



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	SPECIAL WORK SESSION
MEETING DATE	JULY 27, 2026

ITEM:	Discussion on MnDOT's Central Avenue Improvements Project Proposed Stormwater Treatment Areas and Receipt of the Municipal Consent Public Hearing Question and Comment Log. (90 Minutes)		
<i>Presenting Item: Kelly Monahan, Assistant City Engineer</i>			
DEPARTMENT: Engineering		BY/DATE: Rochelle Widmer / July 23, 2026	
CORE CITY STRATEGIES: <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>			
☐ Community that Grows with Purpose and Equity		☐ Engaged, Effective and Forward-Thinking	
☒ High Quality Public Spaces		☐ Resilient and Prosperous Economy	
☒ Safe, Accessible and Built for Everyone		☐ Inclusive and Connected Community	

BACKGROUND

The Central Ave Improvements project includes reconstruction of the 2-mile stretch of Central Ave (TH 65) between 37th Ave and 53rd Ave. This project will look to address safety concerns through the corridor while enhancing the connectivity and quality of life for the residents that live along and use the corridor. The project will benefit all travelers by reconstructing the road, upgrading pedestrian crossings, improving sidewalks and pathways, managing speed, expanding multimodal options, and improving transit access.

On April 17, 2026, MnDOT submitted the proposed final layout for Central Avenue for Municipal Consent. The City of Columbia Heights is currently in the Municipal Consent review process. Approval or disapproval of the final layout is by resolution of the City Council. However, if the City neither approves nor disapproves the final layout within 90 days of the public hearing, the layout is deemed approved (per MN Statute 161.164). Since the public hearing was held on June 16, 2026, the deadline for approval or disapproval is September 16, 2026.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT STATUS

MnDOT attended the public hearing to present the final layout to the public and listen to questions, as required by statute. MnDOT compiled a log of the questions and comments introduced by the public at the hearing. This log was reviewed by MnDOT, Metro Transit, and City staff for completeness. The responses to the public hearing questions and comments are included as an attachment.

MnDOT has proposed Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) with the Municipal Consent layout. These proposed GSI locations or stormwater treatment areas are located within the ROW and on several City- and privately-owned properties in Columbia Heights. Documentation of the proposed GSI locations is attached along with a list of the associated addresses.

City staff has asked MnDOT to present each of the proposed stormwater treatment areas to the Council in conjunction with staff comments. After each area is presented, staff will seek feedback from the Council on how to proceed with each proposed area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council receive the proposed GSI locations with associated City staff recommendations as the next step in advising MnDOT in the Municipal Consent process. City staff also recommends Council receive the responses to the public hearing question and comment log.

Requested Council Action/ Discussion Topics / Key Questions

(Briefly state the specific action staff is requesting of the City Council, if any. For example: provide direction, discuss options, or review information.)

Staff requests that Council respond to MnDOT's presentation on the proposed stormwater treatment areas within Columbia Heights, giving formal approval or disapproval of each location. If no consensus can be reached on any of the proposed locations, further deliberation will be required at a later work session. Staff also requests that Council receive responses to the Municipal Consent public hearing question and comment log and discuss if time permits.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Central Ave Stormwater Overview

GSI Addresses

GSI Locations

Municipal Consent Layout GSI Locations

Public Hearing Question and Comment Log