



NEW NICOLLET REDEVELOPMENT

New Nicollet Redevelopment

Phase II Engagement Summary

June – November 2023

Updated 2/29/24



For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact:

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Project background

In 1977, Kmart and SuperValu leased 10 acres of land after the City of Minneapolis sold the site to real estate investors. This development closed the block of Nicollet Avenue between 29th and Lake Street, creating a barrier that affected the community, local businesses, and the landscape of south Minneapolis.

Today, the City owns this site again, and plans to construct Nicollet Avenue to reconnect with Lake Street. With community input, the site will once again serve as a commercial and cultural crossroads, reflecting the needs of the community who currently lives here.




New Nicollet Redevelopment project area




Aerial image of project site, May 2022


Project goals

In Phase I of public engagement (from August 2022 to January 2023), the community gave feedback which shaped the following goals:

 Reconnect people and places

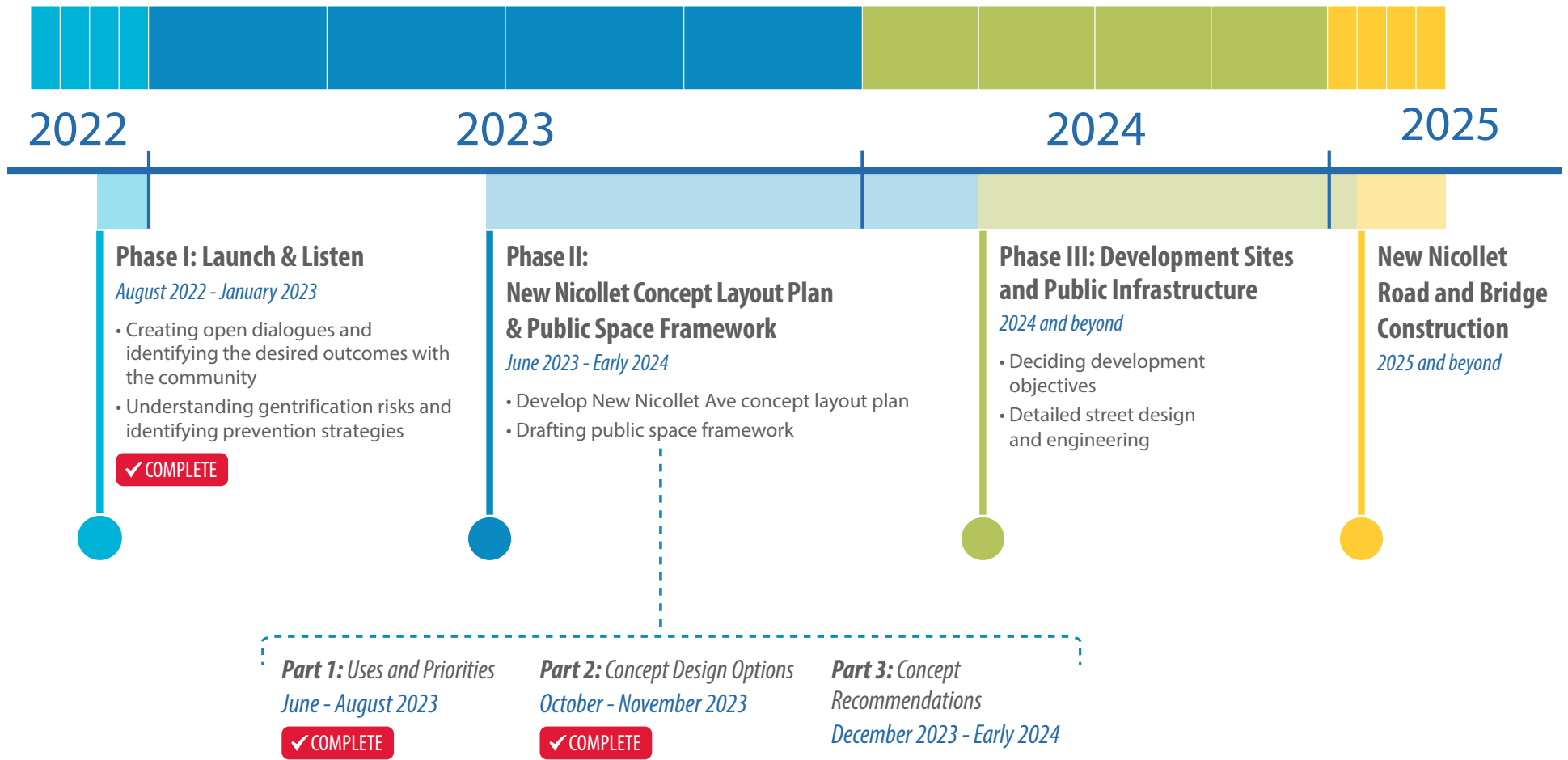
 Build for who's here

 Live, work, shop, and play here

 Build safe, equitable, sustainable transportation networks

 Design safe and healthy communities

Project timeline





*Pop-up at Open Streets East Lake Street
on June 10, 2023*

The City relied on the support and consultation from the following community partners throughout engagement:

- Whittier Alliance (WA)
- Lyndale Neighborhood Association (LNA)
- Phillips West Neighborhood Organization (PWNO)
- Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization (CANDO)
- Fortune Relief and Youth Empowerment Organization (FRAYEO)
- Lake Street Council (LSC)
- NEOO Partners, Inc.

Introduction

The purpose of this summary is to provide an overview of Phase II of community engagement for the New Nicollet Redevelopment Project. The first two parts of Phase II spanned from June to November of 2023. Phase II built on Phase I of engagement, which took place from August 2022 to January 2023.

The goals of Phase I were to:

- Learn from communities within the Focus Area (Whittier, Lyndale, Central and Phillips West neighborhoods)
- Understand the communities' priorities, significant challenges and positive outcomes desired for the site
- Translate those learnings into the project's Desired Outcomes document, which will guide future engagement and recommendations for the redevelopment and the new block of Nicollet Ave

Input from Phase I of engagement informed the project's goals, noted on page 2, which were referenced throughout Phase II. The full Phase I summary can be found here: [Phase I Engagement Summary](#). The Desired Outcomes document can be found here: [Desired Outcomes](#).

Phase II, Part 1 (June-August, 2023)

Phase II, Part 1 of engagement sought to get more specific and prioritize the goals from Phase I so they were reflected in the design of the public space on the redeveloped site and new street. Public space questions asked participants to prioritize activities, features/facilities and size of gathering spaces for the site. Street questions asked participants what should be prioritized on the new street and how to address the narrow trail section on the Midtown Greenway between Nicollet Ave and Blaisdell Ave.

Engagement methods included pop-up events at strategic locations, neighborhood outreach, an open house and online survey in three languages. Engagement targeted the four neighborhoods adjacent to the former Kmart site: **Whittier, Lyndale, West Phillips and Central**. Throughout Phase II of engagement, a particular focus was made to engage the following historically underrepresented groups:

- ✓ Disability communities
- ✓ Black and African American residents
- ✓ Hispanic and Latino residents and business owners
- ✓ Indigenous and Native American residents
- ✓ Vietnamese residents and business owners
- ✓ East African business owners
- ✓ Central and West Phillips neighborhoods

Impact

3,259

Total survey responses

1,053 / 32%

Of survey respondents live in one of four surrounding neighborhoods

16

In-person and virtual events

670

In-person interactions at events



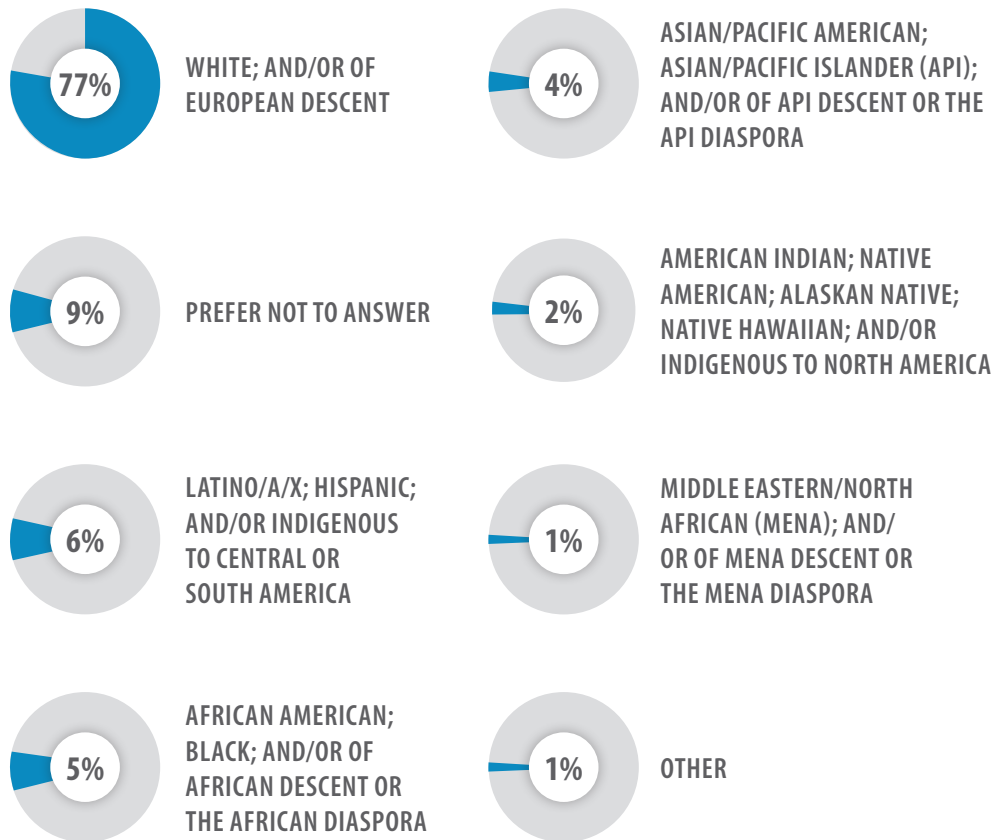
(top) Pop-up at Horn Towers

(bottom) Pop-up at LynLake Street Art Festival

Who we reached: Survey

Note: Demographic data was voluntarily collected via the online survey. Of 3,259 respondents, about 85% provided some level of demographic information which is reflected below. This demographic data provides a snapshot of who was engaged, but is not representative of all participants.

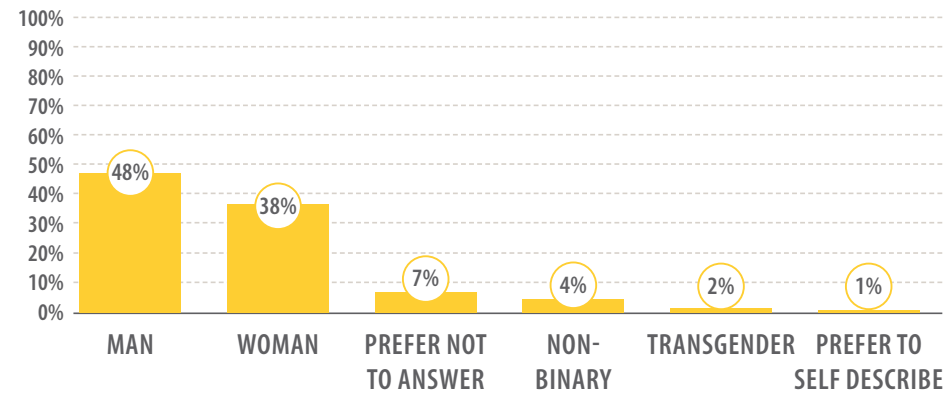
Race/ethnicity



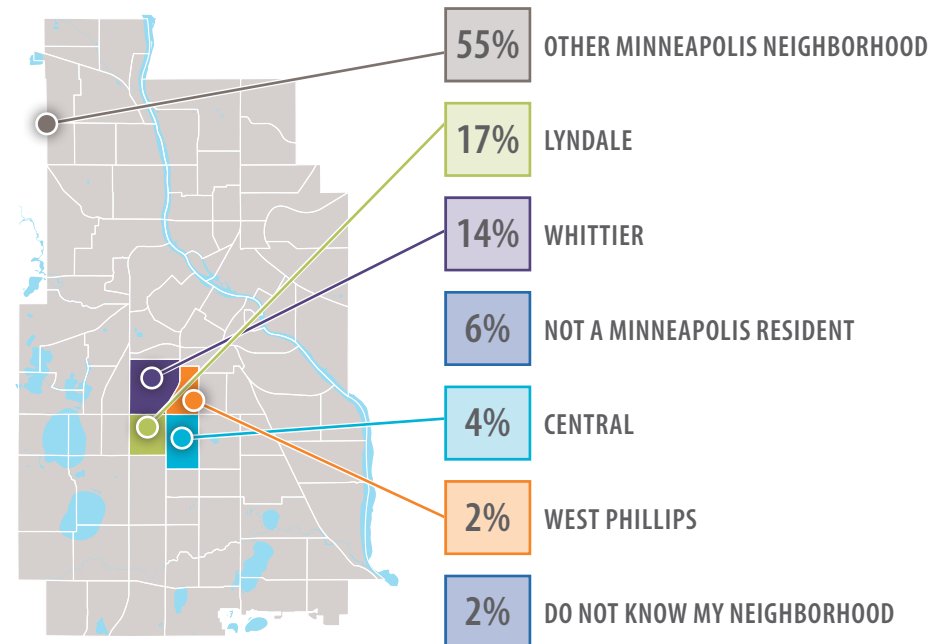
Age



Gender



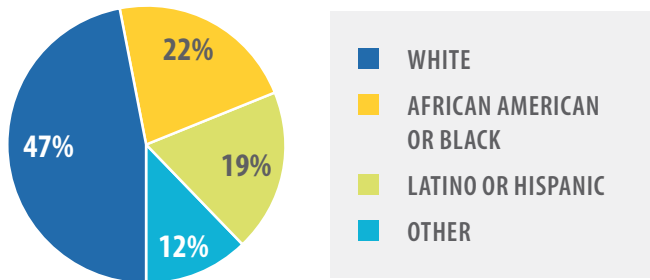
Neighborhood



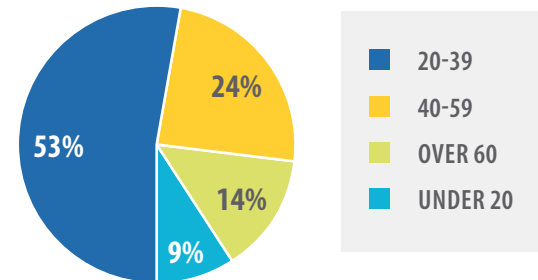
Who we reached: Events (16 events, 670 interactions)

Note: The project team, in coordination with local outreach partners, engaged community members at a variety of events throughout the summer. Demographic data was captured via a voluntary sticker board at five of these events, representing about 25% of event participants.

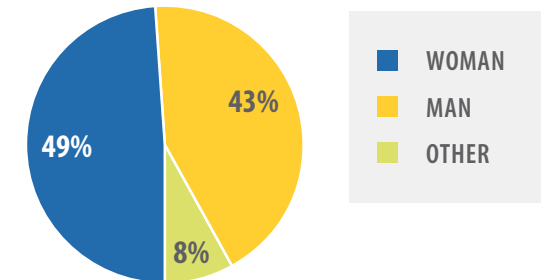
Race/ethnicity



Age

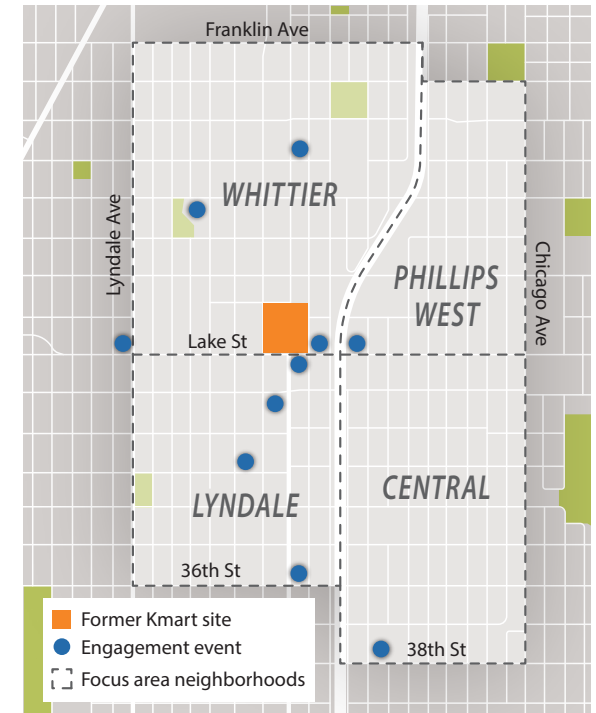


Gender



Engagement events

- Open House: Sabathani Community Center
- Community Connections Conference
- Open Streets East Lake
- Somali Independence Day
- Simpson Housing Cookout
- LynLake Street Art Festival
- Transit stop pop-up: East Lake St and Blaisdell Ave
- Horn Towers
- National Night Out: Whittier Park
- Really Really Free Market
- Whittier Community Education Program End of Summer Celebration
- Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Whittier Alliance Housing and Land Use meeting
- Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Lyndale Neighborhood Association general membership meeting
- Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities

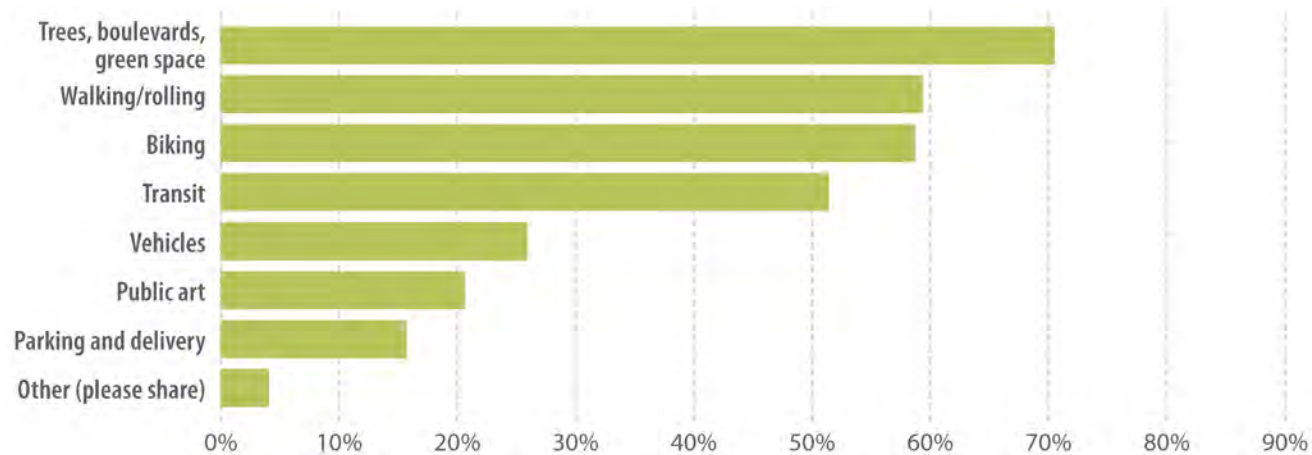


Key takeaways from engagement

Key takeaways from Phase II, Part 1 of engagement (June - August 2023) informed the design concepts for both the New Nicollet street and public space on the site.

STREET

Street priorities



Survey respondents from online and in person chose their top three priorities for the New Nicollet Avenue roadway.

- » The public desires a **pedestrian-friendly** New Nicollet Ave. Across the board, people prioritized **boulevards** and **green space** in the street design.
- » **Bike infrastructure** was a priority for many, but not all groups engaged agreed. For those who did not prioritize bike infrastructure, it was due to the existing bike network on both 1st Ave and Blaisdell Ave.
- » People wanted the narrow trail section on the Midtown Greenway from Blaisdell Ave to Nicollet Ave **widened** and a better **bicycle connection** to the Midtown Greenway via the city's existing protected bikeway network on Blaisdell Ave or 1st Ave.



July open house participants talk to City staff

Key takeaways from engagement

Key takeaways from Phase II, Part 1 of engagement (June - August 2023) informed the design concepts for both the New Nicollet street and public space on the site.

PUBLIC SPACE

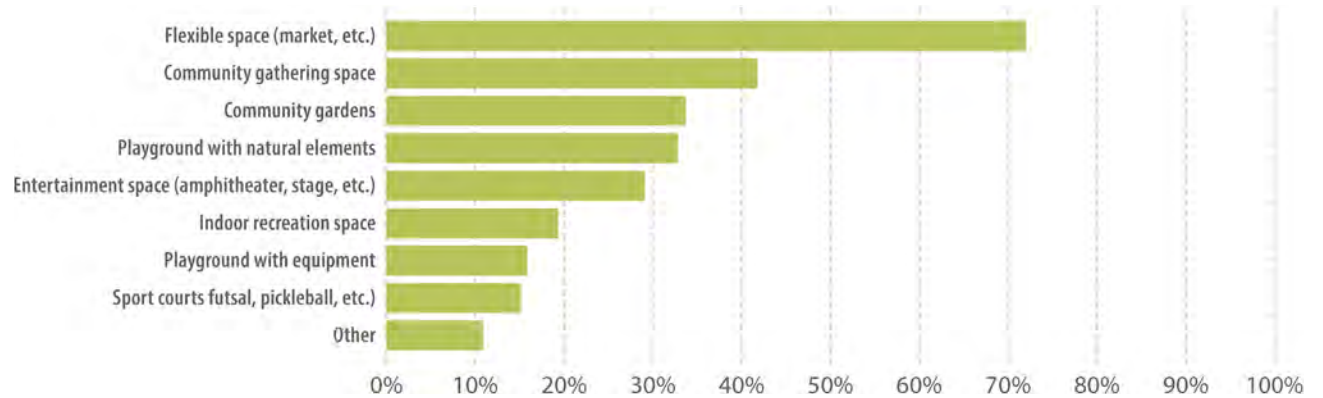
There is a strong desire for **community space** in the form of a park and/or building with opportunities for interaction.

The key community values that emerged were:

- » Flexible public space
- » Reinforce Midtown Greenway connection
- » Uplift community gathering
- » Bring in nature
- » Prioritize health and wellness
- » Empower public art
- » Celebrate Nicollet Ave
- » Improve safety
- » Respect and equity

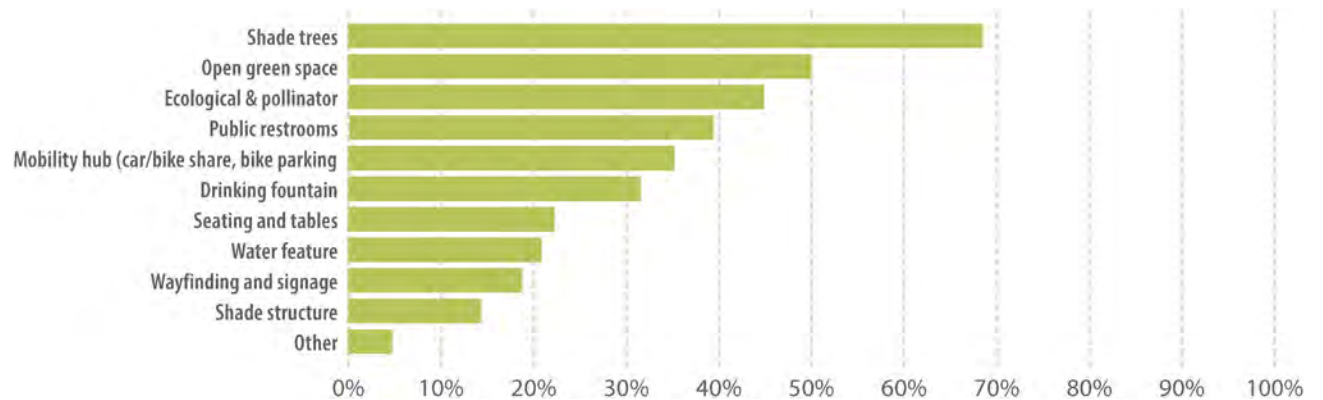
The most popular public space option at the open house featured a **long rectangular park** and noted the Midtown Greenway connection.

Activity priorities



Survey respondents from online and in person chose their top three priorities for activities within the potential public space(s) on the site.

Features/facilities priorities



Survey respondents from online and in person chose their top three priorities for features and facilities within the potential public space(s) on the site.



Community members check out the project boards at the October 10 open house on the former Kmart site

Phase II, Part 2 (September – November, 2023)

In Phase II, Part 2, project staff informed and engaged the community about potential design concepts for the New Nicollet Redevelopment public space and street. Given the priorities from Part 1, four street concepts and three public space concepts were presented to the public for feedback. Community members provided input on each concept, ranking them on a scale of one to five stars.

Impact

3,852

Total survey responses

697 / 18%

Of survey respondents live in one of four surrounding neighborhoods

18

In-person and virtual events

800

In-person interactions at events

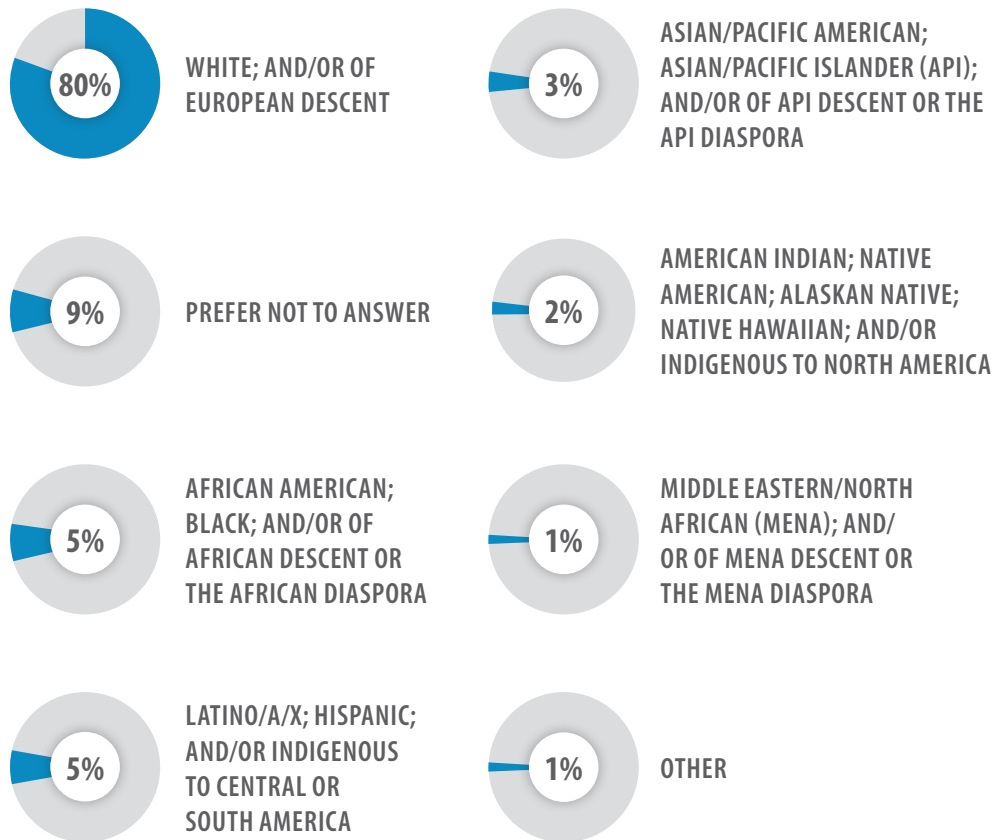


September Slow Roll

Who we reached: Survey

Note: Demographic data was voluntarily collected via the online survey. Of 3,848 respondents, about 65% provided some level of demographic information which is reflected below. This demographic data provides a snapshot of who was engaged, but is not representative of all participants.

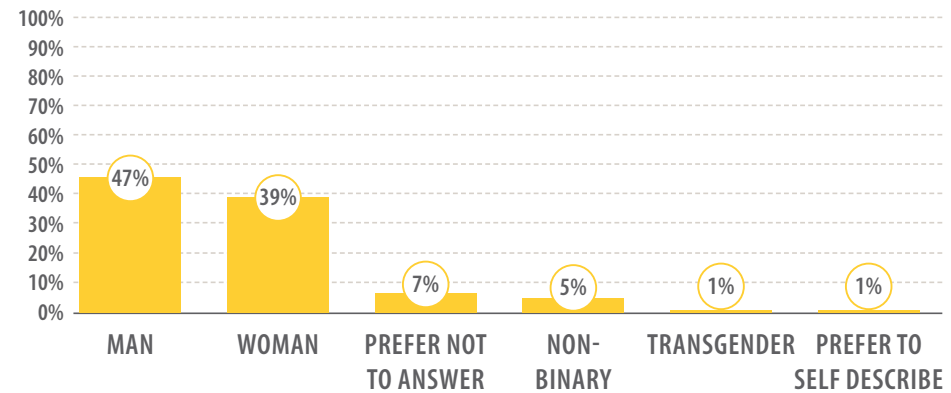
Race/ethnicity



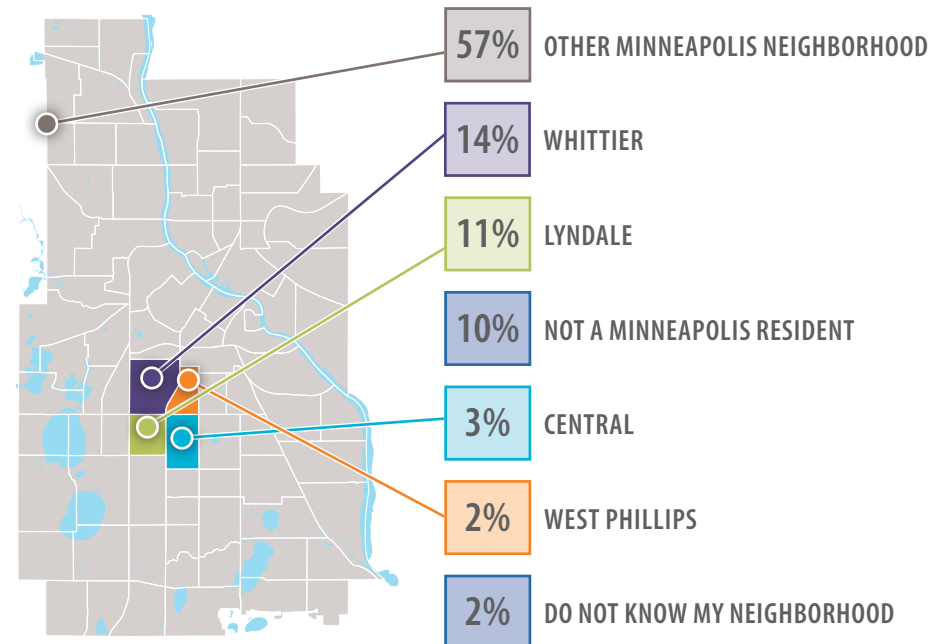
Age



Gender



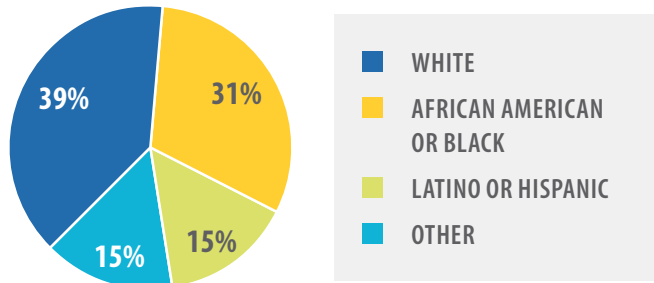
Neighborhood



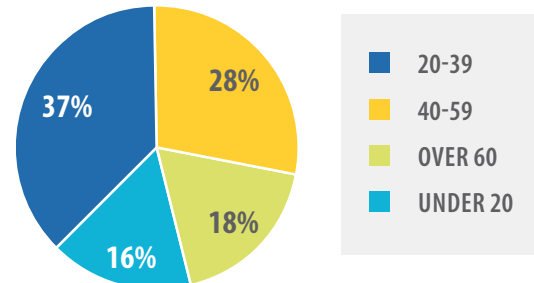
Who we reached: Events (18 events, 800 interactions)

Note: The project team, in coordination with local outreach partners, engaged community members at a variety of events throughout the summer. Demographic data was captured via a voluntary sticker board at eight of these events, representing about 22% of event participants.

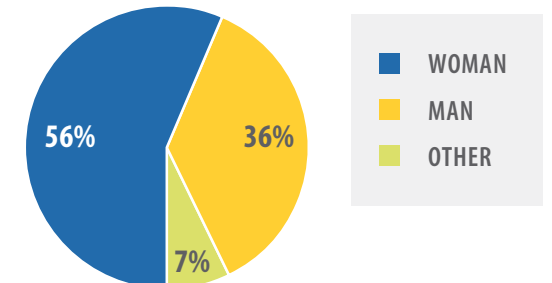
Race/ethnicity



Age

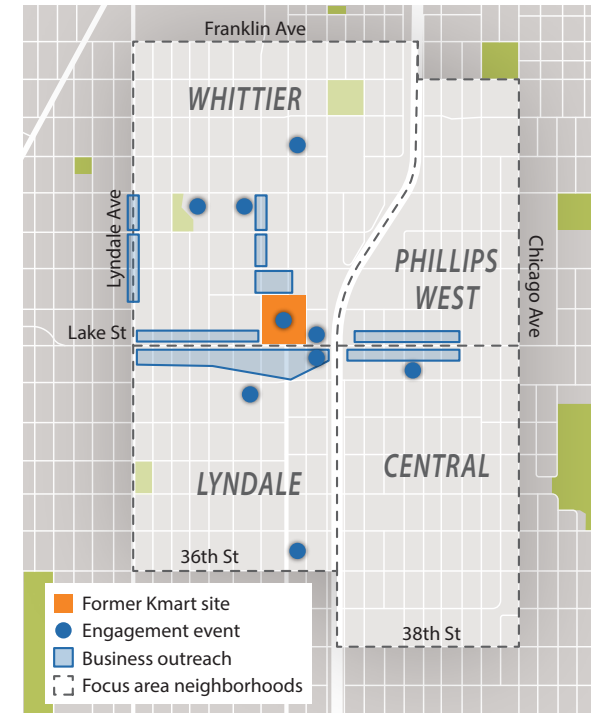


Gender



Engagement events

- Open House: Former Kmart site
- Slow Roll
- Door-to-door business outreach
- Phillips West Fall Fest
- Simpson Housing focus group
- Transit stop pop-up: 1st Ave and Lake St
- MIGIZI focus group
- Whittier Alliance community dinner
- Horn Towers
- Calvary Church
- Lake Street Latino/a/x business meeting
- Eat Street business meeting
- East African/Somali business meeting
- Whittier Alliance Housing and Land Use meeting
- Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities
- Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Lyndale Neighborhood Association Housing Committee meeting
- Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee



Design concepts: Street

THESE DESIGN ELEMENTS WERE INCORPORATED INTO THE STREET CONCEPT OPTIONS BASED ON PHASE II, PART 1 INPUT:



Boulevards and green space

- ✓ Boulevards, green space or furnishing zones with trees



Pedestrian-friendly

- ✓ Wide sidewalks
- ✓ Furnishing zones



Bike infrastructure

- ✓ No dedicated bike facilities due to existing bike network on both 1st Ave and Blaisdell Ave on either side of site
- ✓ Connect the Midtown Greenway to All Ages and Abilities bikeway network, widen Greenway trail and allow for an ADA-compliant ramp



Other

- ✓ Design options with and without parking
- ✓ One with only transit and emergency vehicle access



The project team discusses street concepts with open house participants



Community members rank street concepts at the October open house

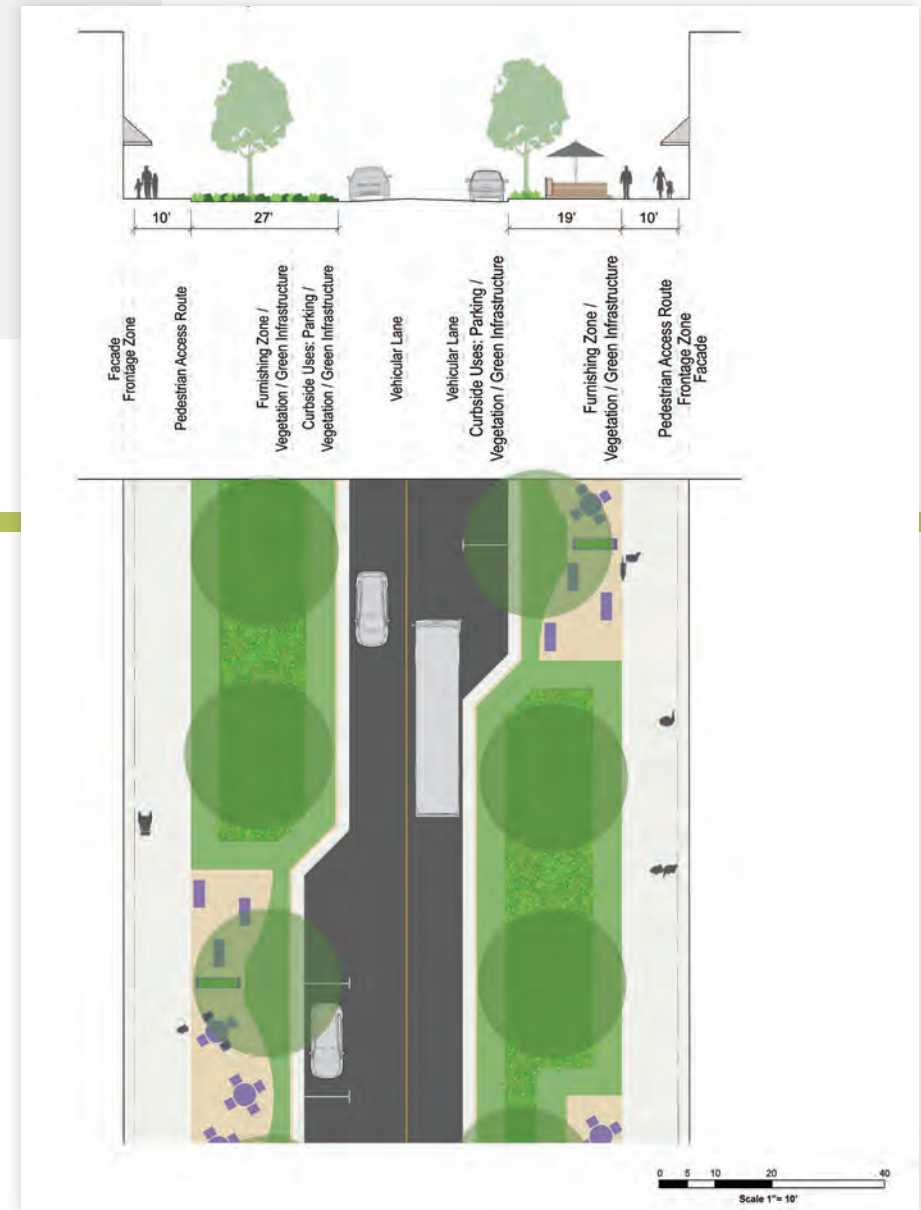
STREET DESIGN CONCEPTS

The City developed four street design concepts based on project goals, city policies, and community priorities from Phase I and Phase II, Part I engagement. Community members were asked to rank each of the design concepts on a scale of one to five stars and identify the features they did and didn't like about each concept.

Street Concept 1

Key features:

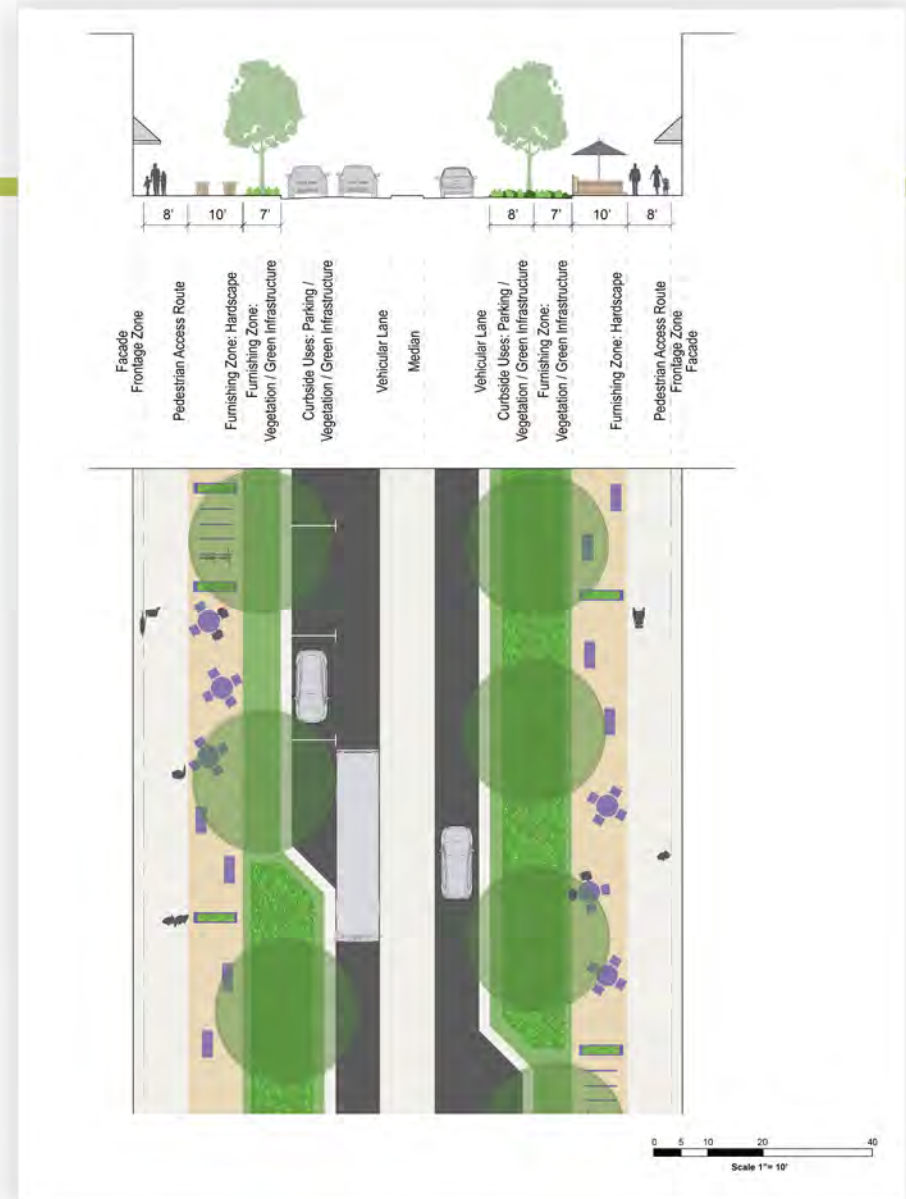
- Transit, private and emergency vehicles on the roadway
- Alternating parking and green space
- No dedicated bike facility
- 10 ft wide sidewalks
- Sections of 20 ft + wide large green spaces or furnishing zones with trees



Street Concept 2

Key features:

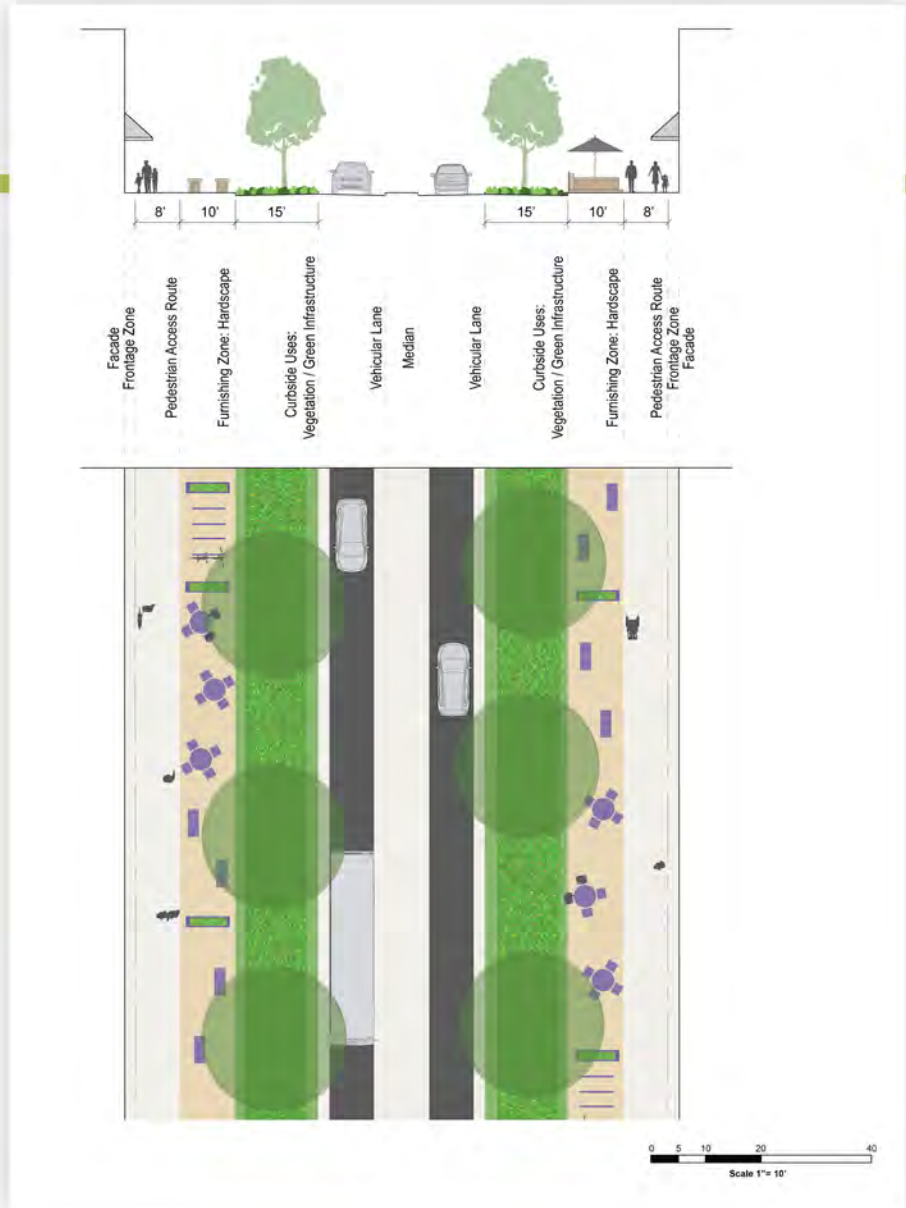
- Transit, private and emergency vehicles on the roadway
- Median
- Alternating parking and green space
- No dedicated bike facility
- 8 ft wide sidewalks
- 8-15 ft wide boulevard green space
- 10 ft wide furnishing zones



Street Concept 3

Key features:

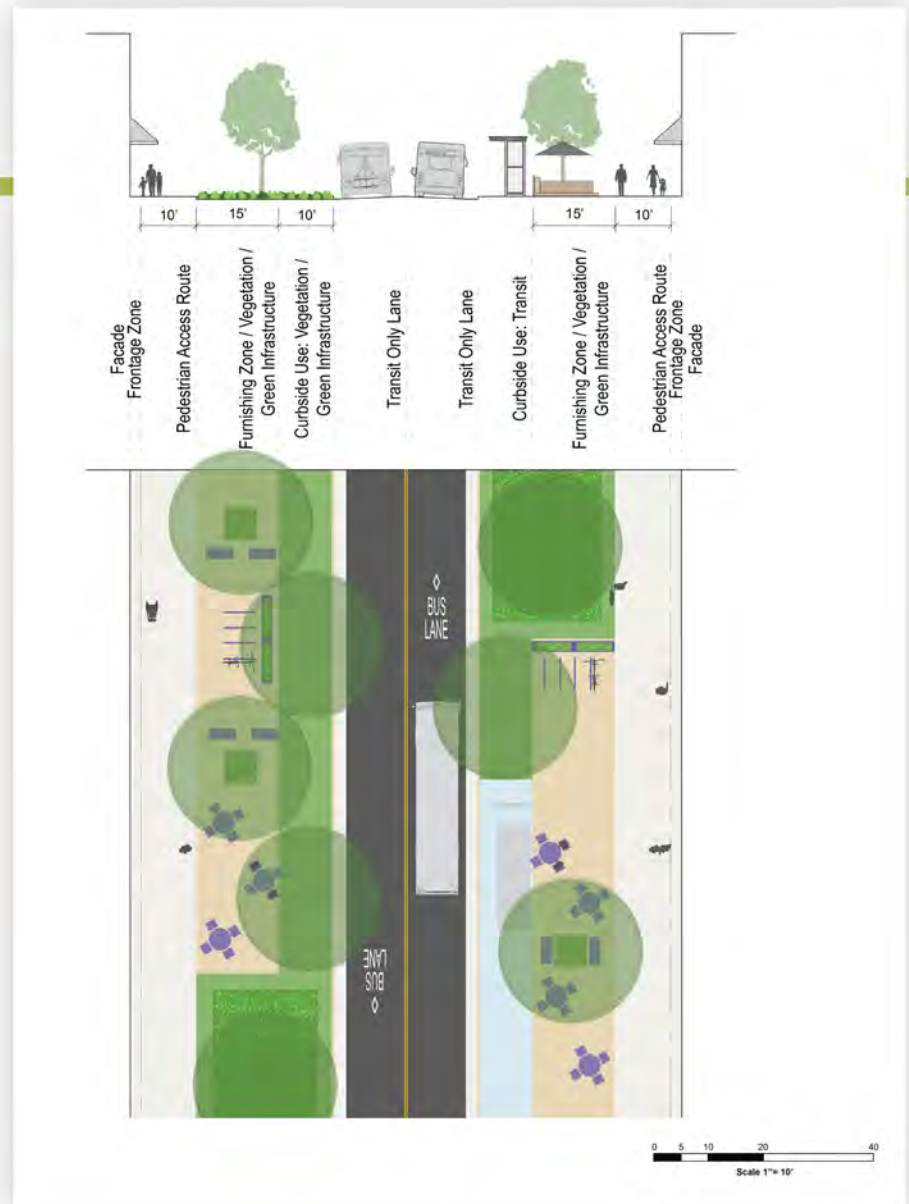
- Transit, private and emergency vehicles on the roadway
- Median
- No dedicated on-street parking
- No dedicated bike facility
- 8 ft wide sidewalks
- 15 ft wide boulevard green space
- 10 ft wide furnishing zones



Street Concept 4

Key features:

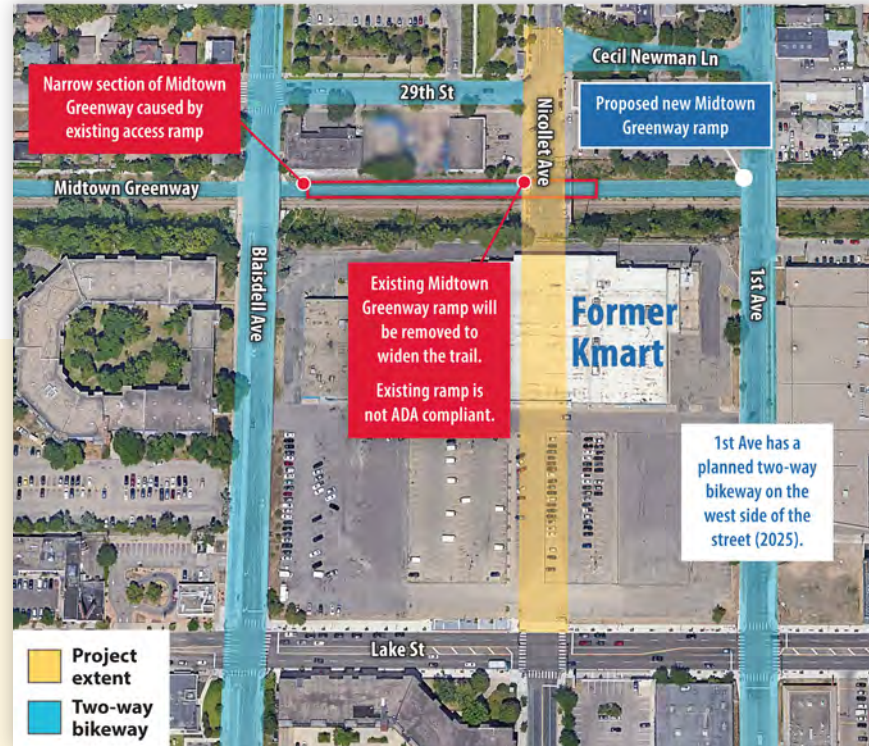
- Transit and emergency vehicles on the roadway
- No parking
- No dedicated bike facility
- 10 ft wide sidewalks
- 10 ft wide boulevard green space
- 15 ft wide furnishing zones with trees



Design concepts: Midtown Greenway connection

The Midtown Greenway ramp is proposed to move to 1st Ave. In Phase II, Part 1 of engagement, the project team heard that people want the narrow trail section on the Midtown Greenway from Blaisdell Ave to Nicollet Ave widened. People also want a better bicycle connection to the Midtown Greenway via the City's existing protected bike network on Blaisdell Ave or 1st Ave.

With that feedback in mind, the new Midtown Greenway ramp will be moved one block east and will connect to 1st Ave to provide access between the trail and the project area. Additional bike connections through the site were considered as part of the Public Space Framework.



Map of bicycle connections and new proposed Midtown Greenway map location

PINCH POINT ON THE MIDTOWN GREENWAY



Total width of section: '13

Typical Midtown Greenway width: 18' - 22'

Midtown Greenway, looking east under Nicollet Ave

Key takeaways from engagement: Street

Throughout engagement, there were differing opinions on whether the New Nicollet Ave should be open to transit and emergency vehicles only or be open to all types of vehicles. Those in favor of the transit-only option cited concerns about traffic safety, climate change, transit reliability and the pedestrian experience. Those in support of opening Nicollet Ave to all types of vehicles wanted to reconnect the street grid for all users, provide better visibility for existing and future businesses on Nicollet Ave, and provide additional opportunities for parking or loading/unloading, especially for people with disabilities.

- » For survey respondents, **Concepts 1 and 4** were tied or nearly tied both overall and among most of the examined demographic subgroups of the survey. These included project area neighborhoods, people who live near the area and people who visit the area. Those who reported owning a business or property in the area on the survey favored **Concept 1**.
- » At the open house, **Concept 4** received the most 5 star and most 1 star reviews, scoring the highest on average. **Concept 1** was a close second.
- » For in-person events, input was provided through discussions. Conversations were often about the merits and tradeoffs with each concept and participants were often asked to indicate which concept they most preferred, as the 5-star rating was difficult to facilitate with large discussion groups. Of the conversations where the five star rating system was used or participants identified their preferred concept(s), **Concepts 1 and 4** scored the highest.
- » More broadly, participants favored greenspace, wide sidewalks, space for sidewalk cafes and other amenities and transit access.
- » Some groups expressed interest in on-street parking, particularly business groups.
- » The lack of dedicated bike facilities on the new street was consistently brought up as a “dislike”.
- » Overall, people did not like the block-long concrete medians in **Concept 2** and **Concept 3**.





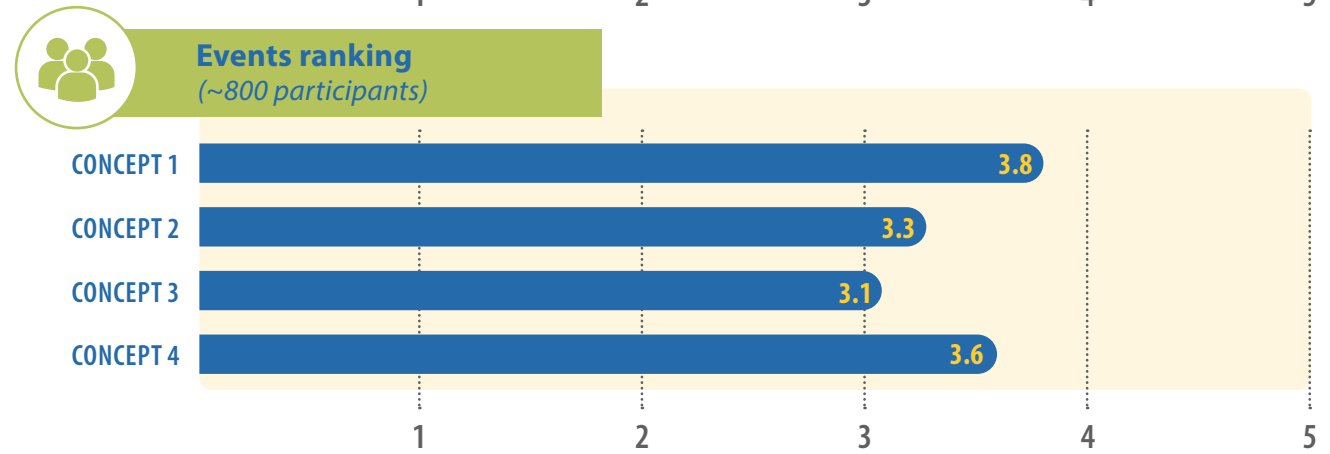
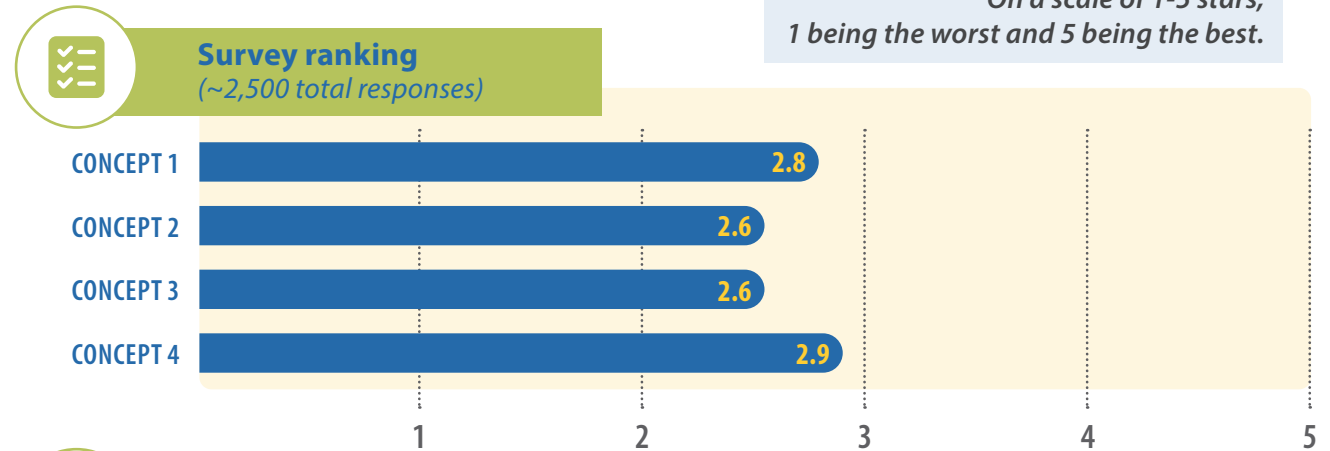
Pop-up at Open Streets East Lake



East African/Somali business meeting

STREET CONCEPTS

On a scale of 1-5 stars, 1 being the worst and 5 being the best.



Note: Not all groups used the 5-star rating system. These results include groups that expressed a preference for one or more roadway concepts.

Features

Likes	Trees, boulevards, green space	Wide sidewalks	Furnishing zones	Transit access
Dislikes	Lack of dedicated bike facilities	Medians		

Design concepts: Public space

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON PHASE II, PART 1 FEEDBACK:



A park along the Midtown Greenway



An east-west pedestrian connection featuring a mobility hub



Set back buildings along Lake St for additional pedestrian/green space



A formal bikeway



Community members rank each public space concept on a scale of one to five stars at the open house



Open house participants talk to City staff at the October event

PUBLIC SPACE CONCEPTS

Given the priorities from Part 1, three public space designs were presented to the public for feedback. Public engagement asked participants to rank their favorite aspects of each concept (that is, aspects of the larger design of the public space) as well as their favorite programming features in each concept (that is, the activities or features that could fit in each concept).

Public Space Concept A

Linear (long rectangular) park along the Midtown greenway

Key Features:

- Two distinct rectangular park spaces on either side of New Nicollet Ave
- Public park along the Midtown Greenway to encourage visibility and safety of the Greenway
- Pedestrian connection east-west through the park with a mobility hub

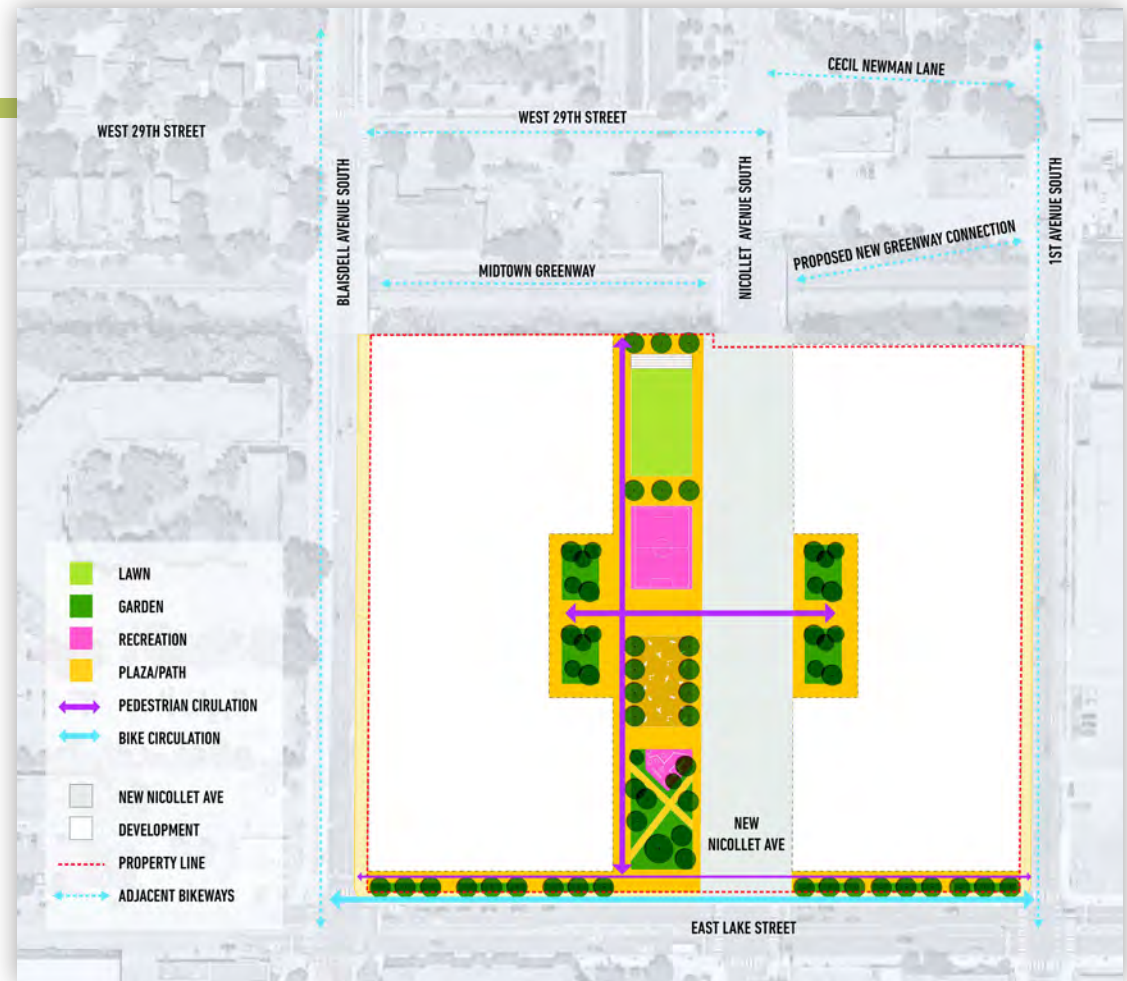


Public Space Concept B

*Linear (long rectangular) park
along Nicollet Ave*

Key features:

- A long rectangular park that aligns with New Nicollet Ave
- Wide pedestrian promenade following retail and restaurants along New Nicollet and safety of the Greenway
- Formal protected bikeway on Lake St connecting bikeways on Blaisdell Ave and 1st Ave
- Set back buildings along Lake St for additional pedestrian/ green space



Public Space Concept C

Corner park and diagonal promenade

Key features:

- A typical neighborhood park size and shape for greater flexibility
- A park next to the Midtown Greenway along the eastern half of the site that encourages safety and visibility of the Greenway
- A diagonal pedestrian promenade through the site creates a sightline from 1st Ave to Blaisdell Ave
- Formal bikeway running diagonally connects to the protected bikeways on Blaisdell Ave and 1st Ave and the Greenway entrance
- Multiple small parks allowing for smaller gathering areas



Key takeaways from engagement: Public space

- » The online survey results did not definitively favor one concept over the others. **Concept A** secured the highest rating at 3.4, positioning it as the frontrunner. Nevertheless, **Concepts B and C** closely trailed with ratings of 3.3, suggesting a minimal preference difference.
- » A nuanced analysis of survey data unveiled a split preference between neighborhood and business respondents. Neighborhood residents equally favored **Concepts A and C**, both receiving ratings of 3.3, while businesses leaned towards **Concept C**.
- » At engagement events, feedback was provided through discussions about the merits and tradeoffs of each concept. Most engagement events that came to a consensus favored **Concept C**, though there were nuances between groups. More details will be provided in the Public Space Framework report.
- » Despite nuanced preferences, common priorities surfaced across all concepts, emphasizing increased green space and connectivity. This included Greenway integration, enhanced pedestrian and bike access, and heightened safety measures.





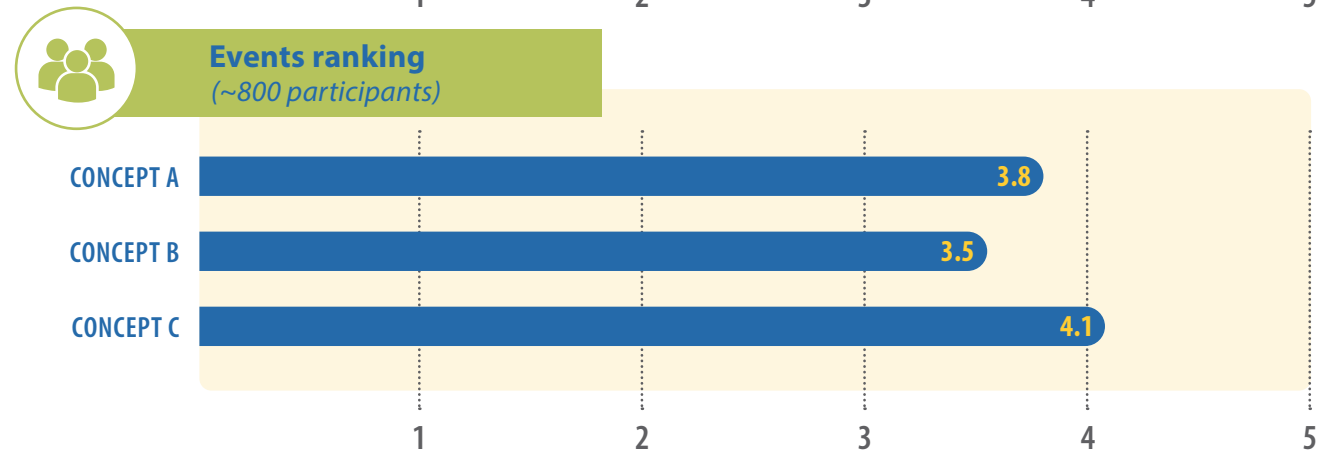
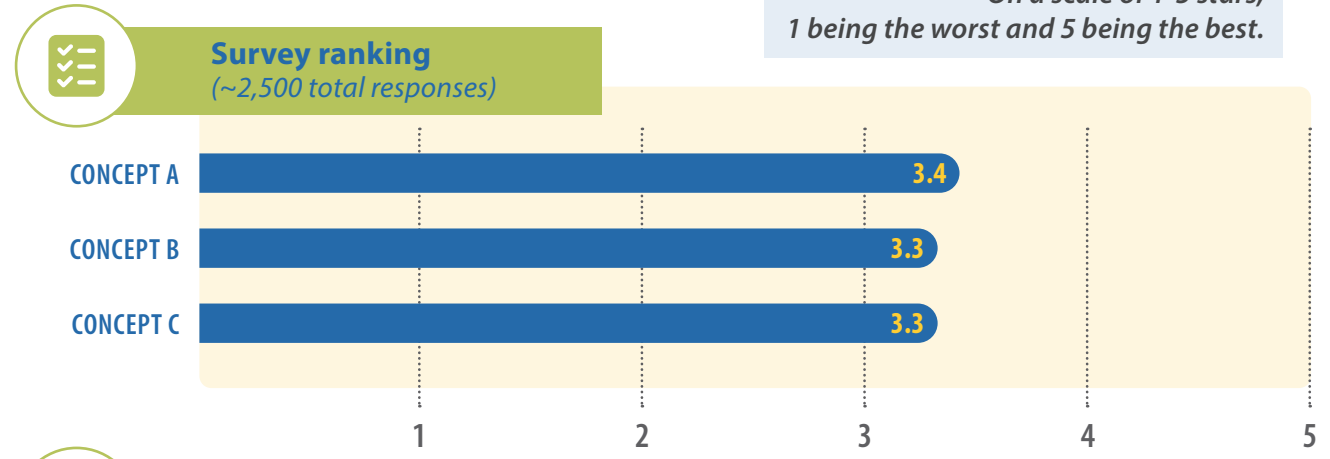
Community members work on public space concept exercise during the July open house



A community member gives a star ranking to one of the public space concepts via feedback frames at the October open house

PUBLIC SPACE CONCEPTS

On a scale of 1-5 stars, 1 being the worst and 5 being the best.



Note: Not all groups used the 5-star rating system. These results include groups that expressed a preference for one or more public space concepts.

Top features

Concept A	East and west pathway connecting bike and ped	Flexible plaza
Concept B	Pedestrian promenade	Large stormwater garden with paths
Concept C	Formal bikeway connecting east and west	Community gardens

Next steps

- Phase II, Part 3 of engagement will take place in early 2024 and will focus on closing the loop with the community, informing the public which design concepts are being recommended and how their feedback was used to inform the design concepts.
- After Phase II, Part 3 of engagement, City staff will bring to City Council and the Mayor the recommended concept designs for both new Nicollet Ave and public space on the site.



Community members play at the October open house



Community art activity at the October open house