

# our streets

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ANNUAL REPORT 2023



# Mission and Vision

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Our Streets works to **lead the nation in putting people first by transforming transportation and infrastructure in the Twin Cities, the metro region and the state of Minnesota**. We do this by making our streets places where people can easily and comfortably walk, bike, roll, and use public transit.

We envision streets and neighborhoods that are vibrant places for people to live, work, and play. We envision communities with people-first transportation infrastructure that is not centered around cars. We envision cities with streets designed to prioritize public health and climate, racial, and economic justice for all our neighbors.



# Our Streets | Approach

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We do this work by:

- **Creating positive visions** for a people-centric future that repairs past and present harms caused by unjust transportation decisions.
- **Elevating and centering community voices and desires**, focusing on those who have been most harmed by and left out of transportation decisions.
- **Using grassroots organizing to build shared power and advocate** for policies, street designs, and concrete outcomes that improve lives in meaningful ways.
- **Facilitating community-led action** by holding ourselves and decision-makers accountable to the community through transparent action.



# Our Streets | Staff

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**José A. Zayas Cabán** (he/him) Executive Director

**Ember Rasmussen** ( they/them) Community Development & Events Sr. Manager

**Carly Ellefsen** (she/her) Communications Manager

**Alex Burns** (he/him) Advocacy & Policy Manager

**Yasmin Hirsi** (she/her) Advocacy Coordinator

**Alexa Bobyak** (she/her) Operations, HR & Individual Giving Coordinator

**Fermín de Cermón** (she/they) Events & Volunteer Specialist

**Raquel Sidie-Wagner** (she/her) Legislative & Community Engagement Specialist

**Ali Sawler** (she/her) Data Specialist

**Jessie Merriam (she/her)** Public History Specialist

**Joe Harrington (he/him)** GIS Specialist

**Sam Peterson (she/her)** Canvasser

**Nick Hutchinson (he/him)** Canvasser

**Greg Hindy (he/him)** Canvasser



# Our Streets | Board

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**Laura Groenjes Mitchell** (she/they) Board President

**Nat Turner** (he/they) Vice President

**Carter Breunig** (he/him) Treasurer

**Alexander Furneaux** (he/him) Secretary

**Calla Martin** (she/they)

**Sylvie Hyman** (she/her)

**Ted Duepner** (he/him)

**Soren Stevenson** (he/him)

**Michelle Van Engen** (she/her)



# Our Projects

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# From the Executive Director

José Antonio Zayas Cabán



## From the Executive Director

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Hello,

**Thanks to support from donors like you, Our Streets Minneapolis is going places.** Everywhere you look, you can see the infrastructure changes that make our neighborhoods more accessible and enjoyable for everyone that your commitment and advocacy helped create.

People-friendly sidewalks and bike lanes are only the beginning. Our efforts extend beyond safe infrastructure. We're working towards public space designed to prioritize public health, climate resilience, and racial and economic justice for everyone. **As a supporter, you've made this vision possible. Thank you!**





## From the Executive Director

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Just this year, we've already accomplished significant milestones together:

- The City of Minneapolis made a formal resolution to decommission Olson Memorial Highway.
- Two Highway-to-Boulevard conversions were included in MnDOT's Rethinking I-94 project alternative.
- We've knocked more than 70,000 doors and established more than 60 community partnerships across the state.
- We've launched our Imagine Series, a new event series co-creating future street designs that put people first.
- We successfully advocated for municipal sidewalk plowing; the Minneapolis City Council included funding to begin a program starting with the pedestrian priority network.



## From the Executive Director

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Our work isn't without its challenges. This year, the City of Minneapolis put Open Streets Minneapolis in jeopardy—despite more than 100,000 attendees and 300 neighborhood organizations, small businesses, local entrepreneurs, artists, and nonprofits finding common ground at five events in 2023 alone. As a Minneapolis summer tradition, over 50 Open Streets events have brought together more than half a million people since 2011.

In 2024, with your support, we'll advance Twin Cities Boulevard, a grassroots movement that aims to uplift communities along the highway, repair the highway's historic and ongoing harms, and reconnect the entire 7.5-mile Rethinking I-94 project corridor. We'll also expand our work on Bring Back 6th, a joint effort with Harrison Neighborhood Association and other community partners, to tell the history of 6th Avenue North and repair the historic and ongoing harms of Olson Memorial Highway. In addition, we will be able to invite you and the Twin Cities community to come Imagine with us, when we announce the dates for our Imagine event Series

Where we're going, everyone is welcome. **Please consider a meaningful gift this year** that will help us increase our canvassing footprint in 2024 to involve residents in our campaigns' designs and decision-making as we grow the reach of our events. **Thank you for supporting streets for people!**



# Financials | 2023



# Financials 2023

## Revenue

Business Sponsorships and Donations	\$180,227.83
Contract Income	\$148,579.30
Foundation and Corporate Grants	\$447,127.84
Individual Donations	\$83,610.51
Other Income	\$7,063.50
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Total Revenues	\$866,608.98

## Expenses

Advocacy and Engagement	\$90,343.00
Administration and Professional Fees	\$387,228.00
Staff/Personnel	\$610,890.00
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Total Expenses	\$1,088,461.00



# 2023 Advocacy



# Our Approach

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## Shifting power, narratives, and decision-making processes.

- Meaningful community engagement that listens to people's needs
  - Canvassing and direct outreach
  - Local partnerships with neighborhood organizations, businesses, and individuals
- Connecting transportation issues to issues of housing, public health, climate, income inequality, and more
- Clear mission to put people first in decision-making



# Bring Back 6th

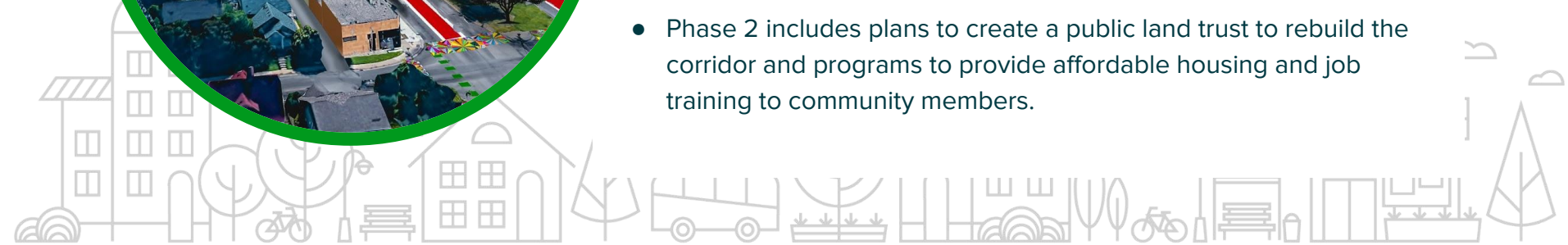
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## Reclaiming Olson Memorial Highway



### Campaign Details

- Address the harms of the highway on the neighborhoods surrounding it, and transform the corridor in two phases:
  - Immediate safety improvements: dedicated bus/bike lanes, decreased speed limits, improved pedestrian lighting.
  - Replace the highway with a reconstructed 6th Avenue North boulevard and commercial corridor.
- Phase 2 includes plans to create a public land trust to rebuild the corridor and programs to provide affordable housing and job training to community members.



# Bring Back 6th

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## Reclaiming Olson Memorial Highway



### Successes

- Thousands of doors knocked, broad community support
- Land reduction and some safety improvements, with legislation for additional changes
- Creation of an Olson redesign project
- Unanimous City Council resolution





# Bring Back 6th

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## Reclaiming Olson Memorial Highway



### 2024 Goals

- Ensure the completion of all Phase 1 safety improvements along Olson.
- Secure a timetable and commitment to bring back 6th Avenue North, including the adoption of our community development benchmarks.
- Release Toole & Visible City study to demonstrate feasibility and benefits of highway removal.



# Twin Cities Boulevard

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## Re-Thinking I-94



### Campaign Details

- Direct response to MNDOT's "Rethinking I-94" project.
- This is a generational opportunity to reimagine the corridor and to put the needs of people and the planet ahead of automobile traffic.
- We envision a corridor with reduced emissions, cleaner air, reconnected communities, parks, affordable housing and business space, and transportation options for people walking, rolling, biking and taking transit.



# Twin Cities Boulevard

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## Re-Thinking I-94



### Successes

- Community support and engagement has expanded beyond what people perceived was possible.
- Amended purpose and need documents from open letter we organized.
- Inclusion of two “at-grade” options, growing support from elected’s.



# Streets for People

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## Transforming Transportation Decision Making



### Campaign Details

- Movement to put people first on City & County streets
- **Streets we're currently focusing on:**
  - Lyndale Ave S
  - Nicollet Avenue S
  - West Broadway Ave



# Streets for People

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## Lyndale Avenue South | 4:3 Conversion and Pedestrian Improvements



**Neighbors have been asking for safety improvements to Lyndale for years. Our advocacy helped to:**

- Hold Hennepin County accountable
- Get a 4:3 lane conversion
- Get new concrete pedestrian medians at 25th & 27th Streets



# Streets for People

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## Lyndale Avenue South | 4:3 Conversion and Pedestrian Improvements



### 2024 Advocacy Goals

- Build community support for people centered designs on Lyndale, Nicollet and West Broadway
- Increase small business canvassing and advocate for a County support fund during major street reconstruction
- Further integrate advocacy groups with Imagine and other community events.



# Winter Sidewalks Campaign

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## Campaign Details

- We began this campaign in 2018 and secured a \$300,000 increase in the mayor's 2020 budget to improve corner clearing.
- In 2023, we were successful in securing City funding for a pilot program.
- In 2024, we are calling on the City to invest in a full municipal sidewalk plowing program.



# Building on Advocacy Success

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In just over two years, we've gone from **0 to 3,400 digital activists. We want to raise that number to 4,500 by EOY 2024.**

We've hosted **Imagine 6th Ave N, a pop-up museum & community event**, and created an *I-94 in Minneapolis* Mobile History Museum.

Between 2022 and 2024, we've knocked **over 100,000 doors**. In just over two years, **over 500 individuals** have signed up to **volunteer**.

**Our goal is to have more than 500 volunteers signed up by EOY 2024.**





# Events | 2023



# Open Streets Minneapolis

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- Hosted five Open Streets Minneapolis events, including two new events in Cedar-Riverside and on Glenwood Avenue, and returning events on Lyndale Ave, West Broadway Ave, and East Lake Street.
- Reached more than 50,000 attendees.
- Collaborated with more than 400 businesses and organizations.



# 2023 Events

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- Debuted *Concrete River: A History of I-94 in Cedar-Riverside* mobile museum exhibit
- Engaged Northside residents in the history of 6th Avenue North with a multiple month exhibition of the *Bring Back 6th Mobile History Museum* in partnership with Sumner Library and discussions with the Mapping Prejudice project
- Hosted forums to inform and engage residents about emerging transportation issues
- Collaborated with Million Artist Movement to create a neighborhood vision quilt with Cedar-Riverside residents.



# Communications | 2023



# Communications

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## We Built a Good Foundation in 2023:

- **New Channel(s):** TikTok, BlueSky, Threads
- **Video content,** both 9:16 for YouTube/embedded and 16:9 for Reels and TikTok
- **Channel Strategy** Developed
- **Proactive Media Outreach** and Relations
- **Thought Leadership** on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter
- **Analytics and Data-Driven** Communications



# Social Media Stats | 2023

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## LinkedIn

- 8.57% engagement rate
- 17k page impressions
- 18k post impressions
- 98 shares

## Twitter

- 490 new followers
- 962k impressions
- 3.5% engagement rate
- 1.4 retweets

## Facebook

- 123k page reach
- 116k post impressions
- 4.04% engagement rate

## TikTok

- 4.3k followers gained
- 55k “likes”
- 381k views on videos
- 10.23% engagement rate

## Instagram

- <40% growth in followers
- 469k profile impressions
- 316k post impressions
- 8.55% engagement rate



# Earned Media

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## Some of the outlets that covered our work in 2023

- WCCO
- KSTP
- MPR News
- Star Tribune
- Sahan Journal
- Wedge Live!
- Bring Me The News
- Racket
- Streetsblog USA
- Axios
- Kare 11



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THANK YOU!

