



VETERANS MEMORIAL BRIDGE CONNECTIVITY PLAN 2025 USER & VISITOR SURVEY

The Veterans Memorial Bridge Connectivity Plan is a multi-year initiative that focuses on developing an approach to open the lower level of the Veterans Memorial Bridge for regular pedestrian and bicycle use, in alignment with earlier planning studies. Building upon the previous proposals, this work looks at the feasibility of various access points and pathways to coordinate with adjacent public spaces and buildings under development at both ends of the bridge.

In 2025 connections were made with thousands of Clevelanders through an annual lower-level activation event, Rediscover Veterans Memorial Bridge, Take-a-Hike tours, and a survey distributed online and via paper copies. The survey responses captured public feedback on the concept of a bike/pedestrian passageway on the lower deck with access points to nearby public spaces.

Cuyahoga County continues to prioritize the community's voice in guiding the work throughout the multi-year process. This survey is the latest in a series of community conversations. While outreach around the 2024 community bridge event gathered information about desired uses for the lower level of the bridge, the 2025 User and Visitor Survey sought to understand the needs of potential and current bridge users to guide basic details such as access points, perceived safety, current upper-level experiences and potential draws.

The survey had 440 participants whose geographic information allowed the team to identify needs of nearby, potentially regular users as well as those who are drawn by special events and activities. Both groups expressed interest in improved connections between downtown and west side neighborhoods, as well as the opportunity to activate a unique and historic space for Cleveland. Both also prioritized improved safety features, and special programming such as seasonal and pop-up events. Nearby users stressed the need for safe and accessible new paths for jogging, walking and biking.

SUMMARY RESULTS:

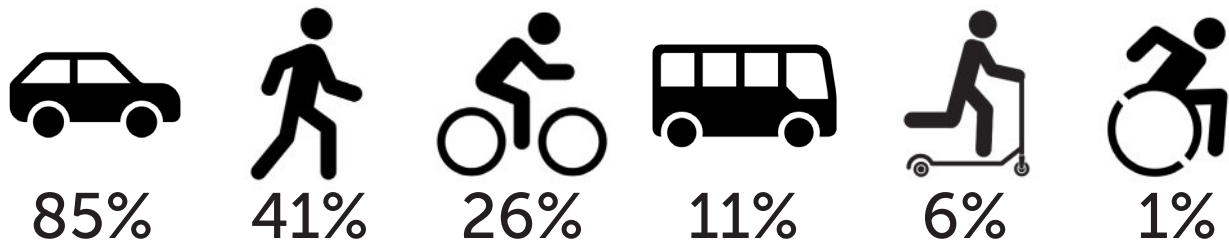
All Participants

USE PATTERNS

- Most respondents were from the Greater Cleveland area, but outside of the immediate area (**87%**)
- **35%** of respondents use the bridge on a regular basis (commuting, exercise, etc.), and **23%** use the bridge 3-5 times per week or more
- Highest time of use are evening (**75%**) and afternoon (**58%**)

MODES OF TRAVEL

Respondents identified all the modes of travel they use on a regular basis to cross the Veterans Memorial Bridge:



- Participants noted not feeling comfortable crossing the upper level of the bridge on foot, by bicycle or on a mobility device due to high traffic volumes (**16%**) and exposure during bad weather (**15%**). Multiple comments noted poor condition of bike facilities as an additional limitation.

TOP DESIRED USES FOR THE LOWER LEVEL

- Places to enjoy views (**85%**)
- Jogging / walking paths (**70%**)
- Historic information & features (**64%**)
- Places to sit (**63%**)
- Bike lanes (**59%**)
- Local art (**52%**)

Other considerations included places to get food and beverages

DESIRED FEATURES TO SUPPORT COMFORT & SAFETY

- Lighting improvements (**78%**)
- Security cameras (**49%**)
- Safety personnel (**42%**)
- Regular staff presence (**35%**)
- Programming and regular activities to activate the lower level (**35%**)

TOP DRAWS

- History tours (**76%**)
- Seasonal & holiday themed events (**73%**)
- Pop-up events, live music & performances (**70%**)
- Art exhibits (**64%**)

97% of respondents expressed interest in making the lower level of the Veterans Memorial Bridge usable for connections and activities.



SUMMARY RESULTS:

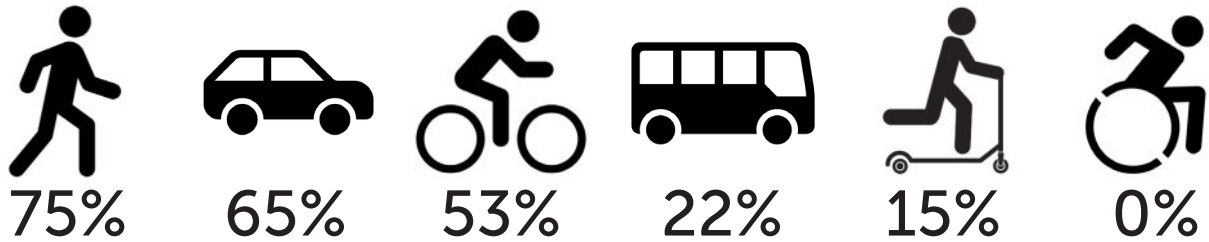
Residents of Adjacent Neighborhoods

USE PATTERNS

- Of the 13% of overall respondents who live in neighborhoods near the bridge, **51%** were from Ohio City, Hingetown and neighborhoods to the west, and **49%** were from the Warehouse District, Downtown and neighborhoods to the east
- **76%** of these local respondents use the bridge on a regular basis (commuting, exercise, etc.), and **47%** use the bridge 3-5 times per week or more
- Highest time of use are evening (**81%**), morning (**62%**) and afternoon (**62%**)

MODES OF TRAVEL

Respondents identified all the modes of travel they use on a regular basis to cross the Veterans Memorial Bridge:



- Participants noted not feeling comfortable crossing the upper level of the bridge on foot, by bicycle or on a mobility device due to high traffic volumes (**39%**) and exposure during bad weather (**37%**).

TOP DESIRED USES FOR THE LOWER LEVEL

- Jogging / walking paths (**85%**)
- Places to enjoy views (**74%**)
- Bike lanes (**72%**)
- Places to sit (**53%**)
- Historic information & features (**49%**)
- Local art (**45%**)

Other considerations included places to get food and beverages

DESIRED FEATURES TO SUPPORT COMFORT & SAFETY

- Lighting improvements (**81%**)
- Multiple access points (**42%**)
- Security cameras (**40%**)
- Connections between upper and lower levels (**40%**)
- Safety personnel (**34%**)

TOP DRAWS

- Live music & performances (**72%**)
- Art exhibits (**69%**)
- Seasonal & holiday themed events, pop-ups & history tours (**63%**) each

Using the space primarily as a location for travel was noted in the comments

98% of respondents expressed interest in making the lower level of the Veterans Memorial Bridge usable for connections and activities.



Appendix

- Materials from 2025 bridge events



Rediscover

Veterans Memorial Bridge



CONNECT
HERE!



East End Connection Concepts

West End Connection Concepts





Veterans Memorial Bridge

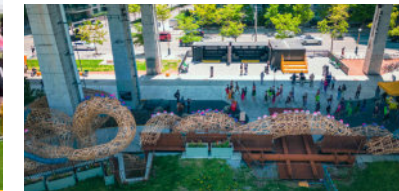
Case Studies

Learning from Other Places

- Establish **clear agreements with partners** in place
- Plan for **accessibility from the start**
- Design **spaces for support** – storage for trash, maintenance, event supplies to minimize resources in mobilizing for operations and events
- Plan ahead for **celebratory, adjustable lighting** options
- **Extend beyond the boundary** of the space to engage others
- Create **predictable schedules**, events, uses, etc.



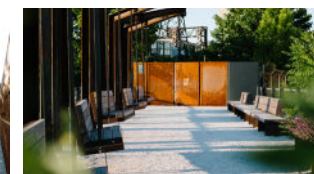
Name | **The Bentway**
Location | **Toronto**
Description | A linear park activating the underside of an elevated highway connecting the lakefront to the city
Year Constructed | **Phase 1 2018**
Ownership | **City of Toronto**
Maintenance & Programming | **Bentway Conservancy**



Name | **Washington Ave Bridge**
Location | **Minnesota**
Description | A double decker bridge on the University of Minnesota's campus that carries pedestrian, bicycle and transit uses above and vehicular uses below.
Year Constructed | **1884, 1964, 1997**
Ownership | **Hennepin County**
Maintenance & Programming | **University of Minnesota**



Name | **The Rail Park**
Location | **Philadelphia**
Description | A repurposed railroad line that serves as linear park in Downtown Philadelphia
Year Constructed | **Phase 1 2018**
Ownership | **City of Philadelphia**
Maintenance & Programming | **Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Department, Friends of the Rail**



Rediscover

Veterans Memorial Bridge



CONNECT
HERE!



2025 Adjacent Project Coordination



1 Superior Midway



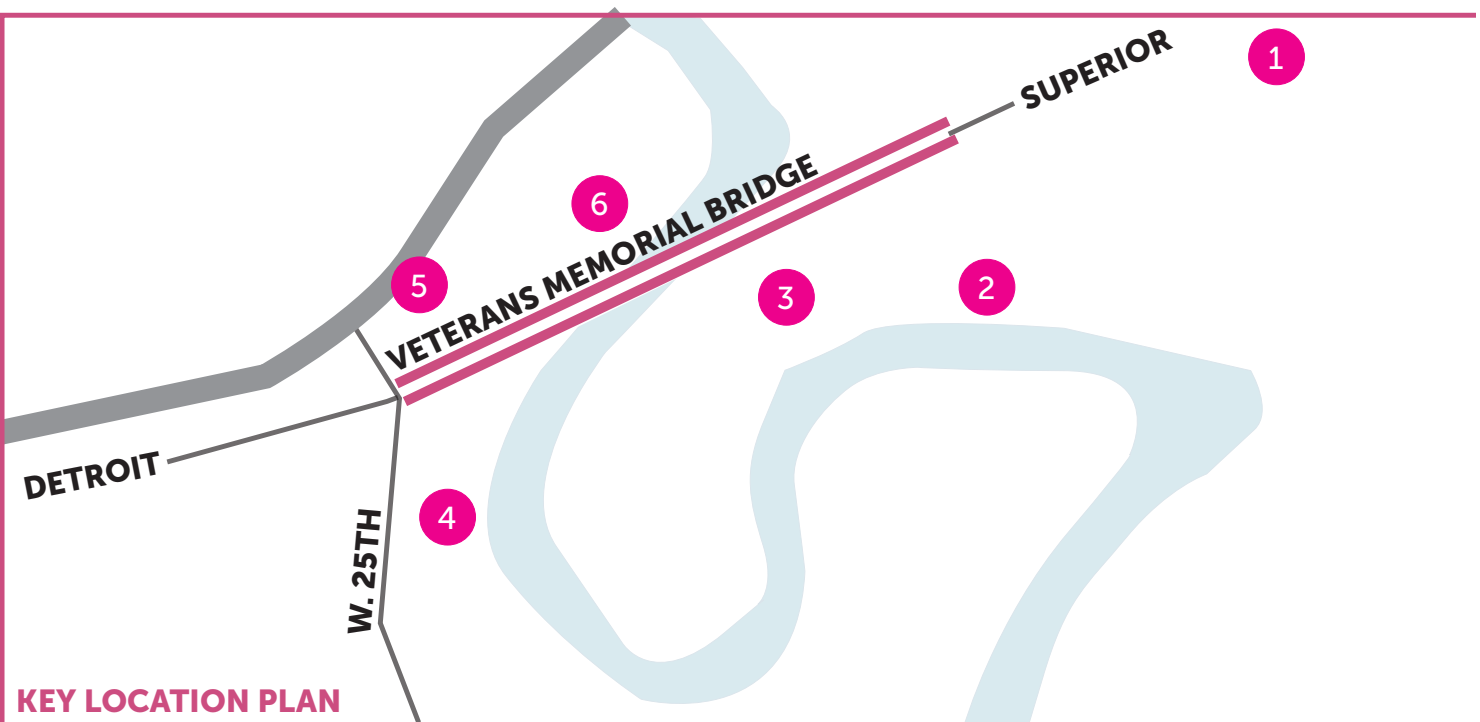
2 Riverfront Cleveland



3 Canal Basin Park



4 IrishTown Bend



KEY LOCATION PLAN



5 BridgeWorks



6 Cleveland Foundation
Centennial Lake Link Trail

