Final Corridor Plan

July 24, 2023

Metro Transit is planning improvements to the Route 10 corridor with the METRO F Line, an arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) service. The F Line will substantially replace Route 10 in Minneapolis, Columbia Heights, Hilltop, Fridley, Spring Lake Park, and Blaine, connecting Northtown Transit Center with downtown Minneapolis and running primarily on University Avenue, 53rd Avenue, Central Avenue, and Nicollet Mall. Arterial BRT is a package of transit enhancements that adds up to a faster trip and an improved experience. The F Line project is currently in the planning phase. The F Line is scheduled for construction beginning in 2025.

This document identifies F Line station locations for approval by the Metropolitan Council. It is the final revision of the F Line Corridor Plan previously published for public comment in draft form on October 24, 2022, and recommended form on April 12, 2023.

To stay in touch, sign up for the F Line project updates at the project website: metrotransit.org/f-line-project.

Executive Summary

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the METRO F Line Corridor Plan is to identify the locations of stations and platforms and provide policy direction to Metro Transit to begin detailed design for the F Line bus rapid transit (BRT) project.

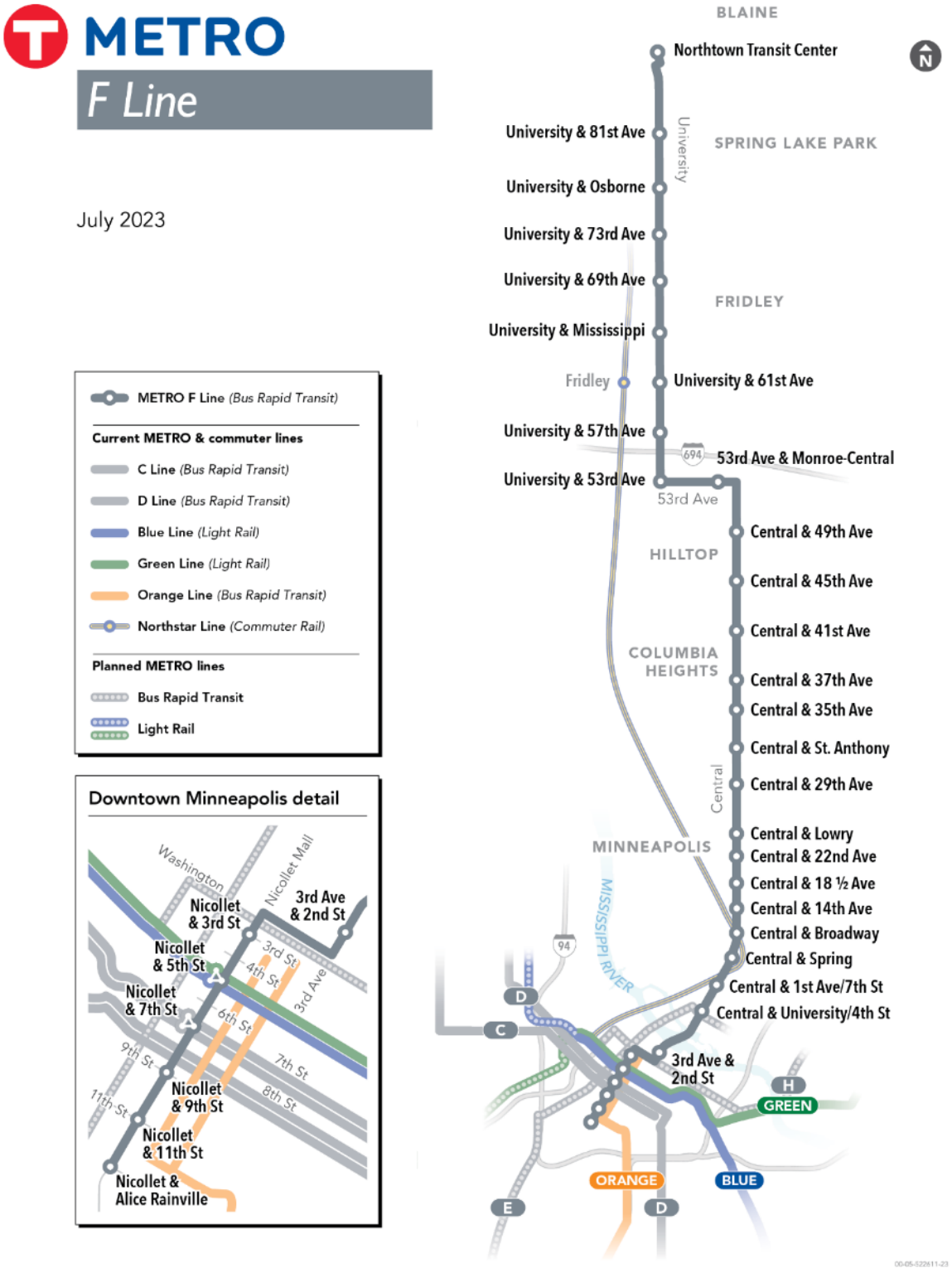
The F Line Corridor Plan is the process and product Metro Transit uses to facilitate early and effective agency coordination and conduct meaningful public engagement on the locations of F Line stations and platforms prior to the engineering phase of the F Line project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

Corridor Overview

The METRO F Line is a planned BRT line that will upgrade and substantially replace Route 10, one of Metro Transit's highest ridership routes. From north to south, the F Line is proposed to operate along a 13-mile corridor from the Northtown Transit Center in Blaine to downtown Minneapolis primarily via University Avenue, 53rd Avenue, Central Avenue, and Nicollet Mall (Figure i). The F Line corridor connects to many important community destinations and other major transit routes, including multiple existing and planned METRO light rail and BRT lines.

A METRO C Line bus serving Penn & Dowling Station; the F Line project will build similar stations and use similar buses (Source: Metro Transit)

Figure i. F Line corridor overview



The Need for Improved Transit in the Corridor

Route 10 is the fifth highest-ridership bus route in the region based on annual ridership, both before the pandemic and today. In September 2019, customers took about 6,500 rides on Route 10 each weekday. Route 10 ridership remains strong, even during the pandemic. In addition to providing access to places and opportunities, Route 10 service is a critical means of moving people in the corridor and an important piece of the broader transportation network.

But Central Avenue is also one of the slowest transit corridors in the region. During peak periods, buses regularly slow to average speeds of 10 miles per hour or less. Frequent stops, lines of customers waiting to board, traffic congestion, and red lights mean that buses are moving less than half the time. Reducing the time it takes for customers to get on and off the bus and the time spent stuck in traffic will significantly improve travel speeds and reliability.

BRT helps address needs by bringing better amenities, faster service, and more comfort to the highest-traveled corridors where many customers rely on transit daily. Advancing equity and reducing regional disparities is a priority for Metro Transit and is used as a guiding principle when identifying future arterial BRT corridors. The F Line can help reduce disparities for people with low incomes and communities of color by improving speed and reliability to connect to jobs and opportunities. About 40 percent of Route 10 riders live in low-income households, and half of Route 10 riders are people of color.

The purpose of the F Line is to provide faster, more reliable, and more attractive bus service along a north-south corridor between Minneapolis, Columbia Heights, Hilltop, Fridley, Spring Lake Park, and Blaine. The need for the project can be summarized by two key challenges: slow and unreliable transit service and passenger facilities inadequate for the high volume of people using them.

Stations

The F Line will stop at 32 locations (stations) across the 13-mile corridor, with stops placed about 0.4 miles apart (two to three stops per mile) on average to balance speed and access. Stopping less often is anticipated to help F Line service operate about 20 percent faster than the existing Route 10, when combined with other improvements. F Line stations will be designed to provide faster and more efficient service, along with amenities that foster an improved customer experience.

After the Final Corridor Plan is approved by the Metropolitan Council, this document will guide the detailed design of stations by confirming **station intersections** and **platform locations** at those intersections. Other characteristics will be finalized through detailed engineering.

Service

The F Line is planned to operate as frequently as every 10 minutes, seven days a week during the day and most of the evening, substantially replacing Route 10 as the primary service in the corridor. The exact F Line schedule, including hours of service and transitions from high-frequency service during the core of the day into later evening service, will be developed closer to the opening of the F Line.

Local service could operate in a portion of the F Line corridor between Columbia Heights Transit Center (41st Avenue) and 53rd Avenue. The modified Route 10 could continue to operate on a path like the

existing Route 10N between Northtown Transit Center and Columbia Heights Transit Center, maintaining service through Spring Lake Park and Fridley along Central Avenue north of 53rd Avenue, and no longer serving downtown Minneapolis. The modified Route 10 could operate approximately every 30-60 minutes. Final service plans, including the frequency and termini for potential modified Route 10 and other corridor and connecting routes will be addressed in a corridor service plan later in project development as the F Line nears implementation.

Bus Priority Treatments

Bus priority treatments are being evaluated along the F Line corridor to help meet project goals for faster transit service. These treatments include modifications to traffic signal timing and implementation of transit signal priority (TSP) and bus queue jumps so that people on buses spend less time stopped at signals or in traffic. Metro Transit intends to work with its partners to implement TSP as part of the F Line project. Signals along the corridor will be evaluated and considered for TSP implementation during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

The Corridor Plan also outlines Metro Transit's priorities for implementation of bus-only lanes along the F Line corridor. Metro Transit does not control streets or make decisions about vehicle lanes. Bus lanes would need to be implemented in partnership with roadway authorities. Metro Transit and agency partners continue to analyze bus-only lanes and discuss how they could be implemented in coordination with other street projects.

Planning Process

The contents of this Corridor Plan were developed by Metro Transit staff throughout 2022 and into 2023 with inputs and feedback received from the Technical Advisory Committee consisting of staff from agency partners and through ongoing community outreach and engagement activities.

The Final Corridor Plan is the third of three planned versions of the Corridor Plan. It incorporates feedback collected during community outreach and engagement activities, agency coordination, and public comment periods on the Draft Corridor Plan in fall/winter 2022 and the Recommended Corridor Plan in spring 2023. Metropolitan Council approval of the Final Corridor Plan will be sought in summer 2023. Upon completion and approval, the plan will identify the final planned locations for F Line stations in advance of project engineering.

Public Engagement

Metro Transit released the Draft Corridor Plan on October 24, 2022, starting a public comment period that lasted until December 5, 2022. During this time, Metro Transit staff engaged riders and community members through a variety of means to gather feedback on the Plan and learn from their experiences.

Project staff revised the draft document based on feedback received and ongoing interagency coordination. This was summarized and incorporated into a Recommended Corridor Plan, which was shared for an additional round of public outreach and engagement. The Recommended Corridor Plan public comment period occurred April 12 through May 14, 2023.

The full Draft and Recommended corridor plan documents, individual station plans, and presentations and meeting materials were available to view online throughout both public comment periods. A comment survey form (online and paper), project email address (FLine@metrotransit.org), and phone number were also made available for the public to submit comments. When meeting in-person or virtually, community were encouraged to comment using these methods; paper comment cards were made available at in-person events.

Release of the Draft Corridor Plan and Recommended Corridor Plan were communicated through print, digital, and in-person communications. This included postcards, signs at bus stops, in-person conversations, a virtual open house, partnerships and meetings with community organizations and neighborhood groups, shared promotion by partner agencies, emails to project and Metro Transit subscription lists, and targeted social media posts. Project information was shared in English, Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Oromo, and Arabic.

Metro Transit received 332 comments on the Draft Corridor Plan and an additional 519 comments on the Recommended Corridor Plan, for a total of 851 individual comments. Additionally, Metro Transit received a 205-signature petition during the Draft Corridor Plan public comment period organized by a business (Otter's Saloon) adjacent to the proposed Central & 1st Avenue/7th Street Station voicing opposition to the proposed southbound platform location.

A complete summary of comments received, including by key themes, is included in *Appendix A: Corridor Plan Comment Summary*. Revisions to the plan based on this feedback are summarized below.

Revisions in the Final Corridor Plan

Metro Transit project staff considered changes to station locations and/or platforms based on feedback received following the two public comment periods on earlier versions of this plan and in context of traffic modeling completed in coordination with roadway agency partners. Staff included responses to station-specific feedback and/or analyzed additional alternatives for station locations that received the greatest number of comments requesting changes to the plan. These station locations are listed below.

Upon additional analysis and review, no changes are recommended to the following stations:

- Central & Lowry (additional discussion on page 100)
- Central & Spring (see page 128)
- Central & 1st Avenue/7th Street (see page 131)

In this Final Corridor Plan, project staff are recommending changes to the following station location – differing from what was previously included in the Draft Corridor Plan and Recommended Corridor Plan:

- Central & 18th Avenue: Shift to Central & 18 ½ Avenue (see page 110)

Detailed discussion of additional analysis and response to comments on specific station locations can be found at the page numbers listed above within the *Stations by Location* section of the plan.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the METRO F Line Corridor Plan is to identify the locations of stations and platforms and provide policy direction to Metro Transit to begin detailed design for the F Line bus rapid transit (BRT) project.

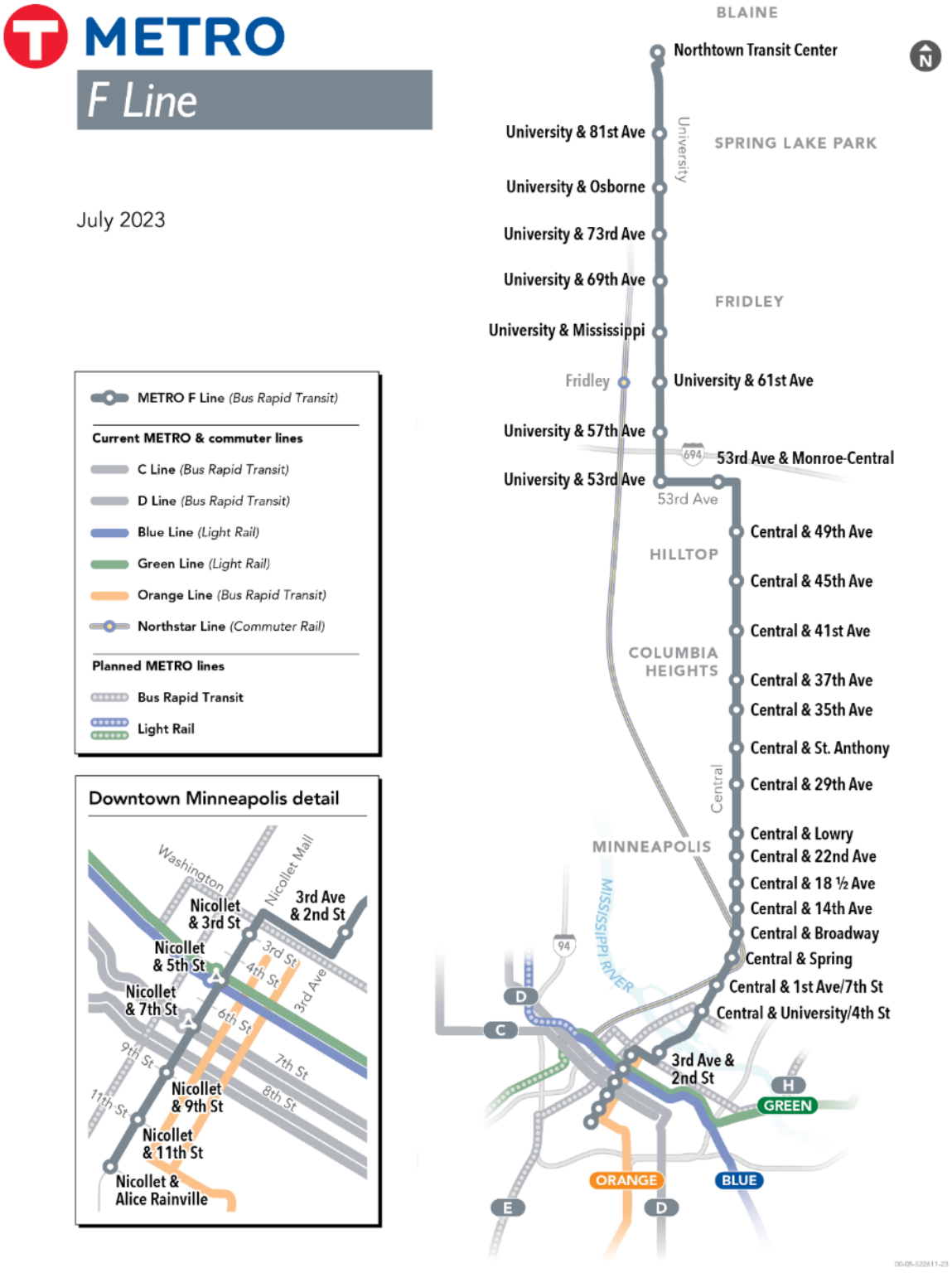
The F Line Corridor Plan is the process and product Metro Transit uses to facilitate early and effective agency coordination and conduct meaningful public engagement on the location of F Line stations and platforms prior to the engineering phase of the F Line project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023). Detailed design of stations, complete evaluation of bus priority treatments like bus-only lanes and changes to traffic signals, and refinement of other important project elements like local service in the corridor will be addressed further in the engineering phase of the project.

Corridor Overview

The METRO F Line is a planned BRT line that will upgrade and substantially replace Route 10, one of Metro Transit's highest ridership routes. From north to south, the F Line is proposed to operate along a 13-mile corridor from the Northtown Transit Center in Blaine to downtown Minneapolis primarily via University Avenue, 53rd Avenue, Central Avenue, and Nicollet Mall (Figure 1). The F Line corridor connects to many important community destinations and other major transit routes, including multiple existing and planned METRO light rail and BRT lines.

Passengers lined up waiting to board a Route 10 bus along Nicollet Mall at 5th Street in downtown Minneapolis (Sept. 2022) [Source: Metro Transit]

Figure 1. F Line corridor overview

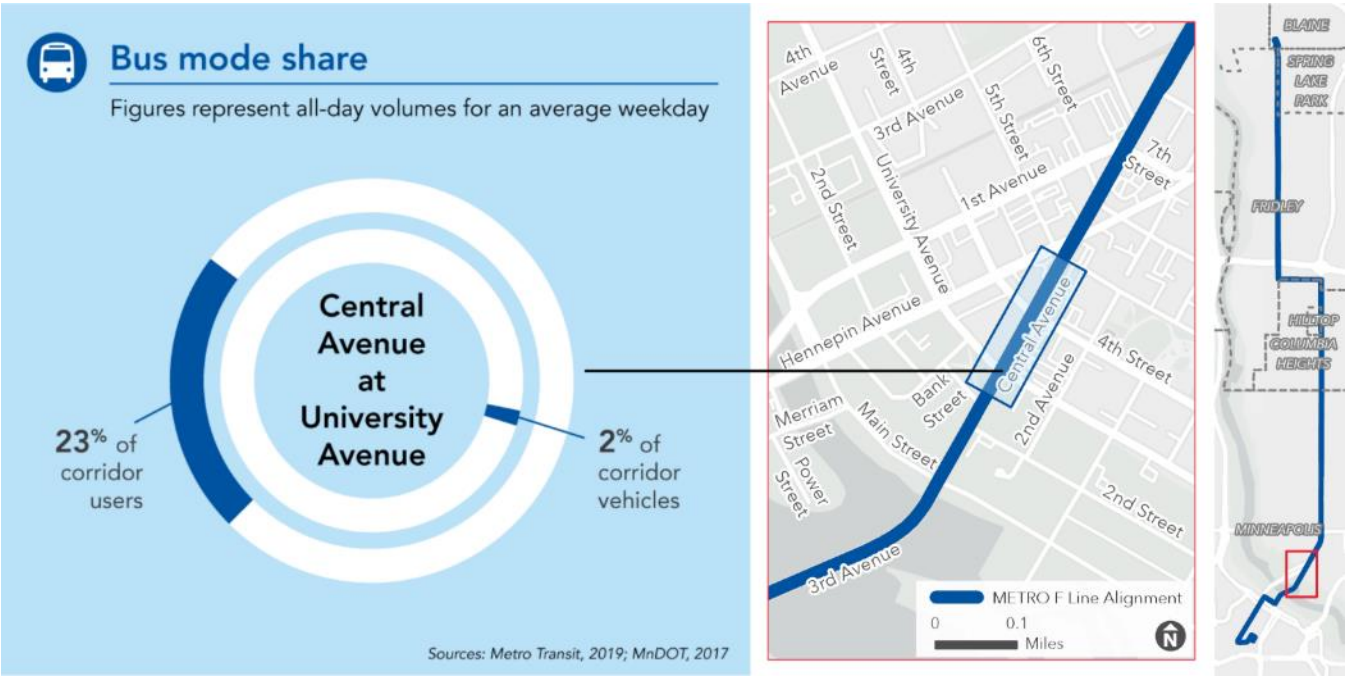


The Need for Improved Transit in the Corridor

Route 10 is the fifth highest-ridership bus route in the region based on annual ridership, both before the pandemic and today. In September 2019, customers took about 6,500 rides on Route 10 each weekday. Route 10 ridership remains strong, even during the pandemic. In addition to providing access to places and opportunities, Route 10 service is a critical means of moving people in the corridor and an important piece of the broader transportation network. For example, on Central Avenue at the intersection with University Avenue, buses carry approximately 23 percent of people traveling by vehicle on Central Avenue but make up just 2 percent of vehicle traffic (Figure 2).

But Central Avenue is also one of the slowest transit corridors in the region. During peak periods, buses regularly slow to average speeds of 10 miles per hour or less. Frequent stops, lines of customers waiting to board, traffic congestion, and red lights mean that buses are moving less than half the time. Reducing the time it takes for customers to get on and off the bus and the time spent stuck in traffic will significantly improve travel speeds and reliability.

Figure 2. Transit users and buses as a percentage of total corridor users (in vehicles) and vehicles



Route 10 has continued to provide important service throughout the pandemic, remaining one of the highest ridership bus routes in the region. Across the Metro Transit system, and in a trend mirrored across the country, frequent, all-day service supporting a variety of trip purposes has retained relatively high levels of ridership during the pandemic. The characteristics that make the Route 10 corridor a good candidate for BRT investment have also made the corridor a continued strong performer across the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advancing equity and reducing regional disparities is a priority for Metro Transit and is used as a guiding principle when identifying future arterial BRT corridors. The F Line can help reduce disparities for people with low incomes and communities of color by improving speed and reliability to connect to jobs and

opportunities. About 40 percent of Route 10 riders live in low-income households, and half of Route 10 riders are people of color.

The purpose of the F Line is to provide faster, more reliable, and more attractive bus service along a north-south corridor between Minneapolis, Columbia Heights, Hilltop, Fridley, Spring Lake Park, and Blaine. The need for the project can be summarized by two key challenges: slow and unreliable transit service and passenger facilities inadequate for the high volume of people using them.

What is Arterial BRT?

Arterial BRT is a package of transit enhancements that produces a faster trip and an improved experience for customers in the Twin Cities' busiest transit corridors. It runs on existing roadways, usually in mixed traffic.

The F Line will be the sixth operational line within the Twin Cities region's arterial BRT system.

- The A Line on Snelling Avenue and Ford Parkway began service in June 2016
- The C Line on Penn Avenue began service in June 2019
- The D Line on Chicago and Fremont avenues began service in December 2022
- The B Line on Lake Street and Marshall and Selby avenues began construction in 2023
- The E Line on University Avenue/4th Street and Hennepin and France avenues is planned for construction to start in 2024

Station design and amenities are consistent for each arterial BRT line while adapting to integrate within the unique street designs and surrounding land uses across different corridors.

High-Quality Stations

Arterial BRT provides faster, more reliable service, and amenities at stations and on the bus that offer an improved customer experience. See Figure 3 for the general design and features of arterial BRT stations in the Twin Cities. While stations share basic characteristics and branding as shown in Figure 3, each station is designed to fit into the surrounding context and meet ridership demand.

Figure 3. Arterial BRT station features

(Source: Google Maps)

Curb extensions / bump outs

Where arterial BRT runs in general traffic, stations are typically built with curb extensions (also called bump outs or bus bulbs) where feasible. Today, many existing local bus stops are located out of a thru-lane of traffic in right-turn lanes or in a curbside parking lane, causing delay for buses merging back into traffic. Curb bump outs at station platforms eliminate the need to merge back into traffic, which causes delay. They also provide space for station amenities and pedestrians on existing sidewalks.

Off-board fare payment

Like on other METRO lines, customers will pay fares prior to boarding the bus and may board through any bus door. Ticket vending machines and fare card validators will be located at each station. Off-board fare payment speeds up the boarding process and helps keep the bus moving. Fare payment will be enforced through random on-board inspections by Metro Transit police.

Shelters

Arterial BRT shelters provide weather protection while customers wait for the bus. Standard arterial BRT shelters feature on-demand heaters, seating, and integrated lighting. Shelters have concrete foundations which increase the level of protection from the elements and make the shelters feel more permanent.

Information

Each BRT station has a pylon marker displaying real-time NexTrip bus departures. Stations also have a printed panel with timetable, maps, and connection information. Detailed transit information is provided in a variety of formats (including audio for low-vision riders) to offer clear direction and increase customer confidence in trip status.

Near level boarding

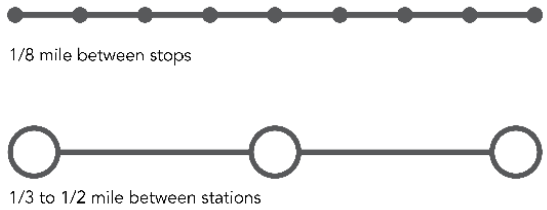
To make it easy to board BRT buses, curb heights at stations are raised to nine inches, compared to the standard of six inches. Near level boarding makes it easier for customers to enter and exit the bus. Customers using mobility devices will still be able to board using an accessible ramp.

Safety amenities, furnishings, and other improvements

Several station components will enhance customer safety and comfort, including security cameras and emergency telephones and adequate space for fast boarding and alighting. Benches, bins for trash and recycling, and bicycle parking will be available for customer use.

Fast, Frequent, All-Day Service

Arterial BRT provides frequent, all-day service that will be more reliable and about 20 percent faster than the existing local service in the corridor.



Limited stops
Arterial BRT stations are spaced about every half mile, focusing on places where the greatest numbers of customers board buses today. With fewer stations, buses can travel much faster while still providing convenient access for customers to walk, bike, or roll to stations.

High-frequency service
Arterial BRT provides high-frequency service in the corridor throughout the day and most of the evening. Frequent service is also provided on nights and weekends.

BRT vehicles
Arterial BRT vehicles are 60-foot articulated buses designed for a comfortable ride. Three wide doors and low floors make it easy and fast to enter and exit arterial BRT buses. Customers using mobility devices are still able to board using an accessibility ramp.

(Source: City of Minneapolis)

Bus priority treatments
Bus priority treatments are used to help keep buses moving in traffic to provide faster and more reliable service. Transit signal priority (TSP) reduces the time buses spend stopped at red lights by linking buses to traffic signals. Bus-only lanes reduce the time that buses spend stopped in traffic.

F Line Project Schedule and Implementation

Anticipated Project Schedule

Planning phase (2022-2023)

The Metropolitan Council adopted the Central Avenue corridor (developed as part of Network Next) as the F Line in March 2021. The planning phase will conclude with the adoption and approval of the final F Line Corridor Plan by the Metropolitan Council, expected in summer 2023. The approved F Line Corridor Plan will finalize station locations and key station components to inform the engineering phase.

Engineering phase (2023-2024)

Following Metropolitan Council approval of the final F Line Corridor Plan, station engineering will begin in 2023 and continue into fall 2024. Specific details such as the precise placement of shelters and other amenities within station platforms will be determined in this phase of the project.

Construction phase (beginning 2025)

The F Line is targeted to begin construction in 2025. Twenty-five new stations are anticipated to be built as part of the F Line project. The F Line is planned to use existing facilities at Northtown Transit Center and along Nicollet Mall.

Coordinated Implementation

Several F Line stations will be developed in coordination with planned projects throughout the corridor, as summarized below. Details for these projects, including timelines, are subject to change. Additional coordinated projects may be included as planning and engineering for the F Line continue.

Highway 47 and Highway 65 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is leading the Highway 47 and Highway 65 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study. The F Line alignment is within the PEL study area on Central Avenue (Highway 65) between University and 53rd avenues and on University Avenue (Highway 47) between 53rd and 85th avenues. All proposed F Line stations are within the study area except the Northtown Transit Center, the three proposed platforms on 53rd Avenue, the 3rd Avenue & 2nd Street Station, and the six stations along Nicollet Mall.

The purpose of the PEL Study is to evaluate existing and future conditions along Highway 47 (University Avenue) and Highway 65 (Central Avenue) to identify needs and potential transportation improvements for inclusion in future projects that improve safety and mobility for all users, including vehicular traffic, pedestrians, bike and transit users, and freight operators. The study will identify a set of desired roadway design alternatives for these corridors, which may include changes to the width of the roadway, number of travel lanes, and implementation of other safety improvements. Identified alternatives will be implemented through separate projects following the completion of the study.

Metro Transit is coordinating closely with MnDOT to assess the feasibility of implementing additional transit advantages in the corridor, such as bus-only lanes. Development of F Line stations within the

projects' shared segments will be coordinated with the PEL Study as it continues to advance. Additional project details are available at: talk.dot.state.mn.us/hwy-47-hwy-65-study.

Highway 47 and Highway 65 intersection safety improvements

Independent from the PEL Study, MnDOT is planning improvements at intersections along Highway 47 (University Avenue) and Highway 65 (Central Avenue) to address safety. These improvements are planned to be constructed in 2025. The following proposed F Line stations are within the project areas: all stations along University Avenue, as well as Central & 49th Avenue, Central & 45th Avenue, Central & 41st Avenue, and Central & 37th Avenue.

Mississippi Street (County Road 6) Roadway Modification Study

Anoka County will be reconstructing Mississippi Street on either side of University Avenue in 2025, affecting the F Line's Central & Mississippi Station. The project includes construction of 8-foot sidewalk on the north side of the street and 8-foot shared use trail on the south side, as well as the closure of University Service Road where it meets Mississippi Street near the southeast corner of the intersection. Additional project details are available at: anokacountymn.gov/3752/Mississippi-St-CSAH-6-Mod-Study.

53rd Avenue Trail and Walk Improvements and 53rd Avenue Turnabout projects

The cities of Columbia Heights and Fridley are constructing multimodal improvements along 53rd Avenue between Main Street and Central Avenue in 2023. In coordination, the cities will be completing the 53rd Avenue Trail and Walk Improvements project between Main Street and Monroe Street, and the 53rd Avenue Roundabout Safety project between Monroe Street and Central Avenue. The University & 53rd Avenue and 53rd Avenue & Monroe-Central F Line stations are within the project areas. Additional project details are available at: fridleymn.gov/1635/53rd-Avenue-Trail-and-Walk-Improvements-; https://www.ci.fridley.mn.us/1639/53rd-Avenue-Roundabout-Safety-Project; and columbiaheightsmn.gov/departments/public_works/construction_projects.php.

Central Avenue safety improvements phase II: 43rd to 47th avenues

Led by MnDOT and the City of Columbia Heights, this project would continue the safety improvements installed in 2016 from 47th to 51st avenues. Work would include new LED street and pedestrian lighting, new sidewalks, new signage, and minor right-of-way acquisition. The City has been awarded federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) dollars for this project in 2025.

37th Avenue reconstruction

The cities of Minneapolis and Columbia Heights are reconstructing 37th Avenue from Central Avenue to Stinson Boulevard, with construction anticipated to last until late 2023. The new design calls for additional boulevard and green space, and the introduction of a shared use trail on the north side of 37th Avenue to connect to the existing shared used trail west of Central Avenue (extending west to University Avenue). The Central & 37th Avenue Station is within the project area. Additional project details are available at: minneapolismn.gov/government/projects/37th-ave-ne-reconstruction and https://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/departments/public_works/construction_projects.php.

Lowry Avenue corridor improvement

Hennepin County is currently leading a project to update the roadway design and reconstruct Lowry Avenue between Marshall and Johnson streets in Northeast Minneapolis. Construction is expected to occur in 2024-2025. Current plans call for a two-way shared use path along the north side of Lowry Avenue and a new three-lane configuration (with one lane in each direction plus a center turn lane) at the intersection with Central Avenue. Additional project details are available at: hennepin.us/lowry-avenue.

Metro Transit, Hennepin County, MnDOT, and the City of Minneapolis are coordinating closely to design and phase the construction of improvements at Central and Lowry in a way that minimizes construction impacts to the local community and roadway users and delivers a better overall intersection.

Hennepin and First roadway improvements

Hennepin County is developing a design plan for multimodal improvements on Hennepin and 1st avenues (County Road 52) between Main and 8th streets in Northeast Minneapolis. The project includes design elements that will improve bike and pedestrian facilities and access to transit. The proposed Central & 1st Avenue/7th Street F Line station is adjacent to the project. Metro Transit is coordinating with the County as design plans are refined and will continue to as the project approaches construction and completion in 2024. Additional project details are available at: hennepin.us/hennepin-and-first.

3rd Avenue bikeway

MnDOT, in partnership with the City of Minneapolis, is exploring opportunities to upgrade existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities on 3rd Avenue (Highway 65) between 1st Street and Washington Avenue, given recent serious injury crashes. Continued development of this proposed station plan will be coordinated with MnDOT and the City as both projects advance into design and engineering. The 3rd Avenue & 2nd Street F Line station is within the project area.

Left: Small businesses along Central Avenue near 41st Avenue; right: person walking down the sidewalk lined with small businesses on Central Avenue near Lowry Avenue. (Source: Metro Transit)

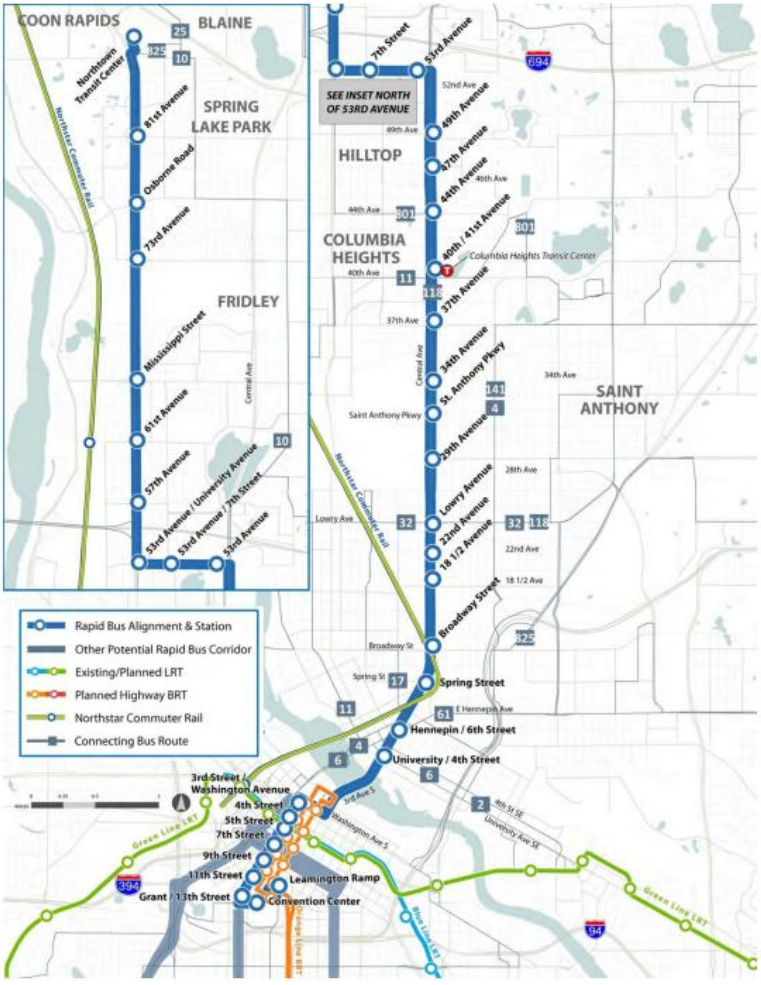
Planning Process

Previous Plans, Studies, and Projects

Arterial Transitway Corridors Study (2012)

In 2012, Metro Transit completed the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study (ATCS), which developed the arterial BRT concept and identified 11 corridors with high-ridership bus routes for implementation of arterial BRT. The ATCS presented the basic components of how arterial BRT would operate in the Twin Cities and offered initial concept-level station locations, ridership estimates, and costs for the eleven lines, including a Central Avenue corridor like the planned F Line corridor (Figure 4). The Central Avenue corridor performed well on the technical evaluation criteria but was not recommended for near-term implementation because it was expected to be analyzed for transit improvements in greater detail as part of a separate planning process.

Figure 4. ATCS Central Avenue corridor map (2012)

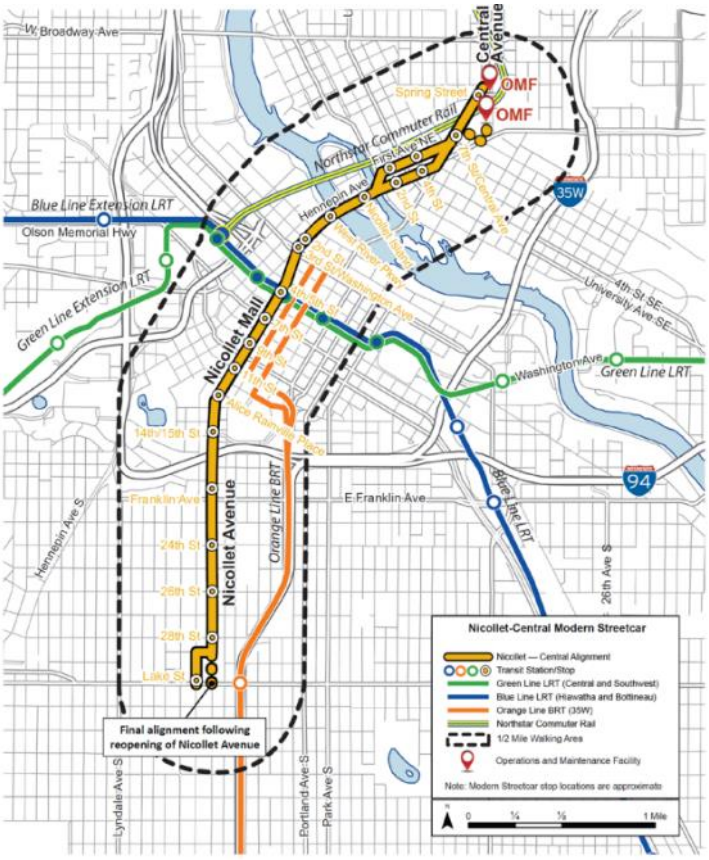


Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar (2007)

In 2007, the City of Minneapolis completed a long-range streetcar feasibility study that recommended seven modern streetcar corridors, including the Nicollet Corridor between the I-35W & 46th Street (BRT) Station and the Nicollet Mall (light rail) Station and the Central Corridor between the Nicollet Mall (light rail) Station and 49th Street in Columbia Heights. In 2013, the City of Minneapolis completed the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives Study to evaluate various alignments and modes for the corridor including No Build, Enhanced Bus, and Modern Streetcar options for the 9.2-mile Nicollet-Central corridor and a 3.4-mile modern streetcar line between Lake Street and at least 5th Street NE.

Based on project goals, public engagement, and technical analysis, the Minneapolis City Council approved a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and recommended modern streetcar to the Metropolitan Council for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Policy Plan. This alternative included modern streetcar service along a 3.4-mile segment of the corridor running between Lake Street and at least 5th Street NE on Nicollet Avenue, Nicollet Mall, Hennepin and 1st avenues, and Central Avenue, using the Hennepin Avenue bridge to cross the Mississippi River (Figure 5). In its Transportation Action Plan (December 2020), the City of Minneapolis identified an action to plan, design, and construct high capacity, neighborhood-based transit along the Nicollet-Central corridors, partnering with Metro Transit to pursue new transit projects of high impact. Advancing the F Line in the Central Avenue corridor supports the City's action in the Transportation Action Plan to plan, design and construct high-capacity neighborhood transit along the Nicollet-Central corridors.

Figure 5. Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar project map (2013)



Nicollet Mall Reconstruction (2015-2017)

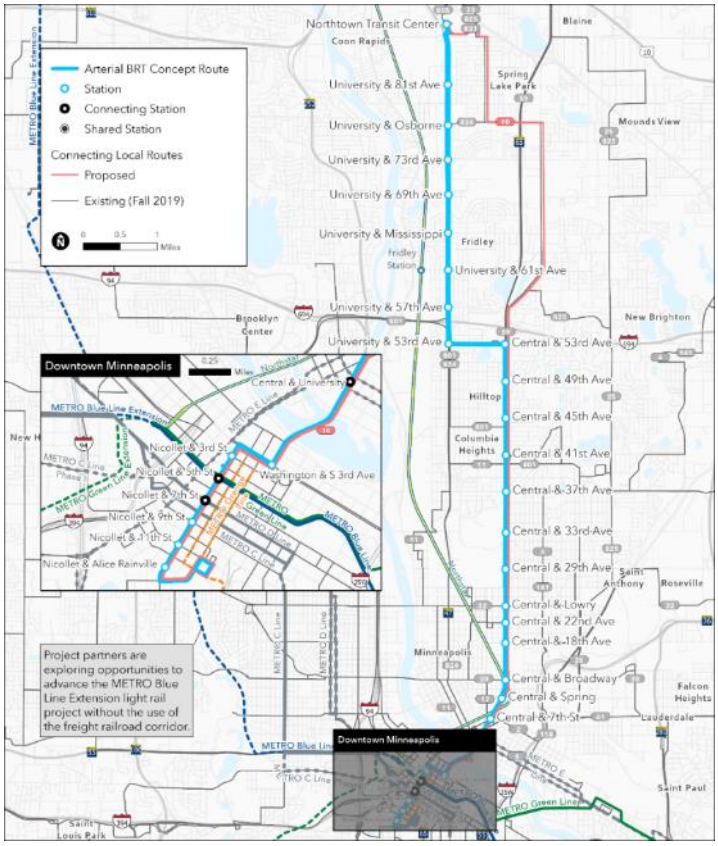
Between 2015 and 2017, the City of Minneapolis reconstructed Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis from Washington Avenue N to Grant Street E. In addition to underground utility work, the project brought new lighting, more than 200 trees, public art, and other improvements, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment. In conjunction, Metro Transit added a dozen new shelters with heat, light and real-time NexTrip information displays at existing bus stops along Nicollet Mall at 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th streets and Alice Rainville Place. These stops will be upgraded to F Line stations with METRO branding and fare collection equipment.

Network Next (2019-2021)

Network Next is Metro Transit's 20-year plan for expanding and improving the bus network. In 2020 and 2021, Metro Transit conducted technical analysis and engaged the public to identify the region's next arterial BRT priorities.

In February 2021, Metro Transit finalized recommendations for the METRO F, G, and H lines of the BRT network. The Central Avenue corridor was recommended as the F Line, with BRT service largely replacing Route 10 from downtown Minneapolis to Northtown Mall via Central and University avenues (Figure 6). The Rice/Robert and Como/Maryland corridors were recommended to be the G Line and H Line, respectively. The Metropolitan Council adopted these recommendations in March 2021. In March 2022, the F Line was Adopted by the Metropolitan Council into the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan.

Figure 6. Network Next Central Avenue corridor concept map (2021)



F Line Planning Stages

F Line Alignment Identified (March 2021)

The Central Avenue corridor concept developed as part of Network Next was recommended as the F Line in February 2021. The Metropolitan Council adopted the recommendation and established the Central Avenue corridor concept as the F Line in March 2021.

In June 2023, City of Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey announced interest in pedestrianizing Nicollet Mall and moving buses to another corridor in downtown Minneapolis. Metro Transit will coordinate with the City of Minneapolis to study alternatives to the F Line's planned Nicollet Mall alignment. Any future changes to the project alignment would be addressed in an amendment to this Corridor Plan.

Early Project Coordination (2021-2022)

F Line planning has included coordination with other planned infrastructure projects throughout the corridor led by the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and partner agencies including the cities of Columbia Heights, Fridley, and Minneapolis, Hennepin and Anoka counties, and MnDOT.

Corridor Plan: Station Location Identification (2022-2023)

The F Line planning phase began in earnest in 2022 with the initiation of corridor plan development. This began the work to review and refine the station locations and concept service plan for the Central Avenue corridor from Network Next, and to identify specific planning issues. The contents of this Corridor Plan were developed by Metro Transit staff throughout 2022 and into 2023 with inputs and feedback received from the Technical Advisory Committee consisting of staff from agency partners and through ongoing community outreach and engagement activities.

This Final Corridor Plan identifies F Line station locations for approval by the Metropolitan Council. It is the final revision of the F Line Corridor Plan previously published for public comment in draft form on October 24, 2022, and recommended form on April 12, 2023. The *Public Engagement* section below includes details on the two public comment periods.

Left: Bench and shelter at the existing southbound Route 10 stop on University Avenue at 57th Avenue. Right: View of the existing southbound Route 10 stop and shelter on Central Avenue at Lowry Avenue. (Source: Metro Transit)

Technical Advisory Committee

This Corridor Plan was developed with input from various functional groups within Metro Transit and in consultation with an interagency Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), consisting of staff representatives from agency partners who advise the F Line project on planning issues throughout the corridor. The TAC provided input on the development of the F Line alignment and concept station locations in the study, refining the Central Avenue corridor concept developed as part of Network Next. The proposed station and platform locations included in this Corridor Plan were made in coordination with the TAC.

Participating TAC agencies include:

- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- Hennepin County
- Anoka County
- City of Minneapolis
- City of Columbia Heights
- City of Hilltop
- City of Fridley
- City of Spring Lake Park
- City of Blaine
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Public Engagement

The purpose of F Line project outreach and engagement is to build broad community awareness and incorporate a range of community needs, concerns, and priorities into the planning and implementation process. It will use an equitable and transparent approach that reduces potential barriers to participation. Public engagement for the F Line project is led by a dedicated Metro Transit community outreach coordinator and supported by the broader F Line project team.

Metro Transit's community outreach coordinators focus on building relationships with communities to engage riders, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders on transit improvement projects like the F Line. The F Line outreach coordinator connects people to the F Line project to share information, engage in two-way conversations, respond to questions and comments, and help incorporate input to be reflected in project outcomes.

As Metro Transit engages community partners along the F Line corridor, we will consider barriers such as stakeholders' ability to participate, language, literacy, disability, and accessibility of information, and adjust our messaging to ensure our engagement efforts are inclusive and reflect communities who live, work, and travel along the corridor.

F Line planning has been informed by findings and engagement results from Network Next, the project and process used to identify Central Avenue (Route 10) corridor as the F Line.

Findings from Network Next (2020-2021)

As part of the Network Next planning process, Metro Transit asked the public to share their priorities for the next arterial BRT lines to be implemented in the region. Participants consistently identified Central Avenue (Route 10) as a top priority. In September 2020, Central Avenue was identified as a top-rated corridor among 11 potential corridors to consider for additional planning.

In December and January 2020/21, Central Avenue was identified as the highest priority for near-term implementation by survey respondents. Respondents highlighted the Route 10 corridor as a high ridership corridor in need of reliability improvements and greater frequency.

Key destinations identified included Edison High School, downtown Minneapolis, affordable housing along the corridor, and the variety of social and cultural opportunities available along Central Avenue. Improved transit access to the northern suburbs was identified as a key need as well as connections to the broader transit network via the METRO Green Line and Blue Line, and Northstar Line were emphasized as essential for transit along this corridor.

More information on the Network Next public engagement process is available at: metrotransit.org/library-archive.

Corridor Plan Review & Engagement (2022-2023)

The first dedicated public engagement phase for the F Line project corresponded with the Draft Corridor Plan in fall/winter 2022. The Draft Corridor Plan was the first of three planned versions of the Corridor Plan. It was circulated for public review and comment between October 24 and December 5, 2022.

Metro Transit revised the draft document based on feedback received and ongoing interagency coordination. This was summarized and incorporated into a Recommended Corridor Plan, which was shared for an additional round of public outreach and engagement. The Recommended Corridor Plan public comment period occurred April 12 through May 14, 2023.

Appendix A: Corridor Plan Comment Summary is a summary of the comments received during the F Line Corridor Plan comment periods. It includes an overview of comments received by station location by sentiment (i.e., support, oppose, neutral), as well as summaries and responses to key comment themes.

Engagement summary

The full Draft and Recommended corridor plan documents, individual station plans, and presentations and meeting materials were available to view online throughout both public comment periods. A comment survey form (online and paper), project email address (FLine@metrotransit.org), and phone number were also made available for the public to submit comments. When meeting in-person or virtually, community were encouraged to comment using these methods; paper comment cards were made available at in-person events.

Release of the Draft Corridor Plan and Recommended Corridor Plan were communicated through print, digital, and in-person communications. Metro Transit used the following strategies during both public comment periods:

- Translation of vital documents in English, Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Oromo, and Arabic
- Postcards mailed to 12,900 homes, businesses, and those who own property within 1/2 mile of the F Line
- Posted signs at 99 existing Route 10 bus stops along the corridor
- Door knocked 149 properties near proposed F Line station locations, speaking with neighbors and/or distributing project information

- Sent multiple email updates to over 13,000 addresses signed up for the F Line Update newsletter, Metro Transit Rider Alerts, or Riders Club distribution lists, and Route 10 Go-To card users
- Completed four rounds of social media advertisements targeted at zip codes along the F Line corridor
- Partner agencies shared project information through more than 20 newsletters and website, and social media postings
- Engaged 874 people at 40 public events and meetings hosted by community organizations and neighborhood groups, who also shared project information through their networks
- Hosted an online open house on November 15, 2022, to share information, collect comments, and answer questions

Above: Photo of a Metro Transit arterial BRT bus taken at a community event in Columbia Heights (Source: Metro Transit). Below: Staff sharing project information and collecting comments at an event at the Columbia Heights Library (Source: City of Columbia Heights).

Above: Front and back of the postcard sent to all homes and businesses within 1/2 mile of the F Line alignment in November 2022, providing information about the Draft Corridor Plan and public comment period; a similar postcard was sent for the Recommended Corridor Plan public comment period in April 2023. The postcards included translations in Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Oromo, and Arabic.
Below left: Project fact sheet translated in Somali with information about the project and how to comment on the Draft Corridor Plan; a similar fact sheet was produced for the Recommended Corridor Plan public comment period. Project fact sheets were also available in Spanish, Hmong, Oromo, Arabic, and English.
Below right: Signage that was posted at Route 10 bus stops throughout the F Line corridor; this was used for both public comment periods. The sign includes translations in Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Oromo, and Arabic.

The online survey was promoted and available during both public comment periods. It included two primary questions, intended to solicit feedback on individual station locations and the Corridor Plan overall. These questions are listed below:

- What are your comments about the proposed station plan at this location (for example: location of station or platform placement at the intersection)?
- What are your general comments about the F Line Corridor Plan?

Respondents were able to submit comments on multiple stations.

Metro Transit received 332 comments on the Draft Corridor Plan and an additional 519 comments on the Recommended Corridor Plan, for a total of 851 individual comments. Additionally, Metro Transit received a 205-signature petition during the Draft Corridor Plan public comment period organized by a business (Otter's Saloon) adjacent to the proposed Central & 1st Avenue/7th Street Station voicing opposition to the proposed southbound platform location.

A complete summary of comments received, including by key themes, is included in *Appendix A: Corridor Plan Comment Summary*. Revisions to the plan based on this feedback are summarized below.

Revisions in the Recommended Corridor Plan

Metro Transit staff read and categorized each of the 332 comments received during the Draft Corridor Plan public comment period (see *Appendix A: Corridor Plan Comment Summary)*, as well as those submitted by agency partners (see *Appendix B: Agency Comments*). These comments were reviewed against all proposed station and platform locations in the Draft Corridor Plan.

Responses to station-specific feedback and/or additional alternatives were analyzed at four stations with relatively large number of comments requesting changes to the plan or in opposition to the project. Upon additional analysis and review, no changes to station or platform locations were recommended.

Revisions in the Final Corridor Plan

Following the second public comment period, staff read and categorized the 519 additional comments received on the Recommended Corridor Plan (see *Appendix A: Corridor Plan Comment Summary)*, as well as those submitted by agency partners (see *Appendix B: Agency Comments*). These were combined with the 332 comments received on the Draft Corridor Plan and considered in total.

Additionally, staff incorporated the results of traffic analysis when considering potential changes to station locations. Traffic modeling was completed in coordination with roadway agency partners to understand the effect of proposed F Line stations on existing traffic operations. The results indicate that the station platforms recommended in this Final Corridor Plan would not result in notable changes to traffic operations.

Staff included responses to station-specific feedback and/or analyzed additional alternatives for station locations that received the greatest number of comments requesting changes to the plan. These station locations are listed below.

Upon additional analysis and review, no changes are recommended to the following stations:

- Central & Lowry (additional discussion on page 100)
- Central & Spring (see page 128)
- Central & 1st Avenue/7th Street (see page 131)

In this Final Corridor Plan, project staff are recommending changes to the following station location – differing from what was previously included in the Draft Corridor Plan and Recommended Corridor Plan:

- Central & 18th Avenue: Shift to Central & 18 ½ Avenue (see page 110)

Detailed discussion of additional analysis and response to comments on specific station locations can be found at the page numbers listed above within the *Stations by Location* section of the plan.

Final Corridor Plan Approval

This Final Corridor Plan will be presented to the Metropolitan Council for approval in summer 2023. The approved Final Corridor Plan will provide policy direction to Metro Transit to begin detailed design for the F Line project.

Passengers aboard a crowded Route 10 bus (Sept. 2022) [Source: Metro Transit]

Project Elements

Arterial BRT projects have many elements that come together for a successful line. This section describes the different components of the project and the considerations that go into planning each.

The project elements described in this section of the corridor plan include:

- Alignment and termini – The path traveled by buses and the beginning and end of the route
- Stations and platforms – Where buses stop to pick up or drop off passengers. One **station** has a **platform** for each direction the bus travels
- Service – The route schedule, frequency, and type of bus service available in the corridor
- Bus priority treatments – Changes to traffic operations that can help speed up buses, move people faster, and deliver more reliable service

Alignment and Termini

Alignment and termini for the F Line were developed as part of Network Next and established when the Metropolitan Council adopted the Central Avenue corridor concept as the F Line in March 2021 (see *Network Next (2019-2021)*). From north to south, the F Line will operate from its northern terminal at Northtown Transit Center to its southern terminal at Nicollet & Alice Rainville in downtown Minneapolis via University Avenue, 53rd Avenue, Central Avenue, 3rd Avenue, Washington Avenue, and Nicollet Mall (Figure 1).

In June 2023, City of Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey announced interest in pedestrianizing Nicollet Mall and moving buses to another corridor in downtown Minneapolis. Metro Transit will coordinate with the City of Minneapolis to study alternatives to the F Line's planned Nicollet Mall alignment. Any future changes to the project alignment and stations would be addressed in an amendment to this Corridor Plan.

Stations and Platforms

Platforms are where transit passengers may enter (board) or exit (alight) a transit vehicle. In most cases, there are two platforms for each station, with one in each direction the bus travels.[1] Stations are collections of one or two platforms and are often communicated in terms of intersections or major points of interest (e.g., transit center). Stations are shorthand for the general area at which platforms are located and points of access to the transit line.

The purpose of the F Line Corridor Plan is to identify the locations of BRT stations and platforms and provide policy direction to Metro Transit to begin detailed design for the F Line.

[1] Stations at line termini and on one-way streets may have just one platform.

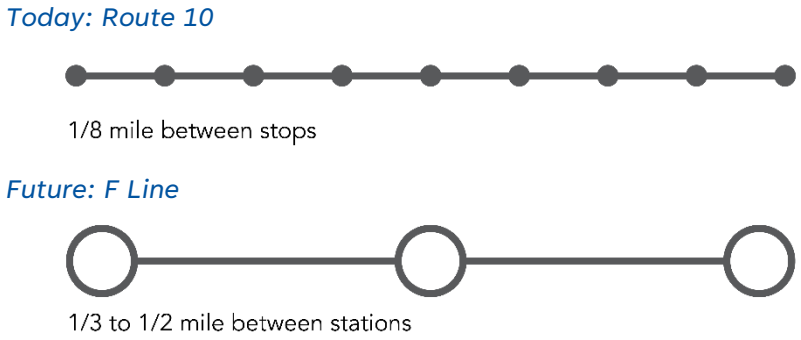
Station Location Considerations

The following are among the many factors that affect where stations are planned to be located. Other site-specific and platform-related considerations often play an important role in selecting station locations.

Station spacing

A key objective of arterial BRT is to offer faster trips for more people along the corridor. Faster trips depend in part upon the strategic placement of stations spaced farther apart than existing Route 10 bus stops while still serving existing customers well. Existing Route 10 stops are typically placed approximately every 1/8 to 1/4 mile.[2] On average, F Line stops would be placed about 0.4 miles apart (two to three stops per mile) to balance speed and access (Figure 7). Stopping less often is anticipated to help F Line service operate about 20 percent faster than the existing Route 10, when combined with other improvements.

Figure 7. Approximate Arterial BRT and local service stop spacing after F Line implementation



Existing ridership & transit connections

When selecting arterial BRT station locations, staff use ridership data to identify the most popular existing bus stops along the corridor. BRT stations are prioritized at intersections where many riders are getting on and off the bus today. With the stations included in this plan, 93% of existing Route 10 riders in the F Line corridor would be able to get on or off the F Line at their current bus stop or within about one block (1/8 mile). Additionally, stations are selected based on connections to other transit lines along the corridor.

Community feedback

Feedback from existing Metro Transit customers and community members along the corridor is important to planning an effective arterial BRT line. The public engagement phase of the planning process helps to inform where stations are located along the corridor.

[2] Most existing Route 10 stops along University Avenue are placed approximately every 1/2 mile.

Land uses & access to destinations

When recommending station locations, Metro Transit considers surrounding land uses and activity generators. Ideally, arterial BRT stations are near to popular amenities and provide easy access to destinations like grocery stores, medical clinics, workplaces, and more. Arterial BRT stations should be near where people are or want to be.

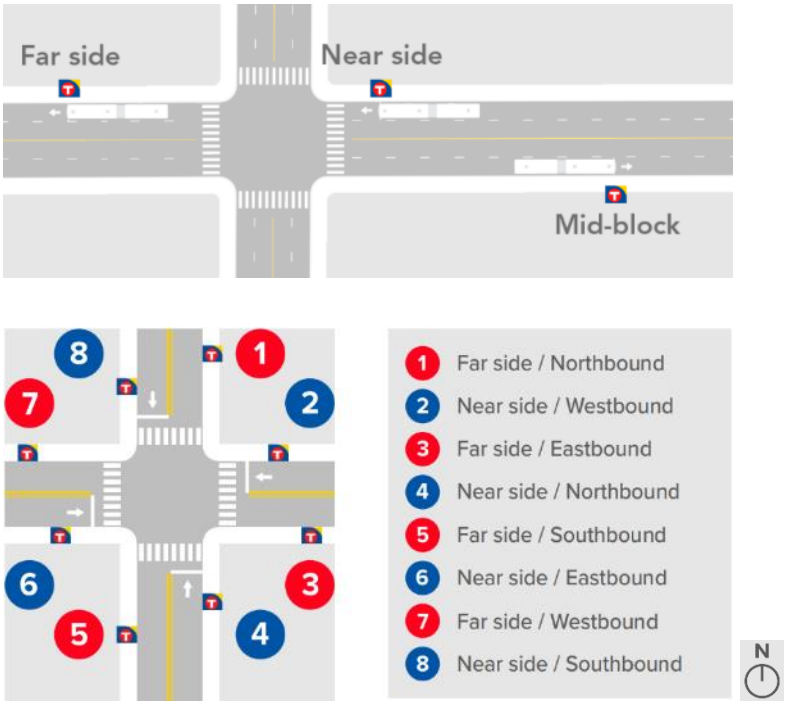
Street design & available right-of-way

Street design elements like bike and pedestrian facilities, driveways, and medians all influence the placement of stations in the corridor. Additionally, the amount of right-of-way available is also an important consideration when station locations are selected.

Platform Location Considerations

Almost every BRT station is made up of two platforms—one for each direction the bus travels. In most cases, platforms/bus stops can either be placed on the nearside or farside of an intersection. A station platform is located "nearside" when it is located just before a roadway intersection. A station platform is located "farside" when it is located just after a roadway intersection. A "midblock" platform location is not located next to an intersection (Figure 8). Midblock locations are generally less desirable than nearside and farside ones, because platforms at intersections provide places for riders to cross the street to destinations.

Figure 8. Bus stop positions: Nearside, farside, and midblock



Farside platforms are beneficial because they reduce conflicts between right-turning vehicles and stopped transit vehicles common at nearside stop locations. Farside stations also maximize transit signal priority effectiveness by allowing a bus to activate its priority call to the signal, progress through the

intersection, and stop at the farside platform. This reduces delay in scenarios more common to nearside locations when a bus is required to stop twice before moving through an intersection: once to unload and load passengers at the platform itself and again for a red traffic signal after leaving the platform.

The preferred F Line platform location is on the farside of signalized and uncontrolled intersections. However, not all platforms are sited farside. Site-specific conditions that may result in a platform being located nearside include:

- Existing roadway access points or driveways
- Right-of-way constraints
- Surrounding land uses

Additionally, nearside platforms may be preferred in limited cases based on signal timing or certain bus priority treatments, or at four-way stop-controlled intersections.

Other Considerations

Shelter size

Preliminary shelter sizes are shown for each planned station to illustrate at a conceptual level how the shelter will fit into each location. All arterial BRT stations are equipped with shelters, as described in the previous section, *What is Arterial BRT?* A key variable at each station is shelter size: small, medium, or large shelter structures. Typical shelter dimensions are:

- Small shelter: 12 feet long by 5 feet wide by 9 feet high
- Medium shelter: 24 feet long by 5 feet wide by 9-12 feet high
- Large shelter: 36 feet long by 5 feet wide by 9-12 feet high

The primary consideration in determining shelter sizes at each platform is projected ridership throughout the day and at peak times (specifically, the number of waiting customers at a single platform) for all routes serving the station. Most arterial BRT platforms are equipped with small shelters, but some platforms with especially high anticipated ridership are equipped with medium or large shelters to ensure adequate shelter for customers.

Specific site conditions may also influence the size of the shelter planned for each location. Shelter size will ultimately be determined through detailed site engineering in the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

Example of a small arterial BRT shelter (Source: Metro Transit)

Example of a medium arterial BRT shelter (Source: Metro Transit)

Example of a large arterial BRT shelter (Source: Metro Transit)

Curb extensions

For each station in this plan, a conceptual design is included to illustrate how the station platforms will fit into the street. These are preliminary ideas for how the stations will fit into the surrounding environment that will be refined and finalized through detailed engineering. In many cases, curb extensions are shown.

A curb extension is a strategy to improve safety for all road users, by extending the curb at a corner and narrowing the roadway width at intersections. At intersections where bus stops are in curbside parking lanes or right-turn lanes, curb extensions are used to expand the bus platform so that it is in line with the travel lane. Curb extensions help reduce the delays from buses merging back into traffic. They also provide space for station amenities, bike facilities, and help to minimize conflicts between waiting bus passengers and pedestrians using the sidewalk.

Curb extensions can also potentially reduce overall bus stop zone length, which may allow on-street parking spaces to be added in space previously used for bus movements.

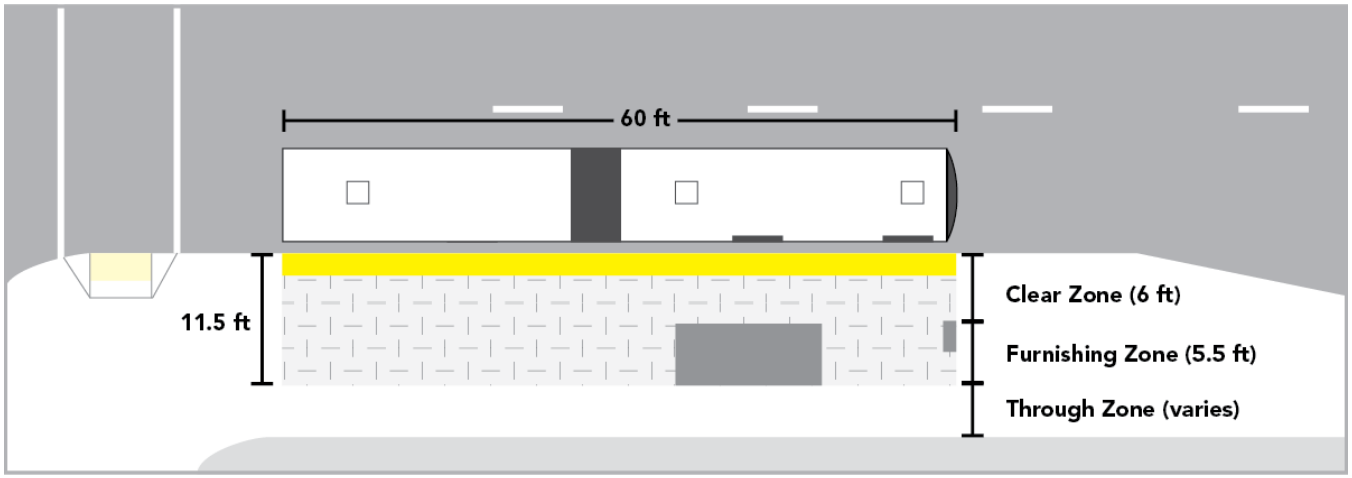
At locations where curb extensions are not considered due to lane configurations or absence of on-street parking, the platforms will be adjacent to the existing curbside travel lane without moving the curb.

At both types of platforms, buses will generally stop in the travel lane ("in-lane") to eliminate the need to merge back into traffic when leaving stations. However, in-lane stops may be unsuitable in high-speed context.

Platform length, width, and height

Typical dimensions for F Line platforms are shown in Figure 9. Generally, F Line platforms will be designed for a standard length of 60 feet. A 60-foot platform length can fully accommodate all doors of a 60-foot articulated bus planned for the F Line. Under rare circumstances, constrained conditions may prevent the construction of a standard platform. However, these situations are avoided wherever possible. In some places, stations may be designed at a longer length to accommodate more than one stopped bus. Platform lengths will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

Figure 9. Typical Arterial BRT platform dimensions



F Line platforms will generally be designed for a standard width of 11.5 feet. This width can accommodate a 6-foot-wide clear zone behind the curb and 5.5-foot-wide furnishing zone to accommodate BRT station elements including the shelter, pylon marker, and other amenities. The clear zone is generally provided independent from a through zone behind the platform. However, under certain constrained conditions, like narrow distances between the curb and a building face might prevent a full 11.5-foot-wide platform from being constructed in addition to a separate through zone. In these cases, the through zone and clear zone may be combined. Platform widths will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project.

Platforms will generally be designed with a standard of nine-inch curb height to facilitate "near-level boarding." Near-level boarding substantially reduces the vertical distance between the curb and the floor of the bus, easing vehicle access for passengers with low mobility and enabling faster boarding and alighting of all passengers. Near-level boarding does not eliminate the need for ramps to be deployed to assist passengers using mobility devices. Curb heights of nine inches or lower are compatible with all bus models in Metro Transit's fleet. Curb heights for specific F Line platforms will be finalized during design.

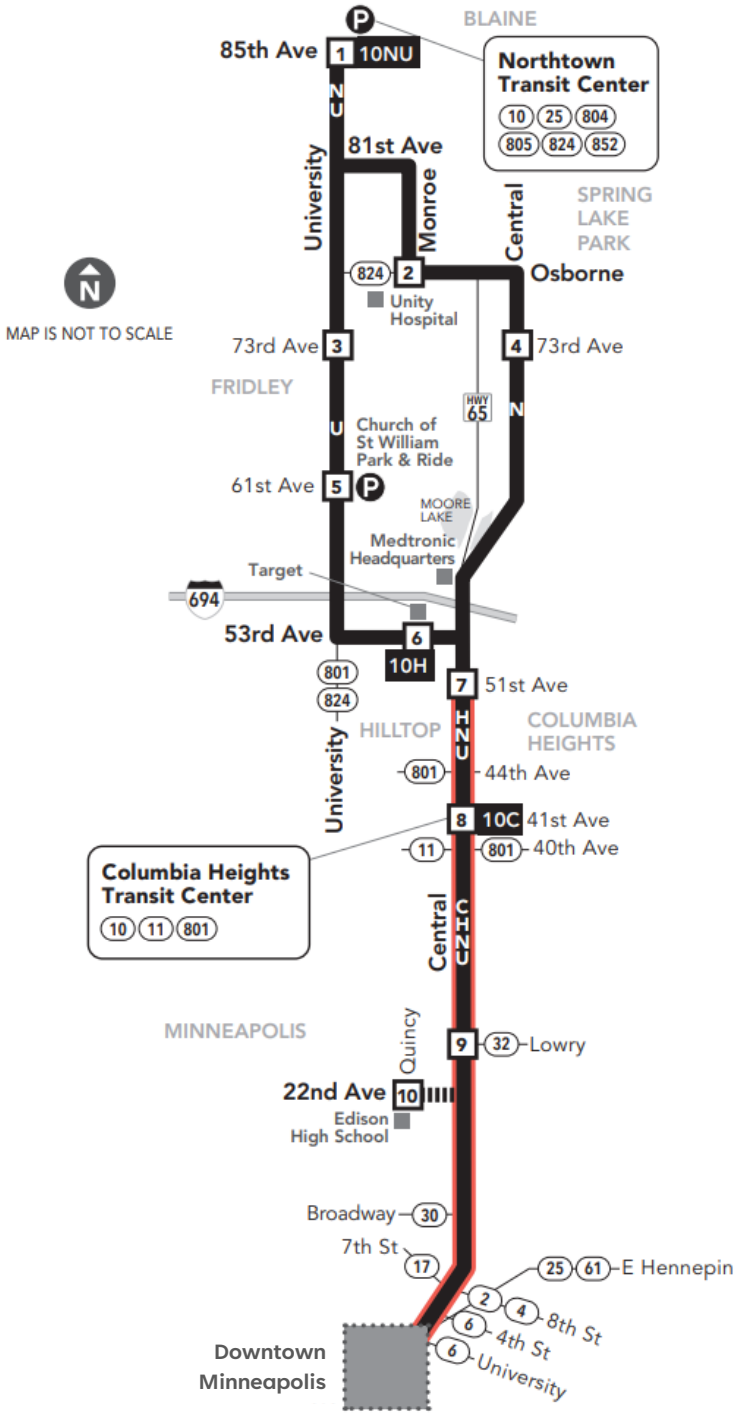
Near-level boarding is not "level boarding," where platforms are located at the same height as the floor of the bus, at approximately 14 inches. Light rail platforms within the Twin Cities are an example of level-boarding platforms. Level-boarding platforms are not being considered for the F Line due to engineering and operational considerations and the space constraints of the corridor. For example, the gradual ramping up to a 14-inch curb from a 6-inch sidewalk in many locations would require a prohibitively large area. Level boarding also requires that buses slow down considerably upon approaching stations, which can significantly negate the travel time savings that arterial BRT provides.

Service

Today, the corridor is served primarily by Route 10, which operates two main patterns (or branches) based out of downtown Minneapolis and destined for Northtown Transit Center: Route 10U, via Central, 53rd, and University avenues; and Route 10N, via Central Avenue (Figure 10). Limited-stop Route 59 has also historically served the corridor between downtown Minneapolis and 53rd Avenue via Central Avenue, though the route has been suspended since March 2020.

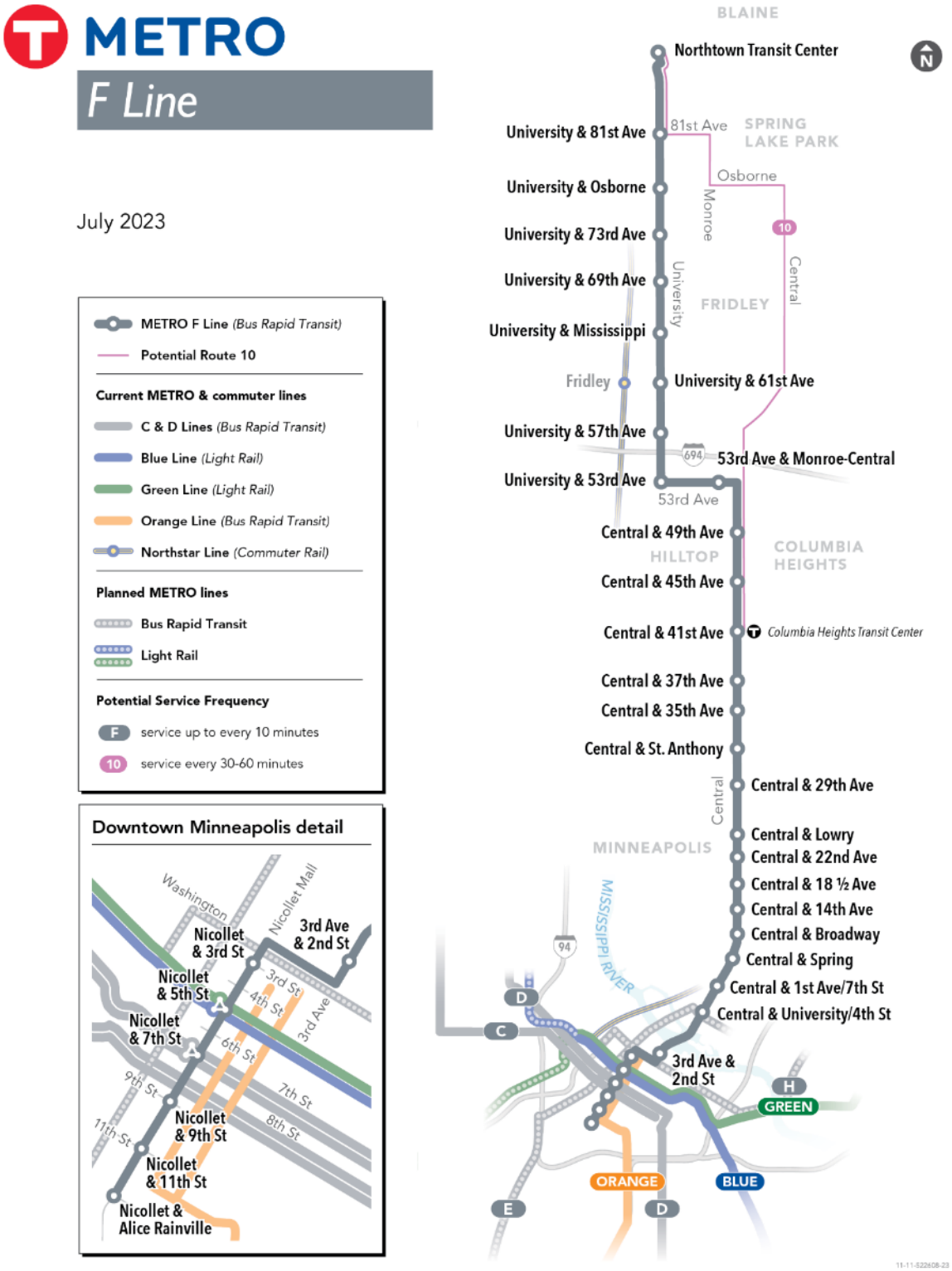
Several other routes currently share smaller portions of the F Line corridor, particularly along Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis (Routes 11, 17, 18, and 25) and along University Avenue in Fridley (Route 824). Many other local and express routes currently cross or connect to the F Line corridor.

Figure 10. Existing Route 10 map



Local bus service that could operate once the F Line service begins is shown in Figure 11. As described in the following sections, potential local service in the corridor from a modified Route 10 would be implemented with the F Line.

Figure 11. F Line and potential local service



Considerations

A key goal of the F Line is to provide faster and more reliable transit service than existing Route 10 service. Balancing speed and access to transit through wider stop spacing and alignment changes can result in localized changes in access as stops may be moved or consolidated. Other services that operate within the corridor also require evaluation as part of an overall assessment of how arterial BRT implementation will change transit service.

As recommendations for alignment and station locations have taken shape, Metro Transit has also evaluated the overall mix of bus service within the corridor. Key factors considered in this analysis included ridership and trip patterns (current and pre-COVID-19 pandemic), pedestrian access, demographics (riders with more mobility challenges or fewer transportation options), and operational cost and efficiency.

Proposed F Line Service

The F Line alignment mirrors that of existing Route 10U (see Figure 10), where existing ridership is greater and land uses are more transit-supportive compared to Route 10N.

The F Line is planned to operate as frequently as every 10 minutes, seven days a week during the day and most of the evening, substantially replacing Route 10 as the primary service in the corridor. On average, F Line stops would be placed about 0.4 miles apart (two or three stops per mile) to balance speed and access. Ninety percent of existing Route 10 riders – including those who use existing Route 10 stops not along of the F Line alignment (e.g., Route 10N) – would be able to get on or off the F Line within 1/8 mile of their current bus stop.[3]

The exact F Line schedule, including hours of service and transitions from 10-minute service during the core of the day into later evening service, will be developed closer to the opening of the F Line.

Potential Other Bus Service in the Corridor

Local service could operate in a portion of the F Line corridor between Columbia Heights Transit Center (41st Avenue) and 53rd Avenue (Figure 11).

The modified Route 10 could continue to operate on a path like the existing Route 10N between Northtown Transit Center and Columbia Heights Transit Center, maintaining service through Spring Lake Park and Fridley along Central Avenue north of 53rd Avenue, and no longer serving downtown Minneapolis. The modified Route 10 could operate approximately every 30-60 minutes.

Final service plans, including the frequency and termini for potential modified Route 10 as well as other corridor and connecting routes will be addressed in a corridor service plan later in project development as the F Line nears implementation. Key considerations will include public feedback, workforce constraints, Route 10 ridership patterns, redevelopment/land use patterns, and anticipated transit travel times based

[3] Based on ridership data from fall 2022. For reference, 1/8 mile is comparable to a typical north-south city block in Minneapolis and Columbia Heights.

on bus priority treatments. Additionally, Metro Transit's Network Now will continue to explore potential changes to other service in the project area in response to changing transit demand and travel patterns that have emerged since 2020.

Until 2020, Route 59 served the F Line corridor, providing peak-only limited stop service on Central Avenue between 53rd Avenue and downtown Minneapolis. With stops placed about 0.4 miles apart, on average, existing Route 59 was 10% to 15% faster than Route 10. Route 59 has been suspended since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent substantial decline in ridership and disruption of transit needs and resources; the route remains suspended due to the bus driver workforce shortage. Route 59 is expected to be eliminated and replaced by the F Line.

Route 824 provides peak-only limited stop service between downtown Minneapolis and Northtown Transit Center, primarily on University Avenue. Route 824 overlaps the F Line corridor along University Avenue between 57th and Osborne avenues in Fridley. The corridor service plan developed as the F Line nears implementation will address potential corridor and connecting limited-stop services, including Route 824.

Columbia Heights Transit Center at Central Avenue and 41st Avenue (Source: Metro Transit)

Bus Priority Treatments

How can the F Line move people faster?

Providing faster, more reliable transit service is a key goal for the F Line project. Under existing conditions, Route 10 buses regularly average less than 10 miles per hour during rush hours. Frequent stops, lines of customers waiting to board, and red lights mean that buses are moving less than half the time. Inconsistent travel times and schedule variability means that customers have a hard time planning on the bus and are stuck waiting for late buses. Through several planned improvements across the corridor, the F Line is intended to operate about 20 percent faster or better than the existing Route 10.

Standard arterial BRT features

The F Line will include a core set of features that will help buses run faster and arrive on time.

Limited stops

Arterial BRT stations are spaced approximately every half mile, focusing on places where the greatest numbers of customers board buses today. Buses can travel significantly faster with more distance between stations, while also allowing for most customers to conveniently walk or roll to stations.

Platform placement

Platforms located on the farside of signalized intersections where feasible allow the bus to move through the intersection before stopping to pick up and drop off passengers, reducing the likelihood of stopping at a red light.

Curb extensions

Today, many existing local bus stops are located out of a thru-lane of traffic in right-turn lanes or in a curbside parking lane, causing delay for buses merging back into traffic. Curb extensions at station platforms eliminate the need to merge back into traffic.

Off-board fare payment and all-door boarding

Off-board fare payment speeds up the boarding process and significantly decreases dwell time at stations while customers get on the bus. Because fares are paid at the platform, customers can board any of three doors rather than standing in line to pay their fare at the front door.

Transit signal priority

Transit signal priority (TSP) helps buses more consistently move through intersections by reducing the frequency and time spent stopping at red lights, a substantial source of delay. Buses alert the traffic signal as they approach to extend green time, allowing the bus to get through the intersection. Updating timing of traffic signals to provide more time with a green light for all vehicles is also a tool that can speed transit operations.

TSP is a standard arterial BRT improvement and is assumed to be included at most signalized intersections along the F Line corridor. Metro Transit intends to work with its partners to implement TSP

as part of the F Line project. Signals along the corridor will be evaluated and considered for TSP implementation during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

Queue jump signals

Queue jump signals allow the bus to bypass stopped vehicles at signalized intersections by providing the bus a dedicated green light ahead of the green for general traffic. The bus can get ahead of traffic by moving from a dedicated lane or shared right-turn and transit lane.

Queue jump signals should be considered for implementation at intersections with existing space on the right side of the roadway available for the bus to approach the intersection, either from a dedicated transit lane or a shared right-turn lane and move back into general purpose traffic from the intersection.

Metro Transit intends to work with its partners to explore queue jumps as part of the F Line project. As F Line design details are developed, intersections along the corridor will be evaluated for queue jump implementation.

Bus-only lanes

Bus-only lanes provide dedicated space for buses to operate out of general-purpose traffic, either all day or part of the day. Bus-only lanes can provide a significant improvement to the speed and reliability of service, as getting stuck in traffic is one of the primary sources of delay for buses. Bus-only lanes implemented elsewhere along the Metro Transit network have been proven to improve bus speeds and significantly reduce variability. These improvements can make sure that transit customers can count on the bus to arrive when they expect it to and to get them to their destination on time.

MnDOT is considering opportunities for bus-only lanes as part of its PEL Study (see *Highway 47 and Highway 65 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study*). The outcome of the PEL Study will provide more information on how bus-only lanes may operate in the corridor.

The following section outlines Metro Transit priorities for implementation of bus-only lanes along the F Line corridor. Metro Transit does not control streets or make decisions about vehicle lanes. Bus lanes would need to be implemented in partnership with roadway authorities. Metro Transit and agency partners continue to analyze bus-only lanes and discuss how they could be implemented in coordination with other street projects.

Segments analyzed for bus-only lanes

As part of broader speed and reliability initiatives, in late 2021 Metro Transit analyzed transit corridors throughout the region to better understand where delays to buses and passengers are occurring and identify candidates for implementation of bus-only lanes to reduce delays and improve service. The results inform Metro Transit priorities for implementation of bus-only lanes along the F Line and throughout the bus network.

Street segments along Central Avenue from 1st Avenue/7th Street in northeast Minneapolis to 41st Avenue NE (Columbia Heights Transit Center) were analyzed because they represent the core portion of the F Line where speed and reliability challenges and passenger delays are greatest.[4]

The analysis incorporated historical transit vehicle and passenger data from fall 2018 to minimize the impact of detours and snow on the candidate corridors in the pre-pandemic era. Street segments within transit corridors were evaluated using several performance metrics used to prioritize segments and corridors where bus-only lanes would be most impactful.

METRO C Line bus in a bus-only lane in downtown Minneapolis (Source: Metro Transit)

Analysis results

Central Avenue from 1st Avenue/7th Street to 41st Avenue was analyzed based on vehicle and passenger delays occurring on street segments within the corridor. The analysis factors and results are summarized in Table 1.

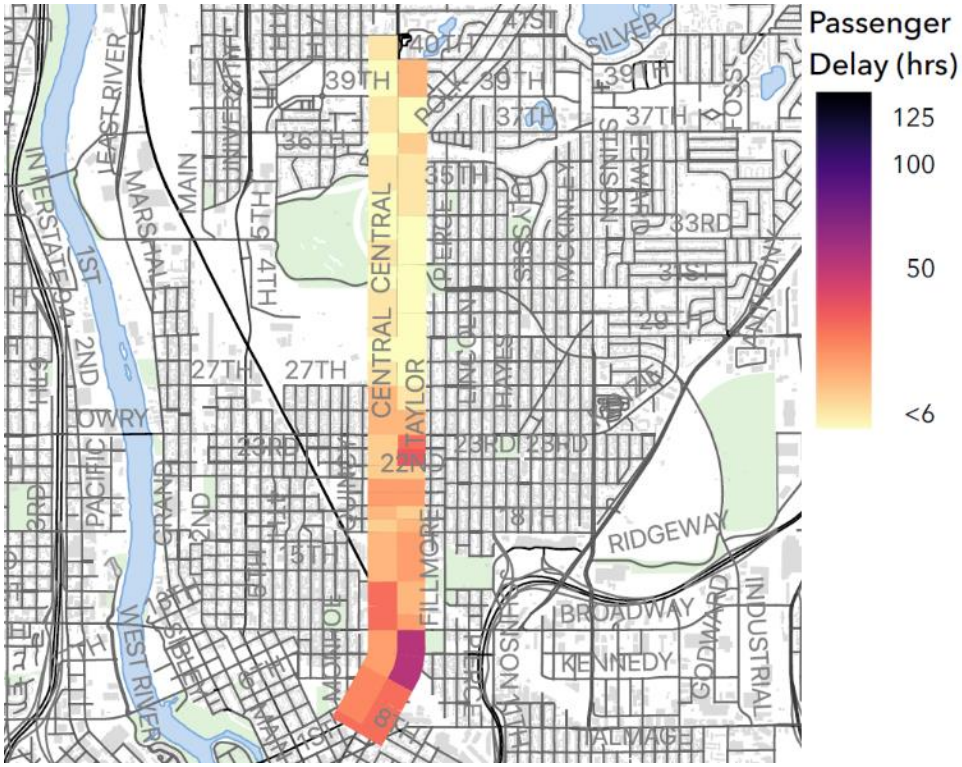
[4] Areas south of 1st Avenue/7th Street in northeast Minneapolis were excluded from analysis because of the ongoing detour to Route 10 south of that point due to construction on the Central Avenue/3rd Avenue bridge.

Table 1. Existing delay analysis results: Central Avenue from 1st Avenue/7th Street to 41st Avenue (fall 2018)

Factor	Description	Result
Passenger Delay (Hrs.)	The total amount of time (in hours) that passengers spent stopped or moving slower than free-flow speed, on average, per day in fall 2018.	436
Passenger Delay (Hrs.) per Mile	Passenger delay (in hours) shown on a per mile basis to compare across segments of different length.	83
Passenger Throughput (Rides)	The average number of passengers per day riding through or getting on or off within the segment.	4,800

On a typical day, passengers and vehicles currently experience significant delays on Central Avenue from 1st Ave/7th Street to 41st Avenue. About 436 hours of cumulative passenger delay per day occur in this segment, with about 4,800 riders per day moving through (based on data from fall 2018). Figure 12 below shows the distribution of the 436 hours of passenger delay across individual street segments.

Figure 12. Existing average daily passenger delay (hours) by street segment by direction (fall 2018)



Passenger delay is most concentrated between 1st Avenue/7th Street and Lowry Avenue (Figure 12). Results show that in the southbound direction passenger delay is greatest in the morning and early afternoon, while delay in the northbound direction is greatest during the afternoon peak, approximately 3-6 p.m. Delay is more variable during these same direction and time of day patterns, as indicated by greater deviation from typical conditions. Greater variability results in less reliable service.

Observed passenger delay along this portion of Central Avenue is distributed relatively evenly in both directions and throughout the day, with smaller spikes or peaks of delay observed (i.e., the delay is more evenly distributed). Though there are opportunities for targeted application of bus-only lanes, the patterns of delay on this portion of the F Line corridor also point to need and benefit for a more complete application.

Based on the results of this analysis, the segment of Central Avenue between downtown Minneapolis and Columbia Heights Transit Center is a good candidate for the implementation of bus-only lanes to improve the speed and reliability of transit service in this corridor.

MnDOT is considering opportunities for bus-only lanes as part of the PEL Study (see *Highway 47 and Highway 65 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study*). The outcome of the PEL Study will provide more information on how bus-only lanes may operate in the corridor.

Stations by Location

The following section contains individual station plans for each of the F Line stations. The plans communicate two core station components:

- the station intersection
- the intersection quadrant where platforms will be located

Other preliminary design details are provided for additional context but are conceptual and will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

The individual station plans are organized north to south beginning at the Northtown Transit Center in Blaine and continuing to Nicollet & Alice Rainville Station in downtown Minneapolis. These stations do not include station plan illustrations, but descriptions are provided for information.

Northtown Transit Center* (Blaine)
University & 81st Avenue (Fridley/Spring Lake Park)
University & Osborne
University & 73rd Avenue (Fridley)
University & 69th Avenue
University & Mississippi
University & 61st Avenue
University & 57th Avenue
University & 53rd Avenue (Fridley/Columbia Heights)
53rd Avenue & Monroe-Central
Central & 49th Avenue (Columbia Heights/Hilltop)
Central & 45th Avenue
Central & 41st Avenue (Columbia Heights)
Central & 37th Avenue (Columbia Heights/Minneapolis)
Central & 35th Avenue (Minneapolis)
Central & St. Anthony
Central & 29th Avenue
Central & Lowry
Central & 22nd Avenue
Central & 18 ½ Avenue
Central & 14th Avenue
Central & Broadway
Central & Spring
Central & 1st Avenue/7th Street
Central & University/4th Street
3rd Avenue & 2nd Street
Nicollet & 3rd Street*
Nicollet & 5th Street*
Nicollet & 7th Street*
Nicollet & 9th Street*
Nicollet & 11th St*
Nicollet & Alice Rainville*

*Denotes a station location that has been previously selected based on existing transit facilities.

The plan identifies 32 stations over the 13-mile corridor. Figure 13 through Figure 18 summarize the proposed station locations at the corridor-wide level, illustrating:

- Existing Route 10 ridership (Figure 13 and Figure 14)
- Planned station spacing (Figure 15 and Figure 16)
- Connecting bus service at each station (Figure 17 and Figure 18)

Figure 13. Existing Route 10 ridership (north of 45th Avenue)

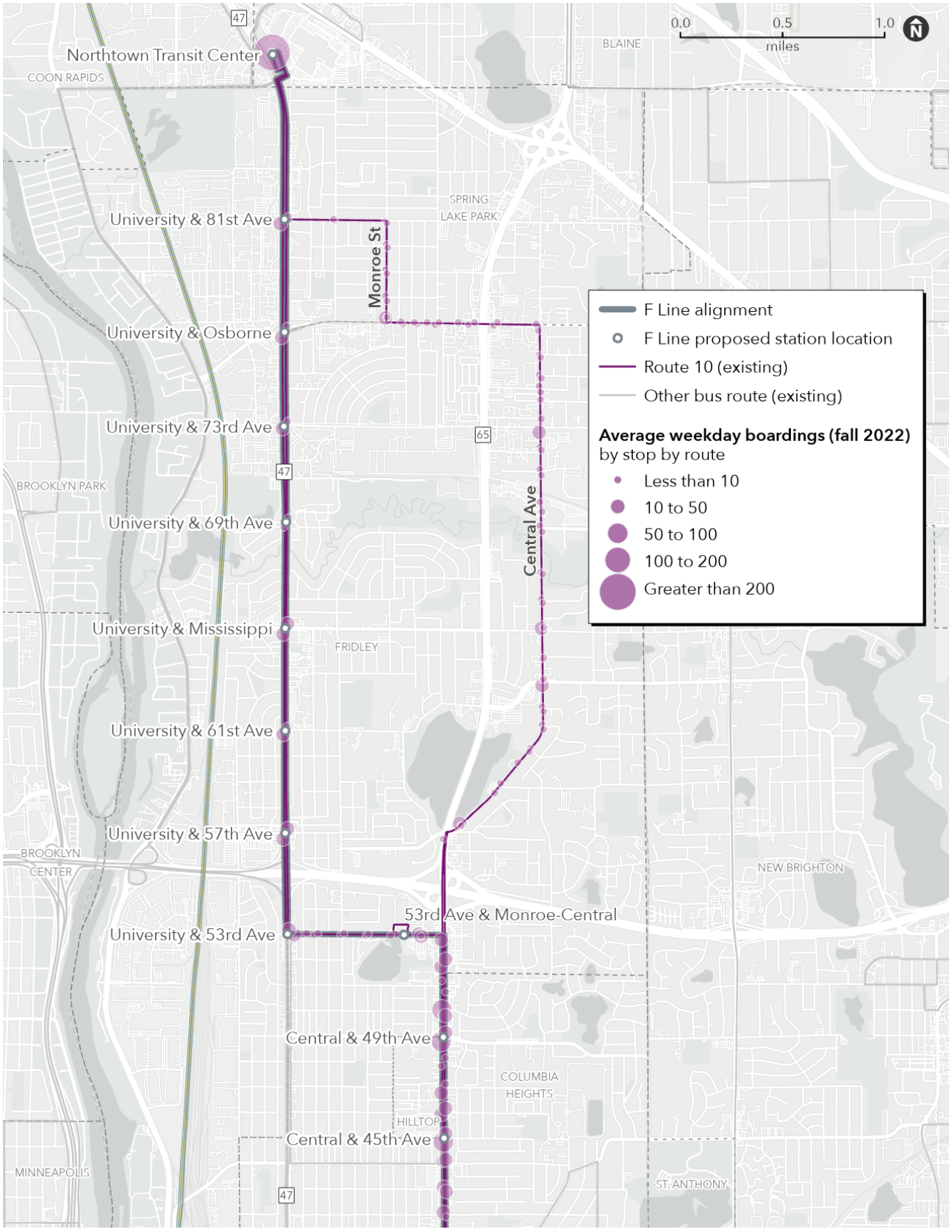


Figure 14. Existing Route 10 ridership (south of 45th Avenue)

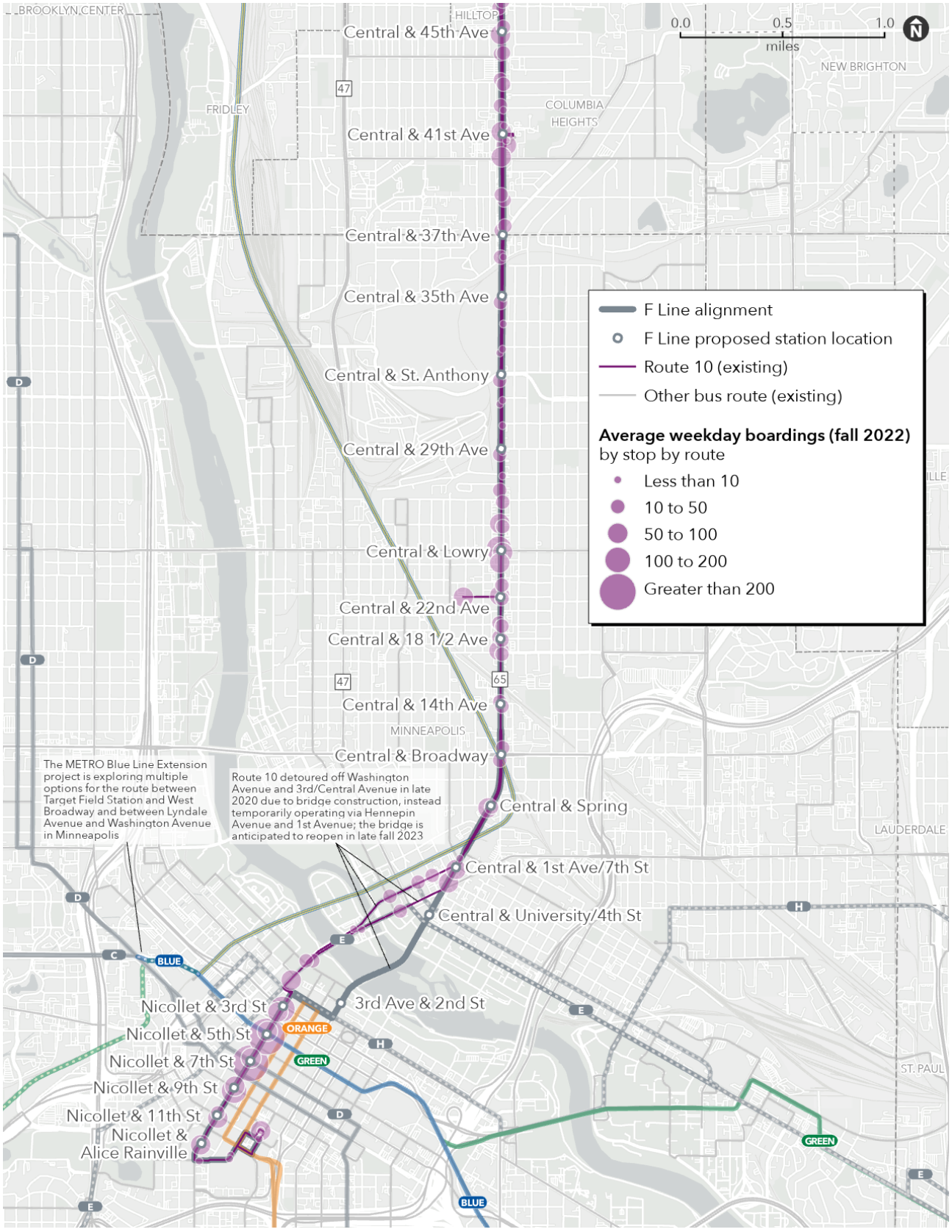


Figure 15. Planned station spacing (north of 45th Avenue)

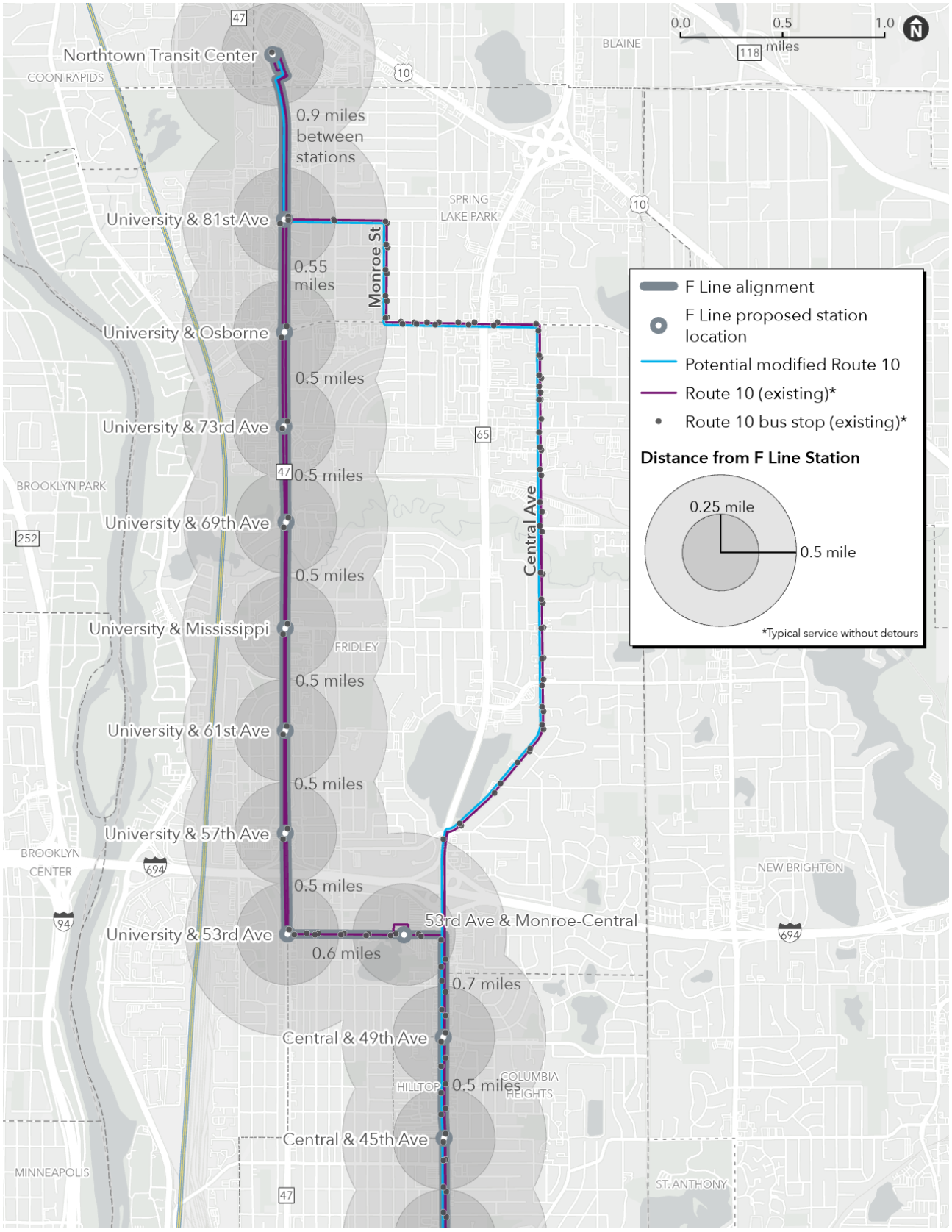


Figure 16. Planned station spacing (south of 45th Avenue)

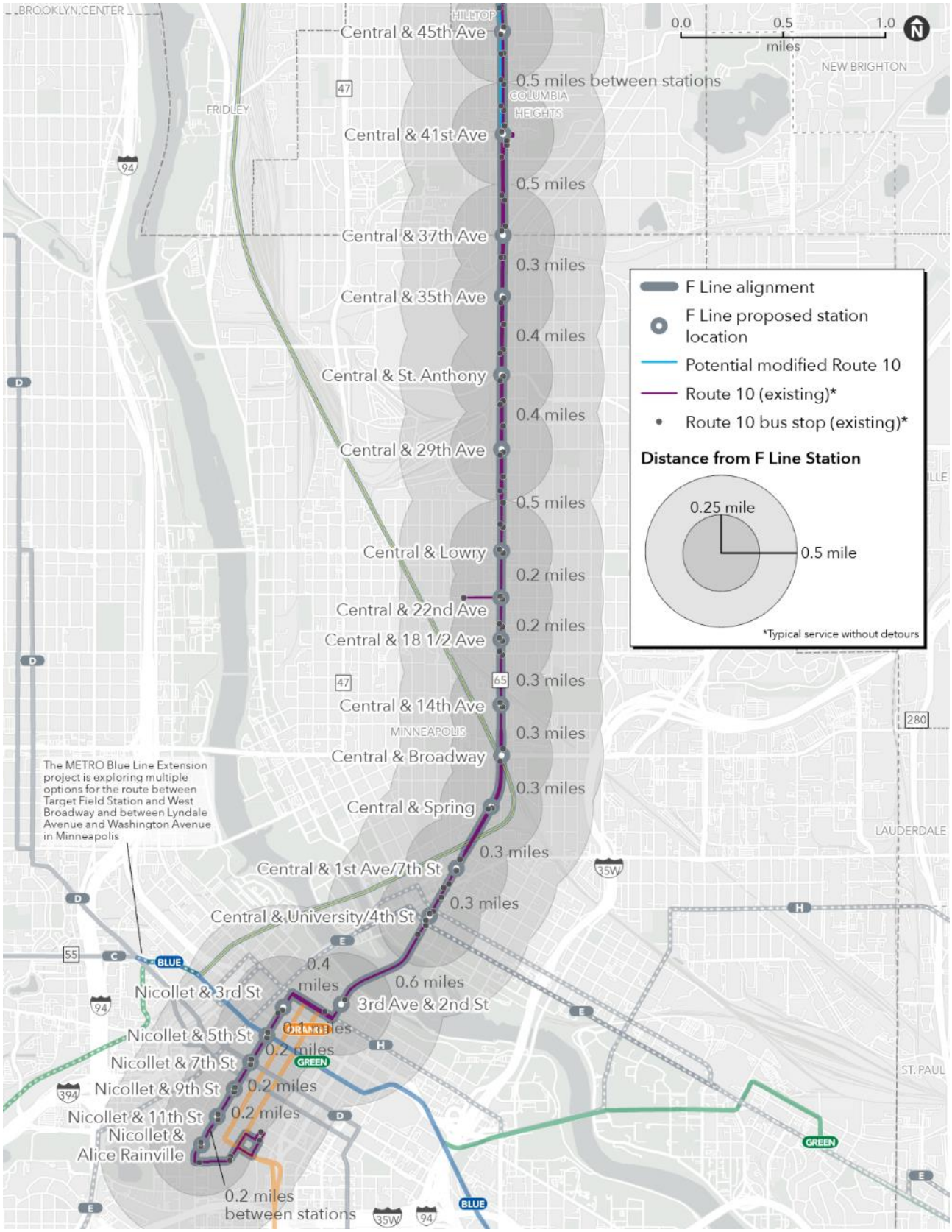


Figure 17. Connecting local bus service (north of 45th Avenue)

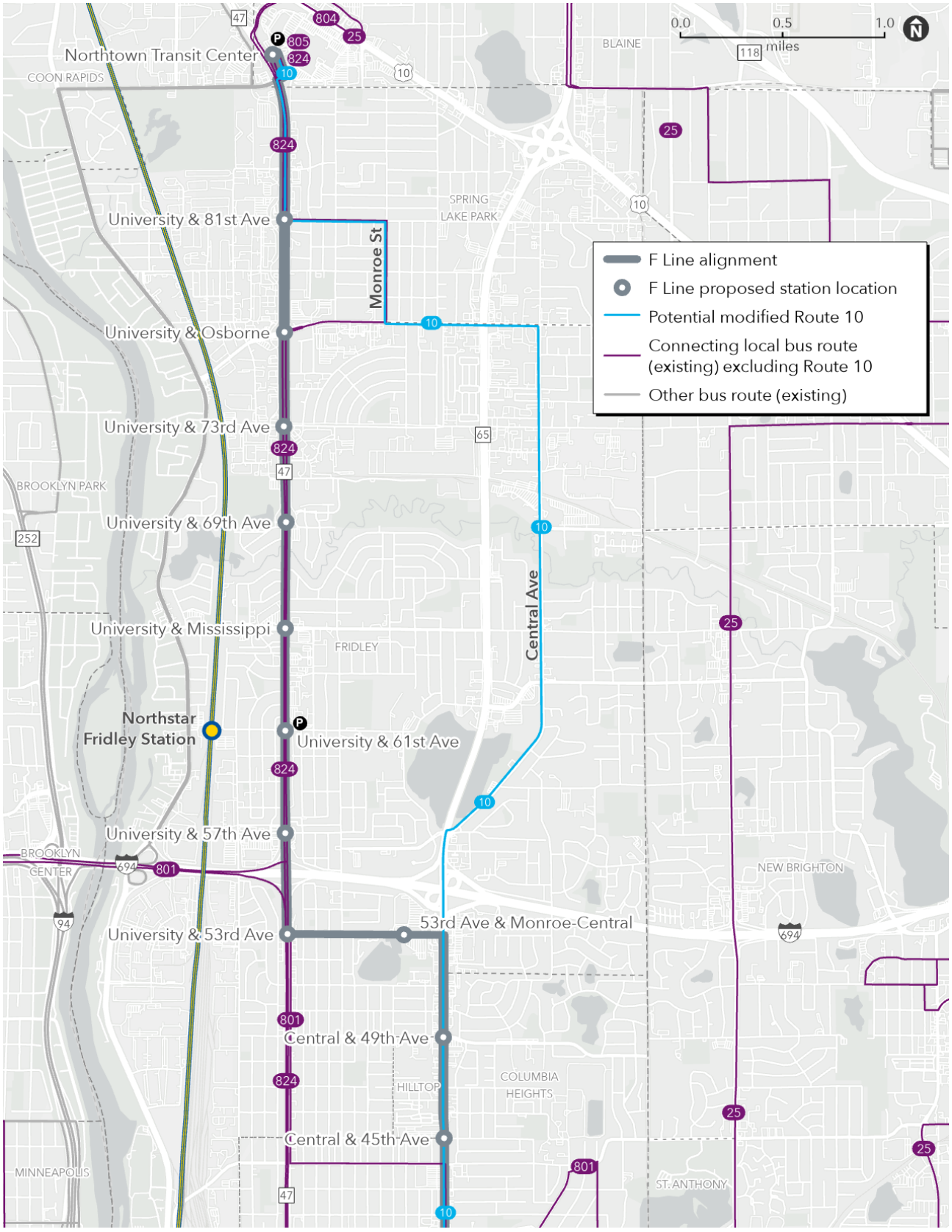
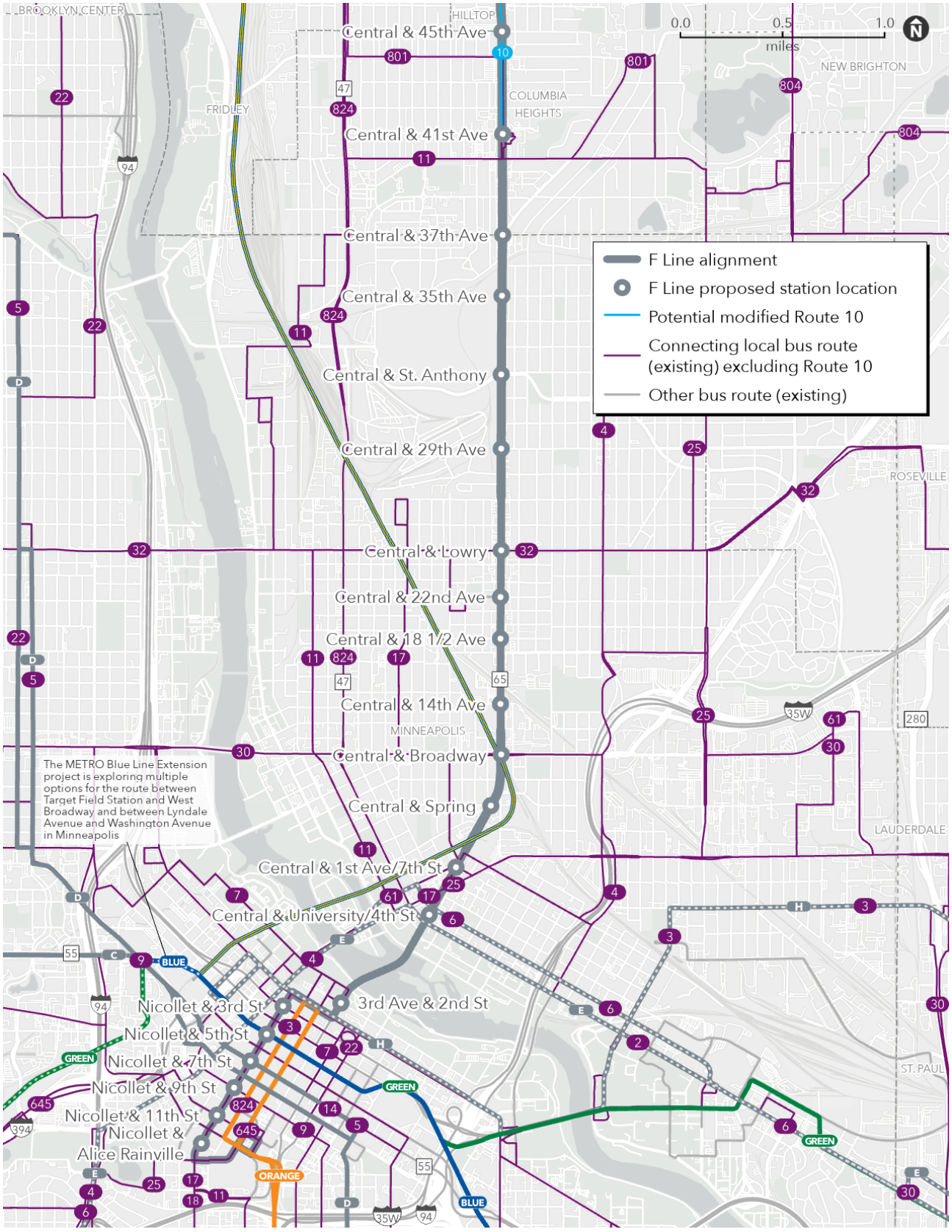


Figure 18. Connecting local bus service (south of 45th Avenue)



Northtown Transit Center

This station is the northern terminal for the F Line and currently offers connections to Routes 10, 25, 804, 805, 824, and 852. Northtown Transit Center Station is one of several stations requiring minimal enhancement prior to the opening of the F Line.

Improvements to the existing Northtown Transit Center were completed in 2022, including realignment of bus stops and vehicle circulation, new pedestrian infrastructure, new shelters with light and heat, a bus driver restroom facility, and NexTrip signs with real-time information. The F Line station at Northtown Transit Center will complement existing infrastructure with METRO branding and fare collection equipment.

The City of Blaine completed a master plan for the Northtown Mall site and surrounding area in July 2022. The plan identifies redevelopment opportunities and establishes a vision for a future vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. Among other transit-supportive changes within the broader Northtown district, the vision calls for a comprehensive network of sidewalks and trails and integration of the Transit Center and the F Line as part of a multimodal hub with transit-oriented development.

Proposed Station Location

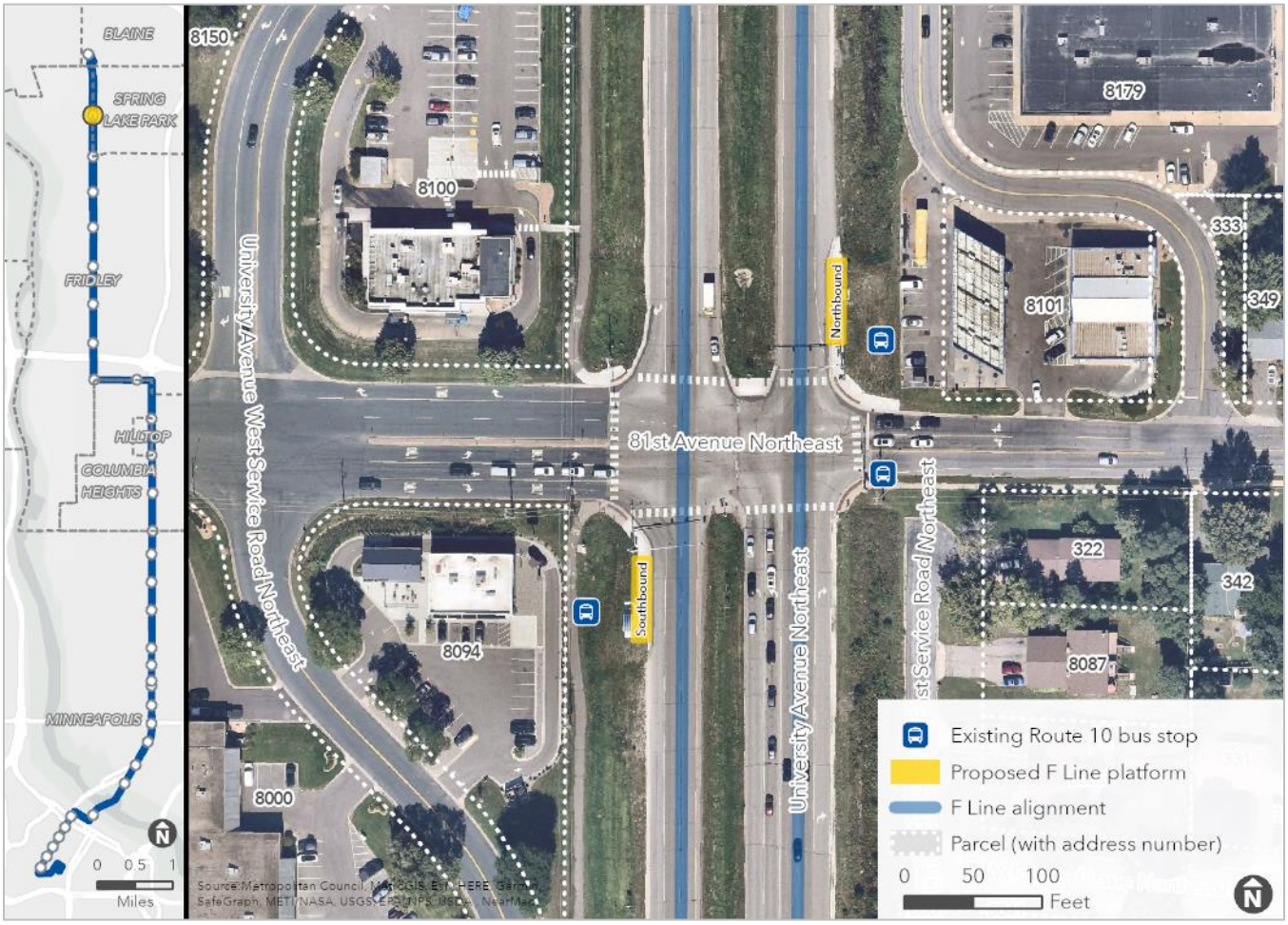
Passengers getting on and off a Route 10 bus at Northtown Transit Center (Sept. 2022) [Source: Metro Transit]

University & 81st Avenue

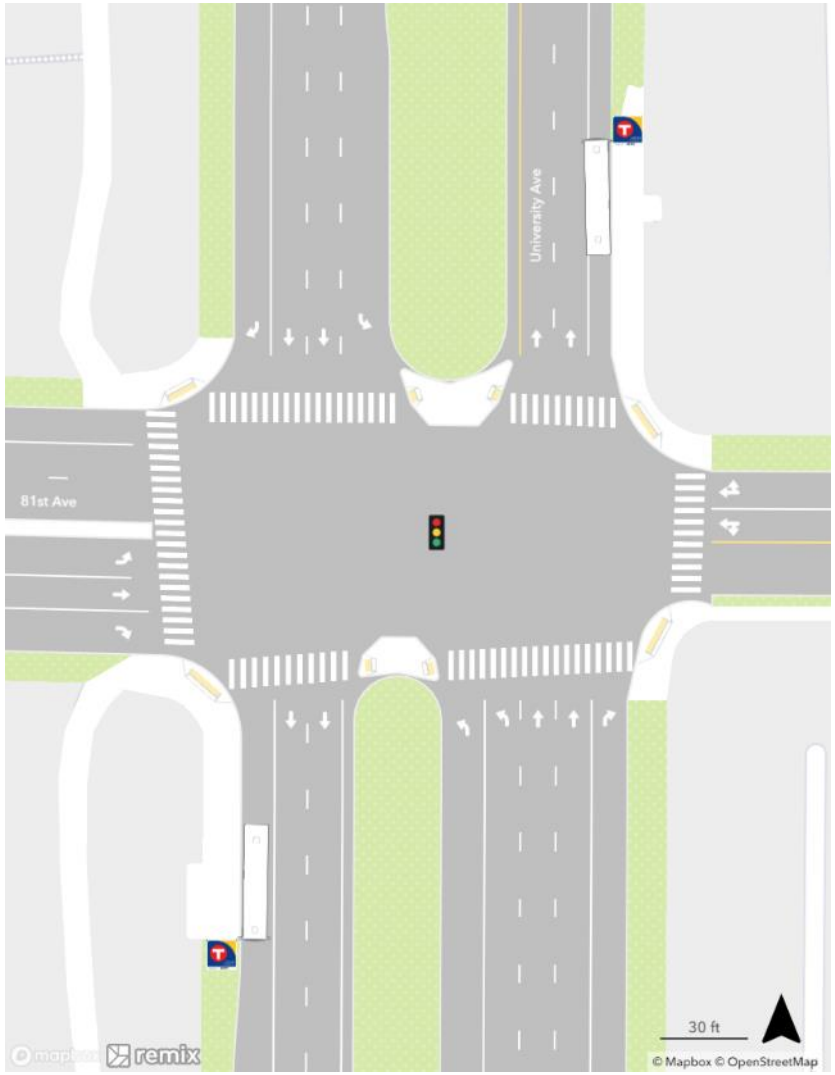
This station currently offers connections to Route 824 and could also be served by a modified Route 10 (see *Potential Local Service in the Corridor* section of the plan). Proposed platforms are located at the same corners as current-day Route 10 stops. University Avenue is under the control of MnDOT, while the east and west legs of 81st Avenue are controlled by the cities of Spring Lake Park and Fridley, respectively.

Commercial activity defines the areas southwest, northwest, and northeast of the intersection, with a mix of commercial and industrial uses further west of University Avenue. Areas to the southeast and further east are largely made up of single-family homes.

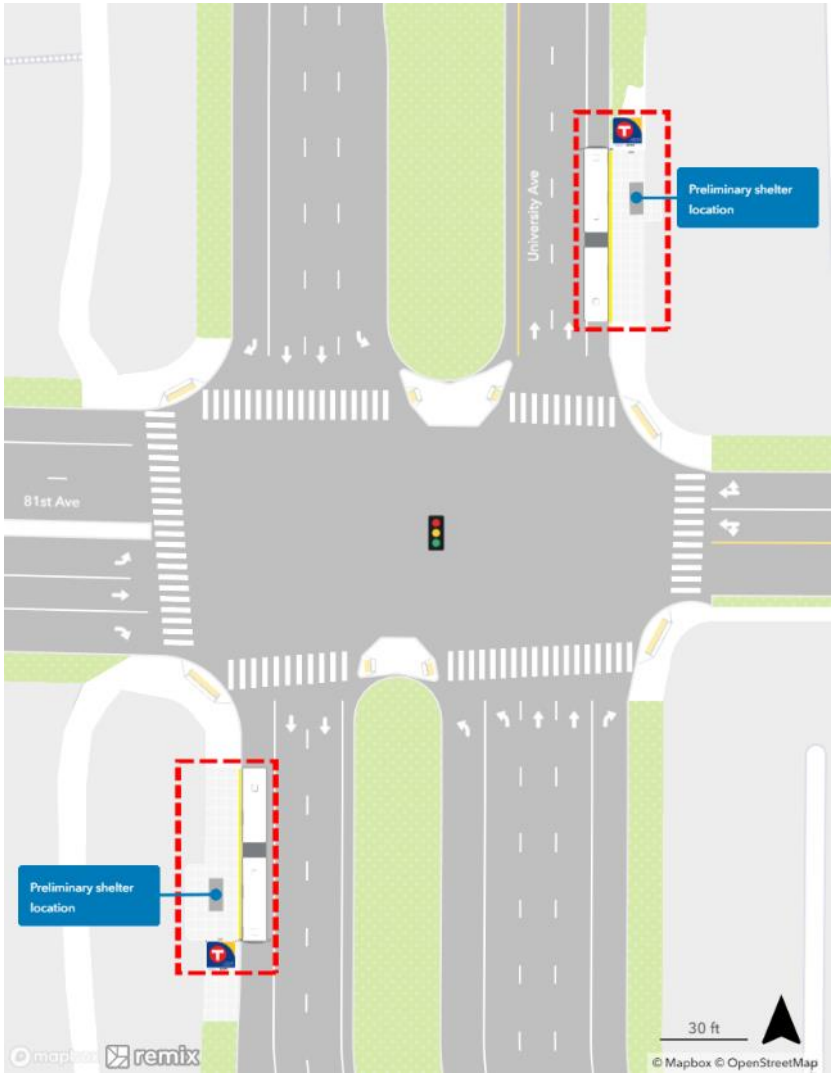
Proposed Station Location



Existing Station Area



Proposed Station Plan



Notes and Discussion

Project coordination

- MnDOT has planned improvements at the intersection in 2025, including changes to corner radii to decrease turning speeds and shorten crossing distances.
- The station is within the study area of MnDOT's Highway 47 and Highway 65 PEL Study. Development of this and other F Line stations will be coordinated with the PEL Study as it continues to advance.

Pedestrian access

- There are marked crosswalks and accessible pedestrian signals at the intersection.
- MnDOT recently added a crosswalk and reconstructed curb ramps at the northwest and northeast corners of the intersection, enabling crossing of University Avenue from both the north and south side of 81st Avenue.
- A shared use trail immediately west of University Avenue provides access to housing, jobs, and commercial activity to the north and south.

Conceptual platform layout

- The proposed station plans included in this document are conceptual and provided for additional context. Station designs will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

Other locations considered

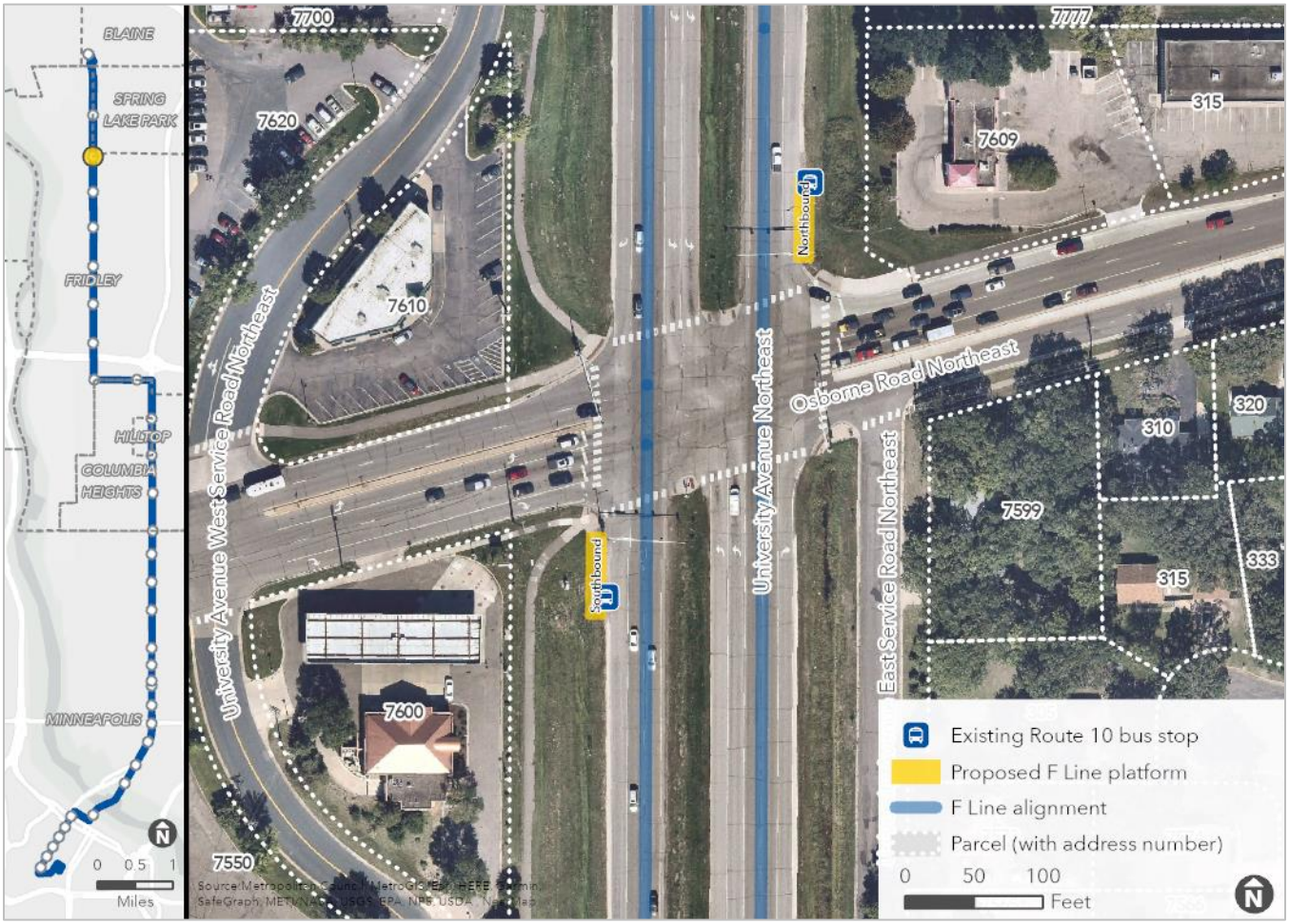
- **University Avenue and 83rd Avenue:** An alternative station location was considered but not advanced at 83rd Avenue. Crossing safety is a concern at the intersection of 83rd and University avenues; it is not a signalized intersection and has a history of pedestrian and bicycle crashes at this location. A platform at this location could encourage unsafe pedestrian and bicyclist crossings. There are currently no bus stops at the intersection for this reason.

University & Osborne

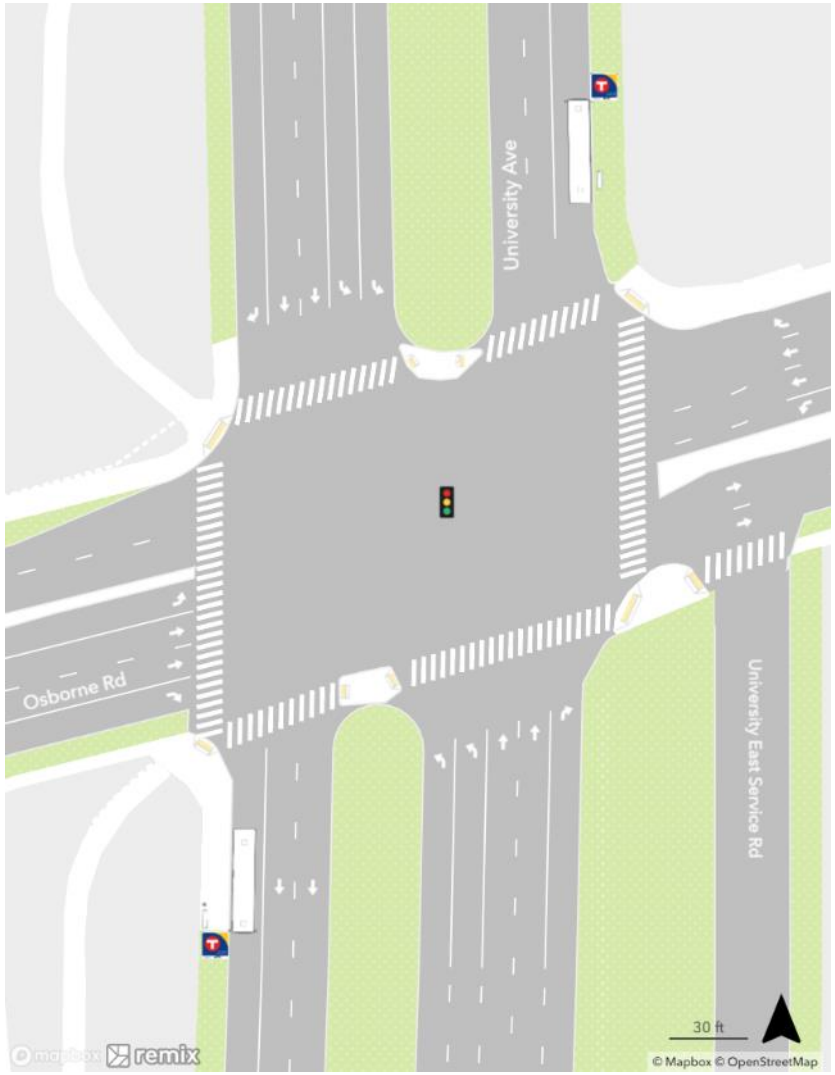
This station currently offers connections to Route 824. Proposed platforms are located at the same corners as current-day Route 10 stops. MnDOT and Anoka County, respectively, are the roadway authorities for University Avenue and Osborne Avenue (County Road 8).

Commercial and industrial land uses define the area west of the station. The Fridley Medical Center, Unity Professional Building, and adjacent to Mercy Hospital – Unity Campus located 1/4 mile east of the station location are important destinations and job centers in the community.

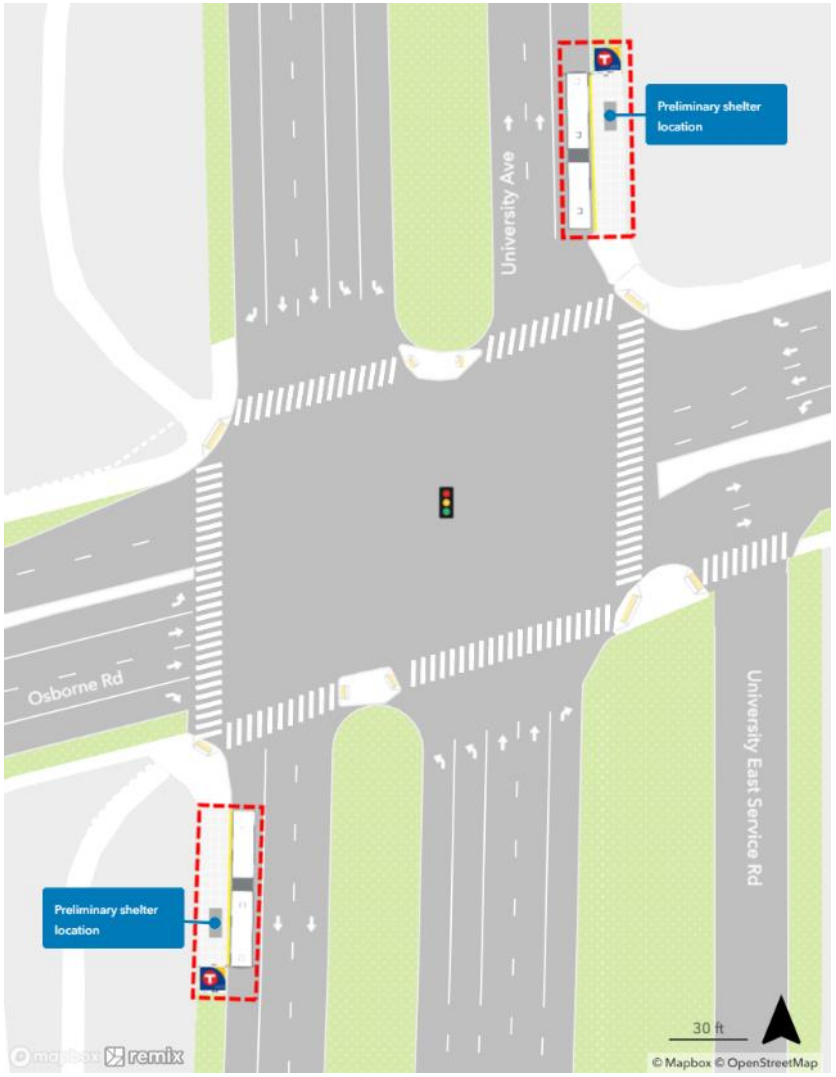
Proposed Station Location



Existing Station Area



Proposed Station Plan



Notes and Discussion

Pedestrian access

- Unlike the next intersection to the north (79th Avenue), the Osborne Road intersection is signalized, has marked crosswalks, accessible curb ramps, and accessible pedestrian signals at all corners. There is a shared use trail immediately west of University Avenue.

Project coordination

- MnDOT has planned improvements at the intersection in 2025, including changes to corner radii to decrease turning speeds and shorten crossing distances.
- The station is within the study area of MnDOT's PEL Study. Development of this and other F Line stations will be coordinated with the PEL Study as it continues to advance.

Conceptual platform layout

- The proposed station plans included in this document are conceptual and provided for additional context. Station designs will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

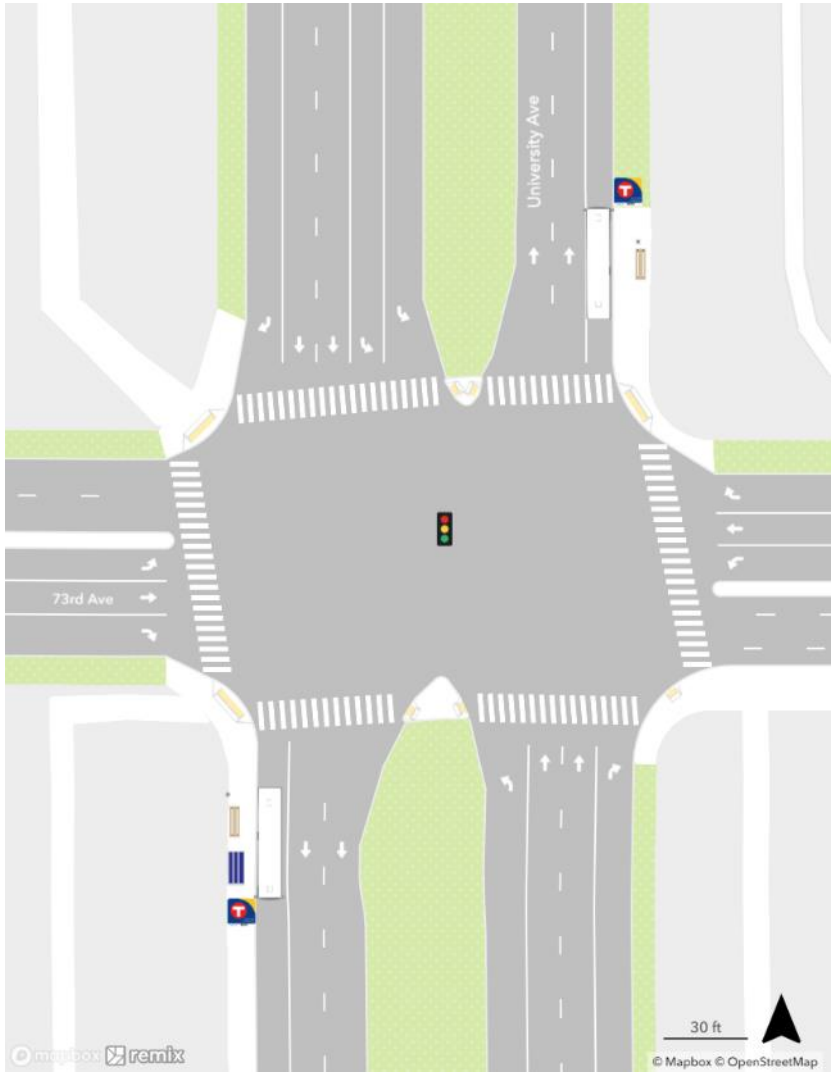
University & 73rd Avenue

This station currently offers connections to Route 824. Proposed platforms are located at the same corners as current-day Route 10 stops. MnDOT is the roadway authority for University Avenue, while 73rd Avenue is controlled by the City of Fridley.

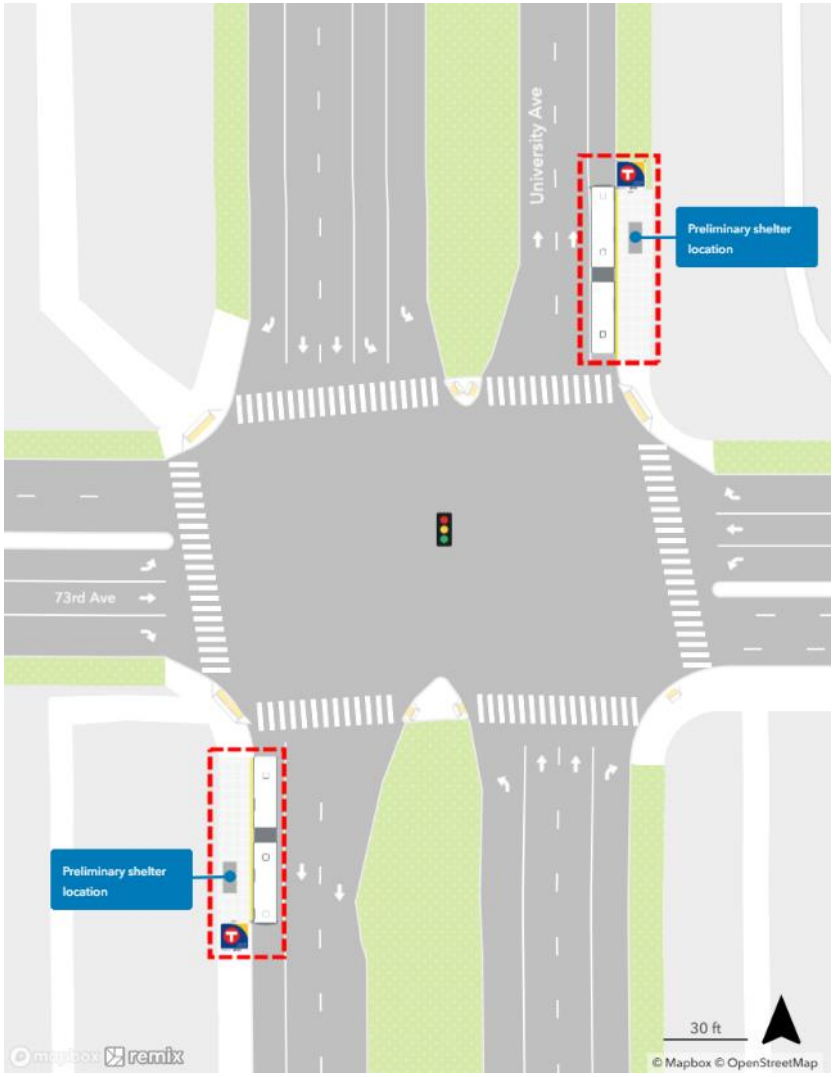
Commercial and industrial activity define the areas northwest, southwest, and southeast of the intersection, with low- and high-density residential development to the northeast.

Proposed Station Location

Existing Station Area



Proposed Station Plan



Notes and Discussion

Pedestrian access

- There is a shared use trail immediately west of University Avenue.

Project coordination

- MnDOT has planned improvements at the intersection in 2025, including median extensions, changes to corner radii, and curb extensions.
- MnDOT is planning to construct a short segment of shared use path in 2025 to connect the southeast corner of the intersection of University and 73rd avenues to the University East Service Road. This will provide more direct access between F Line platforms and the business and industrial district on the south side of 73rd Avenue east of University Avenue.
- The station is within the study area of MnDOT's PEL Study. Development of this and other F Line stations will be coordinated with the PEL Study as it continues to advance.
- The City of Fridley is planning to reconstruct 73rd Avenue in 2026.

Conceptual platform layout

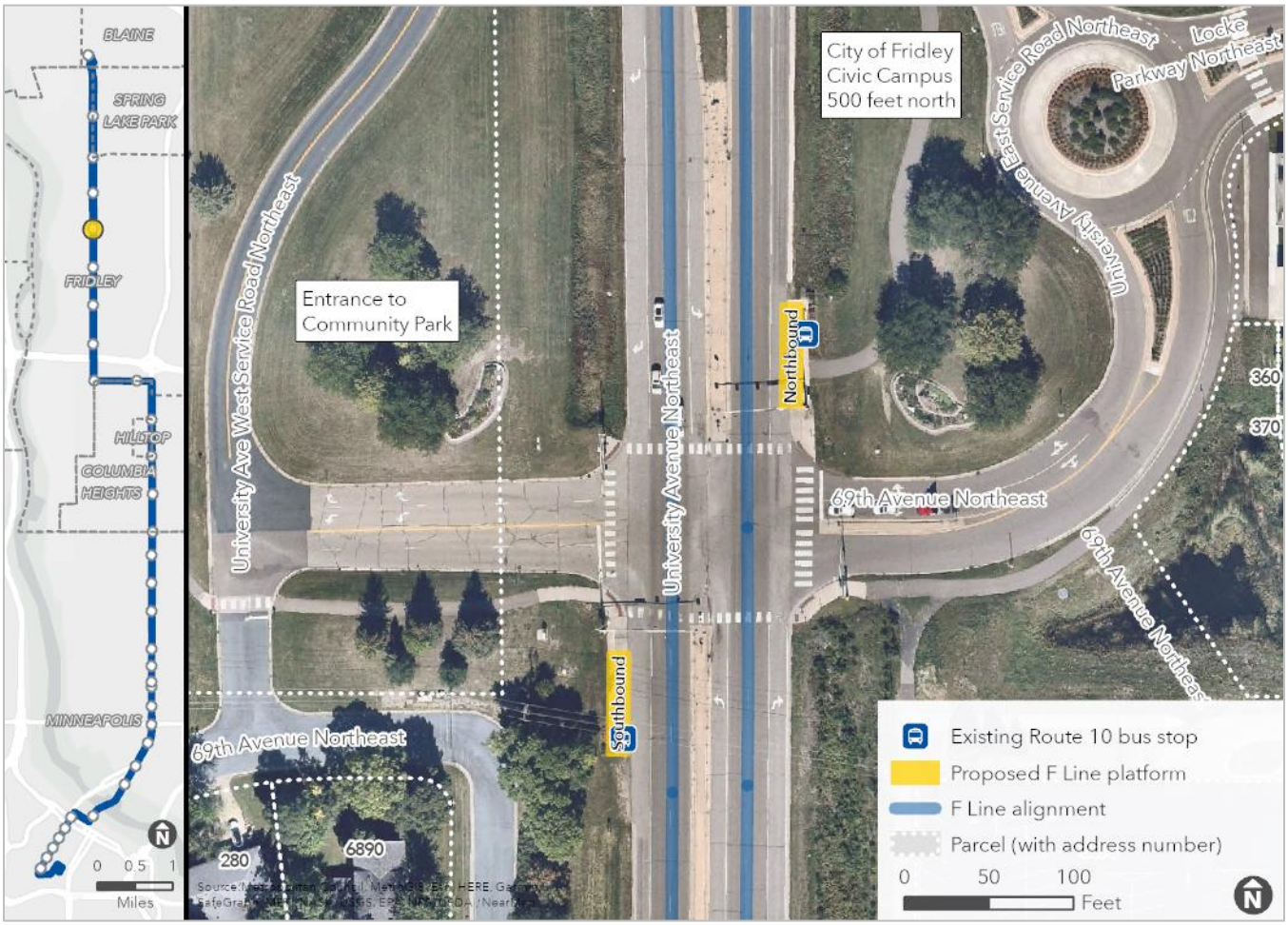
- The proposed station plans included in this document are conceptual and provided for additional context. Station designs will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

University & 69th Avenue

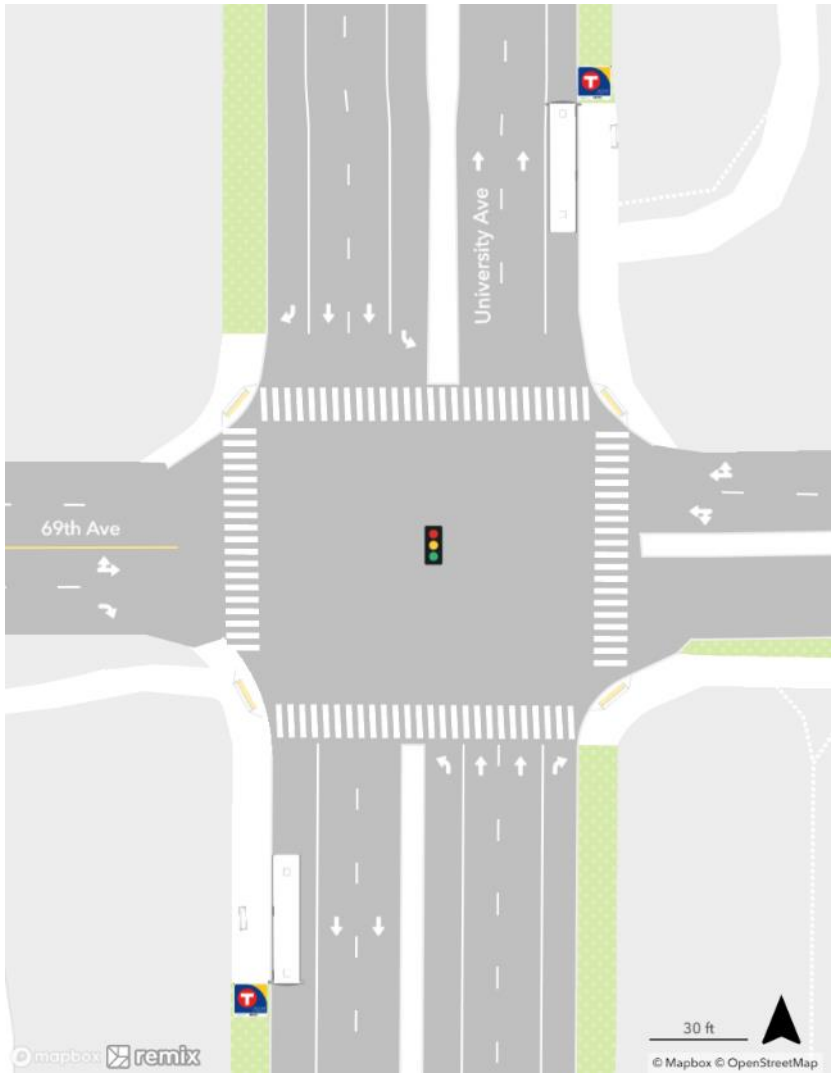
This station currently offers connections to Route 824. Proposed platforms are located at the same corners as current-day Route 10 stops. MnDOT and the City of Fridley, respectively, are the roadway authorities for University Avenue and 69th Avenue.

The City of Fridley Civic Campus is located on the east side of University Avenue, north of the station. A neighborhood of recently built townhomes, condominiums, and single-family homes is located east of the proposed northbound platform. Fridley Community Park is located on the northwest corner of the intersection. Bordering the park to the north is industrial land use and Metro Heights Academy.

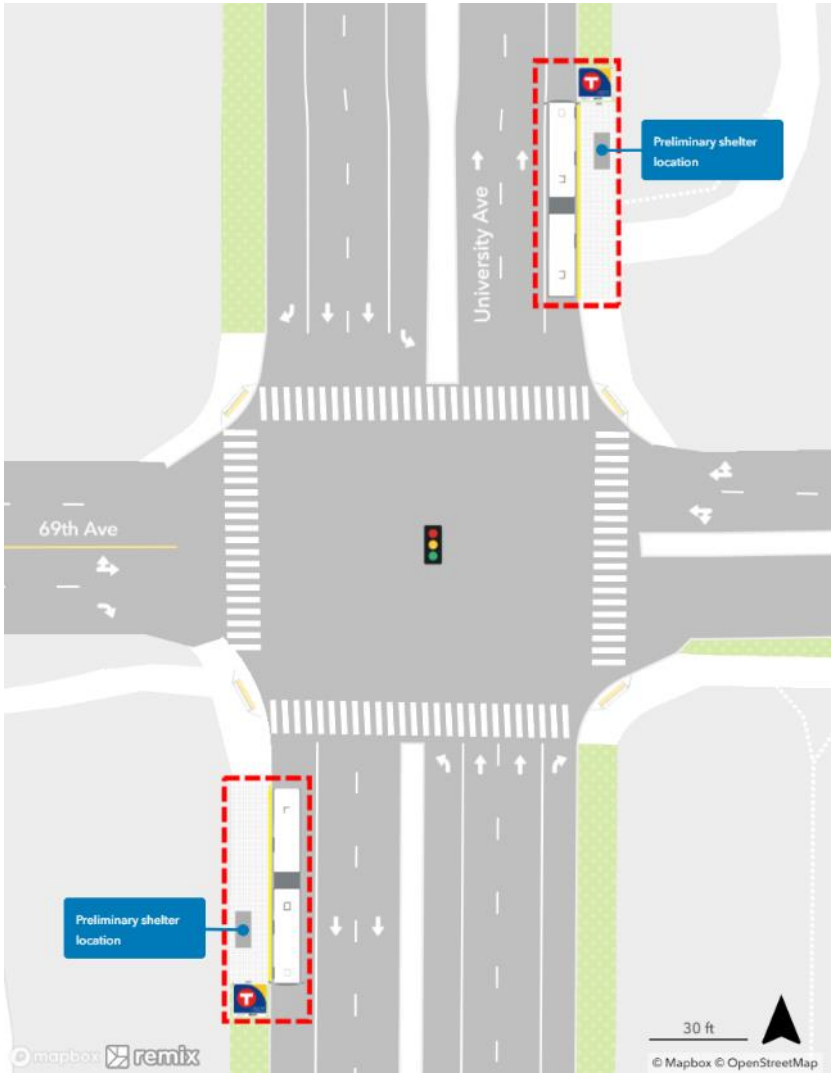
Proposed Station Location



Existing Station Area



Proposed Station Plan



Notes and Discussion

Pedestrian access

- A shared use trail on the east side of University Avenue connects the station to 73rd Avenue and Mississippi Street to the north and south, respectively.
- The City of Fridley plans to construct a shared use trail between 69th and 61st avenues on the west side of University Avenue – extending south the existing trail that begins at 85th Avenue. The trail extension project is slated to begin in 2023.

Bicycle facilities

- The Rice Creek West Regional Trail crosses University Avenue on the south side of the intersection and connects Locke Park and the City of Fridley complex on the east side with Community Park and the Mississippi River to the west. Metro Transit will work with MnDOT, Anoka County, and the City of Fridley to ensure design of F Line platforms do not interfere with but enhance access to the regional trail.

Project coordination

- MnDOT has planned improvements at the intersection in 2025, including curb ramps and accessible pedestrian signals. Additionally, MnDOT expects to make improvements to the Rice Creek West Regional Trail near the intersection in the next few years, with timing depending on funding sources.
- The station is within the study area of MnDOT's PEL Study. Development of this and other F Line stations will be coordinated with the PEL Study as it continues to advance.

Conceptual platform layout

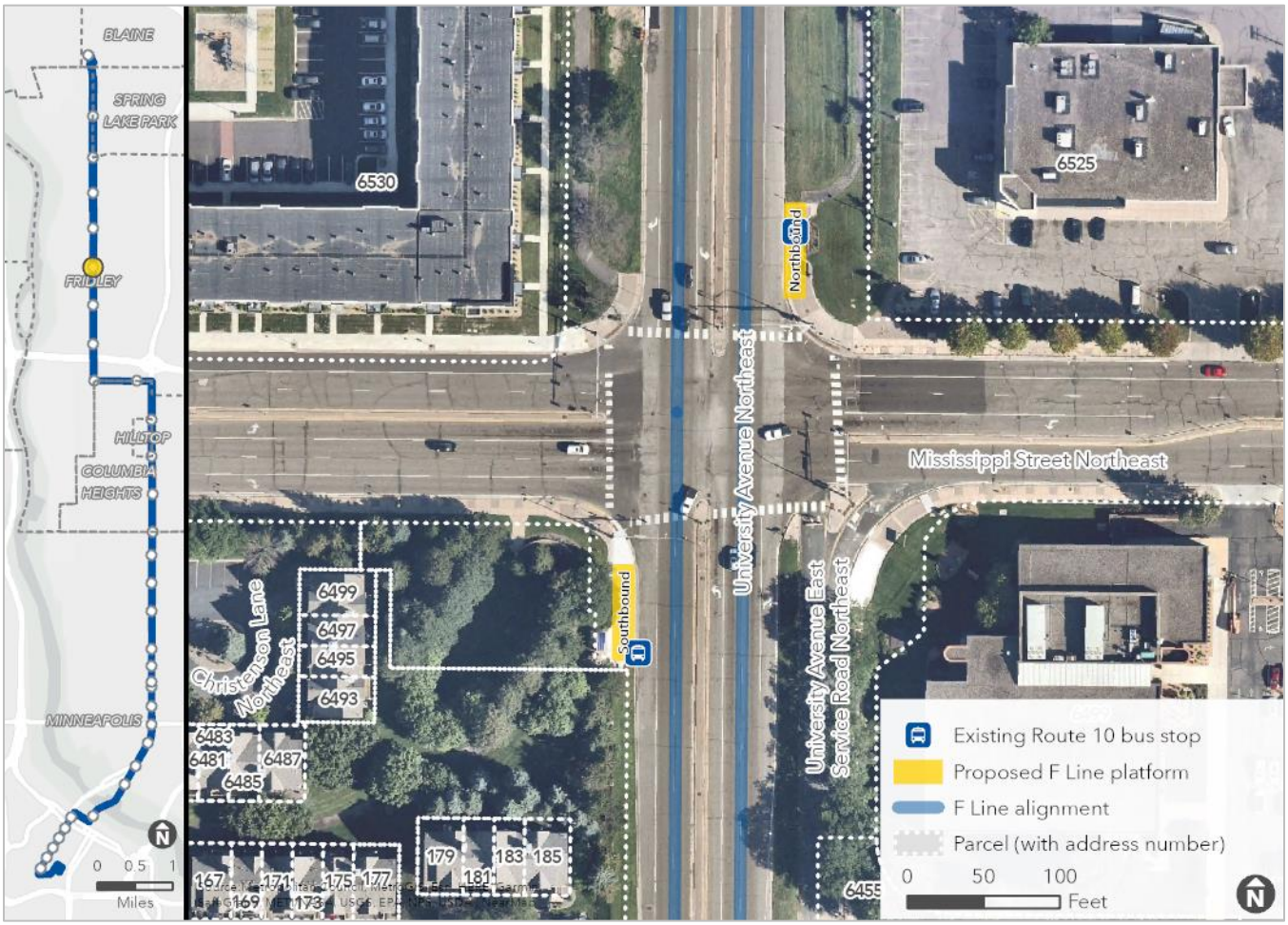
- The proposed station plans included in this document are conceptual and provided for additional context. Station designs will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

University & Mississippi

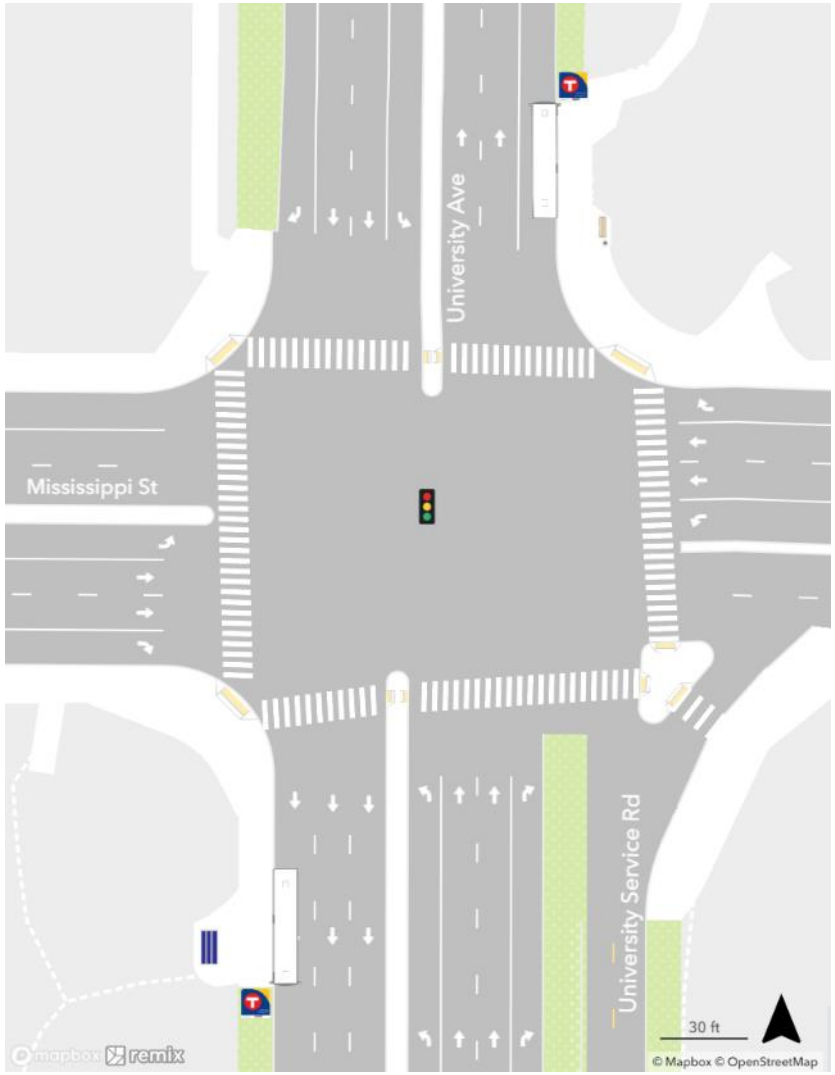
This station currently offers connections to Route 824. Proposed platforms are located at the same corners as current-day Route 10 stops. MnDOT is the roadway authority for University Avenue, while Anoka County controls Mississippi Street (County Road 6).

The area around the proposed station is characterized by newer high-density residential and single-story commercial and strip mall developments.

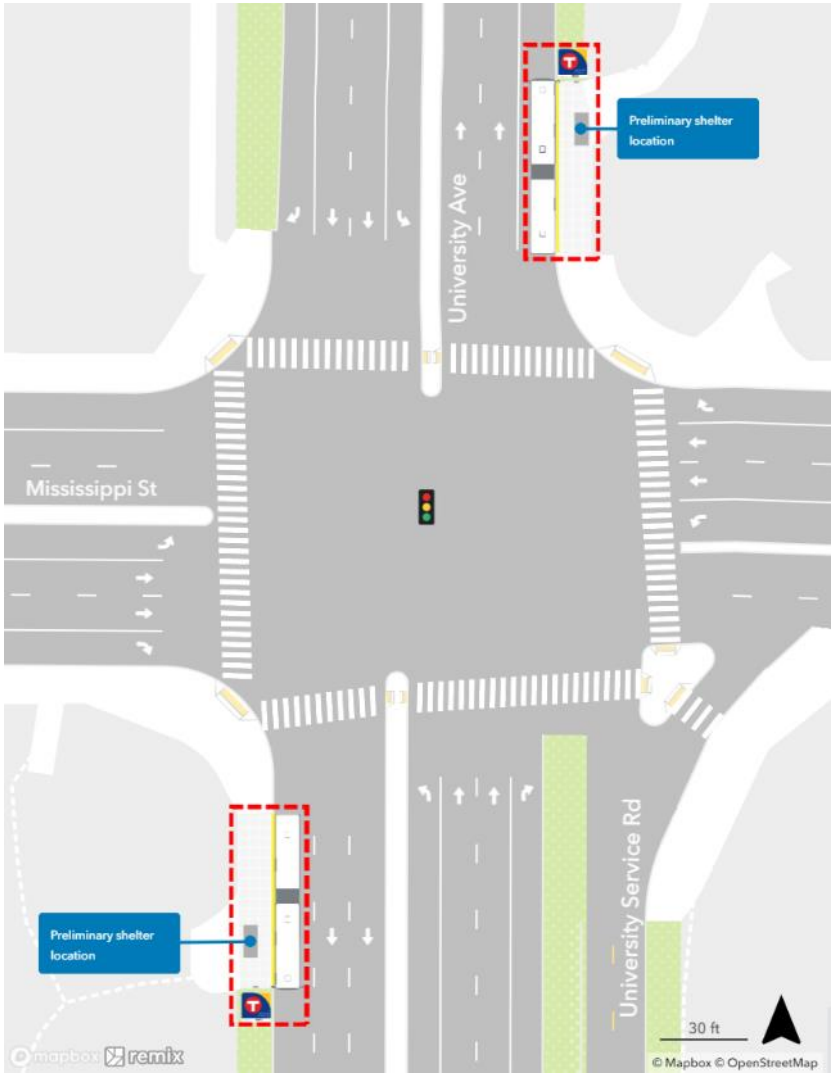
Proposed Station Location



Existing Station Area



Proposed Station Plan



Notes and Discussion

Pedestrian access

- There are currently no sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities along University Avenue south of Mississippi Street; instead, people walk or roll using the University Service Road parallel to University Avenue. The City of Fridley plans to construct a shared use trail between 69th and 61st avenues on the west side of University Avenue – extending south the existing trail that begins at 85th Avenue. The trail extension project is slated to begin in 2023. Additionally, the City plans to construct a shared use trail in the area currently occupied by the University Service Road (east of University Ave), beginning near the southeast quadrant of the intersection of University Avenue and Mississippi Street, and continuing south to Fourmies Avenue.

Project coordination

- MnDOT has planned improvements at the intersection scheduled to occur over the course of 2023-2025 (depending on funding), including medians extensions, tightening corner radii, and upgrading accessible pedestrian signals.
- The station is within the study area of MnDOT's PEL Study. Development of this and other F Line stations will be coordinated with the PEL Study as it continues to advance.
- Anoka County will be reconstructing Mississippi Street on either side of University Avenue in 2025.

Conceptual platform layout

- The proposed station plans included in this document are conceptual and provided for additional context. Station designs will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

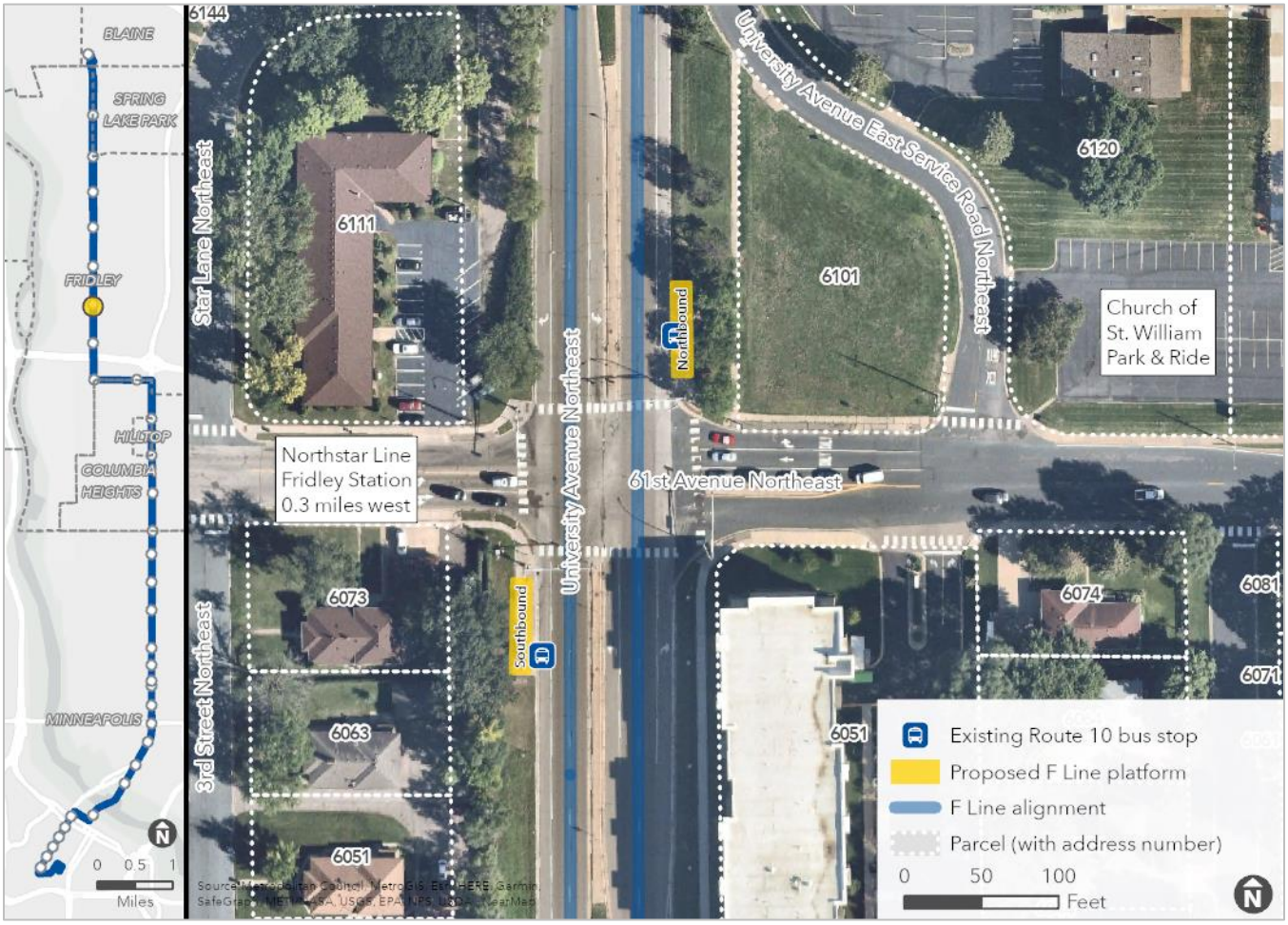
A Route 10 bus at the proposed southbound platform location, with new 262-unit workforce housing development (opened spring 2022) in the background (Source: Metro Transit)

University & 61st Avenue

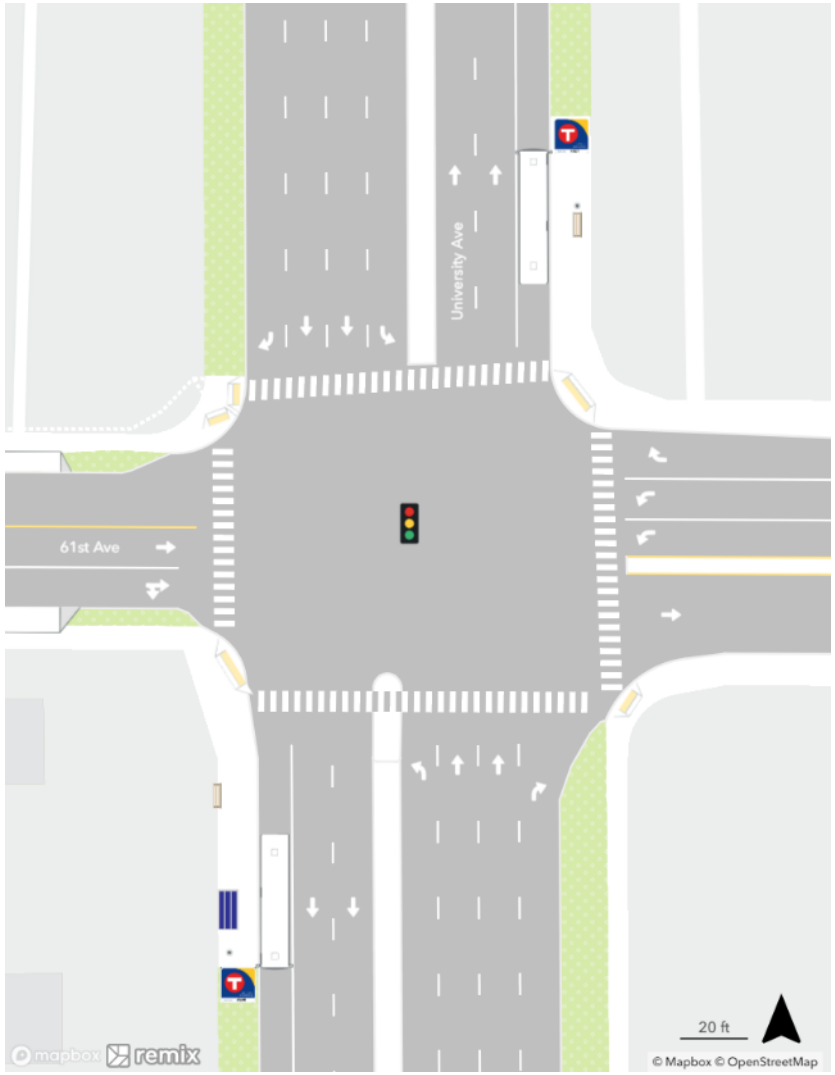
This station currently offers connections to Route 824 and the Church of St. William Park & Ride. Fridley Station on the Northstar Line is five blocks (0.3 mile) directly west of the proposed station. Proposed platforms are located at the same corners as current-day Route 10 stops. MnDOT and the City of Fridley, respectively, are the roadway authorities for University Avenue and 61st Avenue.

The area immediately surrounding the station is largely residential, including single-family homes, duplexes, smaller apartment buildings (some affordable and/or senior housing), and newly built high-density housing. Fridley High and Middle schools and the Fridley Community Center are 1/3 to 1/2 mile east of the intersection.

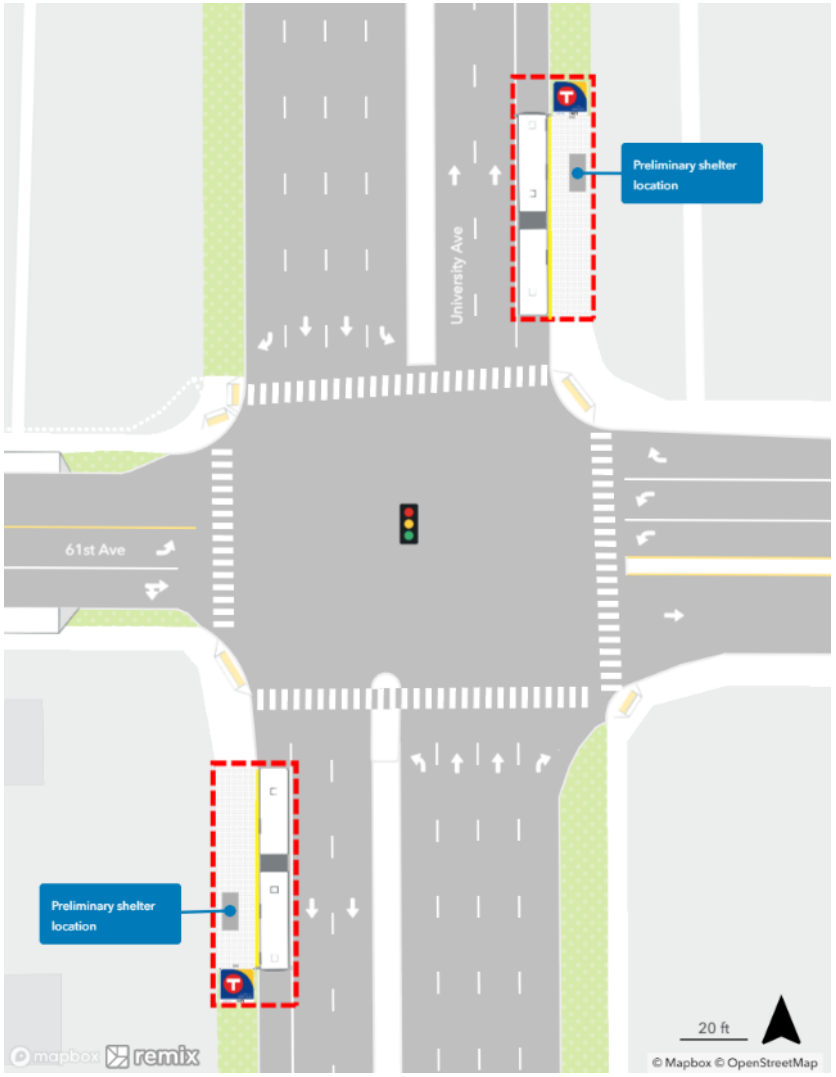
Proposed Station Location



Existing Station Area



Proposed Station Plan



Notes and Discussion

Pedestrian access

- The City of Fridley is exploring opportunities for a new mobility hub[5] near the proposed northbound platform on the City-owned parcel at the northeast corner of the intersection.
- The City plans to construct a shared use trail between 69th and 61st avenues on the west side of University Avenue – extending south the existing trail that begins at 85th Avenue. The trail extension project is slated to begin in 2023. The City intends to extend this trail further south to 57th Avenue at a future date.

Project coordination

- The station is within the study area of MnDOT's PEL Study. Development of this and other F Line stations will be coordinated with the PEL Study as it continues to advance.

Conceptual platform layout

- The proposed station plans included in this document are conceptual and provided for additional context. Station designs will be finalized during the engineering phase of the project (anticipated to begin in summer 2023).

View of the proposed Central & 61st Avenue southbound platform location, with 269-unit housing development (constructed 2016-2019) across the street (Source: Metro Transit)

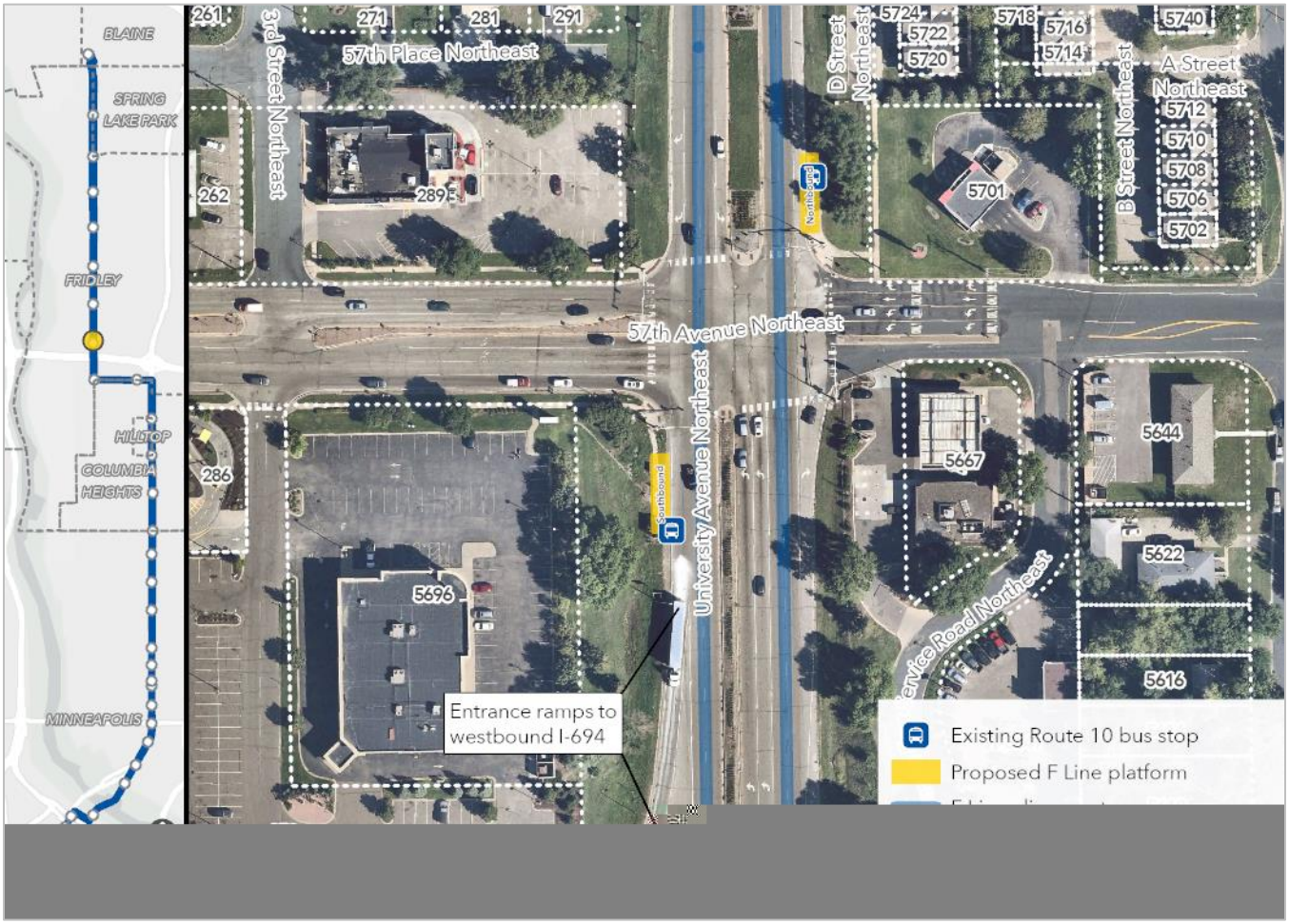
[5] Mobility hubs are places where people can connect with multiple modes of transportation in a safe, comfortable, and accessible environment, facilitating convenient and reliable travel. Mobility hubs co-locate diverse transportation options and community amenities to help people quickly access a shared vehicle, connect between travel services, and orient themselves when they arrive. They are meant to be accessible and inclusive spaces for people to experience the simplicity of multimodal trip planning.

University & 57th Avenue

This station currently offers connections to Route 824. Proposed platforms are located at the same corners as current-day Route 10 stops. MnDOT is the roadway authority for University Avenue, while the City of Fridley controls 57th Avenue.

Commercial activity lines 57th Avenue west of University Avenue; commercial uses are present at the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection. Residential neighborhoods with townhomes and attached and detached buildings define the areas east of the station.

Proposed Station Location



across 2023-24.

- Minneapolis requests that Metro Transit develop their Arterial BRT projects with a scope and matching budget that acknowledges the full range of infrastructure and operational investment necessary to make the transit project complete and successful. Minneapolis has been contributing local funding to past projects in order to ensure intersections are fully upgraded to meet ADA and improve safety for all users and to implement transit advantages. Minneapolis believes these scope elements are essential to the success of the transit project and should be part of the Arterial BRT project scope and budget. Minneapolis' ability to continue to contribute local funding to these projects into the future is not guaranteed.
- In support of future transit improvements to the south of the F Line along Nicollet Avenue, the City supports Metro Transit's current efforts to ensure future interlining of the F Line and a future transit extension.

Transit priority treatment comments:

- Metro Transit acknowledges that Central Avenue is one of the slowest transit corridors in the region with current Route 10 buses regularly averaging less than 12 miles per hour during rush hours. As with all Arterial BRT projects, Metro Transit's goal is to improve transit travel time by 20%. In order to achieve that goal, the City encourages Metro Transit to lead on the traffic analysis and agency coordination around corridor wide transit priority evaluation. The City is a willing partner with Metro Transit and MnDOT to support a more robust evaluation and implementation plan for transit priority to support the speed and reliability of the F Line.
    - Central Avenue from the 3rd Avenue bridge to the northern city boundary (37th Avenue Northeast) is identified in the TAP to evaluate for transit priority lanes and/or other transit advantages (see Transit Action 2.3).
- The City supports providing transit advantages such as transit signal priority (TSP) and queue jumps. The Draft Corridor Plan outlines the suite of options available in an Arterial BRT project but currently does not specify where along the F Line these are targeted for deployment. The City requests Metro Transit make progress to identify where along the corridor specific treatments are proposed in order to properly plan for improvements as a cohesive project package.

Additional staff comments:

The City of Minneapolis supports the F Line Arterial BRT project and sees it as an important improvement to make positive change for people living, working, and traveling along this corridor as well as to meet climate, mode shift, and equity goals. Similar to all Arterial BRT projects, the City sees this as a corridor-wide improvement that goes beyond station platforms. We want to work together to deliver a complete project with our partners – Metro Transit and MnDOT – that follows a complete streets approach, improves the safety of the corridor, and aligns with the City's transportation goals, plans, and policies.

The City of Minneapolis is committed to partnering with Metro Transit on the F Line Arterial BRT, as evidenced by its participation on the Technical Advisory Committee. The City looks forward to further coordination and collaboration through the design and development of the F Line Arterial BRT to bring faster, more reliable transit options for the people of Minneapolis and the larger region.

Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

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November 9, 2022

Dear Jake,

On behalf of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the F Line BRT planning process both on the Technical Advisory Committee and as a partner agency in the public comment period. MPRB supports connections to our parks through regional transportation improvements and is committed to the ongoing coordination on BRT projects. While there were initially three stops adjacent to parks, there are two in the proposed plan. MPRB is supportive of exploring the third, southbound station platform at Chute Square Park at the 4th/University intersection if there is continued interest in that option that was discussed in the planning process. For the two proposed stops adjacent to parks and parkways that are the jurisdiction of Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on the proposed F Line route, both stops adjacent to parkland should be considered a 4(f) resource. MPRB agrees to coordinate on the 4(f) concurrence process with Metro Transit throughout the design and construction process. If easements are required for station platforms that encroach on parkland, MPRB will also coordinate with Metro Transit staff. The East of the River Park Master Plan and the St. Anthony Regional Park Master Plan are both guiding the park design and development of parks along the line and provides MPRB staff with the policy basis for the following comments.

Southbound Central & 35th Avenue
Adjacent to Columbia Park and Golf Course, this station uses the area that is currently a bus pull out bay and converts it into an in-lane bus platform. MPRB does not foresee any negative impacts to the park as a result of the platform reconfiguration or addition of the BRT station or bus traffic. The Columbia Park Master Plan calls for public art along the sidewalk adjacent to the station area and MPRB would be interested in pursuing public art opportunities in the area or on the station if any opportunities arise. There are new stormwater BMPs in the Columbia Golf Course and Park that should be considered in the design and construction process. The stormwater project is a joint effort between the City of Minneapolis, MPRB, and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. There are two stormwater projects that should be considered, the Columbia Stormwater Pretreatment project and the Northern Columbia Green Infrastructure.

Central & St. Anthony
The southbound station planned on Central and St. Anthony falls adjacent to St. Anthony Parkway Regional Park. On pg 53 of the Master Plan, there is a bike trail on the southside of St Anthony that crosses

Central Ave near the proposed bus platform. With the new in-lane stopping proposed for the bus, MPRB staff are interested in learning more about the potential turning conflicts or congestion that might occur for drivers turning south from eastbound St. Anthony Parkway, with special attention to the fact that cyclists will be using the crossing for the regional trail on that side of the intersection. More information is needed to understand the potential traffic impacts. However, MPRB is in support of traffic calming at this intersection, and understands there are some benefits to slowing traffic through an in-lane bus stop. Other nearby park uses that may be of interest to Metro Transit is the archery range on the west side of the railroad. This should not pose a safety threat to bus shelter users as the RR and topography provide a barrier.

Corridor-wide Considerations
MPRB will also continue to monitor the station area plans for the tree preservation and planting plans. Tree preservation is of the upmost importance to the health of our urban tree canopy and park system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the plans and provide comment. MPRB looks forward to these transit improvements in our region.

Sincerely,

Carrie Christensen
Senior Planner
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board