

PEDESTRIAN-CENTRIC

The Artery along 8th Avenue in Hopkins meets multiple City goals related to development, community building, placemaking, and connections. The experience of the Hopkins Artery should inspire communities in the region that are exploring ideas to make the pedestrian environment more attractive and encourage redevelopment. The Artery includes a narrow one-way street, a two-way cycle track, wide sidewalks, public art, and public gathering spaces.



Looking south along the Artery with the recent development of Gallery Flats (foreground) and the Moline (background)

Hopkins' historic downtown, which is centered on Mainstreet, is located two blocks to the north of the future Hopkins Downtown METRO Green Line station at 8th Avenue. The Artery was created by reconstructing two blocks of 8th Avenue South from Excelsior Boulevard north to Mainstreet. The City has long wanted a gateway to its downtown from Excelsior Boulevard. The City has also wanted to ensure that transit riders feel drawn to Mainstreet when they step off the platform.

PEDESTRIAN PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The Artery includes one-way vehicle access, but the City took great care to create a walkable environment. Lighting suspended by cables over the street helps to create the sense of enclosure. Recent redevelopment along the west side of 8th Avenue creates clearer edges that help define the

FAST FACTS

Project Cost:

\$5.5 million for road work, utility work, and public art

Partners:

- Hennepin County – \$700,000 grant
- Three Rivers Park District - \$460,000 cost sharing on cycle track
- Metropolitan Council – \$1,325,000 grant

Consultant:

Bolton & Menk

Transit

[METRO Green Line Extension](#)

Station:

[Downtown Hopkins Station](#)

Station Area: Near historic downtown with a traditional street grid

Timeline:

- 2012** – Consultant layout proposal and student capstone
- 2013** – Concept plan approved
- 2015** – Artery Experiment
- 2017** – Construction
- 2018** – Project completed

space. Trees provide shade and wide sidewalks are lined with frequent benches, providing spots for people to rest, people watch, or chat with friends. The narrow roadway makes the street easier to cross.

PUBLIC ART

Public art was an integral part of planning and was part of the project budget. City staff also encouraged developers to incorporate art and reflect the area's history in their projects. The City's artists worked with a consultant to ensure that their designs addressed potential long-term maintenance concerns. One artwork, a dragonfly wing at the corner of 8th Avenue South and First Street, can be lowered to function as a gate to close off the street for events. The design meets standards for traffic control requirements.

CONNECTIONS

The two-way cycle track that runs along the Artery also connects two regional trails: the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail, which crosses 8th Avenue north of Mainstreet, and the Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail, which runs south of Excelsior Boulevard.

The City consulted with Metro Transit to ensure the design would work with existing local bus routes as well as planned bus connections after the METRO Green Line opens. With the planned one-way roadway section, the City and Metro Transit identified an alternative route, and the City made certain that transit was accommodated on these streets (e.g., prohibiting parking to accommodate turning).

SUSTAINABILITY

The Artery includes permeable pavers and native plants in rain gardens. In collaboration with the Nine Mile Creek Watershed District, these stormwater treatments helped create the City's first storm water credit bank. These credits can be purchased by other projects in the corridor.

BUILDING SUPPORT

Building support over time was the biggest challenge for the project since it involved changing access for people and properties along 8th Avenue South. The project took many years to complete in response to the need for extensive community engagement and attentive design. To build support and influence the project's design, the City conducted the "Artery Experiment", a public event with temporary striping for the cycle track, installed artificial and real turf, brought in planters with flowers, and showcased artwork.



Circulation diagram including the Artery and its connection with the future LRT station and regional trails.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The City of Hopkins, including its elected officials, became invested in the project because of its potential for community-building and community development. Involving students in a capstone project helped to build buy-in from the community and officials. Not only could City staff think “outside of the box” and propose bold ideas, they had the support to explore the feasibility of those ideas.

Constructing the project was challenging because the Moline apartment building at the corner of Excelsior and 8th Avenue South was being built at the same time. Road work needed to be phased to accommodate that project.

The project has prompted the City to increase bicycle parking downtown to support the increased bicycling connections. As the temporary art painted in crosswalks fades, the City will decide if it should refresh them with new designs in the future.

Now that the stage is set with the new community spaces along the route, the City is looking at different ways to activate the space and keep it changing with the seasons.

HOW DOES THIS PROJECT SUPPORT TOD?

Connect: The Artery supports physical connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. However, it also connects people in a figurative sense by creating a sense of place with meaning and value.

Intensify: The Artery has sparked new housing and uses along the corridor, but it is also a gathering place that increases the activity and vibrancy of the area through public events and activities.

Demonstrate: The Artery demonstrates that physical infrastructure can be interesting and inspirational as well functional. Bringing different disciplines together made this project a reality.

LEARN MORE

[City of Hopkins – The Artery / 8th Ave S](#)

The Artery Experiment Final Report

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The Dragonfly sculpture by Mykelbust + Sears also functions as a traffic control device during festivals and farmers markets.

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FEEDBACK

Did you find this information useful? Do you have questions or suggestions for improvement? Contact us at TODGuide@metc.state.mn.us