Pleasant Ave S Safe Routes to School - Engagement Plan Draft

Project overview

The Pleasant Ave S Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project will improve safety on Pleasant Ave S and 49th St S. The project includes Pleasant Ave S between 34th St and 49th St, and 49th St between Pleasant Ave and Nicollet Ave.

The project will focus on making walking, biking, rolling and taking transit to school easier for students, staff, and family members at Lyndale Elementary School, Justice Page Middle School, and Washburn High School. Additionally, the project will improve safety for residents and users of these segments of Pleasant Ave and 49th St.

The engagement plan explains:

- **When and how** we will share project updates
- **How often** we will communicate key information
- **Who** we aim to engage
- **What strategies** we will use to gather input and feedback
- **Local community demographics** that shape our approach

The plan is a living document and may be updated as the project progresses. If major changes occur, we will share them with stakeholders and include them in the final engagement summary.

More information, including project goals, can be found on the project website:
https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/pleasant-ave-srs/

Key facts

- **Connections**
  - The route connects to three public schools, various neighborhood destinations, and the future 34th St bikeway
- **Travel choices**
  - According to a 2024 travel tally, an estimated 32.0% of students walk, roll, bike, or take transit to school across all three public schools along the project
- **Networks**
  - The route is designated as a near-term low stress bikeway on the All Ages and Abilities bicycle network map (read more about what this means in the Minneapolis Street Design Guide)
- **Traffic Safety**
  - The project route intersects with multiple high-traffic streets, creating challenging and potentially unsafe crossing conditions
  - 36th St, 38th St, and 42nd St are previously identified 2022 High Injury Streets that intersect with the route

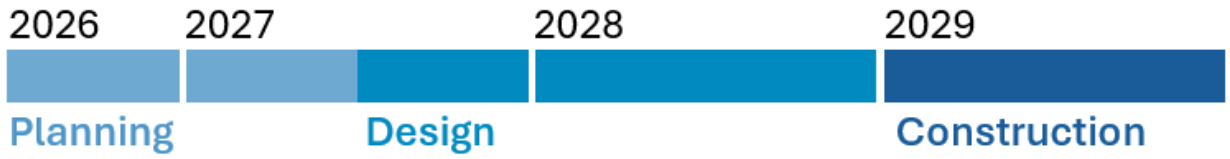
For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact (Public Works, Danica Dosmann email danica.dosmann@minneapolismn.gov or call 612-759-5730. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. Para ayuda, llame al 311. Rau kev pab, hu 311. Hadii aad caawimaad u baahantahay, wac 311.

Project highlights

The project will focus on safety improvements, such as:

- Traffic calming
- Walking, rolling, and biking improvements
- Improved wayfinding

Project schedule



Summer 2026 – Summer 2027: Planning

- Collect and analyze data about existing conditions
- Develop engagement plan and outreach strategies
- Connect with students, families, residents, and neighborhood organizations
- Identify traffic safety and comfort concerns
- Develop a concept layout based on what we learned from engagement

Fall 2027 – Winter 2028: Design

- Revise and finalize detailed design
- Continue community outreach to provide updates on project progress

2029: Construction

- Continue community outreach to provide information on construction timeline and potential impact
- Install safety treatments
- Update pedestrian curb ramps to improve accessibility
- Project completion

Project audiences

Audience identification

Understanding who our audiences are is an important part of planning how we connect with the community. These audiences may change as the project moves forward. We will adjust our approach to make sure we are reaching the right people in the right ways.

To figure out who the key audiences are, we looked at:

- People or groups who help make decisions or need to review or approve parts of the project.
- Organizations or individuals who use or manage places affected by the project.
- People with special knowledge or experience who can help us make better choices.
- Groups or leaders who speak for others and can share the views of many affected people.

The table below shows the main audiences we've identified so far, along with why they are important to this project.

Key audiences

Audience	Relevance	Interests
Students & families walking, biking, rolling and taking transit to and from Lyndale, Justice Page and Washburn	Individuals who experience and are familiar with current safety and comfort concerns, have ideas about what would make their commutes safer, and will benefit most from improvements.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Mitigation measures* • *Quality of life* • *Personal health and safety* • *Mobility* • *Community engagement strategies*
All students & families of Lyndale, Justice Page and Washburn	Students and families at the public schools along the project, using all modes of transportation, have insights about current conditions and desired changes, and will benefit from improvements. This includes individuals who would explore new commute options under improved conditions.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Mitigation measures* • *Quality of life* • *Personal health and safety* • *Mobility* • *Community engagement strategies*
School staff & administration at Lyndale, Justice Page and Washburn	These groups provide essential information about school operations, including arrival and dismissal procedures. Dedicated school staff will serve as project points of contact to help plan and facilitate engagement with student groups. Staff members live in or commute to the project area and are attentive to both personal project impacts and impacts on students. They also help connect the project team to opportunities for student engagement.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Construction management* • *Mitigation measures* • *Education* • *Community engagement strategies*
Neighborhood organizations (Lyndale, King Field, Tangletown neighborhoods)	These groups convey resident perspectives and local knowledge. They have an important role in keeping community informed about city projects and help us reach a larger audience of community members.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Construction management* • *Mitigation measures* • *Community culture* • *Property Values* • *Community engagement strategies*

Residents	People who live on the route and are most likely to be affected by construction and project improvements. This group can help share their visions for the area.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Construction management* • *Mitigation measures* • *Quality of Life* • *Look and feel* • *Personal health and safety* • *Mobility* • *Community engagement strategies*
Venture Academy and Lake Country School	Private and charter schools are not within the Safe Routes to School program's core focus, but they may still offer valuable input and will be invited to share their experiences with the corridor.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Construction management* • *Mitigation measures* • *Personal health and safety* • *Mobility* • *Community engagement strategies*
Property owners	Property owners and communities frequently using the corridor are likely to be affected by construction and project improvements. They will be invited to share their experiences with the corridor.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Construction management* • *Mitigation measures*
Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committees	These committees include community activists and policy experts with a vested interest and expertise in walking and biking infrastructure and who can help us make better choices.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Mitigation measures*
Public agencies (Hennepin County, Metro Transit)	Coordination on design and operation with other agencies to address any potential impact caused by the project.	• *Project impacts/benefits* • *Construction management* • *Mitigation measures*

Equity and engagement

Achieving equity in transportation means that the quality of the transportation networks in the city create fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people. In Minneapolis, historic exclusion from government-led processes, disinvestment in certain communities, and insensitive design have all contributed to the inequities that persist today. To rectify these systemic injustices, both past and present, we must reconsider and invest in our transportation system through a deep commitment to racial equity – providing just outcomes for all people in the city, and outcomes that are not predictable by race.

The City of Minneapolis acknowledges that the transportation system and government-supported decisions have underserved, excluded, harmed and overburdened some communities, namely Black and

Indigenous communities, other communities of color, and people with disabilities. We understand that these past decisions have denied these communities the full participation of transportation benefits, which has led to disproportionate burdens (Racial Equity Framework for Transportation Acknowledgement of past harms).

The City is focused on ensuring that populations that have been excluded from (or under-represented in) government-led processes such as public engagement are involved and aware of projects occurring in their neighborhoods. We have created the Racial Equity Framework for Transportation (REF) to guide us in this work. We have also created the Transportation Equity Dashboard as a tool that goes into more depth about the elements of the REF. The dashboard includes a Transportation Equity Priority (TEP) score. This project will prioritize engagement activities and events to reach historically excluded and under-engaged community members within the project area.

Characteristics of effective, equitable community engagement

- Is centered on relationship-building
- Is trauma-informed
- Happens when staff have clarity about what can be influenced by community members and to what degree community member input can influence outcomes
- Focuses on transparent communication
- Actively decreases barriers to participation
- Uses multiple approaches to intentionally connect with BIPOC and economically disadvantaged groups
- Uses background data disaggregated by race and social economic status
- Provides time and resources for reflection and evaluation of process(es) and results

TEP analysis

TEP score:

The project extents fall entirely within TEP tier 5. Lyndale Elementary, one of the three public schools this project will serve, is located within a TEP Tier 2 area, a high-priority area for transportation equity.

Lyndale Elementary is located at the north end of the project extents, near the intersection of Pleasant Ave S and 34th St. The student walk zone identified by Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) for Lyndale Elementary is primarily within the TEP tier 2 area.

The Lyndale Elementary student population is predominantly Hispanic/Latinx and Black, and 83.1% of students are people of color (source: 2026 student enrollment data from Minnesota Department of Education). The school's population of free and reduced-price eligible students is 79.2% of students, while the state of Minnesota's population is 40.3% of students. About 14% of students said they walked or biked to/from school in the 2023-2024 school year. In 2024, 10% of students were ineligible for busing, not living 0.5+ miles away from the school to fall in the bus zone (source: Lyndale Elementary SRTS Plan).

The Washburn High School student population is 46.6% people of color, predominantly Hispanic/Latinx (22.5%) and Black/African American (15.0%). Similarly, Justice Page Middle School student population is 43.7% people of color. (Source: Minnesota Department of Education Dashboard).

Within the Lyndale Elementary walk zone, there is a higher percentage of residents below poverty level (22.56%) than the city average (16%). In this area, the percentage of residents of color (51.5%) is also higher than the city average (41.2%), with a notable presence of residents that identify as Black (33.5%), two or more races (14.2%), and Hispanic or Latino (12.1%). Furthermore, 28.1% of residents are foreign-born, compared to the city average of 13.7%, and 22.6% of residents are limited English speaking, compared to 7.7% citywide. While 15.6% of Minneapolis households are without a vehicle, 31.7% of households around Lyndale Elementary lack access to a vehicle. (Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates).

There are more lower income residents in the northern segments of the project. Land temperatures are higher than the city average in the north of the project area, 2.3 °F higher north of 34th St, 1.4 °F between 34th and 38th Streets, and .07 °F higher between 42nd and 48th Streets. There are a high percentage of residents under the age of 18 throughout the corridor, with higher percentages around or higher than the city average (18.9%) from 38th to 42nd St (18.5%), 42nd to 48th St (25.5%), and below 48th St (29.1%). The highest concentration of residents with disabilities is between 34th and 38th St (13.8%). (Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates).

Language: The public schools in the project area translate main family communications into both Spanish and Somali. All three public schools have over 5% of students speaking Spanish (27% at Lyndale, 9% at Justice Page, and 12% at Washburn). 5% of students speak Somali at Lyndale Elementary, and 2% speak Somali at both Justice Page and Washburn (source: MPS).

As a minimum, the following communication and engagement tools will be considered:

- Interpreters at information sessions and meetings where required.
- Translation of printed information into Spanish and Somali for communications with school communities.
- Promotion of the availability of translation services on public-facing documents.

Engagement phases, objectives and tactics

Phase & Time Frame	Engagement Objectives	Tactics
Phase 1: Consult September – December 2026	Generate public awareness of the project. Clearly communicate the purpose, scope, and timeline of the project. Use public feedback to inform engagement plan alternatives or refinements. Build relationships with community members and organizations. Gather input on community priorities and existing safety concerns. **Call to action**: Share your thoughts on the engagement plan and timeline. Share your input on safety concerns.	• Project webpage • Newsletter • Postcard mailer • Project one-pager • School site visits and arrival & dismissal observations • School and school group meetings • Open House • Neighborhood association meetings • Pop ups • Survey or online comment tool • BACPAC introductory report (0%)
Phase 2: Inform & Consult January – May 2027	Begin to incorporate community and stakeholder input from Phase I to develop preliminary concept designs. Present concept design alternatives and facilitate community feedback. **Call to action:** Share your ideas about the project design(s).	• Project webpage • Newsletter • Postcard mailer • Project one-pager • School site visits and arrival & dismissal observations • School and school group meetings • Open House • Neighborhood association meetings • Survey or online comment tool • Phase 1 engagement summary • BACPAC presentations (15%)

Phase 3: Inform
Summer 2027
	Close the loop on concept alternative(s) feedback.
	
	Present concept vision at public open house.
	
	Communicate that the project will be moving forward to detail design and construction.
	
	Call to action: Subscribe to receive project construction updates.
		• Project webpage
		• Newsletter
		• Phase 2 engagement summary
		• BACPAC presentations (30%)
		• Emails with Summary Engagement report and final design:
		  ○ School staff
		  ○ Survey participants
		  ○ Sign-ins
		  ○ Neighborhood associations

Use of community input

Feedback from the community will be gathered as part of Phase 1 & 2 of the engagement plan. All feedback will be thoughtfully considered and may inform the planning and design of the Pleasant Ave SRTS project. The feedback will be used to:

Planning

- Inform engagement approaches
- Identify safety concerns and priorities
- Identify locations for safety improvements

Design

- Impact the prioritization of locations for safety improvements
- Inform on safety improvements adopted

Review and evaluation

The effectiveness of the engagement activities will be measured against desired outcomes. Participation levels for all events and surveys will be closely monitored. Newsletter performance metrics will be regularly tracked and reported. We will make data-driven adjustments in our community engagement activities to engage more effectively.

Engagement goals

Engagement goals were identified using the Racial Equity Framework for Transportation TEP score, demographic data, stakeholder analysis, and the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. They are listed below. The primary engagement goals are derived from the broader Safe Routes to School program goals, with more specific and measurable sub-goals that are directly related to the Pleasant project.

Goal 1: Use creative, diverse, and accessible ways of doing engagement to ensure people are aware of the project. (SRTS program goal)

- Use a combination of digital, written, and in-person engagement throughout project phases.

- Partner with at least one local organization for engagement support and outreach throughout the project.
- Table at an event/program hosted by each school.

Goal 2: Seek feedback on the outcomes and decisions that the public can influence. (SRTS program goal)

- In partnership with school staff, host a minimum of one feedback activity at each of the three public schools (Lyndale, Justice Page, Washburn).
- Activities could include, but are not limited to:
    - Hosting or participating in a walk or bike audit along the project route with students and staff who walk, bike, & roll from some of all three schools.
    - Hosting a creative visioning exercise with one or more schools with participation from at least 30 students.
    - Hosting an 'open house' during lunchtime hours, where students can drop by, learn more about the project, ask questions and provide feedback.
- Achieve a 15% active survey participation rate by 30% design for the estimated 1,050 households included in MPS's defined walk zone.

Goal 3: Work with students, staff, families and local residents in decision-making. (SRTS program goal)

- Host an in-person Open House event with at least 20 people attending, representing both neighbors and school families.

Goal 4: Strive to engage diverse communities at a rate that is reflective of the demographics of the area and school populations.

- Provide translated written materials when at least 5% of the population speaks another language.
- Achieve a response rate of 14% of the total number of surveys completed in Spanish (reflective of the percentage of Spanish-speaking families across the three public schools).
- Strive to reflect 50% students and families of color response rate in community surveys (average of 3 school demographics).