

Engagement Plan

Downtown Saint Paul Streets and Sidewalks Plan

Version 2: Posted 3-13-2025

This document is posted online for record-keeping and communication purposes; it however is a living document that the project team is editing as the plan develops.

Project Description

Saint Paul's downtown is at a critical point. With multiple infrastructure projects, including major transit lines, corridor reconstructions, and an ambitious bikeway network, there is an opportunity to reinvent the right-of-way and shift modal priorities through the [Downtown Saint Paul Streets and Sidewalks plan](#). At the same time, major changes in the real estate and development market are raising questions about how the public realm sets the stage for private sector investment. Meanwhile, with its position at the heart of the city, downtown is an essential part of advancing the city's policy goals, including climate action, equity, safety, and economic development.

Utilizing recent infrastructure and investment plans, such as the Downtown Alliance's recently completed Downtown Investment Framework, Metro Transit Network Now strategic plan, the improvements in the public realm can help catalyze private investment within and beyond the right-of-way. In coordination with stakeholders, this planning process can help build consensus needed to advance downtown revitalization and renewal.

Goals for Engagement

- Building on the many prior downtown engagement efforts to minimize engagement fatigue
- Identifying and elevating underrepresented voices to advance more equitable outcomes
- Providing space for feedback on broader priorities for a sustainable, livable and vibrant downtown
- Building a sense of ownership in the plan and design recommendations, to catalyze implementation

Community Profile

Current community demographics for the Downtown Saint Paul area are sourced utilizing [Minnesota Compass Data](#) and the Center for Economic Inclusions [Indicators for an Inclusive Regional Economy](#).

Equitably engage a diversity of public & private stakeholders.

Equity can be defined as trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives, recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to systemically unjust processes and institutions. In contrast, equality aims to provide everyone with the same thing to enjoy full healthy lives. This definition is derived from language used by community-based coalitions, including [Metropolitan Council](#), [Nexus Community Partners](#) and [The Alliance](#).

Critical communities are those whose input has been disproportionately unheard in public decision-making, including people of color, people with disabilities and low-income people.

Below is a list of communities that the project team intends to proactively engage:

- Native/Indigenous Community
- Unsheltered population
- Latino
- Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI)
- African American
- Low-income households
- Youth and young adults
- Formerly incarcerated individuals
- People with disabilities
- Seniors

Key Themes Relevant to Diverse Communities

- Equity and inclusivity: Given the disparities communities of color face with regards to housing, transportation and low to no cost entertainment and family friendly public spaces. This plan is poised to provide increased access to opportunity to improve vitality in the Downtown Saint Paul community.
- Safety: Concerns and perspectives about public safety vary by geographic area and culture. Safety can be defined differently in various communities.
- Work schedule reality: Low-income and communities of color have historically had different work schedules according to their profession or economic status and may be concerned about safety during early morning or late-night visits outside of rush hour.
- Environment: As many people of color visit and patronize the area, their perspectives on environmental and design issues are especially valuable to the project.
- Transparency: Residents and communities should be engaged in planning and decisions should be open and widely communicated.
- Accountability: Residents and communities can see how their participation affects the outcome; specific outcomes are measured and communicated.

Importance of providing the greatest amount of access to a diversity of stakeholders.

Using a variety of tools and techniques for communicating with stakeholders, the project team will ensure that access to engagement activities and information is unhindered throughout our engagement process. That we meet stakeholders in places that are easily accessible by transit, providing childcare, and providing both in-person and digital opportunities for participation when possible.

Below is a list of potential tools to utilize where possible and resources for communicating with stakeholders:

- Email
- Webpage
- Social media (such as Facebook, Bluesky, X, Instagram) -Community-based forums

- What's App
- Visual media

Informing critical communities will be a focus of public events and online materials. Other channels of communication will be used as appropriate, such as:

- One-on-one and small group meetings
- Listening/informing sessions
- Conversations and/or surveys
- Culturally relevant pop-ups and community events
- Traditional and multicultural social media communications
- Community and multicultural media

Engagement Deliverables

The public workshops, design charrettes, pop-up events, and stakeholder meetings proposed in this section will provide an opportunity for both private and public sector key stakeholders and the public to give current perspectives on mobility in the Downtown St. Paul area for future growth and direction.

Accessibility

Translation Services: Engagement materials will be provided in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish. Translation services will be through a company that is certified as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and is local to the Twin Cities. Potential vendors for translation quotes include:

- Global Translation & Interpreter
- Minnesota Interpreters and Translators
- Native Hmong Interpreter, LLC
- Latitude Prime LLC

Physical Accessibility: The locations chosen for events should be accessible to all physical abilities to enter and stay comfortably. Printed materials will be prepared in a visually accessible way with large text size, contrasting color, clear hierarchy, and engaging visuals.

Engagement Methods

Public Workshops & Design Charette

Two public workshops, providing an overview of project progress and an opportunity to provide input on important decision points. Materials will be shared in a hybrid environment to maximize engagement. Workshops will be held in downtown and key stakeholder groups will be invited to participate in the hands-on ideation process. We will develop activities exploring options and priorities. We will produce a summary of the results of every event.

The design charrette will explore options for corridor typology, classification, and design. This hands-

on exercise will involve participants in the opportunities, constraints, tradeoffs, and possible outcomes of different scenarios to increase understanding and help build consensus around a workable solution. The summary of this will include visual representations of what was explored and sketched.

Pop-up Events

Going to where people already are is often the most effective way to connect. We will use creative engagement activities, including live sketching of ideas and concepts, on-the-street surveys in key areas, engaging game-type activities, and hands-on activities. General Public engagement will consist of three pop-ups to coincide with opportunities for public input. Where possible, we will schedule pop-ups around downtown events and activities that draw broad participation from local and visiting stakeholders. Local venues, events, and activities will be sought out at crucial points throughout the project and welcoming exploration of new opportunities to expand our reach. We will produce a summary of the results of every event. (See summary reporting document on final page of this plan.)

Political Engagement

With the high-profile nature of this project and the prominence of both downtown and the Capitol area, it is important to have focused conversations with policymakers and other political leaders. Working with the city and its partners, key political stakeholders will be identified. Facilitation of 10 meetings, either 1:1 or small groups will occur throughout the project. While these will be somewhat directed by the interests of those involved, we anticipate topics to include a vision for downtown, challenges and opportunities to achieve that vision, response to proposed plan goals and what resources may be available. All meetings will be summarized and provided for city staff to review.

Stakeholder Engagement

The downtown area has many key stakeholder groups that can provide insights into existing conditions, needs, priorities, opportunities, and many other factors. As many have regularly scheduled meetings, it is good practice to present as part of their agendas, where key people are already assembled. We plan on attending and presenting at 10 regularly scheduled meetings organized by groups like Capitol River Council, Greater Saint Paul BOMA, East Metro Strong, Saint Paul Downtown Alliance, Visit Saint Paul, and others. We will develop presentations, facilitate discussions, and produce meeting summaries.

Due to the numbers and complexity of stakeholder groups downtown, we will develop a stakeholder evaluation matrix to track to learn more about the groups we are trying to reach so we can tailor our engagement approach. We will explore levels of interest and involvement, key issues and concerns, and effective engagement strategies for each of the following:

- Elected/appointed officials
- Agency and Organization partners
- Educational institutions
- Civic, cultural, artistic, health, and religious institutions
- Residents and neighborhood associations, especially BIPOC
- Business owners, employees, customers, and associations
- Property owners, managers, and renters

| <u>Key Stakeholder</u> | <u>Level of Involvement</u> | <u>Project Team Responsibility</u> |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Elected/appointed officials</i> | | |
| Mayor Melvin Carter's Office | Inform/Consult | City of Saint Paul |
| Ward 2 Councilmember | Inform/Consult | City of Saint Paul |
| City of Saint Paul Public Works | Inform/Consult | City of Saint Paul |
| Saint Paul Parks and Recreation | Inform/Consult | City of Saint Paul |
| Planning and Economic Development (PED) | Inform/Consult | City of Saint Paul |
| <i>Agency and Organization Partners</i> | | |
| TAC (Advisory Council) | Consult | City of Saint Paul/ Nelson/Nygaard/ Bolton & Menk |
| Ramsey County | Inform/Consult | City of Saint Paul |
| Capitol River Council | Involve | City of Saint Paul /Consultant Team |
| St. Paul Downtown Alliance | Involve | City of Saint Paul |
| <i>Educational institutions</i> | | |
| St. Paul College | Involve | NEOO Partners |
| <i>Civic, cultural, artistic, health, and religious institutions</i> | | |
| Minnesota Black Chamber of Commerce | Inform | NEOO Partners |
| Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce | Inform | NEOO Partners |
| | | |
| <i>Events and Venues</i> | | |
| Science Museum of Minnesota | Involve | NEOO Partners |
| Minnesota History Museum | Inform | NEOO Partners |
| Saint Paul Arena Company: Xcel Energy Center; Minnesota Wild, Roy Wilkins Auditorium | Involve | City of Saint Paul/ Consultant Team |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| CHS FIELD | Inform | City of Saint Paul/ Consultant Team |
| Saint Paul Saints | | City of Saint Paul/ Consultant Team |
| <i>Tourism</i> | | |
| Greater St. Paul BOMA | Involve | NEOO Partners |
| East Metro Strong | Involve | NEOO Partners |
| Visit St. Paul | Involve | City of Saint Paul/Consultant Team |

Online Engagement

We will develop an approach for Online engagement, centered on a project webpage or landing page hosted on the city's website stpaul.gov/downtown_projects. Primary components of this strategy will include:

- Informing of text needed for the webpage/landing page and providing updates before major project milestones and public engagement events.
- Co-creating an interactive comment option that allows people to add and respond to comments in the study area.
- Developing, sharing, and summarizing an accessible, mobile-friendly public survey to solicit input. A similar version of the questions will also be used at in-person events to facilitate summarizing themes and project goals.
- Posting content from public workshops and the design charrette to allow review and input for those unable to attend the events.
- As with other engagements, we will summarize the results of this input and share with city staff. We will also ensure digital materials meet ADA accessibility standards.

Project Schedule/Timeline

| Timing | Activity | Content | Responsibility |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| October/ November 2024 | Develop Engagement Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Objectives • Key stakeholders • Key messages • Methods • Draft project schedule | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Data Walk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm location and time • Review and agenda | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and finalize logistics | |
|--|--|---|--|

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|--|--|
| December 2024 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose Schedule Key 1:1s Summarize Engagement | NEOO lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Key Stakeholder List | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and approval | NEOO lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Communications Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and Approval | NEOO lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |

| | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|---|--|
| January 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose Schedule Key 1:1s Summarize Engagement | NEOO Lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City approval |
| | Project Website Launch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content confirmation QR code creation Translation as needed | Consultant team support, City Lead and finalize |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| February 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose Schedule Key 1:1s Summarize Engagement | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City approval |
| | Finalize Engagement Plan | | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team, City Approval |
| | Survey Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital text survey | Consultant Team Support, City finalize and approve |

| | | | |
|------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| March 2025 | Public Workshop #1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop facilitation guide • Confirm logistics • Promotion/Comms | Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Schedule Key 1:1s • Summarize Engagement | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City approval |
| | Pop Up: Saint Patrick's Day Parade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabling Materials (TBD) • Confirm Location/Date • Engagement Activities | NEOO Lead, Consultant team support |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| April 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Schedule Key 1:1s • Summarize Engagement | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City approval |
| | Project Website Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review site • Provide Updates | NEOO Led, City approval |

| | | | |
|----------|------------------------|---|--|
| May 2025 | Review Engagement Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record plan adjustments • Ensure goal alignment | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Pop-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabling Materials • Confirm Location/Date • Engagement Activities | NEOO Lead, Consultant team support |
| | Engagement Report: YTD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement findings | NEOO lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|---|---|
| June 2025 | Public Workshop #2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose | Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
|-----------|--------------------|---|---|

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation Materials | |
| | Pop-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabling Materials • Confirm Location/Date • Engagement Activities | NEOO Lead, Consultant team support |
| | Project Website Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review site • Provide Updates | NEOO Led, City approval |

| | | | |
|-----------|------------------------|--|--|
| July 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Schedule Key 1:1s • Summarize Engagement | NEOO Lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City approval |
|-----------|------------------------|--|--|

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| August 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Schedule Key 1:1s • Summarize Engagement | NEOO Lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City approval |
| | Project Website Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review site • Provide Updates | NEOO Led, City approval |

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|--|---|
| September 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing • Project follow up | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| October 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing • Project follow up | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Project Website Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review site • Provide Updates | NEOO Led, City approval |

| | | | |
|---------------|------------------------|--|---|
| November 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Schedule Key 1:1s • Summarize Engagement | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| December 2025 | Stakeholder Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing • Project follow up | NEOO Led, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Project Website Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review site • Provide Updates | NEOO Led, City approval |

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| January - March 2026 | Engagement Summary and reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement findings | NEOO lead, Full Consultant Team Support, City finalize |
| | Stakeholder Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform stakeholders of plan progress | Consultant team support |
| | Project website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates and maintenance | City led, consultant team support |
| | | | |

| Engagement Strategies | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Strategy | Frequency | Description |
| TAC Technical Advisory Committee | Monthly | Monthly convening of City of Saint Paul Technical Advisory Committee members which is comprised of internal stakeholders of agency and organization partners |
| CRC Capitol River Council | Quarterly | <p>Quarterly convening of CRC public realm committee members consisting of stakeholders who live and work downtown Saint Paul</p> <p>The CRC is the City of Saint Paul council</p> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | | representing district 17 |
| HART Group | Quarterly | Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART) |
| Survey | 1 | Targeted text-based survey with interactive mapping questions. SurveyMonkey or City approved, cloud-based software |
| Quarterly City Manager Debriefs | Quarterly | City PM and Department Directors meeting to update on study status and inform appointed officials |
| Pop Ups | 3-4 | Targeted public engagement at local events or in conjunction with organizations and institutions |
| Stakeholder Meetings | Ongoing – as needed | Key stakeholder conversations in group or one on one format |

Evaluation of Efforts

Engagement Event Summary Template

*Please fill out and send to mccain@neopartners.com within **48 hours** of the event. Thank you!*

| | |
|--|--|
| Lead team member | |
| Event Name: | |
| Event Date: | |
| Event Location: | |
| Estimated number of participants: | |
| How the event was promoted: | |

Event Summary

| | |
|--|--|
| What was the tone/mood of participants? What original ideas or assumptions have been proven to be true? | |
| What were participants' attitudes towards the project like? | |
| If you collected demographic information, please add here: *Take a photo of the demographic information collected and include at the bottom of the page or include as email attachment. | |
| What were the common themes that came from the information collected? (q's, comments you heard) | |
| Did anything else stand out to you that you heard, observed, or learned? | |
| Are any follow-ups needed? | |

| | |
|--|--|
| What worked well? | |
| Would you recommend attending this event again? | |
| Would you suggest doing anything differently next time? | |

Photos

Please send any event photos along with this summary to [Sharice](mailto:Sharice@mccain@neoopartners.com) at mccain@neoopartners.com. Thank you!

