



Heritage Park
Neighborhood Association



our
streets



USI | URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.

BEST
BUY
Teen Tech
Center



Date: November 21, 2024

To: MnDOT Commissioner Nancy Daubenberger, MnDOT District Engineer Khani Sahebjam, MnDOT West Area Manager Ryan Wilson, Toward Zero Deaths Coordinator Tara Helm, Minneapolis Public Works Director Tim Sexton, Minneapolis Vision Zero Coordinator Ethan Fawley, Minneapolis Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator Alex Schieferdecker, Olson Memorial Highway Project Manager Christina Perfetti

CC: Mayor Jacob Frey, Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, Council President Elliot Payne, Representative Esther Agbaje, Senator Bobby Joe Champion, Hennepin County Commissioner Irene Fernando

The undersigned members of the Bring Back 6th community coalition are urging you to collaborate and submit an application to the [Bloomberg Asphalt Art Initiative grant program](#) to seek funding for an artwork crosswalk pilot project at the intersection of Van White Memorial Boulevard and Olson Memorial Highway. Bloomberg Philanthropies recently posted a new request for proposals and increased the maximum funding amount per project to \$100,000.

This intersection is unsafe and inaccessible for all users. It has a high crash rate and is included in the City of Minneapolis high injury street network. The intersection of Olson and Van White connects important businesses and institutions within our community. Every time a community member crosses the street to get to school, the library, or the park, they are unnecessarily being put at risk. For years, residents have been asking MnDOT and the City to take action to protect our community, yet no meaningful action has occurred. [A 2024 report](#) by the World Resources Institute highlighted the ongoing safety issues on Olson Memorial Highway.

Installing an asphalt art pilot project at this intersection is a needed solution to improve pedestrian visibility and reduce crash risk. [A 2022 study](#) found that after asphalt art projects were implemented, the locations experienced a 50% reduction in crashes involving people walking, rolling and biking, a 37% reduction in crashes that resulted in injuries, and a 17% reduction in total crashes. Cities that have successfully implemented artwork crosswalks include Miami, Kansas City, Atlanta, New York City, Cambridge, Louisville, Richmond, and Durham. There is no reason why we can't do the same in Minneapolis.

As part of this project, we ask that MnDOT and the City of Minneapolis partners Northside youth with artists to design and implement the project. Students at the Best Buy Teen Tech Center at Summit Academy OIC have [partnered with Our Streets](#) and RSP Architects to co-create solutions to improve pedestrian safety on Olson Memorial Highway. This is in response to recent incidents, including one in which a student was hit while crossing the highway. These students are working with RSP Architects to render the Van White and Olson Memorial Highway intersection and develop ideas for a safer, more accessible Olson Memorial Highway and the eventual restoration of 6th Avenue North. This grant is an opportunity to build on this pilot project, incorporate the students' ideas and hire local Northside artists to support a deeper sense of community ownership of the project.

Please make a public commitment to applying before the January 31 2025 deadline.

Sincerely,

Anndrea Young
Interim Executive Director
Heritage Park Neighborhood Association

Nichole Beuhler
Executive Director
Harrison Neighborhood Association

José Antonio Zayas Cabán
Executive Director
Our Streets

Nimet Abubaker
Youth Executive Vice President
Green Garden Bakery

Sarah Eckerstorfer
Career Pathways Program Facilitator
STEM District I
Summit Academy OIC

Elana Dahlberg
Operations Director
Urban Strategies, Inc.