

our streets

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Mission and Vision

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 Approach

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

Fermín de Cermón (she/they), Community Development Coordinator

Zubeda Chaffe (she/her), Organizer

Maleah Douglas (she/her), Events Coordinator

Carly Ellefsen (she/her), Communications Manager

Eric Forste (he/him), Organizer

Dylan Fresco (he/him), Organizer

Joe Harrington (he/him), Policy Manager

Searra Hetherington (she/her), Organizer

Yasmin Hirsi (she/her), Advocacy Manager

Greg Hindy (he/him), Lead Organizer

Nick Hutchinson (he/him), Community Engagement Organizer

Vanesa Kahlhamer (she/her), Operations, HR & Individual Giving Coordinator

Jessie Merriam (she/her), Public History Specialist

Melanie Nevilles (she/her), Organizer

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

Emma Rudock (she/her), Organizer

Ali Sawler (she/her), Data Specialist

Audrey Tcha (she/her), Communications Specialist

Kārlī Žaklīna Barobs (they/them), Organizer

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



Our Streets | Board

Carter Breunig (he/him), Treasurer

Gunnar Carlson (he/him)

Ted Duepner (he/him)

Alexander Furneaux (he/him), Secretary

Laura Groenjes Mitchell (she/they), Board President

JoAnn Leppink (she/her)

Sylvie Hyman (she/her)

Raj Singh (he/him)

Nat Turner (he/they), Vice President

Michelle Van Engen (she/her)



From the Executive Director

José Antonio Zayas Cabán



From the Executive Director

To our supporters and community:

This year, Our Streets advanced transportation justice in Minnesota in ways that felt both historic and urgently necessary. Across campaigns, coalitions, classrooms, and corridors, we demonstrated what it means for community members—not agencies, not consultants—to define the future of their neighborhoods. And with every step, we proved the core belief that guides our Grand Vision: when people most impacted by infrastructure decisions lead, the solutions are smarter, more just, and more transformative.

However, our work isn't without its challenges. Many of you know that we faced delays in federal reimbursement for our Bring Back 6th project, despite meeting every requirement. This challenge has been significant, but it has also proven the strength of our organization. We have been transparent, persistent, and unwavering in our commitment to steward public dollars responsibly, even when systems make it difficult. We will continue to push for timely, fair processes so that community-led planning does not get held hostage by administrative barriers.



From the Executive Director

Nonetheless, we accomplished significant milestones together, including but not limited to:

- Hosting a [Design Week](#), a multi-day workshop for the Bring Back 6th campaign, where residents, business owners, and local organizations came together to reimagine the Olson Memorial Highway corridor.
- Releasing a [major report](#) outlining a path to reconnect neighborhoods harmed by highway construction and disinvestment.
- Our complete streets advocacy demands were met by Hennepin County for a safer street design on Lowry Ave.
- Holding our second [Twin Cities Transportation Academy](#) this summer.
- Making [progress at the legislature](#) that will be carried into the next session as part of a long-term strategy to move towards transportation systems rooted in health, housing stability, racial justice, and climate resilience.
- Growing our coalition and supporter base who showed up to rallies, PAC meetings, and petitions.



From the Executive Director

This year showed what is achievable when community voices lead and when organizations like Our Streets have the resources to support them. As we step into 2026, we invite you to renew or increase your support for Our Streets. With your partnership, we can continue to push back against harmful expansions, advance visionary alternatives, train new advocates, and ensure that Minnesota leads the nation in community-driven planning.

Thank you for standing with us, believing in this work, and helping build a future where our streets truly belong to the people.

In community,



José Antonio Zayas Cabán



Financials | 2025



Financials 2025

Revenue

Business Sponsorships and Donations	\$ 20,750
Contract Income	\$ 703,323
Foundation and Corporate Grants	\$ 1,102,200
Individual Donations	\$ 92,511
Other Income	\$ 2,429
Total Revenues	\$ 1,921,213

Expenses

Advocacy and Engagement	\$ 1,405,821
Administration and Professional Fees	\$ 514,005
Staff/Personnel	\$ 1,035,462
Total Expenses	\$ 2,955,288



Advocacy



Our Approach

Shifting power, narratives, and decision-making processes.

We create positive visions for a people-centric future that repairs past and present harms caused by unjust transportation and decision-making. We elevate and center community voices and desires, focusing on those who have been most harmed by and left out of transportation decisions.

We use grassroots organizing to build shared power and advocate for policies, street designs, and concrete outcomes that improve lives in meaningful ways.



Bring Back 6th

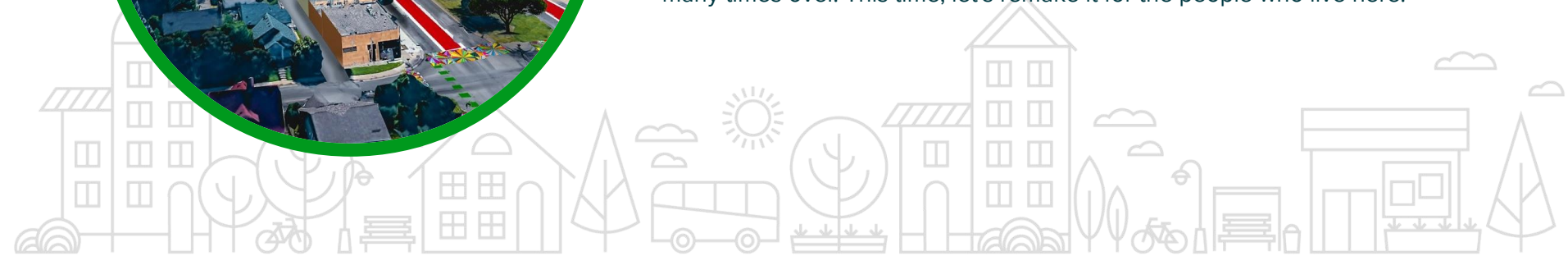
Reclaiming Olson Memorial Highway



Repairing historic and ongoing highway harms.

Once called the “Beale Street of Minneapolis,” the old Near-Northside was an integrated Black and Jewish community that was destroyed in 1939 for the construction of Olson Memorial Highway, a low-trafficked highway “to nowhere” that has been polluting the neighborhood ever since.

Instead of a highway, we could have improved health, livability, economic benefits, improved mobility, and environmental benefits. Near-North Minneapolis deserves healthier air, safer streets, more parks, less traffic noise, affordable housing, business opportunities, and more. It has been remade, many times over. This time, let’s remake it for the people who live here.



Bring Back 6th

Reclaiming Olson Memorial Highway



2025 Successes

- Implemented our Reconnecting Communities Grant grant with engagement activities including 'Home is Here' and 'Design Week'.
- Published the [Bring Back 6th Report](#).
- Completed the Bring Back 6th Collaboration with NUMO, publishing an anti-displacement framework.
- Engaged with MnDOT, Coalition Members, and the community on the report fundings.



Bring Back 6th

Reclaiming Olson Memorial Highway



Goals for 2026

- Deeper and broader community engagement on the roadway design, anti-displacement policies, and other project elements.
- Begin to build relationships with key stakeholders who will implement policy and planning approaches.
- Work with community and agency partners to compile legislative asks in 2027.
- Engaging with MnDOT's Process.



Twin Cities Boulevard

Rethinking I-94



Campaign Details

Reimagine the I-94 Corridor by constructing an “at-grade” boulevard, reconnect communities, build multi-modal transportation options, and restore land to serve housing, green space, small business, and tax base purposes.

What started as a positive visioning campaign in response to the Rethinking I-94 project is growing into an effort to challenge MnDOT’s decision to remove the “at-grade” options from consideration.



Twin Cities Boulevard

Rethinking I-94



2025 Successes

- Over 100 supportive testifiers joined the January 17th Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting to support the Twin Cities Boulevard.
- Communicated technical components of the scoping process, I-94 report, and other technical flaws with the process to the community.
- Hosted regular coalition meetings with community partners.
- Collaborated with Line Break Media to produce a [Twin Cities Boulevard Campaign](#) video.



Twin Cities Boulevard

Rethinking I-94



2025 Successes cont.

- Collaborated with Twin Cities Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) to gather nearly 3,000 signatures to support the boulevard option.
- Passed legislative language to strengthen the PAC through the Senate, through not signed into law.
- Continued to grow our presence in communities through tabling and doorknocking.
- Hosted a rally with over 100 participants at a MnDOT engagement workshop.



Twin Cities Boulevard

Rethinking I-94



Goals for 2026

- Continue to push MnDOT to restore the boulevard, and if they are unwilling, pause the project or otherwise stop their efforts to rebuild the freeway without community priorities.
- Build the base of support for Twin Cities Boulevard and organize in community, maintaining hope and momentum.
- Build relationships with community members, groups, other advocacy efforts, elected officials, and others in St. Paul.



Twin Cities Boulevard

Rethinking I-94



Goals for 2026 cont.

- Prepare additional political, legal, and other strategies to continue our efforts for Twin Cities Boulevard.
- Supporting Twin Cities DSA's ask to conduct an independent study.





Campaign Details

We're working with state decisionmakers to create a transportation system for all. This includes improving MnDOT accountability, fair public processes, and policy and funding solutions to enable more transit, active transportation, highway removal, and less highway expansions.



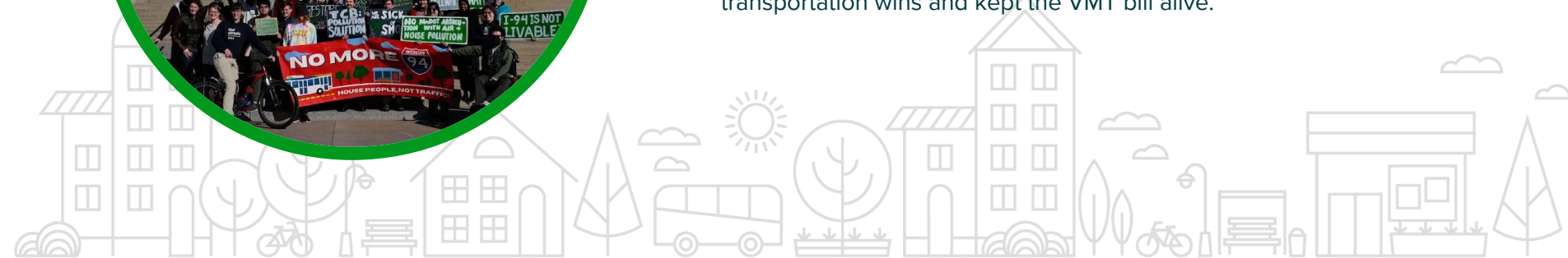
State Legislative Priorities

Transforming transportation decision making



2025 Successes

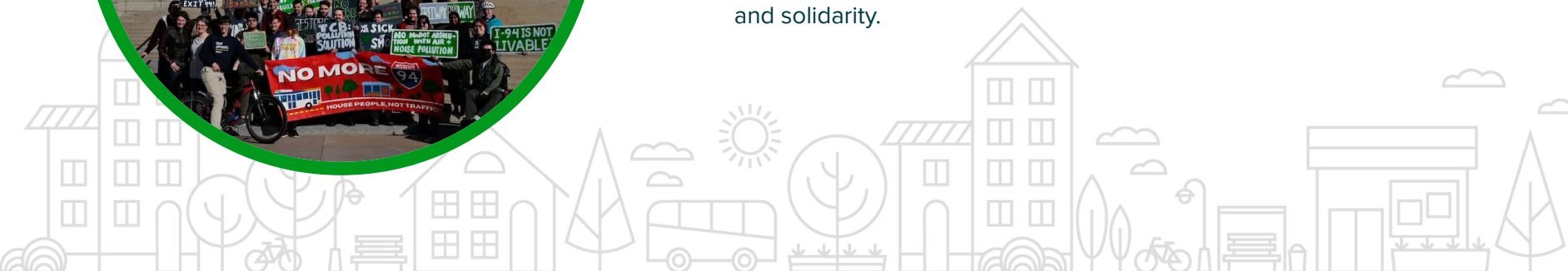
- Our Streets was able to grow existing relationships and cultivate new ones with key legislators.
- The Highway Justice Act was heard in the Senate and passed out of committee with a 6-5 vote along partisan lines.
- Our Streets hosted our first Day on the Hill to bring community members into the legislative process.
- We successfully defended the 2023 and 2024 transit and active transportation wins and kept the VMT bill alive.





Goals for 2026

- Continue to grow our legislative presence and expand our efforts to make the legislative process more accessible and grounded in addressing community needs.
- Engage our coalition partners with our legislative work and priorities.
- Address the legislative context to meet the moment as we advance our policy priorities.
- Grow our engagement with labor and other advocates to build support and solidarity.



State Legislative Priorities

Transforming transportation decision making



Goals for 2026 cont.

- Engage the legislature with both our project and policy priorities.
- Move our policies forward in the legislative venue.
- Grow the number of legislative champions and legislators engaged with our work.



Events and Programs



Events Overview

Bringing joy to our streets



2025 Successes

- Co-hosted the national Communities Over Highways Summit with America Walks.
- Presented The War on Cars LIVE event, which happened concurrently with the Communities Over Highways Summit.
- Collaborated with Toole Design, NUMO, and community partners for Bring Back 6th Design Week and two Home is Here events.



Events Overview

Bringing joy to our streets



2025 Successes cont.

- Hosted three Time Machine events. We returned to Cedar-Riverside, and added premiered two new events: North Minneapolis Time Machine and 94 Stories Time Machine in St. Paul.
- Hosted six additional events and co-hosted six additional events.
- We tabled at 29 events.



Programs Overview

Creating advocates for safe and accessible transportation networks



Twin Cities Transportation Academy

- A free community class designed to help bridge the gap between community advocates and transportation planning entities.
- Facilitated our second year of Twin Cities Transportation Academy over the course of 10 weeks with over 30 participants.



Programs Overview

Creating advocates for safe and accessible transportation networks



Street Smarts Book Club

- A program designed for our supporters to learn more about the transportation issues we face.
- Hosted two Street Smarts Book Clubs: one in April, reading *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown, and the other in September, reading *City Limits* by Megan Kimble.



our streets

THANK YOU!

