

# Park and Portland avenues safety improvements project

## Phase 1 engagement summary – August–November 2024

Hennepin County is planning to make safety improvements on Park and Portland avenues between Interstate 94 and 46th Street West. Public engagement for the Park and Portland Safety Improvement Project aimed to equitably inform, consult, and engage area residents and stakeholders in the selection of a preferred design concept. Phase 1 of engagement focused on collecting input on existing conditions and the roadway elements people wanted to see included in the project.

Prior to phase 1, the project team connected with key community members and distributed a focused survey on the existing conditions to leadership at community organizations through engagement co-creation meetings. The feedback heard during the co-creation meetings was taken into consideration as the project team moved forward in phase 1 of engagement.

### How we got the word out

Phase 1 of engagement focused on collecting input through the following methods:

#### Commissioner's listening session

The project team assisted Commissioner Angela Conley in hosting a listening session at Sabathani Community Center on October 24, from 5 to 7 p.m. Over 50 individuals attended and the project team received 39 comment cards.

The Commissioner's team led promotion and advertisement of this event.

#### Open house

On November 19, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the American Swedish Institute, an open house was held to inform the public about the project and gather feedback from attendees about the existing conditions of the corridor.

Notification methods included mailed postcards, webpage updates and project email blasts. 24 individuals attended and the project team received five comment cards and six project layout comments.



#### Pop-up events

The project team hosted six pop-up events in 2024 around the project area to discuss the project with community members and reached a total of 177 people. Locations and events included:

**Greenway Glow Event**  
September 7

**Peavey Park Field**  
October 1

**Sabathani Community Center Fall Health Fair**  
October 5

**American Swedish Institute Makers Night**  
October 10

**Midtown Global Market Community Resource event**  
October 11

**Seward Friendship Co-Op**  
October 23

### How we collected feedback

Attendees had the opportunity to give their feedback on the project and the existing conditions in the project area in the following ways:

 Comment cards

 Comments on an aerial printout of the project area

 Verbal comments to project staff



## What we heard

Hundreds of comments on the existing conditions aerial and comment cards were collected over the course of this phase. These are the top five themes gathered:



#### Traffic safety & speed reduction

Many attendees expressed concerns about high vehicle speeds along Park and Portland avenues. Suggestions to slow traffic included narrowing lanes, adding roundabouts, and increasing enforcement.



#### Bicycle & pedestrian infrastructure

There was strong support for protected bike lanes, with some concerns about two-way bike lanes adding complexity at intersections. Attendees also requested improved pedestrian safety features, such as enhanced lighting, flashing signals and better crosswalk visibility.



#### Community & equity considerations

Participants emphasized that the current conditions prioritizes commuters over residents. There were calls for greater engagement with underrepresented communities, including Spanish and Somali speakers, and for the project to reflect long-term neighborhood needs rather than just facilitating through-traffic.



#### Green space & streetscape enhancements

Many attendees supported adding greenery, improved boulevards, and rain gardens to make the streets more livable. However, some were concerned about maintenance challenges, visibility issues, and potential unintended consequences, such as "weed ditches" or obstacles for pedestrians. There were calls for improvements in bike facilities, including wayfinding signage and protected bike lanes with curb separation.

Connect with the project team

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