

## Walking snapshot in Minneapolis

### MORE PEOPLE ARE WALKING OR ROLLING

Reliable data for counting pedestrians in Minneapolis comes from two sources: the U. S. Census Bureau and the City of Minneapolis' annual counting program. The two data sources measure different things: the way people travel to work or school (U.S. Census Bureau) and the number of people walking at select locations throughout the city (City of Minneapolis Count Program). Together, they give us an idea of trends for people walking in Minneapolis. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 3,567 more people walked or rolled to work or school between 2007-2017.<sup>1</sup> Over the same time, the number of people walking or rolling increased by 21% at annually counted city benchmark locations.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1: People are walking more



This figure represents the change between 2007 and 2017.

### SEVERE AND FATAL PEDESTRIAN CRASHES ARE INCREASING

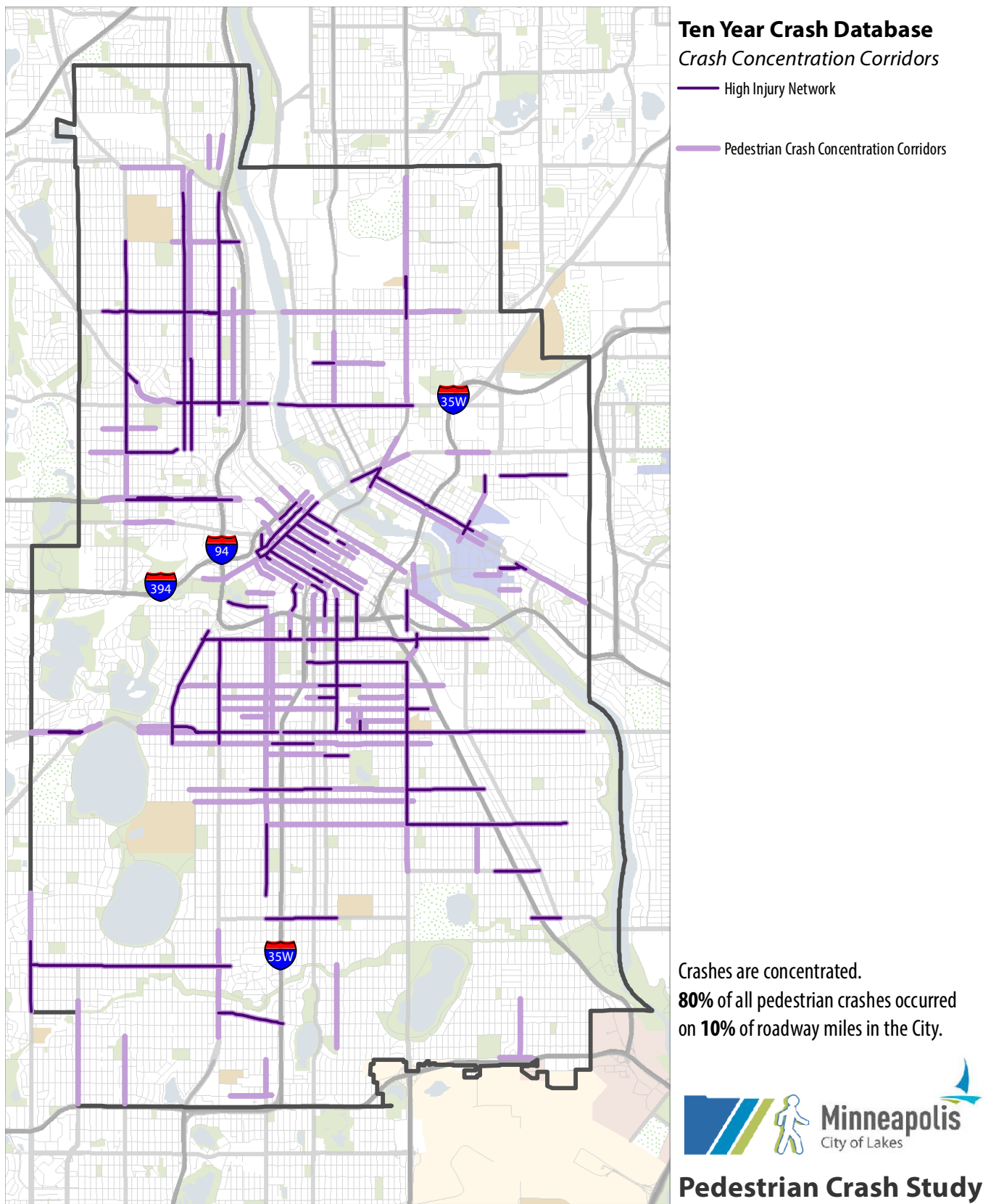
After years of decline, pedestrian injuries and deaths have been rising in recent years in Minneapolis. From 2007 to 2016, a pedestrian was severely injured or killed on Minneapolis streets every 13 days on average. Most of the crashes (80%) involving pedestrians occur on, and are concentrated along, a small number of streets (see Figure 2 on the next page). Pedestrian crashes disproportionately impact lower-income neighborhoods where the majority of residents are people of color.

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable street users; 11% of reported pedestrian crashes lead to a life-altering injury or death.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2012-2016)

<sup>2</sup> [30 annual benchmark locations; Annual Minneapolis Bicyclist and Pedestrian Count data](#)

Figure 2: High Injury Street map

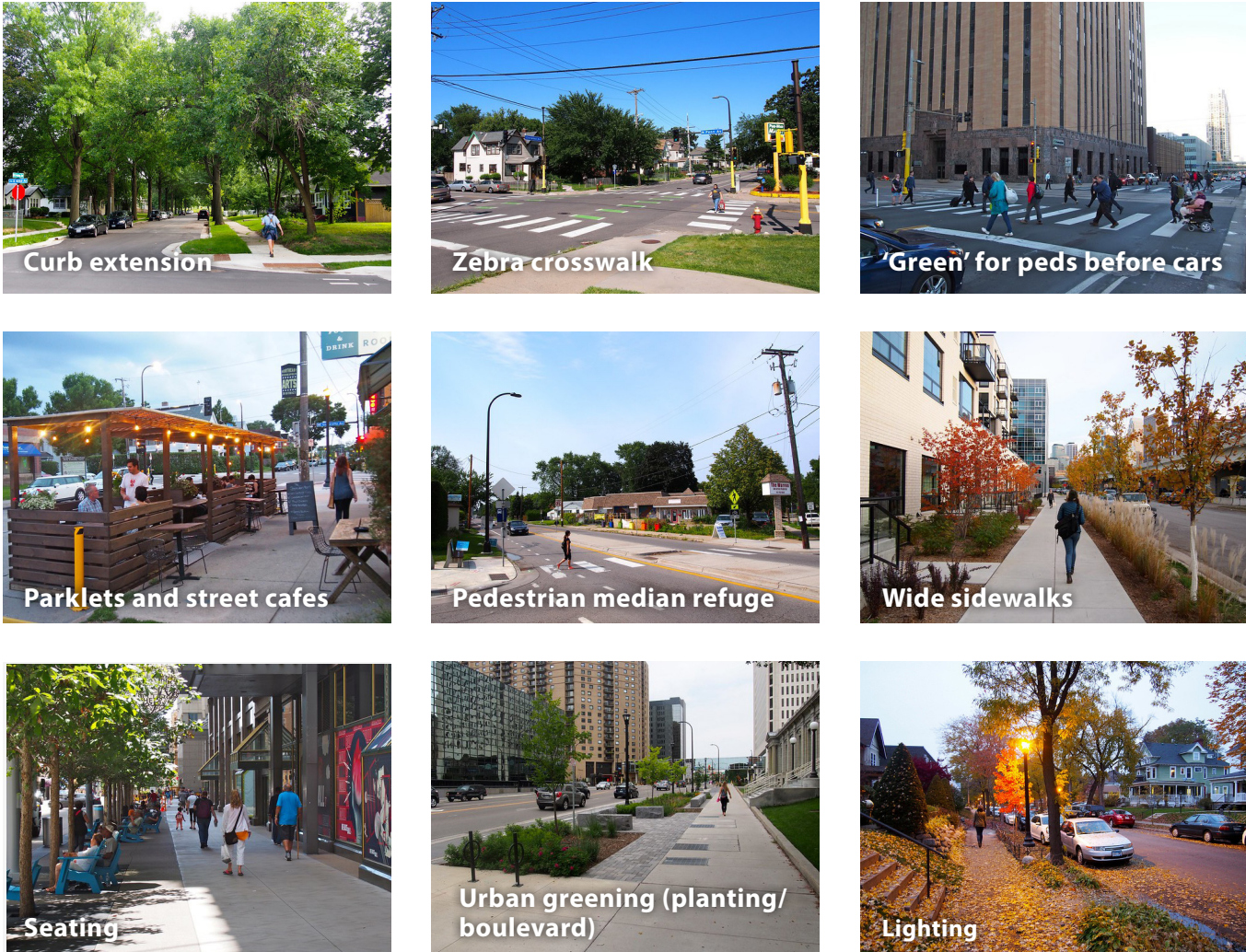


**DESIGNING FOR PEDESTRIANS FIRST**

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on improving pedestrian infrastructure. In 2017, the city upgraded 3,000 crosswalk markings from [parallel line crosswalk](#) to [Minneapolis Zebra crosswalks](#) that will improve the visibility of pedestrian crossings. The city has also implemented, and continues to evaluate the effectiveness of, leading pedestrian signal intervals (LPI) that allows a pedestrian to begin crossing the street before vehicles receive a green light. This ensures that pedestrians are more visible within the crosswalk before vehicles begin moving.

There are multiple ways to improve safety and comfort for those walking and rolling. Curb extensions, sometimes called bumpouts or bulbouts, extend the sidewalk area into the street to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and improve visibility. Wide sidewalks allow people to pass each other comfortably and can also provide space for public realm improvements such as pedestrian lighting, trees, benches or other features that help to buffer pedestrians from moving vehicles and contribute to a walkable environment. Reducing the number of four lane streets, multiple lane one-way streets, and slowing motor vehicle speeds are also important for safety and comfort for people walking, particularly as they cross the street.

**Figure 3: Street design for pedestrians**



## ACTIVATING PUBLIC SPACES

Programming public spaces with events and activities encourages people to be active and demonstrates alternative uses for street space. Minneapolis has many programs oriented to improving the pedestrian environment. One of the more successful programs is Open Streets. Open Streets is a series of events when a street is closed to vehicular traffic for part of the day (typically 6 hours) and opened up to those walking and bicycling; street vendors are out, activities like yoga and dancing are organized, and there are spots with live music and other activities. Open Streets focuses on promoting healthy living, sustainable transportation, civic pride and discovering local businesses. The event started in 2011 with one event and an estimated 5,000 attendees. It has since expanded to 7 or 8 events annually, with an estimated 103,500 attendees in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Parklets and street cafés are other programs that activate streets through partnerships with businesses and community organizations. Parklets provide amenities like seating, plantings, bike parking and public space for people to linger and enjoy through the conversion of on-street parking spaces. The City currently operates three public parklets, and organizations or businesses can also apply to host a parklet. The street café program is offered to local businesses to expand their outdoor seating areas into the street. A survey from 2017 showed that all businesses that hosted parklets would recommend hosting a parklet to another business, and they agreed that the parklet contributed to increased sales and foot traffic. Both hosts and users agreed that the parklet improved the streetscape and enhanced neighborhood identity.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 4: Parklet



Figure 5: Open Streets event



<sup>3</sup> Our Streets Minneapolis.

<sup>4</sup> City of Minneapolis Parklet Program Survey (2017).