

Project overview

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

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



New Nicollet Redevelopment project area

Project Goals

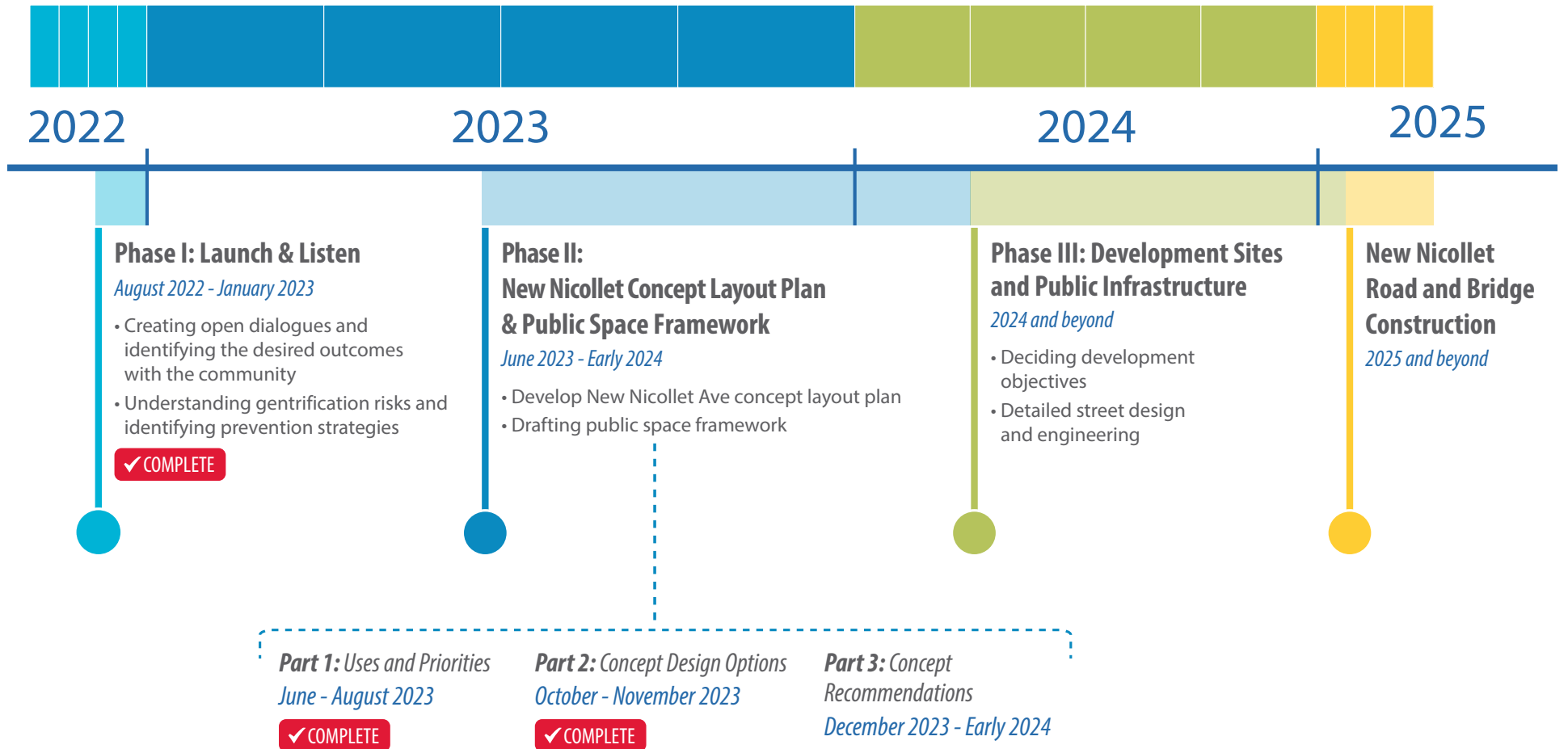
In Phase I of public engagement (from August 2022 to January 2023), the community gave feedback which shaped the following goals:

- Reconnect people and places
- Build for who's here
- Live, work, shop, and play here
- Build safe, equitable, sustainable transportation networks
- Design safe and healthy communities



Aerial image of project site, May 2022

Project timeline



Community engagement



Stakeholder priorities

Based on what we heard during community engagement, priorities generally aligned with the project goals. Overall, people wanted:

- A green, pedestrian-friendly New Nicollet Ave with space for sidewalk cafes and other amenities, and access to transit.
- Throughout engagement, there were differing opinions on whether the New Nicollet Ave should be open to transit and emergency vehicles only or be open to all types of vehicles.

You can find a summary of our engagement and a detailed look at the feedback we've received on our [project website](#).



Community members check out street concepts at the October 2023 open house



Key takeaways from engagement

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

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

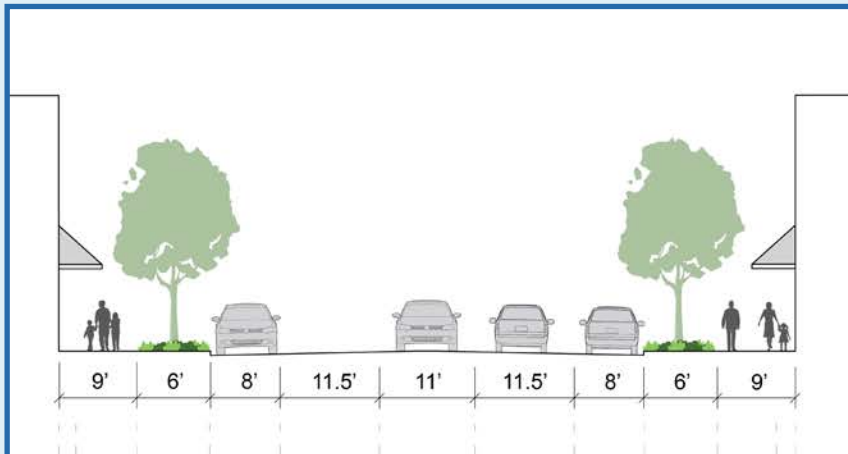
Design concept evaluation





How the recommended concept compares to Eat Street

The impact of this project on the Eat Street corridor was a concern that came up frequently during community engagement. The recommended concept preserves the feel of the Eat Street corridor while also encouraging traffic calming through the elimination of the center turn lane, addition of a mid-block crossing with a median island and widened pedestrian spaces.



Nicollet Ave north of the project site

	Typical Section Widths	
	Eat Street	New Nicollet
Right of Way	80'	100'
Sidewalk (both sides)	18'	35'
Space for Trees and Greening (both sides) *	12'	13-31'
Vehicle and Transit Lanes	34'	22-43'
Curbside Parking and Loading/Unloading	16'	8-13'

Midtown Greenway connection



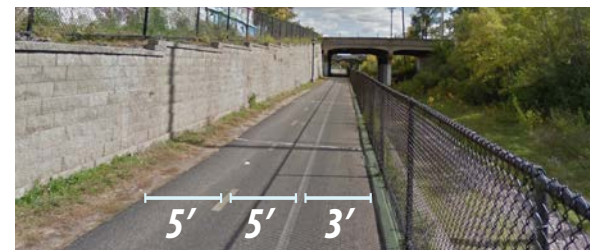
The Midtown Greenway ramp is proposed to move to 1st Ave. In Phase II, Part 1 of engagement, the project team heard that people want the narrow trail section on the Midtown Greenway from Blaisdell Ave to Nicollet Ave widened. People also want a better bicycle connection to the Midtown Greenway via the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

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



Map of bicycle connections and new proposed Midtown Greenway map location

Pinchpoint on the Midtown Greenway



Total width of section: '13
Typical Midtown Greenway width: 18' - 22'

Midtown Greenway, looking east under Nicollet Ave

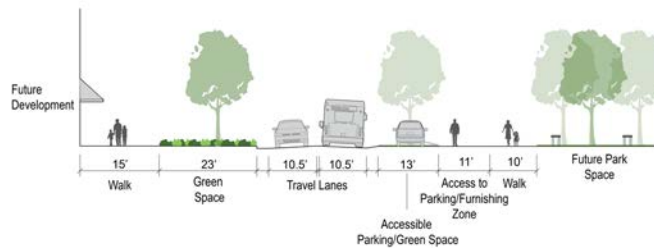
Design concepts considered



The City considered four main design options for New Nicollet Ave. These design options were developed and evaluated using the project goals, stakeholder priorities and technical analysis.

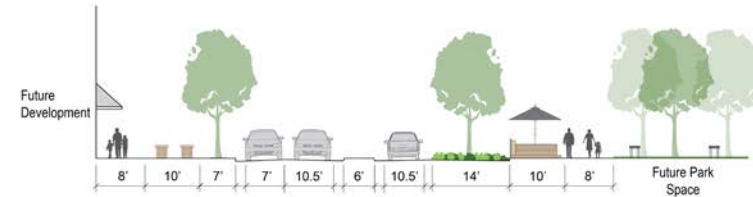
Design Concept 1

Concepts 1 and 4 were most supported in community engagement. Concept 1 is the City's current draft concept layout proposal.



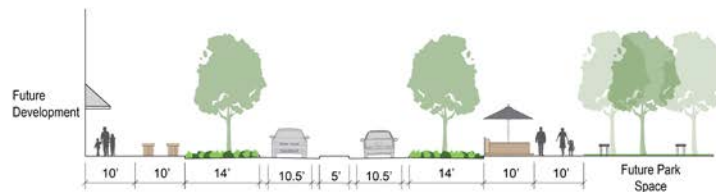
Design Concept 2

This option is similar to Concept 1 but reduces space for greening and pedestrians, which was a key priority for stakeholders. It was not evaluated further.



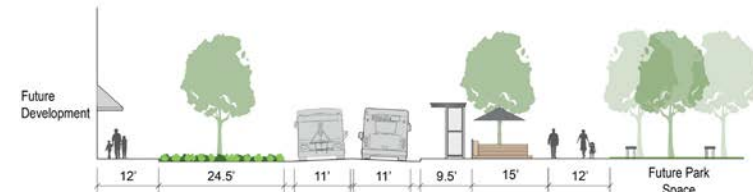
Design Concept 3

This option is similar to Concept 1 but reduces space for greening and pedestrians, which was a key priority for stakeholders. It was not evaluated further.



Design Concept 4

Concepts 1 and 4 were most supported in community engagement. Information on key considerations and challenges with this concept are included below.

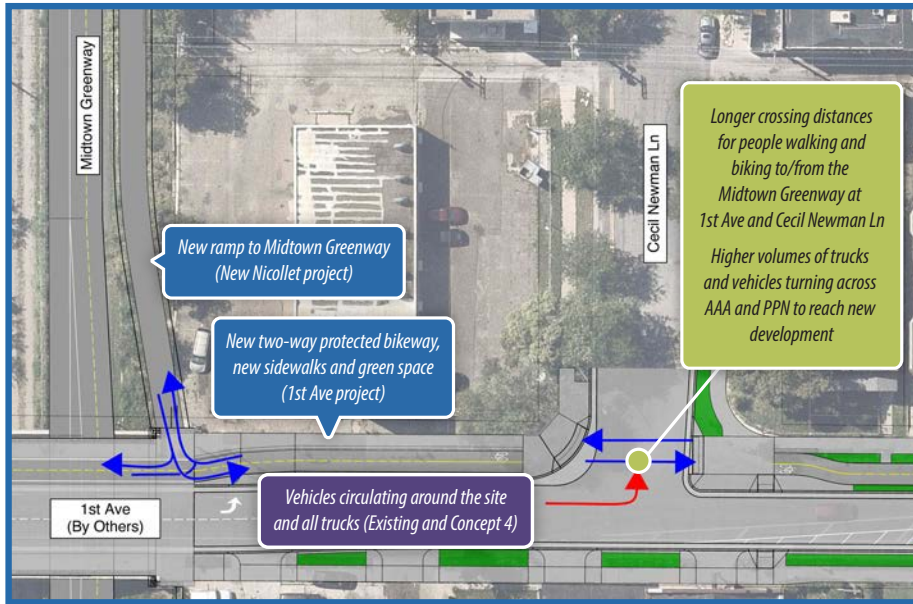


Design Concept 4 evaluation



In this option, New Nicollet Ave is open to transit and emergency vehicles only. Other vehicles, including passenger and freight vehicles continue to circulate around the site.

Increased vehicle/bike conflicts



Concept 4 would keep higher levels of vehicle traffic, particularly large trucks and buses, on 1st Avenue S and Cecil Newman Lane compared to Concept 1. This additional vehicle traffic conflicts with those crossing Cecil Newman Lane on foot or by bike on the new two-way bikeway along 1st Avenue S being constructed in 2024.

Key considerations and challenges

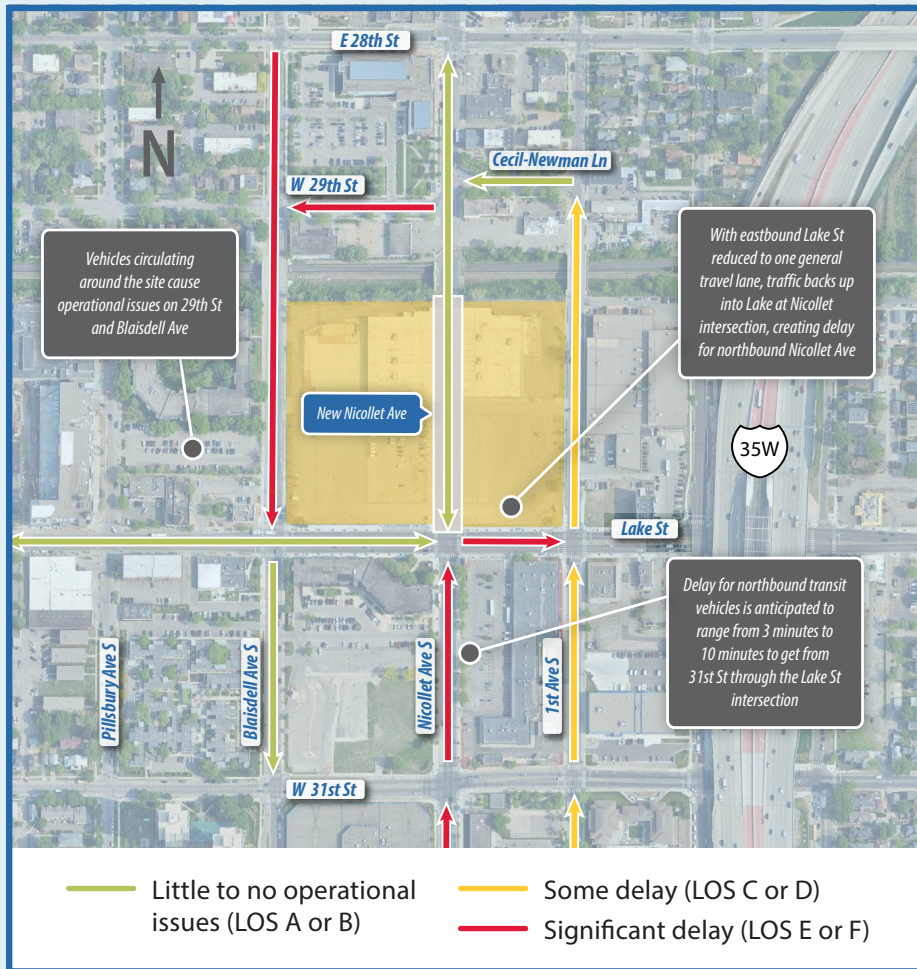
Challenge 1: Maintains conflict points between people walking, bicycling and driving, including freight vehicles

A new ADA-compliant access ramp to the Midtown Greenway from 1st Ave will provide a direct connection to the [Pedestrian Priority Network \(PPN\)](#) and [All Ages and Abilities Bikeway Network \(AAA\)](#) on 1st Ave. **With Concept 4, Cecil Newman Ln and 29th St will carry higher volumes of traffic and be designed to accommodate large trucks turning across the new two-way bikeway at 1st Ave immediately adjacent to the new Midtown Greenway ramp entrance.** This is currently the way traffic and freight flow around the site but the new ramp to Midtown Greenway entrance at 1st Ave and the new two-way bikeway on 1st Ave is expected to increase volumes of people walking and biking through this area increasing the potential for conflicts between people walking, biking, and driving.

Challenge 2: Longer crossing distances for pedestrians and bicycles

Nicollet Ave is a freight route, providing goods and services to businesses along the commercial corridor. Currently, trucks are routed around the former Kmart site. This condition would remain in Concept 4, which requires larger intersections at 1st Ave, Cecil Newman, Nicollet Ave, 29th St and Blaisdell Ave to allow trucks to make the turns around the site. This maintains significantly longer crossing distances across those intersections for people walking and biking, of which pose a safety concern.

Design Concept 4 evaluation



Queues on Nicollet Ave south of Lake St are expected to be substantially longer for Concept 4 than Concept 1, causing significant transit delay on Nicollet Ave.

Challenge 3: Negatively impacts transit speed and reliability

This option requires all traffic other than buses and emergency vehicles to travel around the site to access destinations on Blaisdell Ave, 1st Ave and other areas of Nicollet Ave. While this is a condition that exists today, redeveloping the former Kmart site will increase demand to access the site. This option limits site access for people driving to Blaisdell Ave and 1st Ave, which increase volumes on Lake St, 29th St, Cecil Newman Ln, 1st Ave and Blaisdell Ave. Additionally, the METRO B Line project will convert two of the existing travel lanes on Lake St into bus-only lanes, further reducing vehicular capacity on Lake St. **These changes are expected to create more delay on Lake St that spills over into Nicollet Ave south of the site, creating significant delays for northbound transit vehicles on Nicollet Ave.**

Challenge 4: Does not allow any new access to site for ADA-accessible parking/loading/unloading or deliveries

Curbside vehicular access to the development, such as short-term uses like passenger loading/unloading and business and resident deliveries would be limited to 1st Ave and Blaisdell Ave. since vehicles would not be allowed on Nicollet Ave. There is no parking or loading areas planned for 1st Ave and limited parking available on Blaisdell Ave.

Design Concept 4 evaluation



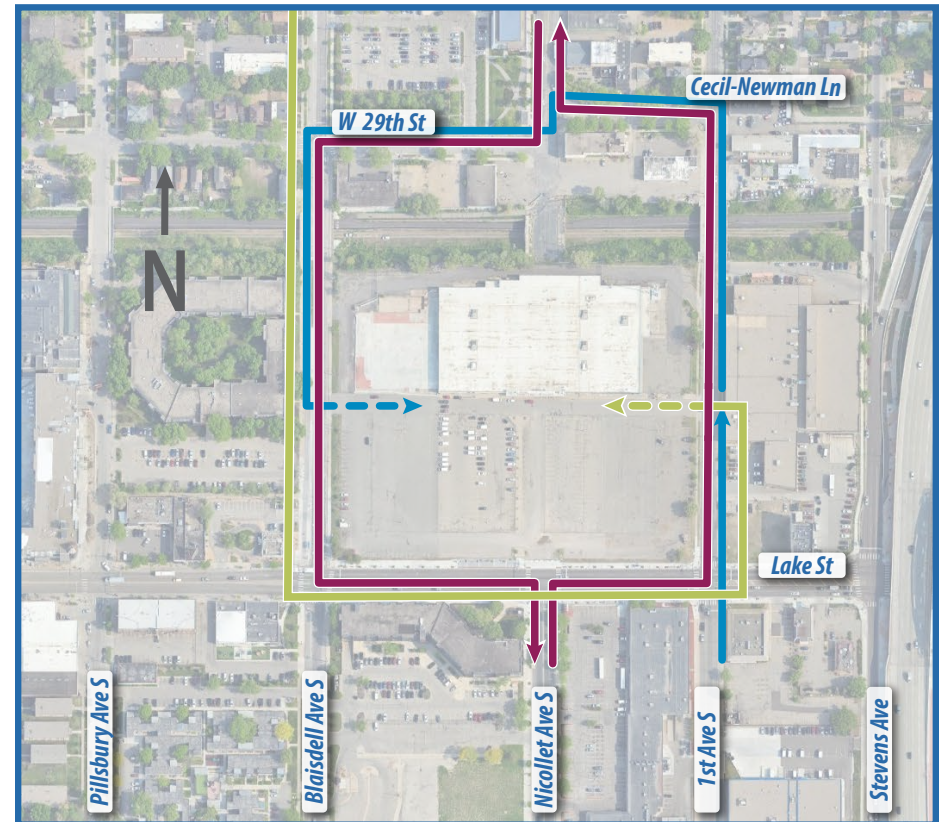
Challenge 5: Maintains longer trip lengths for people driving and freight vehicles to access the planned development and destinations on Nicollet Ave

Concept 4 requires drivers to use 1st Ave, Cecil Newman Ln, 29th St and Blaisdell Ave to drive around the site on one-way streets. While vehicular access points to the new development have not been determined, vehicular access to parking and loading will be focused on Blaisdell Ave and 1st Ave ([Project Expectations, 2021](#)). Maintaining this traffic pattern requires longer trips to circulate the site, adding additional vehicle traffic to the street network surrounding the site and increasing vehicular miles traveled compared to Concepts 1, 2 and 3.

Challenge 6: Maintains confusing street network disconnecting a primary commercial corridor

While Cecil Newman Ln and the route around the former Kmart site has been in place for many years, Eat Street business owners shared that many customers often have difficulty finding their businesses.

Vehicular traffic patterns with Concept 4



- Accessing 1st Ave from the north
- Accessing Blaisdell Ave from the south
- Accessing Nicollet Ave to the south and north of site (existing condition)
- Potential site access points

Recommended concept layout



Vision Zero: High Injury Streets

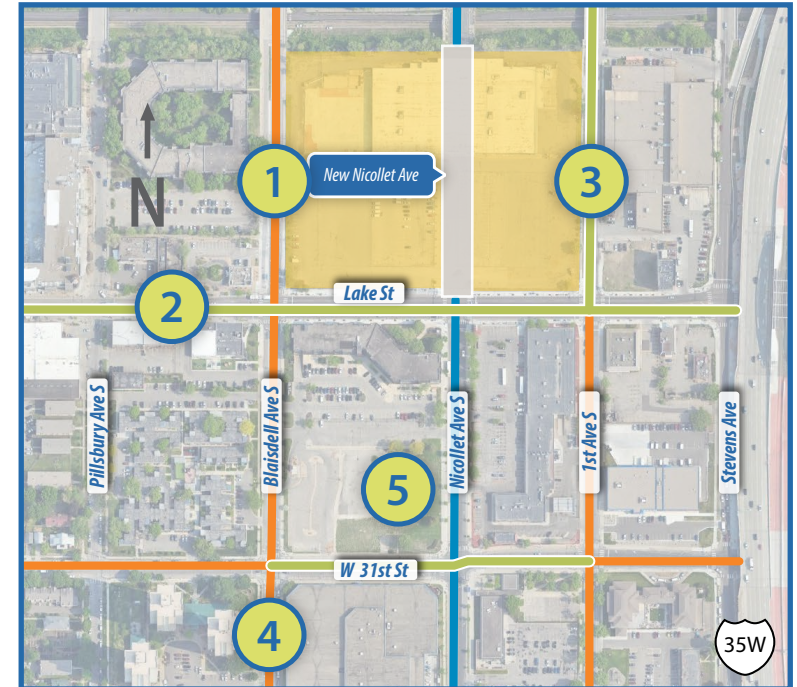


Project goal: Build safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation networks

66% of severe and fatal crashes happen on just 9% of streets in Minneapolis or 112 miles. Several of these streets are in the New Nicollet Ave project area. Many of these streets have major planned or completed safety improvements:

- 1 Blaisdell Ave (2021-2022): A two-way median protected bikeway and curb extension at Lake St was installed as part of the [Whittier-Lyndale Bikeway](#).
- 2 Lake St (2024): Two of the existing travel lanes will be converted to transit lanes and a crossing median will be added at Blaisdell Ave and Lake St as part of the [METRO B Line Bus Rapid Transit \(BRT\)](#) and Hennepin County [Lake St Improvements](#) projects.
- 3 1st Ave (2024): This corridor will be reconstructed with new sidewalks, a two-way protected bikeway on the west side of the street, boulevards, and narrower travel lanes.
- 4 31st St (2022-2023): Converted from a four-lane roadway to a two-lane roadway with left turn lanes. Quick build safety improvements including bollard bumpouts, medians and hardened centerlines were installed between 35W and 1st Ave. 31st Ave from 1st Ave is planned for a full reconstruction in the City's [2024-2029 Capital Improvement Plan](#).
- 5 3030 Nicollet (2024): A new development at Nicollet Ave and 31st St is anticipated to add bumpouts to Nicollet Ave and 31st St.

Minneapolis 2022 High Injury Streets



- Former Kmart site
- High injury streets
- High injury streets to monitor (have had recent major work)
- High injury streets with major planned safety improvements

The recommended New Nicollet Ave Concept Layout includes safety improvements to Nicollet Ave immediately north of the site.

Pedestrian Priority Network



Project goal: Design for pedestrian safety, access and comfort

The [Pedestrian Priority Network \(PPN\)](#) is a grid of streets that represent where people frequently walk and is used to focus investment to improve the ease, comfort and safety of people walking and rolling.

The recommended New Nicollet Ave Concept Layout includes many pedestrian improvements along the PPN and the New Nicollet Avenue:

- 1 Wide sidewalks and green spaces
- 2 Mid-block crossing with a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) to connect to future public space on site
- 3 New ADA-compliant access ramp to the Midtown Greenway for people walking and rolling
- 4 Wider space for pedestrians on the Midtown Greenway
- 5 Shorter pedestrian crossings and ADA improvements

New public art is also being planned for the street (not shown). Location for the public art is TBD.

Pedestrian Priority Network (2020)



— PPN Network — Trails

The recommended New Nicollet Ave Concept reduces existing street crossing distances on 29th St, Nicollet Ave and Cecil Newman Lane by over 50%.

All Ages and Abilities Bikeway Network



Project goal: Provide bicycle connections in the project area for all ages and abilities

The [All Ages and Abilities Bikeway Network \(AAA\)](#) is a network of existing or planned low-stress routes to make bicycling a real option for more people.

The recommended New Nicollet Ave Concept Layout includes many improvements on the AAA for people biking:

- 1 Widens the Midtown Greenway between Blaisdell Ave and 1st Ave S
- 2 New ADA-compliant access ramp to the Midtown Greenway connecting to the planned two-way protected bikeway on the west side of 1st Ave S (2024)
- 3 Improved crossing at 1st Ave and Cecil Newman Lane to connect to new Midtown Greenway ramp at 1st Ave
- 4 Improved protected two-way bikeway on Cecil Newman Lane, shortened crossings and a new traffic signal to cross Nicollet Ave

Recent and upcoming projects supporting these improvements:

- 5 Blaisdell Ave: A two-way median protected bikeway and curb extension at Lake St was installed as part of the [Whittier-Lyndale Bikeway](#) in 2021-2022
- 6 1st Ave (2024): This corridor will be reconstructed with new sidewalks, a two-way protected bikeway on the west side of the street, green boulevards and narrower travel lanes
- 7 The Public Space Framework establishes plans for a new pedestrian path and bikeway through the site

All Ages and Abilities Bikeway Network (2020)



- Existing low stress bikeway
- Planned near-term low stress bikeway
- Trails

Transit Priority Network



Project goal: Support fast, frequent and reliable transit service

The [Transit Priority Network](#) identifies priority projects that the City will partner with the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit to plan and invest in to improve the coverage, speed and reliability of transit service.

The project area is currently served by Metro Transit Route 18 on Nicollet Avenue and the Route 21 on Lake St.. Today, Route 18 travels around the site on 29th St, Blaisdell Ave, 31st St, 1st Ave and Cecil Newman Ln. Metro Transit's Network Next identified the Nicollet (Route 18) corridor as a mid-term Bus Rapid Transit candidate. In 2025, Metro Transit will identify the next programmed arterial BRT lines to be implemented between 2030 and 2035.

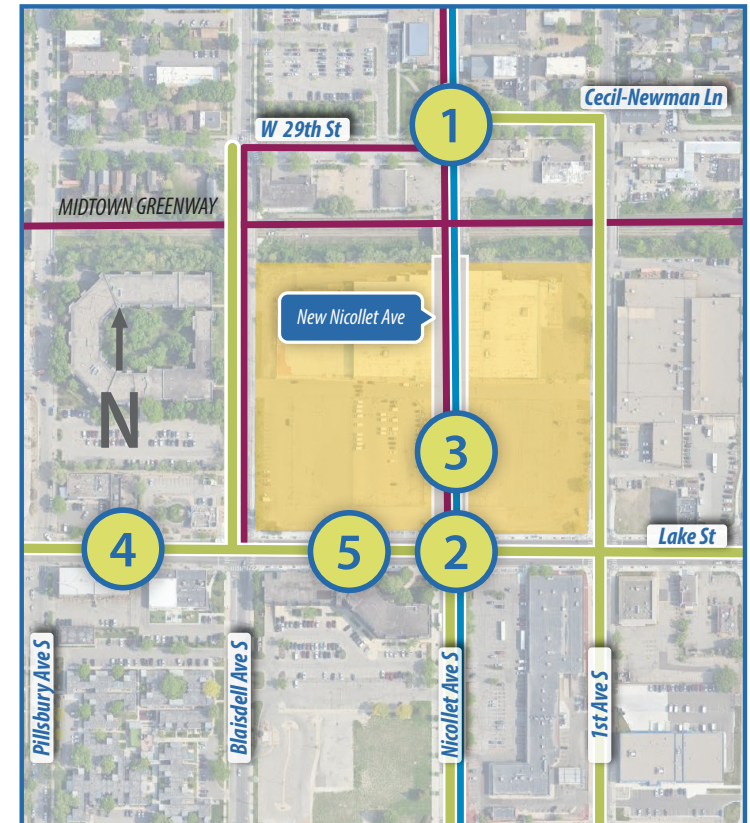
The recommended New Nicollet Ave Concept Layout includes several improvements for transit:

- 1 Reopening Nicollet Ave allows transit service to be rerouted to stay on Nicollet Avenue, simplifying and streamlining transit service
- 2 The proposed northbound transit lane on Nicollet Ave and potential northbound queue jump at Lake St and Nicollet Ave will improve transit speed and reliability. Southbound transit vehicles are expected to operate with less delay than northbound transit vehicles.
- 3 New transit stop and shelter on New Nicollet Ave

The Route 21 currently provides service on Lake St and will be upgraded to the METRO B Line in 2025 which will include:

- 4 Converting two existing travel lanes on Lake St into transit lanes
- 5 Future B Line platforms have already been constructed on Lake St on either side of Nicollet Ave

Transit Priority Network (2020)



- Future transit priority corridors
- Existing high frequency transit
- Planned high frequency transit

Truck Route Network



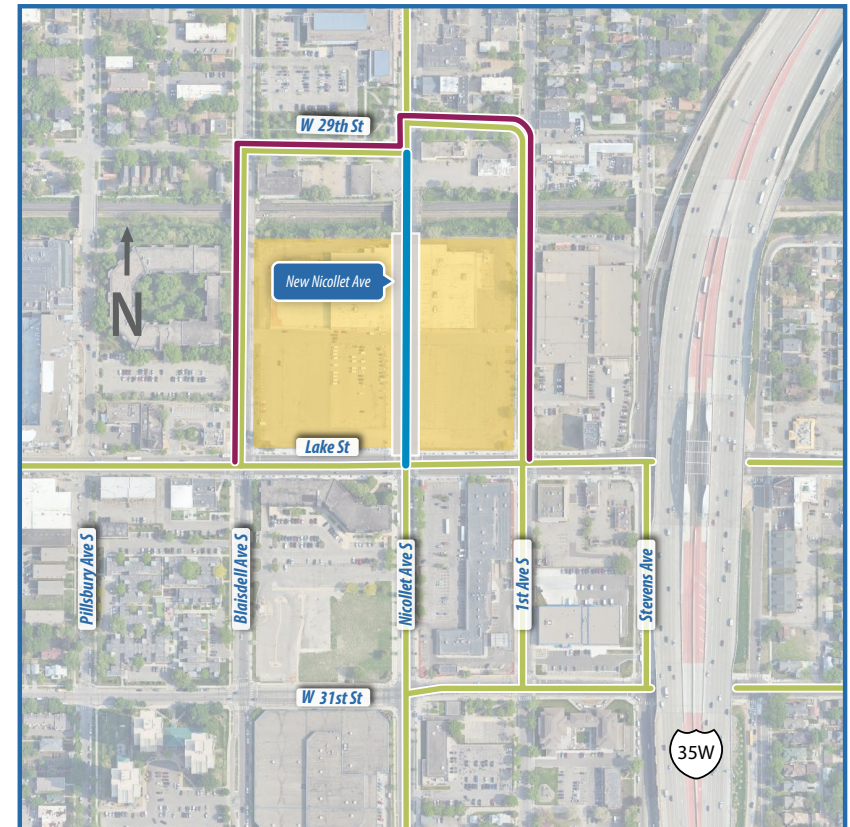
Project goal: Let people live, work, shop, and play here

The [Truck Route Network](#) seeks to accommodate freight movement and facilities to support the local and regional economy while mitigating any negative impacts to safety, congestion and the environment.

The Truck Route Network identifies streets that accommodate movements of large trucks. These routes are often on commercial corridors or in industrial areas to support local and regional businesses. Commercial corridors on the Truck Route Network often overlap with corridors that serve larger volumes of pedestrians and transit vehicles and sometimes bicyclists.

Many restaurants and businesses along the Eat Street and Lake St commercial corridors rely on trucks of various sizes to make deliveries and pick up goods. Today, the Truck Route Network travels around the site on 1st Ave and Blaisdell Ave, turning across several key segments of the pedestrian and bikeway networks. The New Nicollet project proposes to relocate the Truck Route Network to the New Nicollet Ave to minimize truck turning movements, conflict points and continue to serve business needs on Nicollet Ave.

Truck Route Network (2020)



- Existing Truck Route Network
- Proposed Truck Route
- Proposed Truck Route Removal

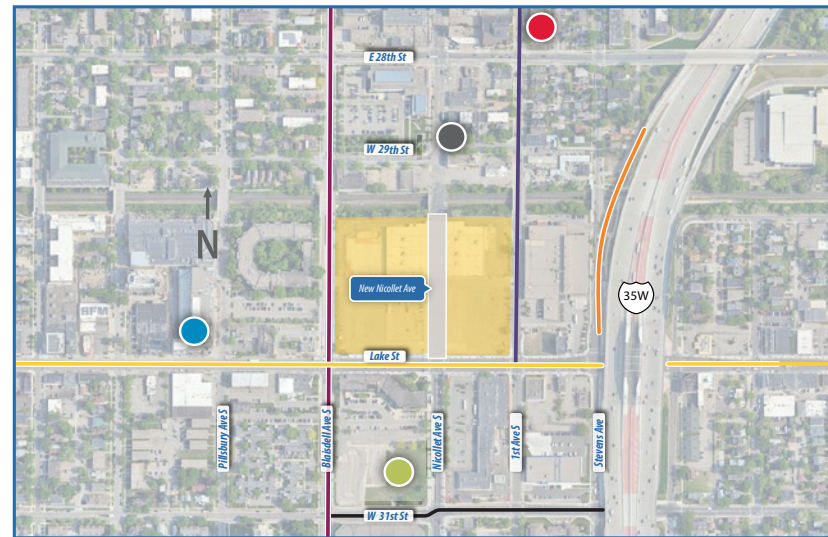
Traffic and Transit Speed Reliability Analysis



A traffic study was completed to understand the anticipated impacts of opening Nicollet Avenue and of future development on the New Nicollet site. The study:

- Used 2023 traffic volumes
- Assumed a reduction in vehicle volumes over time in alignment with city mode shift goals
- Assumed 1/3 of trips to the new development would be by vehicle and 2/3 would be by walking, biking or transit
- Compared **Concept 1** (Nicollet open to all vehicles) and **Concept 4** (Nicollet open to transit and emergency vehicles only)

Recent and upcoming street improvement and development projects



- Former Kmart site
- Whittier-Lyndale Bikeway (2021-2022)
- New I-35W exit ramp and Orange Line Station (2022)
- Karmel Mall expansion (2023)
- B-line transit lane conversion
- 3030 Nicollet Redevelopment and Wells Fargo (2024)
- 1st Ave Reconstruction (2024)
- 31st St Improvements (2022-2023, 2029)
- Eat Street Crossing (2023)
- Simpson Housing (2024)

Results:

- Multiple projects in the area have or are anticipated to add demand while reducing vehicular capacity (see map). This adds more users to the street network, creating more delay as the area continues to develop.
- **In the transit-only Nicollet scenario (Concept 4)**, vehicles waiting on Nicollet Ave and Lake St to go around the site cause significant delay for transit vehicles trying to get to the transit only block of Nicollet Ave.
- **In the Nicollet open to all vehicles scenario (Concept 1)**, operations for transit along Nicollet are expected to work much better, reducing delay for transit on Nicollet Ave while supporting transit speed and reliability on Lake St for the METRO B Line bus rapid transit line (2025).

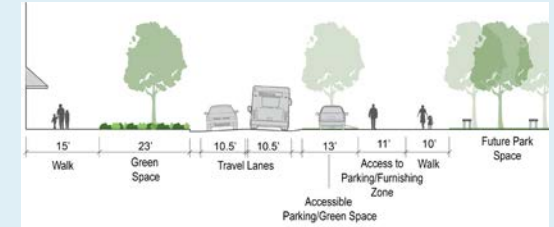
Draft concept design tradeoffs



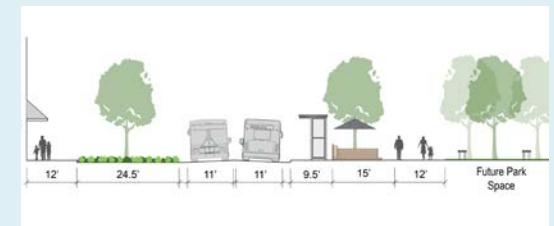
Community-driven project goals were used to evaluate concept options for New Nicollet Ave. All concepts align with plans for a new pedestrian and bicycle connection through the New Nicollet Redevelopment site that will be established through the Public Space Framework. **Concept 1 best meets project goals and stakeholder priorities.**

PROJECT GOAL	METRIC		RECOMMENDED CONCEPT	
			Concept 1	Concept 4
Reconnect people and places	Walking/Rolling*	Provide room for wide sidewalks and comfortable, safe crossings	+	○
	Bicycling*	Provide connection to the Midtown Greenway and bikeway network with comfortable, safe crossings	+	○
	Transit	Support fast, frequent, and reliable transit	+	-
	Driving vehicles	Accommodate vehicle and freight access needs	+	○
Build safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation networks	Reduce trip lengths to access destinations		+	○
Design safe and healthy communities	More trees and green space		○	+
Build for who's here	Goals identified by business owners and residents	Provide welcoming, quiet experience for people walking and connecting to transit	○	+
		Simplify street network; Business visibility; Provide parking	+	○

Design Concept 1



Design Concept 4



*All concepts assume that the Midtown Greenway ramp will be moved to 1st Ave to better connect to All Ages and Abilities bikeway network, widen Greenway trail and allow for an ADA-compliant ramp

- ⊕ Meets project goal
- Meets project goal with less than optimal conditions
- ⊖ Does not meet project goal

Recommended design concept

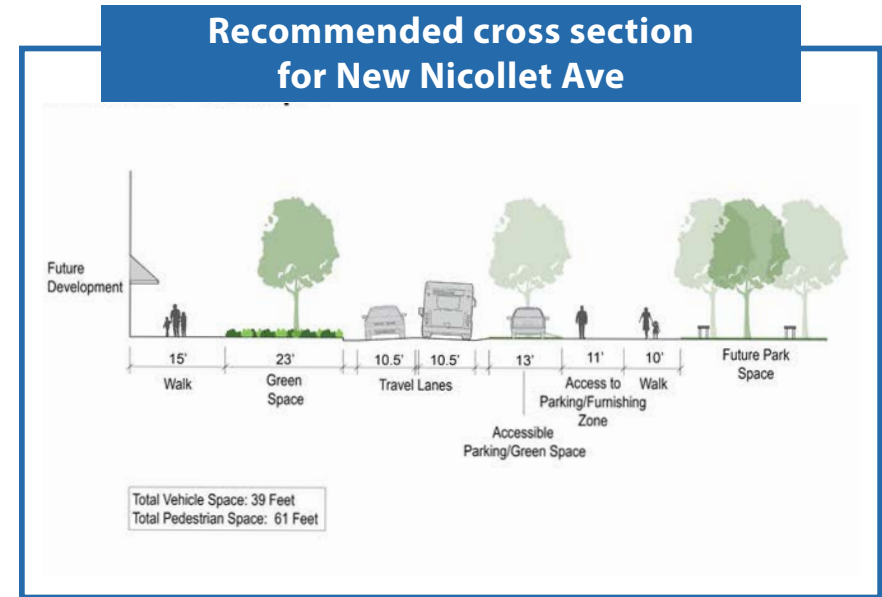


Public Works is recommending **Concept 1**, which opens Nicollet Ave for people walking, taking transit, driving and for emergency vehicles. There is no dedicated bikeway proposed on the new Nicollet Ave, but the recommended concept includes several key improvements for people biking on the All Ages and Abilities Bikeway Network adjacent to the site.

This concept provides:

- ✓ Wide pedestrian spaces with green space to collect and treat stormwater and space for sidewalk cafes
- ✓ An ADA accessible ramp to the Midtown Greenway from the existing bikeway network on 1st Ave and a wider trail to address the narrow Midtown Greenway trail section between Nicollet Ave and Blaisdell Ave
- ✓ Pedestrian and bicycle crossing and infrastructure improvements on Cecil Newman Ln and 29th St
- ✓ Rerouted transit service to Nicollet Ave, with transit advantages to enhance transit speed and reliability while balancing pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity
- ✓ A reconnected street grid for all users and all modes of transportation
- ✓ Space for parking or loading/unloading to support existing and future area businesses and development

This booklet focuses on the New Nicollet Ave recommended concept layout. Details for the public space concept design can be found on the project website.



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

Recommended design concept

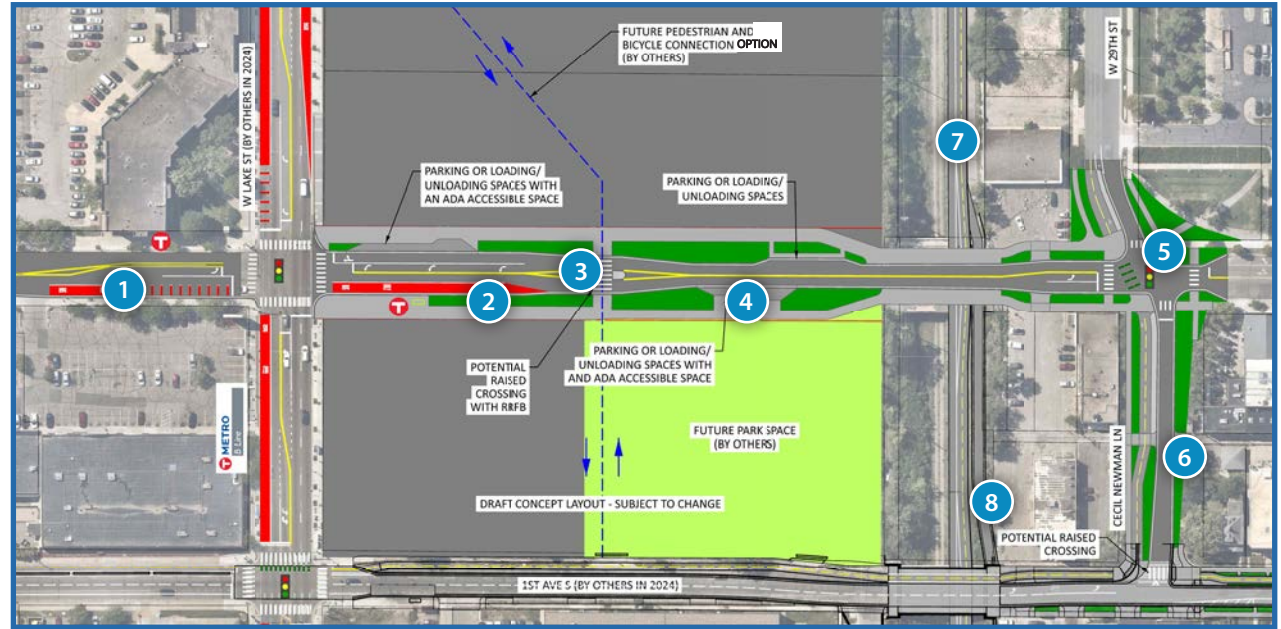


- 1 **Northbound transit lane** and potential queue jump to improve transit speed and reliability.
- 2 **Large green space** along the corridor to collect and treat stormwater and provide more greening.
- 3 **Mid-block crossing with a median and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)** to provide a connection through the development for people walking and biking. This will connect to future public space and the Midtown Greenway.



- 4 **Limited parking or loading/unloading spaces** with ADA-accessible spaces on each side of the block. These will be wider and at sidewalk height to comply with new ADA rules (PROWAG).

Recommended concept layout (Concept 1)



- 5 Realignment of the Nicollet Ave, 29th St, and Cecil Newman Ln intersection. This will include **a new traffic signal, narrow crossing distances, more space for greening and a raised protected two-way bikeway.**
- 6 Wider sidewalk, boulevard and two-way protected bikeway on Cecil Newman Ln to improve connection from new Midtown Greenway ramp to Nicollet Ave.
Updated intersection design at Cecil Newman Ln and 1st Ave in coordination with 1st Ave Reconstruction project to provide a shorter and safer crossing.
- 7 **Wider Midtown Greenway trail** between Nicollet Ave and Blaisdell Ave.
- 8 New ADA-compliant access ramp from 1st Ave to the Midtown Greenway.