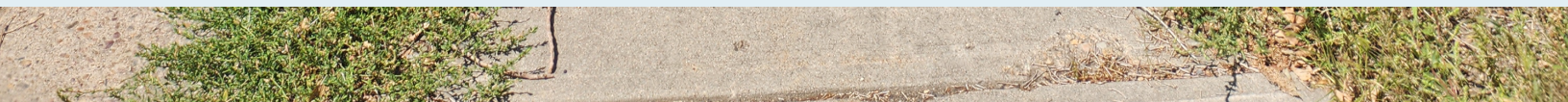




# City of Boulder

Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project  
2023 Community Engagement Summary





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## Summary

Community engagement for the Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project began in late July 2023. The purpose of community engagement is to ensure users of Iris Avenue have an opportunity to shape the future of this important street. This first phase of engagement (summer through winter 2023) was composed of three “sprints.” Sprint 1 focused on informing the public about the project and seeking initial input; Sprint 2 aimed to provide new experiences, like guided walking and biking tours to gain different perspectives on the corridor; and Sprint 3 shared what city staff has learned and the next steps for how the feedback collected will inform the project.

Staff thank the community for sharing what is working and what needs improvement to help inform the design process that will begin in early 2024.

Themes heard from the 2023 community engagement sprint activities are:

- East-west travel is important, and drivers appreciate Iris Avenue as a convenient and reliable route across the city.
- People also want Iris Avenue to provide convenient and safe walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit routes.
- Existing facilities do not facilitate comfortable bicycle travel along Iris Avenue. Bike lanes are currently narrow and separated from vehicle traffic only by a painted stripe.
- Delivery, transit, waste management and other vehicles stop in-lane, blocking the bike and right-side travel lanes.
- Neighbors want to maintain the character of their neighborhoods, which they see as providing safer, more comfortable alternatives for walking, rolling, and biking than arterial streets like Iris Avenue, and are concerned that changes to Iris Avenue could create traffic diversion onto nearby streets.
- Sidewalks could be improved to provide comfort, safety, and attractive walking conditions - they are currently too narrow, winding, sloping, bumpy, and often blocked by overgrown landscaping.
- Transit service is infrequent, and many transit stops are not accessible and lack shelters, benches, and trash cans.
- Crossing Iris Avenue safely and conveniently is a priority for people of all ages and abilities traveling to school, work, for errands, and for recreation – but today some see it as a barrier to getting where they want to go.
- Vehicles travel at high speeds creating unsafe conditions and excessive street noise.
- Safer neighborhood and business access is essential.
- Drivers feel unsafe turning onto and off Iris Avenue and feel they’re more likely to crash with oncoming traffic when doing so.
- Residents are concerned changes will impact emergency evacuation and response.
- Community members want attractive facilities and opportunities for placemaking.
- Better wayfinding and help navigating to local and regional destinations is desired.
- Roadway pavement conditions could be improved.





Figure 1 Community engagement highlights

Over 1,600 people were engaged through 2023. People participated in online questionnaires and in-person contacts at tabling, pop-up, and other community events. Guided walk and bike tours provided opportunities to get more detailed feedback from participants and provide context to quantitative data collected by the technical team. Together, this qualitative and quantitative data will

inform preliminary design alternatives. This first round of engagement culminated in an Open House and three Walks in the Park where the project team shared learnings and provided another chance for community members to offer feedback before city staff begin the preliminary design phase of the project.

Future community engagement activities to support remaining phases of the project process are under development. Sprint 4 in winter (Q1) of 2024 will focus on education and information sharing about City of Boulder transportation goals and professional best practices for reaching those goals. Sprint 5 in spring 2024 will provide preliminary design options to the community for feedback. Sprint 6 in summer 2024 will provide a recommended design through the Community and Environmental Assessment Process (CEAP) as outlined in Figure 2.

A CEAP is a formal review of the project conceptual designs, including environmental, social, and fiscal impacts, to select a recommendation for construction. The CEAP balances community goals with the policies outlined in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, departmental master plans, and sub-community or area plans (there are no sub-community or area plans for the Iris Avenue project area). The CEAP is presented at two public hearings, one to the city’s Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), who are asked to make a recommendation to City Council, and one to City Council, who are asked to approve the CEAP.

Figure 2 Community and Environmental Assessment Process for Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project

### Community Engagement Purpose, Goals, and Approach

The purpose of community engagement for this project is to ensure that users of Iris Avenue have an opportunity to shape the future of this important street. Community Engagement Goals include:

1. Facilitate appropriate engagement that is guided by the city’s [Public Engagement Framework](#), [Racial Equity Plan](#), and [Language Access Plan](#).
2. Ensure that engagement includes and reflects the lived experiences and voices of the range of travelers on Iris Avenue including the needs and voices of the most vulnerable.
3. Ensure that project improvements reflect the needs of the users of the street, the local neighborhood stakeholders, and the most vulnerable people who live, work and/or travel on the corridor; and when improvements do not reflect their input, the reasoning is clearly explained.



4. Clearly communicate why Iris Avenue was prioritized, the importance of safer, connected, and more comfortable streets, and project tradeoffs to the public, key stakeholders, and decision makers.
5. Engage key corridor businesses, community assets, group homes, and agencies early and often throughout the project.
6. Build trust and enduring relationships during 2023 to guide the design process in 2024.

To reach these goals, staff began the community engagement process for the project with three sprints to hear from as many users of the street as possible. Each sprint informed the next, allowing the project team to be flexible and adapt to the needs and desires of the community.

## Sprint Details

### Sprint 1: July—September

Community engagement kicked off in late July with a press release, webpage, listening sessions and questionnaire. The goal of this first sprint was to inform the public about the project, gather general feedback, and assess concerns and priorities for improving travel along and across Iris Avenue. The reach and impact are summarized below:

- 7/28 Webpage and press release
  - 2 media outlets picked up.
- 7/28- 9/20 Be Heard Boulder Questionnaire 1: 772 engaged
- 8/7 Inside Boulder News segment
- 8/18 Business outreach to Willow Springs Shopping Center and shops at 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Iris Ave: 30 reached<sup>1</sup>, 25 informed<sup>2</sup>, 5 engaged<sup>3</sup>
- 8/18-9/29 Listening sessions: conversations with Community Cycles, Center for People with Disabilities, Boulder Transportation Connections/Boulder Chamber of Commerce, SmartHome-Imagine!

The questionnaire asked for general feedback and for suggestions on who the project team should be sure to include in engagement. This helped the team shape future sprints and activities to reach the suggested stakeholders.

To promote the questionnaire and project, staff participated in pop-ups and tabling at existing events where they handed out flyers, fact sheets, and gathered responses on printed questionnaires:

- 8/1 National Night Out: 10 informed
- 8/9 Red Oak Park Bike Giveaway: flyers available, no staff
- 8/10 What's Up Boulder: 50 reached, 25 informed, 25 engaged
- 8/15 Columbine Back to School Day: 50 reached, 47 informed, 3 engaged
- 8/30 Foothill Back to School Night: 30 informed
- 8/31 CU Bike Fest: 20 informed
- 8/17 RTD Stop (Iris Avenue at Broadway) Pop-up: 40 reached, 25 informed, 15 engaged
- 8/18 Safeway (Iris Avenue at 28th Street) Pop-up: 25 informed

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<sup>1</sup> Reached: aware of the project

<sup>2</sup> Informed: provided flyer or other project materials

<sup>3</sup> Engaged: provided feedback/comments



- 9/6 Elmer’s Two Mile Pop-up: 50 reached, 20 informed, 30 engaged



Figure 3 Sprint 1 Community engagement activities

### Sprint 2: September—October

The focus of Sprint 2 was to host and promote experiential activities along and near the project area. These experiences of walking, biking, playing, and communing on and near Iris Avenue provided staff opportunities to gather observational data and participant feedback in real time. They also allowed participants to experience the corridor in different ways and learn about the current and potential uses of the street.

- Promotion of Experiential Activities
  - 9/13 Growing Gardens pop-up: 40 reached, 25 informed, 15 engaged
  - 9/14 FUNKtion at Boulder Junction: 5 informed
- Experiential Activities
  - 9/16 Fall Transportation Safety Fair: 25 engaged
  - 9/19 Guided Walking Tour: 25 engaged
  - 9/21: Boulder Housing Partners and Neighbors Iris-Hawthorn Block Party: 45 reached, 30 informed, 15 engaged
  - 9/27: Community Cycles Advocacy Committee Guided Bike Ride: 32 engaged
  - 9/28: Center for People with Disabilities & City of Boulder Accessible Roll and Stroll: 2 engaged
  - 9/28: Growing Up Boulder Youth-led Walk: 26 engaged





Figure 4 Accessible roll and stroll

### Sprint 3: October—December

The purpose of Sprint 3 was to share what the project team heard through 2023 and close the feedback loop with those who participated in prior sprints. The themes, community priorities and concerns, and opportunities for improvement heard from all engagement activities and events to date were shared with the public along with another opportunity for input. This sprint also informed the public about how feedback will be used in the project's next steps, and what to expect from the project team in the coming months. Engagement activities were scheduled to be mindful of winter holidays.

- 10/11: Press release
  - 2 media outlets picked up
- 10/24: In-person Open House: 103 engaged
- 10/24- 11/8: Virtual Open House: 162 engaged
- 11/17: Webpage updates
- 12/2, 12/9, 12/16: Walks in the Park staff office hours: 28 engaged (12/2), 32 engaged (12/9)
- 12/18: Summary report



Figure 5 Open House

## Main Themes from 2023 Engagement

The major themes heard throughout engagement are summarized here:

- **Multi-modal Connectivity**
  - Existing facilities do not facilitate comfortable bicycle travel along Iris Avenue. Bike lanes are currently narrow and separated from vehicle traffic only by a painted stripe.
  - Delivery, transit, waste management and other vehicles stop in-lane, blocking the bike and right-side travel lanes.
- **Speed/Noise**
  - Vehicles travel at high speeds creating unsafe conditions and excessive street noise.
- **East/West Travel**
  - East-west travel is important, and drivers appreciate Iris Avenue as a convenient and reliable route across the city.
  - Residents are concerned changes will impact emergency evacuation and response.
  - People also want Iris Avenue to provide convenient and safe walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit routes.
- **Crossings**
  - Crossing Iris Avenue safely and conveniently is a priority for people of all ages and abilities traveling to school, work, for errands, and for recreation – but today some see it as a barrier to getting where they want to go.
- **Sidewalks**
  - Sidewalks could be improved to provide comfort, safety, and attractive walking conditions -they are currently too narrow, winding, sloping, bumpy, and often blocked by overgrown landscaping.
- **Neighborhood Streets**
  - Neighbors want to maintain the character of their neighborhoods, which they see as providing safer, more comfortable alternatives for walking, rolling, and biking than arterial streets like Iris Avenue, and are concerned that changes to Iris Avenue could create traffic diversion onto nearby residential streets.
- **Side Street Access**
  - Safer neighborhood and business access is essential.
  - Drivers feel unsafe turning onto and off Iris Avenue and feel they're more likely to crash with intersecting or oncoming traffic or being hit by traffic approaching from behind when doing so.
- **Aesthetics**
  - Community members want attractive facilities and opportunities for placemaking.
- **Navigation**
  - Better multi-modal wayfinding and help navigating to local and regional destinations is desired.
- **Road Conditions**
  - Roadway pavement conditions could be improved.
- **Transit**
  - Transit service is infrequent, and many transit stops are not accessible and lack shelters, benches, and trash cans.

Themes heard during each major engagement activity are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Themes heard during each major engagement activity.

Activity	Theme										
	Multi-Modal Connectivity	Speed/Noise	East/West Travel	Crossings	Sidewalks	Neighborhood Streets	Side Street Access	Aesthetics	Navigation	Road Conditions	Transit
Listening Sessions											
Questionnaire											
Pop-ups											
Tabling Events											
Youth Engagement											
Walk Tour											
Bike Tour											
Accessible Roll and Stroll											
Open House											
Virtual Open House											
Walks in the Park											

The following sections provide a summary of each engagement activity and themes of the feedback gathered.



## Sprint 1- Project Announcement and Listening Tour

### Listening Sessions

In August and September 2023, staff met with several groups of key stakeholders including Community Cycles, Center for People with Disabilities, Boulder Chamber/Boulder Transportation Connections, and SmartHome-Imagine! The purpose of these listening sessions was to build relationships with stakeholders, understand the experiences of each group's members/clients, and receive advice for inclusive, transparent, and meaningful engagement. Comments heard from these sessions have been summarized here:

Some groups expressed a desire for the city to consider the future use of the corridor and not only present-day use. They see the importance and utility of Iris Avenue as an east-west corridor and want to understand how lane reconfigurations could potentially affect traffic and improve the safety of drivers and other road users. Some suggested traffic calming on nearby residential streets to prevent neighborhood cut-through traffic and to enhance the beauty of areas along and around Iris Avenue. Transit connectivity and shopping area access were also mentioned as priorities for these groups and their members.

Crossing improvements, sidewalk and bus stop conditions, and greenway connections are paramount for many of these groups, including the maintenance of landscaping and snow and ice removal. Several conversations mentioned clients and members who see Kalmia Avenue, Glenwood Drive, Grape Avenue, Hawthorn Avenue, and other side streets as more attractive, safer, and more pleasant biking and walking routes and would like better wayfinding and access to those streets from Iris Avenue and nearby routes.

City staff was asked to consider barriers to mobility for those with disabilities, including pavement conditions, crossing opportunities, time duration, and signals, as well as the physical separation of modes to prevent collisions and more clearly direct users to their designated spaces. Transitions from sidewalk to curb to street crossing, or those from sidewalks to paths are not always clearly marked or simple to navigate currently, both for people biking and those with disabilities who are walking and rolling.

Using what they learned from these listening sessions, including the comments above and suggestions for engaging diverse communities, staff continued their Sprint 1 activities to hear more about individual experiences of Iris Avenue and began designing Sprint 2 activities.



Figure 6 Pop-up at Iris Avenue and Broadway

### Business Outreach

In August, staff knocked on the door of each business in the Willows Springs and Safeway Shopping Centers to announce the project launch and hear from the business community. They spoke with employees, owners, and operators of businesses and left project information with those they did and did not speak with directly. Businesses revealed mixed feelings about the existing conditions of travel on Iris Avenue. Some noted the street works well for their purposes of commuting to and from work by car while others expressed concern about unsafe vehicle turning behaviors onto and off of Iris Avenue. The proximity of their driveway access to 28<sup>th</sup> Street was also mentioned as a source of stress for them and their customers. Finally, some employees noted that infrequent bus service along Iris Avenue made commuting to work and school difficult.

### Questionnaire, Pop-ups, and Tabling Events

During August and September, staff tabled at existing events like back-to-school days and community festivals, and popped up at busy activity centers like Safeway, the intersection of Iris Avenue at Broadway, Elmer’s Two Mile Park, and RTD stops. Staff asked community members about their experiences on Iris Avenue and promoted an online questionnaire that was open from July 28-Sept. 9. The questionnaire asked respondents about their travel mode along and across Iris Avenue, what is important to them, and what their general thoughts on Iris Avenue are. Conversations at pop-ups and tabling events asked these same questions with a paper version of the online questionnaire.

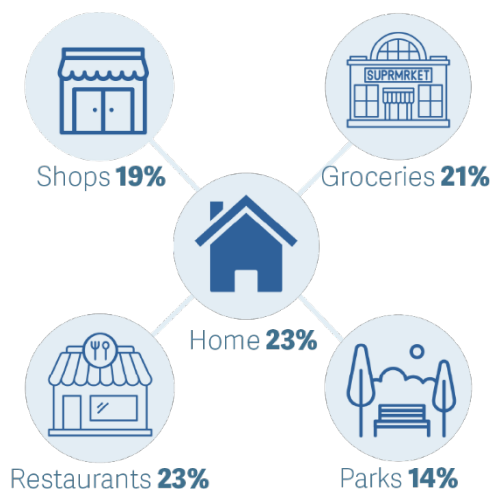


Figure 7 Top destinations for Iris Avenue users

Respondents to the questionnaire indicated they travel on and across Iris Avenue for a variety of reasons. The most common destinations people connect to are home, restaurants, grocery stores, shops, and parks as shown in Figure 7. Other destinations included work, school, childcare, health services, community services, community gardens, and recreation center.

About half of respondents reach their activities by driving alone (46%) and more than half do so by more than one mode of travel (drive, bus, bike, scooter, walk, and/or roll) as shown in Figure 8.

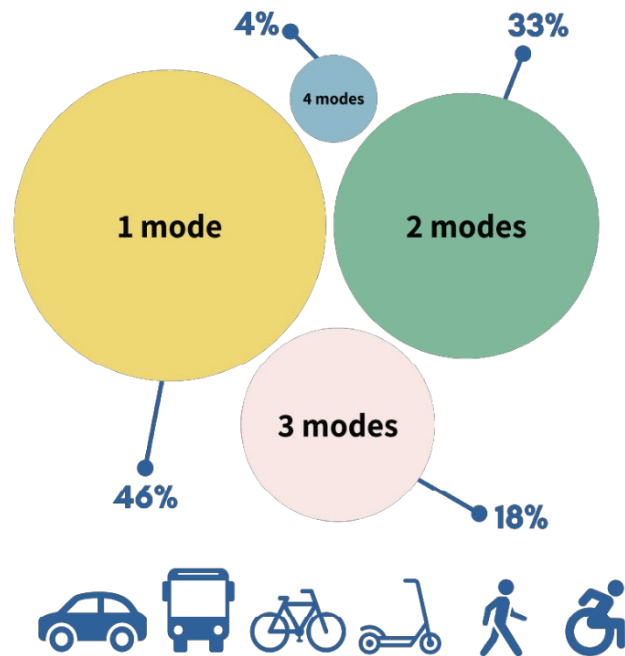


Figure 8 Number of travel modes used by Iris Avenue travelers

### Sprint 1 Themes

An analysis of all comments received from these [Sprint 1](#) activities revealed 10 major themes. These are listed here in no particular order:

1. **People want connectivity and safety for walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit.**
  - Paths are disjointed and don't connect across and parallel to Iris Avenue in a logical way.
  - People avoid biking and walking on Iris Avenue now and find alternate routes instead, even though it is the most direct east-west route.
  - There is not enough space on the street in current bike lanes for people biking or on the sidewalks for people walking/rolling.
2. **Vehicles travel at high speeds and the street is noisy.**
  - Iris Avenue feels and sounds like a highway in a residential area, spewing fumes, dirt, and debris onto bike lanes, sidewalks, and neighboring properties.
  - Drivers of vehicles routinely speed along Iris Avenue, while making turns onto side streets, and don't always stop for people in crossings.
  - Straight and wide configuration of the street encourages speeding and drag racing at night.
3. **East-West travel is important.**
  - Iris Avenue is the most convenient east-west corridor in North Boulder.
  - Many people use the street to commute in and out of Boulder.



- Residents along Iris Avenue and points west value Iris Avenue as a thoroughfare to destinations along 28<sup>th</sup> Street and points east.
  - Emergency Evacuation and Management are a priority for residents, particularly those living west of Broadway.
- 4. Crossing Iris Avenue safely and conveniently is a priority.**
- Current crossings are heavily used and appreciated by people who bike, walk/roll, and take transit, particularly 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Elmer's Two mile.
  - Crossings can be improved by providing better ADA accessibility, longer crossing times, more space for bikes and pedestrians on either end of the crossing, and more visibility for people in the crosswalk (flashing lights or full traffic signal).



*Figure 9 Pop-up at Elmer's Two Mile path behind Safeway Shopping Center*

- 5. Sidewalks could be improved.**
- Sidewalks are narrow, uneven, bumpy, and winding.
  - Between Broadway and 26<sup>th</sup> Street, sidewalks can get overly close to the street-with fast moving vehicles, making pedestrians feel unsafe.
  - People ride bikes on the sidewalks which feels unsafe for both bike riders and pedestrians.
  - Landscaping is often overgrown onto the sidewalks, further narrowing them.
- 6. Neighbors want to maintain the safety and character of nearby streets.**
- Residents are concerned with cut-through traffic from Iris Avenue and other busy streets like 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>. They worry that calming measures on Iris Ave would divert more traffic onto neighborhood streets.

- Neighboring and parallel streets (like Kalmia Avenue and Hawthorn Avenue) are currently quiet, low-traffic and ideal for biking and walking alternatives to Iris Avenue.
- 7. Safer neighborhood and business access is essential.**
    - Residents on Iris Avenue find it difficult to get out of and into their driveways.
    - Turning on and off Iris Avenue feels unsafe with impeded sightlines and fast-moving traffic.
    - Left turns are especially difficult with four lanes of fast-moving traffic.
    - Accessing businesses at Willow Springs and Safeway Shopping Centers is confusing and stressful due to fast-moving traffic, slip lanes from Safeway, and poor sightlines
  - 8. People want placemaking and attractive facilities**
    - Trees and landscaping are desired. People enjoy the landscaped and buffered portions of Iris Avenue much more than the areas where the sidewalk is adjacent to traffic.
    - The North-South connections across Iris Avenue are viewed as pleasant and attractive. People desire such qualities along Iris Avenue as well.
    - People want to walk and bike along Iris Avenue for pleasure and to reach amenities and services. They want it to be pleasant and inviting to do so.
  - 9. Road conditions could improve.**
    - People pointed out potholes and deteriorated pavement for both drivers and cyclists.
  - 10. Access to transit needs improvement.**
    - Crossings between transit stops are missing, particularly in the stretch between 25<sup>th</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street- leaving bus riders to run across Iris Avenue with no crosswalk or signal.
    - Transit service along Iris Avenue is infrequent and doesn't provide a convenient alternative to driving downtown or to destinations along 28th Street.

## Sprint 2- Experiential Activities

### Fall Transportation Safety Fair

In partnership with community partners from Boulder Community Health, Boulder Valley School District, Boulder Transportation Connections/Boulder Chamber, and Community Cycles, city staff hosted a Fall Transportation Safety Fair at North Boulder Recreation Center. Boulder Police Department hosted a bicycle skills course, Boulder Community Health provided free helmets and fittings, and staff were present to collect feedback from adult and child participants. Participants noted an appreciation for the crossing at 15th Street and expressed support for upcoming enhancements to the existing crossing. Many people mentioned using 19<sup>th</sup> Street and 26<sup>th</sup> Street for bicycling with their kids and that crossings of Iris Avenue do not feel safe. Several participants noted that the green conflict markings and



Figure 10 City of Boulder staff member talks to a child at the Fall Transportation Safety Fair



traffic calming on 26<sup>th</sup> Street has helped make bicycling feel safer and more comfortable and some felt that those changes have made drivers more aware of people on bikes.

Most participants commented that they do not feel safe cycling along Iris Avenue as a family, and avoid doing so, but do often cross Iris Avenue as a family and want safer crossings for children commuting to school. Many people who walk along and across Iris Avenue expressed a desire for more pedestrian wayfinding signage to help people navigate to popular destinations. Lastly, a few participants mentioned a desire to bring together people who drive and those who bike for a conversation to build relationships and common understanding.

### Boulder Housing Partners and Neighbors Iris-Hawthorn Block Party



Figure 11 Youth engagement at Iris-Hawthorn Block Party

Boulder Housing Partners hosted a block party for the Iris-Hawthorn property and surrounding neighborhoods. Community partners from Boulder Public Library, Grupos de Lucha, Growing Up Boulder, and Women’s Wilderness were present to share resources and provide activities for families. Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project staff talked with residents and neighbors about their experiences using Iris Avenue. Residents expressed concern with high vehicle speeds on Iris Avenue, on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Hawthorn Avenue. One resident referred to Hawthorn as a barrier between the two sides of the

neighborhood and said they don’t feel safe allowing children to cross on their own. Some residents expressed a desire for better navigation and wayfinding from Growing Gardens to Iris Avenue and along and near Elmer’s Two Mile path. Attendees mentioned avoiding Iris Avenue while walking and biking, particularly accompanied by children, and that the sidewalks are winding, bumpy, and cracked, discouraging them from walking to the Safeway Shopping Center.



## Walk Audit

Made2Walk, a [Boulder Walks](#) partner, conducted a walk audit<sup>4</sup> of the Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project corridor to assess the pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort of the project area. The walk audit analyzed the street from the pedestrian perspective and provided context for comments received during the Guided Walking Tour and Accessible Roll and Stroll.



Figure 12 Image of sidewalk along Iris Avenue

The main takeaways from the walk audit were:

- Sidewalk widths vary greatly along the corridor from about 4 to 8 feet depending on location.
- Sidewalks are very narrow in some areas.
- Bus stops are not adequate.
- There is an opportunity for improved pedestrian-scale lighting.
- There is a need for trimmed trees and hedges to expand the space pedestrians can use.
- A lack of signage and wayfinding makes it difficult for pedestrians to connect to other streets and paths
- Cracks, potholes, and manholes in sidewalk, ramps, and crosswalks create tripping hazards
- Curb cut ramps are not directional
- Tactile surfaces in curb cut ramps are often cracked or otherwise degraded
- Bikes ride on the sidewalk and impede safe travel of pedestrians
- Driveways engulf adjacent sidewalks, slanting the sidewalks and creating hazards for pedestrians
- Trash cans and other items block the sidewalks

The full Walk Audit can be found in [Appendix A](#).

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<sup>4</sup> A walk audit is an assessment of pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort of a particular area (America Walks, How to Conduct a Walk Audit in Your Community, <https://americawalks.org/how-to-conduct-a-walk-audit-in-your-community-quick-video-guide-for-assessing-your-neighborhood-walkability/>).

### Guided Walking Tour

Nearby residents, including children, and Transportation Advisory Board members (past and present) walked from the Boulder County Offices near Broadway to 19<sup>th</sup> Street and back, observing and noting the pedestrian experience. Residents noted that Iris Avenue does not feel like a safe corridor to walk alongside, preferring the residential parallel streets. Most participants mentioned they cross Iris Avenue frequently by walking and feel it is unsafe for students crossing it when walking to and from school<sup>5</sup>.

Participants also noted:

- uneven, winding, bumpy, and cracked sidewalks,
- issues with vehicles pulling far into crossings to gain better sightlines of oncoming vehicle traffic,
- lack of landscaping maintenance,
- a lack of adequate crossings and crossing time,
- and a feeling of being trapped between loud, speeding vehicles and tall fences and walls while walking.



Figure 13 Guided Walking Tour participants

### Accessible Roll and Stroll

During the Accessible Roll and Stroll with city partners from the Center for People with Disabilities, participants noted similar issues and pointed to a lack of consistency with crossings, mainly the location and type of pedestrian push buttons as well as with direction, texture, and size of curb ramps. Participants also expressed concerns about micromobility devices, like electric scooters and bikes, sharing paths and sidewalks with pedestrians.



Figure 14 Accessible Roll and Stroll

### Guided Biking Tour

In partnership with Community Cycles, staff hosted a guided biking tour of Iris Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods. To demonstrate parallel bicycle routes and Iris Avenue crossings, much of the tour took place on Kalmia Avenue, Hawthorn Avenue, Grape Avenue, 19<sup>th</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Street, 15<sup>th</sup> Street, and 16<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Iris Avenue is listed as part of the walksheds for both Foothill and Columbine Elementary schools by Boulder Valley School District <https://www.bvsvd.org/departments/transportation/bvsvd-safe-routes-to-school/school-travel-maps/foothill-transportation-resources>



Street. Participants noted the lack of connectivity across Iris Avenue and inadequate bicycle facilities on Iris Avenue. Many participants mentioned using parallel routes to avoid Iris Avenue while biking, but a lack of available safe crossings of Broadway and 19<sup>th</sup> Street forces many cyclists to follow a circuitous route. Participants expressed general support for the crossings at 15<sup>th</sup> Street, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Elmer's Two Mile and a desire for more safe crossings as well as further improvements to existing crossings.

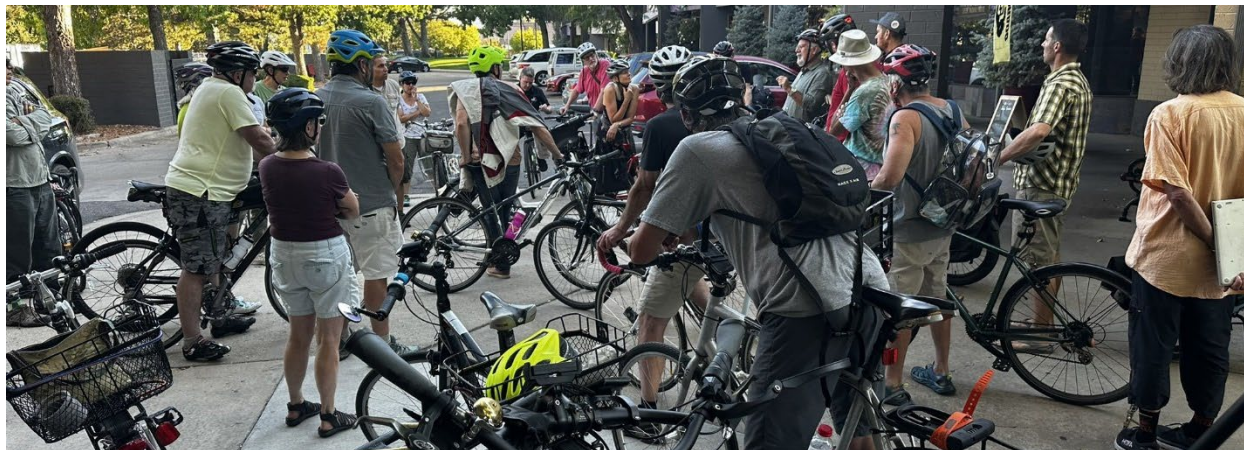


Figure 15 Guided Biking Tour

### Children and Youth Engagement

In September, Growing Up Boulder (GUB), a City of Boulder partner, partnered with two Boulder Housing Partners home communities: the Iris Hawthorn Home Community and the Glen Willow Home Community to engage youth about Iris Avenue. Youth engagement goals were to 1) ask children, youth (and their caregivers/other adults, if present) how they travel along Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28th Street and 2) what their experiences have been like. Growing Up Boulder facilitated two events: the first was embedded in a “block party” at Iris Hawthorn home community and the second was a PhotoVoice engagement using red and green frames along Iris Avenue with Glen Willow home community children and youth. GUB staff engaged with 16 children and youth ages 5- 18, six caregivers, and two adults.



Figure 16 Youth engagement by Growing Up Boulder

Children and youth (and caregivers at the Iris Hawthorn site and YSI staff in the case of the Glen Willow site) view Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28th Street as a major east-west street that requires improvements to meet the City's project goals of making it safe, comfortable, and connected. Overall, young people and their caregivers/staff feel that Iris Avenue is car-dominated and not friendly to children, youth, and non-car users. Safety is the greatest concern while using the Iris Avenue Corridor—as a driver, passenger, walker, biker, and scooter/skateboarder.

The four main categories regarding safety were identified as speed, pedestrian crossing, (not enough) space, and maintenance. GUB collected resident data on current modes of travel on the corridor and asked people about their experiences using the road, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Respondents indicated



traveling most often along Iris Avenue by car or bike. They traveled equally by scooter/skateboard, walking, and by (YSI program) van. Traveling by bus was the least often used mode of transportation.

## The Primary Concern is **Safety**



### **speed**

*"Broadway and Iris is a really busy intersection and it's scary!"*



### **pedestrian crossing**

*"Cars don't stop for you when you are crossing... and we don't jaywalk or anything!"*



### **space (not enough)**

*"The bus stop on the north side of Iris is built too close to the road. You have to be really careful when you go in there... so you don't get hit."*



### **maintenance**

*"The sidewalks are cracked and uneven and we trip or fall and lose our balance."*

Figure 17 Youth engagement quotes and images regarding safety

Participants reported speeding cars, excessive noise, concerns while crossing Iris Avenue and while navigating Iris Avenue sidewalks as a biker, walker, scooter, or skateboarder. They also pointed to outdated bus stop facilities and needs for repair and maintenance for example: overgrown bushes along sidewalks and Iris Avenue paving needs and sidewalk repair. Comments from youth engagement were incorporated into main themes and location-based comments in this report. A full report on GUB's youth engagement can be found in [Appendix B](#).

## Sprint 3- Open House and Report Back on Engagement Themes

### Open House

To complete the feedback loop for Sprints 1 and 2, staff held an open house with a virtual option to share what they had heard from the community so far, provide information about the project timeline and process, and ask for further comments. Over 1000 comments were received from the 265 participants in both the in-person and virtual open houses.

### *In-Person Open House*

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, 103 people attended the in-person open house at Foothill Elementary School. Community members were welcome to drop in at any time during the open house. Children's activities were available for families.



*Figure 18 Community members at in-person open house*

City staff shared project information and learnings from the community gathered through previous engagement activities. Additional community input was sought on the presentation boards and on a printed roll plot map of the project area. Presentation boards and roll plot map can be found in [Appendix C](#). Growing Up Boulder, one of the city’s community engagement partners, also provided a summary of feedback shared by kids in Boulder.

Participants were encouraged to provide additional feedback.

#### *Virtual Open House*

For those who could not attend the in-person open house, or who preferred a virtual option, a virtual open house was open from Oct 24 – Nov 8 on the city’s Be Heard Boulder engagement platform. More than 800 comments were provided by the 162 people who participated in the virtual open house.

## Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project



### Project Overview

The [Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project](#) will implement transportation improvements to make Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28th Street safer, more connected, and more comfortable.

More than 1,100 people have engaged with the project so far. Join us at an [open house](#) on Oct. 24 or fill out the next questionnaire below anytime from Oct. 24-Nov.4 to provide additional information important to you.



### Timeline

Throughout 2023, the project focuses on listening to the community and collecting transportation data. Design will begin in early 2024 after community input and data is collected and analyzed. Construction will begin once design is finalized, funding is secured, and contractor and materials procurement is complete.

- **July 28-Sept. 9:** Questionnaire 1
- **Oct. 24:** [Open House](#)
- **Oct. 24-Nov. 8:** Virtual Open House Slides and Questionnaire 2
- For a full list of engagement opportunities, visit the [project webpage](#).

### Sign up for updates

For project updates, visit the [Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project webpage](#) or sign up for the monthly [Transportation & Mobility Newsletter](#).

**VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE AND QUESTIONNAIRE 2**    **CLOSED- QUESTIONNAIRE 1**

**CLOSED-MAP YOUR EXPERIENCES**

**Important Links**

- Project Website
- La página web del proyecto

[Sign up for project email updates](#)

**Who's Listening**

**Ericka Amador**

Senior Transportation Planner - Iris Avenue Engagement Lead  
City of Boulder



**Phone** 7209681500  
**Email** [amadore@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:amadore@bouldercolorado.gov)

**Project Process and Timeline**

- Project Begins**
- Community Engagement- Listening Tour**  
Understand what is working and what needs improvement
- Open House**  
In Person Open House October 24.  
Virtual Open House and questionnaire Open Oct. 24 - Nov. 8
- Data Collection and Analysis**

Figure 19 Virtual Open House on Be Heard Boulder Website

### Themes

The following summarizes the most common themes heard at both the in-person and virtual open houses.

1. There is concern about traffic diversion onto neighborhood side streets like Kalmia Avenue, Grape Avenue, and Hawthorn Avenue
2. Turning movements onto and off Iris Avenue, especially at 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets, are difficult and feel unsafe. People want these improved and are afraid they will worsen with changes.
3. Drivers appreciate Iris Avenue as a convenient and reliable route across the city.
4. Some would like to see Iris Avenue further emphasized as a vehicle corridor and parallel side streets emphasized as active transportation corridors.
5. Many people who ride bikes want improvements to bike infrastructure on Iris Avenue and its crossings to improve the cycling network and to allow for more ages and abilities to use facilities which are currently seen as a barrier.
6. Most desire upgrades to the pedestrian realm for comfort, safety, and attractiveness.
7. Many people of all travel modes avoid Iris Avenue altogether and may not necessarily think of Iris Avenue as an option for walking, rolling, or biking.
8. Speeding and noise on Iris Avenue are major issues for residents and people who use Iris Avenue on all travel modes. This includes street racing at night that wakes nearby residents.
9. Residents are concerned changes to the street will impact emergency evacuation and response.



10. There is some confusion about responsibility for maintenance of landscaping and ice and snow removal.
11. There is understanding by many of competing community priorities and a question about how the city will make decisions.
12. Crossing Iris Avenue is difficult due to signal timing or long distances between crossings for both people on bikes and pedestrians.
13. Better bus service along Iris Avenue is desired.

#### Walk in the Park Staff Office Hours

To provide another opportunity to speak with staff about their thoughts and concerns for Iris Avenue, the status and next steps of the project, and anything else important or confusing to them, the community was invited to join staff for Walks in the Park. Three walks, Dec. 1 at Parkside Park, Dec. 9 at Columbine Park, and Dec. 16 at Melody Park were offered on the project website and promoted via email directly to city council, community members, partners, and key project stakeholders.

Attendees were a mix of apprehensive and supportive of changes to Iris Avenue. Apprehensive participants expressed concerns about increased vehicle traffic on nearby neighborhood streets and many pointed to a lack of understanding of the project's rationale and goals. Emergency evacuation and management was also raised as a major concern, particularly for residents of neighborhoods west of Broadway.



*Figure 20 Participants at a Walk in the Park at Columbine Park*

Those who are supportive of changes to Iris Avenue want to see the safety of people on bicycles and pedestrians improve. They are open to solutions that reduce vehicle speeds and enhance the experience of everyone. These participants hope Iris Avenue will become a welcoming multi-modal connection for people of all ages and abilities.

Between the two groups, there was general agreement that the safety of all users is paramount, that vehicle speeds on Iris Avenue and nearby neighborhood streets should be reduced, and that data and evaluations of previous projects might help all community members understand their safety benefits.

## Location-specific feedback

Throughout engagement, location-specific comments were collected through conversations, markers on an interactive map on Be Heard Boulder, and on the roll plot during the open house. Comments are summarized by location below.

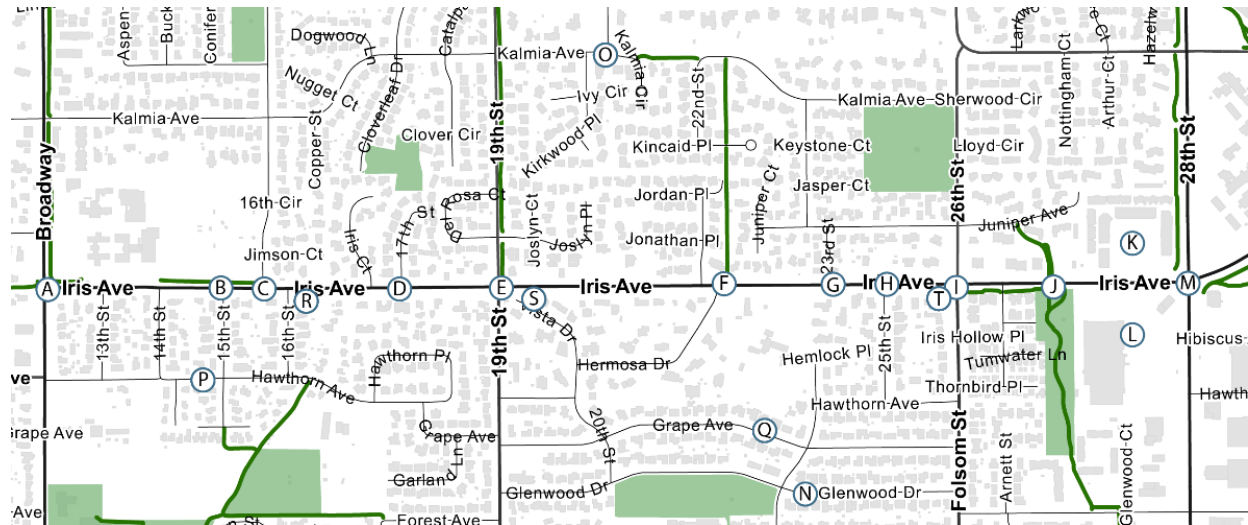


Figure 21 Iris Avenue feedback locations. Letters correspond to locations below.

### A. Broadway

- Broadway is the only signalized, marked crossing in the area to get to Foothill Elementary School.
- Between 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, the bike lane is very narrow, and the sidewalk is unpleasant.
  - Multi-use path and buffer between it and vehicles are desired.
- Protected bike and pedestrian infrastructure are desired, including underpass.
- Foothill Elementary School pick up creates vehicle backup at Broadway and Iris Avenue. Vehicles try to get around backup and create unsafe situations for pedestrians and people on bikes.
- There are long wait times for crossing signal. To get walk signal, pedestrians report waiting for all north-south traffic, then westbound, then north-south before walk signal turns on.
- If using parallel streets like Kalmia Avenue or Hawthorn Avenue, pedestrians and people on bikes cross Broadway at unsignalized and unmarked crossing or detour to Broadway at Iris Avenue for signal.
- Some community members ask for two lanes each east and west instead of one lane east and two westbound left turn lanes and a right turn lane onto Broadway.
- Some pedestrians cross Broadway at Juniper Avenue to reach bus stop
- Southbound to eastbound turning vehicles back up on north side of Broadway all the way to left travel lane. This
  - forces southbound traffic to concentrate in right lane through Iris Avenue intersection;
  - forces left turns after red arrow; and

- can block access to Juniper Avenue at times.
- Southwest corner:
  - Crossing Broadway from path on west side of Broadway to Iris Avenue or to Broadway northbound is difficult, but many people on bikes currently use the signal phasing (all red) to make the left northbound.
    - Timing of this crossing is a bit quick for small children on bikes.
- Southeast corner:
  - People use the gap between the red light and when the “No Right Turn On Red” comes on to turn right. This endangers pedestrians crossing northbound across Iris Avenue.
  - There is a desire to turn the right lane to a right turn only lane at Broadway at Iris Avenue for the eastbound turn.
- Northeast corner:
  - The intersection is busy and makes turning right on a bike difficult and uncomfortable, with some people cutting through Boulder County parking lot instead.
  - Right-turning drivers make crossing Broadway, especially for schoolchildren feel unsafe.
  - Sign says, “No right turn on red arrow” but no arrow comes on.
  - Multi-use path coupled with a bike lane at the northeast corner is confusing to users and there is a preference for separation and more and clearer instructions on where each user should be.

## B. 15th Street

- The current crossing is appreciated and well-used by people biking and walking/rolling along [13<sup>th</sup> Street GreenStreet](#).
- Vehicles don’t always stop for people in the crossing. Traffic calming and more and sooner warning are desired.
- There is support for upcoming [Community Mobility Planning and Implementation \(CMPI\)](#) improvements to the existing crossing at 15<sup>th</sup> Street, particularly the RRFB (flashing crosswalk), new multi-use path to create more direct route, and elimination of left turns from 15<sup>th</sup> Street northbound to westbound
  - Some desire an underpass or full traffic signal as on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street.
  - Some 15<sup>th</sup> Street residents raise concerns about finding alternate routes for westbound trips.
- This crossing feels safer than crossing at unmarked crossings, but high vehicle speeds and 2 lanes in westbound direction make pedestrians and people on bikes feel unsafe crossing.
- Appreciation for 8 ft path on north side, people feel safe using it currently.
- Better wayfinding across Growing Gardens to continuation at 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Streets is desired.
- Some ask for 15<sup>th</sup> Street stop signs and yield signs to be removed and face east-west traffic instead to prioritize North-South bike traffic on the GreenStreet.
- Better connectivity, including extension of multi-use path to Broadway and multi-use path west of Broadway is desired.
- Snow and ice can be an issue in winter, particularly on the south side near the pedestrian crossing and connection to 15<sup>th</sup> Street south.

## C. 16<sup>th</sup> Street

- Some ask for 15<sup>th</sup> Street crossing to be moved to 16<sup>th</sup> Street to improve directness.
- Curb ramps are not directionally aligned.
- Between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street, sidewalks are curvy, indirect, and don’t get cleared of snow/ice in winter.



- Speeding vehicles in this stretch, along with narrow bike lanes and trash cans in bike lanes, make riding bikes uncomfortable.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Street north of Iris Ave
  - Turning southbound to eastbound left from 16<sup>th</sup> Street is difficult. Drivers often must stop south of the stop bar (blocking east-west bikes and pedestrians), wait for gap in traffic, and accelerate quickly, which feels dangerous for all travelers.
  - The approach to Iris Avenue can get icy in winter and some feel it might cause vehicles to slide into Iris Avenue.
  - Parked vehicles and pedestrians can congest this stretch of street during baseball games.
  - Right turn off Iris Avenue toward 16<sup>th</sup> Street northbound has wider radius than right turn onto Iris westbound which allows faster northbound right turns.
  - A left turn lane to 16<sup>th</sup> Street northbound for bikes is desired.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Street south of Iris Ave
  - Some report speeding vehicles.
  - This is seen as the main route to Growing Gardens for events and residents report increased traffic.
  - There is a desire for traffic calming.
  - Many report poor sightlines to vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles to the west due to the large tree and fence at southwest corner.
  - People biking express confusion for traveling east from 16<sup>th</sup> Street northbound.

#### D. 17<sup>th</sup> Street

- There is a desire for a crosswalk at Iris Court or 17<sup>th</sup> Street to connect bus stops.
- Some ask for crossings to create continuous north-south connections to neighborhood connections like:
  - North of Iris Court into Cloverleaf Drive
  - North of 17<sup>th</sup> Street to Pine View Park
  - Catalpa to Pine View Park to Iris Court
- SmartHome Imagine!
  - Staff often park vehicles across Iris Avenue on 17<sup>th</sup> Street and cross Iris Avenue at unmarked crossing.
  - Transit, Paratransit and delivery vehicles park in the right lane and bike lane to load and unload passengers.
- For walking (to 19<sup>th</sup> Street):
  - The sidewalk is slanted and not level.
  - The landscaping is overgrown.
  - The area is dark at night.
  - Narrow pedestrian area closely constrains pedestrians between property lines and moving vehicles.

#### E. 19<sup>th</sup> Street

- Crossing Iris Avenue as a pedestrian or bicyclist west-east and north-south is stressful due to the high volume of right-turning vehicles from 19<sup>th</sup> Street to Iris Avenue.
- Some report vehicles running red lights at 19<sup>th</sup> Street.
- If walking from 19<sup>th</sup> Street to Broadway, pedestrians are forced to Iris Avenue from parallel streets to the north between 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

- Some have observed the use of westbound bike lane used as right turn lane for northbound right turns to 19<sup>th</sup> Street.
- A desire has been expressed by some for a protected bike lane from Iris Avenue at 19<sup>th</sup> Street to Elmer's Two Mile path.
- As 19<sup>th</sup> Street narrows north of Iris Avenue southbound, vehicles don't always yield to people on bicycles.
- The number of driveways along 19<sup>th</sup> Street causes some people biking to brake constantly.
- Vegetation can obstruct sightlines up to Norwood Avenue.
- Residents northwest of the intersection report using Linden Avenue to Broadway for southbound trips instead of Iris Avenue,
- Northbound vehicle movements
  - Left turn lane experiences smaller volume of vehicles than the current straight/right turn lane. Desire to combine left turn with straight and designate right turn only lane for eastbound turns onto Iris Avenue.
  - There is a desire for green arrow protected left turns for northbound turns.
- Southbound vehicle movements
  - Left-turning vehicles eastbound have a short turn phase.
  - There is a desire for green arrow protected left turns for southbound turns.
- Southwest Corner
  - Landscaping is often overgrown.
- Southeast corner
  - People bicycling report confusion and discomfort using bike lane between vehicles going through northbound and vehicles turning right eastbound. There is a desire for a northbound through and right turn area for people on bicycles.
- Sidewalk to 26<sup>th</sup> Street
  - The sidewalk is narrow and often has overgrown foliage.
  - There is support for wider sidewalk with separation from bicycles
  - The sidewalk on the south needs repair between 19<sup>th</sup> and Hermosa. It is currently too narrow, winding, and close to the street.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Street is seen as an important school route that should be improved for crossing children and young people.
  - There is a desire to extend the school zone to include 19<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Some ask for dedicated pedestrian signal phases, particularly during school bell times.
- East-west paths between 19<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Streets to the north are reported as a good alternative to walking and biking on Iris Avenue.

#### F. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street/Hermosa Drive

- There is a desire to re-evaluate school zone flashing during the middle of the day.
- Requests for:
  - signage to warn vehicles leading to the crossing
  - more crossing time for people with disabilities
  - Improvements to directness both on north and south end
- Some comment that the some commenting that northbound flow for cyclists could be improved. The current button location is reported as awkward.
- The south side ramp is narrower than the north side ramp.
- Some report:
  - close calls with vehicle drivers not stopping for red light

- difficulty turning left onto and from Iris Ave at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and residences on Iris near 22<sup>nd</sup> Street
  - speeding when enforcement van is absent, speeds decreasing when van is present
- The sidewalk between 19<sup>th</sup> and Hermosa Drive on south side slopes toward the street.
- The sidewalk bridge fronting 2120 Iris Avenue has steep grades.

#### G. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street

- Some ask to fill a large dip in the walking path between 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Joselyn Place paralleling Iris Avenue on the north side.

#### H. 25<sup>th</sup> Street

- Landscaping is overgrown on Iris Avenue near the intersection.
- Sidewalks are winding on this stretch of Iris Avenue and end for pedestrians continuing southbound on 25<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### I. 26<sup>th</sup> Street/Folsom Street

- Some report cut-through traffic uses 25<sup>th</sup> Street to Folsom Street.
- The tactile strip on curb ramp is set back at the northeast and northwest corners.
- The sidewalk narrows as it moves west and needs concrete repairs to offset uneven surfaces/tripping hazards (southside).
- Bicyclists ride on the sidewalk.
- The northeast pedestrian signal is in a good location for people in wheelchairs. However, people with visual impairments do not find it intuitively located and an audible pedestrian signal would help them locate it.
- Signal timing
  - The north-south crossings for people on bicycles are reported as too short.
  - There is a desire to balance the 26<sup>th</sup> Street/Folsom Street and Iris Avenue travel movements
    - There are reported difficulties turning left from Iris Avenue. The signal takes a long time and drivers must find a small gap.
  - There is ample time for crossing east-west for people with disabilities.
- There is support for the existing multi-use path on southside to extend west.
- Some express desire for emphasis of 26<sup>th</sup> Street and its crossing of Iris Avenue as a primary north-south bike route and a de-emphasis of its role as an alternative to 28<sup>th</sup> Street for vehicle traffic.
- People biking feel unsafe with the high volume of northbound left turns.
- North-south and east-west crossings of Iris Avenue feel unsafe for people walking due to right turning vehicles.
- Vehicles use Folsom bike lane as an eastbound right turn lane to Iris Avenue.
- Some suggest Folsom Street and 30<sup>th</sup> Street would make a good one-way couplet.

#### J. Elmer's Two Mile

- There is support for connecting path to Wonderland Creek path.
- From Willow Springs to Elmer's Two Mile, there is a path to the north. Cyclists taking the sidewalk or bike lane to the entrance of Elmer's Two Mile report feeling unsafe.
  - Wayfinding in this area is desired.



- There is a sharp right turn from the westbound bike lane to Elmer's Two Mile. Pedestrians and people biking want improved access to Elmer's Two Mile and clearer wayfinding.
- The Juniper Avenue connection to Elmer's Two Mile is undersized for the mix of uses and speeds.
- Elmer's Two Mile ends abruptly at Juniper Avenue.
- At Iris Avenue connection:
  - On the north side, the curb cut is difficult to differentiate for those with visual impairments. It currently indicates a crossing.
  - On the south side, there are no truncated domes.
- Elmer's Park often has overgrown landscaping and maintenance responsibility is unclear to those who report issue.
- The route to Safeway Shopping Center is circuitous and lacks wayfinding.
- There is support for markings on the multi-use path to designate bike and pedestrian spaces. The path currently feels like a bike path for users.

#### K. Willow Springs Shopping Center

- There is a desire for green conflict markings at the driveway.
- Some ask for a connection from the path on the north side to 28<sup>th</sup> Street to avoid biking or walking in parking lot or restaurant patios.

#### L. Safeway Shopping Center

- Northside access is seen as confusing, a free-for-all, and unsafe for all users.
- There is a desire to formalize access from Elmer's Two Mile.
- Curb ramps on the Iris Avenue access do not seem ADA compliant.
- Left turns to and from shopping center are difficult due to high traffic volumes and few gaps in traffic.

#### M. 28<sup>th</sup> Street

- Street and intersection with Iris Avenue is seen as unpleasant and unsafe for walking, biking, driving and many report avoiding it.
- Some express interest in an underpass.
- Vehicles use eastbound Iris Avenue bike lane as right turn lane for 28<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Slip lane on southeast corner of 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Iris Avenue sees low yielding and fast-moving vehicles, provides a harsh transition to the Diagonal multi-use path

#### N. Glenwood Drive

- Residents are concerned with cut-through traffic if diverted from Iris Avenue.
- Crossing Folsom at Glenwood is tricky for people on bicycles.
- The stop sign at Glenwood Drive at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street has low visibility. Some report drivers running the sign.

#### O. Kalmia Avenue

- Residents are concerned with cut-through traffic if diverted from Iris Avenue.
- Kalmia Avenue is seen as a pleasant and safe alternative for walking and biking, but there is no safe crossing of Broadway, and some see the crossing at 19<sup>th</sup> Street as difficult and unsafe in its current state.

- Some pedestrians and people on bikes use Linden which turns to blinking yellow during snow. They report they often can't find a gap in traffic for crossing when this occurs.
- There is a desire for traffic calming and discouragement of cut-through traffic from Iris Avenue.
- Kalmia Avenue from 19<sup>th</sup> Street to 26<sup>th</sup> Street is not always plowed and can remain icy (shaded) for long stretches of time, though the existing multi-use path is usually clear.
- There is a desire for wayfinding for people biking to Willow Springs and Safeway Shopping Centers

#### P. Hawthorn Avenue

- Reports of vehicles turning right onto Hawthorn despite restriction
- Used as east-west bicycling route, but there is not a safe crossing of Broadway

#### Q. Grape Avenue

- Residents are concerned with cut-through traffic if diverted from Iris Avenue.

### Bus Stops

#### R. Iris Avenue & 16th Street Stop ID: 14597

- Bus pad doesn't seem accessible and lacks amenities like a bench and shelter
- When bus stops in lane, it blocks both vehicle and bicycle traffic

#### S. Iris Avenue & 19th Street Stop ID: 14599

- Unpleasant walking conditions to reach this stop, including bicycles riding on the sidewalk

#### T. Iris Avenue & Folsom Ave Stop ID: 14612

- User waiting for bus blocks sidewalk if using mobility device

### Next Steps

Sprint 4 in early 2024 will continue the conversation about city and regional transportation, sustainability, equity, and resilience goals and professional best practices for reaching those goals. Analysis of data collected in 2023 will continue into 2024. The data and analysis, along with this engagement summary, and transportation goals will inform the development of preliminary design options in early 2024. Staff will return to the community in spring 2024 to gather feedback on these design options as part of Sprint 5.

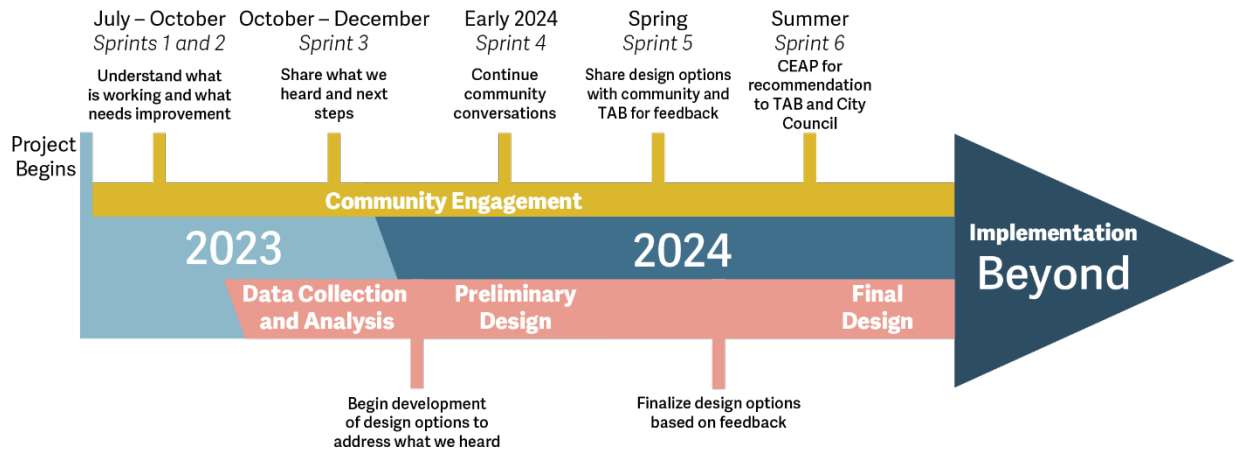


Figure 22 Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project Timeline and Process

These design options will also be shared with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) in spring 2024 as part of Sprint 5. A formal review of the project conceptual designs, including environmental, social, and fiscal impacts, to select a recommendation for construction will follow through a Community and Environmental Assessment Process (CEAP). The CEAP will be presented at two public hearings as part of Sprint 6, one to the city’s TAB, who are asked to make a recommendation to City Council, and one to City Council who are asked to approve the CEAP. After City Council approves the CEAP, staff will create the Final Design, seek funding and begin implementation when funds become available.





# Iris Avenue Walk Audit

October 19, 2023

Created for Boulder Walks (City of Boulder, CO) to inform Iris Avenue Transportation Improvement Project



Prepared by:

**Ana Lucaci, MPH, Made2Walk**

[www.made2walk.com](http://www.made2walk.com)

[ana@made2walk.com](mailto:ana@made2walk.com)



## Purpose of Project

Boulder Walks has hired Made2Walk as a community partner to conduct a series of experiential walks in the form of a walk audit to engage the community and gather feedback on improvements along the Iris Avenue corridor – focusing on the perspective of a pedestrian. Together with City staff, two locations were identified for the two walks where the public and other community partners were invited to attend. The section of Iris Avenue to be analyzed (28<sup>th</sup> St. to Broadway) has been identified as part of the Core Arterial Network (CAN), one of the 10 priorities of the City Council<sup>1</sup>.

A walk audit is an assessment of pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort of a particular area<sup>2</sup>. The walks are focused on connection and collaboration, in the specific manner that Walk2Connect has been supporting the City of Boulder's walking program since 2015.

## About Boulder Walks



Boulder Walks is a City of Boulder program that celebrates walking, highlights historic and cultural resources, and emphasizes the health and community benefits of walking. In partnership with Colorado-based Walk2Connect Collaborative and Made2Walk, Boulder Walks has provided opportunities for neighbors to connect with one another where they live and given community members an active way to engage in pedestrian planning activities. By walking and working together, we invest in a more walkable city.

## About Made2Walk



Made2Walk is a social impact organization focused on pedestrian safety in relation to the traffic and the built environment. Made2Walk sprung as Ana Lucaci's Walking Action Plan at the end of the Walking College fellowship in 2017. Ana Lucaci is a public health professional who has used walking as a means of transportation for many years, particularly while growing up and working in Romania. After a pedestrian vs. car crash, she became an advocate and public health educator helping others experience walking as a means of staying healthy and speaking out to make walking and rolling accessible and safe for all.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Boulder, Core Arterial Network, <https://bouldercolorado.gov/guide/core-arterial-network>

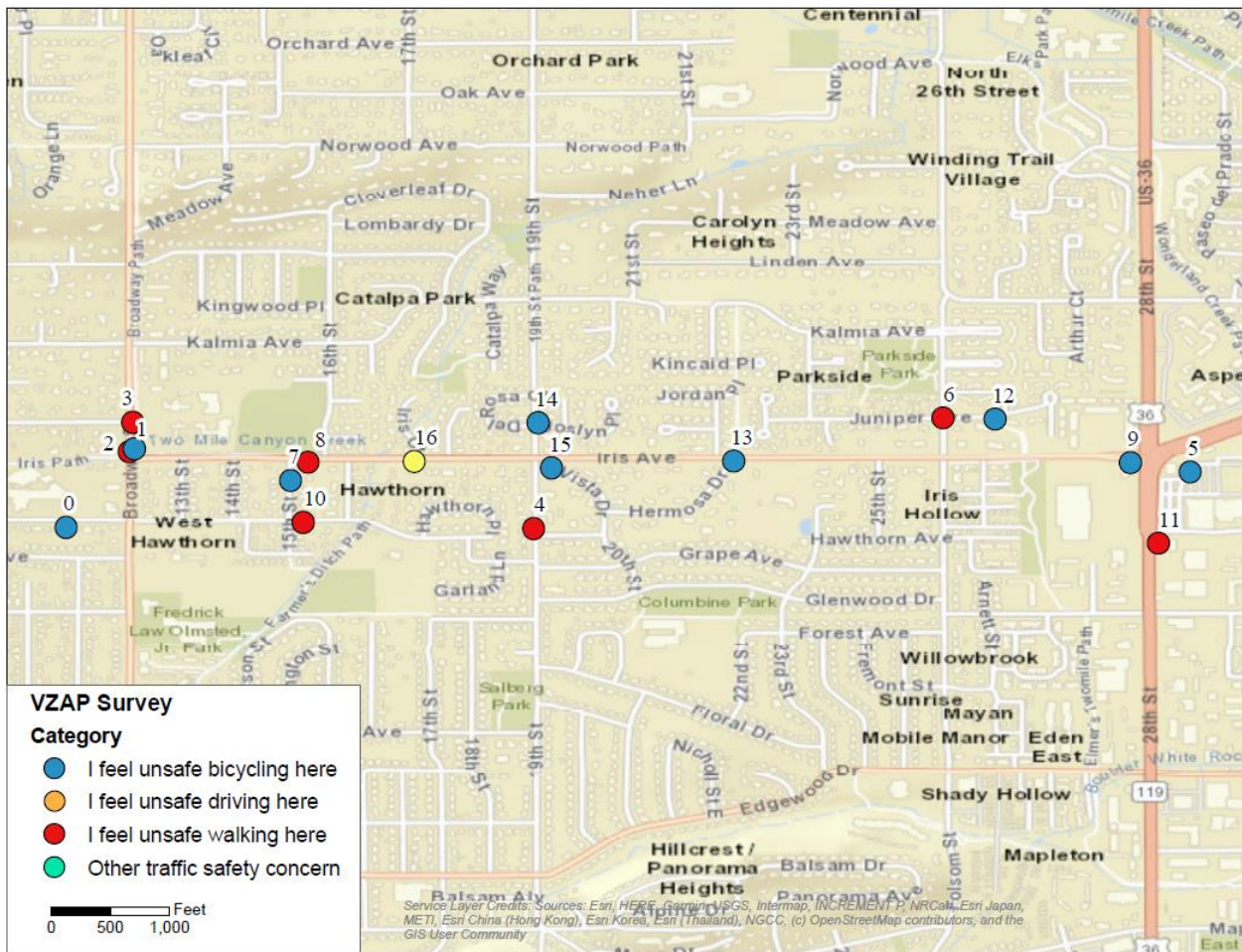
<sup>2</sup> America Walks, How to Conduct a Walk Audit in Your Community, <https://americawalks.org/how-to-conduct-a-walk-audit-in-your-community-quick-video-guide-for-assessing-your-neighborhood-walkability/>



## Overview of the Area

The area is mostly residential, with a chain store and a shopping center at one end, a County office campus at the other end, five bus stops on each side, three multi use paths crossing it (underpass: Elmer’s Two mile; two on-grade at Hermosa Drive and 15<sup>th</sup>), a sports field, a school zone, and a couple of schools in the vicinity.

The City of Boulder Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP) Survey<sup>3</sup> received extensive input for the area on how unsafe the area feels for those who travel/live in the area.



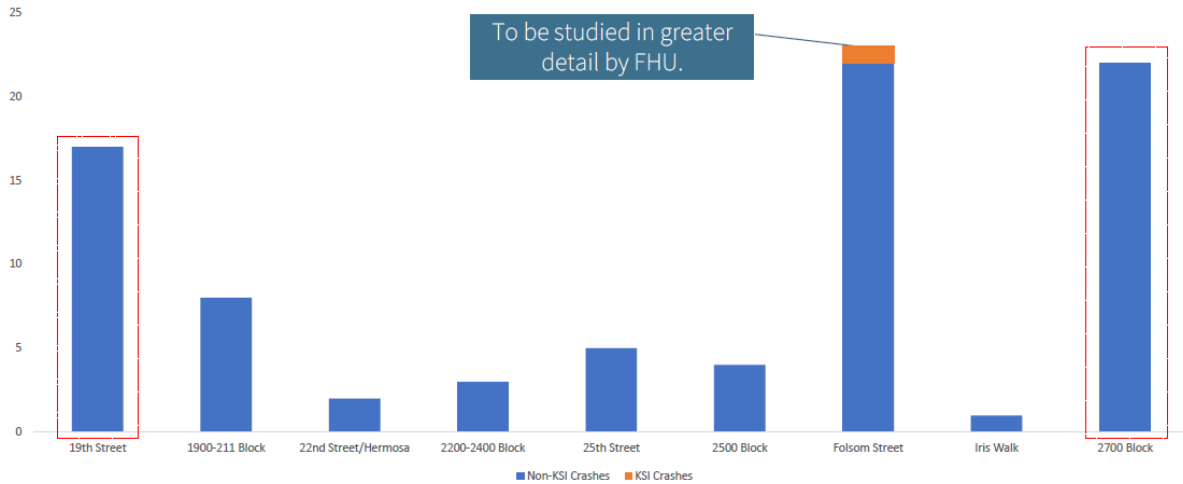
The following slides from VZAP 2023<sup>4</sup> show that while the burden fell on all modes of transportation, there is evidence of multiple crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians along the corridor.

<sup>3</sup>City of Boulder, Vision Zero Action Plan, <https://bouldercolorado.gov/projects/vision-zero-action-plan>

<sup>4</sup> ibid

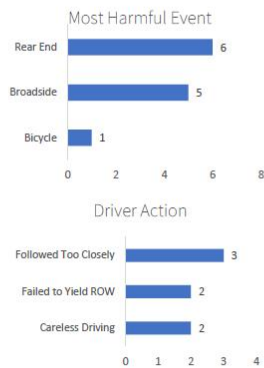


# Crashes by Location



## Iris & 19<sup>th</sup> Street

Signalized Intersection



- A bicycle-involved crash occurred when a southbound left-turning vehicle failed to yield right-of-way and struck a bicyclist traveling northbound straight through the intersection.
- Rear-end crashes – 3 WB; 2SB (1 had no information)
- Broadside crashes – 3 WB (3 in 3 years)

Total Crashes: 17 KSI Crashes: 0 Fatal Crashes: 0  
*\*Intersection and Intersection-related Crashes Only*

# 2700 Block Iris

Mid-block Location



- A bicycle-involved crash occurred at the west access of the Safeway driveway (west of 28<sup>th</sup> Street) when westbound left-turning driver failed to yield right-of-way and struck a bicyclist traveling eastbound in the bicycle lane.
- A bicycle-involved crash occurred at the west access of the Safeway driveway (west of 28<sup>th</sup> Street) when westbound left-turning driver failed to yield right-of-way and struck a bicyclist traveling eastbound in the bicycle lane.
- A bicycle-involved crash occurred at the driveway access on the north side of the street (just west of 28<sup>th</sup> Street) when a southbound right-turning vehicle struck a bicyclist traveling westbound on the sidewalk.
- 8 of the 10 broadside crashes were caused by northbound left-turning vehicles from the safety parking lot and being struck by eastbound vehicles. The majority of these crashes occurred when there was queuing at the 28<sup>th</sup> Street & Iris Avenue signal which makes it difficult to see oncoming traffic in both eastbound through lanes.



Total Crashes: 22 KSI Crashes: 0 Fatal Crashes: 0  
*\*Intersection and Intersection-related Crashes Only*

# Iris Avenue & Folsom (Studied by FHU)

Signalized Intersection



- A serious-injury crash occurred when a westbound left-turning vehicle failed to yield right-of-way and struck a bicyclist traveling eastbound straight through the intersection. The bicyclist was severely injured.
- A pedestrian-involved crash occurred when a southbound left-turning vehicle failed to yield right-of-way and struck a pedestrian crossing northbound on the east leg crosswalk.
- A bicycle-involved crash occurred when a westbound left-turning vehicle failed to yield right-of-way and struck a bicyclist traveling eastbound straight through the intersection.
- A bicycle-involved crash occurred when a northbound right-turning vehicle turned right on red and struck a bicyclist traveling westbound on the sidewalk crossing the south leg. The crash report did not indicate who was at fault.
- A bicycle-involved crash occurred when a northbound right-turning vehicle turned right on red and struck a bicyclist traveling westbound on the sidewalk crossing the south leg. The driver was cited for failure to yield.
- A bicycle-involved crash occurred when a northbound right-turning vehicle turned right on red and struck a bicyclist traveling westbound on the sidewalk crossing the south leg. The crash report did not indicate who was at fault.



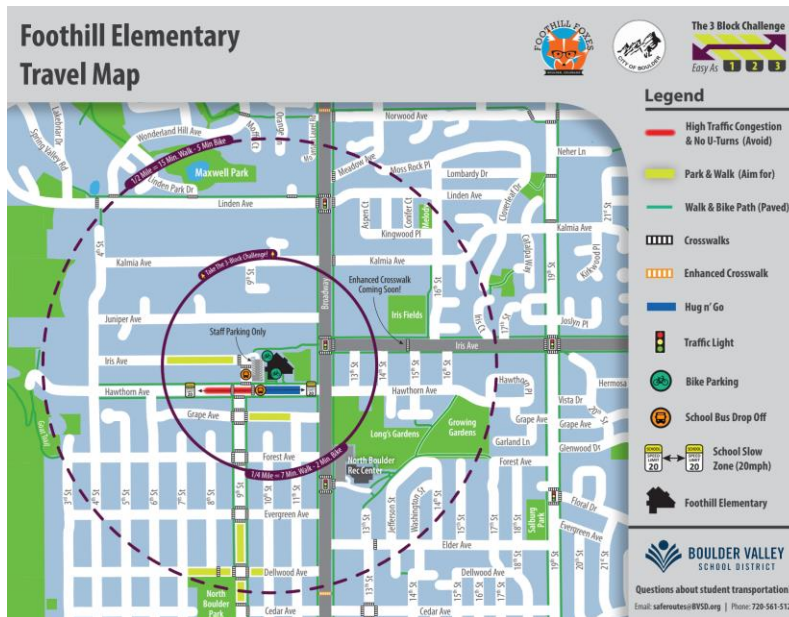
Community Engagement Walk/Roll events:

**September 19, 2023** - community at-large (around 25 individuals, all ages)

Participants: nearby residents, children using the route to get to/from school, Transportation Advisory Board – past and present members, City of Boulder staff



One of the main takeaways from the residents was that Iris does not feel like a safe corridor to be walking alongside, they use the residential streets parallel to it or just to cross it and use other adjacent areas. It is especially not safe for the students (some were present) that have to use this corridor to get to/from school. Iris Ave is listed by the Boulder Valley School District - Safe Routes to School<sup>5</sup> as a Walk/bike path for students to use.



<sup>5</sup> Boulder Valley School District, Safe Routes to School, <https://www.bvds.org/departments/transportation/bvds-safe-routes-to-school/school-travel-maps/foothill-transportation-resources>



**September 28, 2023** – focused on mobility with representatives from Center for People with Disabilities – Boulder with staff. It was an important educational moment for those present to take unique notes regarding accessibility, sidewalk width, signage, curb cuts, access to bus stops from the lived experience perspective of a wheelchair and white can users.



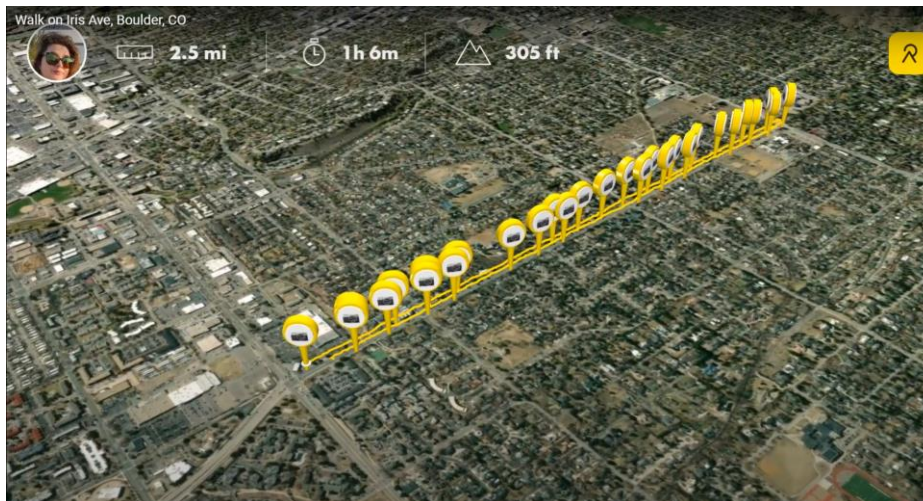
### Made2Walk Walk Audit

An independent walk audit for the full route was completed on August 24, 2023 by Made2Walk. Pictures can be seen at the GIS video links below:

**South Side:** <https://bit.ly/IrisSouth>

**North Side:** <https://bit.ly/IrisNorth>

**Terrain elevation gain:** there is a gradual incline along Iris Ave, with an elevation gain of 305 ft<sup>6</sup> from 28<sup>th</sup> St to Broadway.



<sup>6</sup> Relieve, Iris Ave Walk, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mg7T89ITLc8>

**Sidewalk width:** varies from 4ft to 8ft. The South and North side videos above will reflect the GIS location of the sidewalk width measurements.





## Opportunity for Improvement Themes

**Narrow sidewalks in places:** while at both ends (North side of the intersection with Broadway and intersection with 28th Street) the sidewalks are wider (8ft) and used as multi-use paths, in between the distance is not consistent.





**Bus stops are not adequate:** except for the bus stops at Iris Ave and Broadway, the remaining stops along Iris are not well equipped with shelter, benches, shade, trash receptacles, etc. Visually impaired individuals are not able to identify that there is a bus stop along the way.





**Pedestrian-scale lighting:** is nonexistent along Iris Ave. The only places pedestrians are given a shining spot are in the crosswalks that are signalized. Otherwise, it is very dark for pedestrians walking and rolling alongside Iris Ave when natural light is not available.





**Need for trimmed trees and hedges:** a very common complaint. This is not just an eye-sore, but it limits the space a wheelchair can travel through (in places where sidewalks are already narrow) and confusing for visually impaired persons using a white cane.





**Lack of signage/wayfinding:** while most trails are well signed, some areas are lacking wayfinding signs for the connecting streets, specifically for the visually impaired.





**Cracks, potholes, and manholes in sidewalk, ramps, and crosswalks:** create a tripping hazard.





**Curb Cut ramps are not directional:** although ADA does not dictate curb cuts at intersections to be directional and can be misaligned with the direction of the sidewalk, it is imperative for people with disabilities to be directional so that they can travel safe and not find themselves in the middle of the intersection.





**Tactile surfaces in the curb cut ramps are made from bricks:** brick is not as durable as other metal options and can crack easier, creating a tripping hazard, lose its tactile surface, can be shaved by snowplows, and retain water/debris/weeds more easily.





**Bikes on sidewalk:** even though there is a bike lane on both sides of the street, some bicyclists prefer the sidewalk, most likely because they feel unsafe traveling along the motor vehicles. This would be more acceptable if the sidewalk was wide enough to allow for multi-use.





**Confusing trail end:** there is a ramp (with tactile markings) at the end of this trail/underpass ramp that directs people into traffic. Most likely the ramp is there for bicyclists to join the on-road bike lane or as an onramp for maintenance crew. However, one would expect there to be a crosswalk to the other side, especially visually impaired people, who would label that ramp as a crossing. There is no way for them to tell where the path ends and that the safe options are left or right.





**Driveways are engulfing the adjacent sidewalks:** most driveways are short and take the sidewalk space to build their ramp, making the sidewalk slanted and wheelchairs travelling become tilted, with the risk of toppling over.





**Trash pickup occurs on the sidewalk:** while this is not a permanent occurrence, trash receptacles are a heavy obstacle for a wheelchair user to avoid when they can only travel on the sidewalk.







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# Project Overview

## About Growing Up Boulder

Growing Up Boulder (GUB) is a nonprofit program based in Boulder, CO. It launched in the spring of 2009 as a partnership between the University of Colorado, the City of Boulder, Boulder Valley School District, State Senator Dorothy Rupert, local nonprofits and businesses, and children and youth from ages 0-18. GUB's vision is to cultivate vibrant communities where all young people thrive. GUB's mission centers young people's rights, voices and agency to advance equitable and sustainable communities for all. Since its inception, GUB has engaged more than 8,000 young people on more than 100 projects. Growing Up Boulder and the City of Boulder are partnering with UNICEF USA to work towards formal recognition of Boulder as a [Child Friendly City](#). See GUB's [website](#) for more details.

## About City of Boulder's Transportation and Mobility Department

Boulder's Transportation and Mobility department's vision is to "create a safe, accessible, and sustainable multimodal transportation system connecting people with each other and where they want to go. Our transportation system will be safe, equitable, reliable, provide travel choices, and support clean air and our climate commitment." Visit their [website](#) to learn more.

## Iris Avenue CAN Project: Phase 1

In May, 2023, [Growing Up Boulder](#) (GUB) began collaborating with City of Boulder Transportation staff to learn about the goals and engagement plans for the first phase of the Iris Avenue Project. In September, GUB staff partnered with two Boulder Housing Partners' home communities: the Iris Hawthorn Home Community and the Glen Willow Home Community. Youth engagement goals were to 1) ask children, youth (and their caregivers/other adults, if present) how they travel along Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28th Street and 2) what their experiences have been like. Growing Up Boulder facilitated two September engagements: the first was embedded in a "block party" at Iris Hawthorn home community and the second was a PhotoVoice engagement using red and green frames along Iris Avenue with Glen Willow home community children and youth. This report provides a description and highlights findings of each engagement, and summarizes common themes across both engagements. The transportation department will take these findings and fold them into other community input received in 2023, which will then inform design options to be developed in 2024.



The next section, courtesy of the project website<sup>1</sup>, provides background and additional context for the Iris Avenue CAN Project:

### **CAN Definition**

The Core Arterial Network (CAN) is a connected system of protected bicycle lanes, intersection enhancements, pedestrian facilities, and transit facility upgrades that will help reduce the potential for severe crashes and make it more comfortable and convenient for people to get where they need to go along Boulder's main corridors.

### **Background**

In January 2022, Boulder City Council, in partnership with the Transportation Advisory Board, prioritized work on the "Core Arterial Network" (CAN). Iris Avenue is one of 3 CAN Priority Corridors. CAN corridors, or arterial streets, are areas with some of the highest crashes and safety concerns within the city. Arterial streets make up only 17% of streets within the city but are where 67% of total crashes resulting in severe injury or fatality occur. The city selected the three CAN Priority Corridors because they complete key connectivity gaps in the city's overall network. The other two Priority Corridors are Baseline Road (30<sup>th</sup> Street to Foothills Parkway) and Folsom Street (Pine Street to Colorado Avenue).

### **Description and Project Goals**

The Iris Avenue project will implement a series of transportation improvements to make Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28<sup>th</sup> Street safer, more connected, and more comfortable. Iris Avenue has been identified through plans, studies, and data as a key corridor in this part of the city that needs safer, more comfortable, and connected travel, no matter how someone chooses to move. Through careful planning and smart construction, Iris Avenue will allow people driving, walking, biking, and accessing the bus more options to get where they are going as safely and conveniently as possible. Throughout 2023, the project focuses on listening to the community and collecting transportation data. Design will not begin until early 2024, after community input and data are collected. Construction will not begin until mid-2024 at the earliest.

### **By the Numbers (both engagements)**

- 16 Children and youth, ages 5-18
- 6 Caregivers
- 2 Adult community members
- 2 Youth Services Initiative (YSI) staff
- 4 Growing Up Boulder staff

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bouldercolorado.gov/projects/iris-avenue-transportation-improvements-project>



*Young people use red frames to express that the bus stop on the north side of Iris/Broadway is located too close to the road and a green frame to show that they like the schedule at the Iris & Broadway bus stop. Photos by Alma Garcia*



*Young people express how they use Iris Avenue; a youth points out how they use transportation connecting Iris Avenue while using Growing Up Boulder's Child Friendly City Map. Photos by Maddie Frank*

## Summary of Findings

Children and youth (and caregivers at the Iris Hawthorne site and YSI staff in the case of the Glen Willow site) view Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28th Street as a major east-west street that requires improvements to meet the City's project goals of making it safe, comfortable, and connected. Overall, young people and their caregivers/staff feel that Iris Avenue is car-dominated and not friendly to children, youth, and non-car users. Safety is the greatest concern. The four main categories regarding safety were identified as speed, pedestrian crossing, (not enough) space, and maintenance. GUB collected resident data on current modes of travel on the corridor and asked people about their experiences using the road, bike lanes, and sidewalks.






## How do you travel along Iris Avenue?

Participants from the Iris Hawthorne and Glen Willow Home Communities (children, youth, and adults) were asked to report how they travel along Iris Avenue. They could choose more than 1 mode of travel. Respondents indicated traveling most often along Iris Avenue by car or bike. They equally traveled by scooter/skateboard, walking, and by (YSI program) van. Traveling by bus was the least often used mode of transportation.

<i>Engagements 1 +2: Iris Hawthorne and Glen Willow Communities</i>					
Bike	Scooter/ Skateboard	Walk	Car	Bus	Van
14	5	5	16	3	5

## What have your experiences been like on Iris Avenue?

Participants from the Iris Hawthorne and Glen Willow Home Communities (children, youth, and adults) were asked to indicate what their experiences were like along Iris. Respondents reported (nearly) as equal number of positive as negative experiences.

<i>Engagements 1 + 2: Iris Hawthorne and Glen Willow Home Communities</i>				
Positive 	Somewhat positive 	Neutral 	Somewhat negative 	Negative 
8	2	1	7	1

## Most Salient Findings

Young people at both home communities shared many personal experiences using Iris Avenue from Broadway to 28th Street. There were more than twice as many statements shared across both engagement groups that were about things not going well as compared to things going well. In general, people felt that Iris Avenue works well for cars, but not for pedestrians or bikers. The table below summarizes the most frequently mentioned statements related to things that are and are not working well along the Iris Avenue corridor. For the cumulative data, data



fell into five categories: Iris Avenue Infrastructure, Other Infrastructure, Signage and Wayfinding, Nature, and Connection/General. Some statements could have been categorized into more than one category (for example, comments about pedestrian crossings could have been a part of Iris Avenue Infrastructure and Connection).

The primary theme that weaves through all the negative/somewhat negative experience data is related to not feeling safe or comfortable while using the Iris Avenue Corridor—as a driver, passenger, walker, biker, and scooter/skateboarder. Residents report speeding cars, excessive noise, concerns while crossing Iris Avenue and while navigating Iris Avenue sidewalks as a biker, walker, scooter, or skateboarder. Residents point to outdated bus stop facilities and needs for repair and maintenance (ie. overgrown bushes along sidewalks and Iris Avenue paving needs and sidewalk repair) to name a few.

A real time example of the safety concerns using the pedestrian crosswalk occurred during the Glen Willow/YSI group engagement as they were attempting to cross Iris Avenue at 15th Street as a group of eight. Despite there being 3 adults guiding 5 children/youth, and even with the GUB staff members’ hand up (and waving) to get the attention of an oncoming car, the driver did not stop for us to cross. We were in the crosswalk well before the driver, and still he did not yield.

*“Cars don’t stop for you when you are crossing...and we don’t jaywalk or anything!”*

*–Iris Hawthorn residents*

*“There are parts of the sidewalk that if you are on your bike and had to veer, even a little, you would be in the road with the cars.”*

*–Iris Hawthorn resident*

### Personal Experiences Table

In this table, we used 5 categories to describe the personal experiences of Iris Hawthorn and Glen Willow residents (Iris Avenue Infrastructure, Other Infrastructure, Signage & Wayfinding, Nature, Connection/General).

Categories*	Things that are working well	Things that are <u>not</u> working well
<b>Iris Avenue Road Infrastructure</b> (space, flow, speed, pedestrian crossings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The traffic flows okay</li> <li>• The road is wide for the cars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cars drive too fast on Iris</li> <li>• Iris Avenue is too car-dominated</li> <li>• Iris Avenue is not pedestrians/bike-friendly</li> <li>• Drag racing at night is loud</li> </ul>

Categories*	Things that are working well	Things that are <u>not</u> working well
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Traffic light cameras that control cars from going too fast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Iris Avenue is noisy</li> <li>● Cars don't always stop for us at the pedestrian crossing/crossing feels unsafe with children</li> <li>● Iris Avenue's asphalt is cracked and full of patches. It needs repaving.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Infrastructure</b> (sidewalks, bike lanes, bus stops, lighting, and other amenities along Iris Ave)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some wide sidewalks</li> <li>● Fire hydrants</li> <li>● Covered bus stops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need more light on the street and in our home community park at night</li> <li>● The bike lane needs to be expanded to feel safe riding in it</li> <li>● The tree at 16th Street blocks sight lines</li> <li>● Bus stops are old and need updating (benches are wobbly, maps are faded, north side bus stop is too close to the road, etc)</li> <li>● Biking on sidewalks and in bike lanes are challenging given cracked and uneven surfaces; also, in the bike lane, fast-moving cars are reported as intimidating to riders of all ages</li> <li>● The sidewalk along Iris Avenue doesn't feel safe to stroller, bike, walk, scooter, or skateboard because of cars—sometimes the sidewalk curves and pedestrians are really close to passing cars</li> <li>● Sidewalks are too narrow</li> <li>● Cracked and uneven sidewalks are a safety issue</li> </ul>

Categories*	Things that are working well	Things that are <u>not</u> working well
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hedges, bushes, and trees need maintenance</li> <li>● Litter along Iris Avenue</li> <li>● Drainage ditch close to the sidewalk needs further safety measures</li> </ul>
<b>Signage &amp; Wayfinding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Signs are helpful for road, bike lane, and sidewalk users</li> </ul>	
<b>Nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Trees, bushes, and mountain views while using sidewalks</li> </ul>	
<b>Connection/ General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Close to things I like to do</li> <li>● Like the area that I live in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Need a traffic light on 15th/16th &amp; Iris</li> <li>● Need additional traffic lights or crossings for pedestrians and bikes, coming in and out of neighborhoods (to make Iris feel pedestrian friendly)</li> <li>● Cars turn too fast off of Iris Avenue going onto side roads</li> <li>● Need easier access to safely get to and from Pine View Park and Melody Park from Iris Hawthorne</li> <li>● Using neighborhoods to navigate instead of walking along Iris to be more safe</li> </ul>

\*See resident quote highlights by category in the appendix.

## GUB’s Engagement Partners & Engagement Approaches

The next section introduces GUB and its partners. Content is courtesy of each organizations’ website:



## About Boulder Housing Partners

[Boulder Housing Partners \(BHP\)](#) strives “to make living in Boulder welcoming and affordable for people from a diverse range of backgrounds, regardless of income. Housing Partners strives to make living in Boulder welcoming and affordable for people from a diverse range of backgrounds, regardless of income.”<sup>2</sup>

[Iris Hawthorn Home Community](#) is “a group of single-family rental homes, bordered by Iris & Hawthorn Avenues and Broadway & 16th Street, for families participating in *Bringing School Home*. Residents can enjoy the playground and common outdoor areas that are within walking distance to bike trails, the community gardens and the North Boulder Recreation Center.”<sup>3</sup>



[Glen Willow Home Community](#) sits at the west end of Pearl Street and is home to 34 apartments and townhomes ranging from studios to four-bedrooms. Renovated in 2020, it is within walking distance to the Pearl Street Mall, Peoples’ Crossing Park, and nearby RTD bus lines. Residents can enjoy Glen Willow’s community center, playground, and community gardens.<sup>4</sup>

Boulder’s Parks and Recreation [Youth Services Initiative’s](#) mission is to “inspire youth and families from underrepresented communities to make healthy, caring and responsible choices through recreation, health and well-being opportunities as well as life skill development.” Their programs include: Getting Fit, Healthy Together, Summer Learning, Mentor Program, and Recreation on Wheels.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>2</sup> <https://boulderhousing.org/about/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://boulderhousing.org/properties/iris-hawthorn/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://boulderhousing.org/properties/glen-willow/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/youth-and-family-services/youth-services-initiative-ysi>

# Iris Hawthorn Home Community Engagement

***“I like that I can walk to swings, friends, slide and the rock wall on the playground.”***

*–Iris Hawthorn resident*

***“The large tree on 16th and Iris is dangerous. You can’t see! My father in-law was in a collision due to the big tree. He called the city, but they said they were not going to do anything.”***

*–Iris Hawthorn resident*

## By the Numbers

- 4 Children (ages 5-11)
- 7 Youth (ages 12-18)
- 6 Caregivers
- 2 Adults
- 3 Growing Up Boulder staff

## Description

On Thursday, September 21, 2023, three bilingual GUB staff members attended the Iris Hawthorn Boulder Housing Partners Block Party, and spoke with caregivers and their children and youth using a large map of Iris Avenue. GUB staff invited residents to look at the map and share their experiences. It was explained that their input would inform the city’s plans for making Iris Avenue more safe, comfortable, and connected. Community members were also invited to write their answers on flipchart paper about how they travel along Iris Avenue and what their experiences have been on Iris. Given the nature of the event was to bring people together (ie. the community was eating and children were playing), residents were not interested in leaving the group activities to go for the planned Iris Avenue walk to use the red and green picture frames (PhotoVoice). GUB staff shifted their engagement approach and instead chatted with youth and invited youth and families to come make their comments on and around the map. One challenge in this less structured, more organic setting, was that precise quantitative data was more difficult to gather. However, given that residents live adjacent to Iris Avenue, the overall approach was quite successful. GUB staff was able to gather a lot of rich qualitative data that directly addressed people’s experiences using Iris Avenue.






## Engagement Data

This section highlights the data collected for how residents travel along Iris Avenue, What their experiences are like, and specific statements regarding things that are and are not working well along Iris. Participants could choose multiple modes of transportation.

**How do you travel along Iris Avenue?**

Engagement 1: Iris Hawthorne Home Community				
Bike	Scooter/ Skateboard	Walk	Car	Bus
11	4	2	11	1

**What have your experiences been like on Iris Avenue?**

Engagement 1: Iris Hawthorne Home Community				
Positive 	Somewhat positive 	Neutral 	Somewhat negative 	Negative 
7	0	3	0	0

In the Iris Hawthorn community we noticed a discrepancy between how people answered questions on the map versus how they marked the paper with the faces. There were 7 positive responses and 3 neutral, yet upon speaking with people their comments tended to be more negative than positive. We noticed that it tended to be younger children who marked the faces. It is possible they did not fully understand the paper or were reluctant to mark negative in such a public way.

In the individual home community engagements, safety was THE key concern. Four categories related to safety emerged: speed, crossing, space, and maintenance.

**Things that are working well:**

Children statements:

- It seems the traffic flows okay
- It is wide for the cars and I like that there are cameras on the traffic lights to control the cars from going too fast
- There's a lot of space and there isn't ever traffic

Adult statements:

- I like the area
- I like that I can walk to swings, friends, slide and the rockwall on the playground (but bad words on the playground and the park at IRIS/Hawthorne is too small)



## Things that are not working well:

### SPEED

- Cars drive too fast (7 residents—adults and children/youth)
- At night, people drag race loud cars (4 residents—adults and children/youth)
- The loud drag racing (cars and motorcycles) wakes up my infant every night (1 adult resident)
- People turn left off Iris onto 16th way too fast.

### CROSSING SAFETY

- Cars don't stop for when you are crossing ("and we don't jay walk or anything!")
- Need some kind of traffic light or crossing for pedestrians and bikes
- Need a traffic light on 16th (5 residents)
- Broadway and Iris is terrifying in the morning. The "No turn on red" sign is not visible enough, people don't see it. We need better signage. I have almost been hit several times in the crosswalk.
- Crossing to the left or the right is complicated due to the traffic
- The large tree on 16th and Iris is dangerous. You can't see! (6 residents)
  - My father-in-law was in a collision due to the big tree. He called the city, but they said they were not going to do anything.
- Biking is a challenge.
- Crossing feels unsafe with young children.
- Need easier access to safely get to and from Pine View Park and Melody park from my house.
- The sidewalk doesn't feel safe with a stroller.
- There is no crosswalk on 16th St.
- The southeast corner of 15th and Iris needs better bike crossing
- It is hard to come out onto Iris Avenue from 16th (resident who lives at 3374 16th).

### SPACE

- There is not enough space in the bike lane A (6 residents). It's scary.
- The sidewalks are so narrow. I would walk if there were more space.
- Please don't make it fewer lanes like what happened on Folsom (3 residents)
  - Many people coming in from Longmont, Niwot
  - What if there was a flood or a fire?
- Broadway and Iris is not bike-friendly. You have to ride on the sidewalk.
- There are places where the sidewalk curves and you are near the cars.
- There are parts of the sidewalk that if you are on your bike and had to veer, even a little, you would be in the road with the cars.

### MISC. SAFETY (MAINTENANCE)

- There was a loose manhole cover and my dad got mad because he thought we'd get a flat tire, and it felt really unsafe.
- Need more light on the street and in the park at night

- It is dark and people who don't have homes say things to us
- I skate and scooter to school at Boulder High and the sidewalk curves and also because the trees and bushes are not cut, I have to duck.

## Glen Willow Home Community & Youth Services Initiative Program Participants

### By the Numbers

- 4 children (ages 6-11)
- 1 youth (age 12)
- 2 adult staff members
- 1 GUB staff

*“It’s nice to have a covered bus stop when it’s raining or snowing out.”*

*–YSI participant/Glen Willow resident*



YSI youth and GUB staff begin a PhotoVoice activity on Iris Avenue

### Description

On Thursday, September 28, 2023, one GUB staff member met YSI staff and Glen Willow residents at Iris Fields. GUB staff introduced the Iris Avenue Project using a large map of Iris Avenue and explained that their input would inform the city’s plans for making Iris Avenue more safe, comfortable, and connected. Then, GUB staff asked children and youth how they traveled on Iris and recorded this information on flipchart paper. Afterwards, residents looked at the map and shared their experiences. The [PhotoVoice](#) activity was introduced next and the whole group walked along Iris Avenue indicating what things they felt were and were not working well. Our walking route included using the sidewalks on the north and south sides of Iris Avenue and the pedestrian crosswalks at Iris/15th Street and Broadway/Iris Avenue between 5:15-6:00 pm. Traffic was heavy at this time.






### Engagement Data

This section highlights the data collected for how residents travel along Iris Avenue, what their experiences are like, and specific statements regarding things that are and are not working well along Iris. Participants could choose multiple modes of travel.

**How do you travel along Iris Avenue?**

Engagement 2: Glenwillow Home Community (Youth Services Initiative)					
Bike	Scooter/ Skateboard	Walk	Car	Bus	Van
3	0	3	5	2	5

**What have your experiences been like on Iris Avenue?**

Engagement 2: Glenwillow Home Community (Youth Services Initiative)				
Positive 	Somewhat positive 	Neutral 	Somewhat negative 	Negative 
1	2	1	2	1

Similar to the Iris Hawthorne participants, safety was the key concern with the Glen Willow community. Four categories related to safety emerged: speed, crossing, space, and maintenance.

**Things that are working well:**

- We like wide sidewalks so we can walk with our friends and family
- I like the trees and nature along the sidewalks
- Signs are helpful for bikers and cars
- Readable bus map on the south side of Iris Avenue (near Broadway and Iris)
- Nice to have a covered bus stop when it's raining or snowing out
- Nice to have a fire hydrant close by for fire safety
- Pedestrian crosswalk at 15th is good so that we don't have to walk all the way to the Iris and Broadway intersection

**Things that are not working well:**

**SPEED**

- Cars drive too fast
- Iris Avenue is really noisy!

**CROSSING SAFETY**

- Cars don't stop for when you are using the pedestrian crosswalk



- Broadway and Iris is a really busy intersection and it's scary!
- The sidewalk along Iris Avenue doesn't feel safe to bike, walk, scooter, or skateboard.
- The sidewalks are cracked and uneven and we trip or fall and lose our balance
- I avoid Iris Avenue and walk in the neighborhoods where it's safe

#### SPACE

- There's not enough space in the bike lane. It's scary riding next to cars who are driving fast.
- The wider sidewalks are great because you can walk with friends and family. The narrow sidewalks need to be widened.
- Iris Avenue is not bike-friendly.
- In some places, the sidewalk is too close to the road. I feel like I might get hurt if I make a wrong move.
- Bus stops need updating—the material that the benches are made out of are hot in the summer and cold in the winter. One of the benches on the south side bus stop (near Iris and Broadway) is really wobbly and moves sideways when you sit on it.
- One of the framed maps on the south side bus stop is so faded that you can't even read it.
- The bus stop on the north side of Iris (near Broadway and Iris) is built too close to the road. You have to be really careful when you go in there that a car or a bicyclist aren't coming when you are going in; so you don't get hit.
- Iris Avenue is too car dominated and not friendly.

#### MISC. SAFETY (MAINTENANCE)

- There are prickly bushes along the south side of Iris that scratch you when you go by. They need to be trimmed back.
- Iris Avenue's asphalt is cracked and full of patches. It needs repaving.
- The area in and around the drainage ditch needs safety upgrading, especially around the drain. There's trash in it, and you could fall down into it.
- Pick up litter in and around the road and sidewalks.

## GUB Staff Engagement Reflections

A few reflections to share:

1. The word comfort or comfortable was never used to describe Iris Avenue. GUB staff speculated that this was because safety comes before comfort in residents' minds.
2. GUB staff feel that children and youth participating in future phases of the Iris Avenue CAN project could benefit from learning about what is being implemented in other parts of the country or world to see how youth voices can inform the creation of safe, comfortable, and connected spaces. This knowledge can be eye opening to young people and could deepen their thinking about their local context.

3. In terms of process for the block party event, we had planned to mirror the steps taken at the Glen Willow engagement. However, GUB staff realized the premise and structure of the two events were quite different and that the community at the block party wanted to stay together and not branch off and go on walks along Iris Avenue. Thus, we pivoted our approach in the moment and used the large map of Iris Avenue as a focal point of our discussion, inviting people to come look at the map and comment and write. Additionally, GUB staff approached youth in a more conversational, informal way and were able to engage effectively.
4. We have noticed that community members may not always be familiar with participatory approaches and that we need to be sure to explain more thoroughly how their input will inform city decisions. One idea is to provide examples of how community/youth input has shaped policy/practices in the past.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, children, youth, and their caregivers find that Iris Avenue works well for cars, but it does not work well for pedestrians and people riding bicycles (skaters, scooters, strollers).

***“Broadway and Iris is terrifying in the morning. The “No turn on red” sign is not visible enough; people don’t see it. We need better signage. I have almost been hit several times in the crosswalk”.***

*–Iris Hawthorn resident*

As engagement partners eagerly chatted with GUB staff about their experiences along Iris Avenue, safety was the primary concern. GUB staff observed that residents cared deeply about their neighborhoods and appeared happy to learn about future improvements to the corridor.

## Partners and Appreciation

GUB would like to thank our partners, Boulder Housing Partners, Youth Services Initiative, and the City of Boulder for their collaboration on this project. We send our heartfelt thanks to the children, youth and caregivers/staff who shared their experiences and opinions about Iris Avenue CAN with us.

- Boulder Housing Partners
  - Claudia Perez-Rogero, Resident Services Coordinator
  - Karin Stayton, Director of Resident Services
- Growing Up Boulder Staff/Team
  - Maddie Frank, Development and Operations Coordinator
  - Cathy Hill, Education Director

- Mara Mintzer, Executive Director
- Nicole Sager, Educational Consultant
- Transportation and Mobility Department
  - Ericka Amador, Senior Transportation Planner
  - Melanie Sloan, Principal Project Manager
- Youth Services Initiative (Boulder Parks and Recreation Program)
  - Alma Garcia, Recreation Coordinator
  - Grey Esposito-Krier, YSI staff member

## Appendix

1. [PhotoVoice Photos from Glen Willow/YSI Engagement](#)
2. [Sample Quotes from Residents](#)



# Iris Avenue Transportation Improvements Project

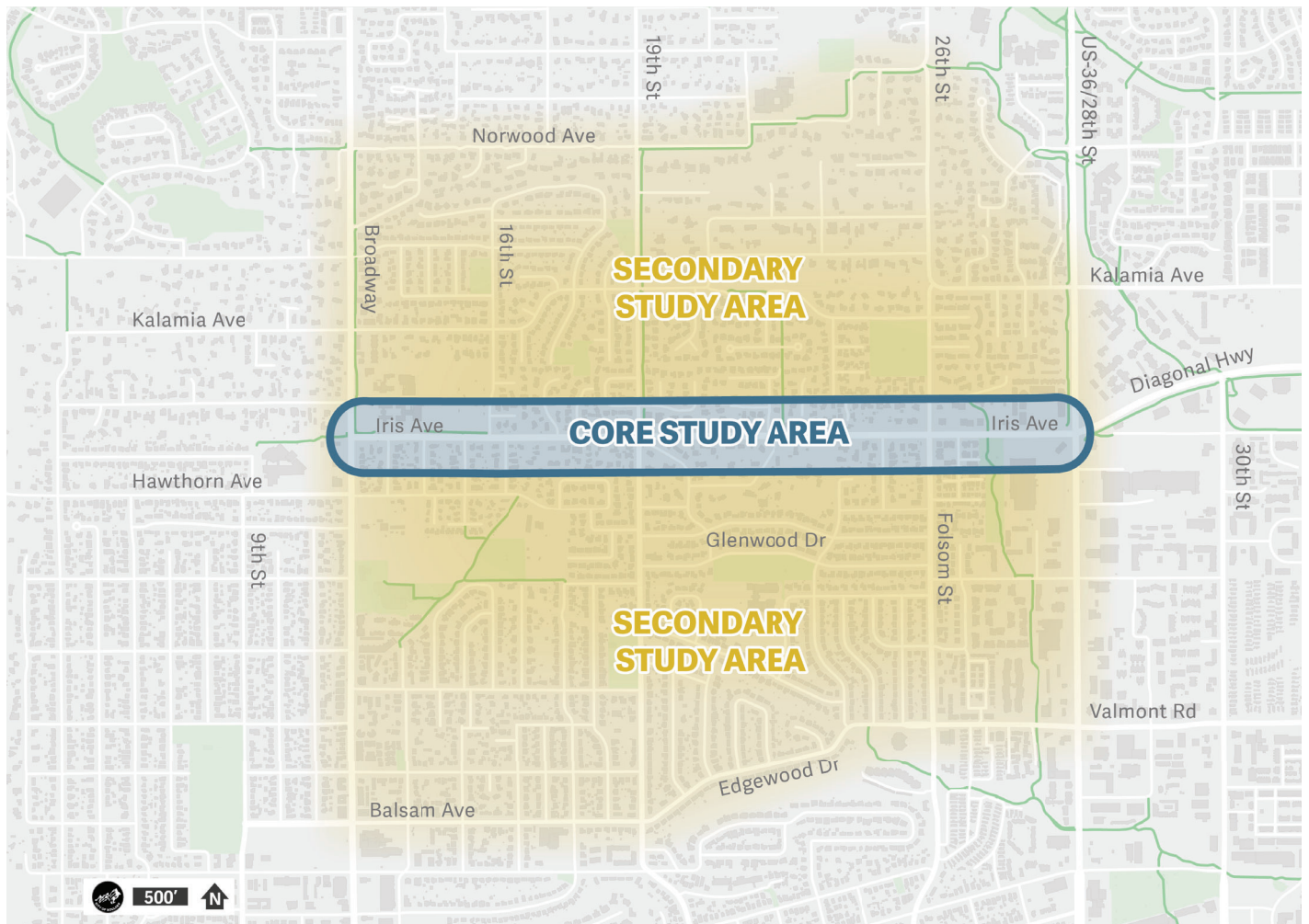
**This project will identify and implement transportation improvements to make travel on Iris Avenue between Broadway and 28th Street safer, more connected, and more comfortable.**

In January 2022, Boulder City Council, in partnership with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), prioritized work on the “Core Arterial Network” (CAN).

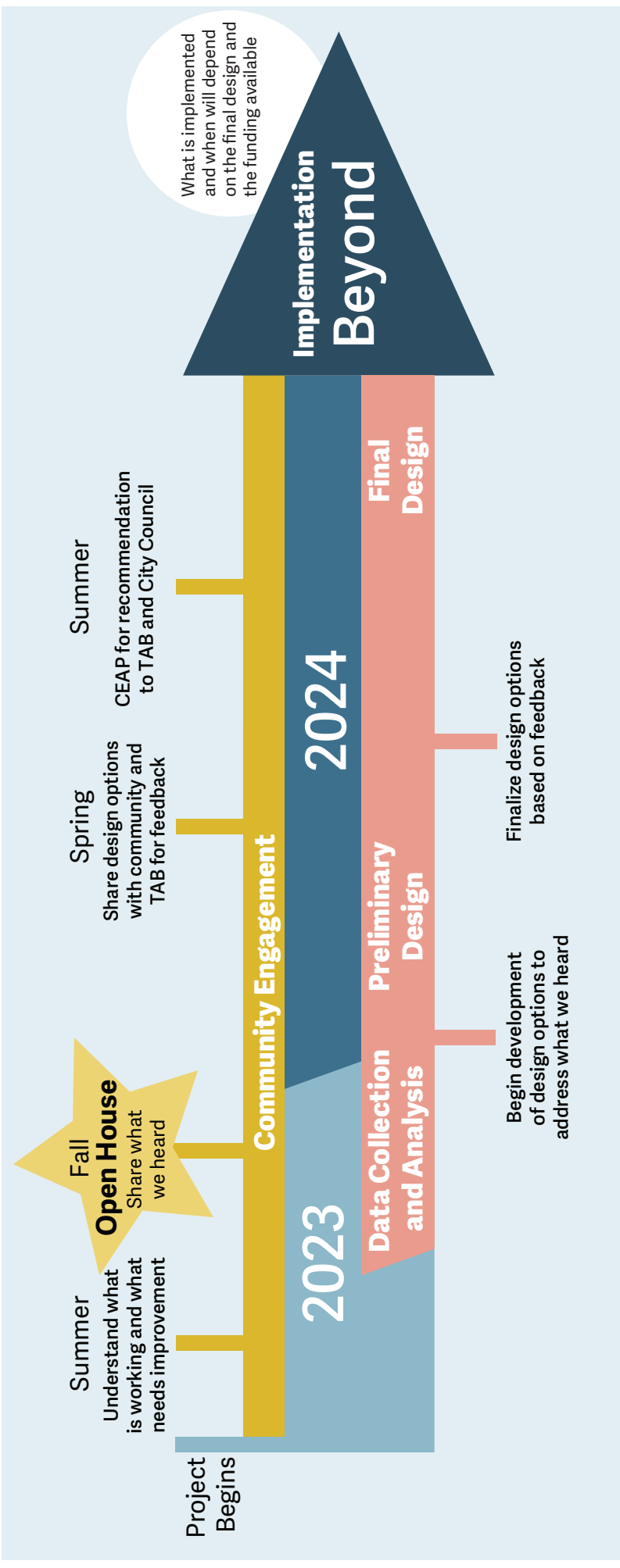
Iris Avenue is one of three CAN priority corridors selected to complete key connectivity gaps in the city’s transportation network.

Between Broadway and 28th Street, Iris Avenue provides direct, convenient connections to everyday neighborhood destinations and supports travel within Boulder and between Boulder and communities along the Diagonal Highway.

Transportation improvements along Iris Avenue aim to improve safety for everyone, increase mobility and access to destinations, and make the City of Boulder more inclusive and livable.



# Project Process and Timeline



## What is a CEAP (Community and Environmental Assessment Process)?

A formal review of the project conceptual designs, including environmental, social and fiscal impacts, to select a recommendation for construction.

The CEAP balances community goals with the policies outlined in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, departmental master plans, and sub-community or area plans (there are no sub-community or area plans for the Iris Avenue project area).

The CEAP is presented at two public hearings, one to the city's Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), who are asked to make a recommendation to City Council, and one to City Council, who are asked to approve the CEAP.





# Community Engagement So Far

In the summer of 2023, the City of Boulder collected community feedback to understand how people travel along and across Iris Avenue and reach the places important to them.

We conducted **23** engagement activities  
and reached **over 1,100** people.



**We heard from:** residents, employers and employees, children, youth and families, advocacy organizations like Boulder Walks, Community Cycles, and the Center for People with Disabilities, commuters, students, and many others

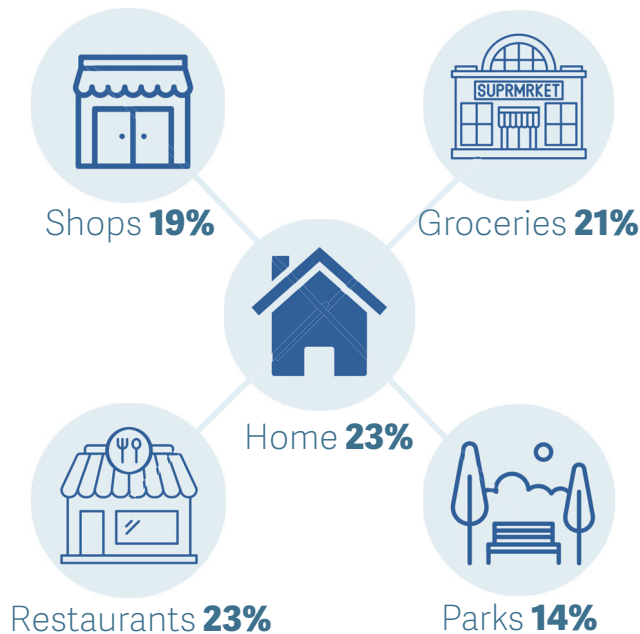
**At engagement activities like:** listening sessions, online questionnaires and interactive maps, pop ups on streets and paths, at shopping centers and schools, at neighborhood parties, and on guided walking and biking tours of the corridor



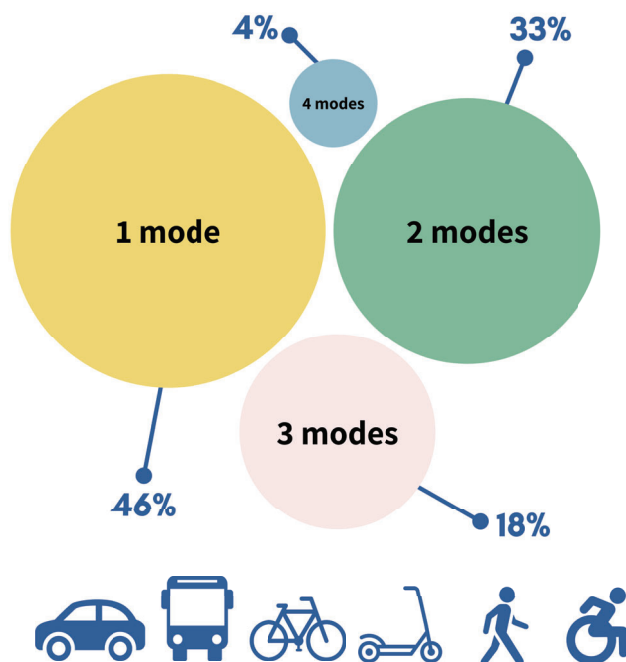


# What We've Heard So Far

We learned that people travel on and across Iris Avenue for a variety of reasons. The most common destinations people connect to are:



Nearly half of the people we heard from reach their everyday activities by more than one mode of travel (drive, bus, bike, scooter, walk, and/or roll).



# What We're Hearing

## People want connectivity and safety for walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit

"Cars drive recklessly on Iris, and the bike paths/crossings are stressful. There needs to be a much more robust bike network for North Boulder. The disjointed neighborhood streets and paths that dead end randomly are preventing more bike trips from happening." - **Palo Park resident who rides his bike to daily errands**

"We don't bike on Iris very much because it is a big, fast road - doesn't feel safe and other east-west options are do-able and less stressful for biking. However, I would be interested in safer biking options on Iris." - **Palo Park resident who walks, bikes, and drives Iris Avenue for daily errands**

"The bike infrastructure on Iris feels dangerous for everyone. Even as someone who primarily drives, I don't feel like bikers get enough space." - **Commuter who drives Iris Avenue to work**

"Trash day all people place their trash cans on the bike lane which makes it very unsafe for bikers" - **Central Boulder resident who travels to school by bike on Iris Avenue**

"We've entered the hell strip where you're sandwiched between overgrown landscaping and tall fences and fast-moving traffic" - **Participant on guided walking tour**



Person riding bike on sidewalk

## Vehicles travel at high speeds and the street is noisy



Vehicle traffic on Iris Avenue

"The street has become a highway for large trucks and many cars traveling at high speed. Much of Iris is residential and the speeding is causing very loud traffic noise and safety issues." - **Resident of Iris Avenue**

"People driving routinely speed, so I avoid it and take alternative routes, even though it would be more direct to take Iris." - **North Boulder resident who walks and bikes to work and shops**

"It is very easy to speed when traveling East from Broadway even for those paying attention." - **North Boulder resident who walks and drives on Iris Avenue**

"Iris is very wide and very straight and so it seems to be designed for very high speeds in mind. It shouldn't be surprising that people move very fast on this road." - **Southeast Boulder resident who bikes on Iris Avenue to visit family**

"For those of us whose homes back to Iris, we basically are living with a freeway behind us. The noise and pollution is imminent at all times of the day." - **Resident of Iris Avenue**

# What We're Hearing

## East-West travel is important



Vehicle traffic on Iris Avenue

"This is the most convenient access to Broadway from 28th St in this area for drivers, especially large delivery trucks."- **Central Boulder resident who drives and takes the bus**

"I don't often see people walking or biking on Iris Ave. but it would be a really great cross-town connection, particularly with the Diagonal Highway BRT project coming soon."- **Southeast Boulder resident**

"Iris should be dedicated to vehicle traffic and Kalmia between 16th and Broadway should be made more accessible for pedestrians and bikes."- **North Boulder resident who drives Iris Avenue**

"I'd never bike down it in its current form, so improving bike safety is a top priority as it's a crosstown connector for us."- **Resident of Central Boulder**

"Please recognize that car traffic is a necessary part of the city's need for an east west arterial for car traffic in north Boulder."- **Resident of Central Boulder**

"Love Iris the way it is"- **Resident of Central Boulder**

## Crossing Iris Avenue safely and conveniently is a priority

"Being able to safely cross Iris Ave on bike and on foot is my primary concern. I live a few blocks north of Iris and commute by bike to work and for shopping year-round. The bike tunnel by Safeway and the pedestrian light by 23rd St are really important to my commuting to work and downtown on bike. More of that would be good."- **North Boulder bike commuter**

"The pedestrian crossing at 15th & Iris is nice but it needs something like flashing lights so that drivers notice it and stop more often. The number of drivers who don't stop when a pedestrian is present makes it dangerous."- **North Boulder resident who walks, bikes, and drives**

"I sometimes cross halfway between 15th and 19th because it is so far to the designated crosswalks and it is the shortest route to walk downtown."- **North Boulder resident who drives and walks**

"Given the proximity of schools, Iris should enable children to walk and bike safely not only along the road, but across it. Slowing down motor vehicles to enable safe crossings is important."- **Parent of children who attend daycare off Iris Avenue**

"The sidewalk doesn't feel safe with a stroller"- **Caregiver and resident of Iris/Hawthorn community**



Crossing at 19th Street



# What We're Hearing

## Sidewalks could be improved

"Our residents have noted that the sidewalks are uneven, winding, and bumpy"- **Staff member of a home for people with disabilities**

"Sidewalks along Iris need to be improved - they are irregular, missing in some places, and not ADA compliant."- **North Boulder resident who drives Iris Avenue and walks on less busy streets**

"The sidewalk on the North side of Iris is too narrow - and consistently has overgrown foliage between 26th and 19th."- **Palo Park resident who walks, bikes, and drives on Iris for errands**

"I walk along Iris and don't feel unsafe. There are plenty of places to cross. As with all intersections anywhere, I always look to make sure drivers turning left see me."- **Crossroads resident who walks and drives on Iris Avenue**



Sidewalk ends at 25th Street

## Neighbors want to maintain the safety and character of nearby streets

"I'm concerned more traffic will be diverted to my street and make it less safe"- **Resident of Kalmia Avenue**

"I am most concerned that this project will cause greater congestion on Iris and cause traffic to divert onto the side streets off of Iris. Most of these streets are quiet, low traffic streets (many being official bike routes) and increased traffic would present safety risks to the pedestrians and bikers who frequent them."- **Central Boulder resident who walks, bikes, and drives on Iris Avenue**

"Iris Ave is a temptation to speeders since it has few lights and is a straight shot from Broadway to 28th. The traffic noise at all hours is loud with drivers gunning and speeding. Many accidents happen especially at our corner at Folsom. Since Iris is surrounded mostly by residential areas this has a huge impact on quality of life."- **Central Boulder resident who drives on Iris and walks nearby neighborhood streets everyday**



Hermosa Drive south of Iris

# What We're Hearing

## Safer neighborhood and business access is essential



Northern driveway for Safeway shopping center



Driveway to private residence on Iris Avenue

"We live ON Iris Ave and it's often difficult to get out of our driveway since there's fast and non-stop traffic." - **Resident of Iris Avenue**

"It seems like a free for all with the multiple business access for Willow Springs and the Safeway/Gas Station while many people are also trying to get from the far north to make the southbound turn onto Folsom. Yikes! Being a pedestrian in this area is not safe. Driving isn't much fun either." - **Commuter who drives Iris Avenue to grocery store**

"Left turn from 16th to eastbound Iris is tricky." - **North Boulder resident who travels Iris Avenue by car**

"Iris is so busy that it is sometimes difficult or dangerous to turn East from North 22nd St (Heritage Meadows) onto Iris. It is also dangerous to turn North from eastbound Iris onto North 22nd St." - **North Boulder resident who drives to daily needs**

"I worry about getting t-boned turning onto Iris Avenue." - **Employee of a local business in Willow Springs Shopping Center and commuter from Longmont**

## Residents want placemaking and attractive facilities



Grassy, tree-lined sidewalk along Iris Avenue

"Please consider ways to beautify the green spaces along it." - **North Boulder resident**

"Tree planting should be a part of this project." - **North Boulder resident who bikes and walks to daily needs**

"We use Iris almost daily, it (like other streets) should add safety features and things that would be attractive to residents and others." - **North Boulder resident who regularly drives Iris Avenue**

"[15th Street is] a really nice way to travel into and around the city -- I like the shady street and connections to Goose Creek and the path along 13th Street." - **North Boulder resident who drives Iris Avenue to visit family and friends and run errands**



# What We're Hearing

## Better wayfinding and help navigating are desired

"More pedestrian signs are needed for wayfinding during this long stretch of Iris"- **Resident of South Boulder who runs errands near Iris Avenue**

"Wayfinding and signage on and near Elmer's Two Mile path would be great." - **Resident of Iris/Hawthorn community**

"Wayfinding to alternate routes [like Hawthorn] are desired." - **Staff member of a home for people with disabilities**



Wayfinding signage near Elmer's Twomile Multi-Use Path

## Road conditions could improve



Pothole near Iris Avenue at 26th Street intersection

"Road conditions are terrible" - **Driver and resident of Central Boulder**

"Large potholes on the road which causes bikes/cyclists to tumble when not prepared" - **Palo Park resident who walks and bikes on Iris Avenue**

"It needs to have the pavement reviewed and maintained regularly. It seems to deteriorate quite rapidly, perhaps due to heavy traffic." - **North Boulder resident who drives on Iris Avenue**

## Access to transit needs improvement

"If I were waiting for the bus at this stop, I would block the sidewalk and the ramp would have nowhere to deploy" - **Person with a disability who uses a wheelchair**

"Investing more in our public transit in this area would be great" - **Palo Park resident who walks and drives on Iris Avenue**

"We have very poor transit access in North Boulder. It should be easier for us to get to and from downtown by bus." - **North boulder bus rider, driver, and walker**

"The bus stop on the north side of Iris [near Broadway] is built too close to the road. You have to be really careful when you go in there that a car or bicyclist aren't coming so you don't get hit." - **Young transit rider**

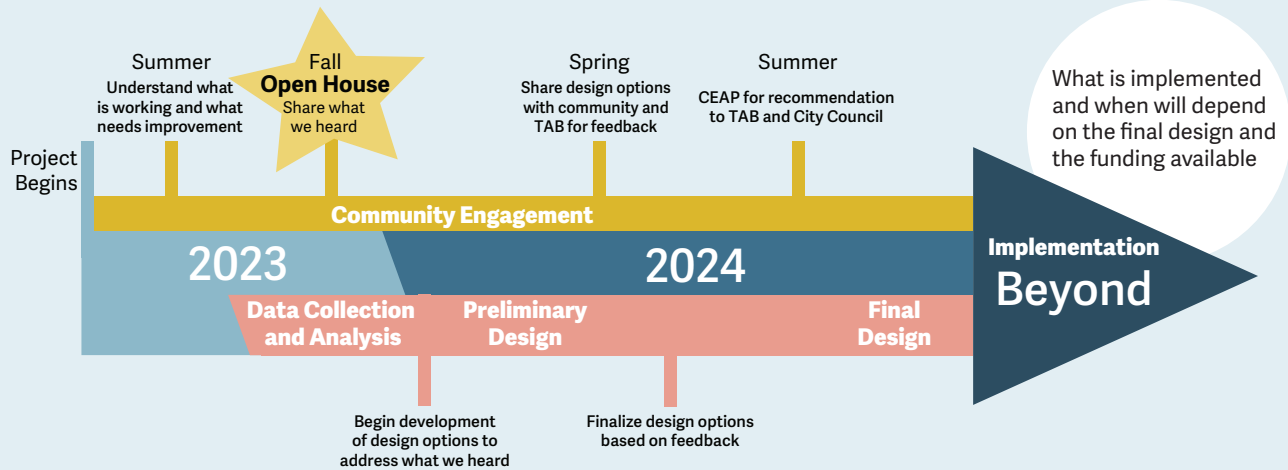


Not enough sidewalk space for people walking and those waiting for the bus



# What's Next?

Your feedback and the data we collect and analyze will inform design options we bring to you for the next round of community feedback in spring 2024.



## We'll complete data collection and analysis

To understand what's working and what needs improvement, data collection like number and location of trees; travel movements, volumes, and speeds; and bike and pedestrian volumes. Analysis began in summer 2023 and will continue through fall and winter 2023.

## Share designs in spring 2024 and gather your feedback

In early 2024, we'll develop design options based on your comments and data collected along the corridor. We'll return in spring 2024 to gather your feedback on these design options.

## Until then

**Visit** the project website for updates

**Sign up** for our monthly Transportation and Mobility Newsletter newsletter



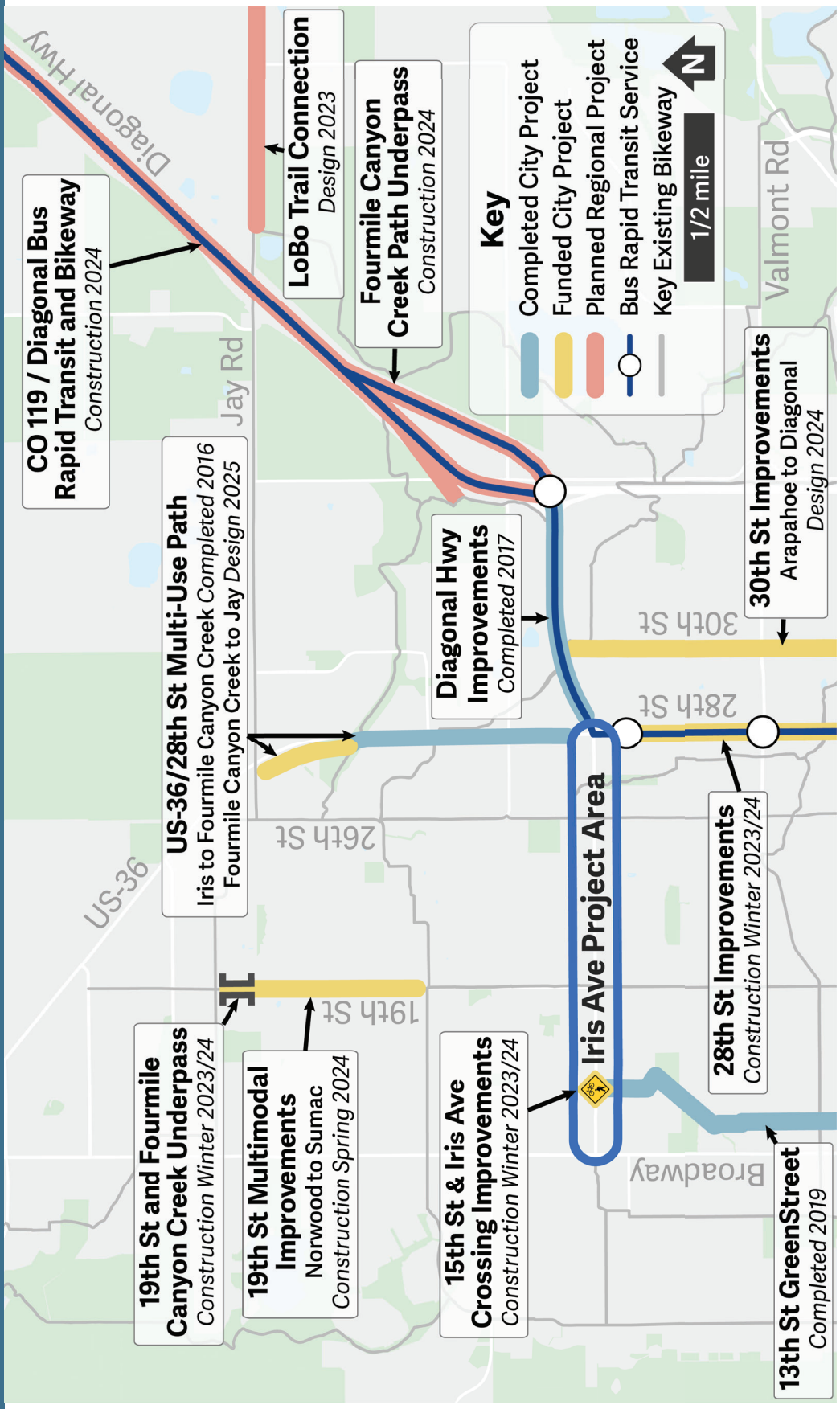
[bldr.fyi/iristip](https://bldr.fyi/iristip)

**Contact the project team** at any time with input, suggestions, or questions

Ericka Amador  
Senior Transportation Planner, City of Boulder  
(p) 720-968-1500  
(e) [amadore@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:amadore@bouldercolorado.gov)



# Separate But Related Projects



## 15th St & Iris Ave Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements

<https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/pedestrian-crossings>

