

Columbia Heights Complete Streets Policy

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

This policy defines a process to ensure future street and transportation projects consider the equity of all users by incorporating features as necessary and feasible to implement Complete Streets. The City views each street and transportation project as unique and design features will likely differ from street to street, yet each street may still be considered “complete”.

A safe, accessible Complete Streets transportation network accommodates users of all ages and abilities, such as bicycles, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists. The intent behind Complete Streets is that all street projects should identify opportunities to carry out the vision of a Complete Streets approach and shall be integrated into the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the transportation system.

SECTION 2. POLICY

The City of Columbia Heights is committed to the implementation of Complete Streets to create a comprehensive transportation network that is safe, equitable, multi-modal, complete, and connected network. For major street reconstruction or new construction projects, Complete Streets elements will be incorporated unless an exception is granted. For minor maintenance projects such as repaving or restriping, staff shall document opportunities for future Complete Streets elements but shall not be required to implement them unless cost-effective.

For resurfacing or rehabilitation projects, staff shall review Complete Streets opportunities, but improvements are only required when they are cost-neutral or provide substantial safety benefits based on resource material such as the CMF Clearinghouse or planning documents covered in this policy. Where a project aligns with existing citywide or regional plans (e.g., Safe Routes to Schools, ADA Transition Plan), city staff shall prioritize the use of existing design frameworks to reduce redundancy.

Accommodation shall be provided for all modes of transportation to continue to use the road safely and effectively communicated during any construction or repair work that impacts the right of way and/or sidewalk.

When transportation projects are initiated by other jurisdictions, such as the state or county, but are located within or on the edge of city limits, city staff shall advocate for the integration of Complete Streets principles.

Private development projects shall incorporate Complete Streets elements as identified by city-wide plans such as Safe Streets for All, Imagine 2050 and the City’s 2050 Comprehensive Plan, City Code requirements, and design guidelines.

Effective immediately following passing of a resolution by the City Council, all projects entering the design phase will comply with this policy except as to the components for which an exception has been granted.

SECTION 3. DESIGN

Design Complete Streets to be context-sensitive and meet the needs of the community and surrounding area while emphasizing safe and accessible travel for all people. All facilities shall

be designed in accordance with the best state-of-the-practice design guidance referenced by state (Minnesota Department of Transportation & Office of Sustainability and Public Health) and federal agencies (Federal Highway Administration) as well as any guidance identified in city plans.

Street designs should prioritize safety and equitable mobility for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, alongside motor vehicles. Design choices that emphasize vehicle throughput, such as wider lanes or reduced pedestrian crossings, shall be carefully evaluated to ensure they do not compromise the safety and accessibility of other modes of transportation. The city will seek to create a balanced transportation network that accommodates all users while maintaining safe and efficient movement.

SECTION 4. DOCUMENTATION AND EXCEPTIONS

The City will include the documentation in the form of a Complete Streets worksheet to determine if incorporation of the components is practical and feasible for each project. Projects deemed to have no significant impact on multimodal transportation, such as routine maintenance (e.g., repaving or sweeping), will not require extensive Complete Streets documentation. Documentation shall focus on key elements, such as vulnerable user safety, connectivity, and budget constraints, while reducing the level of detail for minor projects. Complete Street elements shall be documented, considered, and included in projects unless:

- The cost of establishing and maintaining facilities for all users would be excessively disproportionate to the need or exceed budget costs.
- Routine maintenance of the transportation network that does not change the roadway geometry or operation, such as mowing, sweeping, mill and overlay, and spot repair.
- Emergency repairs such as a watermain leak that requires an immediate, rapid response; however, temporary accommodations for all modes shall still be considered.
- Where a reasonable and equivalent project along the same corridor is already programmed to provide facilities exempted from the project at hand.

If an exception is required, the exception shall identify the criteria above in the documentation worksheet. The City Engineer, in collaboration with Public Works and Planning staff, will review exceptions and propose alternative solutions where feasible.

SECTION 5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The City shall maintain a publicly available list of performance measures and prepare information in the City's annual report documenting the City's progress with respect to these performance measures as described in this policy.

Community engagement will be prioritized for major transportation projects or those affecting underserved areas, while minor projects will include notifications but require less intensive engagement.

The annual report will include the following performance measures:

Process Measures:

Process Measure	Initial Start (2024-2025)	Annual Change Over Time (1 Year from Start)
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Annual % of eligible projects that have completed a report identifying, documenting or implementing recommendations		
Who are the users of the project area and through what mode do they travel? Describe whether the users speak a language other than English.		
Does the area have identified speeding or other dangerous driving to multi-modal users such as conflict points within eligible projects?		
How does the existing area handle stormwater and are there water quality or quantity concerns in the project area or downstream of the project area?		
Existing Complete Streets elements in the project area and on intersecting streets and whether elements are practically feasible in this location including temporary or permanent countermeasures.		

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Outcome Measures:

Outcome Measure	Initial Start (2024-2025)	Annual Change Over Time (1 Year from Start)
Are there any public transit facilities along the project area or significant destinations along the routes where there are connectivity gaps for pedestrians or bicyclists?		
Are there any areas that are "under-lit"?		
# of barriers to pedestrian/bicyclist movements in a project area identified or removed		
If Complete Streets elements are determined to be feasible, rank/score these elements by amount of maintenance required?		

Is the project area, or streets it intersects referenced in any plans such as Safe Streets for All, ADA Transition Plan, etc.?		
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81 **SECTION 6. CONFLICTING OR COMPETING NEEDS**

82 When there are conflicting needs among users or modes, the City will prioritize solutions that
 83 balance safety, accessibility, and mobility for all users. Special emphasis will be placed on
 84 protecting vulnerable street users, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, children, seniors, and
 85 individuals with accessibility needs.

86 When space or resources are limited, the City will evaluate each situation based on a
 87 combination of safety, community impact, and current use patterns. Where feasible,
 88 adjustments to street design will prioritize vulnerable users without significantly compromising
 89 the mobility of other modes. Consideration of motor vehicle speed, flow, and driver convenience
 90 will be balanced with the need to create a safe and accessible environment for all users. Efforts
 91 to reduce speeds will be considered a benefit to the overall community. Design solutions will
 92 seek to accommodate all modes of transportation, with a focus on equity and underserved
 93 communities, ensuring a well-rounded transportation system that meets the needs of all users.

94 **SECTION 7. CREATE A NETWORK**

95 To ensure safe and convenient access to key destinations, the City will focus on developing a
 96 well-connected street network that supports multiple modes of transportation, including walking,
 97 biking, public transit, and driving. The goal is to provide a seamless and safe experience for
 98 users across the network, even if not all streets accommodate every mode.

99 Rather than requiring every street to provide separate facilities for all modes, the City will
 100 prioritize connecting key corridors and destinations where multimodal trips are most likely. Gaps
 101 in connectivity, particularly where vulnerable users are impacted, will be addressed through
 102 strategic planning and project prioritization.

103 The City will continue to require developers to implement Complete Streets elements in new
 104 developments as outlined in this policy. Additionally, City staff will collaborate with the State of
 105 Minnesota, neighboring communities, and regional partners to extend the connected network
 106 beyond city boundaries when feasible. Coordination efforts will focus on shared priorities, such
 107 as safe pedestrian crossings and multimodal access.

108 **SECTION 8. SUPPORTIVE LAND-USE**

109 The City shall incorporate this policy into all city-developed land-use policies, plans, zoning
 110 ordinances and public or private projects. New or revised land-use policies, plans, zoning
 111 ordinances, or equivalent documents should specify how they will support and be supported by
 112 the community's Complete Streets vision. The City shall consider the needs of not just today's
 113 users, but those who will be using it in future years.

SECTION 9. PROMOTION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Training will be provided to key personnel in relevant departments. Staff may use MnDOT's annual Complete Streets training to ensure consistency and to reduce redundancy in training efforts.

SECTION 10. MONITORING AND REVISION

The City Engineer, in collaboration with the Columbia Heights Sustainability Commission will monitor the implementation of the Complete Streets Policy. When necessary, the policy shall be revised, or a minimum of every two (2) years.

Related procedures, plans, regulations, and other processes should be considered in relation to the implementation and outcomes of the Complete Streets Policy. Special attention should be paid to the process and outcome of the creation of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan completed with the Safe Streets for All grant awarded to the city.

Considerations for future revisions may include:

- Identify priority groups or places.
- Identify ways to require the prioritization of underinvested and underserved communities.
- Identify ways to require the establishment of specific criteria to encourage funding prioritization for Complete Streets implementation.
- Identify ways to include stakeholders that are representative of underinvested and vulnerable communities.
- Consider the creation of a community engagement plan with specific strategies for who, when, and how they will approach public engagement in the project selection, design, and implementation process.

Complete Streets Worksheet

Project Narrative

- 1) Project Name:
- 2) Roadway Jurisdiction:
- 3) Project Boundaries:
- 4) Project Manager:
- 5) Is the project area, or streets it intersects, referenced in any of the following plans?
 - a. City's Transportation Safety Action Plan (Safe Streets for All)
 - b. City's ADA Transition Plan
 - c. Safe Routes to School Plan
 - d. Roadway Corridor Study (ex: 40th Avenue, Central Avenue, and University)
 - e. Transit Overlay District
 - f. Imagine 2050 – Metropolitan Council
 - g. 2050 Comprehensive Plan
 - h. Parks Master Plan
 - i. Local Water Management Plan
 - j. Watershed Management Plans
 - k. Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation Plan
 - l. Other

Existing Conditions

- 6) Describe existing and projected modal volumes, if available:

Volumes	Existing	Projected (Year)
Average Daily Traffic		
Truck Volumes		
Speed Conditions		

- 7) Detail crash data, if available, and known conflict locations:
 - a. Do crashes tend to be between certain modes? YES/NO
 - b. Are there known conflict points between specific modes? YES/NO
 - c. Are there areas of identified speeding or other dangerous driving? YES/NO
 - d. Are there any barriers to pedestrian/bicyclist movement or challenges observed or informed of in the project area? YES/NO
 - e. Are there any areas that are "under-lit"? YES/NO
- 8) How do users of the project area travel? Describe whether the users speak a language other than English and how those users have been engaged.
- 9) How does the existing area accommodate different modes travelling north-south and/or east-west?
- 10) Describe any public transit facilities along the project area or any significant destinations along the routes or for which the project area is a connector (schools, parks, libraries, Civic

Campus, commercial corridors):

11) How does the existing area manage stormwater and are there known water quality or quantity concern in the project area or downstream of the project area?

12) Describe the existing landscaping and mark whether any Living Streets components exist in the project area and on intersecting streets and whether they are practically feasible in this location:

- ☐ Trails, sidewalks, and on-street, striped bike lanes
- ☐ Median islands
- ☐ Accessible pedestrian signals
- ☐ Curb extensions/bump outs
- ☐ Narrower travel lanes/road diets
- ☐ Speed limits and other traffic calming improvements
- ☐ Safe crossing facilities, including pavement markings
- ☐ Safe and effective lighting
- ☐ Diverse tree plantings
- ☐ Stormwater management
- ☐ Pollinator-friendly/water efficient landscaping
- ☐ Bike racks
- ☐ Benches
- ☐ Water fountains
- ☐ Waste receptacles
- ☐ Public art
- ☐ Other components as determined based on latest and best "Living Streets" standards

13) Please explain and provide supporting evidence why this project meets criteria for an exception:

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION
MEETING DATE	JANUARY 13, 2025

ITEM:	Consideration of a Complete Streets Policy		
DEPARTMENT: Community Development		BY/DATE: Andrew Boucher – City Planner	
CORE CITY STRATEGIES: (please indicate areas that apply by adding an “X” in front of the selected text below)			
X Healthy and Safe Community		X Thriving and Vibrant Destination Community	
X Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive, and Friendly		X Strong Infrastructure and Public Services	
X Trusted and Engaged Leadership		X Sustainable	

BACKGROUND

Over the past year, staff in the Community Development and Engineering/Public Works Departments collaborated with the City’s Sustainability Commission and Minnesota Department of Transportation to develop a Complete Streets Policy. This effort included creating and refining multiple versions through small group meetings with staff and commission members, as well as focused workshops with experts from MN DOT and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The policy received a positive recommendation from the Sustainability Commission during their November 2024 meeting before moving to the December 2024 Council Work Session.

Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School were identified as priorities in Chapter 6 – Transportation of the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. These are defined as roadways designed to accommodate all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit—regardless of age or ability. Currently, the City has not established a policy for Complete Streets, which is a requirement to achieve Step 3 in the GreenStep City program. These guidelines provide a framework and design philosophy for both private and public projects that can be incorporated into future updates to City Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, and any other applicable policies and procedures.

To inform the policy’s development, staff and the Sustainability Commission reviewed Complete Streets policies adopted by cities in Greater Minnesota and the seven-county metro area. Additional resources included toolkits from the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition and Smart Growth America. The draft policy was carefully evaluated against these toolkits to ensure it prioritizes context-specific solutions tailored to the City’s needs.

The Complete Streets policy has ten total sections:

1. Purpose
2. Policy
3. Design
4. Documentation and Exceptions
5. Performance Measures

6. Conflicting or Competing Needs
7. Create a Network
8. Supportive Land-Use
9. Promotion, Education, and Training
10. Monitoring and Revision

The purpose and policy sections define a process to evaluate and incorporate features for each mode of transportation as the City considers major street reconstruction or new construction projects. Minor maintenance projects such as repaving or restriping will not require consideration of Complete Street elements but will still document the opportunities and feasibility of these elements to be included in larger projects. Complete Streets elements will be included in resurfacing or rehabilitation when they are cost-neutral or provide substantial safety benefits. These benefits are based on resource material such as the CMF Clearinghouse, established planning documents, or other citywide/regional plans such as Safe Routes to School, ADA transition. When transportation projects are initiated by other jurisdictions such as the state or county but located within or on the edge of city limits, staff shall advocate for the integration of Complete Streets principles.

The design of Complete Streets will need to be context-sensitive and meet the needs of the community and surrounding area while emphasizing safe and accessible travel for all people. Part of the Complete Streets policy will require documentation of different components to determine the practicality and feasibility of these components based on: vulnerable user safety, connectivity, budget of construction and ongoing maintenance, etc. unless an exception is required. To evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, staff has included a series of process and outcome measures to be compiled and reviewed annually.

The process metrics include the percentage of projects with a completed project worksheet; this worksheet will include:

- Who are the project area users, modes of travel, whether a language other than English is spoken in the applicable neighborhood;
- Does the project area have identified speeding or conflict points within eligible projects;
- How does the area handle stormwater and are there quality or quantity concerns present;
- Are there existing Complete Streets elements or elements that are practically feasible?

The outcome measures will include:

- Are there public transit facilities or significant designations with connectivity gaps for pedestrians or bicyclists?
- Are there any areas that are “under-lit” or present a number of barriers to pedestrians/bicyclist movements that have been identified or removed?
- If there are Complete Streets elements that have been determined to be feasible, rank/score these elements by the amount of maintenance required?

By establishing a process to evaluate the potential and effectiveness of Complete Streets improvements from a budget, maintenance, and safety perspective, the City will be able to prioritize these improvements and implement elements which provide the greatest safety gains while balancing budget and maintenance needs to create a network of complete streets. Future actions that are anticipated include adopting the Complete Streets Policy into zoning code and the City Design Guidelines updates as well as assessing other opportunities for departments to support implementation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution 2025 - 006, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to approve Resolution 2025 - 006, being a resolution approving the City of Columbia Heights Complete Streets Policy and direct staff to identify opportunities to implement the Complete Street Policy.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- Resolution 2025-006
- Complete Streets Policy
- December 2024 Work Session Memo
- Comprehensive Plan Chapter 6 – Transportation Maps
- Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 – Parks and Trails
- [Minnesota Best Practices for Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety](#)

RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 006

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE COMPLETE STREETS POLICY FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MN

BE IT RESOLVED BY the City Council (the “Council”) of the City of Columbia Heights, Minnesota (the “City”) as follows:

WHEREAS, on November 20, 2024, the Sustainability Commission heard a presentation on the Complete Streets Policy after several rounds of workshops, edits, and collaboration with the Sustainability Commission, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and city staff before giving a positive recommendation to the Council Liaison and having staff introduce the proposal at the next City Council Work Session; and

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2024, the City Council reviewed the timeline and efforts that went into the draft Complete Streets Policy and provided staff with direction to prepare the policy for consideration at a future City Council meeting; and

WHEREAS, the City has interest in implementing a Complete Streets Policy to make progress on transportation safety goals identified in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which establishes both Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School as priorities in the Chapter 6 – Transportation section to expand the services available to commercial and residential tenants and property owners, and enhance the overall health and safety of the built community; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that a safe, accessible Complete Streets transportation network accommodates users of all ages and abilities, such as bicycles, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists and all street projects shall identify opportunities to carry out the vision of a Complete Streets approach and be integrated into the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the Complete Streets Policy is to be context-sensitive and meet the needs of the community and surrounding area while emphasizing safe and accessible travel for all people with all facilities designed in accordance with the best state-of-the-practice design guidance referenced by state (Minnesota Department of Transportation & Office of Sustainability and Public Health) and federal agencies (Federal Highway Administration) as well as any guidance identified in city plans; and

WHEREAS, street designs should prioritize safety and equitable mobility for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders, alongside motor vehicles and prioritize design choices that emphasize vehicle throughput, such as wider lanes or reduced pedestrian crossings and ensuring they do not compromise the safety and accessibility of other modes of transportation to create a balanced transportation network that accommodates all users while maintaining safe and efficient movement; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in accordance with all ordinances and regulations of the City of Columbia Heights, the City Council of the City of Columbia Heights approves and establishes the Complete Streets Policy as attached.

ORDER OF COUNCIL

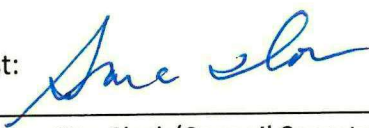
Passed this 13th day of January, 2025

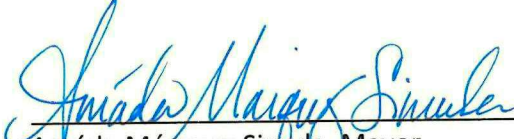
Offered by: James

Seconded by: Buesgens

Roll Call: All Ayes

Attest:


Sara Ion, City Clerk/Council Secretary


Amada Márquez Simula, Mayor

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	WORK SESSION ITEM
MEETING DATE	DECEMBER 2, 2024

ITEM:	Discussion on Complete Streets Policy		
DEPARTMENT: Community Development		BY/DATE: Andrew Boucher, City Planner; November 25, 2024	
CORE CITY STRATEGIES: (please indicate areas that apply by adding an “X” in front of the selected text below)			
X Healthy and Safe Community		_Thriving and Vibrant Destination Community	
_Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive, and Friendly		X Strong Infrastructure and Public Services	
_Trusted and Engaged Leadership		X Sustainable	

BACKGROUND:

Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School were identified as priorities in Chapter 6 – Transportation of the City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan. These are defined as roadways designed to accommodate all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, and transit—regardless of age or ability. Currently, the City has not established a policy for Complete Streets, which is a requirement to achieve Step 3 in the GreenStep City program. These guidelines provide a framework and design philosophy for both private and public projects.

Over the past year, the City’s Sustainability Commission, in collaboration with city staff, has developed a draft Complete Streets policy. This effort involved creating and refining multiple versions through small group meetings with staff, commission members, and focused workshops with experts from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. These collaborative efforts culminated in the draft policy presented today.

To inform the policy’s development, staff and the Sustainability Commission reviewed Complete Streets policies adopted by cities in Greater Minnesota and the seven-county metro area. Additional resources included toolkits from the Minnesota Complete Streets Coalition and Smart Growth America. The draft policy was carefully evaluated against these toolkits to ensure it prioritizes context-specific solutions tailored to the City’s needs.

The Complete Streets policy has ten total sections:

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8. Supportive Land-Use

9. Promotion, Education, and Training
10. Monitoring and Revision

The purpose and policy sections define a process to evaluate and incorporate features for each mode of transportation as the City considers major street reconstruction or new construction projects. Minor maintenance projects such as repaving or restriping will not require consideration of Complete Street elements but will still document the opportunities and feasibility of these elements to be included in larger projects. Complete Streets elements will be included in resurfacing or rehabilitation when they are cost-neutral or provide substantial safety benefits. These benefits are based on resource material such as the CMF Clearinghouse, established planning documents, or other citywide/regional plans such as Safe Routes to School, ADA transition. When transportation projects are initiated by other jurisdictions such as the state or county but located within or on the edge of city limits, staff shall advocate for the integration of Complete Streets principles.

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The process metrics include the percentage of projects with a completed project worksheet; this worksheet will include:

- Who are the project area users, modes of travel, whether a language other than English is spoken in the applicable neighborhood;
- Does the project area have identified speeding or conflict points within eligible projects;
- How does the area handle stormwater and are there quality or quantity concerns present;
- Are there existing Complete Streets elements or elements that are practically feasible?

The outcome measures will include:

- Are there public transit facilities or significant designations with connectivity gaps for pedestrians or bicyclists?
- Are there any areas that are “under-lit” or present a number of barriers to pedestrians/bicyclist movements that have been identified or removed?
- If there are Complete Streets elements that have been determined to be feasible, rank/score these elements by the amount of maintenance required?

By establishing a process to evaluate the potential and effectiveness of Complete Streets improvements from a budget, maintenance, and safety perspective, the City will be able to prioritize these improvements and implement elements which provide the greatest safety gains while balancing budget and maintenance needs to create a network of complete streets.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the following:

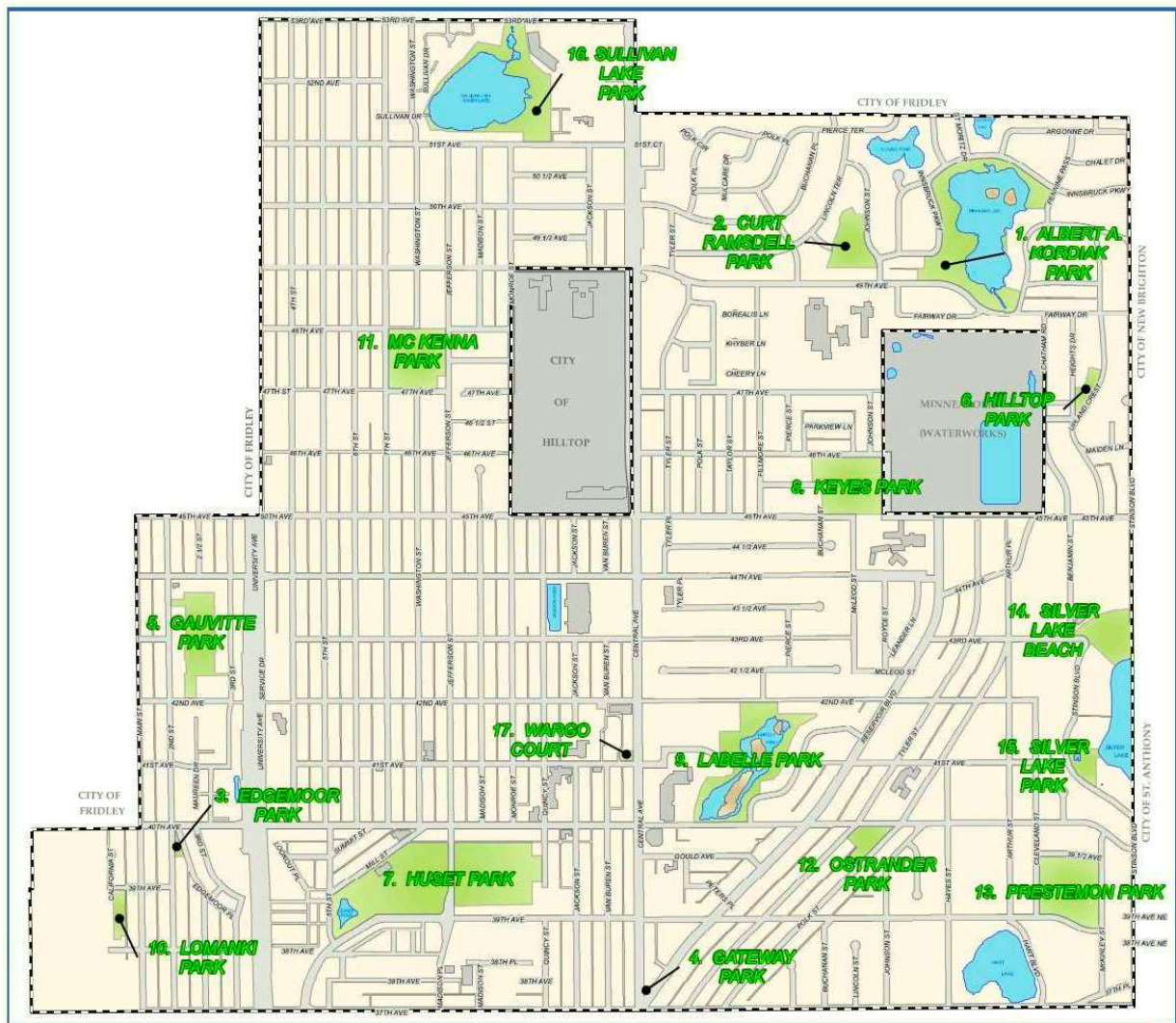
- 1) Review the draft Complete Streets policy and provide staff with directions and recommended edits if there is interest in preparing the policy for consideration at a future City Council meeting.

- 2) If the City Council is interested in pursuing the Complete Street policy, then future direction will be required if there is a desire to incorporate the policy into land use planning and other applicable guiding documents such as zoning code and design guidelines.

ATTACHMENT(S):

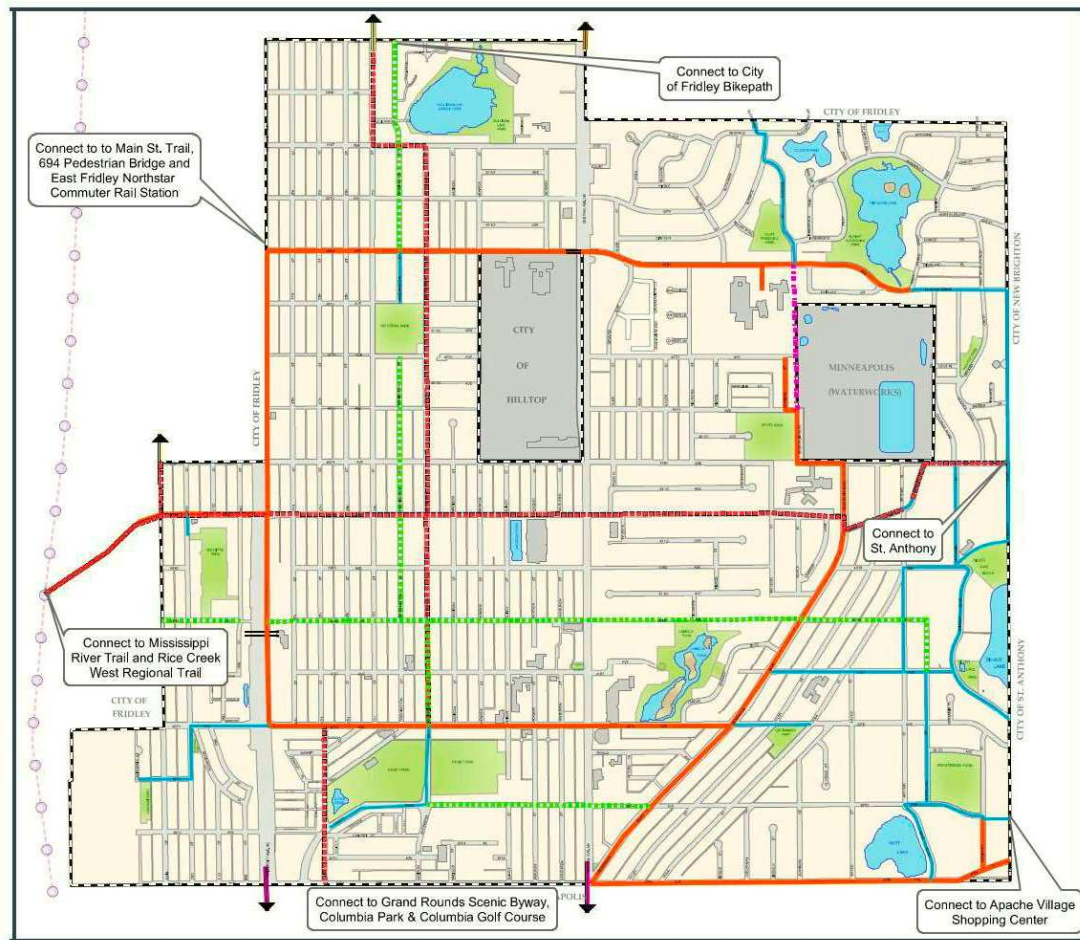
Draft Complete Streets Policy

FIGURE 7-1. CITY PARKS



Source: City of Columbia Heights

FIGURE 7-2. RECOMMENDED BIKE ROUTE NETWORK



Source: City of Columbia Heights

Type

- Ped and Bike Overpass
- Connection Over/Under I-694
- Connection Over/Under I-694 - Heavy Traffic
- Connection to Grand Rounds Scenic Byway
- Primary City Trail Loop
- Secondary Trail Connections
- Primary City Trail Loop System Gap
- Existing Bike Route on Road
- Secondary Route to Consider
- Commuter Rail

Future connections into adjacent communities are subject to change based on future coordination and planning efforts.

FIGURE 6-1. JURISDICTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

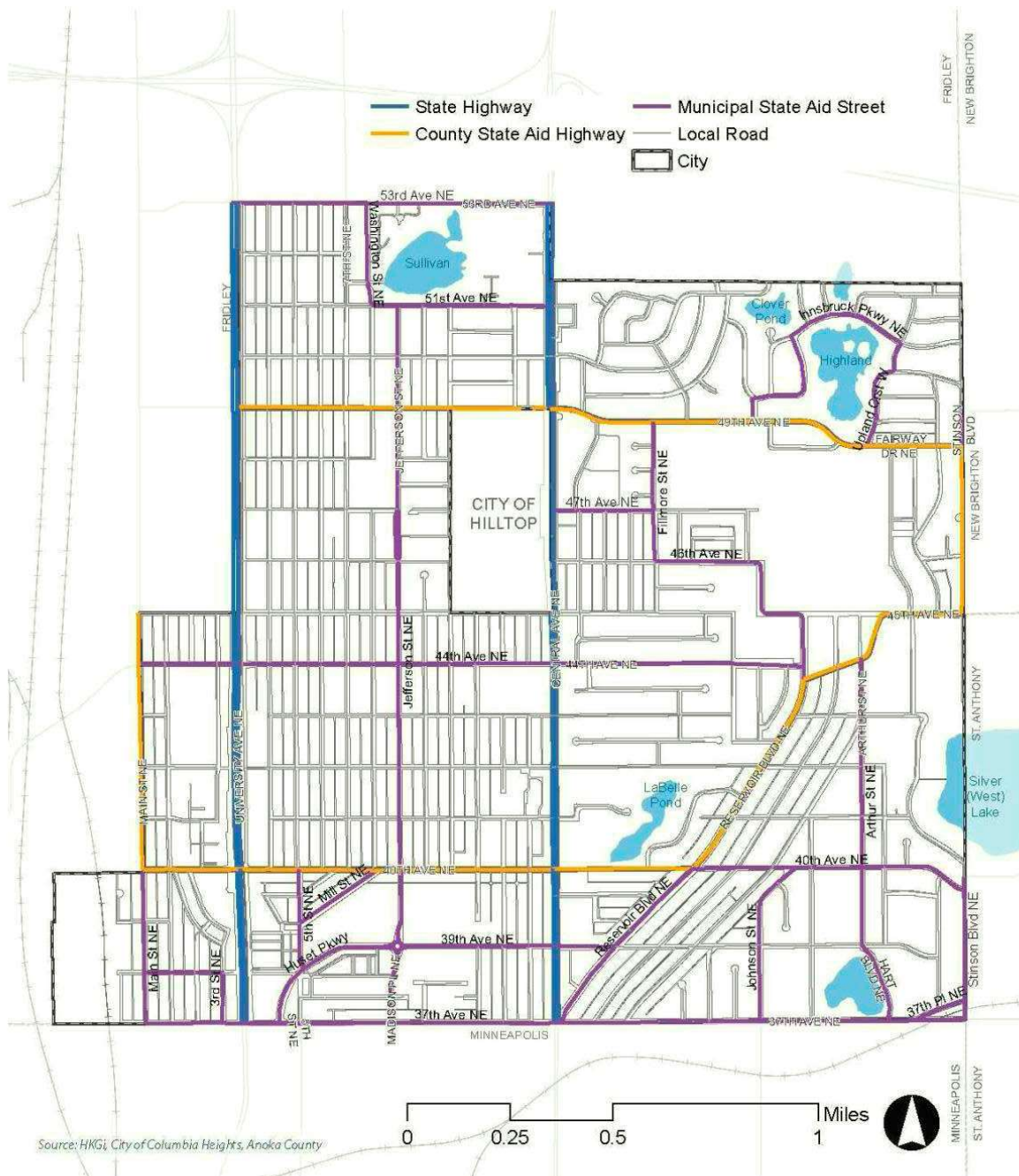


FIGURE 6-3. EXISTING ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION
University Avenue and Central Avenue are functionally classified as A-Minor Arterials

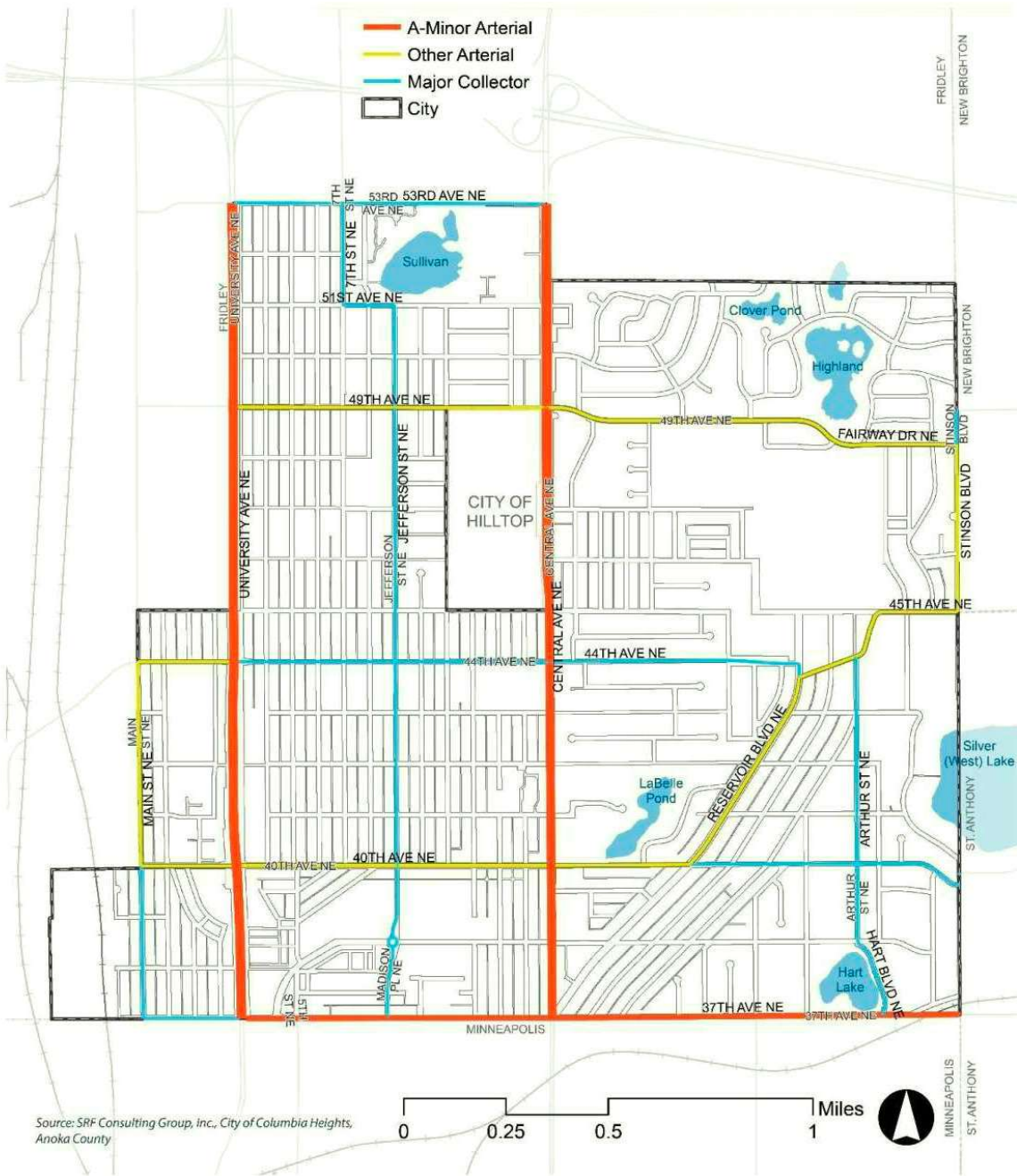


FIGURE 6-6. EXISTING ROADWAY GEOMETRY

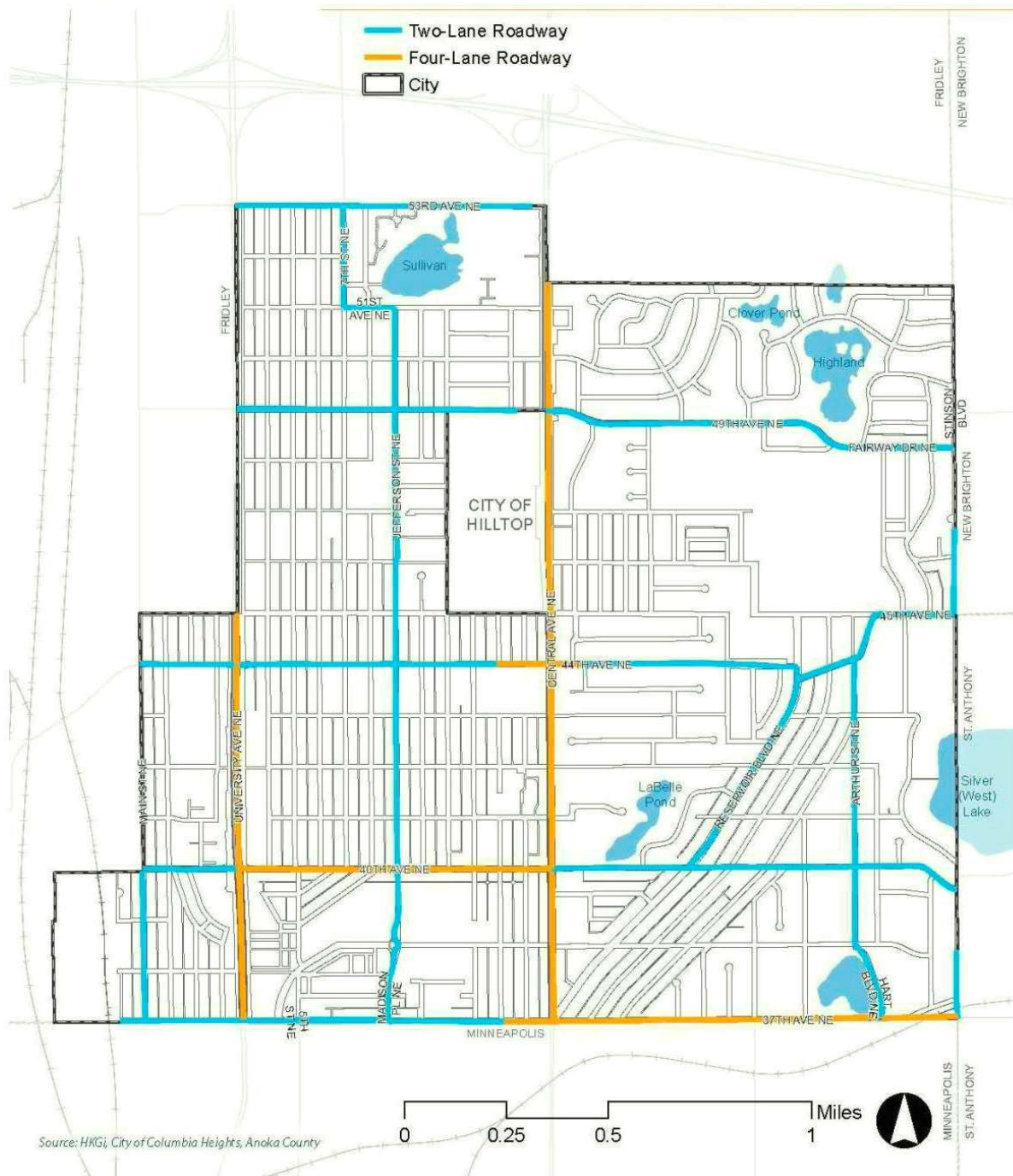
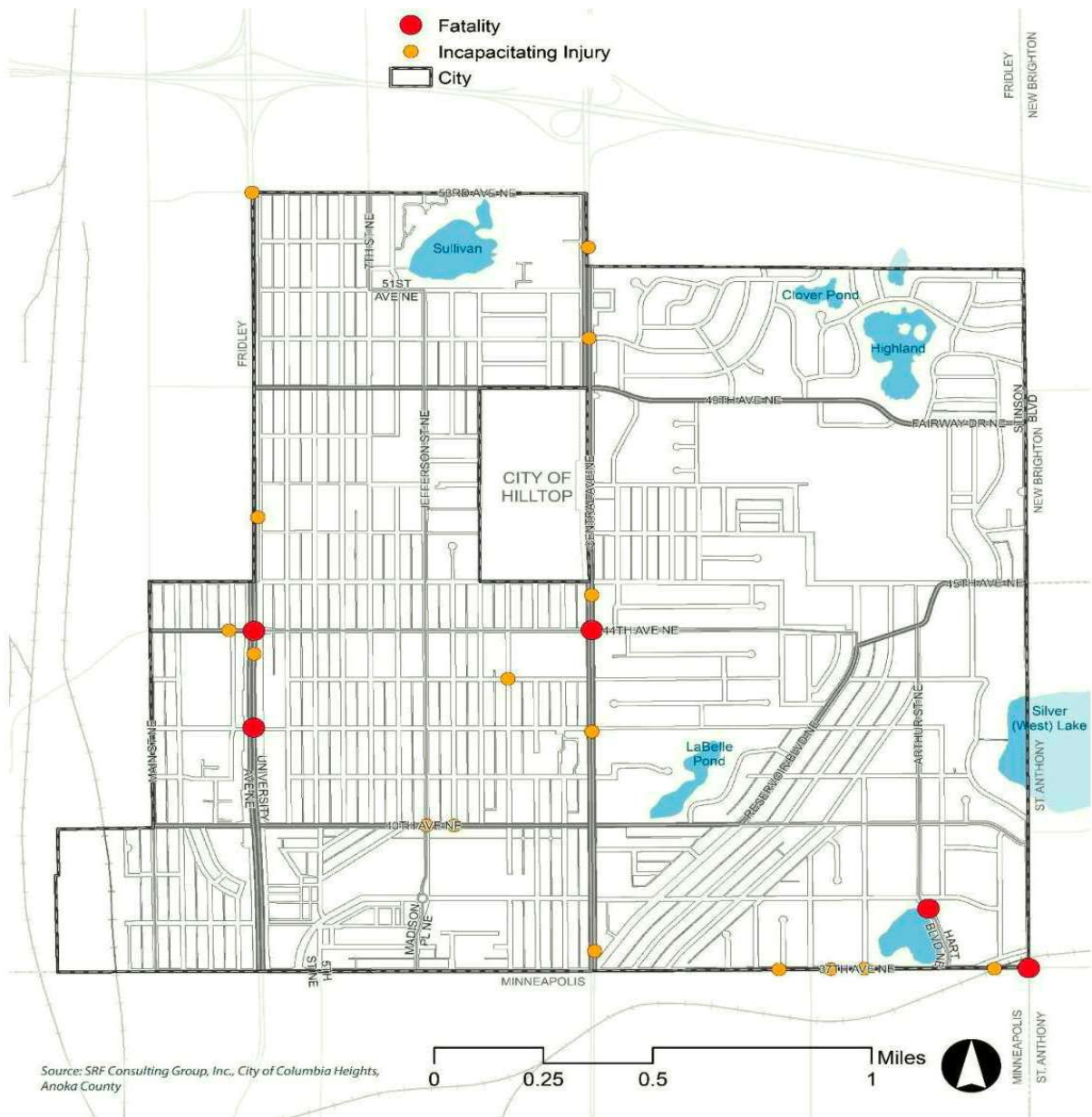


FIGURE 6-9. HIGH SEVERITY CRASH LOCATIONS



Another transit option in Columbia Heights includes Transit Link. Transit Link is

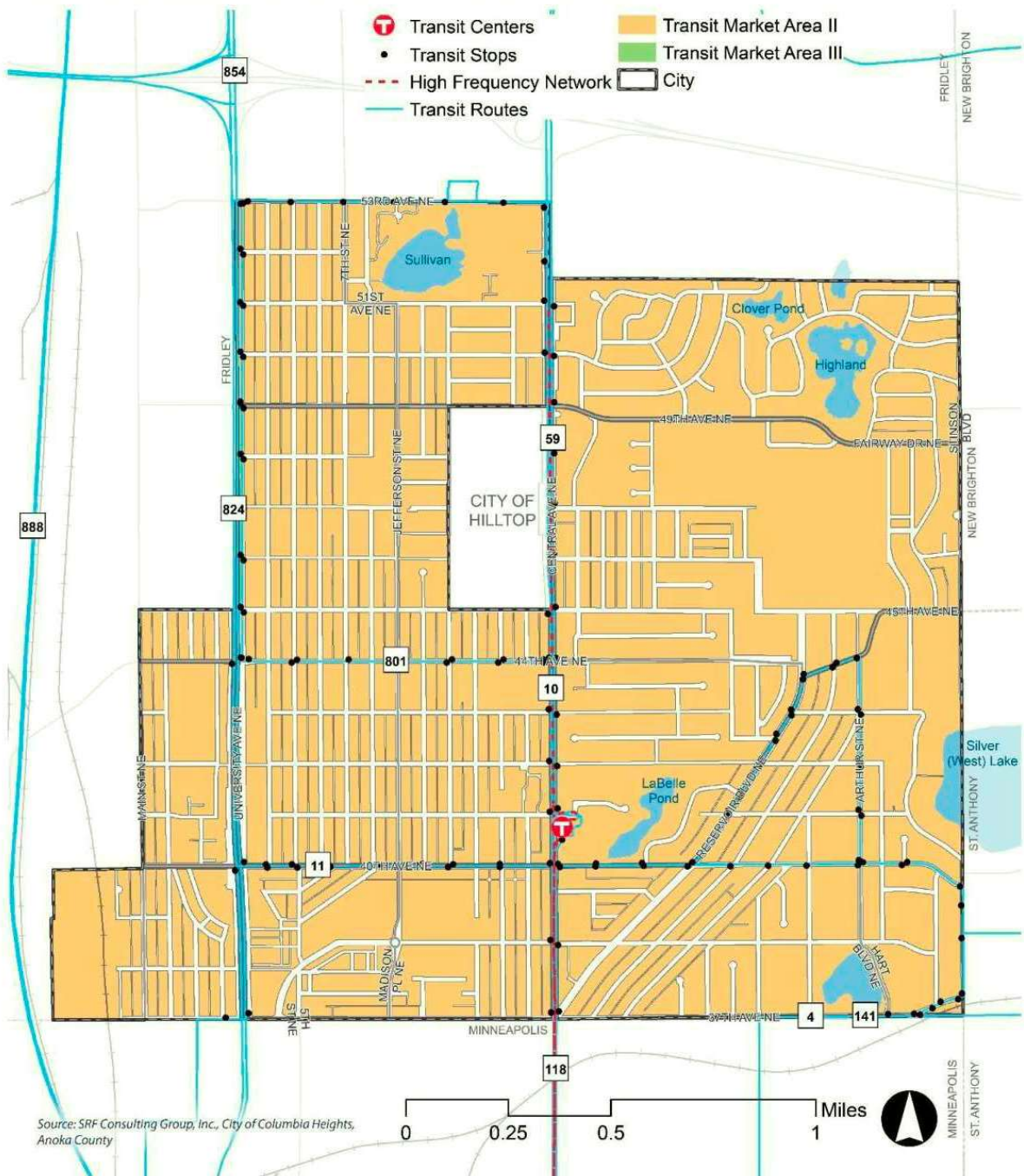
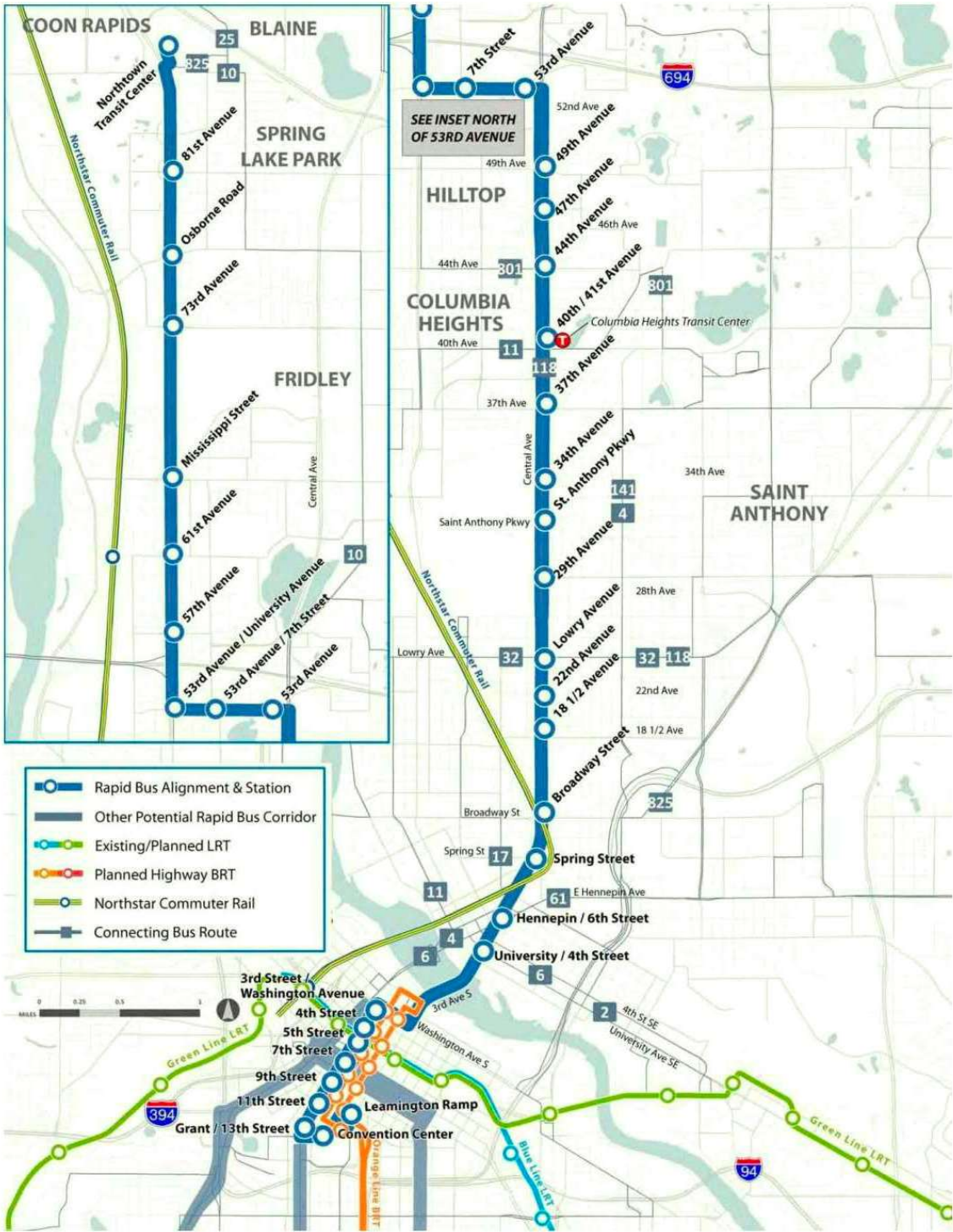


FIGURE 6-11. BUS RAPID TRANSIT BUS CONCEPT



Source: Arterial Transitway Corridors Study

6-140 Columbia Heights 2040 Comprehensive Plan

FIGURE 6-12. BICYCLE AND TRAIL FACILITIES

