2020 Minneapolis
Mobility Hubs
Pilot Report

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AMBASSADOR PILOT PROGRAM

The ambassador approach was key to the overall success of creating people-centered spaces at mobility hubs in Minneapolis. Ambassador teams, as champions for care and programming of mobility hubs, have a multiplier effect on the positive impact of these spaces in the community.

What is the Ambassador Pilot?

Goals of the Ambassador Pilot Program

1. Provide community-based approaches to safety through a regular on-site personnel presence;
2. Create a decentralized, community-grounded maintenance approach for the mobility hub features;
3. Provide a holistic model that connects maintenance, public safety, resource distribution, and enhanced public realm features by capitalizing on the synergies between these often siloed conversations.

Ambassador Role

The core duties for a Mobility Hub Ambassador were to activate and maintain the mobility hubs and make users at each hub feel more safe and welcome. The Ambassador's responsibilities included:

» Performing light maintenance, such as litter pick up, tending plants, adjusting signs, snow removal, and artwork care at each mobility hub and monitor conditions as they walk between each site;
» Alerting Mobility Hub project staff about larger maintenance issues (i.e. broken or missing items);
» Interacting with people (while socially distanced due to COVID-19) at mobility hubs to establish positive relationships with frequent users and nearby businesses and residents;

» Connecting mobility hub users with Metro Transit's Transit Assistance Program, Nice Ride for All, Bird Access and Lyft Community Pass;
» Communicating safety issues occurring at the site to appropriate channels, intervene in minor unsafe activity (i.e. divert verbal street harassment, check in with individuals who are in distress);
» Supporting engagement efforts.

Why the Ambassador Model?

Community engagement during the 2019 Mobility Hub pilot illuminated that feeling unsafe at transit and mobility locations was a common and significant barrier to using these facilities and services. What "safety" meant for people varied - for some it meant traffic safety from cars as a person walking or biking, while for others it had more to do with personal safety while being at the site.

In addition to safety, the ambassador approach also filled the following needs that would improve the experience at mobility hubs:

» Establish a regular presence who can support positive activity and be a friendly face to frequent users
» Provide frequent maintenance for enhanced features distributed throughout neighborhoods
» Create a role that can advocate and raise on-site needs across the many jurisdictions and stakeholders with assets at mobility hubs spaces

How was the Ambassador Pilot Implemented?

An ambassador program, run in partnership with community organizations and small-scale entrepreneurs was developed to meet the needs identified. A model of having locally-hired ambassadors visibly and frequently caring for spaces in the public realm was chosen because it:

» Leveraged existing community relationships and interests to unearth new opportunities for partnership and improvements;

» Ambassadors could become familiar faces in these spaces, allowing them to build new relationships with users, making people feel both more comfortable and safe;

» Promoted well maintained spaces, and having that maintenance be highly visible communicates safety and community ownership;

» Supported community members to spend time on things that improve quality of life but are hard to efficiently deliver in a centralized maintenance system, such as snow removal and planting care.

The Ambassador partnerships were sought out through an open call supported by targeted outreach to BIPOC-led and community-based organizations where the project team had prior relationships. The City, through its project partner The Musicant Group, contracted with the West Bank Business Association to implement the Ambassador pilot for mobility hubs in West Bank/Cedar Riverside. To establish Ambassadors at mobility hubs in North Minneapolis, youth outreach entrepreneur Marc Woods was selected to lead a team. Funding was made available through the Energy Foundation via Bloomberg Philanthropies American Cities Climate Challenge.

Gratitude

The City of Minneapolis Public Works and the Musicant Group would like to thank Marc Woods and KJ Starr for their leadership in piloting the Ambassador Pilot Program with us.

NORTHSIDE TEAM

WEST BANK TEAM

Ambassador Pilot Partner Profile: West Bank/ Cedar Riverside

WEST BANK BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Hiring local | Managed by the West Bank Business Association (WBBA), two neighborhood residents were hired to serve as ambassadors overseeing six mobility hubs in the neighborhood. Each worked 10 hours a week for 18 weeks. One of the two ambassadors spoke Somali, which opened the potential to connect with the significant East African community in Cedar Riverside.

Training | Provided by The Musicant Group around site care and WBBA around harm reduction and de-escalation.

Opportunities Supported | A campaign around promoting low-carbon transportation options among the Muslim community of Cedar Riverside.

> " This pilot would work very well with our organization's long-term priorities [to help] our businesses transition from reliance on parking and vehicular traffic... It will be wonderful to have a friendly face to help direct and welcome people."
>
> - At the outset of pilot: KJ Starr, West Bank Business Association

Impact

» 12 planters placed, maintained, and watered at mobility hubs
» 300+ maintenance/outreach hours logged on site and in the community
» 2 bright yellow vests with West Bank insignia that signal: "this is a person I can ask for help"
» 2 bus shelters that had the lighting and heating replaced when an ambassador noted it was broken
» Both ambassadors underwent de-escalation training during this project.

Funding | $11,700 for two part time ambassadors and administrative time. This covered an 18-week pilot of Ambassador service.

Ambassador Pilot Partner Profile: North Minneapolis

MARC WOODS + YOUTH SERVICE LEARNING

Hiring local | Marc Woods led the Northside Ambassador team, employing two youth workers and one adult to program and care for seven North Minneapolis mobility hub sites. Marc built on his past experience managing street outreach and youth mentorship programs with the Minneapolis Youth Congress and Youth Coordinating Board to build a business to consult on projects like this.

Training | Provided by The Musicant Group around site care. Additionally, team capacity grew around grant administration and event planning.

Opportunities Supported | New community artwork was installed on the parklet at the Penn and Lowry mobility hub, masks were distributed to community members, and volunteers provided care and maintenance services.

> "The number one thing that has developed from this mobility project for me is a sense of community. As I have used my light to give to others, reciprocity has followed. The mobility spaces have changed the community by giving familiar faces, allowing others to see youth in a positive light. It has given an outlet to the elders who don't have much hope to vent, and help, it has become a resource center with our [masks, water] giveaway. I've had so many people come to me asking for work ,it's overwhelming. The people who have come literally take so much pride in their work that there's very little for me to do outside of teach, and provide tangible ways to accomplish their desires. A highlight being the little boy with handmade business cards who asked to work."
>
> – Marc Woods, Ambassador Pilot Lead

Impact

- » 12 planters placed, maintained, and watered at mobility hubs
- » 260 hours logged on site and in the community
- » Youth given opportunities to develop solutions to problems in their own community
- » A coat drive
- » A Halloween Trick-or-Treat event
- » A community painting event
- » A dozen resource distribution pop-ups
- » National exposure in news article and webinar.

Funding | $11,700 for two part time youth ambassadors, one maintenance-focused ambassador, and Woods' administrative and mentorship time. The team also used their funding to do bi-weekly activations on site, from distributing masks and water, to painting the parklet on site.

Lessons Learned

1. Co-Creation and Adaptability

Given the many demands on community groups during the first half of 2020, one goal of the partnering process was to minimize administrative burdens and ensure that there were mutual benefits for all involved. The resulting partnerships were established around shared goals - the community partners were able to pursue their goals through the opportunity of the mobility hub ambassador pilot program. The first several weeks of the relationship focused on creating the framework for the ambassador program in collaboration - drawing from both the project team's experience operating hubs in 2019 and partners' experience running other similar programming. From this foundation, there was enough trust to be able to navigate the new terrain of operating the ambassador program, amid dynamic challenges of 2020.

Lessons Learned | Future iterations of the ambassador program should build on the success of this approach - establishing partnerships with a foundation in aligned goals, co-creation of the program details, and flexibility.

2. Open Communication

Establishing shared expectations for the communication pathways is important. The approach this season established communication channels from the Ambassadors through the Lead in each neighborhood. The Lead from both neighborhoods would communicate with the project team, who could then activate any other maintenance resources, permissions or changes needed across other departments. This approach minimized the need for Ambassador partners to attend weekly project team meetings and reduced demands on their time. Good communication also depends on building strong relationships and responsiveness in a short chain of communication.

Other communication tools that were tested during the program were a form that Ambassadors used during their shift to document the work they did, additional maintenance items, photos and insights from conversations/observations during the shift. This opens up potential for an ongoing feedback loop and data gathering from the site to the project staff, reducing steps in the communication process. However, access to a Google Form while in the field caused trouble for some team members, and so communication then flowed only through the Lead in each neighborhood.

Lessons Learned | Future iterations of the Mobility Hub Ambassador program can use this insight to 1) develop the right input tools for simple data gathering/communication from the field and 2) consider hiring Ambassadors through the Local Lead but having them report directly to the Project team. This more direct communication chain would ensure insights from the site and in the neighborhood do not get delayed in the communication process.

RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION

SNOW REMOVAL

3. Benefits of Localization

From the start of the ambassador pilot, the project team prioritized hiring people from the neighborhood to serve as ambassadors. A flexible model was established that could adapt in response to user feedback received and based on strengths of the partner running each team. West Bank Business Association and Marc Woods were the partner Leads on developing the ambassador approach. Since they came from different backgrounds, the model provided insights into how a business district-oriented approach and youth mentorship oriented approach contributes to the pilot objectives. The pilot was nimble enough to reflect the assets each partner brought to the approach and the context of their organization, while still being under the same umbrella of the Ambassador pilot goals and receiving support from the project team.

Both ambassador teams saw great benefit in an approach that was intentionally localized because it provided the opportunity to:

» Hire neighborhood residents
» Create authentic connections within the program to local culture and identity
» Offer avenues for other benefits like service learning, mental health outlets and community growth through events

The aspects of the program that could be streamlined through centralized administration:

» Communication of maintenance issues in need of further work, building stronger accountability into the system
» Shared training experiences for consistent service quality across neighborhoods
» Minimizing administrative burden at the local/grassroots level

Lessons Learned | As the ambassador approach evolves, the program can actualize benefits of both local participation and some enhanced centralized administration. A program structure could utilize a central Ambassador Pilot Lead (within the project team or through another partner with sufficient capacity), who is accountable for the outcomes across several Ambassador teams and who has direct communication with the Ambassadors on-site. Another local partnership could help direct potential Ambassador hires to the program, but wouldn't need to stay active in the day-to-day operation of the team.

NORTHSIDE TEAM

"Rewarding others for doing positive things became a reality after a follow up conversation with Ella and Max. Oftentimes people think that they should be given an opportunity before they can make an impact. In my opinion it's quite the opposite. I recruit those who are already doing the work. It becomes more natural and a bonus instead of a chore or punishment."

- Marc Woods, Ambassador Lead

RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION

4. Building Youth Capacity

Both the Northside and West Bank Ambassador teams took the opportunity to fill at least one out of two of their ambassador roles with local youth. This created many benefits for both the youth and the project overall - generating earning opportunities, skill development, and infusing the program with their unique perspective on their neighborhood.

Lessons Learned | For the youth to be most successful, in the new role it was important for their managers to have a sense of the support they would need. As the program evolves, it could further support youth employment opportunities by allocating further resources toward staff capacity to support managing youth team members and investing in their growth and development.

JOY: A LIP SYNC BREAK

> " ""When you invest in others they are more likely to support you in return."
>
> - Marc Woods, Ambassador Lead

PARKLET PAINTING

COMPLETED PARKLET AT PENN + LOWRY

5. Community Ownership

Success in the ambassador program came through the strongest when the partner organization, in several cases led by a youth member of the team, was given the opportunity to express their identity and vision through the mobility hub program.

One youth Ambassador led an event that demonstrated their ability to bring energy to the mobility hub spaces and make the space their own by painting the parklet at Penn and Lowry. The youth on the Northside Ambassador team organized this event, recruiting other youth from the Black Student Union in Minneapolis high schools to participate in painting the parklet black. The students then came up with ideas to further enhance the space, adding words like "Unity," "Equity" and "Community" in colorful letters.

In her own words, this is an excerpt of an event summary written by Landrei Areial, who led the Paint the Parklet event:

PARKLET PAINTING

Landrei Areial

"When the time came for us to paint our bench at the pilot on Lowry & Penn, multiple members of the community asked to join us and help paint. We quickly handed them paintbrushes and little bowls filled with black paint. As we painted the bench together we heard many stories, some which included the loss of loved ones, others which included a mini-series of those "back in the day" stories. I personally believe that specific project was probably one of the most meaningful as well as insightful moments out the pilot as a whole.

Our moments, presence and activities were therapeutic to the community. Giving others the ability to speak and be open with us about their personal hardships and obstacles that they have faced and are facing to this day, and being able to mutually relate to some stories and topics was all therapeutic.

Being able to come together for something positive yet so simple as painting, as a collective, which is something you don't see too often, I think not only gave some community members a glimpse of hope but also a positive staple in the community that many will now see whether their driving, biking, or walking by, it's a representation of community collectiveness which I believe is a huge factor in moving towards our next step as a people."

In the West Bank Ambassador team, one youth team member developed a communication campaign around the concept within the Islamic concept of "Sunnah," encouraging neighbors to participate in activities that emulate the Prophet Mohammed and benefit the community, like picking up litter or riding a bike. They designed posters around several messages and worked to distribute them around the community, including a shoutout in a local radio program.

IT'S SUNNAH TO...

Keep the neighborhood clean!!

The prophet (saw) said "cleanliness is half our faith"

Let's help keep the neighborhood clean and remember Allah sees you and loves those who do good!

Further Lessons Learned from Northside Ambassador Pilot

The following is an excerpt from the summary written by Marc Woods, lead of the Northside Ambassadors.

Marc Woods

"If I had to have steps to lead someone in this process again, I would list the steps in this order

» Meet people where they're at
» Make goals and agendas as transparent as possible
» Put others in a place where they can thrive (set them up for success not failure)
» Reflect daily and often for clarity
» When working with youth invest in them over the work, the work will be taken care of when staff/people are valued
» Be stern but redirect conflict by asking for possible solutions
» Trust the process
» Listen to what others say and facilitate instead of control.

Goals accomplished:

» Practice philanthropy
» Mentor youth and employ them
» Create safe spaces
» Provide resources to the community
» Create equity
» Model positive initiative
» Build community culture
» Give hope
» Allow outlets for mental health
» Represent community in a positive light no matter what it looked like"

Further Lessons Learned from West Bank Business Association Ambassador Pilot

The following is an excerpt from the summary written by KJ Starr, lead of the West Bank Ambassadors.

KJ Starr

"Having bikes and scooters in the neighborhood this year definitely increased ridership among our residents. I hope we will have them again next year and they will help tie together our transit with our bike friendly population that works, lives and plays on the West Bank.

Having ambassadors help with trash in the neighborhood was definitely beneficial. We will continue to work on both having systems in place so that our main commercial corridor is maintained and garbage cans are available and work on cultural messaging to care about our neighborhood.

We look forward to developing the safety work of the ambassadors this next year. The safety work will benefit from not being tied so much to the mobility hub locations.

As a short term, part time project, it was also always likely to be a challenge to hire individuals who were very committed to doing the work. In contrast to professional ambassadors downtown, I was unable to commit to more than providing a few months work to people. "

MOBILITY HUB FUNCTION + FEATURES

The frameworks below, developed over two years of piloting, outline key strategies for producing mobility hubs that provide an optimal experience for the user and maximize progress toward project goals.

Key Themes

Transit-Centric

The core service of a Minneapolis mobility hub is to connect people to the transit system, so proximity and visual relationship to that stop is critical to success. We have found that transit-centric mobility hubs are more successful than focusing on locations with less transit along bike infrastructure or other central features.

Why?

» **Transit stops generate mobility hub users** - This pilot has tested out a range of sites, including several that had the adjacent bus stop down the block. Examples of sites like this include Farview Park (North) and Franklin Ave & 11th St from 2019, two sites that were not extended to the 2020 season. At the center of this determination was a combination of trip data and feedback that many residents didn't see the value in locating mobility hub improvements so far from bus stops.

» **Mobility hubs need eyes on the space** - Even when people are not using transit at the mobility hub, transit riders help keep the space active throughout the day and help the space feel more safe. This positive activity and eyes on the space also helps diminish negative activity that can crop up in empty, isolated locations.

» **First/last-mile solutions break down as the tie to transit weakens** - For mobility hubs to be effective tools to connect people with transit stops, the transition between micro-mobility and transit needs to be as seamless as possible. Breaks in the user experience can cause confusion or frustration that leads people to default to what they're used to instead of taking advantage of new modes. Put simply, wouldn't you hate to be docking your bikeshare bike and watch your bus pull away less than a block from where you are?

Successful transit-centric mobility hub configurations can come in many forms, but one of the most commonly deployed for our sites was placing mobility hub features on the same corner of the intersection as the bus stop but on the alternative leg. This is especially useful in spaces where the bus boarding area is already built out or especially tight on a commercial corridor. In this arrangement it's important to still make sure seating is still available in the line of sight to see the bus coming and signage denotes the mobility hub features available around the corner.
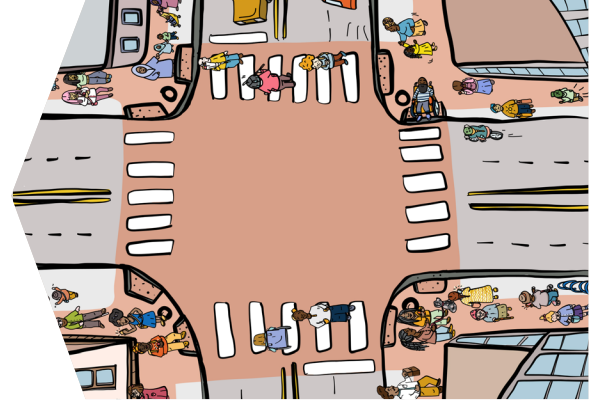
Co-location

Locate all mobility options in a compact area, within view of the bus stop.

Location factors during a pilot are often dependent on the availability of right of way, whether that's on the sidewalk or in the street.

Why?

» **Visibility** - Multiple things in one place means the user understands all the options they have, without having to open multiple apps to check for available vehicles. It is also easier to clearly brand the space as a mobility hub if all elements are in a defined area.

» **Legibility** - If the public is to understand what a "mobility hub" is, it helps if it's a clear space with defined components and edges, instead of a conceptual idea that covers a whole city block or more. Co-location contributes to a cohesive "brand" or set of expectations about what you will find at any mobility hub, even when a user may not have been to that hub before.

» **Maintainability** - Maintenance is more efficient if workers don't have to cross the street multiple times to touch all the components. In the winter, tighter co-location means less space needs to be cleared of snow before a mobility hub is fully operational.

Common Cause

When possible use placement and form of mobility options to support other policy objectives on the street, like pedestrian safety, commercial and social activity generation, green infrastructure and traffic calming.

Why?

» **More project champions** - Mobility hubs can support multiple objectives toward making a people-friendly street, therefore expanding potential champions and funding opportunities for their implementation.

» **It's cost-effective and space-efficient** - The street is an environment where both space and funding have limitations. These synergies may increase coordination needed and complexity with syncing up project schedules, but ensure optimal utilization of limited space and funding.

For example, the bump out at Central & 26th St Mobility hub was extended to include space for a bike rack and the slip lane closure at 3rd & 12th St held space for mobility hub furniture and social spaces.

Boarding Bonus

Mobility hub features intended to support comfort and socializing should be located on the boarding-heavy (often the "inbound") direction.
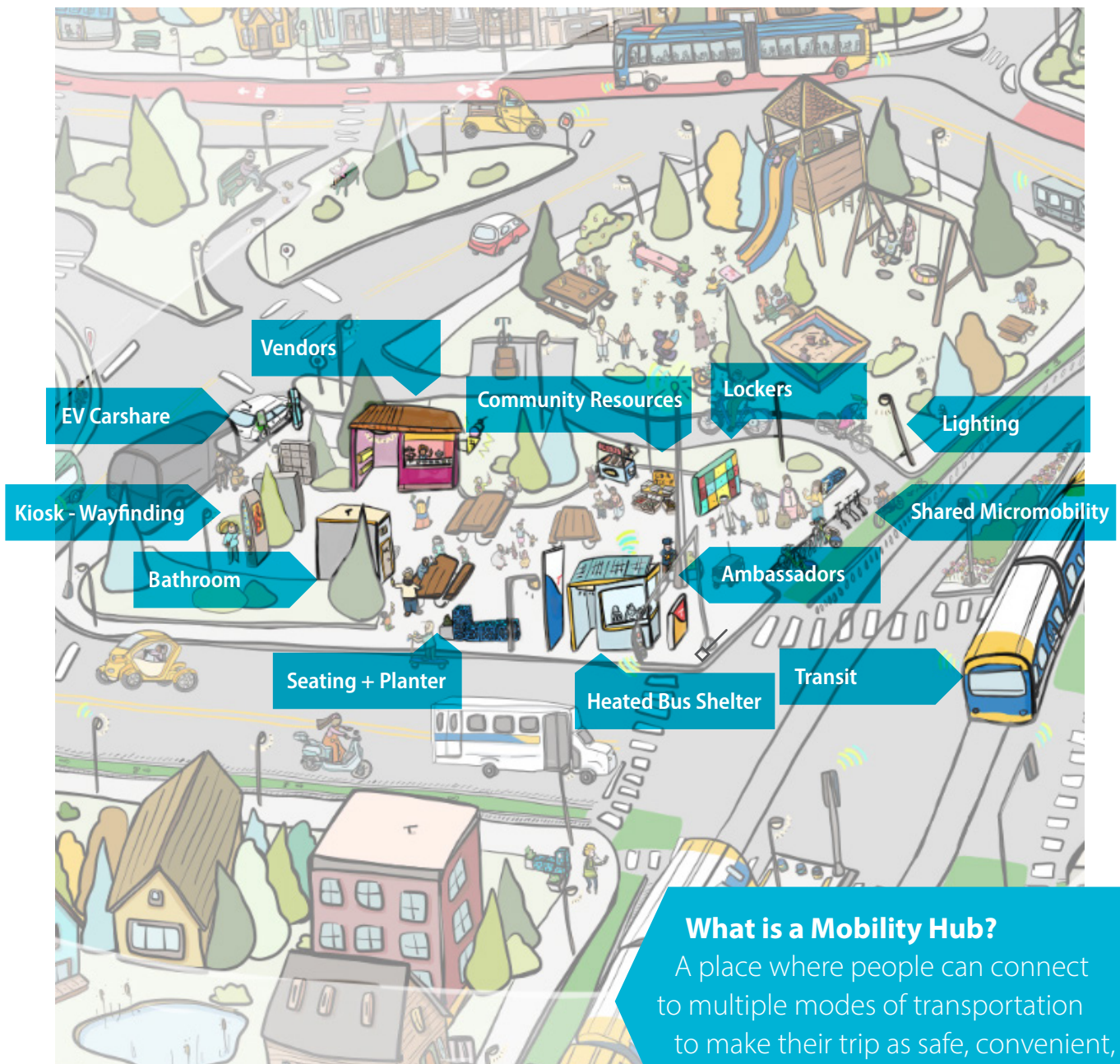
Why?

» When making the decision to concentrate mobility hub features on the inbound or outbound direction of transit travel, selecting the side with the most boardings will ensure that maximum benefit is derived from the elements as people spend time waiting for the bus.

» People accessing mobility hubs for their "first mile" have different needs than those using it for their "last mile trip." People using mobility hubs who travel to a mobility hub to access transit (first mile) benefit most from comfort, convenience and social features because they are spending more time at the hub while they wait. People accessing last mile options at the mobility hub primarily need access to convenient mobility options, getting oriented and simply transferring to the last mile mode.

Future Vision of Minneapolis Mobility Hubs

This illustration, created by artist Sarah Nelson, represents a future vision of what a fully built-out Minneapolis mobility hub could look like.

What is a Mobility Hub?
A place where people can connect to multiple modes of transportation to make their trip as safe, convenient, and reliable as possible.

2020 Pilot New Features

Infrastructure Safety Improvements

Why | Infrastructure Safety was identified as a priority improvement for 2020 during mobility hub pilot engagement in 2019 and is part of the the City of Minneapolis' Vision Zero implementation.

What | Three mobility hubs received quick-build safety improvements.

Through coordination with the City's Vision Zero 20 in 2020 Initiative, three mobility hub pilot sites received intersection improvements to enhance bike and pedestrian safety. The 20 in 2020 Initiative included implementation of quick-build infrastructure safety improvements at more than 20 intersections as part of the City's Vision Zero initiative to eliminate all traffic deaths and severe injuries on City streets.

Locations

Penn and Lowry

» The infrastructure improvements installed included hardened centerlines* and signal timing changes to improve pedestrian safety while crossing the street.

Central and 26th

» At this site, hardened centerlines and bollard bulb-outs were implemented, shortening the crossing distance and making pedestrians more visible.

Chicago and Lake Street

» Improvements included hardened centerlines and bollard bump outs. The mobility hub at Chicago and Lake Street is still in long term planning, however it was not an active pilot site in 2020, in part because of the more urgent conversations occurring with regard to rebuilding Lake Street.

01	Slow Turn Wedge
02	Bicycle Crossing
03	Painted Bump-out with Bollard
04	Zebra Crosswalk
05	Hardened Centerline with Bollards
06	Parklet

*What are hardened centerlines? The centerline is the marking (yellow in the image) that divides two lanes of opposing traffic. Bollards create a raised centerline near the crosswalk at an intersection to prevent drivers from "cutting" the corner at higher speeds while turning. This reduces the likelihood of crashes at intersections, including for pedestrians (as was found in a recent study).

Slip Lane Transformation at 3rd Ave & 12th St in Downtown Minneapolis

Why | A recommendation from 2019 was to pursue reallocation of street space for mobility hub improvements and slip lane closures in order to open up significant space while also improving pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

What | A mobility hub site at the gateway to downtown Minneapolis was selected to test reallocating slip lane space for mobility hub improvements. One slip lane was closed at 3rd Ave and 12th St for a pilot period of four months and furnished with pavement paint, movable seating and planters.

Impact | This site received the most positive email and social media feedback from users of any of the mobility hubs. Adjacent property owners were primarily neutral with a concern raised around limiting the free-right turning movement. Pedestrian counts were not taken due to the disruption of travel patterns during COVID.

The simple circle design for the pavement art was chosen to reinforce the connection between the pavement paint and the blue furniture boxes. Additionally, circles and bright colors are effective visual cues to communicate a sense of invitation and energy in a space. This kind of space demarcation could be used anywhere that mobility hubs are placed in-street, whether in bump outs, parking spaces, closed turn lanes or other right of way. The mobility hub project team maintained and cleared snow from the site and consolidated furniture into several snow-cleared patios along the main pathway. The closure signage was rented and the paint is being monitored to determine its condition after the winter.

Lessons Learned | This installation demonstrated successful use of paint as a way of denoting mobility hub spaces. This is another opportunity to integrate artists into the mobility hub program and express community identity while incorporating features that clearly tie together the network of mobility hubs.

BEFORE

AFTER

*What is a slip lane? A slip lane, commonly also referred to as a free-right turn lane or "pork-chop" is a feature of roadway design intended to maximize vehicle speed at intersections. However, as a byproduct, they produce unnecessary conflicts and dangerous conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians when drivers fail to reduce their speed enough to look for these vulnerable users and yield to them.

Parklets at Mobility Hubs

Why | The City of Minneapolis received the de-commissioned parklet from a MnDOT program, and the 2019 engagement showed strong support for more seating at the Penn and Lowry mobility hub site. Penn and Lowry was also anticipated to continue being a central place for programming, which a parklet would support.

What | In cooperation with Hennepin County, the landowner of a vacant lot at Penn and Lowry, the parklet was placed as part of the 2020 mobility hub pilot and incorporated into the maintenance and programming run by the Mobility Hub Ambassadors. In the late fall and winter the Ambassadors held a painting event, turning the parklet black with words inscribed in many colors.

Impact | As a result of the parklet component of the mobility hub at Penn and Lowry, the space had more structure that allowed people to gather and connect. The parklet became a strong visual beacon identifying the improvements being made there. Thanks to the consistent, creative contributions of the Mobility Hub Ambassadors, the parklet was an active platform for small-scale, socially-distant community connections to occur.

Lessons Learned | As this parklet demonstrated the potential of having programmable space an anchor for the Northside network of mobility hubs, there would be significant benefits for each neighborhood network to include a similar anchor space under the care of Ambassadors to serve as a platform for community building around the hubs.

Thanks to the consistent, creative contributions of the Mobility Hub Ambassadors, the parklet was an active platform for small-scale, socially-distant community connections to occur.

Wayfinding that Speaks with Icons

Why | The wayfinding signage designed for the 2019 Mobility Hub pilot effectively directed people to several nearby destinations, but lacked more contextual information for planning trips and using new transportation options.

What | As a part of the pilot's iterative design approach, this year we tested two new wayfinding signage options: an orientation sign installed on the pavement and a neighborhood-level wayfinding map.

Impact | These signage options were easier to maintain and more cost effective than the 2019 wayfinding signage options and offered further opportunity to create a signage system based on icons and visual communication over text. However, they did have less space for multiple languages to be displayed.

Lessons Learned | As the system of wayfinding signage continues to evolve, there may be good applications of each signage type that has been tested. Additionally, more engagement can be incorporated to document residents' ideas for wayfinding destinations to call out on the sign.

Bike Fix Station

Why | The bike fix station idea was suggested by a leader of the Las Bici Chicas group as a feature that would make mobility hubs more useful to people who use their own bikes and rarely can afford to pay per ride on shared modes. The location was selected as it was in the West Bank Mobility Hub Ambassador area and those team members reported the Cedar Ave plaza hub as one of the most active hubs in their network.

What | One bike fix station was installed in October at the Cedar Ave plaza mobility hub. This included a bike tire pump, a bike stand and a set of tools.

Impact | The bike fix station was out for a short enough period of time that awareness of it wasn't yet high enough to assess its impact for users.

Lessons Learned | Next season, further work can go toward analyzing utilization and maintainability of the bike fix station.

The bike fix station idea was suggested by a leader of the Las Bici Chicas group as a feature that would make mobility hubs more useful to people who use their own bikes.

Lockers

Why | During engagement in South Minneapolis, some residents expressed interest in a personal storage locker system at mobility hubs, and several institutional partners saw utility in having places for people experiencing homelessness to temporarily store possessions. Bike lockers in other parts of the transportation system are geared toward regular commuters but are underutilized in many locations.

What | The Mobility Hub Pilot worked with a smart locker provider to explore implementation of a small-scale smart locker system operated through mobility hubs. The project team established connections with the Lowry Hill East Neighborhood Association and the Hennepin County Libraries to test and promote the installation of lockers, but ultimately ran out of time in the season to use smart lockers. To test a simpler system, the staff at Webber Library maintained a low-tech locker at the Humboldt & 44th Hub that operated as an extension of the library as a resource and community information hub at a mobility hub.

Impact | The Library Locker, as the project team called it, distributed 26 transit comfort kits (from December 11 to January 19) that contained:

- » Crossword puzzle
- » Blank Journal and pen
- » Pencil
- » Library contact info page
- » Thinking putty
- » Poem
- » Self care on commute card
- » One cold weather item, which could be handwarmers, stocking caps, or gloves

The initial one month pilot was extended to run three months due to the success of the initial run, and the librarians programming it reported steady usage. They also appreciated having an additional way to serve the community.

> " "Thank you for helping to keep this going for a while beyond the pilot, it really has been a wonderful little addition for our library to be able to reach people during Covid and winter."
>
> - Elizabeth, Hennepin County Webber Library

Recommendation | This short term pilot and the other positive reception of the locker prospect shows excellent potential for further work to occur - both around the low-tech locker point as a platform for other entities like libraries to connect with mobility hub users, and implementation of a smart locker system that was explored.

Iterations on Mobility Hub Modular Furniture

Why | The 2019 mobility hub furniture was made completely from plywood, which was cost-effective and paintable for a pilot of limited duration. The 2020 pilot looked toward expansion and enhanced durability and comfort for furnishings. Furthermore, planters were successful at the Penn and Lowry site in 2019 and were called out by mobility hub users during engagement as a big draw to the space, so the project team wanted to expand their use. As a pilot, it was still important that the furniture remained multi-purpose and modular to adapt to many environments.

What | The 2020 mobility hub pilot utilized some 2019 furniture, but for the most part was built out using a new set of furnishings. These utilized HDPE, a recycled plastic material, for enhanced durability. Other features of the second iteration of pilot furniture included:

» Smaller dimensions to increase seating comfort

» Solid sheets of material on two sides of each piece, to make a "top" and "bottom" easier to sit on and harder to put liter inside, while maintaining the ability to place them vertically or horizontally

» Larger cut-out holes on the sides to make removing litter easier and faster

» 1"x1" HDPE planters that could be connected directly into the furnishing system

» Attachment system to be able to add more specialized features as site needs are identified

» Lighter, less cumbersome furniture sizes making moving pieces easier

Impact | These improvements vastly improved the maintenance system for the 2020 furniture - saving an estimated 50% of onsite management time throughout the system. The maintainer running hubs with both 2019 and 2020 hubs reported significantly easier maintenance of newer pieces - whether to remove litter, graffiti or move the boxes. Less litter over the whole season was reported by Ambassadors at the Northside hubs.

Recommendations | As mobility hubs look to advance beyond a pilot program and into capital improvements, we recommend selecting new more permanent seating options. While piloting, having furniture that is modular and flexible to respond to feedback from users on site is important. However for sites that have tested configurations, the furnishings selected no longer need to be as all-purpose. This opens up the opportunity to select furnishings that are even better at their main purpose - like selecting a seating option that has a back rest and limits the potential for debris to collect. User feedback supports continuing the colorfulness of current furniture, and carrying the City of Minneapolis blue theme through to new furnishings can help maintain continuity with the pilot improvements even as specific fixtures shift.

Lessons Learned

Connecting with People and Caring for the Public Realm

Anyone who has operated spaces in the public realm knows: people use spaces and sometimes the evidence is all too clear - litter, markings, stolen furniture, removed plants and the like. The key is to be responsive in caring for spaces and ultimately to build social connections that diminish the occurrence of them in the first place. In the words of Ambassador Team Leader Marc Woods, "connect before you correct." The project team frequently anchors our mobility hub approach in our shared goal: for people to use these spaces. The result of use is wear and tear. The goal is not to eliminate wear and tear, as that would entail discouraging use. If we are successful, wear and tear will occur and proper care and maintenance will be required.

Strong social connections between ambassadors and frequent users were an effective tool this season that made an impact on the frequency of these site issues. The Northside ambassador team reported strong social connections forming as their regular routine of maintenance and on-site activations unfolded. It was sites that were under their care that seemed to result in less litter at Northside hubs and fewer instances of plants being removed from their planters, according to feedback from the team. It's a small sample size, but this points to a well-documented point that people take better care of places that they feel connected to and ownership of.

Design can be part of the solution to address these common behavior-driven site issues - like how the furniture design for this year helped mitigate litter and make writing/markings easier to remove. But at the core of a mobility hub approach has to be an understanding that people who see sites being consistently cared for and who feel their own experience be valued will over time be more impactful than design can be in diminishing these outcomes.

> People seeing sites being consistently cared for and feeling their own experience valued will over time be more impactful than design can be in diminishing negative outcomes.

Challenges

Overall, of 300+ units of furniture with none of it locked or bolted to the ground, a total of 15 units or about 5% went missing. One strategy exercised this year for a site that was losing pieces of folding chair furniture was clearly marking all the units as part of a City program. Whereas the standard had been to place "contact us" stickers on at least one furniture piece per site, having markings on all units might have diminished incidents where property managers who were not aware of the pilot removed furniture and diminished the removal of furniture that may have been seen as untended by members of the public. Given that public spaces were as in-active as they've ever been, one would expect fewer "eyes on the street" to have led to a spike in missing furniture. On the contrary, the situation remained consistent with 2019 results.

Safe Public Spaces for Everyone

The project team also wants to acknowledge the ways that community members utilized mobility hub features to meet their own most pressing needs. Ostensibly, our furniture became part of someone's emergency housing solution (encampment). It became part of several people's emergency income strategy (signing/panhandling). Both cases represent the kind of adaptation that, if playing out in other ways, would be celebrated as an insightful pilot design iteration, which is why the team took no actions to discourage users from participating in the pilot feedback process just like any other community member. We see it as a poignant reminder that in the lives of many community members, there isn't a line between infrastructure for housing, for transportation, or for work - your whole life unfolds in the public realm. It's our responsibility to ensure that as we shape a more human-centered public space, we emphasize that dignity for all can and should include the housing insecure and people experiencing homelessness.

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2020 MOBILITY HUB PILOT
ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

PARTNERSHIPS

This year's engagement results encompass responses from the following partnerships and methods. All partners were compensated for their work.

» **Saint Anthony East Neighborhood Association** (SAENA) phone survey

» Socially distant in-person survey and online focus group with **Alexis Pennie**

» Survey promotion through **Native American Community Development Institute and West Bank Business Association**

» Other online survey responses

Does having places to sit, bright colored signs, clear places to park scooters and bikes, and information about nearby places make you more or less likely to get around by bus, bike, scooter or walking?

69%

RESPONDED

"MORE LIKELY"

With COVID-19 and the unrest in our neighborhoods this year, is there anything about your transportation options that could be changed to make your trip easier during this time?

What makes you feel safe and comfortable while taking the bus, walking, or riding scooters now? What could be improved that would make you feel more safe and comfortable?

1. CLEANING
2. DISCOUNTS
3. SHUTTLES TO SERVICES

Good lighting
28%

Well maintained spaces
27%

Colorful, welcoming furnishings
21%

More non-police personnel
17%

ENGAGEMENT

» Engagement partnership grants ensured that opportunities for input came through groups who already had relationships and communication methods established to effectively communicate during this unprecedented time.

» When surveys that include demographic data are combined, the results mirror the demographics of the city as a whole: 68% White and 23% Black or African American, and slightly more female than male.

2020 Engagement Approach

With support from three partnering organizations, community engagement around the Mobility Hub Pilot expanded in 2020, even as the coronavirus pandemic dramatically reduced in-person engagement. Instead of trying to create new champions in this environment, we expanded our engagement partnership grants to ensure that groups who already had relationships and communication methods established could keep the conversation going in this unprecedented time.

Despite these limitations, 2020 engagement improved in both reach and quality through the partnership approach. This year's engagement results encompassed responses from the following partnerships and methods.

Partnerships and Key Insights

Northeast Minneapolis

Partner: St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association

Method: Compensated Phone Survey with postcard notification to residents of public housing + senior living complexes near Central + Spring Street mobility hub pilot site, online survey distribution through the neighborhood newsletter.

Outcomes: 64 responses, in-depth conversations on transportation needs, relationships built within SAENA to benefit future impact. SAENA's comprehensive report and survey analysis, linked **here**.

Key Themes + Findings: The SAENA partnership demonstrated the value of intensive engagement as a method for data collection. Longer, more in-depth, financially compensated phone surveys were well-suited to these residents. The phone interviews led to positive relationships between residents and the neighborhood organization, as well as more in-depth answers. SAENA

reported that this kind of outreach design is something they hope to replicate in their future projects. This partnership also allowed the overall engagement strategy to better capture the urban senior demographic.

Key Themes + Findings:

1. Respondents would like to see improvements at this intersection that make them feel more safe and comfortable while walking or rolling to the bus stop or waiting for the bus. Improvements in lighting, seating, and maintenance of the space are most important. Their transportation habits for work are largely unchanged as a result of the pandemic, but recreational trips are down.

2. Broader neighborhood feedback emphasized improved visual appeal and lighting, but also transit service for the area. As a result of Covid-19 and unrest this group has stayed home, walked more, and stopped using public transit to commute.

3. Central Avenue and Spring Street was not a welcome space for any mode of travel. The area was poorly lit and feels unsafe in its current condition.

North Minneapolis

Partner: Alexis Pennie

Method: Distributed survey at mobility hubs, to local businesses, hosted Virtual Community Conversation and Neighborhood Clean Up.

Outcomes: 150+ survey responses, greater awareness of pilot among neighborhood leaders, businesses

Key Themes + Findings: The Alexis Pennie partnership allowed the project team to recieve feedback from people who were continuing to ride transit despite the pandemic, and from people who were actively using mobility hub spaces over the summer and fall. These survey responses are reflected in the question-by-question results to follow.

Another component of the outreach led by partner Alexis Pennie was a focus group with members of the North Minneapolis community. As a resident of the Jordan Neighborhood and longtime Northside cycling advocate, Alexis gathered attendees through both this existing network and new participants who learned about the engagement through posters on-site. The following themes arose in the 1.5 hour conversation:

1. Vehicular and personal safety continues to be a major priority to address at mobility hubs and throughout the transportation system.

2. People are interested in seeing new approaches to make people feel safer. Three broad categories emerged: technology improvements, infrastructure improvements, better communication on rules/how to stay safe while biking, and activation/staffing (like ambassadors or through the existing City systems).

South/Central Minneapolis

Partner: Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI)

Method: Small-scale, outdoor popup on site to promote survey and gather feedback.

Outcomes: NACDI's deep ties in the Native American community around Franklin Avenue supported getting feedback in ways that felt relevant to community members while promoting civic participation.

Key Themes + Findings: NACDI discussed the mobility hub pilot with their participants and invited them to take the pilot survey. The following themes emerged from their conversations:

1. Community members were most interested in Nice Ride use as a way to access transit and as an alternative to driving.

2. Use was highest in the evening, typically for errands or returning from school/work.

3. Desire for larger, winter-ready tires on the bikes and for more of the bikes to be electric because it was useful to people who can't drive, don't want to pay for gas, and benefit the environment.

4. Desire for more mobility hubs on Franklin Ave.

5. Positive feedback about the mobility hub concept overall and feeling that Minneapolis was taking an innovative approach.

6. Desire for more free ride passes to encourage new riders to utilize other modes.

West Bank/Cedar Riverside

Partner: West Bank Business Association

Method: Ambassadors promoted the online survey through postcards shared on site and created input opportunities for WBBA member businesses.

Outcomes: Two bus stops with broken fixtures and safety issues prior to the mobility hub pilot were resolved and awareness of input opportunities increased.

Key Themes: WBBA incorporated some limited engagement opportunities into their Ambassador Pilot approach, highlighting future opportunities to have outreach to businesses inform a mobility hub approach in commercial centers.

1. An increased presence of Nice Ride bikes and scooters made residents feel positively about their ability to use those modes.

2. The Ambassador approach was well-received in the neighborhood by businesses and users. Positive feedback mostly centered around their contributions to keeping the streets clean and keeping planters.

3. One business owner noticed significant improvements to the safety of the mobility hub at Cedar and 3rd St. The project team was able to coordinate with Metro Transit to have a bus stop lighting fixture replaced.

4. Negative feedback from businesses on the West Bank focused on loitering concerns, from youth spending time there to people panhandling while using furniture at mobility hubs.

Other online survey responses

The survey was also accessible through QR codes on wayfinding maps and sent via several email distribution lists, though this was not a focus of the approach.

Who We Heard From

A total of 207 responses were collected.

The resulting survey groups capture multiple demographics. Alexis Pennie's respondents were not asked to provide demographic data, but were all transit users living and/or working in North Minneapolis. SAENA partially targeted their survey toward senior residents living near their neighborhood's mobility hub (Central Ave. and Spring St.). SAENA's respondents were 44% White and 55% Black or African American in total. The online survey was distributed to neighborhood groups and business associations throughout Minneapolis, but respondents were 83% White in total. When surveys that include demographic data are combined, the results mirror the demographics of the city as a whole: 68% White and 23% Black or African American, and slightly more female than male. Including Alexis Pennie's responses, the survey is generally representative of the transit-riding population of Minneapolis.

As needed, the survey questions were adapted to reflect the method of distribution, such as a phone or online survey needing to reference site details that a person taking the survey on site can see around them.

Further Input to Explore

Looking forward to future engagement, input on the following themes would be beneficial:

1. Identify future mobility hub sites

2. Identify barriers to using mobility hubs

3. Opportunities to foster community ownership over parts of mobility hubs

Survey Response Analysis

Short Trips

Respondents had the opportunity to choose multiple answers for this question, and the vast majority did--they ride transit, walk, bike, and/or drive. Different trips, whether they vary in purpose or length, are suited for different forms of transportation. Transit, walking and biking already have significant user bases in the neighborhoods where mobility hubs are piloted. To fulfill its role as a carbon reduction strategy, mobility hubs can seek to enhance the ease and reliability of these modes to seek to decrease the need to drive alone on short trips.

Trips to Bus Stop

With transit as a backbone for a mobility hub system, mobility hubs can be tailored in design toward how neighborhood residents want to access bus and light rail. Respondents to the survey primarily walk, use a wheelchair, and/or ride a bike or Nice Ride to the bus stop, which would suggest that prioritizing these modes at mobility hubs would best support transit use.

Transit Riding

Most online survey respondents currently ride or previously rode the bus pre-COVID, with varying degrees of frequency. However, the pandemic has had a significant impact on ridership. This illustrates the need for alternative transportation for transit riders as the effects of the pandemic continue.
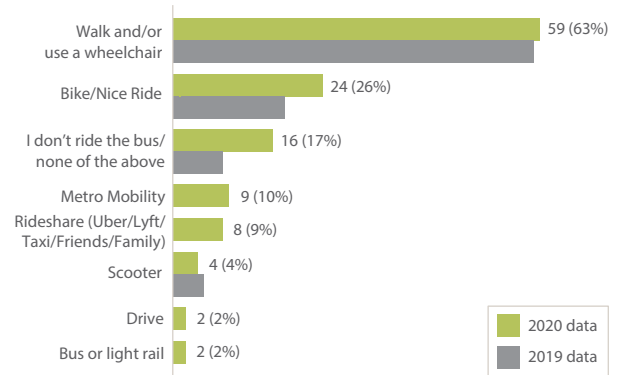
Respondents who rode/ride the bus do/did so because they perceive it to be convenient, environmentally sustainable, and inexpensive.

Those that do not ride the bus say it's because they prefer the train, that the trip is too slow, is inconvenient, expensive, unsafe (regarding crime and coronavirus), and because they drive instead. Despite the disruption of COVID-19, these rider desires are consistent with those of riders in the 2019 survey. To address some of these barriers to additional ridership, mobility hubs can incorporate rail station-like enhancements like lighting, heat, and real time signage, and continue to prioritize safety and convenience improvements.
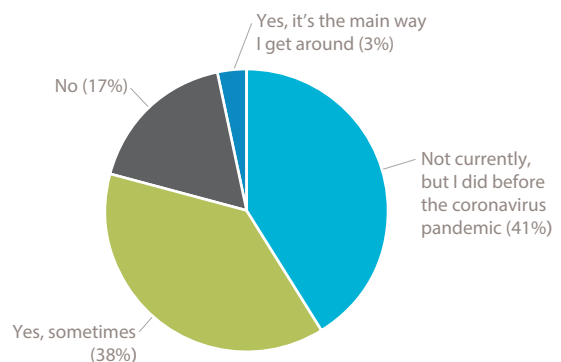
Survey Results: *For short trips, how do you travel to the location?*

Bus or light rail — 56 (57%)
Walk and/or use a wheelchair — 48 (49%)
Bike/Nice Ride — 45 (46%)
Drive — 43 (44%)
Scooter — 6 (6%)
Metro Mobility — 2 (2%)
Rideshare (Uber/Lyft/Taxi/Friends/Family) — 0 (0%)

Legend: 2020 data, 2019 data

Survey Results: *Do you use any of these transportation types to get to or from the bus stop?*

Walk and/or use a wheelchair — 59 (63%)
Bike/Nice Ride — 24 (26%)
I don't ride the bus/ none of the above — 16 (17%)
Metro Mobility — 9 (10%)
Rideshare (Uber/Lyft/Taxi/Friends/Family) — 8 (9%)
Scooter — 4 (4%)
Drive — 2 (2%)
Bus or light rail — 2 (2%)

Legend: 2020 data, 2019 data

Survey Results: *Do you ride the bus?*

Yes, it's the main way I get around (3%)
Not currently, but I did before the coronavirus pandemic (41%)
Yes, sometimes (38%)
No (17%)

"Bus was my main mode of transport before covid but now seems too dangerous due to varying levels of compliance with social distancing, so I have become very limited in where I can go."
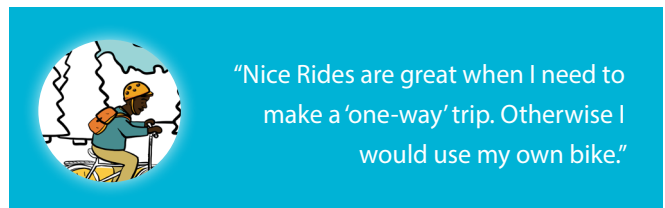
Nice Ride Use

The Nice Ride program, having just completed a decade in the Twin Cities, has achieved considerable reach among respondents to the online survey. The majority of respondents use Nice Ride because it's inexpensive and because it's a good backup option when primary modes are unavailable. Those who have not, or prefer not to, say it's because they have their own bikes, the Nice Ride system is too difficult, it's expensive, or it doesn't serve their neighborhood. Nice Ride has also proven to be more resilient in the face of the pandemic, losing fewer active users in 2020 than other transportation options discussed in the survey. Especially in neighborhoods where Nice Ride is not as familiar, mobility hubs can assist new users to understand how to use the service and further work to promote discount program options through programming and signage.

Unlike the transit system, many Nice Ride users don't make repeat trips using the service - they help fill in transportation needs for one-way trips or to substitute for their own bike on occasion. This information can help mobility hubs gear their Nice Ride support features toward things that help people orient themselves toward their destination and help them navigate a system they're less familiar with than transit.
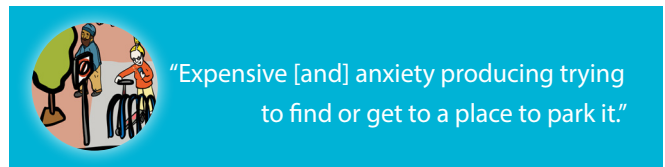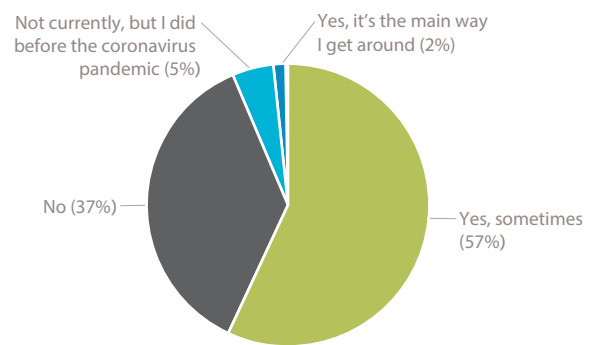
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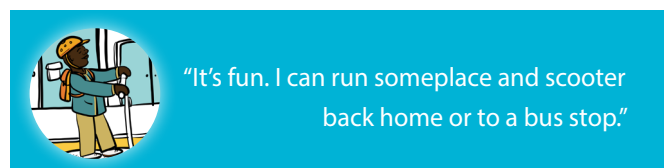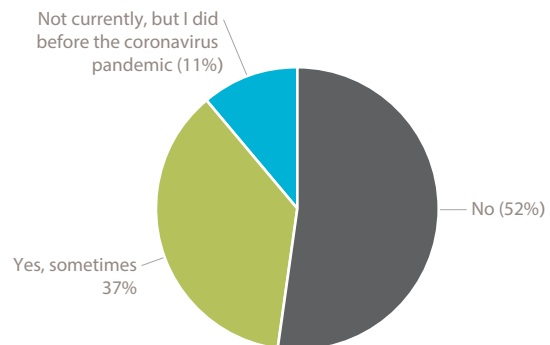
Scooter Use

Scooters showed continued support among occasional users, with some limitations for users who are older. People who avoid electric scooters do so because they own a bike or scooter, they see scooters as dangerous, too expensive, or they are hard to find in their neighborhood. People who do ride electric scooters say that they're fun and good for the occasional short trip. Ensuring that scooter parking and riding instructions are provided at mobility hubs can help enhance people's comfort with this mode, as it is still relatively new in Minneapolis.

"Nice Rides are great when I need to make a 'one-way' trip. Otherwise I would use my own bike."

Survey Results: *Have you ever used a Nice Ride bike?*

Not currently, but I did before the coronavirus pandemic (5%)

Yes, it's the main way I get around (2%)

No (37%)

Yes, sometimes (57%)

"Expensive [and] anxiety producing trying to find or get to a place to park it."

Survey Results: *Have you ever used an electric scooter?*

Not currently, but I did before the coronavirus pandemic (11%)

No (52%)

Yes, sometimes 37%

"It's fun. I can run someplace and scooter back home or to a bus stop."

HOURCAR Use

Approximately 22% of survey respondents reported that they use HOURCAR. Those that do say that it fits well with their lifestyle (college, young adult, etc). Those that don't say it's because they have their own vehicle, it's expensive, hard to find or understand, or it's completely unknown to them. Some stated that they are interested in the concept. This data suggests that there is a need for enhanced awareness of this mode, which could be supported at mobility hubs through consistent signage (wayfinding and landing signs, as some hourcar placements are not at the immediate hub corner) and partnered promotions at events.
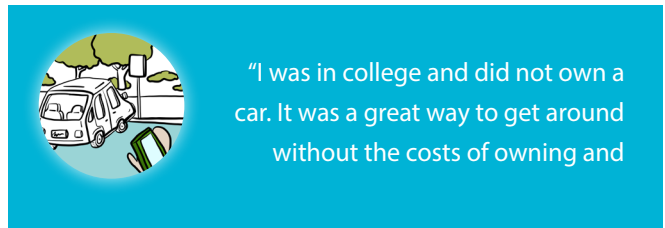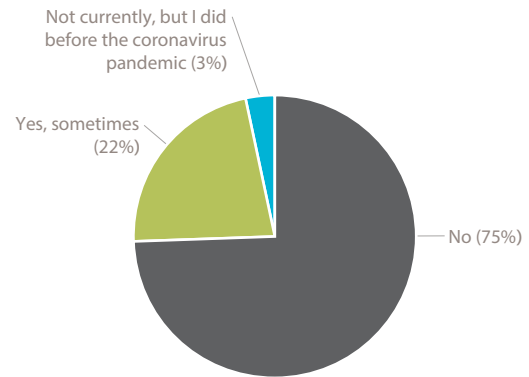
75% of respondents had never used an HOURCAR.
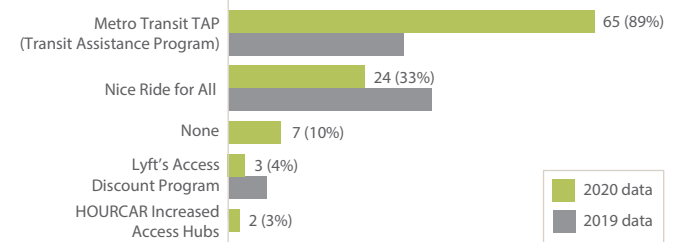
Discount Program Awareness

TAP is very well-known, while most other programs lack name recognition. However, this makes sense given the types of transportation respondents use the most. Among respondents to the survey from 2019 to 2020, the greatest increase in discount program awareness was for Metro Transit's TAP program - up by about 47%. Some of this change may be attributable to enhanced promotion of TAP during COVID and the expansion of eligibility to people who are unemployed. Awareness of other discount programs are still low and mobility hubs users would benefit from more opportunities to interact with these providers.

Between 2019 and 2020, awareness of the Metro Transit's TAP program went up by 47%.

Survey Results: *Have you ever used an HOURCAR (car share) ?*

Not currently, but I did before the coronavirus pandemic (3%)

Yes, sometimes (22%)

No (75%)

"I was in college and did not own a car. It was a great way to get around without the costs of owning and

Survey Results: *Check the box for the discount programs you knew about before this survey.*

Metro Transit TAP (Transit Assistance Program) — 65 (89%)

Nice Ride for All — 24 (33%)

None — 7 (10%)

Lyft's Access Discount Program — 3 (4%)

HOURCAR Increased Access Hubs — 2 (3%)

2020 data
2019 data

Site Specific Questions

The on-site and phone surveys conducted by the St. Anthony East Neighborhood Association and North Minneapolis engagement partner Alexis Pennie explored the opportunity to talk with respondents more at length about their experience with the mobility hub pilot and the transportation system in 2020 overall. They are also conversations in the context of the hubs that the respondent is at or lives blocks away from, so they reflect a unique opportunity to get granular feedback on the program.
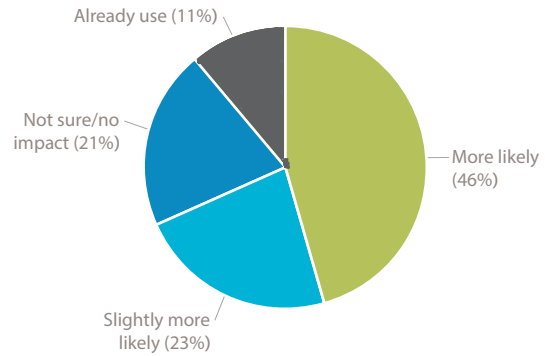
Experience at Mobility Hubs

Nobody surveyed felt negatively about these additions (places to sit, bright colored signs, clear places to park scooters and bikes, and information about nearby places) to the public realm. 68% of respondents reported that mobility hub improvements impacted their mode choice. Their responses reflect a broad affirmation of the need for inclusive infrastructure in the streetscape to support multi-modal users.

69% of respondents reported that mobility hub improvements impacted their mode choice.

How have your mobility habits changed since COVID-19?

Respondents to the SAENA survey have generally reduced their trip volume due to the effects of the pandemic: whether that's due to the virus itself, loss of employment, or decreased opportunities to socialize. Some who are still making regular trips minimize their bus ridership, preferring to get rides from friends when possible. Others have maintained their normal trips, despite pandemic-related concerns. Overall, survey respondents were experiencing greater restrictions to their transportation options due to COVID-19 and were filling the gap through either support from their friends and family with cars or by eliminating their trips altogether.

Survey Results: *Does having places to sit, bright colored signs, clear places to park scooters and bikes, and information about nearby places make you more or less likely to get around by bus, bike, scooter or walking?*

- Already use (11%)
- Not sure/no impact (21%)
- More likely (46%)
- Slightly more likely (23%)

"[I find it] more difficult getting around downtown especially when the bus schedule is so limited/stop running at all. Just restricted to being at home because they rely on public transportation."

"[I'm] traveling less because less people are willing to help me get around - to keep [social] distance"

"We need more scooters in our neighborhood. Bikes are not just for leisure. People in lower income neighborhoods depend on them for transportation to work and school. We should always be fully stocked and drivers that deliver the bikes and scooters should be trained to be equitable."

What is most important to making your trip better?

When asked what was most important to making their trip better, or what would make their experience at the intersection of Spring and Central better (for SAENA respondents, there were consistent themes. There are similar desires among respondents for traditional trip improvements, like higher bus frequency, and nontraditional trip improvements, like the addition of places to sit and gather. Those considering improvements to transit service should expand their reach beyond traditional changes, while still promoting the basics. We heard as much from our respondents: improvements in placemaking and visual appeal are most effective when one is waiting for a bus they know will come in a timely manner.
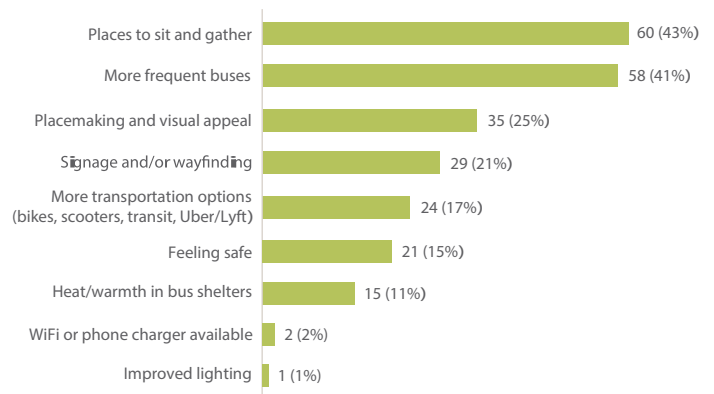
2020 Subject Focus: Safety and Responsive Programming

The following two questions were delivered in every survey method deployed in 2020. It was important to the project team to understand the specific challenges and barriers mobility hub users were facing this season and in other seasons also impacted by COVID-19. The 2019 survey had identified "feeling safe" as a key improvement to focus on, but we wanted to create an opportunity to dive deeper on what that means to people in the context of mobility hubs.
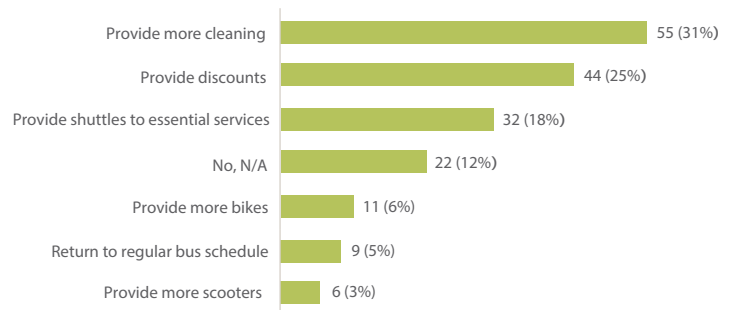
With COVID-19 and the unrest in our neighborhoods this year, is there anything about your transportation options that could be changed to make your trip easier during this time?

Respondents are reacting to the limitations of our current state. They're looking for cleaner, less expensive, and more efficient transportation to meet their needs. Many of those surveyed also expressed hope for more respectful behavior from their fellow passengers, but disagree on how best to enforce that goal: responses are evenly divided on whether increased or decreased policing is the solution. Others are hoping to decrease their bus travel through alternative modes, and see protected bike lanes as necessary support of that mode alternative. They want to get to their destination safely, comfortably, and efficiently.

Survey Results: *What is most important to making your trip better?*

Places to sit and gather	60 (43%)
More frequent buses	58 (41%)
Placemaking and visual appeal	35 (25%)
Signage and/or wayfinding	29 (21%)
More transportation options (bikes, scooters, transit, Uber/Lyft)	24 (17%)
Feeling safe	21 (15%)
Heat/warmth in bus shelters	15 (11%)
WiFi or phone charger available	2 (2%)
Improved lighting	1 (1%)

Survey Results: *With COVID-19 and the unrest in our neighborhoods this year, is there anything about your transportation options that could be changed to make your trip easier during this time?*

Provide more cleaning	55 (31%)
Provide discounts	44 (25%)
Provide shuttles to essential services	32 (18%)
No, N/A	22 (12%)
Provide more bikes	11 (6%)
Return to regular bus schedule	9 (5%)
Provide more scooters	6 (3%)

"Since some of my bus trips have been replaced with biking, I've become super aware of the unsafe places to bike like Franklin Ave. It would be really nice if there were better separation between bicyclists and cars...so that I didn't have to be quite so afraid of being hit by a car now that I'm putting more miles on my bike."
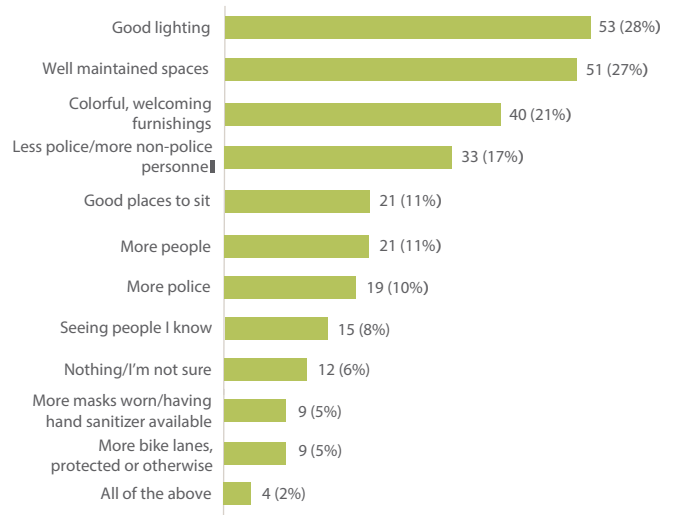
"Much more frequent buses and assurance that all bus drivers are following rules about passenger limits. Also different options such as safe/low cost transport that cannot carry many people (like Uber/lyft) and ventilation on buses and physical distance/barriers (little plexiglass pod rooms, or barriers between each seat.)"

What makes you feel safe and comfortable while taking the bus, biking, walking or riding scooters now? What could be improved that would make you feel more safe and comfortable?

Respondents' top answers all came down to the built environment--not to policing or pandemic precautions, though less policing and more masks are preferred. Adequate lighting, consistent maintenance, and colorful furnishings are all tangible indicators of a service provider that cares about riders' daily experience. The mobility hub system can be a way to provide that level of care while adding convenient, desired features like additional transportation options and more places to sit. However, it must be implemented in conjunction with basics like reliable bus service.

"The only thing that makes me feel comfortable right now is walking and biking on the greenway. To improve the city, greatly reduce the number of people driving cars. Do this by pedestrianizing all local streets and dedicating larger corridors to transit with bus-only lanes, leaving less room for car culture to dominate."

"Lighting is also a big safety concern for me, in terms of walking, biking, scooters, and the bus. Sidewalks, trails, and bus stops are often not well illuminated and this makes me feel unsafe in those spaces. Also, it makes me uncomfortable when there are only a few people on the bus, especially at night. Poor lighting outside plus less people is not a great combination in terms of (feelings of) safety."

Survey Results: *What makes you feel safe and comfortable while taking the bus, walking, or riding scooters now? What could be improved that would make you feel more safe and comfortable?*

Category	Value
Good lighting	53 (28%)
Well maintained spaces	51 (27%)
Colorful, welcoming furnishings	40 (21%)
Less police/more non-police personnel	33 (17%)
Good places to sit	21 (11%)
More people	21 (11%)
More police	19 (10%)
Seeing people I know	15 (8%)
Nothing/I'm not sure	12 (6%)
More masks worn/having hand sanitizer available	9 (5%)
More bike lanes, protected or otherwise	9 (5%)
All of the above	4 (2%)

Contextual Notes

To contextualize trip data for this season, it is important to note the factors outside of the pilot that survey respondents reported affecting their trips. In the online survey, 80% of respondents reported a change in their employment status as a result of the pandemic, with 66% of total respondents now working remotely or unemployed, therefore reducing their work-related trips. In the SAENA survey, most Saint Anthony East residents reported a reduction in their typical trips. Therefore, while changes in sentiments tracked in the survey and improvements made at hubs can be adequately compared between both years of the mobility hub pilot, indicators like mode usage and ridership are too deeply affected by the pandemic to gauge the effectiveness of this year's hubs through raw numbers.

When combined with new partnerships, the engagement's reach broadened despite the limitations of the pandemic. In total, the 2020 survey engagement efforts documented feedback from 206 participants, many of which came through conversations that went deeper than multiple-choice questions. Conversational-style questioning had the potential to make data compilation more difficult, but in the end led to a better understanding of where the project team's questions were limited in scope and what attitudes the team may have failed to account for when creating surveys. A mix of interviews and simple surveys is the best path forward for future engagement.

"Today I start my new job in the Elliot Park Area and this [the plaza at 3rd and 12th] was the perfect place to wait for my day to begin. I think more seating areas like this would be great for making downtown more inviting of pedestrians and people on work breaks. It's nice to get out during breaks and not just eat lunch in our offices!

So thank you for inviting feedback. This little seating area has made my first day on the job a bit better!"

Scooter Share Data

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impacts on scooter share ridership in the City of Minneapolis during the 2020 program year. The program launch was delayed to July, shortening the data collection period. Using 2018 as a baseline, the City saw a 361% increase in ridership from 2018 to 2019, but then an 86% reduction in ridership from 2019 to 2020. 2020 ridership was only 36% lower than 2018 ridership. Besides public health concerns from users, the stay at home orders and the shift to working from home resulted in a significant loss in daily daytime commuter users. Since Minneapolis usually sees a higher percentage of rides during the week than other cities due to more commute versus recreational trips, Minneapolis saw higher losses than other cities. As more trips became recreational, we saw the length of the trips increase (2019- 1.1 miles/ride and 13.13 minutes/ride, 2020- 2.24 miles/ride and 19.98 minutes/ride). Ridership increased throughout the season and also increased at many of our Mobility Hub locations once the placemaking and parking elements were installed (see below). Mobility Hubs with ambassador and community program also saw even higher increases in trips starting or ending near the hubs, such as Penn and Lowry and locations in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. The percentage of trips starting or ending in ACP50 areas also remained flat, despite the ridership loss, aided by equity distribution requirements and the placement of Hubs in those neighborhoods.
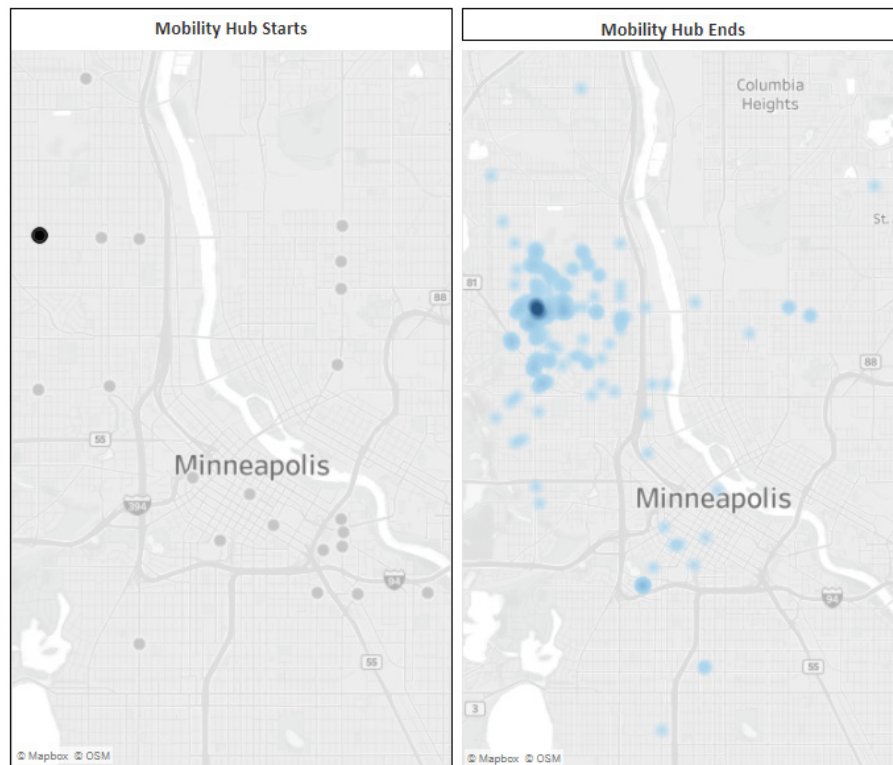
Table: Trip Counts Starting or Ending Near a Mobiltiy Hub

		before 2020	during 2020
Downtown	7th St N & 9th St N (Glenwood)		
	7th St S & Chicago Ave S		
	12th St S & 3rd Ave S		
	City Hall/Government Plaza Station		
North	44th Ave N & Humboldt Ave N		
	Lowry Ave N & Fremont Ave N		
	Lowry Ave N & Lyndale Ave N		
	Lowry Ave N & Penn Ave N		
	Plymouth Ave N & Emerson Ave N		
	Plymouth Ave N & Penn Ave N		
Northeast	18th Ave NE & Central Ave NE		
	22nd Ave NE & Central Ave NE		
	26th Ave NE & Central Ave NE		
	Spring St NE & Central Ave NE		
South	26th St W & Lyndale Ave S		
	Franklin Ave E & Bloomington Ave S		
West Bank/Cedar Riverside	3rd St S & Cedar Ave S		
	Cedar Ave S (Riverside Plaza)		
	Cedar Ave S & Washington Ave S (7 Corners)		
	Cedar-Riverside Station		
	Franklin Ave E & 29th Ave S (Riverside Ave)		
	Franklin Ave E & Minnehaha Ave		

Source: Data from scooter share providers for the 2020 pilot period from July through December 2020.

The City also analyzed the reach of trips starting or ending at Mobility Hubs. See below for where trips starting at the Penn and Lowry Mobility Hub ended, which shows both neighborhood and longer trips.

Map: Scooter Trips Starting or Ending at Mobility Hubs

Source: Data from scooter share providers for the 2020 pilot period from July through December 2020. Link to open data portal

Scooter Share User Survey Data

Respondents to the scooter share user survey distributed by both Minneapolis operators - Lyft and Bird – reported that an average of 23% of scooter trips were used to connect to or from transit stops. Respondents reported that an average of 51% of scooter trips replaced use of a personal car, Uber/Lyft, or taxi. Questions related to COVID-19 verified some of our assumptions around ridership trends as well. 52% of respondents reported they were not commuting to work. Whereas 40% of respondents reported that COVID-19 had no impact on their scooter usage, 30% indicated they used scooters less often. When asked if they were using a scooter to avoid certain modes of transportation: 28% reported using scooters to avoid public transit, 28% reported avoiding Uber/Lyft rideshare, and 21% reported they would not have made a trip, had a scooter not been available.

Bike Share Data

Bike share ridership near Mobility Hubs was highest downtown (Government Plaza - 498 rides), in the Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood (Seven Corners - 799 rides), and in South Minneapolis (Lyndale and 26th - 614 rides). Traditional docking stations for classic bikes outperformed lightweight e-bike stations. Not having classic docking stations at all Mobility Hubs impacted the ridership, with users still preferring classic bikes. One surprise was the low ridership (16 rides) at the classic docking station added this season at North Market.

Source: Data from Nice Ride for the 2020 pilot period from July through December 2020.

Other Indicators and Feedback Opportunities

Beyond formal surveys, feedback can also be captured through other less formal means, such as media coverage, social media conversations, open comment emails, and reports from users on site.

On-Site Information and Email

Stickers were placed at many of this year's locations with an email address for feedback. Though a small sample size, these brief, in-the-moment pieces of feedback provided a more informal mechanism for connecting with users.

Business/Property Owner Feedback

Throughout the pilot there were several instances where the project team worked to connect with adjacent businesses and property owners. While the overall impact on the businesses from COVID made tracking the pilot's impact on the businesses' sales over the season unclear, their feedback was still a valuable tool to guide implementation.

» **North Market**

The North Market grocery store also operated as a COVID test site this year and the managers there were supportive of the project and helped determine the right placement of mobility hub elements.

» **Lyndale Ave Businesses**

Businesses adjacent to the Lyndale Ave & 22nd hub and the Lyndale & 26th hub were both eager to give input on those pilot locations. Both were supportive of the installation at their site. They also felt positively toward elements that complemented the existing streetscape and were well-integrated.

» **Central Lutheran Church and Minneapolis Convention Center (3rd Ave and 12th St)**

The mobility hub at 3rd Ave & 12th St was placed in consultation with leadership at Central Lutheran Church and the Minneapolis Convention Center. Their position was primarily neutral with a concern raised around the limitations of the automobile free-right turning movement that is restricted by opening that space up for the mobility hub.

» **First Covenant Church of Minneapolis (Chicago and 7th)**

The project team was able to meet with the church and other property owners nearby to share information about the project and how input was being collected. With the recent pilot-to-permanent improvements made to the sidewalk bump outs, participants were enthusiastic to see similar long-term improvements follow these mobility hub pilots.

"I just wanted to say I love the light-blue boxy installations set up around the city! They bring a pop of color where needed and are delightful! Please keep them up. Thank you for doing this!"

Earned Media and Online Forums

As the pilot sites grew in number, so did the awareness of the public regarding the mobility hub pilot. This season the mobility hub pilot was featured in several webinar presentations (Shared Use Mobility Center, MnDOT Shared Mobility Webinar) and one industry news article. The 2020 pilot enjoyed greater online exposure than 2019 both through traditional channels and social media like Twitter. One article describes the mission of the project:

> "In an open field near the major intersection of Penn and Lowry Avenues in North Minneapolis, across the street from a liquor store and near several churches and a school, resides one of the city's pilot "mobility hubs," one of 25 spaces designed to increase access to low- or no-carbon transportation options.

> The idea is that by concentrating various modes of transportation in strategically placed, centralized locations, people will be more likely to use public or shared transportation. City officials hope that the project ultimately reduces the reliance on personal vehicles for those that have them and increases mobility for those that don't."
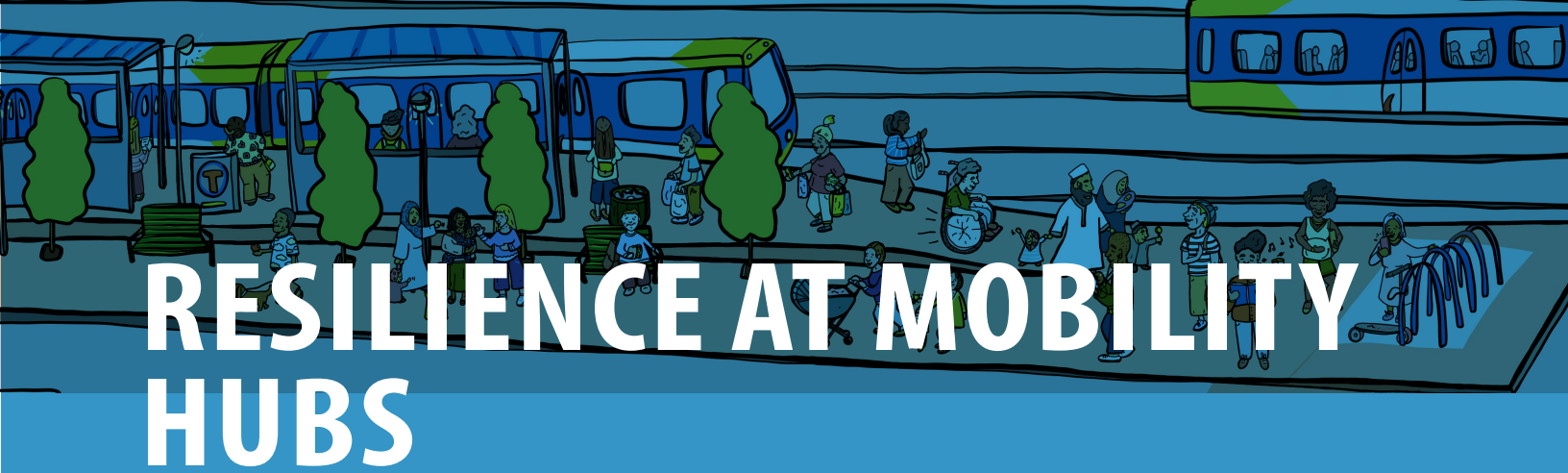
The full article, "Mobility Hubs Become Community Anchors in Minneapolis" by Cinnamon Janzer can be read on NextCity.org.

I like these blue things that just started to appear out of nowhere

Tweet your reply

RESILIENCE AT MOBILITY HUBS

The events of 2020 provided an unplanned and unexpected window into what kind of role mobility hubs can play in producing more resilient, socially connected neighborhoods during crises.

The mobility hub pilot sites are in neighborhoods where many residents are essential workers, experienced higher numbers of COVID cases, and/or experienced loss of income during necessary public health shutdowns[1]. These neighborhoods had to simultaneously respond to trauma within communities of color after the death of George Floyd and come together to respond to new dynamics disrupting neighborhood safety.

During the 2020 mobility hub pilot, several powerful examples of neighborhood resilience emerged, coming from existing neighborhood leadership and materializing at mobility hub spaces by nature of their central location, usage, and provision of public space. If future mobility hub programs maintain and amplify the qualities that made this possible, then greater social connections, better ways to reach people during crisis, and efficient public resource distribution can occur. This is an opportunity to build this program with the next challenges in mind - fortifying existing assets and investing in new ways for communities to emerge even stronger after COVID and better able to withstand future crises.

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1   For data on Minneapolis neighborhood COVID case data, view the latest on the City of [Minneapolis dashboard.](#)

Defining Resilience

In the process of creating a resilience strategy, the City of Minneapolis has defined resilience in the following way:

"City resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and *thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.*

What does this actually mean? We are working to make sure everyone in Minneapolis has what they need to thrive in good times and in bad – especially individuals and communities who may be more vulnerable due to things such as lower wealth, environmental threats, or structural racism."
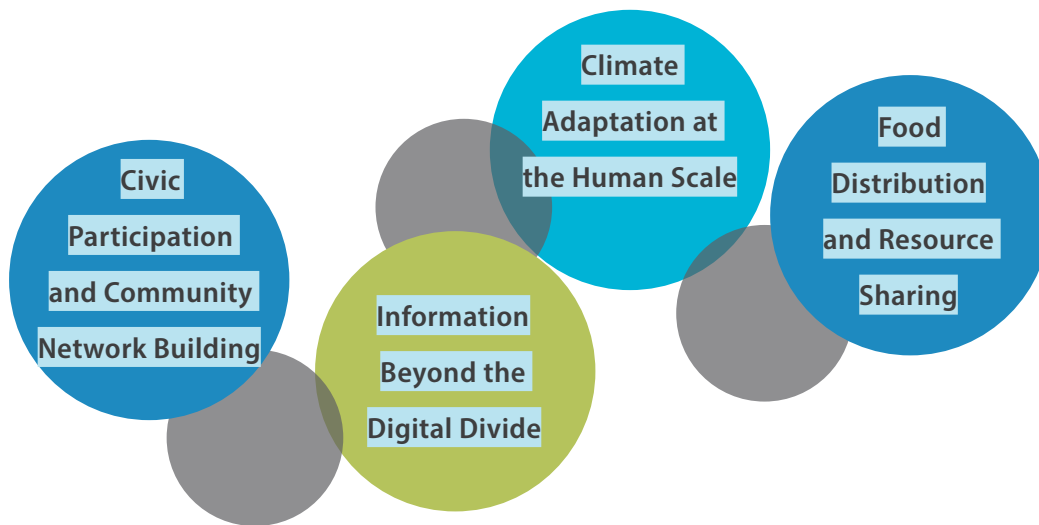
Transportation Resilience

A robust mobility hub network would contribute to resilience by increasing Minneapolis residents' accesss to destinations and contributing to redundancy in the transportation system. Redundancy means that during disruptions to one part of the system, users have the opportunity to easily fill their trip needs in another parallel way. For example, in 2020, many bus riders experienced localized service shutdowns during the unrest. With reliable, convenient additional modes that don't rely on car ownership, users are better able to navigate in times of uncertainty or sudden change.

For more on how mobility hubs functioned as substitute transportation options and could improve as a service during a pandemic, see the Engagement Deep Dive.

Examples of Resilience at Mobility Hubs

Mobility hubs, as key connection points in the public realm where people come to access transportation modes, have the potential to serve broader resilience goals as well. There are numerous ways this could unfold, but rather than list out potential solutions, the following section illustrates scenarios that are already occurring.

Climate
Adaptation at
the Human Scale

Food
Distribution
and Resource
Sharing

Civic
Participation
and Community
Network Building

Information
Beyond the
Digital Divide

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY NETWORK BUILDING

Increased civic participation improves the ability of community members to shape the outcomes of issues that affect their lives and builds localized networks of information. In a similar respect, resilient communities have spaces where people can run into each other and keep up the kind of loose community connections that become critical when organizing a response to a crisis.

Neighborhood Resilience at Mobility Hubs Grant

Funded in part by a micro-grant within the Mobility Hub pilot, the Native American Community Development Institute (NACDI) hosted two of their Make Voting A Tradition (MVAT) events - socially distanced - at the Franklin and Bloomington mobility hub. NACDI has been using MVAT events in the neighborhood for seven years to build strong relationships with Indigenous residents and increase voter registration and turnout, making their voices heard in the democratic process. This year they also promoted the importance of completing the Census in their community to ensure equitable distribution of resources.

Informal Voter Information Distribution

Throughout the leadup to the 2020 election, voter information packets and educational signage on how to vote during the pandemic were seen at South Minneapolis Mobility hubs.

Parklet Painting at Penn and Lowry

Led by a Northside Mobility Hub Ambassador, this event served to build capacity among youth in executing community arts events and serve as a platform for their voice and vision to shape the design of the space there. Residents of the neighborhood also joined in the process painting the parklet.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION AND RESOURCE SHARING

Mobility hubs became natural destinations for food distribution to occur in the wake of several local grocery destinations closing down. In real time, residents were responding to emerging needs during crises. Because of the hubs' central location, visibility and availability of space, people took the opportunity to operate there.

This occured in spaces as small as the top of the mobility hub furniture and as large as a distribution event that filled a whole vacant lot at the hub. While food distribution can be logistically complex, shelf stable and hot meals were distributed at these sites.

FRANKLIN + CEDAR HUB MEALS

COMMUNITY FOOD SHARING

FRANKLIN + CEDAR HUB MEALS (II)
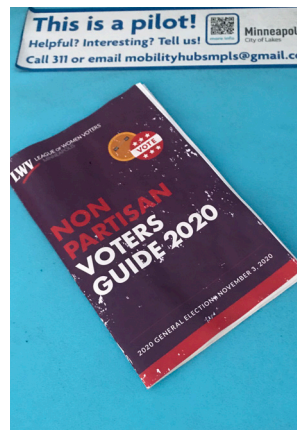

NORTHSIDE AMBASSADOR RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION

NORTHSIDE AMBASSADOR COAT DRIVE

INFORMATION BEYOND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

In our increasingly digital age, a significant amount of information related to critical resources, service changes, and other elements of dynamic communication in crisis is transmitted online and via smart phones. However, according to the the most recent Census data, 15 percent of Black and Indegenous Minneapolis residents did not have home internet access along with 17 percent of Latino/a residents[1]. 21-26 percent of Northside residents did not have an internet subscription[2]. People without access to digital information are more vulnerable in times of crisis and less connected to resources for recovery. In this context, mobility hubs have the potential to become centralized, local, analog communication centers - able to distribute up to date information from the City to residents or from other neighborhood groups to residents as well.

Information already gets wrapped around poles and printed on lawn signs at these places. Examples included notices of rent relief resources, voter registration, census reminders, garage sales, and more. Neighborhood groups have shown interest displaying messages in any future message boards developed at mobility hubs. Messaging on COVID precautions occurred on a limited basis.

With more awareness of mobility hub messaging potential, hubs could serve as a more comprehensive analog communication solution. Advancment of information access at mobility hubs could include permanent kiosks/beacons, information on display in a permanent message board, or resources available in a locker system. Provision of Wifi at mobility hubs could also help boost access.

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1   To access visit the US Census Bureau's online data portal.

2   To access visit the US Census Bureau's online data portal.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION AT THE HUMAN SCALE

Infrastructural climate adaptation is often envisioned on a large capital scale - updating aging infrastructure, building in redundancies to protect from future outages, etc. At mobility hubs, we have the opportunity to build in small-scale adaptation that people can use to control the comfort of their experience despite less predictable weather.

An example of small scale adaptation took place when person at the Franklin and Bloomington mobility hub was observed waiting for the bus. Due to the summer heat, they had moved the furniture into the shade of a nearby tree. This tiny action is, at a very human and immediate scale, the kind of adaptation that will help people stay comfortable as extreme weather conditions occur more frequently in the coming years. In the winter, seating can go in areas protected from wind, in the warmth of the sun. In the summer, it can be moved to areas best shaded for comfort.

OTHER RESILIENCE CONCEPTS FROM ENGAGEMENT

Residents have shared a broad range of ideas that connect to a resilience strategy during engagement on what features were most important to improving their trip. If tested and implemented, they could contribute to surrounding communities to thrive, be more connected and be more prepared to respond during crisis.

» Invest in access to organic produce through partnering with local farmers who have excess produce

» Produce carts like in Brooklyn, NYC - could be fresh food, food truck
» Place for celebrations of community successes, a center of community gathering
» Centering location decisions around increasing access to economic opportunity
» More activities - safe house to play cards, pool table, horse shoes
» More trees for shade

People-Centered Resilience Strategies at Mobility Hubs

Mobility hubs became sites of spontaneous acts of neighborhood resilience during the overlapping crises of 2020. Based on these innovative uses, next year the mobility hub program will explore the following approaches to foster access, programming, and community connection:

At the core of a resilient community is social capital. It's people knowing what the needs are and having the skills and access to resources to do something about it. To invest in resilience is to invest in social capital. Growing leadership and building capacity within communities is an asset that will translate to almost any type of challenge or crisis a community may face.

Build community partnerships and connections that build awareness of the opportunities to utilize the mobility hub for community based activities. As regular activations become more well known in the community, people will develop an awareness of the mobility hubs as a place to go to "plug in" with their neighborhood. At a mature mobility hub, there could even be emergency plans developed for how sites could operate for food distribution, shuttle locations or neighborhood response launch sites.

Establish space for programming to occur. Physical environments can be developed mobility hubs to serve as social infrastructure and provide space for the ongoing programming that can make mobility hubs the nexus of a thriving, resilient community. Programming spaces should be accessible to both project partners and welcoming toward other members of the community utilizing the spaces.

Keep programming spaces available and create simple systems to support use. It is important that as spaces grow and evolve, they still operate as fundamentally public spaces, able to be programmed in a dynamic and responsive fashion to evolving community needs. Through clearly communicating and simplifying the process of using public space.

Continue to center neighborhood identity and build in opportunities for localized control and capacity development through the mobility hub program. Opportunities to influence the design, operations and programming of mobility hubs will be an important component of scaling the program up from this pilot stage. Consistent avenues for participation in and control over the spaces will help ensure that residents feel well served by mobility hubs and feel ownership of spaces.

Coordination with staff advancing resilience work through Minneapolis Forward, the Resilience Hubs program, the Green Infrastructure program and Cultural Districts in the city is ongoing. As much as possible, mobility hub sites can become platforms for cooperative advancement of shared goals within the City enterprise.

Minneapolis

Public Works

This pilot was implemented by City of Minneapolis Public Works with the support of The Musicant Group.

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2020