



North Saint Paul Living Street Engagement Plan

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December 3, 2013

Mr. Ammerman;

Green Tree Consultants is pleased to submit our response to the Request for Proposals to prepare an engagement plan for the implementation of the City of North Saint Paul's Living Streets Initiative. Green Tree Consulting is committed to promoting Living Streets as an option for cities that wish to utilize street design to promote non-motorized transportation and sustainable stormwater management. Street design affects everyone in the community and for this reason a comprehensive community engagement plan is necessary in the implementation of a living streets project. At Green Tree Consultants, we are excited to apply the skills and theories that we have been learning in our Public Participation class to developing this plan.

After a careful analysis of the key concerns of North Saint Paul residents, Green Tree Consultants has created the attached engagement plan. This plan seeks to alleviate concerns about the aesthetics and costs of the Living Streets program. Our outreach process will include a branding campaign, a series of workshops, visual preference surveys, roundtable discussions, design charretts, and pop-ups. It is designed to create a forum to solicit and respond to community members' concerns about living streets, to provide information to the public about living streets, and finally to involve residents in the design process. We believe that this process will help community members better understand the purpose of living streets and generate more community ownership of the project by making community members feel that their concerns were addressed throughout the participation process.


Thank you for considering our proposal. We look forward to working with you on this exciting engagement process. We will contact you within the next week to see if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely;


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Overview

Introduction

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Introduction

North Saint Paul is a town of about 11,450 residents in eastern Ramsey County, Minnesota. The city has a mix of historic architecture, new commercial development, and established residential neighborhoods. North Saint Paul is a tight-knit community with a quiet small town atmosphere in the middle of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. It is bordered to the South by the Maplewood, to the East by Oakdale, to the West by Little Canada, and to the North by Mahtomedi.

North Saint Paul is a town of 3.1 square miles. 5.3% of this

land area is water.

The average household size of North Saint Paul is 2.5 people. 35.1% of the population over the age of 25 has a high school diploma, 20.7% of this population has a Bachelor's degree. The median household income in 2010 inflation adjusted dollars was \$52,876. Unemployment rates for the population over 16 are at 9.4%.

The total employed civilian population of North Saint Paul is 5,601 people. 32% of these people are employed in management, business, and financial operations or other professional occupations. An additional 12.3% work in office or administrative

support occupations. 12.4% work in sales or related occupations and 10.2% work in construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations. 70.8% of homes are owner occupied and 29.2% are renter occupied. There are a total of 106 vacant housing units in the city, just over half of these units are for rent.

Tables 1 and 2 below illustrate the race and age of North Saint Paul residents. An additional 3.1% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

Table 1: Race

Race	Total	Percent
Total Population	11,450	
White	9,058	79.1%
Black or African American	964	8.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	9	.1%
Asian	793	6.9%
Other	251	2.2%
Two or more races	375	3.3%

All demographic data is taken from the American Community Survey 2011 five-year estimates.

Table 2: Age

Age	Total	Percent
Total Population	11,450	
Under 5 years	509	4.5%
5 to 9 years	792	6.9%
10 to 14 years	708	6.2%
15 to 17 years	585	5.1%
18 to 24 years	1,101	9.6%
25 to 34 years	1,581	13.8%
35 to 44 years	1,363	11.9%
45 to 54 years	1,942	17.0%
55 to 64 years	1,382	12.1%
65 to 74 years	781	6.8%
75 to 84 years	499	4.4%
85 and older	207	1.8%



Map showing the location of North Saint Paul taken from the City of North Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan 2008-2030

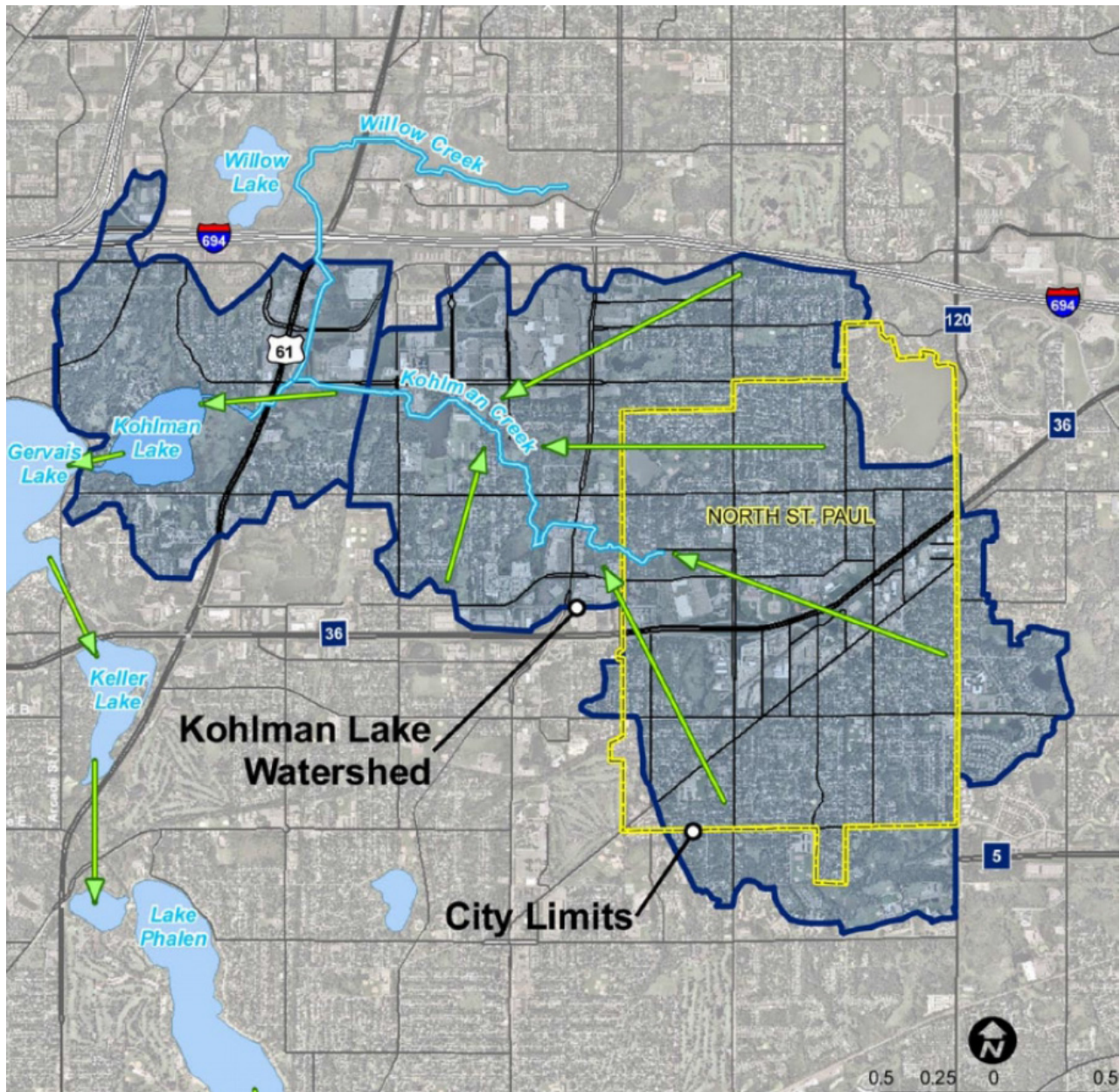
Background

In 2009, in the face of severe problems with polluted storm water reaching Kohlman Lake in Maplewood, North Saint Paul city officials began planning a reconstruction of the city's streets that would improve stormwater management. Stormwater planning evolved into consideration of a living streets policy, which would combine stormwater management with other

improvements that slow down traffic, increase the number of street trees, and make streets more bike and pedestrian friendly. In contrast to traditional street design, which prioritized motorized traffic, living streets are "alive" in that they feature abundant plant life and are a comfortable place for people to spend time.

In 2011, the North Saint Paul City Council adopted the Living Streets Plan. Currently,

the City is looking for strategies to move forward with implementation of a living street and has identified a number of streets that would be suitable.



Map showing that the majority of North Saint Paul is within the Kohlman Lake watershed. Taken from the City of North Saint Paul Living Streets Plan

Approach to the Planning and Participation Process

By adopting the Living Streets Plan, the City of North Saint Paul made an exciting commitment to improving water quality, upgrading bike and pedestrian safety, building community, and enhancing neighborhood beauty. The Living Streets Plan released

by the City of North Saint Paul and the Ramsey- Washington Metro Watershed District provides a comprehensive explanation of the purpose and numerous benefits living streets will provide to the City. Living streets, which specifically include innovative stormwater management practices, are a particularly good fit for North Saint

Paul because of Minnesota's abundance of lakes and rivers and current problems with polluted stormwater and impaired waterbodies. While living streets will offer many benefits to North Saint Paul, they also represent a significant departure from how streets have been constructed for over the past fifty years. Furthermore, living streets will rely

heavily on assessments of property owners. Residents will naturally have fears and reservations about paying for an amenity that is unfamiliar and different.

Green Tree Consultants strongly believes that effective and inclusive participation processes are a crucial component to North Saint Paul's implementation of living streets. In order to feel good

about making this investment in their neighborhood, residents need to truly understand the costs and benefits of living streets and to know that their ideas and concerns will impact the plan in a meaningful way. With this philosophy in mind, Green Tree Consultants has designed a participation process that focuses on educating

residents, understanding concerns, and involving stakeholders in design and implementation. We believe that this approach to participation will be the most effective way to ensure that residents are engaged around living streets.

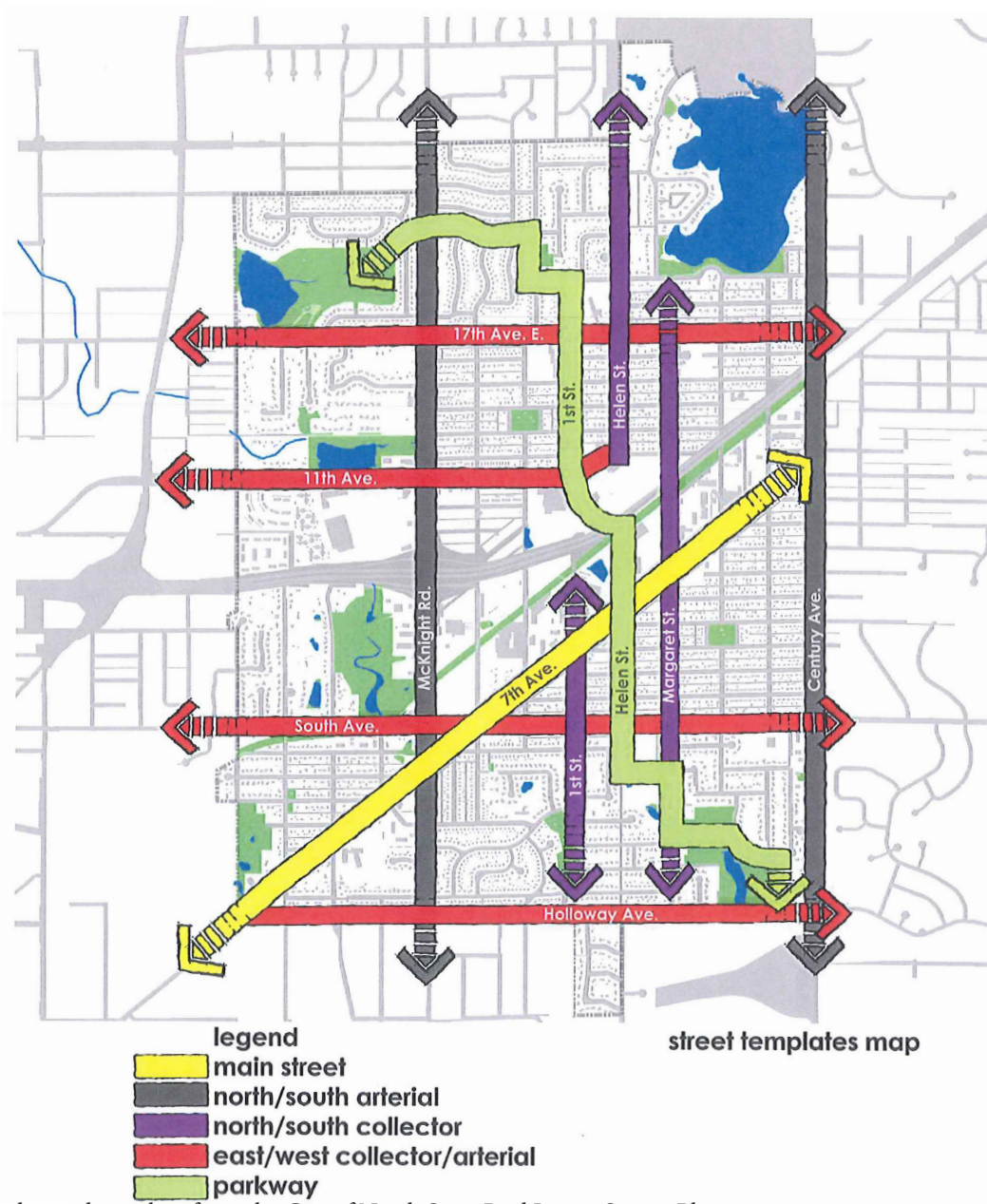


Diagram of planned corridors taken from the City of North Saint Paul Living Streets Plan

Planning and Participation Philosophy

Green Tree Consultants has a wealth of experience with public participation. Although the participation process for each plan is unique, there are five overarching goals that we use to guide us in designing participation processes.

1. Facilitate broad and inclusive participation

Our goal is to make public participation as inclusive as possible. We want to ensure that everyone who will come into contact with the result of a plan has the chance to inform and influence the planning process. This includes homeowners, renters, youth, senior citizens, disabled people, transit dependent families, and people of all incomes, races, countries of origin, and family structures. We recognize that some populations will be harder to reach than others and are committed to using innovative strategies to help involve these traditionally underrepresented populations.

2. Allow for two-way knowledge sharing

At Green Tree Consultants, we believe that public participation is an opportunity for the public to learn about a project and for the public to share their local knowledge with project staff. We recognize that residents of any given neighborhood have a wealth of information that is valuable to project planning. We are committed to looking beyond the traditional “town hall” setting in which project staff lecture residents to more interactive participation events where there is a mutual exchange of information.

3. Engage participants early and often

Public participation has the greatest potential for influence if it occurs at every stage of the process. Public input should be sought as early as possible so that it does not take extra work to ensure that a plan meets the needs and priorities of residents. Planning should be an iterative process in which the public is involved at every stage, from scoping all the way through implementation.

4. Make participation meaningful but fun

We recognize that residents often do not have a lot of time to spend at public participation events, but that this does not mean they do not care about a project. Public participation should allow residents to participate in a meaningful way in a short amount of time. At Green Tree Consultants, we often suggest combining public participation with an enjoyable event, such as a concert or fun activity, so that participation feels less like a chore.

5. Build long term relationships

Effective participation processes build trust between residents and government. We believe that project staff should talk personally to interested residents in order to hear their concerns and ensure that their needs are considered. In turn, residents who understand planning processes and who see that their input is truly valued are likely to stay involved in a project and see it through to implementation. They can serve as a long term resource to government staff on current and future projects.

Key Issues

Green Tree Consultants has identified the following key issues that will need to be addressed through the living streets participation process in North Saint Paul.

1. Lack of understanding of living streets

It is crucial to make sure residents of North St. Paul understand the concept of a living street. The public participation process must provide comprehensive and accessible information about what a living street looks like, how it functions, and the potential benefits and problems. Failure to effectively educate the public about living streets may lead to misinformation, fear, and opposition to the project.

2. Concerns about the cost

City staff have identified resident concerns about cost as a major barrier to implementing living streets, especially because residents will be required to pay a portion of project fees through special property assessments. Project staff will need to be transparent about project costs and clear about the long-term benefits that can be realized through living streets, such as improved water quality and better health, and increased property values.

3. Concerns about maintenance

Living streets require maintenance. Rain gardens need upkeep and sidewalks need to be shoveled and repaired. An effective participation process will invest residents in living streets so that they will not only be accepting of living streets, but will also be willing to assist in the long term safety and maintenance of these amenities.

4. Concerns about sidewalks

City staff have indicated that resident concerns about sidewalks are a major barrier to previous attempts at implementation of living streets. Specifically, residents have expressed the opinion that if sidewalks were installed, pedestrians on sidewalks would be able to see in the windows of houses. An effective participation process will address this concern and anticipate possible misinformation about sidewalks and living streets.

Response to Requirements

The balance of this report will provide a detailed explanation of how Green Tree Consultants will respond to the requirements of the RFP for Engagement in Living Streets Implementation in North Saint Paul. This overview section has provided background on Living Streets in North Saint Paul, a summary of our planning and participation philosophy, and an outline of key issues to be addressed in the participation process. In Part 2, we will describe the participation process

in detail. This will include outlining specific goals, identifying stakeholders, describing participation techniques, and specifying a documentation process. Finally, in Part 3 we have provided a work plan which will outline participation efforts in chronological order, specify key steps and meetings, and identify deliverables. Throughout this document, Green Tree Consultants has taken care to ensure that our proposed participation process is context driven, creative, exciting, and addresses community-specific needs and concerns.



Rain garden on the side of Valley Creek Road in Woodbury, Minnesota. This rain garden was built to minimize the impact of urban stormwater runoff on Tamarak Swamp.

Participation Plan

Goals and Outcomes
Stakeholder Identification
Steering Committee
Participation Techniques

Goals and Outcomes

Participation Goals

The main objective of the participation process is to garner understanding of and support for the implementation of living streets in North Saint Paul. In previous attempts at living streets implementation, the city has faced opposition because of concerns about sidewalks, cost, and the impact it will have on the city's residents.

The participation process has three goals:

- 1) To create an opportunity for the City to listen to concerns of stakeholders.
- 2) To educate stakeholders about the planning process and the benefits of living streets for the individual residents and the city as a whole.
- 3) To involve stakeholders in the living streets design and implementation process.

Public participation is vital to the success of this plan, especially given that some groups of North Saint Paul

residents have already expressed opposition to the policy. It is imperative that the public is supportive of living streets and understand the impact that they will have on quality of life.

Participation Outcomes

In addition to achieving the goals above, the participation process should lead to the following outcomes:

1. Planners will understand residents' fears and concerns about living streets. Insights gleaned from participation sessions will shape later outreach to help mitigate those fears.
2. Stakeholders will better understand the planning process and their involvement in that process.
3. Stakeholders will understand what living streets are and the positive implications they will have on the quality of life for the city's residents and the impact that stormwater runoff has on the water quality of Lake Kohlman.
4. Stakeholders will collaborate in a meaningful way on conceptual designs for the living streets.



View of 7th Avenue.

Stakeholder Identification

Due to the fact that 7th Avenue in North Saint Paul is home to a number of different land uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial, there are multiple stakeholders that should be involved in the participation process. Multiple techniques will be used to target the various stakeholders, listed below, to ensure their support for the implementation of living streets.

In the early stage of the participation process, Green Tree Consulting and city staff will analyze and add stakeholders to the ones identified by an initial stakeholder identification analysis. The group will then contact the stakeholders to gauge their interest in participating in the process. The stakeholders who express interest will be encouraged to join the participation process. Below are lists of potential stakeholders.

Federal, State, Regional, and County Agencies

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- Metropolitan Council
- Metro Transit
- North Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB)
- Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)
- Ramsey County
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Town of North Saint Paul
- Regulatory agencies (multiple)

Business Stakeholders located on 7th Avenue

- Neuman's
- Roddy's Bar and Grill
- Polar Lounge Liquors
- Speciality Floral
- Village Pizza
- Sidewinders Night Club
- Full Throttle Custom Cycles
- Shangri-La Chinese Restaurant
- The Snowman

Residents and other people who visit 7th Avenue

- Senior citizens
- Families
- Young Adults
- Youth 18 and under
- Minorities
- Cyclists
- Motorists
- Employees of local businesses
- Disabled
- Visitors

Non-Profit Organizations and Public Institutions

- Clean Water Fund
- Religious Organizations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Lions Club
- Rotary Club
- Boys and Girls Scouts-Northstar Museum
- Museums
- Cyclists/Bicycle Organizations
- Car Show Organizers

- School groups
- North High School
- Neighborhood groups

Steering Committee

The steering committee will play a critical role in the participation process. Green Tree Consultants recommends that the steering committee be comprised of members of the original steering committee that created the Living Streets Manual, as well as stakeholders identified during the stakeholder identification process (see above). The

steering committee is also an opportunity to engage potential opponents in the planning process. If people who have reservations about living streets are drawn into the planning process and come to understand and support living streets, they can be very valuable in helping to educate other residents and diffuse opposition. The steering committee must be fully informed about the impetus behind living streets, including benefits, costs, and the current opposition. The steering committee will review materials before they are distributed to the public.



Businesses along 7th Avenue are important stakeholders in this plan

Participation Techniques

As discussed above, one primary goal of the participation process is to educate as many people as possible about the benefits of living streets. In order for this to happen, planners will need to understand what the current public perception is of a living street.

Branding

Branding is a way to create an identity and buzz around the project. Green Tree Consultants believe that the branding effort should emphasize how living streets offer neighborhoods a pleasant outdoor space for physical activities. The brand should highlight an active outdoor experience with the Snowman, the city's icon. For example, the Snowman could be on a skateboard or razor scooter. Branding will create quick recognition and positive associations with living streets.

Workshops

The purpose of the first round of workshops is to determine how the public defines “living streets.” The workshop is an opportunity for planners to hear stakeholders’ opinions about living streets, including their fears and concerns about how its implementation would impact their lives, positively and negatively. The town can use this opportunity to inspire the public, while also clearing up misinformation.

The workshops will take place in different locations to target various stakeholders. The goal is to target the stakeholders who are impacted the most by living streets, including the young and the elderly. Workshops will be held at the high school, the community center, and one or two community locations such as the VFW or the library.

According to the 2010 Census, 30 percent of households in North Saint Paul include school-aged children. For this reason, a school is an ideal location for workshops. Workshops here will focus on engaging students. If children are

involved with and excited about living streets, they are likely to go home and discuss their experiences with the families. This may inspire families to become involved in the process. For more specific details on youth engagement see the “Key Meetings” section below.

To make the meetings accessible to families with busy lifestyles, it is important to make them open to all age groups. Activities at all of the meetings will provide meaningful opportunities to engage older children. On-site daycare will be available for families with smaller children. Food and drink will be offered so that families will be able to attend meetings that take place between activities or during their normal mealtimes. For more details for public workshop formats, please see the “Key Meetings” section below.

Roundtable discussions

Another activity at early workshops will be roundtable discussions between staff and residents. These discussions will be used to talk with residents about how they currently use their streets and how they would like to use their streets. Planners can also take this small group opportunity to clear up misinformation and help the public understand the costs and benefits of living streets. These meetings will start with individual reflection on questions asked by planners and then brought to the small group for discussion. Planners will then host a large group discussion.

Living street charrette

A critical part of the participation process is to ensure that the public knows their input will meaningfully impact the plan's implementation. The living streets charrettes will occur towards the beginning of the planning process and will give residents a chance to learn more about living

streets and to offer their unique local insight and creative ideas to the design for 7th Avenue.

During a charrette, participants will be given 40 minutes and miniature physical elements of a living street (such as miniature trees, streets, gardens, people, cars, bicycles, and more) to design their ideal street. During the first round, participants will be free to design a street without any constraints. During the second round, participants will be given information about the cost of different street elements and will be asked to modify their design to fit within the restrictions of the budget. Staff and volunteers will help participants calculate the initial costs compared to the

long term benefits of different street layouts and compare them to leaving streets as they are. Finally, the groups will spend half an hour discussing what they created and how it reflects their values and priorities, as well as how their thoughts of living streets have changed or stayed the same.

Charrette sessions will be well documented by planners using notes and pictures. The intended outcomes of the charrette are for planners to collect ideas and local knowledge to keep in mind while designing the 7th Avenue living street. It will be crucial for later plans to incorporate specific, viable elements developed during the charrettes so that residents see their ideas and priorities were incorporated into the planning process.



Community members at an urban design charrette.

Living street “pop-ups”

Green Tree Consultants recommends hosting a number of “pop-up” living streets events. During these events, elements of a living street, such as bike lanes, curb extensions, and rain gardens are temporarily constructed on a street that is being considered for living streets. Pop-up demonstrations are constructed using materials such as temporary paint, sod or fake grass, and potted plants. They are a highly effective strategy to show the public a life-sized example of what a living street could look like. This is an important exercise because, in our experience, people are often opposed to changes that they do not understand or cannot visualize. Creating a pop-up living street will help people understand the aesthetic improvements a living street can bring to a community.

Planners will integrate concepts created by the public at the educational workshops, charrettes, and online surveys into designs for pop-ups living streets. The pop-ups will be installed on sections of 7th Avenue. These events will be staffed by planners



Potential pop-up site on 7th Avenue

and volunteer community members who will be available to answer questions from passersby, as well as provide educational materials and information about upcoming opportunities for public participation. In this way, pop-up events will be a way to increase interest and awareness of living streets among the users of 7th Avenue.

In addition to the pop-up events themselves, videos could be created showing how people’s interaction with the public space changes before and after the pop-ups are installed. For example,

videos could highlight whether vehicle speeds decreased or pedestrian traffic increased. The videos could be premiered at the open house (see below) or used as an advertisement to stimulate interest in the living streets project.

Open house

The most popular living streets design, as determined at the charrettes and other early engagement events, will be brought to an open house. The open house will be organized in a way that caters to various stakeholders (for more detail see the “Key Meetings” section below). The open house should be an engaging experience held in a pop-up living street. Holding the open house in a pop-up living street will allow participants to experience the aesthetic benefits of living streets while they are giving feedback. On the opening day, 7th Avenue will be closed to motorized traffic, and a festival will be held. This festival will showcase local restaurants with street catering and will provide entertainment for children. The open house will be an opportunity for residents to see what their input so far has created. The open house will be an opportunity for the public to see a rain garden with live demonstrations illustrating the effectiveness of raingardens in reducing stream water runoff.

Business meetings

The business community specifically will be invited to attend the educational workshops and pop-up events. In addition to inviting businesses to learn about living streets along with other residents, one-on-one meetings will be held with businesses identified by the stakeholder analysis.

These meetings will be an opportunity for business owners to share their priorities and concerns about the streetscape with city staff. Follow-up meetings, in either individual or group settings, can then be planned to address specific concerns including the construction process, impact on parking, and possible benefits such as increased foot traffic. For more details, please see the “Key Meetings” section below.



Community members marking needed bus routes at a community design open house.

Online tools

The website will offer a way for participants to stay engaged. Having its own page within the City's website, the 7th Avenue living streets project page will offer access to information about the current status of the proposal. It will also be an avenue for people to learn more about living streets. An educational tool will be available that will allow participants the opportunity to design living streets and see how their designs will impact outcomes like stormwater runoff, pedestrian accidents, greenhouse gas emissions, and maintenance costs. The designs they create can be submitted and will be considered for the pop-up installation.

Website Content

- Agendas and meeting minutes from meetings
- Living Streets Educational Design Tool
- Project design and documents
- Summary of project goals, ongoing work, and project recommendations
- Contact information
- Notices for upcoming public meetings
- Opportunity for public comment
- Social Media Tracker that tracks what people are saying about living streets
- Discussion forum
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Links to other living street projects

The website should be designed to give planners and the steering committee information about engagement and participation of stakeholders. Certain keywords will be associated with the website so that searches will bring the general public to the website.

Delivery of information

Green Tree Consultants is conscious of the changing impact of social media. Twitter, Instagram, and Vines are all examples of the different ways information is created and distributed succinctly and promptly. As a result, we will have a strong web presence with tweets and instagram posts of the workshops and meetings.

It is a unique opportunity to allow the public "behind the scenes" access to the planning process so that the public can see what happens between public events. We will provide information about how we are utilizing information gathered from the workshops.

Traditional tools

Online tools should complement traditional methods of disseminating information to the public. Participants will have the opportunity to sign up for the 7th Avenue living streets newsletter at any of the workshops, open houses, and on the website. The newsletter will provide insight into the planning process. It will also be distributed as an insert in the local paper and as articles in the newsletters of community groups such as the Lions or the Rotary Club.

Alternate methods for delivering information will be to use utility addresses in order to send flyers reminding residents about the workshops and open house. Door knocking a few days before an event could remind people about the workshops and also show that the City is serious about wanting their participation. The Steering Committee will reach out neighborhood organizations and business groups and offer to listen and discuss the living streets implementation strategy.

Promoting participation

Our engagement process is designed to get the public excited about participating in living streets implementation and to provide multiple avenues for participation. Early workshops will be held at a school so that youth can go home and talk to their families about the exciting activities around living streets. Door knockers and flyers will then continue to build interest for the other two workshops. That energy will be continued with the use of voting for favorite pop-up designs.

This enthusiasm will then culminate with an open house where the designs are posted and people can experience living streets. Concurrently, other stakeholders, such as businesses, will be contacted to solicit feedback.

Incentives for participation

Participants must believe that something beneficial will come out of their participation in the process. The goal from the beginning will be to focus on the benefits. Social media will be used to show how participation shapes the design and implementation process. Competition and prizes for designs to be included in the pop-ups will provide additional incentives to participate, in addition to voting for their favorite pop-up designs.

The open house will provide entertainment and food and will be a fun opportunity to provide feedback about living streets.

Ongoing participation

As stated above, one of the major challenges to successful implementation of living streets is that living streets require upkeep and maintenance. Living streets will require ongoing resident participation in order to stay “alive,” and residents need to be willing to commit to living streets before they are constructed. One of the major goals of this participation process is to create resident excitement around living streets that will carry them through to implementation and even farther, to long term maintenance. If participation is successful, residents and business owners will have a great sense of pride in the completed living street because they played an integral part in designing it and making it happen. This enthusiasm and pride could continue in a number of ways after construction is completed. For example, stores along 7th Avenue or different residents could each “sponsor” a rain garden and take charge of cleaning and maintaining that space. Different organizations could plant additional street trees or gardens in the newly created green spaces. Businesses

could provide bike racks to accommodate the increased number of cyclists who are drawn to the business district. Living streets provide a multitude of opportunities for ongoing resident and business participation.



Gateway Bike Trail near North Saint Paul.

Work Program

Key Tasks

Key Meetings

-Planning

-Design

-Implementation

Information Provision Efforts

Ongoing Engagement

Conclusion

Key Tasks

Task 1.0 Reflect on lessons from 15th avenue experience

One of the first things planners and the newly reconvened steering committee must do is come together and reflect on the experience from 15th Avenue. This will include an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). This type of group activity allows everyone to evaluate what worked and did not work from North Saint Paul's first attempt at living streets, while also figuring out what needs to change in order for 7th Avenue to be successful. In order to

ensure all personality-types are considered, the SWOT analysis will start as an individual reflection that then turns into a group discussion based upon what individuals are willing to share. There will be an option to turn in the individual reflection sheet if one so chooses.

During the discussion, one planner will serve as the facilitator while another serves as a discussion recorder. This record will allow planners to analyze the discussion at a future meeting while also allowing them to figure out what topics need to be addressed at the educational open houses.

Task 2.0 Survey existing conditions

Before design concepts can be developed, planners need to know what currently exists on 7th Avenue. Planners will need to determine information such as property owners, utility locations, and space measurements. A survey of current conditions will give planners an idea of the corridor's assets and limitations. Moreover, the survey may show that the corridor needs to be split into different segments, for example a downtown segment, a residential segment, and an industrial segment. Different segments may need different outreach approaches and designs. This is for the planners to decide. Lastly, being familiar with the corridor will help once public engagement has started. The public may bring up issues with certain aspects of 7th Avenue. Planners need to be ready to address specific questions.

Green Tree Consultants using a SWOT analysis.



Task 3.0 Educate community on living streets

After planners have determined the corridor's opportunities and threats and familiarized themselves with the physical layout, they will be ready to engage stakeholders. As mentioned before, the first round of engagement will be workshops focused on educating stakeholders about the living streets concept and why it is needed in North Saint Paul. Planners should use images of successfully implemented rain gardens, sidewalks, and bike lanes from other Minnesota cities, such as neighboring Maplewood. Using examples from neighboring cities might help residents realize that living streets can work in this area. It might even stir friendly competition!

The workshop is also an opportunity for planners to hear the public's questions and concerns. These need to be recorded so that planners can respond to them. Not only will this further educate the public on living streets, but it will show them that planners heard them. The visual preference survey and design charrette will also give

planners an insight into what the public expects from living streets on 7th Avenue.

In addition to the public workshop, planners will also be engaging business owners and community organizations that are located along 7th Avenue. These one-on-one meetings will allow these stakeholders to learn more about living streets while also expressing their thoughts on the concept. These meetings should occur before the public workshop so that they can also participate in the survey and the charrette if they wish to continue engagement.

Task 4.0 Develop design concepts for living streets on 7th Avenue

Following the business and community group meetings and the public workshops, planners will use the feedback to create design concepts for 7th Avenue. Again, this will show the public that planners listened. The planners themselves will create the design concepts, but they will then bring them to the steering committee for refinement. Based on the committee's feedback, planners will make final edits

before presenting them to the public.

Task 5.0 Select preferred design

Finalized designs will be presented to the public as pop-ups along different segments of 7th Avenue. Voting cards will be given to anyone who chooses to participate. Those who do will be able to vote for their top three designs before placing their vote in a voting box. This box will be maintained by a steering committee member and a planner. Due to the fact that it would be nearly impossible to ensure one vote per person, there will be unlimited voting. For those unable to attend the pop-ups, the designs and voting will also be available online.

Task 6.0 Refine preferred design

The design with the most votes will be the design that continues on to refinement. Planners will make any necessary adjustments and present the revised design to the steering committee. Once they receive support from the steering committee, planners will bring the revised design back to the public through a final open house. This is an opportunity for stakeholders to come together and give planners feedback. For planners, this is their chance to solicit final feedback in order to make the last refinements while also gauging support for the design.

Task 7.0 Present design to city council

After the final design open house, planners will take any comments they receive and use them to finalize adjustments to the design. Once the design is complete, it is ready to be presented to City Council for approval.

Key meetings

1. Planning Phase

The following meetings should occur during the planning phase of the 7th Avenue reconstruction. These meetings need to address lessons learned from the 15th Avenue experience, concerns from key stakeholders, and questions from the public. Planners need to know the current state of North Saint Paul stakeholders before any designs can be considered.

1a. Stakeholder analysis meeting for steering committee

Before any planning can start, Green Tree Consultants and city staff need to meet and determine who needs to be on the 7th Avenue Steering Committee. This meeting will consist of a stakeholder analysis led by Green Tree Consultants. Chosen individuals will be contacted by city staff and invited to join the steering committee.

Event Details

Who: Green Tree Consultants and city staff

Where: North Saint Paul Community Center

When: January 2014

Why: To determine membership for the 7th Avenue Steering Committee

Deliverables

- List of recommended steering committee members



Community members giving feedback on plans at a public workshop.

1b. 15th avenue reflection meeting

The new steering committee should meet as soon as 7th Avenue is chosen for reconstruction. They should meet at a central location along 7th Avenue (e.g. Webster Elementary School). As stated above, the purpose of this meeting is perform a SWOT analysis that will identify what did and did not work for 15th Avenue while also discussing opportunities and threats to 7th Avenue.

Event Details

Who: Green Tree

Consultants, city staff, 7th Avenue Steering Committee

Where: Webster Elementary School

When: February 2014

Why: To perform a SWOT analysis for 7th Avenue

Deliverables

- Meeting minutes
- List of opportunities and threats to 7th Avenue living streets implementation

1c. Business & community organization meetings

After the reflection meeting and the survey, planners should start meeting with key businesses and community organizations along 7th Avenue. In order to ensure the participation of business owners, planners should meet business owners at their business at a time that is convenient for the business owner. These meetings should be used to educate business leaders on the living streets concept while also soliciting their feedback and answering their questions. Planners will first ask business owners what they think living streets is. Based on their response, the planner will either add more information or clarify any misconceptions. It is important that planners address their concerns right away, so they can make them allies and advocates. Once they have businesses on-board it is possible to discuss future maintenance help from them (e.g. “Adopt a Rain Garden” sponsorships). For those businesses not quite convinced, it is recommended that the planners offer to take them to existing rain gardens and pedestrian/bike infrastructure projects, such

as those in Maplewood or Saint Paul.

Event Details

Who: City staff with businesses and community organizations along 7th Avenue

Where: At the business or organization

When: March & April 2014

Why: To listen to the thoughts and concerns of affected businesses and community organizations regarding living streets; to educate businesses and community organizations on living streets and their benefits; to clarify any misconceptions; to determine which businesses and organizations would support a rain garden.

Deliverables

- List of frequently asked questions
- List of top concerns
- List of supportive businesses and community organizations
- List of businesses and organizations interested in building and maintaining a rain garden on their property

1e. Senior educational meetings

Planners should also meet seniors at the same time they are meeting with businesses, community organizations, and youth. Sites such as the Lions or Rotary Club or the city's community center are possible locations at which to meet this population. Planners will use these meetings as an opportunity to educate senior groups on living streets and their benefits while also addressing their questions and concerns. If planners sense support, they are encouraged to ask residents if they are interested in sponsoring, building, or maintaining a rain garden. They will use a similar format as used in the business/ community organization meetings and school meetings.

Event Details

Who: City staff & senior citizens

Where: North Saint Paul Community Center

When: March & April 2014

Why: To listen to residents' thoughts and concerns regarding living streets, to educate seniors on living streets

Deliverables

- List of frequently asked questions
- List of commonly mentioned concerns
- List of residents interested in building a rain garden on their property

Key Meetings 2. Design Phase

The following meetings should take place during the design phase of the project. These meetings should give residents a meaningful opportunity to impact the design.

2a. Public workshop

For those who have not yet met with planners, a public educational workshop will be held. Possible meeting locations are North Saint Paul's Community Center, North High School, and North Star Museum.

Participants will be welcomed as they enter and asked to sign a sign-in sheet. On the sign-in sheet, there should be a box for participants to mark if they are interested in sponsoring or building a rain garden.

The first half will be dedicated to a discussion on living streets. The meeting will start with individual reflection on what living streets is and what it should look like on 7th Avenue. Pens and paper will be provided so participants can write down their thoughts. A small group discussion will follow so that stakeholders can hear what others wrote down. Planners will then facilitate a large group discussion, and like the other key meetings, they will fill in any gaps and clarify any misconceptions. Because questions have been collected from the previous meetings, planners will be prepared to answer frequently asked questions. The second half of the workshop will be dedicated to the visual preference survey and the design charette (explained above). Planners will use this meeting to educate the public while also gaining an insight into their questions, concerns, and design preferences.

Event Details

Who: Green Tree Consultants, city staff, and the general public

Where: North Saint Paul Community Center, North High School, and North Star Museum

When: April 2014

Why: To educate any remaining stakeholders on living streets and its benefits; to address questions and concerns; to gather insight into preferred designs for 7th Avenue; to determine interest in sponsoring or building a rain garden

Deliverables

- Final list of questions and concerns
- Compilation of preferred designs
- List of stakeholders interested in sponsoring or building a rain garden

2b. Design scenarios review meeting

This meeting will be with city staff and the 7th Avenue Steering Committee to go over the planners' design scenarios for 7th Avenue. Planners will use the first half of the meeting to go over their designs for sections of the corridor. The second half will consist of committee member questions and suggestions. The steering committee must give support to the designs in order for planners to continue with the implementation process. If they do not, the planners

must edit their designs to meet the committee's standards and meet with the committee again.

Event Details

Who: City staff and 7th Avenue Steering Committee
Where: Webster Elementary School

When: May 2014

Why: To garner support from steering committee on design scenarios

Deliverables

- Meeting minutes
- Design concepts for 7th Avenue to use at the public Design Pop-Ups event

2c. Design pop-ups event

This event will physically demonstrate possible living street designs that planners developed based on stakeholder feedback. Pop-ups will be placed in the area for which the design is proposed. Participants will be given a ballot and asked to vote for their favorite designs. A section for comments will also be on the ballot for anyone that wants to provide feedback. City staff will maintain the voting box to

ensure there is no tampering. City staff will also be near the pop-ups to answer questions and listen to feedback.

Businesses and community organizations will also be invited to host a booth in areas of 7th Avenue that are between design pop-ups. This will allow them to interact with the community and also explain why they support living streets.

Event Details

Who: Green Tree Consultants, city staff, 7th Avenue businesses and organizations, general public

Where: 7th Avenue

When: August 2014 (*insert footnote that explains that most residents are not around in June/July and that time may be needed for redesign if planners do not receive support from the steering committee the first time)

Why: To choose the final designs and priorities for 7th Avenue's living streets; to solicit feedback on designs

Deliverables

- Ballots for top designs for 7th Avenue living streets

2d. Final design review meeting

Planners will use this meeting to present the final design for 7th Avenue to the steering committee. Like the first review meeting, planners will use the first half to present their final design and the second half to listen to feedback from the committee. Again, the meeting should end with a vote from the committee on whether or not to support the final design. Planners should not proceed to the final open house until they receive this support. Instead, they should take the committee's recommendations and incorporate them into an updated design.

Event Details

Who: City staff and 7th Avenue Steering Committee
Where: Webster Elementary School
When: September 2014
Why: To gain support for 7th Avenue living streets final design

Deliverables

- Meeting minutes
- Final design for 7th Avenue living streets

2e. Final product open house

This event is an opportunity for planners to receive support from the public about their final design. It is also a last chance for the public to provide final feedback and suggestions. The event will be held outside so that planners can set up their final design as a pop-up. Also along 7th Avenue will be booths for local businesses. This is their opportunity to show how they are helping in living streets implementation while also promoting their business. Food and beverages will also be offered at certain booths, along with entertainment for the children.

The first half hour will consist of socializing and networking. This is a chance for the public to eat, chat, and examine the final design pop-up. The remainder of the event will include a brief presentation from city staff on the rationale behind the final plan. They will also answer questions anyone may have. Participants will gather around the pop-up during the presentation. Comment cards will be provided for participants to leave feedback. After the presentation,

planners will be available to anyone who still has a question.

Event Details

Who: Green Tree Consultants, city staff, and the general public
Where: 7th Avenue
When: early November 2014
Why: To show the final design to the public and gather final comments; to gauge community's thoughts and feelings

Deliverables

- Final design for 7th Avenue living streets
- Collect comments and suggestions on final design

Key Meetings

3. Implementation Phase

The following meeting will take place during the implementation phase of the project. The goal is to encourage ongoing public involvement with living streets

3a. Keep living streets alive planning session

This event will be held quarterly beginning during the 7th Avenue living streets construction and continue forward for the foreseeable future. The purpose of these meetings will be to facilitate ongoing engagement of businesses and residents around living streets. This group would be responsible for organizing and assigning small maintenance duties to resident and business volunteers. Businesses could be encouraged to “adopt a rain garden” or take ownership in other ways of a small portion of the living street. In addition to civic pride, incentives to participate in ongoing maintenance could include possible small advertisements for businesses and competitions between blocks



Areas along 7th Avenue with curbside provide ideal temporary outdoor meeting spaces.

for having the nicest gardens. Residents and businesses will be encouraged to take ownership of the living street once it is completed and to use it to its full potential as a public space.

Event Details

Who: City staff, interested businesses and residents

Where: 7th Avenue

When: After construction begins and then quarterly

Why: To discuss maintenance and upkeep of plants, rain gardens, public art, and other aesthetic aspects of the living street.

Deliverables

- Specific plan for ongoing maintenance of all elements of the living street
- Plan for future outreach to engage new residents and businesses in ongoing beautification of the living street

Information Provision Efforts

Information on planning and design efforts will be distributed through both traditional, offline tools and online tools. Use of the tool depends on the meeting/event and the intended audience. Many of these tools coincide with tools used to inform stakeholders about planning meetings and events.

Online tools

Living Streets Website

In addition to its use for public engagement, the 7th Avenue living streets project website will be used to convey information about the planning and participation process. Links to the project's summary, timeline, media mentions, events, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) will be on the sidebar. Project staff's contact information will also be clearly displayed so stakeholders can reach out. Lastly, an electronic version of the project's newsletter will also be available.

Social Media

In addition to the website, planners will maintain Facebook and Twitter accounts for the project. These tools will be used to keep followers (i.e. interested stakeholders) up to date on the project. It will also be used for followers to contact planners and ask questions. Moreover, planners can use these tools to solicit needed information. This can be prompted with the use of questions.

Offline tools

Offline tools used to communicate project news include mailings, display boards, media mentions, and flyers. These materials will be created by Green Tree Consultants with information from city staff.

Mailings

Mailings will consist of a quarterly newsletter. The newsletter will highlight key information and any project updates. Planners will also use the newsletter to answer

frequently asked questions. Moreover, the newsletter will highlight supporters of the project by giving them a spotlight section. This will recognize supporters while also showing other stakeholders that influential business owners and residents support the project. This serves to encourage others to support the project.

Display Boards

Boards will be used at events and meetings to display key points and figures about living streets and design concepts. Boards will be large enough for all people to see with effective use of images and figures. While boards are useful for displaying information to a lot of people at once, their use should be focused and information should be presented in a coherent manner. Stakeholders can only read and analyze so much before

they lose interest.

Media Mentions

Newspaper, local TV, and radio stories will be used to update stakeholders that do not use online tools. Since these stories are typically short, only key points and updates will be mentioned. Images will complement the written or spoken word to help connect key concepts.

Flyers

Lastly, for those who do not use online tools or many of the offline tools, flyers will be posted around town at popular places with the same project information and updates. Using information from planning staff, Green Tree Consultants will create the flyers and post them.

Ongoing Engagement

Engagement should still continue even after the City Council has approved the 7th Avenue living streets design. The tools mentioned in the aforementioned section will be used to give implementation updates. Stakeholders can share their construction experiences and concerns via social media and

blogs. Once rain gardens have been planted and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure has been built, residents and business owners can share their experiences.

Once reconstruction is finished and enough time has passed, a survey will be distributed asking stakeholders to reflect on the 7th Avenue living streets process. Questions will be asked concerning the educational meetings, the design charrettes, the design “pop-ups”, and communication efforts. This feedback can then be used to create an even better process for the next street considered for living streets.

Conclusion

The City of North Saint Paul has already taken the political steps to make living streets a reality. Now is the time to get stakeholders on board so the City can start implementation. Through this proposal, Green Tree Consultants has laid out an engagement plan that accomplish the three goals of educating stakeholders on the living streets concept and the planning process, allowing planners the opportunity to

hear stakeholder questions and concerns, and involving stakeholders in the design and implementation process. This proposal uses both traditional and non traditional outreach methods to ensure all stakeholders have a chance to be involved. In addition, a variety of activities and incentives will be used to encourage ongoing participation. Through active engagement of diverse stakeholders, Green Tree Consultants has no doubt that the City of North Saint Paul will create the support it needs to implement living streets on 7th Avenue, creating an attractive and sustainable downtown everyone will enjoy.

Appendix

Work Program: Phase I
Work Program: Phase II
Work Program: Phase III

Phase I
Planning

January 2014

1a. Stakeholder Analysis Meeting for Steering Committee

Participants:
Green Tree Consultants
City staff

February 2014

1b. 15th Avenue Reflection Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to perform a SWOT analysis that will identify what did and did not work for 15th Avenue while also discussing opportunities and threats to 7th Avenue.

Participants:
Green Tree Consultants
City staff
7th Avenue Steering Committee

March & April 2014

1d. School Educational Meetings

For youth, planners should host an educational meeting at North High School and Webster Elementary School so students and their parents can attend.

Participants:
City staff, school staff And youth

March & April 2014

1c. Business & Community Organization Meetings

After the reflection meeting and the survey, planners should start meeting with key businesses and community organizations along 7th Avenue.

Participants:
City staff, businesses and community organizations

March & April 2014

1e. Senior Educational Meetings

Participants:
City staff & senior citizens

Phase II
Design

April 2014

2a. Public Workshop

To educate any remaining stakeholders on living streets and its benefits

Participants:
Green Tree Consultants
City staff
General Public

August 2014

2c. Design Pop-Ups Event

This event will physically demonstrate possible living street designs that planners developed based on stakeholder feedback.

Participants:
Green Tree Consultants
City staff
7th Avenue businesses and organizations
General public

May 2014

2b. Design Scenarios Review Meeting

This meeting will be with city staff and the 7th Avenue Steering Committee to go over the planners' design scenarios for 7th Avenue.

Participants:
City staff
7th Avenue Steering Committee

Early November 2014

2e. Final Product Open House

Participants:
Green Tree Consultants
City staff
General Public

September 2014

2d. Final Design Review Meeting

Planners will use this meeting to present the final design for 7th Avenue to the steering committee.

Participants:
City staff
7th Avenue Steering Committee

Phase III
Implementation

After construction begins and then quarterly

3a. Keep Living Streets Alive planning session

The purpose of these meetings will be to facilitate ongoing engagement of businesses and residents around living streets.

Participants:
City staff
Interested Businesses
Residents



Future