



Mayor Frey, City Council Members and Public Works staff,

The undersigned groups consist of neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, small businesses, and other community stakeholders in Minneapolis.

For a decade, Our Streets Minneapolis, a local nonprofit, has collaborated with the City of Minneapolis on the Open Streets Minneapolis initiative. Open Streets Minneapolis is part of a global movement to make streets places that put people first.

During these free, family-friendly events held in our communities, Our Streets Minneapolis partners with the City of Minneapolis to temporarily close major thoroughfares to car traffic. These thoroughfares are then opened to people biking, walking, rolling, allowing residents to connect freely with neighbors and local businesses.

Since the launch of the first Open Streets Minneapolis event in 2011 that was attended by an estimated 5,000, the program has grown to a peak attendance of 103,500 in 2019.

Today, Open Streets Minneapolis features some of the city's largest and most beloved events. Open Streets Minneapolis events are a canvas on which residents creatively showcase our city's incredible cultural diversity. The events have become important cornerstones of small business calendars in our neighborhoods. Large numbers of people are drawn to the events to buy food, goods and services, thereby boosting sales and increasing the customer base of participating businesses. Open Streets Minneapolis events are a powerful visualization of a transportation system that puts people first and builds public support for addressing our shared climate and equity goals.

As Open Streets Minneapolis has grown, the events have continued to require more resources from Our Streets Minneapolis, the event organizer. Our Streets Minneapolis is a small non-profit organization with only six full-time staff. A single staff member is responsible for planning, coordinating and managing these large-scale events. Our Streets Minneapolis does not receive any compensation from the City of Minneapolis to cover the costs of organizing Open Streets Minneapolis. In 2022, the City of Minneapolis is proposing the creation of a new contract that seeks a contractor to organize future Open Streets Minneapolis events.

The compensation provided through this contract is \$0 ([City of Minneapolis Agreement](#)).

The City's lack of monetary support is having a serious and continued impact on Our Streets Minneapolis's ability to organize Our Streets Minneapolis events sustainably and equitably.

Looming participation costs: To cover the cost of hosting the event, event participants pay a minimal fee for a spot at Open Streets Minneapolis events. While this fee is manageable for some, small businesses, nonprofits, and other event partners in our communities face significant barriers to entry. **Higher entry fees disproportionately affect vendors of color, immigrants and those otherwise marginalized.** Receiving funding from the City would reduce the cost burden on participants.

Limited route selection: Due to capacity and funding constraints, Open Streets Minneapolis events are hosted on corridors that have the resources to support an event. This means that streets with lower incomes and areas along Minneapolis cultural corridors are left out of Open Streets Minneapolis activities. The businesses and communities in these areas deserve celebration. Funding from the City would allow Our Streets Minneapolis to increase the number of events, specifically in lower income areas.

Open Streets Minneapolis is named as a priority in the recently adopted City of Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan. To ensure the current and future sustainability of the Open Streets Minneapolis initiative and to truly make it accessible and equitable for all city residents to enjoy, we are asking the City of Minneapolis to monetarily invest in this program. **We ask that:**

- **The Department of Public works amends the 2022-2022 Public Service Agreement for the Open Streets Minneapolis contractor to include yearly compensation of \$100,000 for the Open Streets Minneapolis events, effective immediately. We propose that funding be sourced from the Public Works discretionary budget.**
- **The Mayor's 2023 budget includes \$100,000 of ongoing funding to support Our Streets Minneapolis in hosting these important events in our communities. We are launching a public organizing campaign to support this goal, which we will continue until our needs are met.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Awakenings... Gifts and Guidance for the Soul, Eric Earll, Owner

Harrison Neighborhood Association, Nichole Buehler, Executive Director

Hope Community, Inc., Will Delaney, Associate Director

Hopewell Music Cooperative North, Andrea Myers, Executive Director

Lake Street Council, Matt Kazinka, Senior Strategic Initiatives Manager

Lyn Lake Business Association, John Meegan, past board chair

Move Minnesota, Sam Rockwell, Executive Director

Our Streets Minneapolis, Ashwat Narayanan, Executive Director

Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association, Tabitha Montgomery, Executive Director

Urban Ventures, Mark-Peter Lundquist, Dir. Farm & Nutrition

Twin Cities Bicycle Club, John Benda, TCBC Board of Directors member

West Broadway Business and Area Coalition, Jamar Smith, Program Manager