

Phase 1 Engagement Summary

2026 Pelham Boulevard Reconstruction

December 2024



SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

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Section 1. Introduction to document

As part of the planning for the reconstruction of Pelham Boulevard in 2026, City staff used several methods to collect feedback from the community in advance of the design of the corridor. This document summarizes the engagement and feedback received.

Background

For more information about the project, please visit stpaul.gov/pelham.

In Summer 2024, City staff began the planning process for the reconstruction of Pelham Boulevard (Pelham) between Mississippi River Boulevard and Franklin Avenue in Saint Paul.

As part of the planning process, staff wanted to hear from the community about their needs and goals for the project.

Scope of Pelham reconstruction

The 2026 reconstruction of Pelham will remove and replace all surface and underground infrastructure of Pelham between Mississippi River Blvd and Franklin Ave. The design is largely based on previous planning and policies like the Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan and the Saint Paul Bicycle Plan.

Construction of Pelham is expected to begin in the Spring of 2026 and last at least one construction season.

Project timeline

The 2026 Pelham Boulevard reconstruction will follow this timeline. This is subject to change:

- **COMPLETED Summer and Fall 2024: Phase 1 community engagement.** City staff will meet with the neighborhood about the project and timing. Community members can share their goals for the project.
- **Winter 2024 to 2025: Initial designs for Pelham.** City staff will consider the feedback from engagement, as well as current city policies and goals, and come up with a recommended design option for Pelham.
- **Spring 2025: Phase 2 community engagement.** City staff will share the recommended design option with the community and get feedback. Tweaks can be made to the design option based on feedback from Phase 2.
- **Summer to Winter 2025: Detailed design.** Once the recommended design option has been decided, city engineering and planning staff will work on the details of the design. Updates will be shared with the community along the way to make sure the design is consistent with community expectations.

- **Spring 2026: Construction.** The reconstruction of Pelham will take most of spring, summer, and fall. City staff will provide regular updates to the community about construction impacts, detours, and progress.

Goals of Phase 1 engagement

The goals for Phase 1 engagement include:

- Communicate the details of the project: timeline, project scope and city goals
- Understand the needs of the neighborhood using a variety of engagement techniques such as online and digital communication and information, online surveys, in person meetings and presentations, information and flyers posted along Pelham, Pelham business engagement, field walks with stakeholders
- Share information about the current Bicycle Plan, the Grand Round Implementation Plan, and how these will inform the design of Pelham

Section 2. Events, presentations, and engagement techniques

Staff participated in and led several presentations and meetings in Summer 2024.

Project webpage

The project webpage (stpaul.gov/pelham) was promoted in all communications with the public. The page contained a direct link to the online survey (see Section 3), and information about scope and timeline of the update. The webpage is also the space where staff post information about upcoming engagement events and presentations. Staff contact information is listed as well. Visitors to the site are able to sign up for project emails and communication from staff.

Online survey

The main goal of engagement was to drive people to take the online survey. The online survey received 328 responses between June and October 2024. The results from the survey are discussed in Section 3 below.

Email updates

Through the online survey and other engagement events, project staff collected email addresses from members of the public. These email addresses will be used to send out project updates and communication as design and engagement progresses.

Property letters

Nearly 350 properties along Pelham Blvd received a mailed letter in September 2024 to introduce the project and timeline, and direct people to the project webpage. The letters went to residents and property owners along Pelham (ie. both property owners and tenants). The letter is shown at the end of this document.

Signs posted on Pelham

Staff posted 17 pedestrian-scaled signs along Pelham to advertise and promote the online survey and project webpage. The signs were posted in August and removed in October and included a QR code to scan with a smartphone and link to the project webpage and survey. The goal was to reach people walking in the neighborhood. The signs are shown at the end of this document.

Property door hangers

Staff hung flyers on door handles of homes on Pelham south of I-94 in June 2024. The flyers promoted the project webpage and the online survey. The door hangers are shown at the end of this document.

Meeting with Avalon School students

Project staff met at Avalon School with a group of students who use Pelham. One student's written reaction to the meeting is included at the end of this document.

Meetings and events

Table 1 is a list of the events staff participated in to promote the 2026 Pelham Blvd Reconstruction. See photos at the end of this document.

Table 1. Engagement events

Event; Location	Date	Number of people engaged (estimate)	Materials and engagement opportunities, notes
Annual Desnoyer Park Picnic; Desnoyer Park	July 16	20	Engagement questions Email sign up One pagers with information and webpage
Saint Paul Transportation Committee; City Hall Annex	July 22	8	Staff gave in-person presentation; Q&A
Pelham Walk Assessment; along Pelham Blvd	July 30	12	Staff walked Pelham with members of DPIA, SAPCC, UPDC
Union Park District Council, Transportation Committee	August 12	12	Staff gave a virtual presentation of timeline, scope of the project; Q&A
Desnoyer Park Improvement Association Board meeting; UST	September 5	30	Staff gave in-person presentation to DPIA and invitees; Q&A

Event; Location	Date	Number of people engaged (estimate)	Materials and engagement opportunities, notes
Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission; Merriam Park Rec Center	September 12	15	Staff gave in-person presentation to Parks Commissioners and attendees; Q&A
SAPCC Ice Cream Social; Hampden Park	September 14	20	Email sign up One pagers with information and webpage
Meeting with students; Avalon School	October 11	10	Staff met with students and staff at Avalon to talk about their issues on Pelham

Stakeholder engagement

The following groups were contacted via email and directed to the project webpage.

- Ward 4 Councilmember and Council President Mitra Jalali
- Saint Anthony Park Community Council
- Union Park District Council
- Desnoyer Park Improvement Association
- MnDOT Metro District
- Kids Park childcare at Desnoyer Park
- Metropolitan Council
- Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ)
- Town and Country Club
- Avalon School
- Large property owners along Pelham, north of I-94, including:
 - Jordan Realty
 - Memorial Blood Centers
 - All American Self Storage
 - Element Materials
 - SBS
 - Novus Glass

Section 3. Feedback received

One of the main goals of engagement was to drive people to an online survey. The online tool was linked on the project webpage and open between the end of June to the end of October, 2024. The survey asked seven questions and received 328 responses.

Online survey

The online survey asked people the following questions:

1. How do you travel on Pelham? Select all that apply.
2. How often do you travel on or along Pelham?
3. Please list one to three things you like about Pelham.
4. Please list one to three things you do NOT like about Pelham.
5. Imagine you are traveling on Pelham in the future when it's been reconstructed.
What do you want it to look like?
6. What groups or organizations should staff be sure to talk to about the project? Are there events we should attend in the neighborhood?
7. What is your zip code?

Question 1. How do you travel on Pelham? Select all that apply.

Figure 1 and Table 2 below show how survey respondents reported traveling on Pelham. Respondents were allowed to select multiple answers, which is why the total number is greater than 328.

Figure 1. How people travel on Pelham.

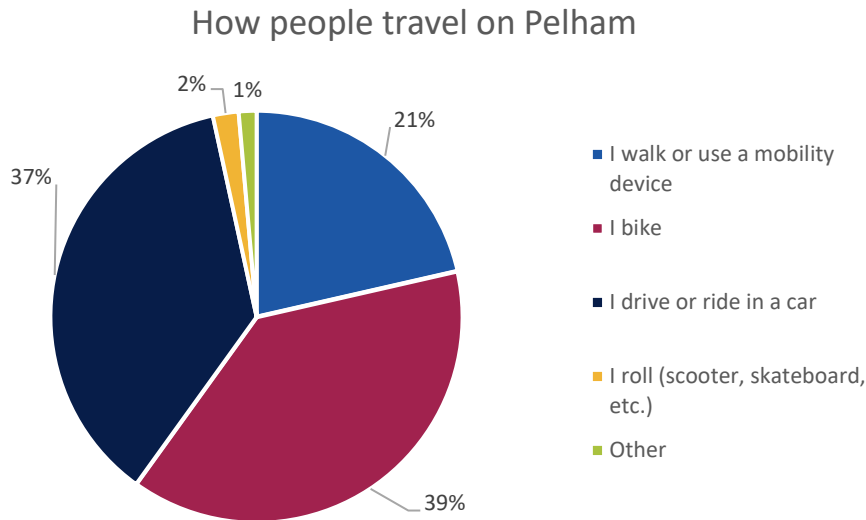


Table 2. How people travel on Pelham

How people travel on Pelham	Count	Percentage
I walk or use a mobility device	138	21%
I bike	248	39%
I drive or ride in a car	236	37%
I roll (scooter, skateboard, etc.)	13	2%
Other	9	1%

Question 2. How often do you travel on or along Pelham?

Figure 2 and Table 3 below show how often survey respondents reported traveling on Pelham.

Figure 2. How often people travel on or along Pelham.

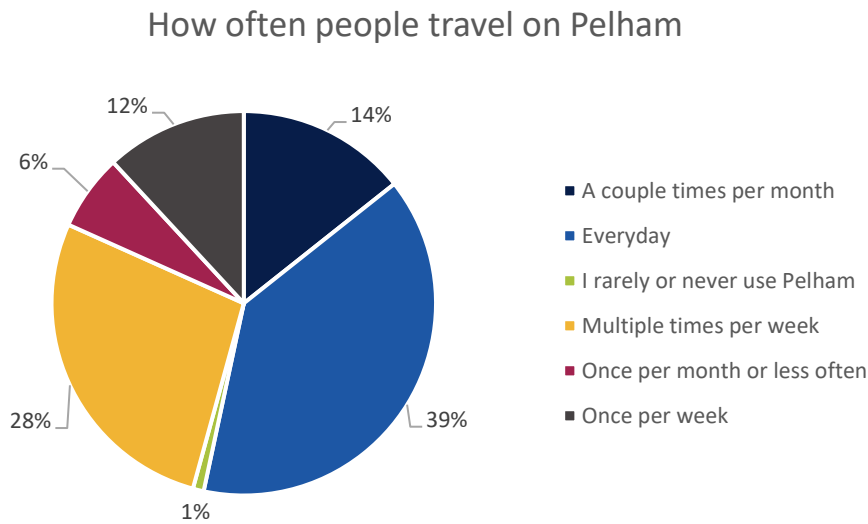


Table 3. How often people travel on or along Pelham.

How often people travel on Pelham	Count	Percentage
A couple times per month	47	14%
Everyday	128	39%
I rarely or never use Pelham	3	1%
Multiple times per week	90	28%
Once per month or less often	21	6%
Once per week	39	12%

Question 3. Please list one to three things you like about Pelham.

Question 3 provided a space for open comments about what works well and what people enjoy on Pelham. Staff analyzed these responses and grouped them into similar themes. Table 4 shows the results of that analysis. People could mention several themes in their answers.

Table 4. What people like about Pelham

What do you like about Pelham?	Count
I like that the bikeway is separated from car traffic	174
I like the trees and nature	92
It offers easy driving connections and convenience	49
Connections to destinations, generally	47
It connects to the Mississippi River	47
It feels safe, drivers travel responsibly	42
It offers easy biking connections	38
I like the wide boulevards	23
I like the neighborhood and community connection	15
I like the sidewalks	14
It connects to Desnoyer Park	11
It connects to the golf course	3
Parking	3
I like nothing	2
It feels safe, little crime	1

Question 4. Please list one to three things you do NOT like about Pelham.

Question 4 provided a space for open comments about what works poorly and what people dislike about Pelham. Staff analyzed these responses and grouped them into similar themes. People could mention several themes in their answers. Table 5 shows the results of that analysis.

Table 5. What people dislike about Pelham

What do you dislike about Pelham?	Count
Surface condition/potholes	112
Driver speeds	73
Design of the bikeway	70
White flexible bikeway posts	31
Amount of car traffic	28
Drivers in the bikeway	28
Drivers do not stop at stop signs	27
Bridge of 94 is uncomfortable to walk	23
Missing sidewalk/sidewalk gaps	21
Surface of the bikeway	20
Lack of on street parking	18
Railroad tracks at Wabash	18
The smell	18
Drivers to not yield to people walking	13
Poor sightlines make some areas unsafe to travel	13
Dislike bikeway, not needed	12
Ongoing Met Council construction at Otis	11
Sidewalk condition	8
Truck traffic	6
Biker behavior	6
I dislike nothing	6
Poor street lighting	3
Bikeway does not connect well	3
Lead pipes	1

Question 5. Imagine you are traveling on Pelham in the future when it's been reconstructed. What do you want it to look like?

Responses to this question were reviewed by city staff. Many themes and requests are similar to responses to Questions 3 and 4. Responses included a desire for:

- New and smooth drive lanes, bikeway space, and sidewalks
- Parking for residents
- Safe, pleasant, slow street
- Trees and nature
- Changes to Otis and Pelham to improve safety and sightlines; no more construction at the corner
- Fully separated bikeway, reconstructed at sidewalk level (no more white flex-posts)
- Removal of railroad tracks at Wabash
- Improvements to the walking experience on the bridge over I-94

Question 6. What groups or organizations should staff be sure to talk to about the project? Are there events we should attend in the neighborhood?

Many of the recommendations from survey respondents overlap with the engagement and communication staff have performed in Summer 2024. See a list of events in Section 2 of this document. Spring 2025 engagement will involve previous contacts and those recommended by survey respondents:

- Desnoyer Park Improvement Association (DPIA)
- Residents
- Union Park District Council
- Ward 4, Council President Mitra Jalali
- KidsPark Daycare
- Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition
- Sustain Saint Paul
- Town & Country Club
- Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN)
- Sierra Club
- Our Streets Minneapolis
- Prospect Park Association
- Avalon School
- Midtown Greenway Coalition
- Move Minnesota
- Businesses and organizations on Pelham north of I-94
- Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ)
- Saint Anthony Park Community Council

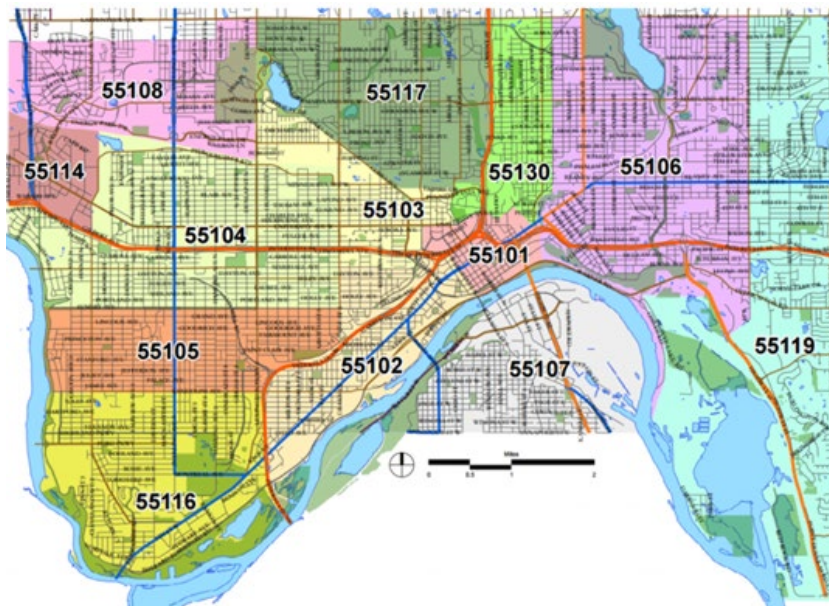
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

Question 7. What is your zip code?

Respondents were asked to provide their zip code. Table 6 shows zip codes. A map of zip codes in Saint Paul is provided for reference. The Pelham reconstruction includes areas in zip codes 55104 and 55114.

Table 6. Zip code of survey respondent

Zip Code	Count	Percent
55101	4	1%
55102	7	2%
55103	3	1%
55104	146	45%
55105	18	6%
55106	3	1%
55107	3	1%
55108	7	2%
55114	32	10%
55116	16	5%
55117	8	2%
55119	1	0.3%
Minneapolis	74	23%
Twin Cities Metro	3	1%



Section 4. Project contacts

Jimmy Shoemaker, Senior City Planner

Department of Public Works

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Department of Public Works

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Section 5. Appendix

Project communication

Photos from engagement

You are subscribed to Project Updates from the City of Saint Paul's [Department of Public Works](#).



Pelham Boulevard Survey Closes October 31

In 2026, the City of Saint Paul will be reconstructing Pelham Boulevard between Mississippi River Boulevard and Franklin Avenue.

Phase 1 of community engagement on the 2026 Pelham Boulevard Reconstruction is wrapping up. The online feedback survey will close on October 31 – thanks to all 198 people who have taken it. Please share it with a friend and let them know about the closing date.

[Pelham Boulevard Feedback Survey](#)

Since engagement started in June 2024, project staff have been attending events and meetings in the neighborhood, including:

- Attended annual Desnoyer Park neighborhood picnic

Pelham Boulevard Feedback Survey

Since engagement started in June 2024, project staff have been attending events and meetings in the neighborhood, including:

- Attended annual Desnoyer Park neighborhood picnic
- Led a walk of Pelham Boulevard with Desnoyer Park Improvement Association, Saint Anthony Park Community Council, Union Park District Council
- Attended Saint Anthony Park Ice Cream Social

Staff have also connected with other stakeholders in various ways:

- Property owners through letters and one-on-one conversations
- Posted signs along Pelham Boulevard
- Met with Avalon School students

Next steps and Timeline

Staff will be reviewing feedback from the online survey and plan to summarize responses from the community. The summary will be posted November 2024 online at stpaul.gov/pelham.

This winter, staff will be working on initial designs based on the feedback received from Phase 1 of engagement. In Spring 2025, staff will share these designs with the community during Phase 2 of engagement.

Based on the feedback from Phase 2 of engagement, staff will make tweaks to the designs and spend the remainder of 2025 in final design of the project – this is a technical phase that will consider small but important details of the design of Pelham Boulevard.

In Winter 2025, the project will be bid to a contractor, with construction tentatively planned to begin in the Spring 2026. More details will be shared about timing of construction and updates will be provided periodically throughout 2025.



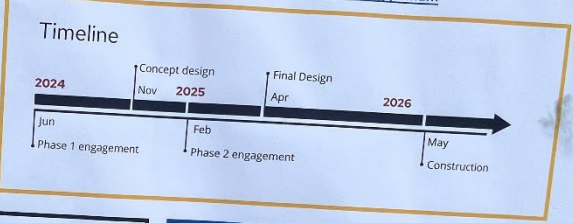


2026 Pelham Boulevard Reconstruction



from Mississippi River Blvd to Franklin Ave | stpaul.gov/pelham

- Known goals and needs**
- Replace aging street surface
 - Replace underground sewer and water
 - Construct off-street bikeway
 - Replace old sidewalk and fill in gaps
 - Fix intersections that are skewed
- Goals and needs from community**
- Minimize tree impacts
 - Calm traffic and reduce non-neighborhood traffic
 - Improve pedestrian crossings



Previous planning that informs design

In 2017, the city developed the Grand Round Design and Implementation Plan, which made a plan for a 26-mile loop of bikeways connecting parks. Pelham is included in that loop.

In 2018, the City installed an "interim" separated bikeway to meet the goals of the Grand Round in the short term. People biking and driving are separated by white flexible posts. These exist today.

The 2026 reconstruction of Pelham allows the City to fully realize the vision of the Grand Round: a street with a fully separated space between people driving and people biking, plus a new street, lighting, and sidewalks.

Feedback

The City is asking for feedback through the end of October. The best way to provide input is through an online survey. Already 160 responses! Find it at stpaul.gov/pelham.

Funding

The project will be funded in part by the new Common Cent funding. This new sales tax (approved by voters in 2023) will generate \$1 billion over the next 20 years to fund street and park improvements. The project will also be funded by property assessments to properties with frontage on Pelham Blvd.

Contact
Jimmy Shoemaker, Dept of Public Works
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Street Reconstruction is Happening in your Neighborhood in 2026 Pelham Boulevard

stpaul.gov/pelham

September 14, 2024

What is happening?

In 2026, the City of Saint Paul plans to reconstruct Pelham Boulevard from Mississippi River Boulevard to Franklin Avenue. The one-mile project serves multiple modes of transportation and is one of the main connections for the Desnoyer Park neighborhood. On the south end, Pelham Boulevard is primarily residential but transitions to more industrial land uses north of Interstate 94. Saint Paul Public Works is leading the community engagement and design, and will manage the construction contractor when roadwork begins in spring 2026.



What will the project change?

The project will include the following above ground improvements:

- Replacing the existing white flex-post bikeway with a bike path that runs alongside the street
- New boulevards, sidewalks, and curb ramps
- New street surface and street lighting

Below ground improvements include:

- Private and public utility replacement and upgrades
- Water and sewer replacements and repairs
- Implementation of stormwater management systems



What we've heard through community engagement

City staff have been talking with the community to understand how this 2026 project can best serve the neighborhood. Past engagement activities:

- July 16: staff attended the annual Desnoyer Park Picnic
- July 30: staff and community members walked the length of Pelham and discussed the opportunities for improvement
- August 12: staff met with Union Park District Council Transportation Committee
- September 5: staff presented to the Desnoyer Park Improvement Association
- September 14: staff attended the Saint Anthony Park Community Council Ice Cream Social at Hampden Park
- Online survey (open through October 2024) currently has more than 160 responses
- Laminated project information signs posted along Pelham Blvd

Early feedback from the community indicates a desire to calm traffic along Pelham and promote safe and comfortable biking and walking. The mature tree canopy is something that is valued by neighbors, and people have said the street surface is in poor condition and needs improvement. Some have asked for more on-street parking. There is both support and opposition to the current space for biking, and many have asked for a new space to run alongside the street (and the white flexible posts to go away).

There are many needs along Pelham Boulevard, and each requires space in the street. Staff regularly make recommendations and decisions about this limited space based on guidance from city plans and policies that have been adopted by City Council.

How can you share your feedback?

Share your thoughts about the project using the online survey (open through October 2024) and sign up for project emails at stpaul.gov/pelham.

How is the project paid for?

A portion of this street reconstruction project will be paid for by a 1% local sales tax, called Common Cent. This sales tax was approved by Saint Paul voters in November 2023. A portion of the project will also be funded through assessments to property owners abutting the project area. The estimated assessment rate is based on a third-party special benefit analysis of the property values in the project area. Property owners will receive a notice of the estimated rate and date for a public hearing when estimated rates are available. More information on assessments can be found at stpaul.gov/specialassessments.

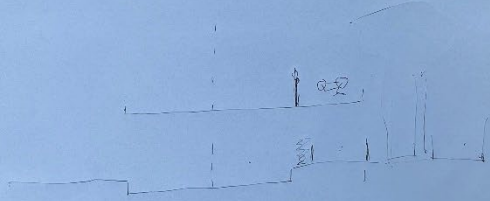


Questions?

Contact Jimmy Shoemaker at 651-266-6204 or jimmy.shoemaker@ci.stpaul.mn.us or Jary Lee at 651-266-1107 or jary.lee@ci.stpaul.mn.us

What do you like about Pelham?

- Trees along Pelham
- GRASS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD
- trees! please keep them all intact
- please keep the trees - they are beautiful
- Connections! To the river, up to University



What do you NOT like about Pelham?

- Cars driving too fast (more than 40mph) down Pelham, especially near Deshaussay Park & cut through traffic
- Not enough crosswalks + ^{↑ south of Doane}
- Road surface - both bike lane + road
- Not enough crosswalks (+ please paint them)
- Road surface is horrible, bad for cars & bikes
- the bike lane was constructed ~~in~~ in a way that is not its layout, would like it to have a bus lane, as we're too cut off from public transit in Deshaussay
- Crosswalk @ Pelham + Beverly could use more visibility
- Otis + Pelham intersection needs to be improved
- Need sidewalks on golf course side of Pelham
- Save side bike lane - so far to have one lane on each side.
- the lights are out at Pelham + the River. Unsafe at night for bikers, walkers, + drivers.
- Crosswalks - Add ^{another} one between Pelham + River Rd, also Pelham + Otis + Beverly.
- Fast cars - We need traffic calming/slowing downhill between Doane + Otis.
- Otis + Pelham is a dangerous intersection - very busy, drivers are irritable + driving fast
- Terrible sewer smell almost always at Pelham + Otis.

From an Avalon School student, October 2024:

Today I got to meet Jimmy Shoemaker who works as a transportation planner in Saint Paul. This meeting was through a visit where he came to Avalon school to talk to the students in order to get feedback on what we want changed about Pelham Avenue in its 2026 reconstruction. Through this I got to give feedback to him about how I want Pelham Avenue to be changed in the future.

Overall, I think Pelham is an okay street but I see a lot of possible improvements. The first of these improvements would be removing the train tracks since they aren't being used and if anything are just a hazard when it comes to the chance of tripping over them or flipping over them on a bike. I recently crashed my bike on Raymond where I hit a crack in the sidewalk and flipped over my handle bars. This change involving the train tracks is of least concern to me, especially when it comes to the other changes I want made.

The next change I want made is the removal of the white poles next to the bike lane when going by Desnoyer Park. Whenever I'm biking by those I am scared of crashing into them, however, this might just be me especially since I don't know what the point of them is, and maybe they are better to have than not have. The second to last major change I want made is the creation of a bike lane separate from cars. This would be very nice because it would get rid of all if not most of the risk when it comes to a biker being hit by a car. Finally the last and most important change I want made is the creation of a walking path on what is the left side of the bridge when facing south. This would be very helpful, especially for Avalon's ultimate frisbee team, which I was on last year. The reason why I hold this as such a priority is because when having 40 or so students walking to a park, you want a place for them to walk instead of in the bike lane which is dangerous.

Now, I did not only express my opinions with this experience. I also learned about street design and laws. For instance, one thing I learned is that the city is not in control of changes made to the bridge over highway 94. This is because it doesn't just go through Saint Paul, but also goes through Minnesota and the state is therefore in charge of it. Yet another thing I learned was that the train tracks crossing Pelham have not been used for a long time, however, the people who put them in don't want to get rid of them. So that's another tricky situation with two different parties needing to come to an agreement. The last big thing I learned from this was that the Saint Paul Classic bike ride follows the Saint Paul Grand Round Map. Before getting to talk to Shoemaker I never even knew there was a thing called the Grand Round, which is a 27 mile stretch of scenic bike paths going around Saint Paul. I learned many more small things but, these are some of the cool things I had the most fun learning.

Overall, this was an awesome experience that I found very intriguing and important. As you may know I bike to school, so I have become sympathetic to many of the problems people face from certain street designs. So, what I would say is you should care about this because even if it doesn't affect you it affects many other people in the community.