

# ST. JAMES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



# SUMMARY



## WHERE WE ARE - OUR STREETS TODAY

St. James is a compact community with a history of improving sidewalks, crossings, and intersections. There remains great potential to make walking and biking even better! St. James is bordered by roads owned by Watonwan County. The state also owns the city's central north-south artery connecting St. James across a railroad. Residents voiced the desire to walk, bike, and roll but expressed concerns about safety and accessibility.



## WHERE WE'RE GOING - OUR STREETS TOMORROW

The planned active transportation network developed through this plan includes recommendations to enhance the active transportation network through corridor and intersection improvements. Priority projects include pedestrian crossing improvements along Armstrong Boulevard, new bikeways and sidewalks along 2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.



## IMPLEMENTATION NEXT STEPS - PUTTING OUR WHEELS IN MOTION

St. James has identified policy, practice, and program actions to support an active transportation network. These actions include steps St. James can take within the first 100 days of plan adoption, as well as over the next one, three and five years. The City will track progress as the plan is implemented to understand and measure community experience, active transportation use, and community benefits.

# WHY ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MATTERS?

## Equity

Car ownership should not be a requirement for getting around safely and efficiently.

## Environment

Cleaner air and reduced impact on climate.

## Economy

Stimulates local economies through job creation, tourism, and business development

## Health & Wellbeing

Active transportation can improve health.

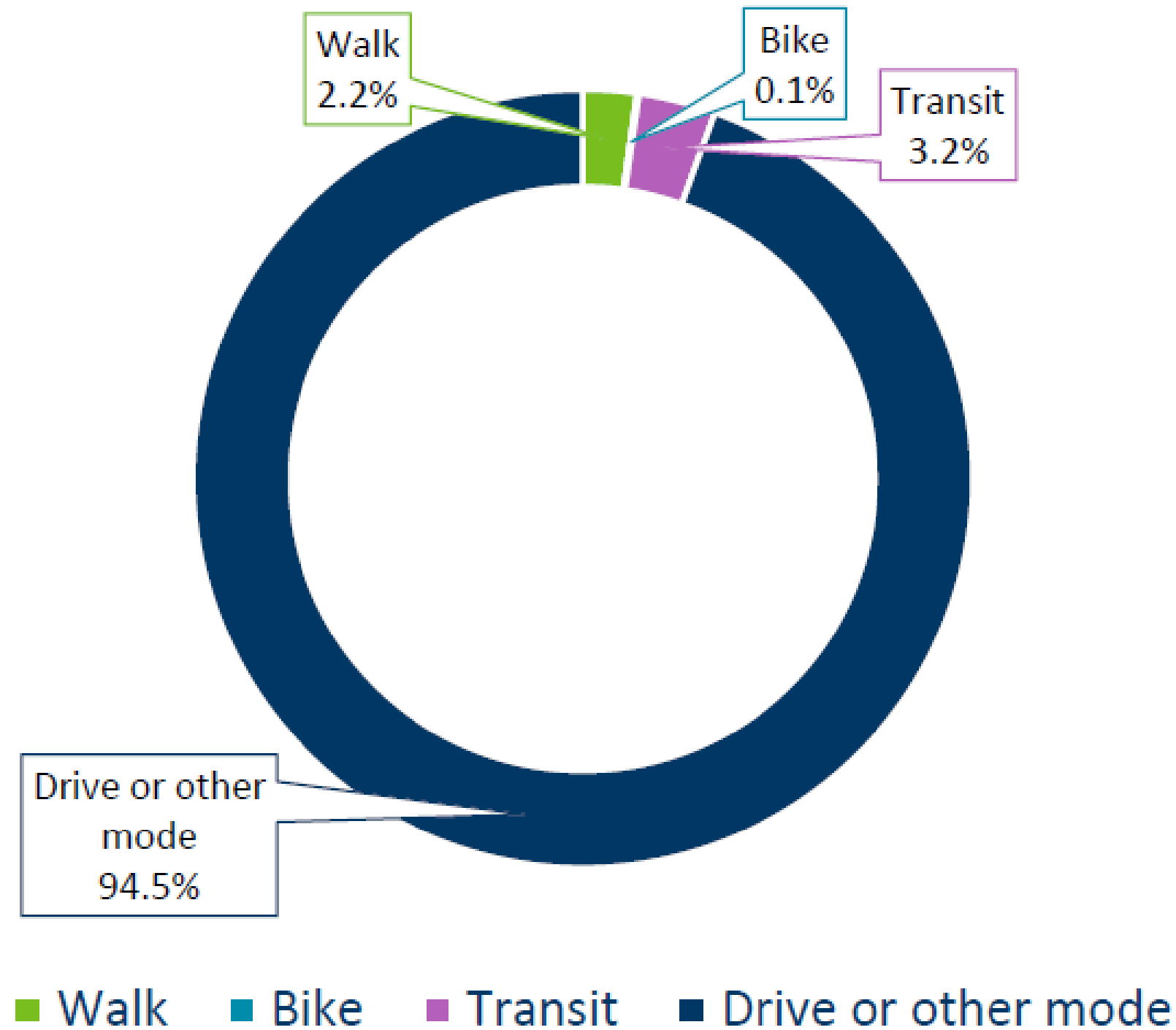
## Social Connection

Provides more opportunities to interact with our neighbors and community.

## Happiness

Researchers have found bicycling to be the happiest form of transportation.

## Commuting Mode Share in St. James



### 2.2% Walk

In St. James, 2.2 percent of commuters walk to work compared to 2.5 percent statewide. *ACS, 2023 5-year estimates*

### 0.1% Bike

In St. James, 0.1 percent of commuters bike to work compared to 0.5 percent statewide. *ACS, 2023 5-year estimates*

### 3.2% Transit

In St. James, 3.2 percent of commuters take transit to work compared to 2.1 percent statewide. *ACS, 2023 5-year estimates*



# SURVEY RESULTS



41 community members contributed to the plan via an online survey.

- **63%** of respondents **walk for exercise or leisure at least once or twice a week**, about **39%** **bike for exercise or leisure at least once or twice a week**.
- On average across all trip purposes, **27% of respondents walk more than once a week** and **19% bike more than once a week**.
- **70%** of respondents **would like to walk, bike** (or ride a bike-like mode) **or use a mobility device around St. James more than once a week**.
- **57%** **would like to walk, bike or roll to a park or green space, but are currently unable to**.
- **Physical health, mental health and fun** are **top reasons** for walking and biking.
- Top concerns are **being worried about being hit by a car** and **weather or climate**.

Residents took the time to write 9 online comments about where they experience problems and the solutions they would like to see.

*Lots of people bike and walk on CR 55, leads to bike trail. Would like separated bike lanes and sidewalk or a pedestrian lane. Fast cars.*

*Grateful for bike trail around the lake and that it reaches south of Highway 4.*

*Armstrong lacks curb cuts south of downtown. People pushing strollers in area*

*Underpass: dangerous, narrow road and obscured views*

*Key connection: Fair Grounds to 13<sup>th</sup> Ave S/Heckman Ct (businesses). Would be safer if sidewalk and/or bike lane on 11<sup>th</sup> St.*

*Broken and uneven sidewalks (3<sup>rd</sup> Ave S btw. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> St)*

*10<sup>th</sup> Ave S is very busy and connects fair grounds and memorial park. Semi-trucks and delivery vehicles. Used by children to access park and by youth fishing.*

*Chaotic biking through downtown roundabouts with kids.*

# LISTENING SESSION

Themes from these conversations include:

## **Safety Concerns Biking Downtown**

Narrow, sidewalk riding, traffic volume

## **Railroad Crossings at Armstrong**

Narrow, sidewalk riding, traffic volume

## **Corridors for Improvement**

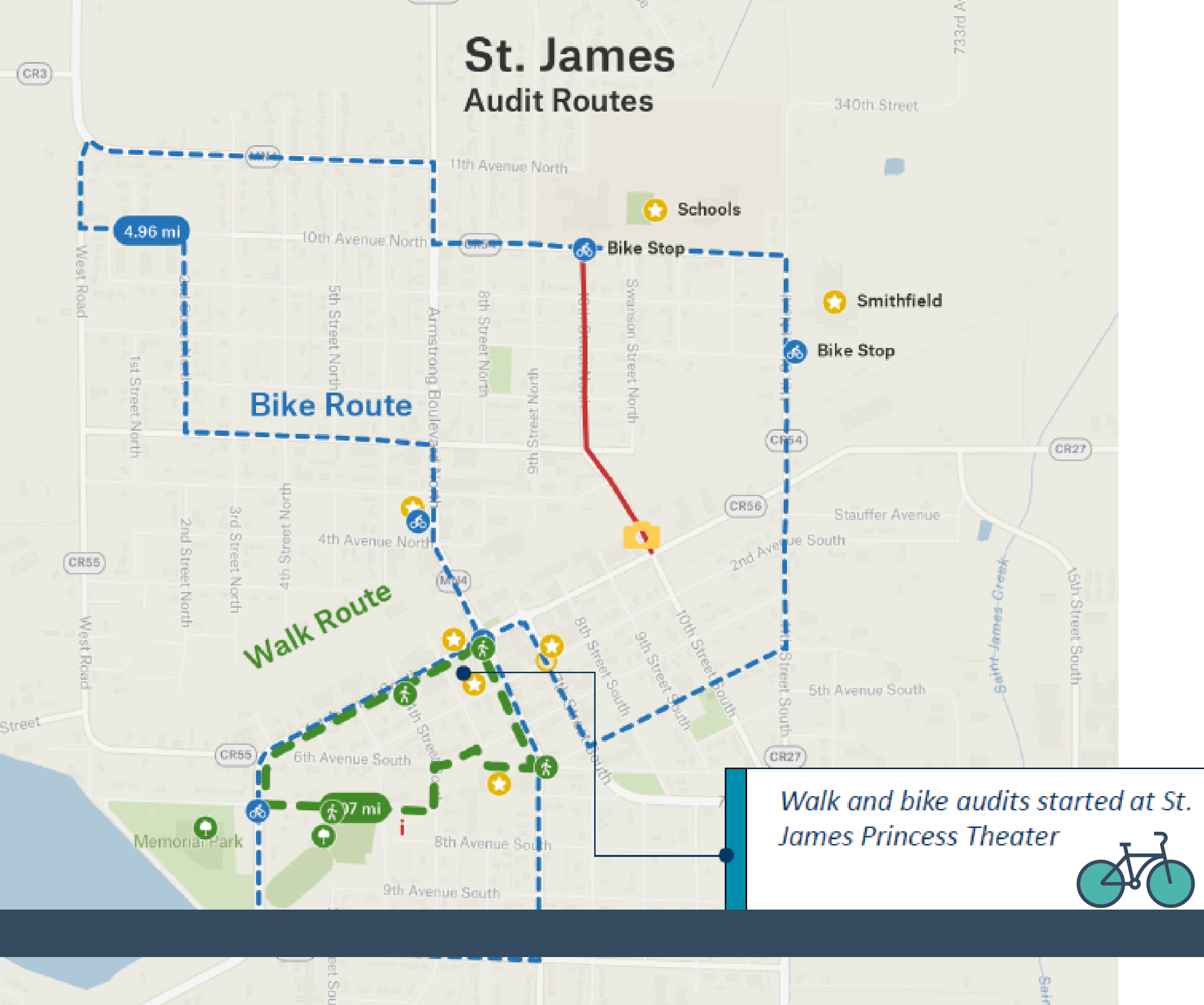
10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South (connections to fields), 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue North (school routes), Armstrong Boulevard (HRA residents)

## **Education and Promotion**

Need for children and adult bicycle education, building from Bike to School Day 2025 success



# St. James Audit Routes



# WALK & BIKE AUDITS

Observed successes and challenges for walking and biking in St. James.

1-mile walk and 4-mile bike ride



# VISION

## PLAN VISION

A safer, more walkable and bikeable St. James where all residents regardless of age, gender, ability, or language can easily access schools, parks, local businesses, and essential services.

## GOALS SUMMARY

- All Ages, Genders, Abilities, & Languages
- Health and Quality of Life
- Sustainable and Resilient
- Economic Empowerment
- Community Driven



# OUR GOALS

- **All Ages, Genders, Abilities, & Languages:** Create a safe, accessible, and appealing transportation network for all residents.
- **Health & Quality of Life:** Promote a healthy active lifestyle for residents and improve community health outcomes through a well-connected sidewalk and trail network.
- **Sustainable and Resilient:** Provide a greater variety of transportation options to reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles and decrease impacts such as noise and pollution.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Support equitable access to economic opportunity through low or no-cost modes of transportation connecting residents and local businesses.
- **Community Driven:** Develop a plan that engages all residents and reflects the diversity of community needs.



# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PRINCIPLES

To provide transportation choice, equity and encourage active trips, routes must be:

## SAFE

*Does the route minimize risk of injury and danger (both traffic and personal safety)?*

## COMFORTABLE

*Does the route appeal to a broad range of age and ability levels and are there user amenities (e.g., places to sit, protection from the weather)?*

## COHERENT

*How easy is it to understand where to go? How to navigate a crossing or an intersection? How connected is the network?*

## DIRECT

*Does the route provide direct and convenient access to destinations?*

## ATTRACTIVE

*Is the route green, well-maintained and celebrate local identity?*

**WHAT CAN WE ACHIEVE IN...**

# **IN 100 DAYS**

- **Confirm Armstrong Boulevard North intersection design and goals for a demonstration project (supported through the MnDOT Active Transportation Planning Assistance Grant).**
- **Develop partnerships with the railroad, Watonwan County, and MnDOT and identify opportunities to improve partner owned and managed roadways.**
- **Continue internal city coordination to understand financing considerations for priority projects.**

# IN 1 YEAR

- **Following the demonstration project, confirm next steps for crossing or corridor improvements. Secure funding and begin design process.**
- **Work with MnDOT District 7/ Region Nine Development Commission to conduct pedestrian and bicycle count studies to understand current travel patterns and impact of improvements.**
- **Engage community in bikeway design potentials along 2nd Avenue South.**
- **Identify design alternatives for 10th Avenue South and secure funding for street reconstruction.**
- **Evaluate and modify the city's winter maintenance policy to enhance clarity, public understanding, and communication channels.**
- **Identify partners and event opportunities to pilot an open streets community event in St. James**

# **IN 3 YEARS**

- **Initiate a city traffic calming program and secure an implementation budget for public works.**
- **Draft and adopt a complete streets policy.**
- **Review and endorse national and state design guidance that fits the context of St. James and the goals of the active transportation network.**
- **Conduct parking study along 2nd Avenue South to identify bikeway goals and design potentials.**
- **Support Safe Routes to School programming through partnerships and funding for events promoting active transportation.**
- **Study alternative street design on 10th Street South below the railroad and confirm funding needs and design feasibility.**
- **Create and adopt an ADA Transition Plan.**

# IN 5 YEARS

- **Following the adoption of a complete streets policy, develop a complete streets checklist to support policy implementation.**
- **Continue to implement ADA accessibility projects to fulfill the St. James ADA Transition Plan.**
- **Identify future bikeway routes building from a bike lane on 2nd Avenue South.**
- **Implement intersection improvements at 10th Avenue South and 1st Street South to better connect any corridor improvements made to 10th Avenue South.**
- **Study and evaluate the feasibility of the identified additional projects and determine project next steps.**

# DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Intersection of Armstrong Blvd N and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave N.

Install temporary curb extensions to provide safer pedestrian crossings for residents.

Identified through public engagement with Park Apartment residents.

Work is funded through the MN Active Transportation Planning Grant.

To be completed in summer of 2026.

