the intersection, which keeps the pedestrian crossings short and creates a 6-foot buffer space to allow more time for the turning driver to see people on bicycles. There will continue to be evaluation and refinement of safety and operations during the detailed design phase of the project.

The Minneapolis Street Design Guide recommends raised and continuous crossings at side street entrances as a standard practice. Will raised and continuous crossing be included on this project?

Raised crossings are a design element that we are still evaluating and will be incorporated in future refinements of the design.

How will you prevent cars from parking too close to intersection corners, causing sight line issues?

On Hennepin Ave, parking and loading will occur in designated bays that do not extend to the intersection. On many cross streets, curb extensions and other treatments are being implemented to shorten pedestrian crossings and these treatments also improve sight lines.

The more unsafe left turns occur when drivers turn onto Hennepin Ave, especially at the more angled intersections. What will be done to reduce danger from those drivers?

Intersection design and crossing treatments on the streets that intersect Hennepin Ave are some of the elements that we are continuing to evaluate as the design is refined.

Will the project include leading pedestrian intervals and bike crossing signals?
We are considering leading pedestrian intervals and bike signals. However, decisions about if or how these devices will be implemented are determined in the detailed design and operations stage of the project.

Will mid-block crossings be included where business density is high?
Ramps for pedestrian crossings of Hennepin Ave are shown on the layouts at the intersections that have traffic signals and at the unsignalized intersections such as Colfax Ave, Dupont Ave, and Emerson Ave. The crossings at unsignalized intersections are considered pedestrian crossings whether or not they have marked crosswalks. If the median is at least 6 feet wide, it provides a refuge for someone to wait, so they only need to cross one direction of traffic at a time. The crossing treatments at the unsignalized intersections have not been determined yet.

The distance between crossing opportunities of Hennepin Ave is 60 to 660 feet, with an average of 330 feet between crossing opportunities. For reference, a short block in Minneapolis is about 330 feet long and a long block in Minneapolis is about 660 feet long. The need for designated mid-block crossings on Hennepin Ave has not been identified.

Is it possible reduce the number of curb cuts shown in the design options?
The project team is actively talking to property owners about narrowing, consolidating, and removing curb cuts. These locations are shown with an asterisk (*) on the layouts. The property owners are legally entitled to reasonably safety and convenient access to their properties and there are city code restrictions on the use of alleys, so a number of curb cuts will need to remain.

How will the pedestrian experience change by being so close to a BRT lane?
The sidewalk will be separated from the transit lane by the bikeway (Option 1), boulevard, and by parked vehicles in some locations. The separation from moving traffic and amenities such as trees, pedestrian lighting, and greening are the most important factors in creating a comfortable space for people walking and rolling. On the west side of Hennepin Ave, there is less separation between the sidewalk and the bus lane in Option 1 compared to Option 2.

Why isn't there a sidewalk being constructed on the east side of Hennepin Ave north of Franklin Ave?
There are not any homes, businesses, or other destinations on the east side of Hennepin Ave north of Franklin Ave. A sidewalk on that side of Hennepin Ave would end in the median at Franklin and people would have to cross a freeway ramp. For those reasons, the city does not identify that segment as a sidewalk gap and no sidewalk is planned to be added.

Is it possible to move traffic signals to the near side of the intersection?
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.

Has any thought been given to preserving sidewalks?
The project includes reconstruction of all the sidewalks within the project limits.

Will you re-time the traffic signals on Hennepin to cycle faster for pedestrians?
We have not yet determined the signal timing for Hennepin Ave. We will determine this in the detailed design phase. The City always provides as much time as needed for pedestrians to cross the street. Working with those times for pedestrian crossings, we want to have as short of a cycle length as we can while promoting safe and efficient operations.

Transit Operations

Are you considering physical separation such as a concrete curb between transit and vehicle lanes to keep private vehicles out of the transit lane?

We explored a barrier between the transit and vehicle lanes but felt that it took up too much space and wouldn't allow us to achieve other project goals. We intend to pursue transit lanes that are not physically separated from vehicle traffic.

Will bus rapid transit (BRT) buses be slowed down behind local buses? Could local bus stops be eliminated from this corridor?

Metro Transit reviewed the existing stop locations and recommended removing seven local bus stops in the corridor. Metro Transit seeks to balance local access for those unable or unwilling to walk to the nearest arterial BRT station, while limiting possible delays to the E Line and local service.

How has Metro Transit adjusted their bus schedules as the result of the red dynamic transit lanes on Hennepin Ave today?

The existing bus lanes on Hennepin are primarily intended to provide more consistent, reliable service. With the longer bus lanes proposed with the Hennepin Ave reconstruction, Metro Transit anticipates that faster travel times will be reflected in the route schedules.

Is there a way to build the transit lanes so that they are only used certain hours of the day like they are now? What is the reason for dedicated transit lanes in non-peak hours?

Having full-time transit lanes supports the City's Climate Action Plan and transit mode share goals. We want to provide high functioning, high caliber transit service to move more people rather than more vehicles. The Route 6 bus is one of the highest ridership routes outside of downtown and ridership is expected to increase significantly throughout the day with the introduction of the E Line BRT. For these reasons, we are looking to provide exclusive transit lanes in this corridor and will commit to enforcement that helps support that. We know there have been enforcement issues with the red dynamic transit lanes on Hennepin Ave. With a fully dedicated transit lane, it's less confusing for drivers and easier to designate as a transit lane.

Why aren't there bus priority lanes south of the Uptown Transit Center and Lake St?

The transit-only lanes shown in the design options extend from Franklin Ave to the Uptown Transit Center. South of Lake St, the roadway is much narrower and traffic volumes are lower. Because there's a narrower roadway and narrower right-of-way, there is not room for a transit-only lane south of Lake St. From the Uptown Transit Center to Lake St, the designs include a zone where buses transition from transit-only lanes into mixed-use traffic.

How would the parking/loading bays work with the transit lanes?

The proposed parking bays are to the right of the transit lane. Drivers looking to park or load, will need to move into the transit lane to access the parking/loading bay. Drivers will need to yield to buses when moving into the parking/loading bay. Vehicles will not be allowed to park or load in the transit lane.

Is the bus stop on Hennepin Ave at 22nd St being eliminated? Why are bus stops at 28th and Hennepin Ave removed?
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.

- The design options show a local and BRT stop on Hennepin Ave south of Franklin Ave and a local bus stop at 24th St. Based on recommendations from Metro Transit, the stop on Hennepin Ave at 22nd St is being eliminated.
- The existing local stop at 28th St is close to the local and BRT stop at Uptown Transit Station. Based on recommendations from Metro Transit, the stop on Hennepin Ave at 28th St is being eliminated.

On Option 1, is it possible for the northbound bus stop on Hennepin Ave at 24th St to remain if the Valvoline driveway is removed?
In Option 1, the left-turn lanes are located at 24th St because there wasn't room at 25th St along with the bikeway and the BRT stations. Left-turn lanes are needed at 24th St and 26th St to provide opportunities to access homes and businesses in this part of the corridor. Even if the Valvoline driveway were removed, there isn't enough space to provide an accessible bus stop. There will be a bus stop on 24th St at Dupont Ave instead, which will serve the Route 17 buses that turn from northbound Hennepin Ave to eastbound 24th St.

Is it possible to put bus stops mid-block, keeping corners more open for increased visibility of people at intersection corners?
Bus stops are proposed to be located at intersections because they are easiest for people to access from all directions, including crossing Hennepin Ave. Most of the bus stops are proposed to be located farside at the intersections, which means the bus travels through the intersection and then serves the bus stop. The shelters for farside bus stops are located at the front of the bus stop, so they do leave more space at the intersection corners compared to nearside stops.

The Route 2 buses that stop/idle on Hennepin Ave just south of Franklin Ave cause frustration and unsafe driving. Could transit layovers be moved off Hennepin Ave?
Today, bus layovers occur on Hennepin Ave between Franklin Ave and 22nd St. Both design options feature full-time transit lanes, so the layover will not occur on Hennepin Ave. The city will work with Metro Transit to identify another location where buses could layover. Metro Transit's preference is to pursue a location along the existing routing on 22nd St/Dupont Ave/Franklin Ave.

Why wasn't streetcar/LRT considered instead of buses? In the future, could we use the bus-only lanes for LRT?
The Route 6 is one of the busiest bus routes in the region. Past studies and policy plans for the Twin Cities region identify the Hennepin Ave corridor for enhanced bus service.

How will the City consider future transit improvements beyond the B Line?
The city and Metro Transit are coordinating the design and construction of the B Line and E Line stations. The B Line will intersect the Hennepin Ave Reconstruction at Lagoon Ave/Lake St and construction is anticipated to begin in 2023. On Hennepin Ave, the Hennepin Ave and E Line projects are expected to be constructed at the same time, beginning in 2024.

Will having 13-foot transit lanes affect bus travel times along the corridor?
Both layouts (Option 1 and Option 2) include 12-foot transit lanes where they are next to the curb, as shown in the city's Street Design Guide. The transit lane width has been coordinated between the city and Metro Transit and is not expected to influence overall transit travel times.

Will the E Line buses be the 40-foot buses or the longer articulated buses?
The E Line buses are planned to be 60-foot articulated buses.

Will the new bus stops be heated?
The BRT stations will have heat, lighting, real-time signs, and other amenities. The city will coordinate the amenities at the local bus stops with Metro Transit during detailed design.

Will buses be given separate signals to get into intersections before cars?
Separate signals for buses will be evaluated in the detailed design and operations stage of the project.

Bicycle Facilities

Will the protected bikeway in Option 1 extend from Douglas Ave to Franklin Ave?
Option 1 does not have a bike facility on Hennepin Ave between Douglas Ave and Franklin Ave. The Transportation Action Plan shows the All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bikeway connection between Franklin Ave and downtown occurring via the Bryant Ave bridge and Loring Greenway. The project does not propose to build a bikeway on Hennepin Ave north of Franklin Ave.

What are the outcomes of studies that have been completed regarding usage of these streets once a dedicated bike lane was built? How are those studies informing future corridors and usage? Do you have data that shows biking has increased enough to support putting in more bike lanes?
To make bicycling a real option for more people, the Transportation Action Plan establishes an All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network that connects neighborhoods and destinations throughout the city. This network will include protected lanes and trails that are physically separated from moving cars, trucks, and buses and be accessible year-round. Building bike facilities also supports the City's Climate Action Plan and mode share goals. To achieve those goals, safe and convenient facilities are needed to make biking a viable alternative to driving.

If the bike facility was provided on Bryant Ave instead of Hennepin Ave, how would Bryant be different than it is today?
The facility on Bryant Ave would need to be improved so that it's a protected bike facility, with the bicycle facility physically separated from vehicles. To provide a protected facility, part of the existing street space would be used to create the bikeway. A similar example is the Whittier/Lyndale bikeway. We would also analyze intersection treatments.

Will there be parallel bike routes on both sides of Hennepin Ave, so that people biking aren't forced to cross Hennepin twice?
The city's All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network also identifies Humboldt Ave as a low-stress bikeway.

If Option 2 is chosen and other bike infrastructure (e.g., Bryant Ave) is considered, what is the timeline for that project?
Since we don't know which bikeway option (on Hennepin Ave, a hybrid, or on a parallel street) will be chosen, we don't know yet which program year that improvements would be built on a parallel street. We would want those bicycle improvements to be built in a similar timeframe as the reconstruction of Hennepin Ave. Once the Hennepin Ave design has

been selected, we will have a better understanding of the budget and timeline for bikeway improvements on a parallel corridor.

If Option 2 is chosen and there isn't a bike facility on Hennepin Ave, people will still bike down Hennepin Ave. How will people bike safely within the proposed lane structure? Will people biking be allowed in bus lanes?
We recognize that even if there is not a bike facility on Hennepin Ave, people will still bike on Hennepin Ave to access destinations. We will be evaluating this in the detailed design stage of the project.
Bikes and buses sharing space does occur in some locations throughout the City, particularly in places where the buses are traveling at slower speeds (e.g., on Nicollet Mall buses travel at 10 mph). In places with high frequency buses and arterial BRT like Hennepin Ave, to have high transit throughput and meet the City's transit mode share goals, it would not be feasible to have the transit lane shared with bicycles.

What is the process for deciding to go with a hybrid bikeway option?
We are evaluating the benefits and impacts to people biking, the effects on the Hennepin Ave design, and the effects on the parallel street where the bikeway would be improved. We are also taking public input through this process. The city will need to weigh all those factors to determine if a bikeway will be included on all or a portion of the Hennepin Ave corridor, or on a parallel route.

Would it be possible to improve east-west bikeway connections to Hennepin Ave if Option 1 is selected?
The city would consider improvements to east-west bike connections if Option 1 is selected, but they would not be implemented as part of the Hennepin Ave Reconstruction project.

Has the city considered closing streets like Colfax Ave, Dupont Ave, Emerson Ave, and Girard Ave at Hennepin Ave to reduce conflicts with the bikeway?
We are still evaluating treatments at these intersections and gathering input on the function and design of these streets. Closure of these cross streets at Hennepin Ave could be considered.

How would the bikeway connect to the Midtown Greenway and to transit stops? Would there be separate bike traffic signals at intersections?
At BRT stations, the bikeway goes behind the transit station similar to the design of BRT stations and the bikeway on Hennepin Ave in downtown. We are still working on what the pedestrian crossings to/from the transit stations would look like. We will explore having separate signals for bicyclists as we continue to refine the design.

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 between the Midtown Greenway and Hennepin Ave at The Mall (north of Lagoon Ave). MPRB has funding to construct a portion of that connection in 2021. 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.

For people biking who want to turn onto 25 ½ St for example, how do the turn movements work?
If a bicyclist wants to go west from the bikeway onto 25½ St, there are pedestrian ramps the bicyclist could use to cross Hennepin Ave. As we continue to refine the design, we will explore whether more bicycle-specific treatments are needed at these intersections.

Does having the bidirectional bike lanes allow for easier snow removal? 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.

What is the expected yearly operational costs to maintain these bikeways during the winter?
Minneapolis is committed to year-round walking and bicycling as safe, accessible, and convenient options for its residents and visitors. Through the Winter Maintenance Study, the city has been studying the cost and responsibilities of winter maintenance of bicycle facilities on city, county, and University of Minnesota streets.

If a bike lane were installed, who would have the right-of-way when a vehicle turns right on a green light?
At all intersections, people walking and biking that are crossing at the intersection have the right-of-way and drivers turning right are required to yield.

What safety analysis have you completed for the two-way bike lanes in Option 1?
The city's Street Design Guide identifies both one-way and two-way sidewalk-level protected bikeways as viable for two-way streets. Two-way bikeways do need additional consideration for safety treatments at intersections, such as a buffer between the bikeway and turning vehicles, protected intersection design, bicycle signals, and raised crossings.

Will there be secure bicycle parking provided by the city along the corridor?
We will be completing a citywide evaluation of bike rack installations and developing a process to identify locations to add bike racks across the city, including adding hitches to meter poles and stand-alone bike racks.

Vehicle Operations

Why isn't there an option that reduces Hennepin Ave to a single lane (or no lanes) for cars, to provide more space for pedestrians, bikes, buses, and greening?
The Transportation Action Plan and Street Design Guide identify Hennepin Ave as a mixed use commercial connector. This means the street needs to continue to provide for vehicle traffic. Based on the traffic needs of the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods, our recommendation is to provide one vehicle lane in each direction for Hennepin Ave.

Have you modeled traffic to evaluate how each design option would handle current vehicle traffic? How will reducing the number of vehicle lanes handle the needed car capacity?
The mode share goal in the city's Transportation Action Plan shows 3 of every 5 trips using a non-auto mode. This also helps us meet the Climate Action Plan goals and lower our carbon footprint. We hope to see a mode shift from personal vehicles to transit and this is why we are incentivizing transit by provided dedicated transit-only lanes on Hennepin Ave.

We've analyzed traffic data between 24th St to 29th St and feel that one vehicle lane in each direction and left turn lanes at key locations will provide operations very similar to what is there today. We are proposing one efficient vehicle lane in each direction instead of the two inefficient lanes that are there today. On the existing street there is a lot of traffic friction, with buses pulling in and out and vehicles weaving between lanes. By creating one smooth flowing lane, we can serve as much capacity as we have with two inefficient lanes.

At the corridor endpoints, we have higher traffic counts and different traffic patterns. At Franklin Ave, we know we need more lanes and are maintaining the number of lanes we have in that area today. In the Lake St/Lagoon Ave area, the traffic counts are not as high, but the blocks are very short with a high number of turns to/from Lake St and Lagoon Ave. With those traffic operations, we feel that we need to have additional lanes there.

The designs appear to speed up through traffic. Are there any concerns that Hennepin Avenue will now feel like a highway?
Features such as narrow lanes and the median create a constrained environment and help to manage vehicle speeds. We want to balance speed management in the design with maintaining vehicle access and mobility to neighborhoods, businesses, and to destinations like downtown.

Could you narrow the travel lanes to gain more space for other uses (e.g., wider bike lanes)?
The lane widths shown on the layouts are 10 feet wide with a 2-foot gutter where the lane is next to the outside curb and 1-foot gutter where the lane is next to a median. These dimensions are consistent with the city's Street Design Guide.

Why do we need to include left-turn lanes if there are going to be restrictions?
With one lane northbound and southbound, it's important that left turns occur from a separate space. Left-turn movements will not be restricted at intersections with left-turn lanes.

At intersections where there is not space for left turns, we prohibit left turns during most of the day because it wouldn't be safe or efficient to allow drivers to make left turns from the through lane. Outside of peak travel times, when traffic is light, we may allow drivers to make left turns from the through lane.

With medians limiting left turns mid-block, what analysis has been conducted to assess the impact on cars needing to access businesses to the left of their travel direction?
Circulation to businesses, neighborhoods, and destinations will continue to be studied during this phase of the design. We have heard from different stakeholders with varied perspectives on the placement of left-turn lanes, the design and operations of the intersecting streets such as Colfax Ave, Dupont Ave, Emerson Ave, etc., and the placement of medians. All these factors influence how vehicles will access a block or an individual business.

How will left-turn restrictions increase safety when they cause vehicles to use more neighborhood streets to circulate? What will be the traffic impacts on neighborhood streets?
The designs seek to balance the needs for neighborhood access and circulation with the space needed for left-turn lanes on Hennepin Ave. Restricting left-turn movements where there are not left-turn lanes is safer for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles and reduces potential cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets. However, the reduction in parking/loading space on Hennepin, the medians, and the left turn restrictions do mean that some traffic will need to use other streets in the neighborhood for parking/loading and circulating around the block to access residences and businesses.

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 documentation (of current traffic counts, patterns, etc.) before construction so we have a good baseline that we can use to monitor and identify issues.

Other streets like Grand Avenue in St. Paul has a center left-turn lane for the entire corridor. Was this option considered? Could left-turn lanes be added at certain driveways?
In evaluating the space in the corridor, we determined that a continuous left-turn lane through the entire corridor did not align with city goals and was not the best use of space in a constrained corridor. Left turn lanes could potentially be added at a few mid-block driveway locations and this will be evaluated in the next phase of design. However, the tradeoff is that it would take space from other elements of the street that are higher in the Complete Streets modal priority.

Prior to design, what traffic data was collected and were driver behaviors observed?
Crash data and counts of pedestrians, bicycles, trucks, and vehicles were collected at all the signalized intersections prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the findings from the data include:

- Significant lane changes and inefficiency of the existing vehicle lanes due to left-turn movements at driveways and intersections and vehicles passing buses
- Vehicles parking and loading in the dynamic red bus lanes
- Dynamic red bus lanes have significantly improved bus reliability on days with more vehicle congestion and on days with bad weather such as snow
- Crash data shows that people walking and biking are over-represented in the injury crashes on the corridor

What is "induced demand" and how does it fit into the City's street designs?
Induced demand related to transportation is when vehicle traffic volumes grow due to increases in the vehicle capacity of a street or transportation facility. Neither Option 1 nor Option 2 increase capacity for private vehicles on Hennepin Ave, so induced demand would not be expected in this corridor.

Do the medians pose challenges for emergency services vehicles?
With the medians, emergency vehicles can get from one side of the street to the other at the intersections or across the median where feasible. In places where we have no left turns, emergency vehicles can turn left if needed. On this and every project, if we change the geometry of the roadway, we work with emergency services to get their feedback and adjust the design where needed.

Have you consulted with MnDOT about closing the I-94 freeway ramps to help reduce traffic near Franklin Ave?
The city has discussed the ramps to/from Hennepin Ave and I-94 and will continue those discussions. At this time, it does not appear likely that the ramps will be closed as part of the reconstruction.

Going northbound on Hennepin Ave, will there be a left turn lane at Franklin Ave?
The design options do not currently show a northbound left-turn lane at Franklin Ave and without a left-turn lane, left turns would not be allowed. Considering the travel patterns in the neighborhood and along the corridor, the ability to turn left onto Franklin Ave is something we will explore as we continue to refine the designs. Option 2 without a protected bikeway on Hennepin Ave has more space to fit a left-turn lane at Franklin Ave.

Will the northbound and southbound lanes on Hennepin Ave north of Franklin Ave remain separated as they are now?
Both Option 1 and Option 2 show a median on Hennepin Ave on the north side of the Franklin Ave intersection.

Why does Option 2 (without bike lanes) eliminate the northbound left turn at 26th Street?
The recommended location for the left-turn lanes is at 25th St because left-turn lanes can be provided in both directions and this intersection is evenly spaced between the other left-turn lanes at 22nd St and 28th St. The recommended placement of left-turn lanes is shown in Option 2. However, Option 1 did not have enough space to fit the turn lanes at 25th St and therefore they were moved to 24th St and 26th St.

Why is the southbound lane on Hennepin Ave south of Lake St so wide when the intersection is being reconstructed?
The layouts currently show the same curb locations on Hennepin Ave south of Lake St. The existing design of Hennepin Ave has two southbound lanes that merge to one lane through the intersection. The intersection design will continue to be refined as the design progresses.

Will "right turns on red" be prohibited at all intersections?
Once we land on a final design, we will explore prohibiting "right turns on red" as this is a traffic operations detail that doesn't affect the physical design of the roadway. This is also an issue that the city is evaluating on a systemwide basis through Vision Zero.

Even where there are "no turn on red" signs, drivers still turn right on red. How will you improve the visibility and driver compliance?
For left- and right-turn restrictions, we will consider the location of the signs and additional treatments to better communicate the restrictions to drivers and make the signs more visible.

What will prevent late night drag racing along the corridor, particularly between Douglas Ave and Franklin Ave?
Both Option 1 and Option 2 make the street narrower between 22nd St and Lagoon Ave and the medians also constrain the space for vehicles. We will continue to work with Minneapolis Police Department on any street design features that will discourage this type of behavior.

Parking and Loading

Many businesses on Hennepin Ave do not have off-street parking. Is on-street parking going to be provided along Hennepin Ave? If not, where will employees, customers, etc. park their vehicles?
Both design options retain parking. While it's not as much as there is today, there is some. We acknowledge and understand that parking is a key concern for corridor businesses and intend to keep some parking along the corridor. We are also looking systematically to make more strategic use of the cross streets to help support parking and loading activity.

Many of the cross streets show existing parking/loading as "under evaluation." What's the purpose of the evaluation?
Both design options reduce the amount of parking on Hennepin Ave, so we are looking at the overall supply of parking including where there is parking off-street and on cross streets. We may implement parking/loading zones on cross streets to help meet the needs of homes and businesses on Hennepin Ave.

Without a bikeway on Hennepin Ave, is it possible to retain on-street parking/loading on Hennepin Ave?
Both design options include some space for on-street parking/loading on Hennepin Ave. Option 2 without the bikeway on Hennepin Ave has more opportunities for on-street parking and loading.

How was the data that informed parking/loading locations collected?
Counts of parked vehicles were conducted as part of a parking study in 2018. The counts are done on each block face during multiple times of the day on weekdays and weekends. This indicates where parking demand is highest and is one factor that is being used to identify on-street parking/loading spaces on Hennepin Ave.

Will people be able to be picked up and dropped off by taxis and ride share services (e.g., Uber, Lyft) along Hennepin Ave? If so, which travel lane will these services use?
In both design options, there are parking and loading spaces along Hennepin Ave where pick up/drop off activity is expected to occur. We are also looking at space available on cross streets and adjacent streets for parking and loading activity. We recognize that access to pick up/drop off is part of maintaining the economic viability of this corridor and it is a priority for this project. Taxi and ride share services will not be allowed to stop in the transit lane.

How many off-street parking spots are available in lots along Hennepin Ave? What is the parking usage/availability like in these lots?
There are a total of 1,430 spaces in surface parking lots and 1,405 spaces in parking ramps near the Hennepin Ave corridor. We do not have occupancy or usage data for the private parking lots and ramps.

Have you considered building or providing new, centralized off-street district parking such as a small ramp to support businesses and make up for some of the lost parking?
We are working to build into the design spaces for loading and short-term parking activities that are needed to support homes and businesses. Providing new off-street district parking is not being considered as part of this project.

Will the City add metered parking as part of this project?
Hennepin Ave has existing metered parking from 28th St to Lake St. We use metered parking to manage parking supply and encourage turnover, especially in a commercial area. We will be exploring the use of metered parking in other areas of the project corridor as we work toward finalizing the design and understand the parking supply that will be available.

Today, on Hennepin Ave between Lake St and 31st St, cars park illegally on the sidewalk and in the bike lane. How will you monitor and enforce illegal parking?
The block of Hennepin Ave between Lake St and 31st St (also known as the Activity Block) is an example where spaces were not provided for loading/pick-up and people are instead using the bike lane for those activities. This is one reason why it is important to provide designated spaces for loading/short-term parking on Hennepin Ave between Douglas Ave and Lake St.

How many parking spots are being removed block-by-block in each design option?
There are 342 existing on-street parking spaces on Hennepin Ave between Douglas Ave and Lake St. Some blocks have high occupancy of the spaces while other blocks are less than 50% occupied. Option 1 has about 30 on-street spaces for parking and loading. Option 2 has about 60 on-street spaces for parking and loading.

Why do businesses have to pay for a loading zone application and yearly fee?
Short-term parking and loading zones are provided by the city as a service to properties and businesses. There are fees associated with posting and maintaining the signs for the zones.

Greening

How wide are the center medians and will the City add trees/plantings to the center medians and boulevards along the corridor?

In both design options the center medians are 4 feet wide for most of the corridor.

It is a goal of this project to implement sustainable stormwater features (green infrastructure) but also plantings and trees in the center medians and boulevards. When it comes to plantings and trees in medians, maintenance can be an issue and we are working closely with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to explore our options. In Option 2, without the bikeway, there is more space to work with and the medians could be widened to accommodate trees.

Will existing trees need to be removed to accommodate Options 1 or 2? If so, will the City plant new trees to replace those removed?

The City's intent with any reconstruction project is to preserve the existing tree canopy. With the boulevard being more limited in Option 1, it will require the removal of more trees than in Option 2. Option 1 also has fewer opportunities to replant trees. We will determine the specific quantities of tree removal and tree replanting as we move into detailed design.

Who maintains the center median spaces?

On the design layouts, the medians are shown as boulevard/furnishing zone space. We would like the medians to feature plantings and trees. However, we need to work with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to determine how these medians can best be maintained if they are planted. This is a detail that will be worked out as we move into detailed design.

Depending on vegetation, landscaped medians harm pedestrian access. How will these be accessible?

Landscaping or plantings will not be included in the median where there are pedestrian ramps for pedestrian crossings.

Business Considerations

Businesses have been impacted by COVID-19 and the protests. Does this project have to happen now? Could it be delayed?

Because of the aging condition of the roadway, we've been working on this project since 2018. At that time, we submitted an application for federal funding, which was awarded for the project and had a program year of 2023. The federal funding accounts for about 35% of the project, offsetting local costs. In order to maintain federal funding, we are moving forward with the project but have adjusted the schedule to push utility and roadway construction out one year. Street reconstruction is planned to begin in 2024 and we are evaluating whether early utility construction is needed in 2023. We will work with businesses throughout the construction timeframe to ensure we maintain access along the corridor.

How is increasing bike and pedestrian traffic good for business?

Street design and amenities that make an area more welcoming to people will also contribute to the attractiveness for businesses and customers.

Other Design Considerations

Are there plans to fix the issue with water pooling in the parking lot at Chipotle? Currently, the street drains into the Chipotle parking lot.

Part of the street reconstruction will include correcting drainage issues in the right-of-way.

Is one of the design options more/less climate-friendly than the other? How is the City accounting for air quality and climate change in these design options? How will these options help the City reach its climate and environmental justice goals?

The project is in the design process and we don't yet know what the design of the corridor will look like. With that said, environmental justice and the Climate Action Plan are 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 the different sectors – with transportation being an important one and with policy direction to favor low carbon modal alternatives.

How does Option 2 support the Transportation Action Plan, Complete Streets Policy, Vision Zero, or the City's climate goals?

- Hennepin Ave is designated as a priority for all the modal networks, including the Pedestrian Priority Network (PPN), All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network, transit priority project network, and Truck Route Network. When you overlay all these elements, there's a lot of competition for space. There are rare instances when not all the desired uses can be accommodated on a street due to the width of the right-of-way. This is one of those times. The different options have trade-offs and meet some of our policy goals better than others.
- Both options align with City policy because we are balancing the needs of multiple modes, and multiple goals around equity, climate, prosperity and mobility.

Taking a singular policy- or guidance-document lens to any one project misses the nuance of the engagement and design trade-off decisions that happen at the project level. This is particularly important for reconstruction projects on corridors that have multiple priority networks designated while adhering to the new stormwater ordinance that established benchmarks for the treatment of stormwater.

What study has been completed of the Hennepin Ave reconstruction between Lake St and 36th St? What are the findings from these studies?

The city has been studying Hennepin Ave south of Lake St since the reconstruction. One of the key findings from that project is that it's difficult to fit in all the modal priorities on a single network. From Lake St to 31st St, in an effort to fit in as many modal priorities as possible, we removed the on-street vehicle parking. We are planning to make changes to the Lake St to 31st St block this year, including adding back in some of the parking/loading space. We have learned from this project and are using these lessons to inform the design of Hennepin Ave between Douglas Ave and Lake St.

Due to the City's Vision Zero goals, will the speed limit be lowered along Hennepin Ave?

In 2020, the speed limit on Hennepin Ave was lowered to 25 mph as part of citywide speed limit changes.

Is it possible to incorporate artistic elements into the street design?

The city has a process and a Public Arts Commission that allocates funding for public art to transportation projects. At this time, there is not designated public art funding in the project.

Can elements of the street design be flexible so that we are not locked into something for the next 50 years? For example, can we substitute parking for bike lanes in the winter or schedule the dedicated bus lanes like they are now?
We design streets to last for 50 years, so we seek to have flexibility as transportation needs and demands evolve. However, some elements do not lend themselves to being dynamic or flexible. For example, Minneapolis is committed to year-round walking and bicycling as safe, accessible, and convenient options for its residents and visitors. We will continue to look for opportunities to build in flexibility or dynamic uses where we can.

Currently, Hennepin Ave has decorative streetlights. Do you know if these streetlights will be removed? If so, will they be replaced by non-decorative LED streetlights (like those on Hennepin Ave between Lake St and 31st St)?
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.

Do all design options cost the same amount?
The costs of Option 1 and Option 2 are similar.

Who makes the final decision on the design?
Ultimately, the City Council approves the design for street reconstruction projects in the city based on a design recommendation from the Public Works Department.

Construction

How long is construction anticipated to last?
We are evaluating the need for early utility construction in 2023. Due to the length of the project (approximately 1.4 miles) and complex nature of the corridor, we expect that the street reconstruction will take two years to complete (2024 and 2025).

Is it possible for electric concrete trucks to be used in construction?
This would be determined by the contractor building the street.

Where will construction begin and how much of the corridor will be closed or rerouted? During construction, how will you mitigate traffic that will route to neighboring streets?
At this time, we do not know how construction will be staged. We typically determine construction once have a design has been selected and know what we are building. There will be engagement with property owners and corridor users to ensure they are aware of construction impacts before they occur.

Project Funding

Why doesn't the city allocate this money to help rebuild Lake Street and small businesses who have been hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest?
The local, state, and federal funding for this project has been allocated for transportation needs in the city and this funding cannot be used to support businesses hurt by the pandemic or damaged by the civil unrest.

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 5-10% 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.

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.

Public Engagement

How are you equitably engaging stakeholders and factoring in feedback?
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. 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.

Why wasn't my specific question answered?
Many of the questions received during the live meetings had similar themes, so in this document we have grouped those questions together. If you have a question specific to your property, or you feel we haven't addressed your specific question, please reach out to the project team at Hennepin.South@minneapolismn.gov or 612-673-3594.