Crash Analysis Studio – Minneapolis Session Transcript

Introductory Trailer

Chuck Marohn: I want to give you two scenarios. Scenario number one a plane crashes. Scenario number two, two cars collide. In scenario number one, we pull out all the stops – we bring in the NTSB, we try to figure out exactly what went wrong. Scenario number two – we send out the cops, we sweep up the mess, and we go on our way.

John Pattison: If we, collectively – everyone on this call and the broader Strong Towns movement – if we do this right, we're going to save thousands of lives.

Edward Erfurt: Mayors and local council members want to do the right thing. They have the ability to solve it. We're going to help provide those tools for them.

Session

Tony Harris: All right. Hi everyone. I know people are still filing in, but I do think I will slowly get us started. Let me begin by saying thank you for joining us today, and welcome to this crash analysis studio session. We're really glad that you're here and engaging with us in this discussion. And for those of you who don't know me, my name is Tony Harris, and I am the Community Engagement Coordinator with strong towns, and I have been invited by a few of our members and supporters in Minneapolis to help moderate this session today. So in a few moments, I'm going to introduce you to the rest of our experts that we have here. But first, I just want to explain a little bit about why we are here today. So we know that over 40,000 people die in automobile crashes in the United States alone every year. Hundreds of 1000s more suffer traumatic injuries during these collisions, and despite the work of public safety officials, these crashes are still happening, and they're affecting all of our lives.

Now there's a prevalent misconception that car crashes are caused solely by mistakes that drivers and pedestrians make. So looking at your phone, changing the radio, speeding, drinking

alcohol and getting behind the North American response to crashes focuses primarily on assigning blame, often to drivers and often to pedestrians too. Now the reality is that crashes are caused by multiple factors, right? So, when a traumatic crash occurs, we need to identify all the contributing factors, learn all that we can and ultimately take action so that we can reduce the number of deaths and traumatic injuries that are plaguing our communities. So, what you're going to see today is a session that follows the strong towns crash analysis approach. So our panelists are going to look at a non-fatal crash that occurred on Park Avenue near 33rd Street in Minneapolis, and we really feel like it's the right time to discuss this crash, since we know that the Minnesota Advisory Council on traffic safety is highlighting intersection design as a priority for reducing deaths and injuries, and we also know that there's an upcoming reconstruction project involving Park Avenue, so let me begin with introductions, and then we will review the facts of the crash, and from there, our experts are going to help us to assess the design factors that contributed to this collision and recommend some ways to make the area safer. Let me emphasize our objective is to discover and learn as much as possible about what happened and make some suggestions for improving safety at this crash location for all road users.

So I'm going to go ahead and introduce our experts now. First, we have Nate Jung, who is an engineer in Toole Design's Minneapolis office. His experience includes the design of complete streets, bicycle facilities, safe and access accessible pedestrian facilities, rapid implementation design, roadway design and Safe Routes to School plans. Nate specializes in complete streets, bicycle facility design and ADA compliant pedestrian facility design. Now when he's outside of the office, Nate enjoys camping, cooking, home, brewing, beer, rock climbing and hiking. So welcome Nate.

Next we have Mark Schoening, who has been a resident of the Central neighborhood for over a decade, and he is a contemporary artist and former professor who, along with his wife, operated an art gallery on their front porch from 2016 until the time that the crash we're looking at today, until the time that that crash happened and damaged their home. Now, Mark

is a dedicated preservationist, and he spends a lot of his free time caring for and restoring his beloved Victorian home, and he also helps his wife in the garden at home a lot too. So welcome Mark.

And then finally, we have Laura Mitchell, who is a parent, a writer, an active transportation advocate and an instructional designer. Through her consulting company, Laura provides services for learning and development, active mobility and community engagement. She is the founder of the Minneapolis cargo bike library, which provides free bike rentals to city residents. And Laura is also board president of our streets, an organization dedicated to better transportation for all road users in the Twin Cities. So I'm going to go ahead and take us into the details of this crash, and I'm going to do that by sharing my screen and pulling up a brief PowerPoint.

So like we usually do for these studios, we're going to start off with what we know, right? So this collision took place around 4:47am on August 11, 2024 so that's almost a year ago to the day. Now, the media coverage on this crash. Crash indicates that a black SUV and a 2024 Mustang were racing on Park Avenue. And I do want to note Park Avenue is a one way thoroughfare that features two lanes for northbound traffic, no lanes for southbound drivers, right? So the crash report states that a vehicle, and we think that would be the SUV, cut off the Mustang that was driving, and the Mustang ran off the road. Now the Mustang hit a tree and then moved on to cause damage to 3314 and 3310 Park Avenue before it hit 3306 and came to rest at 3306 we looked at weather reports for that particular day, the temperatures were in the 70s. Was partly cloudy, and of course, it was so dark out when the crash happened. And I do want to note the Mustang actually flipped upside down before coming to rest outside of Mark's house. So a few more details on the crash.

To my knowledge, the driver of the SUV left the scene of the crash. Right, law enforcement identified that the Mustang driver was named Christian Silva, and his passenger was named Leonardo. Leonardo was treated by EMS at the scene of the crash, and Silva was administered a blood alcohol test. It was found that his blood alcohol content was was a point 08 so he was

arrested on the scene of the collision on the right hand side. Here we have a shot taken from the day that the crash happened. You can see the Mustang flipped upside down over here on the right hand side. And then here we've included just a simple map right you can see Park Avenue kind of in the center here, going north and south, and then the crash location is marked with a red pin. So that's the area where the Mustang came to rest. And on this slide, we've included the visual from the crash report itself. So we wanted to include this, just because I think it helps to illustrate the impact areas right where the Mustang came off the road, hit a tree, and then moved on to cause damage to all three of these homes. Now here I've tried to put together just a simple illustration to show what I believe happened again. This may not be completely accurate, but from my understanding, we have this orange shape that represents the SUV, right, and there's some street racing happening. This SUV cuts off the Mustang, which is represented by the pink shape. The Mustang then goes to hit a tree. So that's the first point of impact on to 3314 and then 3310 and then finally comes to rest at 3306 so I think that's the progression that we're looking at here.

Tony Harris: So we know that the posted speed limit on Park Avenue is 30 miles per hour. The crash report didn't state this explicitly, but according to Mark and to some locals on the ground, there was cell phone tracking right of the car as it was moving during this time. And that phone indicates that the car was moving as fast as 85 miles per hour. Um, thankfully, no residents at the homes were, you know, injured by the Mustang upon collision. And you can see a shot of a phone here that says, you know, it looks like you've been in a crash. Um, phone detected crash at around 4:45am I think is what that says. So a little bit more on the overall conditions of the location. So as I said, we're looking at two northbound travel lanes. From what I've been able to see, there are signals at 34th and park and 31st in park. So I think that's about a three block area where there's no signalization. I wanted to point out there is a bike lane on Park Avenue, and there are two bumper areas around that bike lane. Neither of those bumper areas, to my knowledge, feature any barriers or physical protection for bikers. And then if you go four blocks to the west, you're going to find Portland Avenue, which is another one way avenue for southbound traffic that has two lanes. So I think Portland and park could be considered a

couplet. And our applicant David, David Safranski, he worked with Mark to pull together some photos, both from online and, you know, at the crash location. So I just want to review these to give you a feel for the area that we're speaking about. So on this slide here, this is a photo that's taken outside of Mark's home. This is 3306 I believe this was taken last month, just to give you a feel for like the home after renovation. Here we can see some images from the damage that was done, right? So we're looking, I think, at the front porch here, and then a view of the yard and the front of the house in this shot. Now this image is an online shot that looks at the 30/300 block of Park Avenue. We're looking from a northbound perspective here, right? So we're looking in the way that the motorist will be. Looking like from their point of view. And then this image, also taken from online, kind of shows the opposite, right? So this is if we were standing and looking southbound, looking at oncoming traffic. This might be, you know, what we could see. Now, here we are looking at the intersection of 34th and park. This was taken from the direction motorists would be traveling as you're moving north along Park Avenue. And on this next slide, we included two more pictures to illustrate the crosswalks, and I think this pedestrian refuge area around 34th and park, I was speaking with one local who highlighted this was like an improvement that had happened in the area somewhat recently. So we wanted to just make sure that we included that here too to give you a feel for what you might encounter as you're driving through the area or walking. And then here you can see some traffic moving northbound along Park Avenue. You can see the parking on either side of the road, and then the bike lane here. So hard. And then this is a wide angle shot looking south at Park Avenue.

So again, we're looking in the direction of oncoming traffic. And then we wanted to include two more shots looking south at park you can see, I believe this is the bike lane with some bumper areas on either side. Again, parking on both sides of the street. And then this shot here is looking south at the intersection of 34th and park and then we have one more looking at a car in the bike lane of Park Avenue. So I'm not sure what this car up here is doing. Maybe they're picking someone up, maybe they're trying to get some parking. But from everyone I've talked to so far, it sounds like cars in the bike lane is a fairly common occurrence here. So just wanted to

point that out. And then I think this might be our last slide on photos. So here you can see two shots, and these are actually depicting a speed limit sign on Park Avenue that is obstructed by a tree. So you can see the pole here that is going down into the ground, and I think you can see the white of a speed limit sign a little bit here. Was interesting. When I first started going through photos, I was like, Oh, this must be mislabeled. I don't see any speed limit signs. And then I realized what I was looking at.

Okay, so David, our applicant, did help get some measurements of the crash location too. So we can see on either side, there are six-foot-wide sidewalks and then seven-foot-wide planter areas. And when we're looking at the avenue itself, each of the northbound lanes for through traffic are 12 feet wide, once you add in the bumper space on either side of this bicycle lane, the accommodations for that bike lane total up to 12 feet wide as well. And then, as I stated before, there are parking lanes on either side of the street. One of those measured in eight and a half feet wide, and then the other measured nine and a half feet wide. So that makes the total width across the pavement itself, 54 feet. That width jumps up to 80 feet when you add in the planters and the sidewalks. Now on this slide here, it might be a little bit hard to read. You're looking at basically the same information. It's just presented and visualized a little bit differently. What I do want to point out here, though is the bike lane accommodations in this gray area. You're looking at four feet for buffer space, four feet for the bike lane itself, and then another four feet of buffer space on the other side.

And then a few observations we can make when we're looking at kind of the development pattern in this area. So, to my knowledge, there are, like, some mixed use, mid-rise, high-rise projects along this corridor. Of course, we have single family homes and some neighborhood and commercial establishments as well. I'm going to take you to a map of the surrounding area just to point out a couple other things. So, on the left here, you can see interstate 35 West. And then I think out of frame, on the right-hand side is state highway 100 I just wanted to point out that these are like parallel major routes that are relatively close to the crash location could be influencing traffic patterns in this area. And then you can see Powderhorn Park here. And from

my understanding, you know, there are several schools and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Center are all facilities, community destinations nearby the crash location. And I wanted to point those out and mention that, just because I think you know, when you have that many destinations in an area, it makes it more likely that people might be out, walking, biking, driving to and from different locations, right? Okay?

And then, as I stated, before we know, there are some reconstruction efforts being planned for park and Portland Avenue. So to my understanding, the design phase is happening during 2025 and 2026 with the actual reconstruction. Motion slotted to begin in 2027 from what I've been able to read, it sounds like the work is going to span from County Road 46 up to interstate 94 and then, I also wanted to highlight there was a community survey done in winter of 2024, and 2025 and then also into spring of 2025 might mark might be able to speak a little bit further to this community survey, but I know it was conducted with residents and community members in the area to get their perspective right on transportation safety, and you know what's happening in the area where they live. It seems like respondents were really highlighting street racing and traffic safety as prominent issues. And then there was a contingent of community members that also stated, you know, better infrastructure for pedestrians and for crossing would be really useful in the neighborhood.

Here we have a fairly simple illustration of traffic volumes, right? And I think there are some trends here that we can pick up on. So you'll see on the left-hand side, we're starting to track the data from 2003 and then on the right-hand side, we go as late as 2024 so that's a 21 year period that we're looking at here. Right, there's a decrease of 5351 vehicles traveling on Park Avenue, you know, daily counts. So that translates into a 43.2% decrease over that 21-year time period. The volume for 2024 was 7049 vehicles a day. And then the peak volume during this study, or this kind of time period, was actually in 2003 and that was 12,400 vehicles in one day. And then David and Mark worked together to record three speed studies for us. So I'm going to kind of look at the compiled data for all three studies and then pick out a few characteristics, a few pieces of data from each of them, just to give you a feel for what was observed. The first

study was done during the early afternoon on Friday, July 18, so that would be last month. The second study again early afternoon on Sunday, July 27 and then the third study was done on Monday, July 28 closer to rush hour in the afternoon, so around like four to 5pm I believe

Now the speeds and data found for each of these studies weren't remarkably different, right? So keep that in mind as we look at this compiled data in total, David and Mark tracked 604 cars and found 90.6% of them were speeding past that 30 mile per hour limit. 87 drivers were found to be traveling at 40 miles per hour or higher. So that would be 10 miles per hour or quicker over the limit that's set. And then the 85th percentile speed, that's the speed at which 85% of drivers were traveling at or below that was found to be 39 miles per hour. So when we look at the information for July 18, and then when we look at July 27 we see a couple things that are actually exactly the same, right? So for July 18, there were 38 drivers traveling at 40 miles per hour or higher, same number of drivers on July 27 traveling at that rate or quicker, right? The 85th percentile speed for both of these studies, was found to be 40 miles per hour. And then when we're looking at the July 28 data, again, this was taken around rush hour time. You know, 202 cars tracked. So it was about the same volume of cars tracked, but only 11 drivers were found to be traveling at 40 miles per hour or quicker. And then the 85th percentile speed was 38 miles per hour. So interesting to note that, you know, there were fewer drivers traveling at 40 miles per hour faster. The 85th percentile speed wasn't that much lower than it was during the two previous study days. So I'm going to stop sharing my screen, and now I'd like to turn to our panel, and maybe we could start with Nate. He's okay with it, and I'd like to just hear, you know, like, what factors have you identified as being contributing factors to this crash, you know, based on what we've looked at today and what we've reviewed prior to the session? And Nate, if you want to screen, share or point anything out. Or if you need my help, please feel free to let me know.

Nate Jung: Yeah, thanks Tony. I think one of the things and maybe it'll help if you screen, share anddrop in or actually do an aerial view to start. But one of the things is, like, when we're talking about how people that utilize corridors experience the corridors, is design language. And

one thing that we see here on on Park Avenue. A new especially this specific block is the fact that there aren't any visual cues to drivers, that perhaps pedestrians may be present, or that it might be used for anything except for the original intent of commuting to and from the city. So you'll actually see that the next marked crosswalk is about 1800 feet away at the next signal. So it's completely invisible from where we are currently. There's no cues that perhaps a pedestrian may be present.

Another big, big factor that that I see is not just the general width of the core of the of the corridor, but the perceived width as well. So we do have 12 Foot lanes, which are near freeway with lands, um, lanes, so that already influences the width of the lane, but then you've also got factors such as the science being located in the boulevard space or the buffer space, so they're not as visible to a driver who may be utilizing the corridor as well as the striped buffered bike lane, not really providing a true sense of visually narrowing the roadway.

Another thing that I saw in the article is people saying that the corridor in this section is under parked because people are scared of their cars getting hit, which also helps visually expand the roadway just, which just allows things to move at a much, much faster pace, the one way operation also helps increase speeds, and it also it allows for that drag racing ability. If it were a two way facility, you'd be less likely to encounter, not to say that it can't happen, but you'd be less likely to encounter drag racing, as you'd have to cross it to the the other direction, and then there's a chance of a head on collision, which drivers are a little bit more fearful of. I'll also say that the land use adjacent to the corridor doesn't quite mesh with the design intent of the facility, where the design intent we talk about stroads with Strong Towns, but the design intent of the facility is to be a road. However, the adjacent land use is that of a street, and so those conflicting creates, it maybe didn't influence this crash, as it happened most likely, when there weren't a whole lot of pedestrians out or neighbors using using the corridor, but that also creates a lot of conflicts that are unexpected.

Tony Harris: Yeah, thank you for for giving that summary and landing on the timing of day two is an interesting component, and I was keeping that in mind as we were looking at the speed study information, right and how, how different that could be taken in an early afternoon versus a late night setting. Yeah, that's really helpful. Thanks, Nate. Mark, could we come to you next on factors and what you see contributing here?

Mark Schoening: Absolutely. Thank you, Tony. And thank you Nate for pointing out a few things that I observe as someone who lives on the street on a daily basis. So I put myself out in the street as I saw it this morning. And much to Nate's point, as you can tell, people are scared to park at the end of this block, because during the summer of 2024 there were numerous rear end collisions by people who were racing either in stolen cars or other kinds of vehicles that ran into consecutive neighbors cars. So, as you've pointed out, because there's no parking at the northern end of 33rd and park this becomes kind of an open space for people to speed, to also to Tony's point. If you're at the traffic light at 34th Street, you have no visualization of any kind of controlled intersection for three blocks at that point. So, it becomes, in my opinion, an invitation to kind of speed ahead.

Another thing to point out that really doesn't involve this accident is there's a. Cross street of 33rd and as cars go eastward on 33rd Street, there's a complete blind spot to the oncoming traffic. I'm assuming, when this was set up, it didn't pose as much of a risk when the speed limits were less if people were following that 30 mile an hour speed, but as cars are going 50 miles an hour, there's far less reaction time for someone who's accidentally pulled out in that intersection.

So, I have a lot of documentation of this, but throughout each summer, there's multiple kind of T bone crashes that exist at that intersection as well. So, I will point out that the early morning of this accident, upon hearing that sound, yes, it was surprising, but both my wife and I knew instantly what had happened based on the density of vehicle crashes that exist on this block. I also want to point out that, you know, I can't fathom this, but the year before we moved in,

Park Avenue and Portland Avenue were both three way, one ways, and the width of that bike lane had was reduced in its early stages, and I recall looking back at message boards and articles about them diminishing it to two lanes, and there were suburban commuters who were very upset about this reduction of traffic. I will just also point out that traffic patterns have really shifted over the years. Maybe 10 years ago, there was, there was far more of a reliable kind of morning commute, bumper to bumper into the city, because it's an alternative. As you put it out to 30 5w I feel like those traffic patterns have shifted, and actually, because of the lower density of traffic, it almost feels like an invitation for me, for people to go at higher rates of speed. So that's just something that I acknowledge as someone who's out in front of my house for large periods of time. It I don't know what else to say about kind of observing what traffic has been. I'm also an avid cyclist who commutes up Park Avenue in the bike lane and south on Portland every day, and there are troublesome areas at many points of my commute, but it's something that I look out my front window, and when people are commuting with small children or families are commuting up the right side of that lane, part of me feels very worried about their personal safety as they're going up the street.

Tony Harris: Yeah, thank you for sharing that my my immediate question was to ask you if you think I would do well commuting on Park in Portland as someone who only cycles every now and then. It sounds like you already answered that question. Yeah. If I can ask one more question to your knowledge of like, street racing being an issue in this community, is there, like, a strong history of that, like, do you have recollection of multiple street racing crashes, and, you know, occurring over a longer period of time?

Mark Schoening: Yes, in my kind of shared anger about the situation of the street. I've found a common enemy in my neighbor across the street. So both her and I have been observing this, these traffic patterns, for many years, and I will just point out that all the way back to 2014 so 11 years ago, we were actively attending neighborhood meetings for the central neighborhood, and actually met with city engineers concerning our, you know, issues with street racing, at the time, high speeds, safety in general. And we were always kind of dismissed at those meetings of

simply by being informed that there weren't enough fatal accidents in this area for them to really change any of the infrastructure. So for years and years, that was the explanation we were getting. And then following those meetings, I would always get home and find very near death crashes out in front of my street summer after summer. So does that answer your question?

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely, it's, it's interesting. The more of these sessions that we do, sometimes you encounter places where street racing might be like a one-off issue, and sometimes you encounter, you know, situations where it's more, I guess, endemic could be, could be the word. So knowing that you know, all the way back to 2014 you're saying, you know, attendance at some of these, at these meetings, and the dismissal of those and like, Yeah, it's interesting when you have a lot of non-fatal crashes versus fatal crashes, right? And that, that distinction, yeah, thank you.

Mark Schoening: I may just take a moment to speak about, I think because you brought it up, there was a community survey that was done, yeah, so just to give you a kind of a history of that neighborhood action following this crash at, you know, the end of last summer, there were a number. There was a article that came out in the Star Tribune, which is the local newspaper, kind of referencing the accident. Situation the street. And simultaneously to that we were the neighborhood was also made aware that there was going to be a major, not a major reconstruction, there was going to be a safety improvement project that was going to be happening on our street. And this was announced by the county because I think it's also important to point out that Park Avenue and Portland Avenue are county roads within the city's jurisdiction. So if anyone's experienced trying to navigate that, that can be kind of a wild animal where, you know, there's a lot of pointing in multiple directions. So the county announced that there was going to be a safety reconstruction, not a major reconstruction project, and they were inviting kind of public engagement. But we also became very aware that not a single one of our neighbors knew about any of the meetings or the engagement that was happening in the community. So we became quite obsessive and formed a small group called Slow the roll, and

we distributed flyers for people to attend meetings and fill out a survey and join community meetups for the entire stretch so from 94 all the way down to 46th Street. On both of those roads, we were able to engage over 200 participants in a community survey, and attendance quickly picked up at those future kind of county engagements about the safety project.

Tony Harris: Wow, wow. That's a powerful way to mobilize people and to get them involved. And it's striking sometimes you know what's happening around us, and we don't even realize like that these meetings are happening in the first place, right? So to get people, to get people filling out a survey and attending, I think, is no small feat.

Mark Schoening: One last thing, and I'll let you move on. Post our neighborhood engagement. The county put out a number of signs announcing that this project was coming as they do. So there's a large four by five foot metal sign announcing the oncoming safety project starting in 2027 those were installed during the fall of last year, and within about three months, there had been car crashes into the majority of those signs. So if you want to take a look at those photos, they're on our slow the roll Instagram account. Or if you drive up park or Portland, you'll notice that many of them had been rammed into trees or in yards in front of houses where cars had gone into their front yard. So this has continued to be an ongoing issue since last August.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for Thanks for some of that extra detail and elaboration. I appreciate it. Laura, could we come to you next on on factors and what you see happening here?

Laura Mitchell: Yeah, I think Nate and Mark covered a ton. So I won't repeat all of the great factors that I think they identified, but my orientation both to park and Portland. This entire corridor is as someone who primarily bikes for transportation, and I don't live directly on park or Portland. I'm on the other side of the highway, and so when my wife and I first moved here a few years ago, we're trying to get our bearings and figure out how we're going to safely get around our new city by bike. I remember thinking, Okay, we need to get downtown. Park is a

great way to get down there. Let's do a Google Street View and see how it looks. We saw the wide buffered bike lanes and thought like, great. This should be safe. As soon as we got on it, we realized our mistake. It definitely is not a safe Street, and we found that when there was a high volume of traffic, like more during rush hour and peak travel times, it's so noisy, there's so many cars, and occasionally, I've had experiences where drivers get impatient with how much they're having to wait in the traffic, and they will use the bike lane as their own VIP passing lane, which whether they're in front of me or behind me when I'm on a bike. That's obviously very scary to have a driver in the bike lane going at high speeds to use it to pass other cars. And then when it's lower volume car traffic, it's quieter and it occasionally feels safer when there's a break in traffic. But then oftentimes that leads to the drivers who are there, driving at even higher speeds. It feels like because they just have the wide expanse. As Nate and Mark are both naming, and Tony you were naming too, if there's not cars parked there, if they are visually seeing the just painted bike lane, as you know, additional road space that could be driven into or close to it just results in a lot of high speed traffic. And so I hadn't even seen the speed data that David and folks had collected until today, but my hunch, without even knowing that, was definitely that the average speed is closer to 40 miles per hour, which does not feel safe when you're on a bike, and especially when you're traveling with kids, which my wife and I do with our children. And so I feel like my my experience traveling through this corridor has been startling, scary, frustrating, anxiety inducing. And I think about there's a. Neighbor a few blocks south, I think maybe on the Portland side, though, who has a front yard constructed of jersey barriers, presumably to keep cars from ending up in their front yard. I have a friend who's on Portland a few blocks south, is here too, who also has multiple drivers ended up in her front yard. And I'd be curious sort of to Mark's point of like, is there a map of how often this is happening, because the neighbors who live on this corridor definitely talk about it a ton, and I think that's completely obviously unacceptable to have to live in fear of a driver ending up taking their car into your front yard, into your home. And so my approach now is I will ride on Park in Portland, if my destination is on Park in Portland, OR if I like really it's really close, and I have to take it, otherwise, I do not ride on either of those streets. And I'm quite a savvy cyclist, been riding for 15 years, and it just doesn't feel safe to me or to my family.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for for sharing some about your experience and what it's like to move through this place as a local but like, maybe also as someone who doesn't live directly on top of it and with the speeds too, it's interesting. Like, when you surpass what 25 miles per hour, the likelihood of a traumatic injury or death already starts to decline. So even traveling at the speed limit could be argued to be like a little bit too fast, right for this area. So looking at 40 miles per hour or quicker is definitely, I think the words you use were startling, scary, frustrating and anxiety inducing. Yeah, that's powerful. Okay, any other thoughts or responses on factors from anyone before we move toward recommendations.

Tony Harris: Okay? Well, if anything comes up, we can always circle back. I think I'll take us back to Nate to start, if that's all right, Nate, just given you know your background and experience with different types of like, facility design, Safe Routes to School. I know you've done a variety of different things. What would you recommend happen in this area to increase safety for all road users?

Nate Jung: Yeah. So we can really break this out into short like, right now, like, go out today, after this is done short term, medium term and long term. And so we'll start with like the right now, and that is just to go out there with a bucket of paint and paint some crosswalks at non signal locations, if there's the ability to adding curb extensions using cones or flex posts or something along those lines, would also be a great addition. And overnight, the city could adjust the signals to add rest and read during overnight periods. This is a safety countermeasure that causes lights to stay red until a vehicle approaches them, and then it will allow them to go through that will prevent vehicles from getting up to those, you know, 80 plus mile per hour speeds along the corridor. That one, I was sort of on the fence of like, is that a right now thing or a short term thing? But in the short term, you also could use paint to swap the bike lane and the parking lane to make it parking protected, as mentioned earlier. Hennepin County has plans that take into account many of these concerns, and they've done a good job at providing a solution, an interim solution, for 2027 they're doing a repaving project, not just a

resurfacing, and not A full reconstruction, as mentioned earlier. So as part of that, they're adding a parking protected bikeway, which will visually narrow the road. They also do a great job of adding medians to add horizontal deflection, which there isn't a lot of right now. It's a very straight shot road. Also adding curb extensions. I think with that plan, it's important to consider where parking demand is heavy versus light, where there's heavy, where there's light parking demand as as to and before that can widen visually right in the roadway.

You could add bump outs at strategic points where the parking is lighter to visit visually narrow the roadway and maybe add some green space, or trees or something along those lines. You could also introduce raised crosswalks. Levels, which can add vertical deflection even when traffic is light, such as at night. In addition this, the Park and Portland Plan recently went through the Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and they recommended having a design speed of 20 miles per hour and a reduction of the speed limit also to 20 miles per hour. And while this is good for speed reduction, it's currently disallowed by state law, since Park and Portland are state aid highways, which is a unique Minnesota I program where certain roadways are designated for state funding, and those have to follow rules and design guidelines that are statutorily written into law. So with that, a only a minimum design speed of 30 miles per hours, a lot is allowed. So long term, we could you could look into potentially reforming state aid rules to allow a lower design speed. If that's not on the table, the park in Portland project could still file for a design exception to allow them to design for below 30 miles per hour. I think long term, the volumes on this corridor support a conversion to two way, especially if both Park and Portland are converted to two way as mentioned before, drivers are less likely to drag race on a two way street, and the the volumes have substantially declined since the installation of i 35 which runs parallel and takes a lot of that traffic demand off of park in Portland. In addition, if that were to happen, you could use a series of single lane compact roundabouts, for example, to slow the segment speeds along the along the corridor as well, even during those after hours or light traffic times,

Tony Harris: absolutely. Thank you for taking us through some of those recommendations. Yeah, and it's really interesting to hear the state rules around design speed too, and the ramifications that that that has. Yeah, Laura, could we come to you next on any recommendations or thoughts that you have?

Laura Mitchell: Yeah, definitely agree with Nate on so many of those. I think about a photo that I saw from the folks that Mark has been working with to advocate for around the reconstruction of one of the county's signs notifying folks that the reconstruction was coming got hit by a car and damaged. And so while I'm so excited, I think we need to be thinking a lot about these long term solutions, and I think they're great. I also think about the fact that, like, while we're waiting even for this short term repaving project that can bring some safety improvements. Folks homes are continuing to get cars are continuing to crash. People are getting hurt. And so I'm eager to think about, I don't, I don't know what all the options are, but I'm eager to, like, think creatively about what might be able to be done in the short term. And I've seen some really great examples of utilizing flex posts and cones and paint to catch folks attention in different ways and just visually narrow the roadway, even if it's not a super permanent thing. When we had construction on Hennepin, another street locally, there was a lot of traffic that was being rerouted through some of the more like residential streets, and the city actually put jersey barriers and cones out to cause traffic to have to have to kind of weave car traffic, to kind of have to weave through those streets to slow them down, obviously, due to state aid rules and the 30 mile per hour speed limit, like we can't necessarily have Jersey berries out in the middle of a street that has a 30 mile per hour design speed. But just thinking about ways that we can leverage quick build materials to try to bring some safety improvements to this area seems critically important to me.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely. That's that's helpful, yeah, quick build. And then, I mean, I think one of the things that came to mind for me was like, I've got shears. I could trim that street tree that's blocking a speed sign, right? Will people obey it? Maybe not. But that was something that

came to mind when we're thinking about, like, kind of immediate, shorter term safety. Yeah, yeah. Thank you, Mark, could we come to you on recommendations?

Mark Schoening: Sure, I feel like I don't have much authority in this, other than, you know, being the raging neighbor, but to be honest. Think I'm really looking forward to the start of the construction project. I feel like that is the nearest solution to a level of traffic calming on this street that I've yet to experience is once they begin closing lanes or diverting traffic away. I And I say that because there was a major reconstruction project on 30 5w years ago, and that became kind of the sweet spot for a lot of suburban commuters to shift their commute to Park Avenue, and that's kind of been the start of this major shift of the traffic change and speeds, et cetera. Because I'm a creative thinker and I get desperate at times. I remember being at a traffic meeting quite recently, and a neighbor of mine said that there was a water main break on the southern end of Portland Avenue. And during that water main break, there were three traffic cones that were out, not even cutting off a lane, but were just on the edge of the lane of traffic. And he said that during the three weeks of that construction, that main construction project, it was the quietest it's been in front of his house in years. So inspired by that conversation, i A few weeks later, noticed a massive pothole in front of my house and managed to find a traffic cone. And just as a test to see how things would go, I simply put that in front of the pothole. Now I will tell you it was only about 10 inches inside of the lane of traffic, but and I spent the week painting the front of my house. And I will tell you with without a doubt, it did more to reduce traffic speeds and calming that single cone in front of a pothole at my house. That will also point out that I went to bed that evening and woke up in the morning and the traffic cone had been hit by a car, so it was about halfway down the block. I went to retrieve the cone, put it in the same place and the same thing. Each day, someone hit the cone and knocked it a good quarter or half a block ahead, which is kind of wild. I will note that the pothole has been since repaired, so my my pirate traffic calming measures have since come to a stop.

Tony Harris: Yeah, absolutely. There was a similar, similar instance in in one of a street nearby me, where people kept putting out traffic cones, and they would get hit overnight and but they

still continued to get moved back into place each day until flex posts were put up. Great any further recommendations or thoughts from anyone?

Tony Harris: I feel like we did cover a lot, and I'm really glad that we were able to speak a little bit about the reconstruction project that's coming up too, because it sounds like there's between, like, medians and some of the optical narrowing. I think there was mention of a protected bike lane being part of that project. It sounds like there's, there's some good steps that are happening then, and maybe some things that can happen sooner too, to ensure safety for folks. Cool. Well, if we're ready, I'll go ahead and take us into just a short closing segment. I'm going to share my screen one more time, and yeah, I just want to offer some thanks and acknowledgements to folks.

So, a big thank you to our panelists today. So, Laura, Nate, Mark, we really couldn't have done this session without you all. So, thank you for taking the time to get prepared and to be here with us, especially on a weekend. A lot of thanks to our applicant, David and Mark, for information gathering and just pulling together like a lot of data to help us understand this area better. I know I've learned a ton from this particular session. Um, thanks to everybody who came and attended today, right and engaged with us in some street safety conversations. Really means a lot. And I want to offer thanks to our sponsor for the crash analysis Studio project and anonymous donor, and thanks to strong town staff who have assisted over the past several weeks. You can find a recording of this session and all our crash analysis studio sessions by going online to strong towns.org/crash studio through our website, you can also learn about our Academy course for establishing a studio in your community. You can request assistance from us for running a session like this one, and you can learn more about our upcoming sessions. And then I wanted to note, if you're interested in supporting strong towns and our work for safe streets, please consider becoming a member. You know, members receive access to a variety of benefits. You know, just for small contributions, including this year, we've actually made attendance to our Local-Motive workshop series in the fall, free for members. I know some of those sessions are going to include, like, street safety. I think there's one

particularly about making neighborhoods safer for kids, right to be able to, like, roam around and, you know, be kids outside. So if you're interested in membership, check out strong towns.org/membership, You can always learn more there. You can always contact me too. So, on behalf of my colleagues and our panel, thank you so much for watching this session of the crash analysis studio, we invite you to keep doing what you can to build a Strong Town. Take care – thank you!