

Reconnecting North Minneapolis and the Mississippi Riverfront

Prepared by Eric King
August 2016
Center of Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota- Twin Cities



Reconnecting North Minneapolis and the Mississippi River

August 2016

Prepared for

Friends of the Mississippi River

Prepared by

Eric W King

Candidate, Masters of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Minnesota

This is a publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), an all-University applied research and technology center at the University of Minnesota that connects faculty and students with community organizations and public institutions working on significant public policy issues in Minnesota. The content of this report is the responsibility of the author and is not necessarily endorsed by CMV, CURA or the University of Minnesota.

© 2016 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota. This publication may be reproduced in its entirety (except photographs or other materials reprinted here with permission from other sources) in print or electronic form, for noncommercial educational and nonprofit use only, provided that two copies of the resulting publication are sent to the CURA editor at the address below and that the following acknowledgment is included: "Reprinted with permission of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)." For information regarding commercial reprints or reproduction of portions of this publication, contact the CURA editor at the address below.

Thank you to:

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
McKnight Foundation
City of Minneapolis, CPED
City of Minneapolis, Public Works
Hennepin County Public Works
MnDOT
CURA (Center for Urban and Regional Affairs)

Special thanks to:

I would like to thank the staff at **Friends of the Mississippi River** for their role, support, and professional networking opportunities provided over the duration of this research project. I would also like to give a special thank you to both *Irene Jones* and *Alicia Uzarek* for all the support, guidance, and time they have given. Both of their experiences and professional knowledge were invaluable in helping to guide my research.

Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)
University of Minnesota
330 HHH Center
301 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
Phone: (612) 625-1551 Fax: (612) 626-0273
E-mail: cura@umn.edu
Website: <http://www.cura.umn.edu>

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, natural origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary-----	4
Introduction-----	6
Controlling Agencies-----	7
City/County/State Projects-----	11
Community Outreach -----	14
Recommendations-----	30
Sources -----	40
Appendix A -----	41
Appendix B -----	46
Appendix C -----	53
Appendix D -----	54



Executive Summary

As redevelopment along the North Minneapolis riverfront begins to become a reality as part of the Above the Falls planning efforts, it is important to ensure that river adjacent neighborhoods in North Minneapolis have safe and direct access to these new amenities and opportunities. New trails and parkland both planned and developed within the Above the Falls area have resulted in additional consideration for improving the connections and access for North Minneapolis communities. Currently I-94, active railroad tracks, and an assortment of heavy and light industrial land use activities serve as significant physical barriers in accessing the riverfront. Addressing these barriers is a major land use challenge that if completed will ensure equitable access and enjoyment of the riverfront as new trails and parkland are developed.

Controlling Agencies

Improvements along the streets and bridges over I-94 that connect to the riverfront are controlled by the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and the State of Minnesota. These agencies work together to implement improvements identified in planning documents and through community input. To better understand the partnerships and various roles between agencies, research of these jurisdictional responsibilities was conducted. Research questions included: which agency has jurisdiction over making certain improvements and what projects are currently in the works to potentially include these improvements.

Upcoming Projects

Projects specifically addressing a few of these seven North Minneapolis river connections are currently in the works, or are on the project radar as part of the City of Minneapolis Public Works 5-year Capital Improvement Program. Projects in process and on the radar include the 26th Ave N Reconstruction and 42nd Ave N Reconstruction projects. These projects include implementing many of the improvements identified in both the planning documents and public participation processes, such as off-road and buffered bike lanes, sidewalk repairs, sidewalk widening, and traffic-calming devices to foster multi-modal transportation systems. A reconstruction project involving Washington Ave N is slated for 2018 and includes improvements along Washington Ave from Webber Parkway (44th) to 49th Ave N. An application for a resurfacing project where Washington Ave N converge with 41st Ave N over I-94 has been submitted as well, requiring a partnership between state, county, and city agencies to implement the planned improvements.

The Lowry Avenue Community Works project, which is headed by Hennepin County Public Works, included the improvements spanning from Theodore Wirth Parkway to 3rd St N just west of I-94 in 2009. A large gap in these improvements exists stretching over I-94, between N. 3rd St. and the Lowry Ave Bridge. While no upcoming projects are in the works to specifically address this gap, it is on both city and county staff radar as a major gap in the pedestrian and bicyclist realm.

In 2017 MnDOT will begin a large resurfacing project on I-94 between Nicollet Ave in Minneapolis and Highway 252 in Brooklyn Park. In 2021 MnDOT will begin a resurfacing project on the Plymouth Ave N bridge over I-94. Through a partnership with the City of Minneapolis, chain-link

fencing will be updated and reflect the Minneapolis “standard” during this project, an improvement which will be consistently applied along bridge crossings as resurfacing projects are implemented within the city boundaries.

Community Engagement

In an effort to engage community residents and promote public participation in this research, a two-pronged outreach approach was taken using both a “dotmocracy” survey instrument and traditional survey instrument. The “dotmocracy” survey boards (see Appendix A) were used at a variety of community events over the summer throughout North Minneapolis. The events included: An Upper Harbor Terminal Open House, two outreach appearances at the West Broadway Farmers Market, and tabling at River Fest. Respondents were asked to identify the three main barriers preventing or limiting access to the riverfront, along with three opportunities for improving access to the riverfront, by placing dots on the images in which they felt most strongly towards. The traditional survey instrument consisted of 10 questions. It was administered online through Friends of the Mississippi River’s website and social media accounts, as well as on paper at community presentations and events.

Responses to these surveys — both the traditional and dotmocracy format — identified West Broadway Ave as overwhelmingly the most unsafe pedestrian experience, while crime/safety, heavy traffic, poor sidewalks, poor aesthetics and a lack of access and amenities along the riverfront received the most responses as existing barriers. Improved sidewalks and bike lanes, protected spaces for pedestrians, improved lighting, and access/amenities along the riverfront were the opportunities most desired. Improving wayfinding/signage was a finding consistently mentioned within the survey comments but not reflected within the quantitative survey results.

Methodology

The research in this report covers North Minneapolis neighborhood-river connections from Plymouth Ave N to 42nd Ave N, similar to the Above the Falls plan, to understand the different agencies involved and the roles in which they are involved in implementing different improvements. To accomplish this research, information was collected from agency staff assigned to this area as well as from the community members. Interviews were conducted with staff from Minneapolis Public Works, Hennepin County Public Works, and MnDOT to learn more about jurisdictional responsibilities, potential plans and projects on the radar, and to develop a better understanding of the process behind implementing improvements gathered from community feedback. The Pedestrian & Bicycle Coordinators from Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and MnDOT were all contacted to outline different methods, strategies, and potential funding opportunities. The process for ensuring public participation included attending four community events and administering both a “dotmocracy” survey instrument and traditional survey administered in both a paper and online format in an effort to engage with more community members. The barriers and strategies listed in survey questions #3 & #4 were derived from community and neighborhood organization input gathered during the Spring 2016 research project⁴.

Introduction

Communities in North Minneapolis, while located within close proximity to the Mississippi River, have not been provided with the access and linkages to this natural amenity to the extent in which other communities in Minneapolis have experienced. New trails and parkland both planned and developed within the Above the Falls area have resulted in additional consideration for improving the connections and access for North Minneapolis communities. Currently I-94, active railroad tracks, and an assortment of heavy and light industrial land use activities serve as significant barriers in accessing the riverfront. Addressing these barriers is a major land use challenge for increasing the access and linkages to the riverfront as new trails and parkland are developed.

The southern boundary of the Above the Falls study area has incorporated many improvements in recent years, both along the river and in improving the connections to nearby adjacent neighborhoods. Plymouth Ave N has been developed with protected bike lanes, colorful crosswalks, and direct access to the riverfront. While improvements have been implemented along this connection, many barriers and challenges still exist that have not yet been adequately addressed for making this connection truly pedestrian-friendly. The riverfront stretching from Plymouth Ave N to just north of West Broadway has seen alterations in the land use and now contains parkland and a linear trail connecting to the downtown core.

One of the greatest changes in land use and riverfront activities in recent years is slated to occur along the riverfront at the Upper Harbor Terminal site. This redevelopment will provide the opportunity for access to the riverfront, along with the different types of employment, housing, and recreational opportunities that will be created. For these new opportunities to be equitable, improving the connections between this site and the neighborhoods in North Minneapolis must remain a top priority.

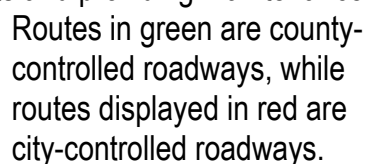
Public participation included attending four community events and administering both a “dotmocracy” survey instrument and traditional survey administered in both a paper and online format in an effort to engage with more community members. Approximately 125-130 people were engaged during community events, along with 166 total traditional survey responses.

Another challenge to improve the neighborhood-river connections is the wide range of actors and agencies with jurisdiction over controlling, funding, implementing, and maintaining the connections and improvements. Research was conducted to identify which agency has jurisdiction over making certain improvements and what projects are currently in the works to potentially include these improvements. This research will be shared with neighborhood organizations and others interested in working towards improved connections to the Mississippi River.



Research was conducted to identify which agency has jurisdiction over making certain improvements and what projects are currently in the works to potentially include these improvements. Improvements along the streets and bridges over I-94 connecting to the riverfront are controlled by the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and the State of Minnesota, requiring partnerships to implement improvements identified in planning documents and from community input.

Figure 1 highlights the major routes in North Minneapolis connecting to the Mississippi River, and which agency has jurisdiction regarding implementing improvements and providing maintenance.



I-94 dissects the entire length of North Minneapolis, which is a MnDOT state-controlled freeway and thus requiring different implementation and maintenance agreements and partnerships. Bridge structures over I-94 are under the control of MnDOT as well, limiting the ability of city agencies in reconstructing the roadway and/or widening sidewalks, adding protected bike lanes, or implementing “greening” improvements.

Table 1 lists the agency jurisdiction for the various streets and bridges over I-94 connecting to the Mississippi River, while the tables attached in Appendix B provide an overview of agency jurisdiction for the improvements identified

Figure 1: Jurisdictional control over streets in North Minneapolis

within the planning documents and collected through community outreach engagement.

<i>Connection</i>	<i>Lyndale to I-94 streetscape</i>	<i>ROW over I-94</i>	<i>I-94 Bridge (streetscape implementation)</i>	<i>I-94 Bridge (streetscape maintenance)</i>	<i>Mississippi River Bridge</i>
<i>Plymouth Ave N</i>	Minneapolis Public Works	MnDOT	Minneapolis Public Works	City-State Partnership	Minneapolis Public Works
<i>West Broadway Ave</i>	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 81)	MnDOT	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 81 Brooklyn Park to Washington Ave N)	City-County-State Partnership	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 66- Washington Ave to Stinson)
<i>26th Ave N</i>	Minneapolis Public Works	MnDOT	Minneapolis Public Works	City-State partnership	n/a
<i>Lowry Ave N</i>	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 153)	MnDOT	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 153)	City-County-State Partnership	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 153)
<i>Dowling Ave N</i>	Minneapolis Public Works	MnDOT	Minneapolis Public Works	City-State partnership	n/a
<i>41st Ave N</i>	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 152)	MnDOT	Hennepin County Public Works (CR 152)	City-County-State Partnership	n/a
<i>42nd Ave N</i>	Minneapolis Public Works	MnDOT	Minneapolis Public Works	City-State partnership	Minneapolis Public Works

Table 1: Agency jurisdiction for the seven neighborhood-river connections in North Minneapolis within the Above the Falls boundary

The City of Minneapolis is typically in control of the maintenance of various improvements (crosswalks, traffic signals, bike lanes, sidewalks) outside of the right-of-way along county roads, and both the right-of-way and sidewalks on city streets.

Hennepin County controls the right-of-way along both county roads (Lowry Ave N and West Broadway Ave) in terms of funding and the implementation of improvements such as restriping and repaving. General maintenance is conducted by the City of Minneapolis Public Works through a city-county partnership.

MnDOT controls the right-of-way of I-94, which includes all roads and bridges crossing the path of I-94. The roadway and sidewalks are maintained through a state-city partnership, while bridge structures remain within the jurisdiction of MnDOT. Improvements require *altering the structure of the bridge* such as widening the sidewalk are controlled by MnDOT. City and county agencies are limited in this sense when proceeding with making improvements along these structures within the I-94 right-of-way.

Contacts

Each agency with jurisdictional control employs different staff dedicated to developing safer and friendlier streets, particularly the Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinators working to enhance the pedestrian experience and cultivate a built environment conducive to multi-modal forms of

transportation. The State, County, and City all have designated Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinators advocating for — and developing — plans and policies intended to create safer and friendlier streets and spaces in the public realm. Interviews were conducted with each of the pedestrian and bicycle coordinators, along with other staff within the agencies. The interviews helped to develop a better understanding of upcoming projects and the process for including identified improvements impacting the I-94 crossings. Appendix C contains a list of the different staff and agencies and the role or position they have in their respective agency.

Project managers for the 42nd Ave N Reconstruction, Lowry Community Works Project, and Plymouth Ave Bridge project were contacted and met with as part of this process, along with attempts to connect with the 26th Ave N Reconstruction project manager to better understand the different actors involved in these larger reconstruction and community works projects.

Funding

Funding for connection improvements will likely come from the capital improvement programs within the Minneapolis Public Works and Hennepin County Public Works departments, along with federal and state funds allocated to MnDOT for their roadways (i.e. freeways; freeway overpasses including bridges; freeway entrance/exit ramps).

Minneapolis Public Works outlines a set of primary city goals meant to align with the pursuit of funding opportunities:

- *Living well: Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life*
- *One Minneapolis: Disparities are eliminated so all Minneapolis residents can participate and prosper*
- *A hub of economic activity and innovation: Businesses – big and small – start, move, stay and grow here*
- *Great Places: Natural and built spaces work together and our environment is protected*
- *A City that works: City government runs well and connects to the community it serves*

These goals help determine which projects are considered to be included within the capital improvement program, and should be applied in the approach while advocating for funding improvements as to how they would satisfy these requirements.

Blue Cross Blue Shield, Center for Prevention MN offers funding opportunities for different projects and programs that satisfy certain elements of their mission and goals that include increasing physical activity while promoting healthy and active living. Improving the pedestrian infrastructure to connect with parks, trails, and other recreational activities along the riverfront should satisfy most of the goals of the Center for Prevention and complement the work in which they are already engaged in North Minneapolis.

An available funding opportunity through MnDOT for developing a more attractive landscape is the Landscape Partnership Agreement in which the agency funds greening and other landscaping initiatives in which the City maintains. This funding opportunity is limited to locations within the right-of-way of MnDOT.

Additional Partners

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) has developed criteria for ranking which projects receive funding and satisfy the goal of building equity into park investments, known as the Criteria Based System for MPRB Capital and Rehabilitation Project Scheduling. Making the argument that park use can not be equitable if access remains unequitable should be again brought to the attention of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board so overcoming these barriers and challenges is clearly defined and addressed. Considered in this ranking system are variables such as population density, youth population, neighborhood safety, asset conditions, longevity, and proportionality. Parks in North and South Minneapolis rank higher, while parks in Northeast and Southwest rank lower when applying this ranking system². This system was developed to quantify neighborhood parks within the city to ensure investments align with the goal of building equity. An Equity Toolkit for pilot projects has been developed and includes the Upper Harbor Terminal Site project in North Minneapolis to help *prevent institutional racism and identify options to remedy inequities should they be identified*³.

The Metropolitan Council Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is another opportunity in which equity, livability, and sustainability are included within the language of the mission and goals of the agency. Currently, about 9% — 1.9% for bike/pedestrian projects only, and 7.1% “setaside” for 2017-2020 projects — of the budget is available for projects for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements.

Other organizations such as the McKnight Foundation or the Better Bridges organization are potential partners for advocating and funding opportunities as well. The McKnight Foundation promotes “sustainable regional development” and “economically vibrant neighborhoods” that are *socially equitable and create communities of opportunity*. Neighborhood organizations and groups, along with non-profit and religious institutions may serve as useful resources for guidance of the design of projects and tapping into potential funding opportunities.



City/County/State Projects

Current Projects Addressing Direct Connections to the Mississippi River

The Minneapolis Public Works Capital Improvement Program (CIP) outlines a variety of projects that will be completed over the next 5 years, including many of the connections in North Minneapolis linking to the Mississippi Riverfront. Projects in process and on the radar include the 26th Ave N Reconstruction and 42nd Ave N Reconstruction projects. The projects include implementing many of the improvements identified in both the planning documents and public participation process, such as off-road and buffered bike lanes, sidewalk repairs, sidewalk widening, and traffic-calming devices to foster multi-modal transportation systems.

Planned Projects Addressing Direct Connections to the Mississippi River

A reconstruction project involving Washington Ave N (CSAH 152) between Webber Parkway (44th Ave N) and 49th Ave N. Slightly south, an application has been submitted for a resurfacing project where Washington Ave N converges with 41st Ave N over I-94 and then with a small section of Lyndale Ave N crossing over 42nd Ave N. This is a complex area that will require a partnership between state, county, and city agencies to implement improvements identified in planning documents and from community feedback. As a result of the multiple jurisdictions involved with the upcoming 42nd Ave N Reconstruction Project, the resurfacing project along Lyndale Ave N from 44th Ave N to 49th Ave N, and the potential project along Washington Ave N overlapping both of these projects, oversight to ensure all of the moving pieces come together in the end to satisfy the vision of the community will be required.

The Lowry Avenue Community Works project, headed by Hennepin County Public Works, included improvements spanning from Theodore Wirth Parkway to 3rd St N, just west of I-94. A large gap in these improvements exists stretching over I-94, across Washington Ave N to the Lowry Ave Bridge. While Hennepin County Public Works will be resuming work on this project and focusing on Lowry Ave east of the river, there are currently no plans to address the bike/pedestrian gap on the west side of the river. Speaking with city and county staff gave an impression that this was a portion that was not a high priority at the moment because a lack of pedestrian activity heading towards river, as well as not enough residential population density to justify funding this improvement at the time.

With improvements recently completed on both Plymouth Ave N and Lowry Ave N, along with current projects underway or on the radar for 26th Ave N, 41st Ave N (CR-152), and 42nd Ave, just Dowling Ave N and West Broadway Ave remain void of major infrastructure improvements or any upcoming projects in the near future. Small-scale streetscape improvements on West Broadway, along with a study of Dowling Ave to identify strategies for enhancing safety and the pedestrian experience are in the works. Both the improvements and study will be useful for further identifying strategies to create safe and accessible crossings to the Mississippi River.

Recent improvements along West Broadway funded by the West Broadway Business Improvement District have included aesthetic improvements to garbage bins, planters, and street furniture

(Figure 2), helping to develop a more pleasurable pedestrian experience for those walking along this busy corridor. Improvements of this nature may help to cultivate interest, excitement, and investment into this corridor and help serve as the catalyst for other projects that help to enhance the pedestrian experience.



Figure 2: Recent aesthetic improvements along West Broadway. Pictured is an updated garbage can.

Development and improvements at the Upper Harbor Terminal site should help spur similar investment and interest in improving Dowling Ave, which should proceed in a manner consistent with both planning documents and community feedback.

Other Projects Within North Minneapolis

Beginning in 2017, a large resurfacing project of I-94 will begin between Nicollet Ave in Minneapolis and Highway 252 in Brooklyn Park. The bridge surfaces are not being touched during this project, though crosswalks over freeway entrance and exit ramps will be restriped, impacting the crossings at both Dowling Ave N and West Broadway Ave. As part of this project, pedestrian traffic signals will be updated crossing over freeway entrance and exit ramps as well.

Plymouth Ave N over I-94 will undergo a resurfacing project in 2021, with MnDOT taking the role as lead agency as the roadway lies within their right-of-way. Chain-link fencing will be updated and reflect the Minneapolis “standard,” which can be seen throughout the city at various bridge crossings (Figure 3).



Figure 3: New “standard” Minneapolis fencing over interstate (South Minneapolis)

The roadway will be resurfaced as part of this project, which provides an opportunity for realigning bike lanes and/or providing additional protection or separate spaces if desired by community members. Beautifying Plymouth Ave by enhancing the pedestrian experience with elements such as greening, seating, and using methods to reduce exposure to wind and noise should be considered as this crossing is improved.

A number of smaller projects are slated to occur in North Minneapolis over the next 5 years as part of the CIP program as well, many of which address developing a safer public realm and enhancing the pedestrian experience. Street resurfacing, along with traffic & safety improvements along many of the roadways running parallel to I-94 and the riverfront are slated to be part of these projects.

Date Project

City Minneapolis Public Works Projects (5 Year CIP)

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2016 | • Queen Ave N bridge over Shingle Creek |
| 2016 | • 49th Ave N bridge over Shingle Creek |
| 2018 | • Lyndale Ave N & Shingle Creek- major bridge repair and rehab |
| 2018 | • Lyndale Ave N resurfacing from Webber Parkway to 49th Ave N |
| 2018 | • Lyndale Ave N bridge over Shingle Creek |

City Vertical Connections

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2017 | • West River Road resurfacing (2017) Broadway to BNSF |
| 2018 | • South Willard resurfacing- GV Rd to 26th Ave (Knox to Victory Pkwy) |
| 2018 | • Penn Ave N- pedestrian level lighting from 12th Ave N to McNair Ave [24th Ave N] |
| 2019 | • Emerson resurfacing- Plymouth Ave N to West Broadway Ave |
| 2019 | • West Jordan resurfacing - Xerxes to Logan/Morgan |
| 2019 | • Fremont Ave N- pedestrian level lighting 30th Ave N to 33rd Ave N |
| 2019 | • Emerson Ave N- pedestrian level lighting 30th Ave N to 33rd Ave N |
| 2019 | • Emerson/Fremont from Plymouth to 44th Ave |
| 2020 | • 16th & Emerson- traffic & safety improvements |
| 2021 | • Highland resurfacing- Girard to Lyndale Ave N (WB to 26th) |
| 2021 | • Crystal Lake Cemetery resurfacing- Penn to Humboldt |
| 2021 | • 16th Ave N Safe Routes to School Program (bike lane from Xerxes to Aldrich Ave N) |
| 2021 | • Dowling Ave reconstruction (I-94 to 1st St N) |

State MnDOT Projects

- | | |
|------|-------------------------------|
| 2017 | • I-94 Resurfacing Project |
| 2021 | • Plymouth Ave Bridge Project |

Table 2: Upcoming reconstruction and resurfacing projects in North Minneapolis

Community Outreach

In an effort to engage community residents and promote public participation in this research, a two-pronged outreach approach was taken using both a “dotmocracy” survey instrument and traditional survey instrument. The “dotmocracy” survey boards (see Appendix A) were used at a variety of community events over the summer throughout North Minneapolis. The events included: An Upper Harbor Terminal Open House, two outreach appearances at the West Broadway Farmers Market, and tabling at River Fest. Respondents were asked to identify the three main barriers preventing or limiting access to the riverfront, along with three opportunities for improving access to the riverfront, by placing dots on the images in which they felt most strongly towards. The traditional survey instrument consisted of 10 questions and was administered online through Friends of the Mississippi River’s website and social media accounts, as well as on paper at community presentations and while out at events in the community

“Dotmocracy” Outreach

On June 26, 2016 an open-house event at Folwell Park in North Minneapolis hosted by MPRB regarding the Upper Harbor Terminal was attended to gather community input by conducting a dot survey. Attendees at this event reflected demographics in-and-around Folwell Park, although a larger rate of respondents were Caucasian and middle-aged when compared to the demographic makeup of North Minneapolis as a whole.

Outreach at the West Broadway Farmer’s Market was conducted on July 22, 2016 and August 5, 2016. As a result of extremely high temperatures and humidity on July 22nd, the number of respondents was less than anticipated with approximately 20-25 respondents. The demographic makeup of respondents was reflective of the greater North Minneapolis community during this event in terms of the ethnic makeup and age of attendees who participated in the survey.

Attendees at the August 5th date were reflective of the North Minneapolis community, with people of all ages and ethnicities. Around 30-35 respondents were reached during this event.

River Fest is an annual event held along the Mississippi Riverfront in North Minneapolis, which took place on July 29, 2016 between Plymouth Ave N and West Broadway Ave. Participation at this event was high, and respondents were reflective of the demographic makeup of Minneapolis as a whole, with attendees present from all over the metro area. Approximately 75 responses were gathered during this event.



Figure 4: Friends of the Mississippi River tabling alongside Minneapolis CPED at River Fest

“Dotmocracy” Results

Tables 3 and 4 provide an overview of the “dotmocracy” survey results from the community events attended. Improving sidewalks, access/amenities along the riverfront, and the land bridge concept were all opportunities that scored relatively high at each of the community events, suggesting these are important priorities to pursue. A lack of access to the riverfront and an unsafe pedestrian environment were consistently identified as major barriers, and thus should be considered as top priorities in which to strategize and advocate to improve.

Barrier	Upper Harbor Terminal Open House (6/26/16)	West Broadway Farmers Market (7/22/16)	RiverFest (7/29/16)	West Broadway Farmer's Market (8/5/16)	Total
Lack of access to riverfront	14	13	34	19	80
Unsafe pedestrian environment	12	9	19	17	57
Poor sidewalks	4	7	24	16	51
Heavy traffic	4	5	30	7	46
Unprotected pedestrian spaces	3	3	30	9	45
Poor lighting	3	9	9	6	27
Lack of wayfinding/signage	2	3	15	4	24
Air and noise pollution	4	5	10	4	23
Poor aesthetics	1	5	8	5	19

Table 3: “Dotmocracy” results- What prevents you from walking or biking to the Mississippi River?

Opportunity	Upper Harbor Terminal Open House (6/26/16)	West Broadway Farmers Market (7/22/16)	RiverFest (7/29/16)	West Broadway Farmer's Market (8/5/16)	Total
Access along and connecting to the riverfront	15	8	38	20	81
Improved sidewalks and bike lanes	13	9	38	12	74
Land Bridge	13	12	31	13	69
Improved lighting	1	9	15	11	36
Improved wayfinding/signage	2	6	17	4	29
Improved aesthetics	4	8	12	4	28
Greening	2	5	14	2	23
Traffic calming devices	2	2	9	9	22
Increased public transit	3	4	4	6	17

Table 4: “Dotmocracy” results- What changes would make you more likely to walk or bike to the Mississippi River?

Respondents at the West Broadway Farmers Market (along West Broadway) identified lighting as a major issue, while respondents at the UHT event (along Dowling Ave N) were much more interested in improving access to the riverfront and creating a more attractive landscape along roads and bridges connecting to the riverfront. Public transit, traffic-calming devices, and poor

aesthetics were priorities consistently lower in terms of community priorities, suggesting making these types of improvements may not be as high of a priority for community residents in enhancing the pedestrian experience and access to the Mississippi River.

On multiple occasions, survey respondents also identified a need for restroom facilities as part of redevelopment along the riverfront, which could be strategically placed in positions where pedestrian and recreational activities converge. Snow and ice removal were also barriers identified that make accessing the riverfront and traveling bridges over I-94 difficult and unsafe.

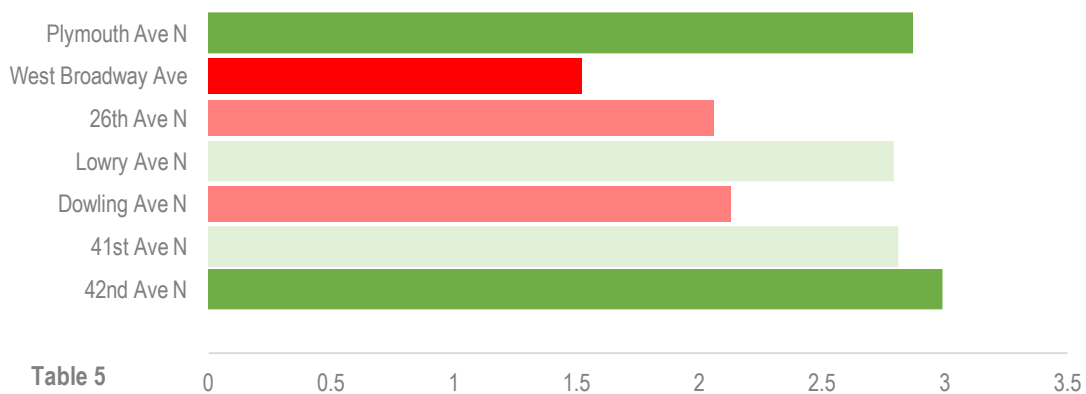
Survey Outreach

A traditional survey was administered online through Survey Monkey as well as on paper at community presentations and while out at events in the community (Appendix A). The purpose of the survey was to gather additional community input around access to the Mississippi River. Friends of the Mississippi River social media networks and personal contacts were both taken advantage of in an attempt to reach out to as many residents in the community as possible. Each of the neighborhood organizations in North Minneapolis were also contacted and asked to forward survey link to their own contacts as well.

The survey was composed of 10 questions (see Table 5 through Table 14). A total of 166 survey responses were gathered, with 150+ comments included addressing questions #1, #2, #3, and #5. Approximately 10 paper survey copies were collected, with the remainder gathered through the online survey tool. The survey was also posted on Friends of the Mississippi Rivers Facebook page with targeted outreach to people living in zip codes in North Minneapolis. The posting also garnered many likes and comments on Facebook. Males — and in particular men of color — are not reflected proportionally within the survey results as participation among this population was much lower, with 68% respondents being female.

Survey Results

#1. When walking or biking along the following roads in Minneapolis, how enjoyable is your experience?



Comments from Question #1 were sorted into main themes and displayed in a table for ease of viewing by each connection over I-94 to the riverfront.

Plymouth Ave N

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic
<p><i>Plymouth is great in terms of protected bike lanes, but could be GREATLY improved</i></p> <p><i>separated and greened lanes would be a step up from the white posts along Plymouth Ave</i></p> <p><i>Bike lanes need to be better swept. Wish the flex posts continued further west [along Plymouth]</i></p>	<p><i>We get in our car and drive to the river at Plymouth</i></p>		<p><i>Plymouth over i-94 is dark and LOUD.</i></p>	<p><i>need better lighting on Plymouth between the river and 2nd.</i></p>	<p><i>I mostly use Plymouth. It is pretty good.</i></p> <p><i>Plymouth feels the safest because of the bike lanes.</i></p>

West Broadway Ave

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic
<p><i>Any designated bike paths from Northside to the River would be great! I usually drive my bike to the river, then ride, traffic & drivers are just too crazy on West Broadway</i></p> <p><i>Bike lane on Broadway would be nice. Lyndale could also use a bicycle lane.</i></p>		<p><i>I am too nervous to walk or bike on Broadway because I get harassed.</i></p> <p><i>Too many transients on Broadway that make me feel unsafe.</i></p>	<p><i>Once you get across 94, Broadway is fine</i></p> <p><i>Broadway needs wider sidewalks over I94 and better buffer between walkers and cars</i></p>		<p><i>Broadway has too many cars and people.</i></p> <p><i>Broadway is too busy because of the highway ramps.</i></p> <p><i>Once you are used to this or are travelling evenings or nighttime most of these except Broadway are really nice</i></p>

26th Ave N

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic
Need a bike lane on 26th Ave N over I-94 and to the river, and then a land bridge connecting to NE Mpls!	more trees all along 26th, like the new section by Farview Park - extend to river		26th requires a zig-zag across busy intersection to reach riverfront. Need better lighting and wider sidewalk everywhere.	Better lighting [referring to 26 th Ave N]	

Lowry Ave N

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic
<p>A dedicated bike trail on Lowry across I-94</p> <p>Bike lane on Lowry to bridge, need to sweep bike lanes</p> <p>definitely need a bike lane along Lowry over I-94</p>	Lowry is nice, except very smelly at times with the shingle plant there				Lowry is decent, but still kind of too busy in places.

Dowling Ave N

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic
Dowling bike route is suicidal.		Dowling seems empty.			

41st Ave N

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic



42nd Ave N

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic
			<p>Need safer pathways to cross streets and you must cross a busy intersection ball along Lyndale to make this happen on 42nd Ave n.</p> <p>The only street mentioned above that I'd even consider biking on is 42nd Ave since it's a brief ride to dedicated trails. None of the other streets feel safe for biking and I like to spend as little time in the lower numbers as possible.</p>		<p>With the exception of going left/north on west at 42 all these intersections are very busy during daylight with large truck traffic. Once you are used to this or are travelling evenings or nighttime most of these except Broadway are really nice</p>

General Comments

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Lighting	Traffic
<p>could use more bike paths to the river itself</p> <p>Separate bikes from traffic</p> <p>Bikes get too little space and aren't respected by cars.</p> <p>bike lanes very worn out, need to be repainted in most places</p> <p>Bikes lanes would be helpful, especially the ones with barriers from the car lane</p>	<p>I never take these streets to the river because I am not aware of how these street connect with the river trail system.</p> <p>People on the Northside need to feel more connected to the resources that area available to them.</p> <p>I don't get to enjoy it because i can't get to it (no accessible</p>	<p>Don't feel safe, too much crime</p> <p>violent crimes and gun violence</p> <p>I don't feel safe walking or biking in north Mpls.</p> <p>I don't walk on any of them. I don't feel safe walking alone.</p> <p>Too dangerous. Too many gunshots and murders</p> <p>Crime!! Clean the streets. Violence,</p>	<p>Bike lanes, better maintained roads and sidewalks</p> <p>Better lighting and level sidewalks</p> <p>Trails or designated lanes</p>	<p>Better lighting needed overall</p> <p>Better lighting would help a lot.</p> <p>Better lighting and level sidewalks</p>	<p>Streets are very busy. Lack of nature.</p> <p>Safety concerns include numerous hit and runs in the area</p> <p>Lots of gravel, glass, oil slicks along the Lyndale routes.</p> <p>Traffic is the largest concern.</p> <p>All the paths to the river are</p>

<i>Bike lanes, traffic are both issues</i>	<i>transportation to get there presently</i>	<i>drugs, garbage. MPD does not care for this area.</i>		<i>made for cars. They are too congested for pedestrian traffic</i>
<i>Bike lanes, better maintained roads and sidewalks</i>	<i>My dislikes are not addressable by FMR -- people yelling, subwoofers, houses not kept up</i>	<i>Streets and businesses need to be cleaned up. Safety is an issue.</i>		<i>Come on. There is a freeway in the way. How can it be enjoyable?</i>
<i>Separate bikes from traffic</i>	<i>Crossings of I 94 feel "gritty." Streetscape between 94 and river are not aesthetically pleasing</i>	<i>Have been harassed by people they live in the area and do not feel safe- have also been threatened with violence</i>		<i>Bike lanes, traffic are both issues</i>
	<i>I usually access it walking along Victory parkway and through Webber Park</i>	<i>Unpredictably unsafe environments keep me from taking my kids towards the river. We stay on Theo pkwy</i>		<i>traffic noise</i>
	<i>add art, full of possibilities to view downtown</i>	<i>The bike lanes are fine but I don't feel safe in North Minneapolis</i>		<i>Separate bikes from traffic</i>

#2. How safe do you feel in the following situations?

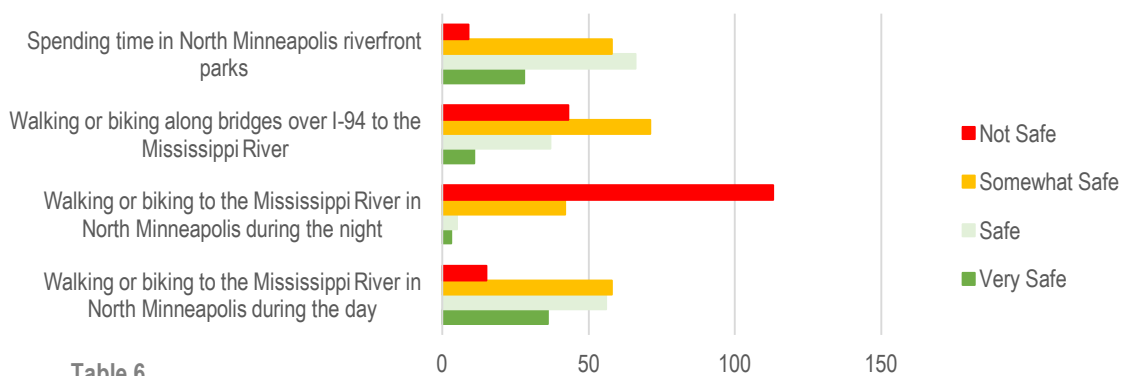


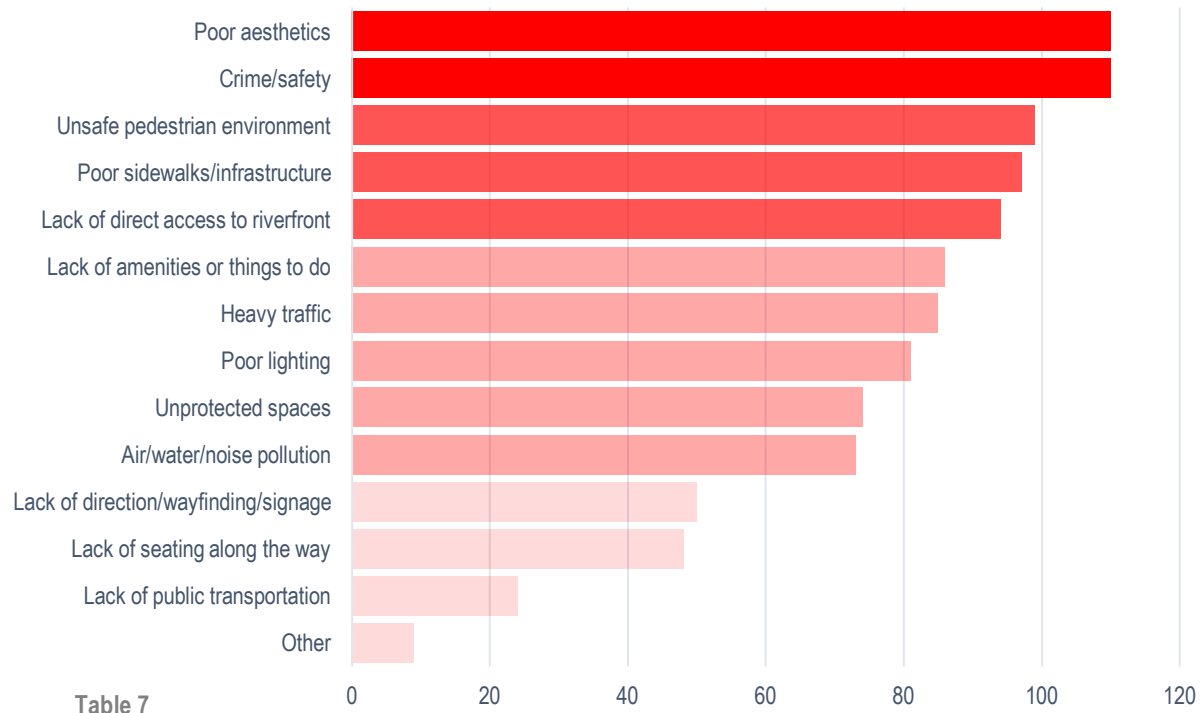
Table 6

Comments from Question #2 were sorted into main themes and displayed in a table for ease of viewing.

Walking to River	In Riverfront Parks	Overall Safety/Crime
<p><i>Lowry is less busy, so it's better than Broadway.</i></p> <p><i>This is mostly Plymouth for me. Lowry looks good...not quite made it on Broadway. I haven't biked at night</i></p> <p><i>Too many gang-related shootings and random muggings occur to make me feel safe walking, but I do it anyway and hope for the best</i></p> <p><i>N 2nd sucks. Northside needs a direct loop (trail) to the rest of the parkway system</i></p> <p><i>Need pedestrian lighting</i></p> <p><i>I don't feel unsafe, but it's not very inviting</i></p>	<p><i>Again, the biggest factor leading to me feeling unsafe is harassment. I rarely go to parks where you are specifying because of this</i></p> <p><i>What riverfront parks. Technically none really in North Minneapolis</i></p> <p><i>I usually don't go north of Boom Island/Plymouth Ave bridge. I would go father north if the trails continued</i></p> <p><i>I run and bike along the Mississippi regularly throughout the week with my two-year old</i></p> <p><i>I didn't know there are riverfront parks</i></p> <p><i>Love watching the River Rats show</i></p>	<p><i>being able to see police presence. police actually breaking up large groups of thuggish or dangerous violent groups. one can easily pin point them from their language volume and aggressive body language. what if n. minneapolis had more bicycle or house ridden police to actually spend time in areas like parks</i></p> <p><i>Homeless hang out under bridges</i></p> <p><i>I only go with others and never late evenings</i></p> <p><i>Being in public is generally feels unsafe, so it's NOT the parks or the neighborhood</i></p> <p><i>I love Mississippi north regional but the south parking lot feels unsafe and I wish there was some personal presence</i></p> <p><i>Crime!! City officials need to make sweeping changes</i></p> <p><i>Too many gangs. Way too volatile</i></p> <p><i>It's kind of an isolated area, give the feeling of being unsafe</i></p> <p><i>Without the community it will be hard to make things feel safe. Connect with the people. They cannot be overlooked</i></p> <p><i>If you can up the pedestrian / bike density, it will feel safer. Low density & low safety is a vicious cycle</i></p>



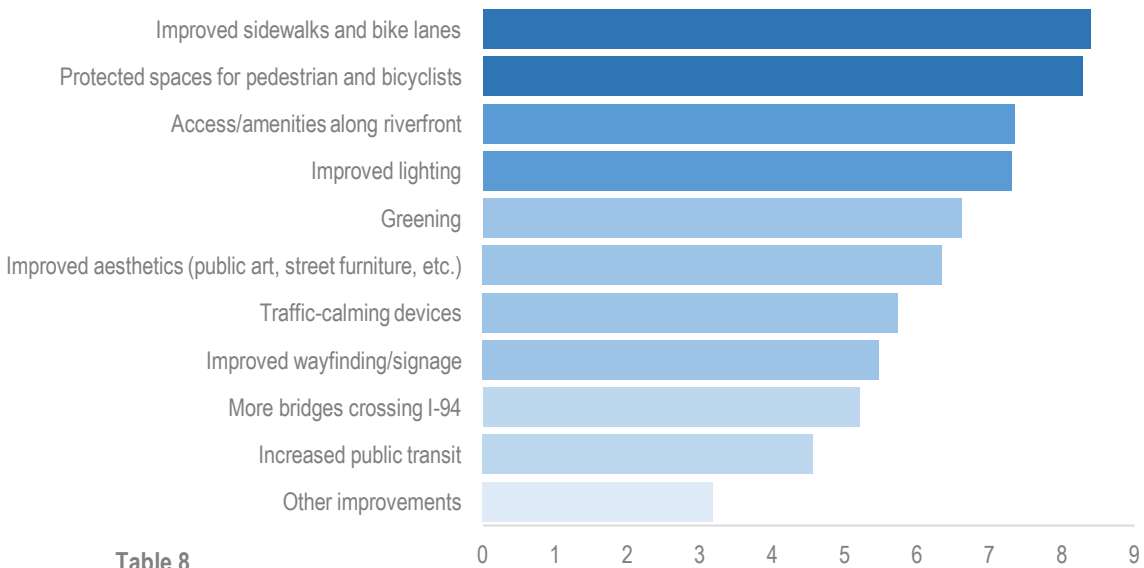
**#3. Which of the following barriers do you experience when walking or biking to the Mississippi River?
Please check all that apply**



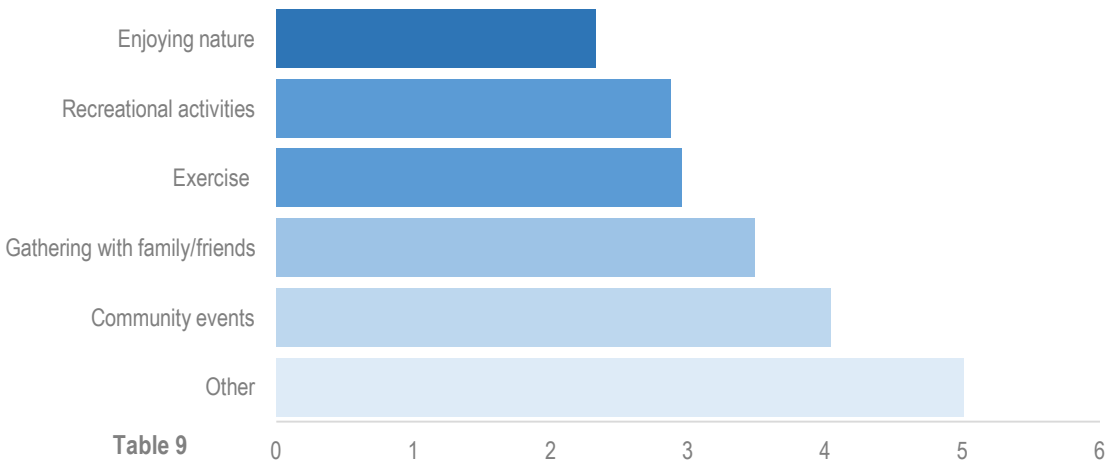
Comments from Question #3 were sorted into main themes and displayed in a table for ease of viewing.

Bike Infrastructure	Other (Pollution, Aesthetics)	Crime/Safety	Pedestrian Infrastructure	Traffic
<p><i>Green Bike depots</i></p> <p><i>Trail is not all along the river. Gets cut off and not consistent north of Broadway. There is a long section where you have to ride in the ugly industrial part</i></p> <p><i>Lack of protected bike routes through North</i></p>	<p><i>A dog park would be nice</i></p> <p><i>Aesthetics. Also, within the routes people take to get to the river. People are sometimes a product of their environment. If their environments are neglected and ordinances are not put into place for residents to maintain a standard, things remain stagnant.</i></p> <p><i>Access and accessibility to the river or near-river community centers is the #1 reason why I don't patronize. (Maybe I'm not educated on what's been done since my last visits.)</i></p> <p><i>Industrial along most of the riverfront. Both sides but especially west</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, love my neighborhood and love the river – "but not what is in between"</i></p> <p><i>bathrooms, artsy things</i></p> <p><i>Lack of public art; lack of an overall aesthetic commitment</i></p> <p><i>eliminate poor chain link fencing</i></p> <p><i>Improvements to bike trails, river access, etc is GREAT, but other needs (pollution, jobs, training) needs to be addressed as well!!!</i></p>	<p><i>crime and violence is the worst. my children NEVER ARE EVER ABLE TO ENJOY ANY OF THE MISSISSIPPI BIKE paths and parks without supervision and never ever after dark do we leave the house unless together or in a vehicle heading out of nomi maybe beat cops to patrol parks and paths on bikes and horses would improve the thuggish violent people around paths</i></p> <p><i>I tend to use Weber to get to the river. The way is full of graffiti and isolated. As a woman, it makes me feel unsafe</i></p> <p><i>Homeless people try to talk to you, while on drugs.</i></p>	<p><i>Poor infrastructure means traveling with my mobility aids is next to impossible</i></p> <p><i>I-94 Underpasses have no lighting. Our area is sorely neglected.</i></p>	<p><i>Even with well labeled bike paths I'm always concerned cars are not paying attention to me</i></p> <p><i>Crazy drivers! Unsafe area to be on a bike west of 94</i></p> <p><i>Aggressive traffic</i></p>

#4. Below is a list of ideas Northsiders have come up with for improving their walking and biking routes to the Mississippi River. Please rank the improvements from 1-11 (1 is the most needed)



#5. What activities will make you want to go to the Mississippi River? Please rank the activities below from 1-6 (1 is the biggest draw)

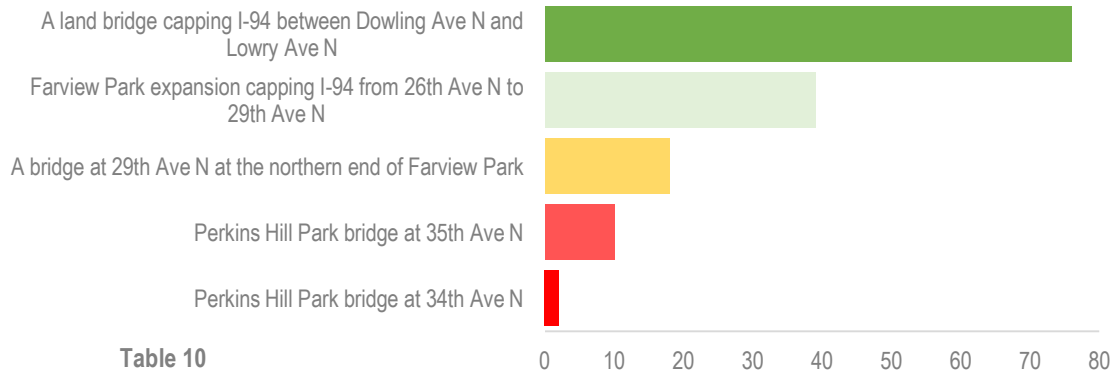


Comments from Question #5 were sorted into main themes and displayed in a table for ease of viewing.

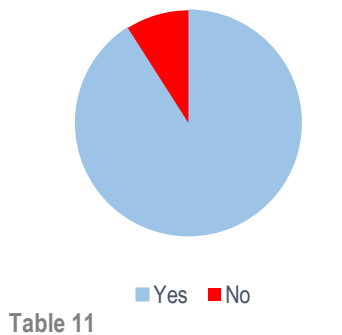
Exercise/Recreational	Events	Commute	Food/Shopping
<p>Photography</p> <p>A dog park</p> <p>getting kids something to do with somewhere to go they aren't in danger</p> <p>Paddleboard, kayak etc rentals so i dont have to go all the way south or west Minneapolis</p> <p>Just being able to ride my bike or walk along the river</p> <p>Having somewhere I can go. The accessibility of public spaces is more than just having wheelchair accessibility per ADA standards. I am affected by sounds, smells, enough seating, quality/comfort of seating, distances from car to facility, distances from car to riverfront (the shorter the better), crowded places</p> <p>Playground</p>	<p>Fireworks</p>	<p>I commute by bike from Bryn Mawr to Fridley, and would really like to have bike trails along the riverfront from 22nd to 42nd Aves. This would complete a nice existing bike way for commuters as well as recreational cyclists. Thanks!</p> <p>to get to work or school</p> <p>Getting around town off roads</p> <p>Commuting by bike/walking</p>	<p>Nice place to stop by after going to the Guthrie or eating NE or downtown.</p> <p>Food & drinks for purchase</p> <p>Waterfront dinning</p> <p>food, shops, food trucks!</p>



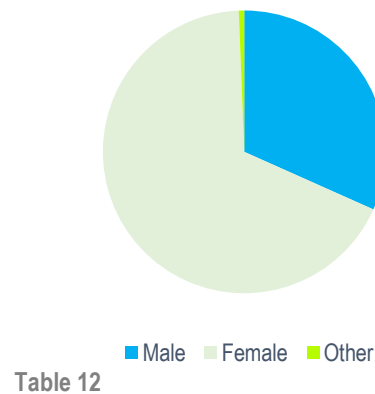
#6. Which proposed new bridge across I-94 would you most like to see built?



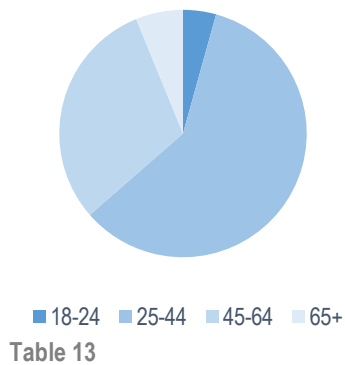
#7. Are you a North Minneapolis resident?



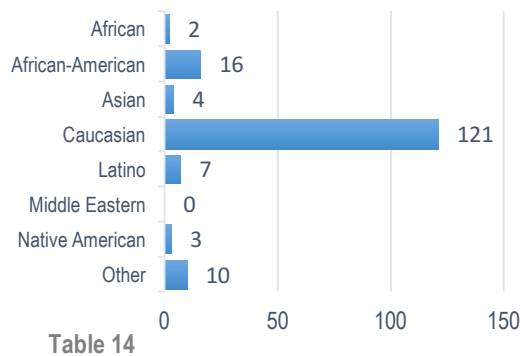
#8. What is your gender?



#9. What is your age?



#10. What is your ethnicity?



Survey Findings

Most survey respondents were North Minneapolis residents (91%) and/or lived within close proximity to the community. More than half of respondents identified as being female (68%) or age 25-44 (60%). A larger number of Caucasians completed the survey than live in North Minneapolis, with approximately 27% of the total respondents identifying as being not of the Caucasian race. Caucasians make up approximately 29% of the population in North Minneapolis, yet accounted for approximately 73% of survey responses⁴.

West Broadway, 26th Ave N, and Dowling Ave N were identified as the three most unsafe streetscapes and crossings over I-94. Heavy automobile traffic along West Broadway and Dowling Ave N were consistently mentioned as major concerns and challenges for developing a safer pedestrian realm. The perception of crime and safety, particularly along West Broadway, was another barrier consistently mentioned within the comments as survey respondents often mention feeling “unsafe” along this crossing. The bike lane along Dowling Ave N was consistently addressed as being very unsafe and dangerous, even “suicidal” as mentioned by one survey respondent. ADA compliance and accessibility poses another challenge, as “poor infrastructure means traveling with mobility aids is next to impossible,” highlighting some of the inequities that exist and must be overcome while developing plans and project improvements along these connections. Improving aesthetics is another important consideration, as these crossings were identified as being uninviting and crossing I-94 “feels gritty.”

Comments addressing the 26th Ave N address similar themes regarding perceptions of safety, identifying this as a crossing in need of better pedestrian-lighting, traffic-calming devices including protected spaces and wider sidewalks. Another challenge identified within the comments regarding this crossing is that the area feels “seemingly desolate,” which further enhances feelings of being in an unsafe environment. The current 26th Ave N Reconstruction project includes both off-road bike lanes and sidewalk widening & reconfiguration, while pedestrian-oriented lighting is an element not included after failing the neighborhood petition process for a property tax assessment to fund pedestrian lighting. Another common theme mentioned for improving 26th Ave N was including various “greening” aspects such as trees, plants, and/or storm water planters for addressing storm water runoff in areas in which impervious surfaces cover the landscape.

Plymouth Ave N and 42nd Ave N were the two crossings identified as being the most enjoyable crossings connecting to the Mississippi River. Survey respondents commented that recent improvements along Plymouth Ave N have included many elements to enhance the pedestrian experience. Many comments gathered also name further improvements for this connection such as general maintenance & upkeep of sidewalks and bike lanes during all seasons and improving the aesthetic experience. Extending flex posts (protected bike lanes) further west was another improvement mentioned that would increase accessibility and safety for residents. The infrastructure along Lyndale Ave N, an important “vertical” connection running parallel to I-94 and the river, is also identified as a streetscape containing “gravel, glass, oil slicks...” that only exacerbate the difficulties accessing streets and connections to the Mississippi River.

42nd Ave N was also identified as a more enjoyable crossing. This may result from proximity to Webber Park and immediate access to trails along the riverfront in this area extending into North Mississippi Regional Park. I-94 underpasses are mentioned as lacking lighting, further enhancing feelings of being unsafe and exposed to criminal/violent behaviors. Along 42nd Ave N crossing over Lyndale Ave N, bike lanes are noticeably absent.

Community feedback regarding Lowry Ave N centered around it being a somewhat safe crossing in need of minor improvements. Such improvements included addressing the gap in the bike lane over I-94, reducing heavy traffic and implementing protected spaces from cars such as sidewalk railings or bike lane barriers from I-94 to the riverfront. Pollution and air quality around Lowry Ave N was another major barrier consistently mentioned during community engagement processes.

As important as improving connections to the riverfront is improving the experience along the riverfront. This includes everything from the sights and smells to the types of activities available for people to engage. Enjoying nature was identified as the most important element in attracting people to the riverfront, followed by both exercise and recreational activities. Gathering with family & friends and community events ranked lower in comparison to more physically active activities, which may be more reflective of survey respondent's desires (social, physical, cultural) than the actual North Minneapolis community itself. As these new trails and parks are developed, considering cultural preferences for activities offered will be an important element to ensure that those living in North Minneapolis receive the same enjoyment of these new public spaces.

Responses to feelings of safety in riverfront parks, walking to the river during the day/night, and crossing bridges over I-94 highlight some of the challenges in cultivating more accessible and enjoyable trails and parks along the riverfront. Walking or biking to the river during the night and walking or biking along bridges over I-94 were the two elements in which respondents felt the most unsafe, with an overwhelming majority of respondents (69.18%) responding they feel "not safe" walking or biking to the Mississippi River during the night, with just 1.89% responding feeling "very safe." Pedestrian lighting and increased pedestrian activity are mentioned as potential ways of overcoming these challenges while activating the space, along with increasing police presence within parks and along these connections. Other consistent themes identified and mentioned as barriers was harassment, people who are homeless approaching, an uninviting streetscape, and addressing areas of isolation which feel desolate and "creepy."

When respondents were asked about new I-94 bridge crossings, two of the options for capping the freeway garnered more responses than pedestrian bridges. Capping I-94 through the use of a land bridge would be very effective in providing safe and accessible routes to the Mississippi River, along with helping overcome many of the physical, visual, and psychological barriers that result from crossing over I-94. Pedestrian bridges, while much safer than traditional vehicular bridges, are not as effective in eliminating many of the physical and psychological barriers as are land bridges.

A land bridge capping I-94 between Dowling Ave N and Lowry Ave N was the most sought after location and method for a new crossing over i-94. An expansion of Farview Park capping I-94 from 26th Ave N to 29th Ave N was the second most desired crossing.

Bridges at Perkins Hill Park, and in particular at 34th Ave N received few responses (2 total), which suggests this location may not be as favored as the crossing at 35th Ave N connecting more directly with the UHT development site.

Many Facebook respondents commented that pollution and air/noise quality are major barriers to spending time along the riverfront. Better wayfinding/signage and water stations for humans and pets were mentioned as methods to improve the experience and increase pedestrian activity. River-oriented businesses and activities are mentioned as important components in both attracting people to the riverfront and providing an experience that people want to revisit.



Recommendations

The following recommendations were created using research gathered in 2016 to help guide neighborhood organizations improving North Minneapolis residents' access to the Mississippi River. The research included significant community outreach as well as gathering upcoming road project schedules and funding information from government staff.

The following recommendations are broken down by streets that cross I-94 and link North Minneapolis to the Mississippi River. For each connection route, a table was created that shows the barriers to accessing the Mississippi River. Barriers are specifically taken from the “dotmocracy” board and survey question #3 (pg. 22) and are listed in order of priority. Community strategies were taken from the “dotmocracy” board and survey question #4 (pg. 24) and are listed in order of priority.

Plymouth Ave N

Plymouth Ave N was identified as one of the safer crossings connecting to the Mississippi River (see survey results for question #1, pg. 16). Improving bike lanes and the aesthetics of this crossing are the two of the top community priorities (see comments specific to Plymouth Ave N on pg. 17). The following table shows more community identified barriers and strategies ranked in the order in which the community prioritized them.

Plymouth Ave N	
Barrier —	Strategy—
1. Lack of Access to Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ River Access○ Wayfinding/Signage
2. Unsafe Pedestrian Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improved sidewalks● Protected spaces● Lighting● Aesthetics● Traffic-calming devices● Wayfinding/signage● More bridges crossing I-94● Increase public transit
3. Poor Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improved sidewalks○ River access○ Lighting○ Greening○ Aesthetics○ Traffic-calming○ Wayfinding/signage○ More bridges crossing I-94
4. Poor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improved sidewalks● Lighting● Aesthetics● Traffic-calming devices● Increase public transit

5. Lack of Wayfinding/ Signage

- Aesthetics
- Traffic-calming devices
- Wayfinding/signage

To implement the priority strategies listed in the table above and improve connections to the river, the report provides an overview of agency jurisdiction and responsibility (see Appendix B), who to contact (see Appendix C), and upcoming projects occurring along Plymouth Ave that have the potential to include the community strategies for improvement (see pages 12-13). The Plymouth Ave N Bridge reconstruction project on the bridge crossing over I-94 in 2021 is an example of an upcoming project. Funding opportunities include federal, state, and city programs and grants.

Given the different community priorities, upcoming projects, and potential funding sources, recommendations for Plymouth Ave N include enhancing the pedestrian experience through beautification efforts such as attractive landscaping and improved wayfinding/signage to better connect the community to the riverfront. Additional outreach could be conducted to identify whether fencing “above-and-beyond” the minimum standards is something the community desires to address wind, noise, and other natural elements while crossing over I-94 on Plymouth Ave N. “Above-and-beyond” minimum standards are elements that exceed those typically outlined as part of city standards. Pedestrian-scaled ornamental lighting and public art are other elements that could be included following the 2021 resurfacing project of the Plymouth Ave Bridge over I-94.

West Broadway Ave

West Broadway Ave identified as the most unsafe crossing connecting to the Mississippi River (see survey results for question #1, pg. 16). Heavy traffic and crime & safety are the two major challenges and barriers for the pedestrian experience along West Broadway Ave (see survey comments specific to West Broadway on pg. 17). The following table shows more community identified barriers and strategies ranked in the order in which the community prioritized them.

Barrier —	Strategy —
1. Lack of Access to Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ River Access○ Wayfinding/Signage
2. Crime/Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improved sidewalks● Protected spaces● Lighting● Greening● Aesthetics● Traffic calming devices● Increase public transit
3. Unsafe Pedestrian Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improved sidewalks○ Protected spaces○ Lighting○ Aesthetics○ Traffic-calming devices○ Wayfinding/signage○ More bridges crossing I-94○ Increase public transit
4. Poor Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improved sidewalks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected spaces • Lighting • Greening • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • More bridges crossing I-94
5. Heavy Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Lighting ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ More bridges crossing I-94 ○ Increase public transit
6. Poor Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sidewalks • River access • Lighting • Greening • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming • Wayfinding/signage • More bridges crossing I-94
7. Unprotected Pedestrian Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Greening ○ Traffic-calming devices
8. Poor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sidewalks • Lighting • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • Increase public transit
9. Air/Noise Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Access ○ Greening ○ Aesthetics
10. Lack of Wayfinding/ Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • Wayfinding/signage
11. Public Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase public transit

To implement the priority strategies listed in the table above and improve connections to the river, the report provides an overview of agency jurisdiction and responsibility (see Appendix B), who to contact (see Appendix C), and upcoming projects occurring along West Broadway Ave that have the potential to include community strategies (see pages 12-13). No major upcoming projects are slated to occur along West Broadway, though minor aesthetic improvements have recently been implemented. Funding opportunities include federal, state, and city programs and grants.

Given the different community priorities, upcoming projects, and potential funding sources, recommendations for West Broadway Ave include identifying ways to develop a safer pedestrian experience within the current public realm. With no major projects slated to occur along West Broadway, minor improvements such as improved aesthetics and increasing pedestrian activity along the street should be pursued. Protected bike lanes where feasible, and improving the poor lighting connecting to the Mississippi River are other improvements useful in addressing crime/safety concerns and enhancing the aesthetic experience along this crossing.

26th Ave N

26th Ave N was identified as one of the more dangerous crossings connecting to the Mississippi River (see survey results for question #1, pg. 16). Improving lighting and implementing methods to enhance the safety of the pedestrian experience are desired (see survey comments specific to 26th Ave N on pg. 18). The following table shows more community identified barriers and strategies ranked in the order in which the community prioritized them.

26th Ave N

Barrier—	Strategy—
1. Lack of Access to Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Access ○ Wayfinding/Signage
2. Crime/Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Lighting ● Greening ● Aesthetics ● Traffic calming devices ● Increase public transit
3. Unsafe Pedestrian Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Lighting ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ Wayfinding/signage ○ More bridges crossing I-94 ○ Increase public transit
4. Poor Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Lighting ● Greening ● Aesthetics ● Traffic-calming devices ● More bridges crossing I-94
5. Poor Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ River access ○ Lighting ○ Greening ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming ○ Wayfinding/signage ○ More bridges crossing I-94
6. Unprotected Pedestrian Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Greening ● Traffic-calming devices
7. Poor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Lighting ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ Increase public transit
8. Air/Noise Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● River Access ● Greening ● Aesthetics

9. Lack of Wayfinding/ Signage

- Aesthetics
- Traffic-calming devices
- Wayfinding/signage

To implement the priority strategies listed in the table above and improve connections to the river, the report provides an overview of agency jurisdiction and responsibility (see Appendix B), who to contact (see Appendix C), and upcoming projects occurring along 26th Ave N that have the potential to include community strategies (see pages 12-13). Upcoming projects occurring along 26th Ave N include the current 26th Ave N reconstruction project set to be completed in 2017. Funding opportunities include federal, state, and city programs and grants.

Given the different community priorities, upcoming projects, and potential funding sources, recommendations for 26th Ave N include advocating for funding sources to provide improved pedestrian-scaled lighting connecting to the Mississippi Riverfront. The portion of 26th Ave N wedged in between I-94 and the Mississippi River will require particular due diligence in implementing improvements that satisfy community needs and provide safe spaces for non-vehicular uses. Greening of this connection, specifically on the bridge crossing over I-94, should be pursued to provide safety buffers and methods for addressing stormwater runoff.

Lowry Ave N

Lowry Ave N was identified as one of the safer crossings connecting to the Mississippi River (see survey results for question #1, pg. 16). Addressing the gap in the bike lane crossing over I-94 and air pollution are major barriers for this connection (see survey comments specific to Lowry Ave N on pg. 18). The following table shows more community identified barriers and strategies ranked in the order in which the community prioritized them.

Barrier—	Strategy—
1. Lack of Access to Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ River Access○ Wayfinding/Signage
2. Crime/Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improved sidewalks● Protected spaces● Lighting● Greening● Aesthetics● Traffic calming devices● Increase public transit
3. Unsafe Pedestrian Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improved sidewalks○ Protected spaces○ Lighting○ Aesthetics○ Traffic-calming devices○ Wayfinding/signage○ More bridges crossing I-94○ Increase public transit
4. Poor Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improved sidewalks● Protected spaces● Lighting● Greening

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • More bridges crossing I-94
5. Heavy Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Lighting ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ More bridges crossing I-94 ○ Increase public transit
6. Poor Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sidewalks • River access • Lighting • Greening • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming • Wayfinding/signage • More bridges crossing I-94
7. Unprotected Pedestrian Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Greening ○ Traffic-calming devices
8. Poor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sidewalks • Lighting • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • Increase public transit
9. Air/Noise Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Access ○ Greening ○ Aesthetics
10. Lack of Wayfinding/ Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • Wayfinding/signage

To implement the priority strategies listed in the table above and improve connections to the river, the report provides an overview of agency jurisdiction and responsibility (see Appendix B), who to contact (see Appendix C), and upcoming projects occurring along Lowry Ave N that have the potential to include the community strategies (see pages 12-13). No major upcoming projects are occurring along Lowry Ave N in North Minneapolis, though the Lowry Ave Community Works project in Northeast Minneapolis begins 2017. Funding opportunities include federal, state, and city programs and grants.

Given the different community priorities, upcoming projects, and potential funding sources, recommendations for Lowry Ave N include addressing the gap in the bike lane from N 3rd St. over I-94 and Washington Ave to N 2nd St. Hennepin County currently owns and plans to develop parcels along this connection, which may potentially provide the opportunity to piggy-back off this project and address this gap. Improving the wayfinding/signage options will help to better connect the community to the Mississippi Riverfront and the new trails and parks slated to be developed near the Upper Harbor Terminal site.



Dowling Ave N

Dowling Ave N was identified as one of the more dangerous crossings connecting to the Mississippi River (see survey results for question #1, pg. 16). Improving the bike lane with protected spaces and improving feelings of safety through increased pedestrian activity are desired for this connection (see survey comments specific to Dowling Ave N on pg. 18). The following table shows more community identified barriers and strategies ranked in the order in which the community prioritized them.

Barrier—	Strategy—
1. Lack of Access to Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Access ○ Wayfinding/Signage
2. Crime/Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Lighting ● Greening ● Aesthetics ● Traffic calming devices ● Increase public transit
3. Unsafe Pedestrian Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Lighting ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ Wayfinding/signage ○ More bridges crossing I-94 ○ Increase public transit
4. Poor Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Lighting ● Greening ● Aesthetics ● Traffic-calming devices ● More bridges crossing I-94
5. Heavy Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Lighting ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ More bridges crossing I-94 ○ Increase public transit
6. Poor Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● River access ● Lighting ● Greening ● Aesthetics ● Traffic-calming ● Wayfinding/signage ● More bridges crossing I-94

7. Unprotected Pedestrian Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Greening ○ Traffic-calming devices
8. Poor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Lighting ● Aesthetics ● Traffic-calming devices ● Increase public transit
9. Air/Noise Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Access ○ Greening ○ Aesthetics
10. Lack of Wayfinding/ Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aesthetics ● Traffic-calming devices ● Wayfinding/signage

To implement the priority strategies listed in the table above and improve connections to the river, the report provides an overview of agency jurisdiction and responsibility (see Appendix B), who to contact (see Appendix C), and upcoming projects occurring along Dowling Ave N that have the potential to include the community strategies for improvement (see pages 12-13). Upcoming projects occurring along Dowling Ave N in which different community priorities may be addressed are identified on pages 11-13 in this report, and include the upcoming Dowling Ave reconstruction project between I-94 and the Mississippi River in 2021. Funding opportunities include federal, state, and city programs and grants.

Given the different community priorities, upcoming projects, and potential funding sources, recommendations for Dowling Ave N include addressing the unsafe and unprotected bike lanes, specifically in locations in which they intersect with freeway entrance and exit ramps. Poor sidewalks were another theme consistently mentioned as a top priority in improving this connection and pedestrian experience, as were crosswalks and implementing audible traffic signals at busy intersections. Other concerns regarding heavy traffic (associated with freeway ramps) may be addressed through traffic-calming devices such as crosswalks, vibrantly colored bike paths, and bumpouts.

41st Ave N

41st Ave N as one of the safer crossings connecting to the Mississippi River. No comments were gathered specific to 41st Ave N. The following table shows more community identified barriers and strategies ranked in the order in which the community prioritized them.

Barrier—	Strategy—
1. Lack of Access to Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Access ○ Wayfinding/Signage
2. Poor Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Lighting ● Greening



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • More bridges crossing I-94
3. Poor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Lighting ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ Increase public transit
4. Air/Noise Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Access • Greening • Aesthetics
5. Lack of Wayfinding/ Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ Wayfinding/signage

To implement the priority strategies listed in the table above and improve connections to the river, the report provides an overview of agency jurisdiction and responsibility (see Appendix B), who to contact (see Appendix C), and upcoming projects occurring along 41st Ave N that have the potential to include the community strategies for improvement (see pages 12-13). Upcoming projects occurring along 41st Ave N include the pending Washington Ave resurfacing project. Funding opportunities include federal, state, and city programs and grants.

Given the different community priorities, upcoming projects, and potential funding sources, recommendations for 41st Ave N include implementing improved lighting and improved wayfinding/signage options to better connect with amenities within close proximity. With a pending project upcoming along Washington Ave N that converges with both 41st Ave N over I-94 and Lyndale Ave N, developing consistency is an important component for the aesthetic experience.

42nd Ave N

42nd Ave N as one of the safer crossings connecting to the Mississippi River (see survey results for question #1, pg. 16). 42nd Ave N was consistently identified as one of the more desired connections for residents living in the community (see survey comments specific to 42nd Ave N on pg. 19). The following table shows more community identified barriers and strategies ranked in the order in which the community prioritized them.

Barrier—	Strategy—
1. Lack of Access to Riverfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ River Access ○ Wayfinding/Signage
2. Unsafe Pedestrian Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sidewalks • Protected spaces • Lighting • Aesthetics • Traffic-calming devices • Wayfinding/signage • More bridges crossing I-94 • Increase public transit



3. Poor Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Protected spaces ○ Lighting ○ Greening ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ More bridges crossing I-94
4. Heavy Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Lighting ● Traffic-calming devices ● More bridges crossing I-94 ● Increase public transit
5. Poor Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ River access ○ Lighting ○ Greening ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming ○ Wayfinding/signage ○ More bridges crossing I-94
6. Unprotected Pedestrian Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved sidewalks ● Protected spaces ● Greening ● Traffic-calming devices
7. Poor Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved sidewalks ○ Lighting ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ Increase public transit
8. Air/Noise Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● River Access ● Greening ● Aesthetics
9. Lack of Wayfinding/ Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aesthetics ○ Traffic-calming devices ○ Wayfinding/signage

To implement the priority strategies listed in the table above and improve connections to the river, the report provides an overview of agency jurisdiction and responsibility (see Appendix B), who to contact (see Appendix C), and upcoming projects occurring along 42nd Ave N that have the potential to include the community strategies for improvement (see pages 12-13). Upcoming projects occurring along 42nd Ave N in which different community priorities may be addressed are identified on pages 12-13 in this report and include the upcoming 42nd Ave N reconstruction project, along with other projects along Lyndale Ave and Washington Ave that intersect with 42nd Ave N. Funding opportunities include federal, state, and city programs and grants.

Given the different community priorities, upcoming projects, and potential funding sources, recommendations for 42nd Ave N include advocating for consistency in improvements between the 42nd Ave N reconstruction project, the Washington Ave N resurfacing project, and the resurfacing project along Lyndale from 44th Ave N to 49th Ave N. Although an upcoming project along 42nd Ave N is slated to occur, improvements will stop on the west side of Lyndale Ave N and result in a gap similar to that found along Lowry Ave N over I-94. Implementing a temporary solution for this gap

in the short-term would be very useful in cultivating a much safer and friendlier pedestrian experience along this crossing.

Next Steps

Residents living in North Minneapolis — especially residents of color — have historically not used parks in the Twin Cities region as a result of both inadequate access and a lack of cultural-specific amenities and activities provided in these spaces⁵. Along with the physical challenges engrained within the built environment in accessing the riverfront, other social and cultural challenges exist as well. It is important that as new improvements are implemented, gentrification — the displacement of existing community members — is minimized and that the improvements help to promote equitable access to parks and trails along the Mississippi Riverfront. Conducting an analysis of the implications of streetscape and pedestrian improvements for improving access to the Mississippi Riverfront helps identify strategies and policies intended to promote new development while offering tools to minimize the negative impact.

Conclusion

Change in the land use and activity along the riverfront is slated to occur at the Upper Harbor Terminal site and other locations along the riverfront in North Minneapolis. This redevelopment will provide the opportunity for opening access to the riverfront, along with access to the different types of employment, housing, and recreational opportunities that will be created as a result. For these new opportunities to be equitable, it is important to ensure that river adjacent neighborhoods in North Minneapolis have *safe and direct access* to these new amenities. I-94, railroad crossings, an assortment of heavy and light industrial land use activities, and heavy traffic serve as significant barriers in both accessing and using the riverfront. By addressing these physical barriers within the built environment, steps can be made towards developing a more accessible and active Mississippi Riverfront in North Minneapolis. Using the different tools and strategies outlined by community members to address the different barriers that exist should help to guide project and improvement-priorities to ensure the new projects and improvements align with community wants and needs.



Sources:

- ¹ *Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board Matrix Criteria for Capital Improvements*. City of Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board. 2016.
https://www.minneapolisparks.org/_asset/bslvkd/ctg_criteria_matrix_for_mprb_capital.pdf
- ² *Racial Equity*. City of Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board. 2016.
https://www.minneapolisparks.org/racial_equity/
- ³ *Minneapolis- Saint Paul Neighborhood Demographic Profiles*. Minnesota Compass. 2016.
<http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis-saint-paul#!community-areas>
- ⁴ King, Eric. *Access and Equity: Reconnecting North Minneapolis and the Mississippi River*. Center of Urban and Regional Affairs. May 2016.
- ⁵ Nelson, Tim. "Racial issues forcing change in Minneapolis parks leadership". MPR News. 2016.
<http://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/07/19/racial-issues-force-change-minneapolis-parks-leaders>

Figure 1: *County, State-Aid, Trunk Highway Map*. City of Minneapolis, Public Works

