



Bemidji Avenue (23rd St NE to Annebell St) Project

Engagement Strategy and Survey Results

February 5, 2025



Project Overview



Improve safety and accessibility of CSAH 21 in Bemidji through road widening, parking enhancements, pedestrian facilities, and a proposed roundabout.

Needed community input to ensure the project meets local needs.



Engagement Goals



Understand community perceptions and concerns through a virtual survey



Ensure broad participation



Collect broad feedback to inform project design



Work with local organizations to assist with survey distribution

Community Survey & Promotion



Question development

- Worked closely with the PM and Beltrami County Engineer to create questions focused on perceptions that could inform design
- Avoided jargon to make the survey accessible to the public

Survey Incentive

- Survey incentive with four \$25 Chamber of Commerce “Bemidji Buck” gift cards valid at various local businesses

Community Partnerships

- Beltrami County
- Two Local Schools
- Chamber of Commerce

Multi-media promotion

- Social media and e-newsletters distributed by two local schools, Chamber of Commerce and the County
- Flyers placed along corridor in schools and businesses



Survey Results

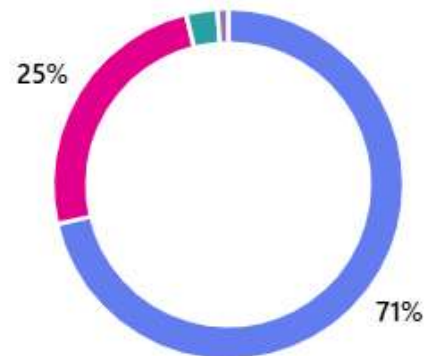
Survey Respondents Summary



- Survey was open for **56 days**
- **208 responses**
- Ages range from 25 to 65+
- Most respondents are **daily drivers of the corridor**

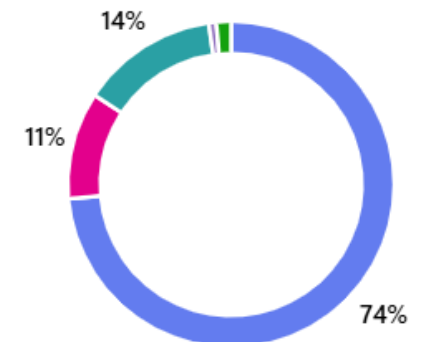
4. How often do you typically travel along Bemidji Ave?

Daily	147
Weekly	51
Monthly	6
Yearly	2
Rarely	0



5. What mode(s) of transportation do you most often use on Bemidji Ave? (Select all that apply)

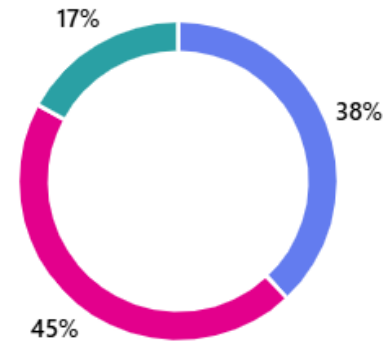
Personal vehicle	201
Bicycle	29
Walking	37
Public transportation	2
Other	4



Traffic Reponses

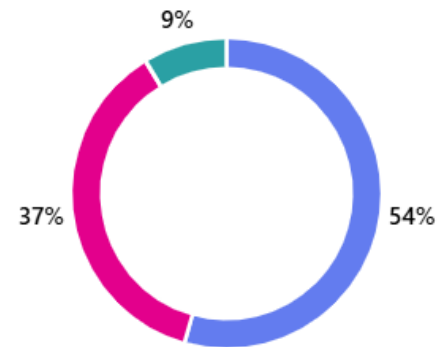
6. Have you experienced delays or heavy traffic along Bemidji Avenue due to a lack of a left turn lane?

● Yes, frequently.	78
● Yes, occasionally.	92
● No, I have not experienced long wait times.	35



7. Have you experienced improper use of the shoulder as a bypass of left turning vehicles along Bemidji Avenue?

● Yes, frequently.	112
● Yes, occasionally.	76
● No, I have not experienced improper use of the shoulder as a bypass.	18



Takeaway: Most respondents have experienced heavy traffic or improper use of the shoulder as a bypass of left turning vehicles.

Center Turn Lane Feedback

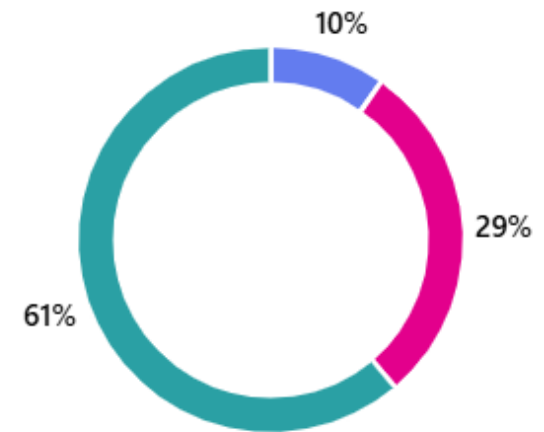
- *“Adding a center turn lane would help make the overall highway safer for our students who walk along the road daily.”*
- *“People have been passing on the shoulder the length of Bemidji Ave. My husband is a year-round daily bike commuter on this stretch and I worry for his safety.”*
- *“I have seen many pedestrians and bikers on this road when driving, and would like them to be more protected from traffic. As a biker and a walker specifically I feel unsafe because I am never sure if cars see me crossing. An addition of a center left turn lane would help drivers be more aware of walkers/bikers.”*
- *“I will agree that a turn lane would be nice. I fear for the kids/people who bike and walk on this stretch of road. I also fear the safety of the school children that are just down the road from my office.”*

Takeaway: Survey respondents agree that a center turn lane could help manage traffic flow, reduce reckless driving behaviors, and increase awareness of pedestrians and bikers on the road.

On-Street Parking Responses

9. Do you currently notice any parking related issues along Bemidji Avenue?

● Yes, frequently.	20
● Yes, occasionally.	60
● No, I have not noticed any parking issues.	126

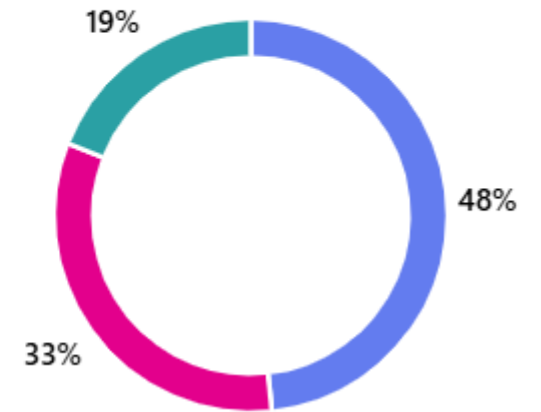


Takeaway: 61% of respondents indicated they have not noticed parking issues along the corridor.

Bemidji Ave and Anne Street

11. Have you experienced long wait times or heavy traffic at the Bemidji Avenue and Anne Street Intersection?

● Yes, frequently.	99
● Yes, occasionally.	67
● No, I have not experienced long wait times.	39



Takeaway: 81% of respondents frequently or occasionally experience long wait times or heavy traffic at this intersection.

Roundabout Responses

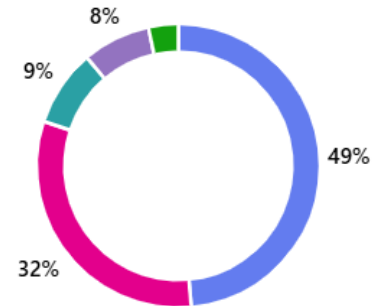
- *“I support putting a roundabout at Bemidji Ave and Anne St. There are certain times of day when I avoid this intersection because I know I would have a long wait to turn north from Anne St onto Bemidji Ave.”*
- *“I'd need to be educated on how to use a roundabout when walking or riding a bike”*
- *“I'm not a fan of roundabouts, any people don't know how to use them properly”*

Takeaway: Most respondents were in favor of a roundabout at Bemidji Ave and Anne St. Many indicated a need to educate the public on how to use a roundabout.

Safety Responses

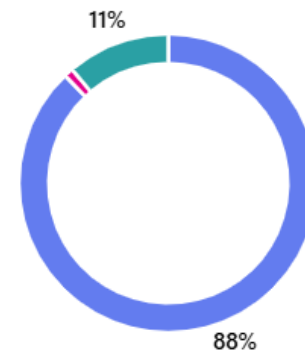
13. How concerned are you about current pedestrian and cyclist safety along Bemidji Avenue?

Very concerned	100
Somewhat concerned	65
Neutral	18
Not very concerned	16
Not at all concerned	7



14. Do you agree sidewalks and/or a multi-use trail along Bemidji Avenue would improve safety?

Yes	181
No	2
Unsure	23



Takeaway: 81% of respondents are somewhat concerned or very concerned about pedestrian and cyclist safety along this corridor. 88% of respondents agree a multi-use trail would improve safety.

Safety Feedback

- *"I cannot stress how important I think this [project] is. This is one of the most concerning places for my family and I. Having cycling friendly infrastructure on this roundabout would be used daily by my family."*
- *"Lots of traffic and they drive SO FAST by the two schools, Voyageurs and AWCL. A trail and sidewalk and crosswalk, school signage would all go a long way to increase the safety for all of our K-12 students."*
- *"I think a multi use trail would be great along this corridor. There are many kids walking to the charter schools and other pedestrians going to the local businesses along this corridor."*
- *"It's a crazy dangerous road for pedestrians because of the aforementioned use of the shoulder as a bypass lane"*

Takeaway: Most survey respondents indicated a need to improve safety along this corridor, especially for the safety of the students, staff and parents traveling to and from Voyageurs and AWCL.

Survey Conclusion

- Heavy traffic and improper shoulder use are common concerns.
- A center turn lane is widely supported to improve traffic flow and safety.
- 61% of respondents have not noticed parking issues.
- Majority support a roundabout at Bemidji Ave & Anne St., with a need for public education on its use.
- 81% are concerned about pedestrian and cyclist safety; 88% support a multi-use trail for improved safety.
- Strong consensus on the need for safety improvements, especially for Voyageurs and AWCL students, staff, and parents.



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