

PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Safer 6th Avenue East: Green Median Proposal



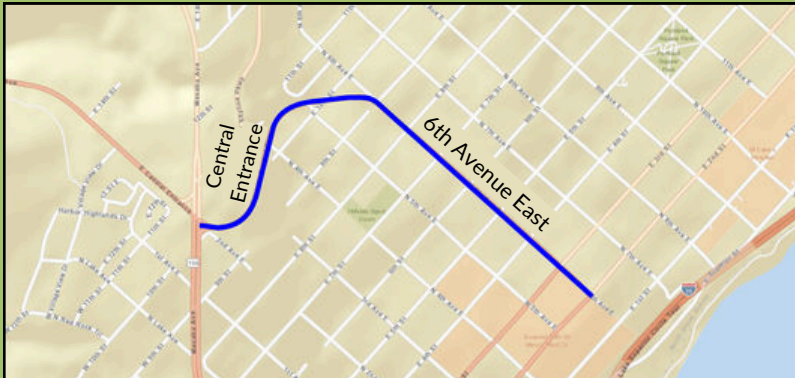
Current Condition

2025 Potential



Project Summary

6th Avenue East divides the Hillside and significantly contributes to health disparities in the neighborhood. Years of community input has led to the City of Duluth beginning a planning process for full reconstruction in the next 7-10 years which is critical to turning this devastating outdated highway into a great place for people. The City begins Phase 1 of this project in summer/fall 2025 with resurfacing, including installation of a median island.



Phase 1 Resurfacing from 2nd Street to Mesaba Avenue aims to provide traffic calming, pedestrian safety enhancements, curb improvements, and an opportunity to test design elements for Phase 2 Full Reconstruction.

Like many historically-redlined communities, Hillsiders have experienced decades of decision-making happening **to** them rather than **with** them. They have expressed a desire for more and improved green spaces, recognizing the numerous benefits, including beautification, traffic calming, and enhanced health and livability.

Individuals living in urban areas with more green space have reported reduced stress levels and improved overall wellbeing compared to those with less green space (White, 2013).

Black and minority ethnic (BME) populations often have lower-quality green spaces, which is a key contributor to poorer overall health. (WHO, 2016). Duluth's Hillside area is composed of roughly 20% BIPOC residents compared to Duluth's average of 11.7% (Minnesota Compass, 2018-2022).



Why A Green Median?

Over 50% of Hillside residents voted to increase tax-dollars for parks improvements in the 2023 Parks Levy. Enhancing the current plans for a road median with greenery will catalyze further investment in neighborhood-wide green space.

60%

would walk, bike, or bus on 6th Avenue East given more green spaces

In 2021, the Hillside neighborhood was surveyed to assess the beliefs, practices, and needs of Hillside residents during the pandemic. 60% of participants* said they would have an increased willingness to walk, bike, or bus along 6th Avenue East given more green spaces.

75%

feel 6th Avenue East is an unwelcoming environment

In the same survey, 75%* found 6th Avenue East to be an unwelcoming environment due to increased noise and lack of public artwork or green spaces.

96%

want safety measures incorporated into street design

70%

want safety measures by way of boulevards and green space

In 2023, Zeitgeist and the City of Duluth released a survey about 6th Avenue East Phase 1 Resurfacing. 96% of survey respondents^y noted a need for safety measures to be implemented, with 70% indicating desire for safety measures by way of boulevards and green space.

In 2014, the city of Superior completed a reconstruction of North Tower Ave, fueled by a growing need to improve mobility in downtown Superior and address a high collision rate. A 12' wide green median was added to the roadway. The project has found great success and support from its citizens, bringing in more business and revitalization (Carlson, 2024).

Before: 2007



After: 2023

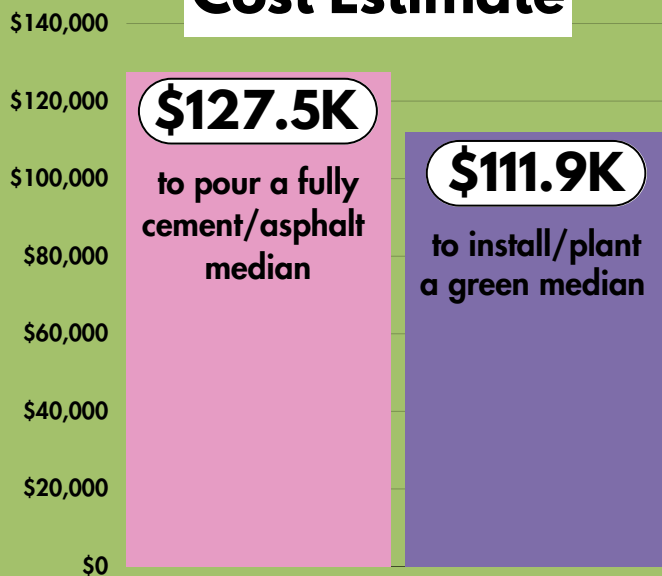


Points of Interest

A 1992-1995 study conducted in Canada and the U.S.A on the effects of greenery and roadway safety found a 5-20% decrease in mid-block accidents following landscape improvements to study streets (Naderi, 2003).

5-20%
decrease in
mid-block
accidents

Cost Estimate



How to Support:

Zeitgeist is committed to facilitating resident-led design to add and improve green spaces, walkability, and overall health for Hillsiders. If you'd like to get involved in supporting these efforts as a green team volunteer, community co-designer, and/or green space advocate, please email Andrea Crouse at andrea@zeitgeistarts.com.

References

- Carlson Chris, City of Superior WI Assistant Public Works Director. "Tower Ave Plantings - Questions about design, install, maintenance." Received by Val Langer, Oct. 23, 2024.
- Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. (2016). "Urban green spaces and health." <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/345751>
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