

# Welcome and Overview

**Please review the proposed design on the back table/wall**

**MnDOT presentation will begin at 6:10pm**

**Public comments will begin about 6:30pm**

**Comments are limited to 5 minutes –  
also welcome to fill out comment card**



# Central Avenue Improvements Columbia Heights Municipal Consent Public Hearing

Christopher Bower | North Area Engineer

Metro District

June 16, 2026

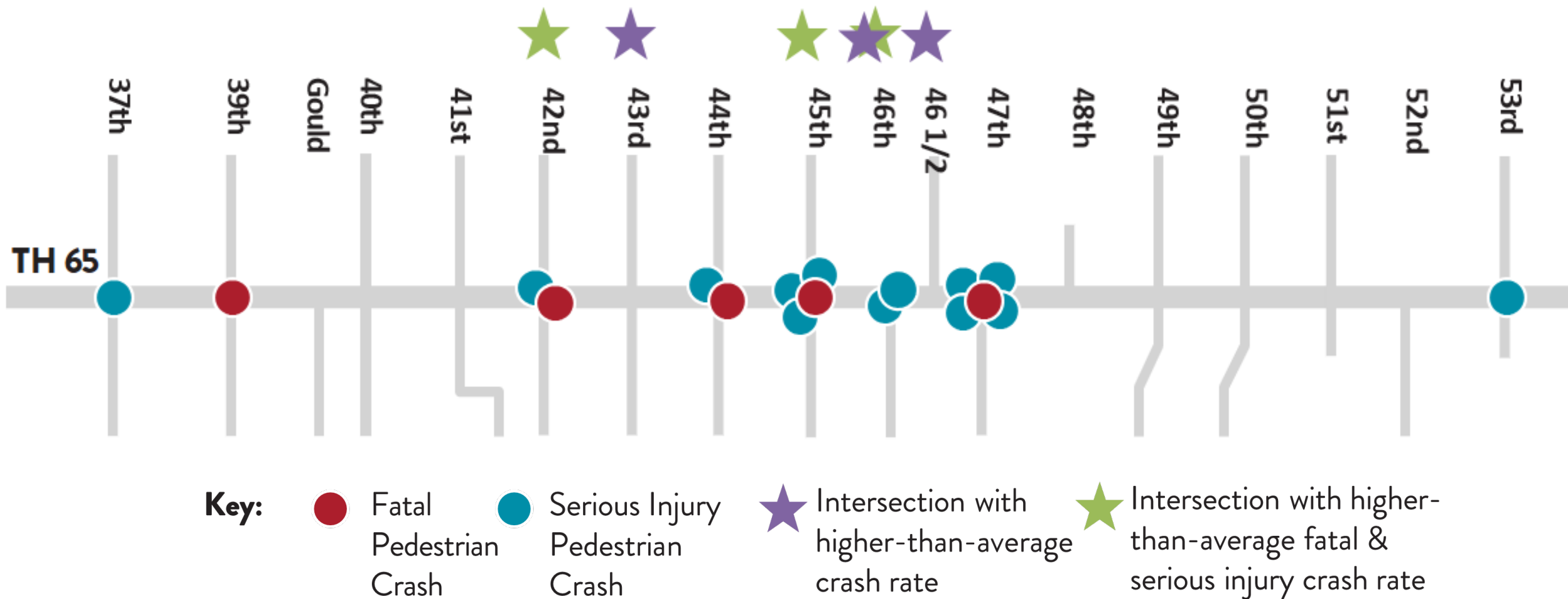
- **Primary Purpose**

- Improve safety
- Improve pavement condition

- **Address additional issues**

- Improve transit associated with Metro Transit's F Line Bus Rapid Transit Project
- Improve underground utilities
- Improve traffic signals and other roadside infrastructure
- Improve walking and bicycling infrastructure

# Crash History (2014-Q2 2024)



# Crash Facts – 2020-2024 (most recent data)

Database of all State Highways in  
MN – nearly 3000 segments

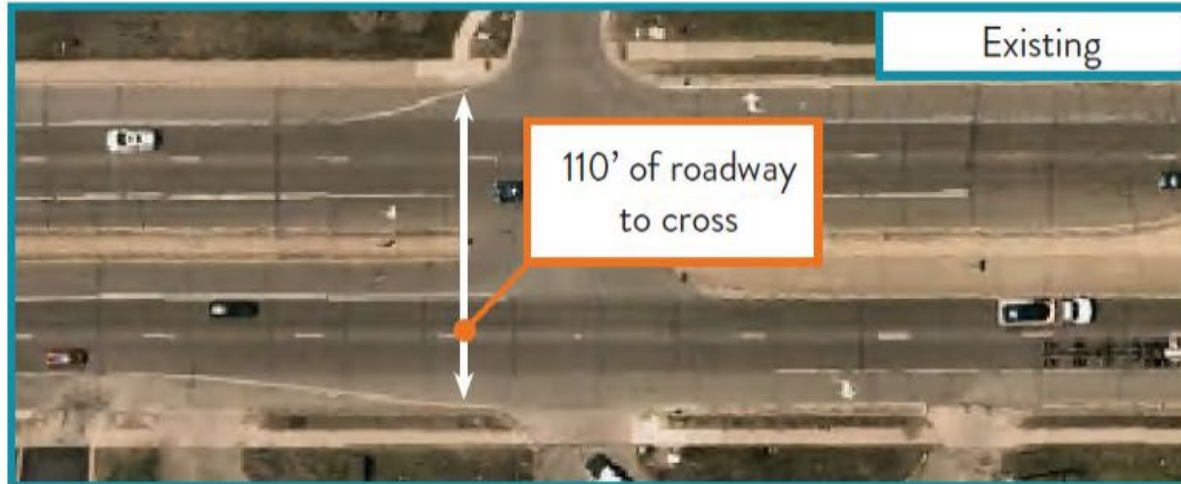
FAR = Rate of serious and fatal crashes  
Index = Adjusted for roadway type, over  
1 is considered "critical"

|    |                                                     |        |                    |               |             |                              |         |        |           |        |       |          |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|-------|----------|
| 1  |                                                     |        |                    |               |             | 1 is considered "critical"   |         |        |           |        |       |          |
| 2  | TRUNK HIGHWAY SECTION TOOLKIT (V1)                  |        |                    |               |             | Statewide                    | 1.166   | -      | 2         | -      | 621   |          |
| 3  | MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering, September 2025 |        |                    |               |             | Filtered Selection           | 1.166   | -      | 2         | -      | 621   |          |
| 4  |                                                     |        |                    |               |             |                              |         |        |           |        |       |          |
| 5  | SECTION DESCRIPTION                                 |        |                    |               |             | CRITICAL RATES (ALL CRASHES) |         |        |           |        |       |          |
| 6  | District(s)                                         | Route  | Route ID           | Begin Measure | End Measure | Category                     | FAR     | FAR*   | FAR Index | CR     | CR*   | CR Index |
| 7  | 6                                                   | MN-60  | 0300000000000060-I | 204.6133      | 219.9218    | Rural 2-lane AADT 1-1499     | 92.009  | 16.336 | 5.63      | 3.128  | 1.078 | 2.90     |
| 8  | M                                                   | MN-65  | 0300000000000065-I | 4.525         | 5.3937      | Urban 4-Lane Divided         | 18.264  | 3.560  | 5.13      | 3.077  | 0.945 | 3.26     |
| 9  | M                                                   | MN-55  | 0300000000000055-I | 188.3214      | 189.6122    | Urban 4-lane Divided         | 18.078  | 3.670  | 4.93      | 4.986  | 0.954 | 5.23     |
| 10 | M                                                   | UNU-52 | 5200000000000052-D | 134.6211      | 135.2707    | Urban 2-lane AADT 8000+      | 61.108  | 12.772 | 4.78      | 10.563 | 2.015 | 5.24     |
| 11 | M                                                   | MN-3   | 0300000000000003-I | 45.187        | 46.1833     | Urban 4-Lane Divided         | 14.433  | 3.458  | 4.17      | 3.464  | 0.936 | 3.70     |
| 12 | 3                                                   | US-169 | 0200000000000169-I | 220.3099      | 221.554     | Urban 4-Lane Divided         | 124.776 | 31.034 | 4.02      | 9.982  | 2.268 | 4.40     |
| 13 | M                                                   | MN-51  | 0300000000000051-I | 6.8444        | 7.3349      | Urban 2-lane AADT 1500-4999  | 67.835  | 18.500 | 3.67      | 3.663  | 2.096 | 1.75     |
| 14 | M                                                   | UNU-52 | 0200000000000052-I | 136.2385      | 138.9397    | Urban Freeway                | 7.983   | 2.268  | 3.52      | 2.089  | 0.743 | 2.81     |
| 15 | 6                                                   | US-14  | 0200000000000014-I | 213.348       | 215.4978    | Urban 4-Lane Divided         | 7.691   | 2.408  | 3.19      | 2.413  | 0.835 | 2.89     |

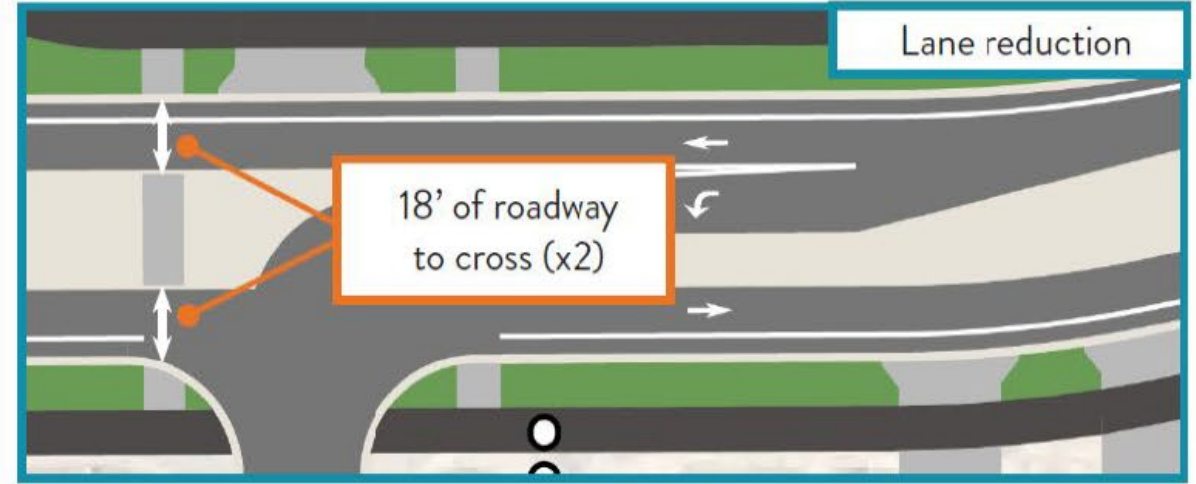
**Central Avenue from 40<sup>th</sup> Ave to 47<sup>th</sup> Ave has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest FAR index of any highway in the state. Fatal and serious crashes are happening at a rate 5 times higher than what MnDOT considers “critical”.**



# Safety Improvements



In the northern portion of Central Ave, there can be up to **110 feet** of roadway for a pedestrian to cross



One of the goals of the new design is to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and provide median refuge to break the crossing movement in half.

# Infrastructure Condition

The underlying pavement on Central Ave is between 61 and 105 years old.

Reconstructed pavement will last longer than a thin layer of asphalt over old pavement.



# Municipal Consent Process

- Municipal Consent required because MnDOT proposes to:
  - ➡ **Remove access - 6 intersections**
  - ↕ **Reduce highway capacity – south of 49<sup>th</sup>**
    - Acquire permanent right of way – refer to layout
- Important way for cities to be heard on these key decisions

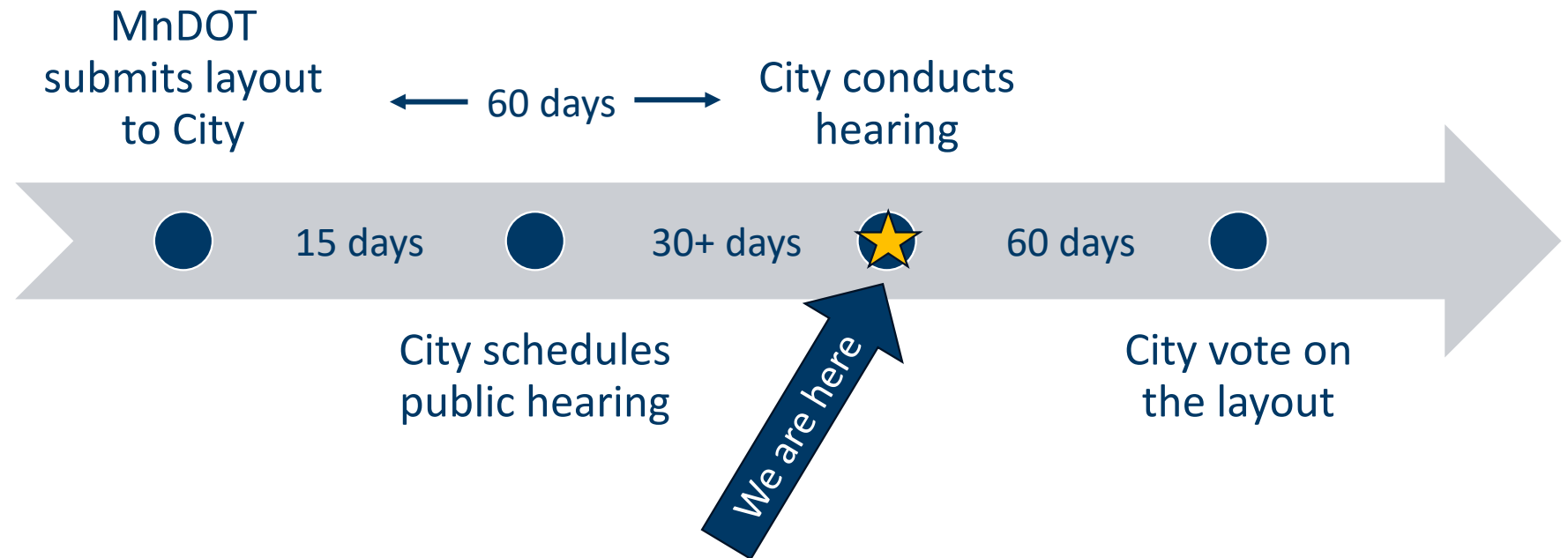




# Municipal Consent Process

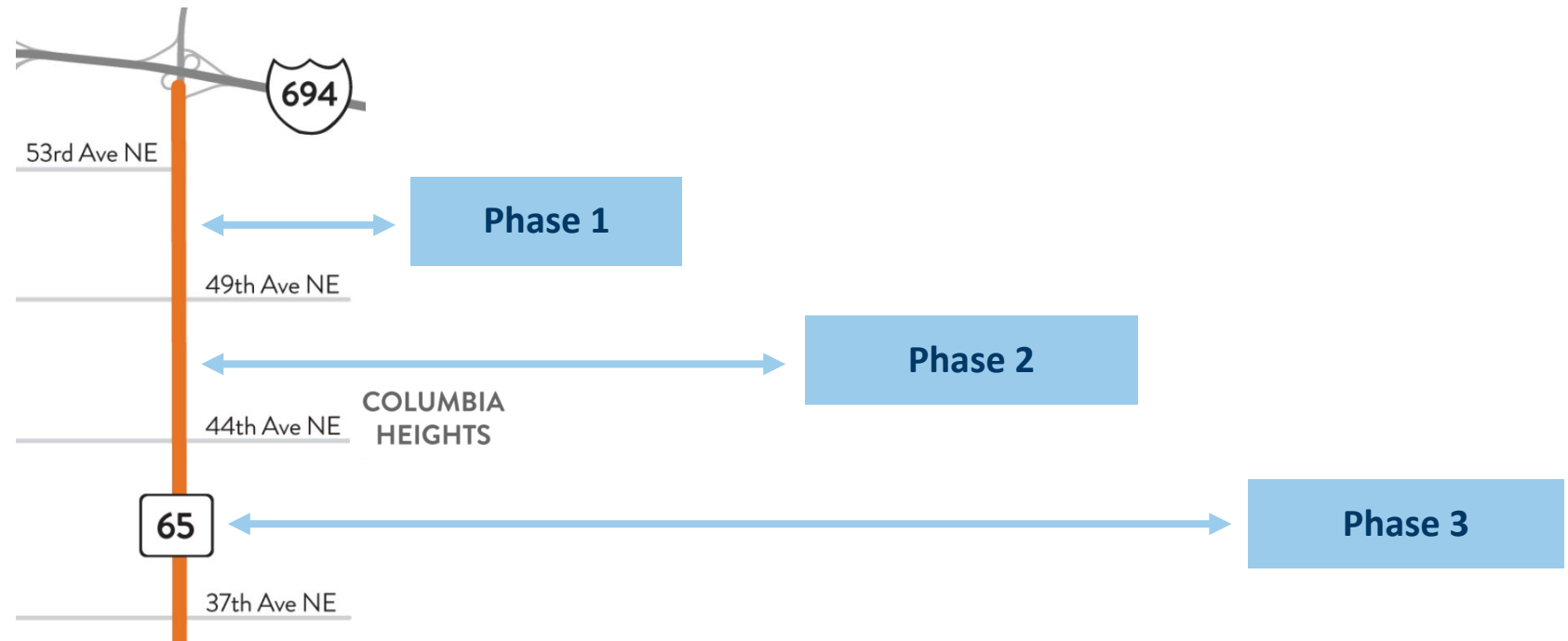
## City may:

- Approve the layout
- Approve the layout with conditions
- Deny the layout
- Do nothing – layout approved by default

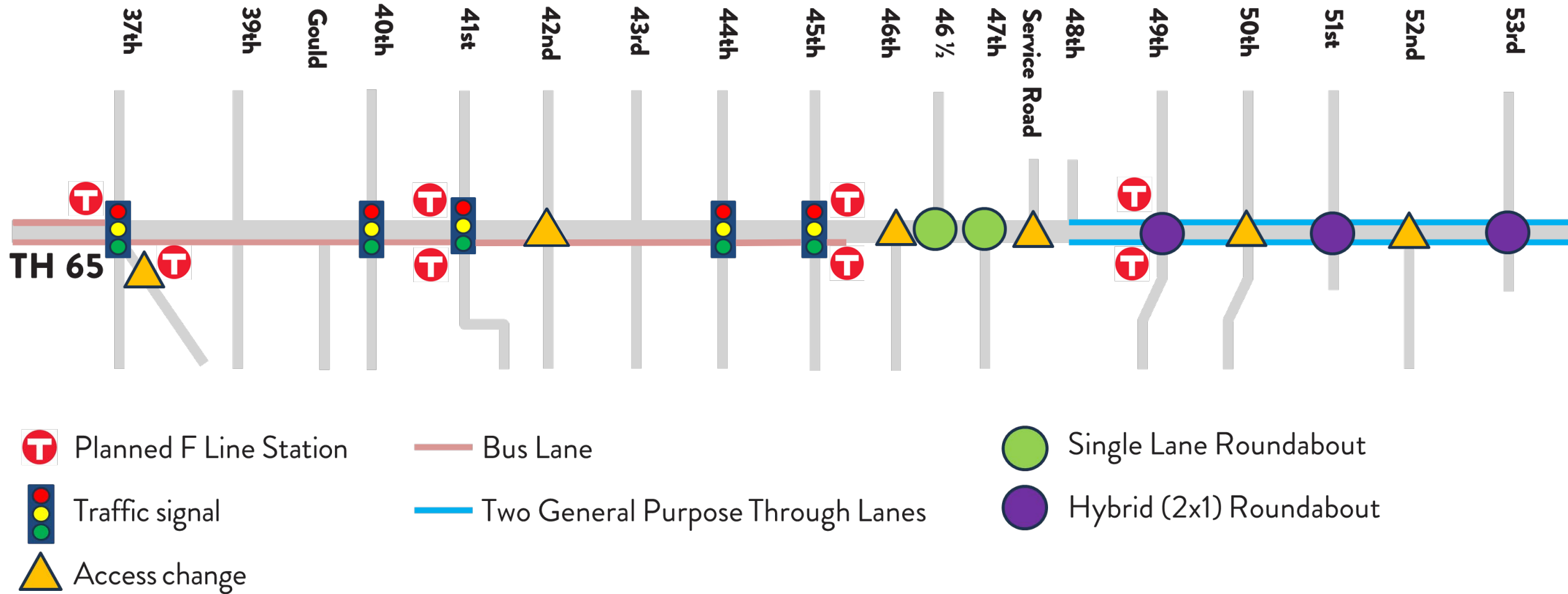


# Project Schedule

| 2026 |    |    |    | 2027 |    |    |    | 2028 |    |    |    | 2029 |    |    |    | 2030 |    |    |    |
|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1   | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |



# Traffic Operations



# Northbound Bus Lane

- Benefits:
  - Improve transit speed and reliability
  - Allows a bus to stop in-lane without delaying general purpose traffic
  - Can be used by general purpose traffic to make right turns
- Spring 2026 Metro Transit bus lane education campaign to increase driver awareness

## BUS LANES



### DO



check your mirrors and **yield to buses** before entering the bus lane



use your **right turn signal** when entering and using the bus lane for authorized turns



enter the bus lane where it is **dashed** before your turn



use the bus lane to **turn right**, when entering or exiting a driveway, or when accessing a designated parking spot

### DON'T



**pull in front of a bus**, even if it is stopped



enter the bus lane where it is **solid**, except to access a parking spot



drive in the bus lane for multiple blocks



park, load, or stop in a bus lane **during unauthorized days/hours**

# Northbound Bus Lane

- Compliance:
  - 40-70% reduction in violations with red paint observed elsewhere in US
  - Twin Cities: Parking violations enforced by regulatory services; moving violations require sworn law enforcement officer, and local police departments lack capacity
  - Metro Transit monitoring impact of violations on bus lane efficacy and exploring possibility of camera-based enforcement





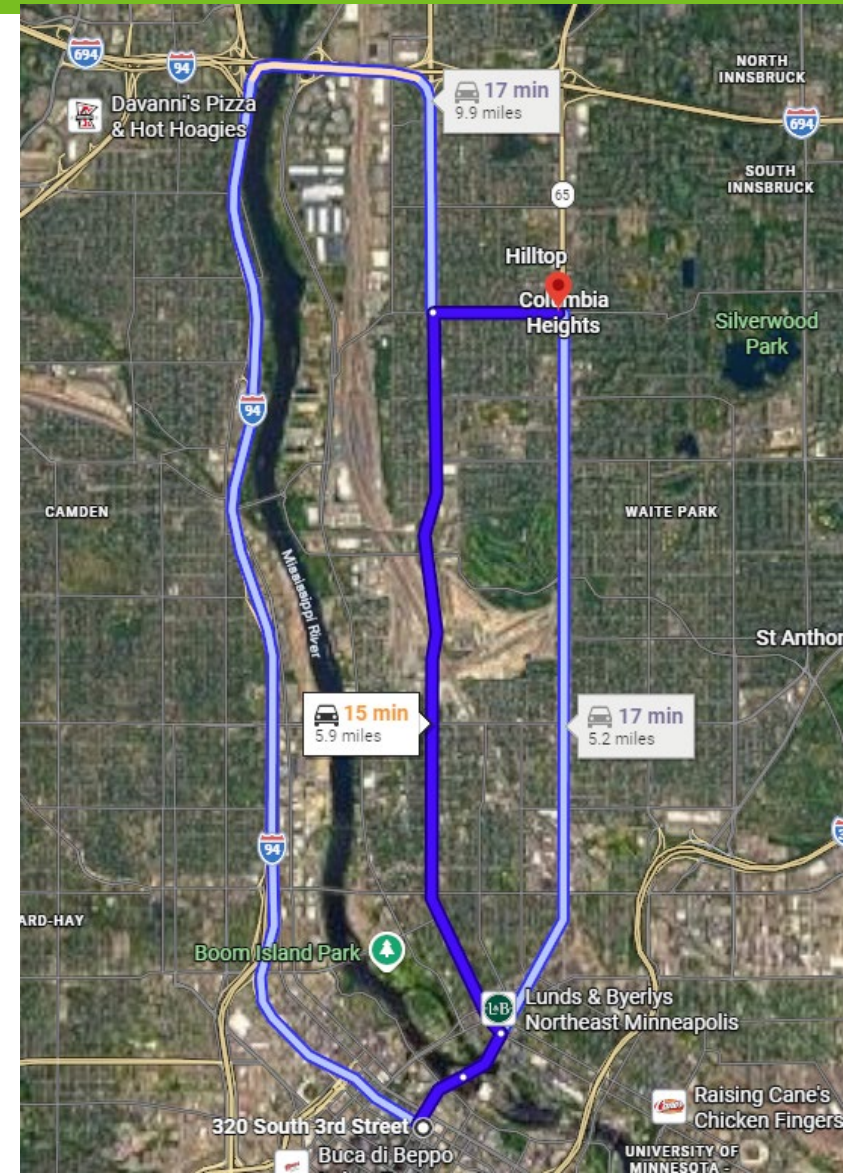
# In-Lane Bus Stops

- Local buses will stop out of the travel lane (in bump-outs)
- F Line buses stop every 10-15 minutes with an approximately 7 second dwell time



# Travel Times post-construction

- Most of the day, travel times on Central Ave post-construction will be similar to what they are today.
- During rush hour, a driver traveling through Columbia Heights may experience an extra 30 seconds of travel time on average
- Today – during rush hour – Central Ave is not the fastest way to get around. The proposed design will not change that.





# Stormwater Treatment

- MnDOT required to reduce phosphorus runoff from Central Ave.
- Proposing “Infiltration Boulevards” – example shown at right
- Requires acquiring some property from city-owned parcels and Gateway Park
- Also requires acquiring some private property – MnDOT has contacted property owners who will be affected



*Photo courtesy of New Jersey Developers Green Infrastructure Guide (Keltic Engineering, Inc.)*

# Project Budget and Maintenance

## Project Budget

- Total Cost - **\$55,800,000**
- Columbia Heights Total Cost - **\$1,026,000** plus any city-requested utility construction
  - Of this, \$800,000 for new traffic signal at 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave and Highway 65



6/1/2026

## Columbia Heights Maintenance Obligations (not comprehensive)

- Routine maintenance of shared-use paths
- Aesthetics and landscaping
- Maintenance of electrical infrastructure and stormwater treatment is shared with MnDOT



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# Visual Quality

- Process to inform the look and feel of project area outside roadway lanes
- Visual Quality Advisory Committee (VQAC) comprised of community, city, county, and project design team members
- VQAC Meetings (4) planned June-Oct 2026
- Visual Quality Manual: deliverable summarizing VQAC recommendations to final design team





# What MnDOT has heard to date

## 2019-2023

### Overall Hwy 47/65 study engagement:

-  440 public meeting attendees
-  3,296 survey responses
-  2,769 map/alternative comments
-  15 virtual stakeholder briefings
-  14 in-person and virtual public meetings
-  256 local calls made to stakeholders
-  2,829 newsletter subscribers
-  125 sidewalk decals and yard signs installed

## 2024-2025

### Central Ave NE engagement:

-  620 public meeting attendees
-  846 survey responses
-  30+ business meetings
-  20 community pop up events
-  13 neighborhood presentations
-  5 city council presentations
-  37,224 postcards sent
-  689 business postcards hand delivered
-  1,710 newsletter subscribers
-  310 public meeting comments

- Support for safety and accessibility
- Support for transit reliability
- Questions/concerns about congestion with fewer lanes
- Roundabouts – mixed feedback
  - Support for single-lane roundabouts
  - Questions about multilane roundabouts. MnDOT committed to more education and signage.

# Public Hearing Guidelines

- Comments are limited to 5 minutes
- Please introduce yourself  
(and address or relation to the project? Question for the cities)
- This is an opportunity to share comments or concerns about the MnDOT proposed design with elected officials
- If you have questions for MnDOT, please fill out a comment card or email [info@CentralAveImprovements.com](mailto:info@CentralAveImprovements.com)
- We welcome constructive criticism of the project, but please be respectful of your neighbors, project staff, and elected officials

# Thank you!

**Christopher Bower**

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