

# Golden Valley Walk / Bike Connections

## Connecting to the city center

*Golden Valley residents support better walking and biking connections within their community – and the routes and destinations matter.*

Through the city's comprehensive planning process, residents voiced support for a dynamic town center and transportation system that embraces all modes. Recent studies in downtown Golden Valley have shown similar input from area stakeholders. To gain more insight into opportunities to improve pedestrian and bike access to the Golden Valley downtown, Hennepin County Active Living and the City of Golden Valley collaborated on a one-year planning and engagement effort. The project had five goals:

- Make changes to the built environment to support active living
- Promote active transportation in and around downtown
- Improve the pedestrian environment in downtown with a focus on providing safer options for pedestrians at special events
- Build upon work done through Golden Valley's comprehensive plan, Urban Land Institute's Downtown Study, METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit Station Area Planning, and other engagement opportunities to advance a vision and identity for downtown
- Build partnerships between businesses, residents, the city and community organizations to support and encourage biking and walking to and within downtown



Strategies included analyzing alternative routes, identifying ways to encourage pedestrian activity and improve safety (particularly for seniors and others most impacted by health disparities), and cultivating partnerships and program opportunities with business and organizations near downtown, including with the library and farmers market.

## A focus on engagement and awareness

The project focused on promoting walking and biking to and within downtown through community engagement during the Golden Valley Arts & Music Festival. The project also aimed to grow awareness by Luce Line Regional Trail users on how easily accessible downtown is from the trail.



Most project activities occurred at the Arts & Music Festival, held on the city's downtown civic campus on Saturday, September 14, 2019. Demonstration activities included temporary wayfinding signage between the Luce Line trail and the festival and a temporary bike "corral" for festival goers to park their bikes. Engagement activities included a walking/biking survey and informational boards at three booths located at the festival, the library and along the Luce Line Regional Trail. Surveys were also gathered from participants in a downtown walking/biking audit on August 8, 2019 and from library patrons between September 16-30, 2019.

### What did the city hear?

Just over half of survey participants, (53%) walked or biked to the festival. Top reasons for visiting downtown were for dining or entertainment; visiting the library, farmers' market or stores; or socializing or getting coffee. *More comfortable and enjoyable routes* were the most likely feature to entice people to walk or bike more often. This feature was slightly more important for those walking (48%) than biking (38%). The next most desired features for walking were *more useful, convenient or fun destinations* (43%) and *events and activities that encourage walking* (39%). For biking, *more or better marked trails* (34%) and *convenient bike parking* (34%) were next most important.

### Recommendations

The project resulted in seven recommendations.

1. Design and install temporary demonstration bike/walk projects
2. Resolve the existing bike lane gap on Winnetka
3. Conduct follow-up community engagement
4. Broaden the city's inventory of non-motorized transportation facilities
5. Partner with existing downtown businesses, civic groups and other organizations to draw bicyclists and walkers downtown
6. Use of temporary public art
7. Explore increasing downtown event frequency