



Problem Statement

The problem statement describes the issues that should be considering in the design concepts for the Penn Avenue Corridor Study, based on a combination of input from community members, technical analysis (e.g., safety and traffic review), and city and county policy direction (e.g., comprehensive plans, bike and pedestrian plans, etc.).

Business need safe and reliable access along Penn Avenue

- **People can't walk or bike safely or comfortably along Penn Avenue.** People can't walk to the businesses along Penn Avenue. Sidewalks are in poor condition and there are few controlled crossings. There are no bicycle facilities along Penn Avenue making it unsafe and uncomfortable for most riders.
- **It's difficult to make left turns onto or off-of Penn Avenue.** People need to get in and out of the many businesses and destinations along Penn Avenue and frequent driveways complicate traffic operations and create safety and congestion problems.
- **The pavement is in poor condition.** Much of the driving and walking surfaces on Penn Avenue are in poor condition, leading to safety and operational issues such as potholes, uneven surfaces, and other trip hazards.
- **There is are no public parking opportunities along Penn Avenue.** Businesses need parking for their customers and employees. There is currently no on-street parking along Penn Avenue and no public parking within close proximity.



Small lots along Penn Avenue mean frequent driveways and frequent turning vehicles.



A person using a mobility device along Penn Ave with uneven sidewalk surfaces is forced into a nearby driveway

Penn Avenue is dangerous to walk

- **Penn Avenue is not safe to walk across:** People cannot safely cross Penn Avenue to get where they need to go because there are very few controlled crossings (i.e., stop lights, cross walks, etc.) and crossings distances are very large (i.e., 4 to 6 lanes of traffic). Crossing Penn Avenue is critical need for people who need to get to businesses, schools, and bus stops.
- **Penn Avenue is not comfortable to walk along.** Sidewalks in many places are immediately adjacent to driving lanes, at the back of the curb, with no buffer or boulevard space. This means there is no protection for walkers against fast moving vehicles and it is a very uncomfortable place to walk. Sidewalk surfaces are also uneven with obstructions such as utility poles, and there are gaps in the sidewalk network. There is also



Missing sidewalk along Penn Avenue



little space along sidewalks for transit riders at the many bus stops along the corridor.

- **There are no features to create a positive walking experience.** There are very few supporting features such as benches, garbage, trees, and plantings to encourage walking. These features are necessary to make walking a realistic option for most people.

Biking on Penn Avenue is not safe

- **There are no dedicated bike facilities on Penn Avenue.** Penn Avenue is a critical north-south link in the transportation network, providing the only route across Highway 62 for one mile on the east and one-half mile on the west. Penn Avenue also connects to the 66th Street bikeway and the trail on the south side of Highway 62, as well as the Three Rivers Regional Trail at 75th Street to the south of the project area. Penn Avenue represents a critical gap in the local and regional bicycle network.

There isn't enough green space on Penn Avenue

- **Green space makes it safer to walk.** Planted boulevards can create a buffer between pedestrians and cars, making it safer to walk. They also make it more enjoyable by providing shade and visual interest.
- **Green space creates room for water and snow.** Green infrastructure (i.e., grass, plantings, trees, etc.) provide opportunities to protect the environment through better treatment of stormwater and by creating space to store snow.

Project Goals

Project goals translate the problem statement into actionable targets for potential interim and long-term solutions for the corridor. The project goals will be used to evaluate alternative solutions for Penn Avenue.

- *Walking:* Provide people walking along and across Penn Avenue with routes that are useful, comfortable, interesting, and safe, and encourage safe vehicle travel speeds. This includes places and spaces that make it comfortable and easy to take the bus.
- *Biking:* Provide people biking along and across Penn Avenue with routes that are useful, comfortable, interesting and safe, including a bike facility in accordance with the city's Bicycle Master Plan.
- *Land use:* Identify streetscape improvements, such as expanded boulevards, new trees, and other pedestrian improvements that enhance the local, main street character of the Penn-Central Neighborhood.
- *Land use:* Avoid permanent expansion of the street into private property (right-of-way impacts).
- *Safety:* Address nominal and substantive safety problems for all users. This includes locations with a history of high crash frequency and severity, places with physical characteristics that are known to be unsafe, and situations where travel feels unsafe or uncomfortable.
- *Access management:* Address operational and safety problems created by the high frequency of driveways and intersections along Penn Avenue, and maintain adequate vehicle access to adjacent properties for residents, employees, and freight haulers.
- *Vehicle operations:* Provide reliable vehicle operations along Penn Avenue with reasonable travel times and delay.