

# January 2024 open house summary

In spring 2024 Hennepin County will begin a two-year project to reconstruct and improve safety on Minnetonka Boulevard (County Road 5) in St. Louis Park between France Avenue and Highway 100. In January 2024, a virtual and in-person open house were held to share and answer questions about the project's final design and construction plans.

~100  
attendees

39  
questions/  
comments

## Construction overview map



## Frequently asked questions

### How will access be maintained during construction?

During both years of construction, regional traffic will be detoured to County Road 25. Residential and business access will be maintained at all times by utilizing the nearby local connections during closures. Advanced notice will be provided to residents and business prior to any closures.

### Why is having bicycle infrastructure important/necessary?

Providing safe, connective facilities for all modes of transportation aligns with Hennepin County's 2040 Comprehensive Plan goals and the goals and considerations of the Minnetonka Boulevard reconstruction project. This segment of Minnetonka Boulevard was identified in the City of St. Louis Park's Connect the Park implementation plan to create more bikeways, sidewalks and trails throughout the community. It also aligns with the following City of St. Louis Park plans and policies:

- Climate Action Plan
  - Initiative 6.4: Enable reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) from single occupancy vehicles.
  - Improve the city's average walk score from 47 to 60 by 2030.

- 2040 Comprehensive Plan
  - Plan, design, build and operate the city's mobility system in a way that prioritizes walking first, followed by bicycling and transit use, and then motor vehicle use.

### **Why multi-use trails instead of facilities with bikes and pedestrians separate?**

Alternatives with separated bike and pedestrian facilities and protected bike facilities and bike lanes on the roadway were evaluated. A multi-use facility was ultimately selected for the following reasons:

- Protected bike lanes on both sides of the roadway would not fit within the available 66-feet of public right-of-way and would require significant acquisitions of private property.
- A two-way bike facility on one side would require many users to cross Minnetonka Boulevard.
- Bicycle facilities on the roadway did not meet the goals of an all-ages and abilities network.
- A multi-use trail on both sides of Minnetonka Boulevard provides access for users of all ages and abilities and adds green boulevards on both sides of the roadway that improve safety, storm water treatment, and streetscape in the area.

### **Will the re-design of the Minnetonka/Inglewood intersection cause traffic back-ups or parking issues?**

The final plan revised the median design between Joppa Avenue and Inglewood Avenue to allow eastbound left turns to northbound Inglewood Avenue. This addresses concerns of increasing traffic on the two-block segment of Joppa Avenue and maintains Inglewood Avenue as the preferred connection north Minnetonka Boulevard.

The removal of the south frontage road between Inglewood and Joppa will not restrict ingress or egress to properties south of Minnetonka Boulevard. It removes a little-used segment of the service road and provides a larger area for greenspace, landscaping, and storm water treatment. Pedestrian and bicycle access will be improved.

### **How will the speed limit be determined?**

Per state statute, Hennepin County must follow the process of completing a speed study post construction to establish the new speed limit for Minnetonka Boulevard. The intent is that the 4-lane to 3-lane conversion will slow traffic and allow for a speed limit reduction to 30 mph, the minimum allowed for county roads.

### **Will this design cause back-ups at Highway 100?**

The proposed 3-lane section of Minnetonka boulevard will safely accommodate approximately 15,000 vehicles per day. This volume increases on the west end of the corridor between Salem Avenue and the northbound Highway 100 ramps. The roadway section in this area will be widened to 4 lanes to accommodate the increased AM and PM traffic to reduce queuing and increase safety.

### **Will this design cause back-ups behind buses?**

The project team has worked closely with Metro Transit to review transit service for Route 17 to maximize convenience for riders and upgrade the facilities. Bus stop locations along the corridor have been consolidated to meet demand and reduce the number of stops required, increasing the level of service. Though there will be fewer stops along the corridor, buses will stop in the thru lane and block traffic while boarding and exiting. Passing in the center left turn lane is not legal or safe for drivers. This additional traffic calming is another safety benefit for transit users, vehicles, and all users biking, walking, and rolling on Minnetonka Boulevard.