

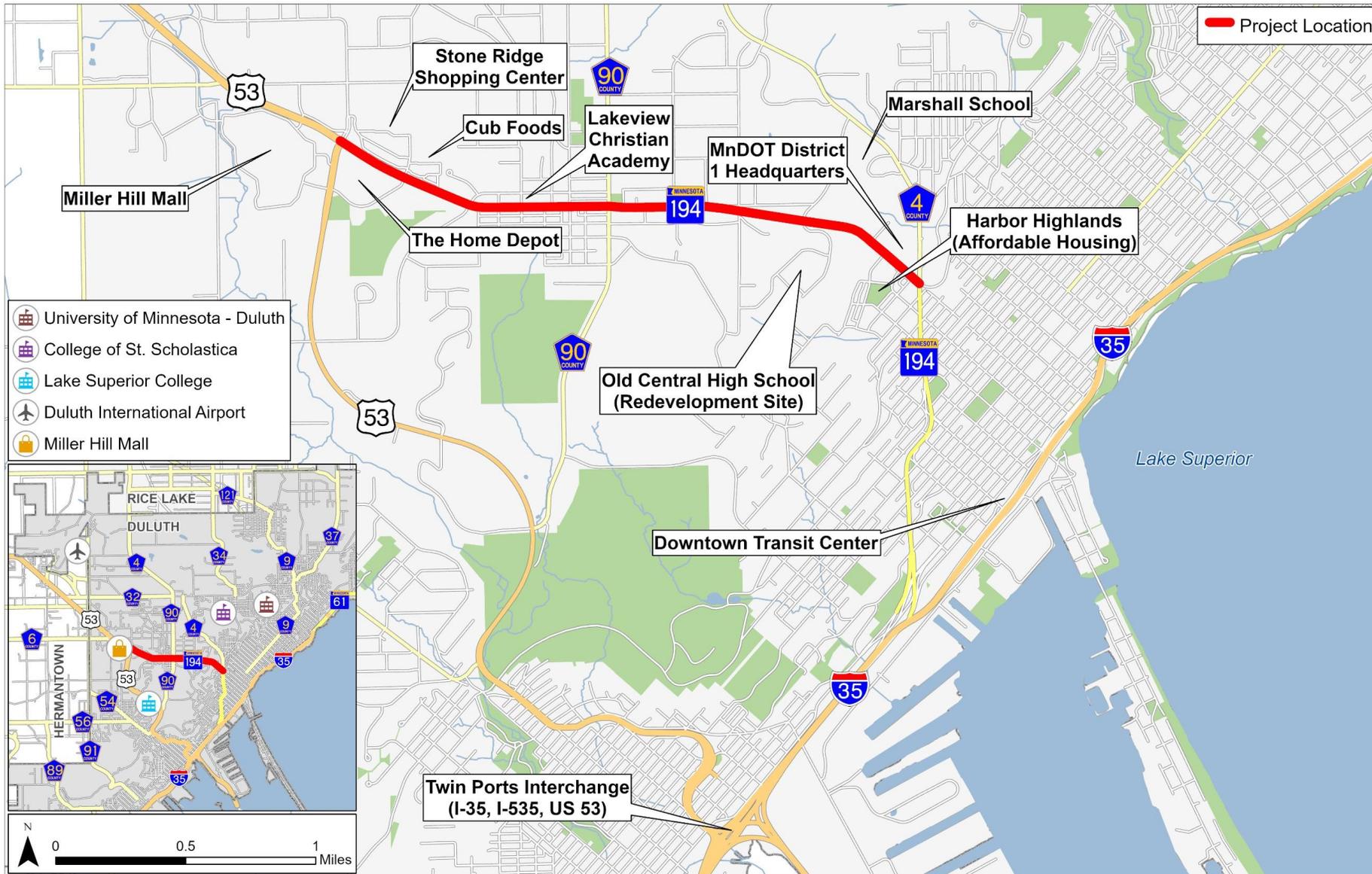
Central Entrance: A New Vision for an Old Road

Central Entrance Vision Plan

MIC Policy Board

December 11, 2024

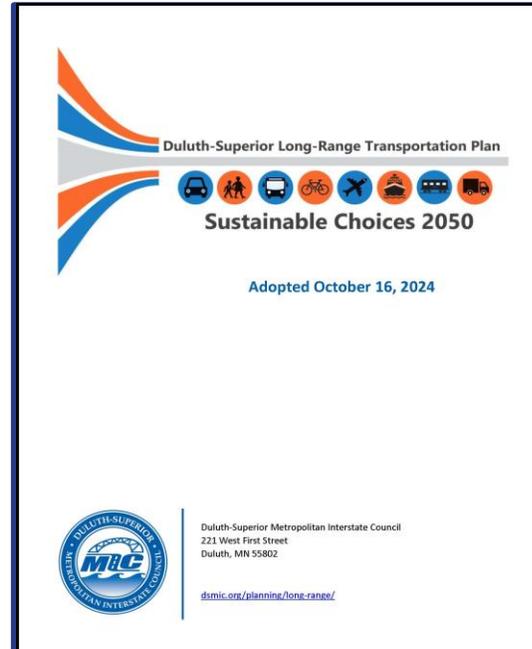
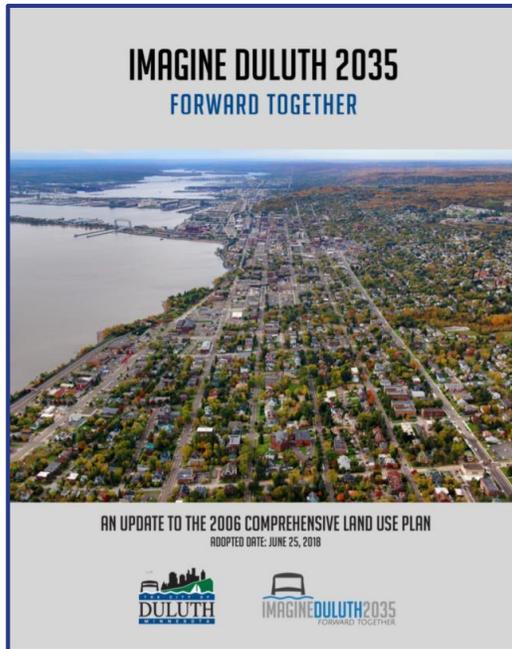
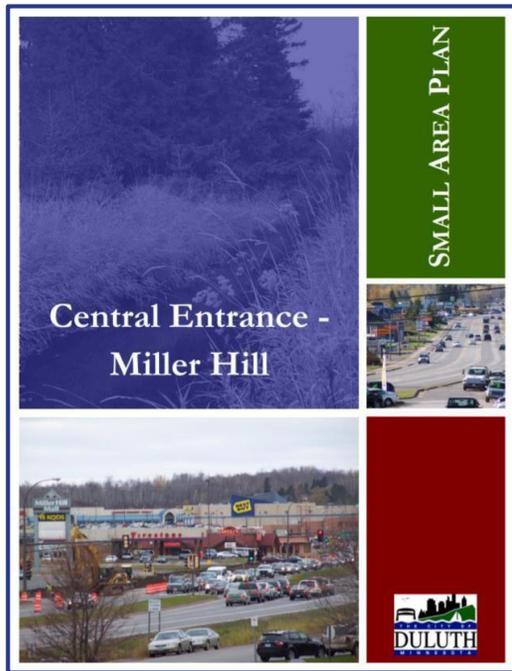




Plan Area

From Trinity/Joshua/US 53
to Mesaba/Rice Lake Road

History

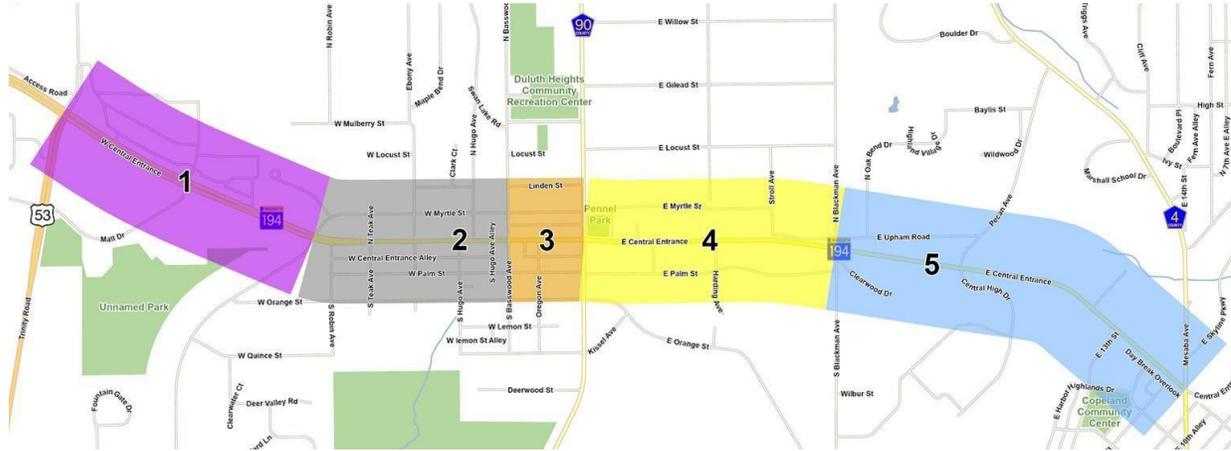


- 1992 – Miller Trunk Hwy Corridor Traffic Analysis
- 1995 – Miller Trunk Hwy Traffic Study
- 1998 – Miller Trunk Hwy Traffic Study – Status Report
- 2002 – Miller Trunk Hwy Implementation Plan
- 2009 – Central Entrance Small Area Plan
(City of Duluth)**
- 2012 – Central Entrance Corridor Study (MIC)
- 2018 – Comprehensive Plan (City of Duluth)
- 2019 – Long Range Transportation Plan (MIC)
- 2021 – Central Entrance Vision Plan (MIC)
- 2022 – Better Bus Blueprint (DTA)
- 2022-25 – Preliminary & Final Design (MnDOT)
- 2029-33 – Reconstruction (MnDOT)

Existing Conditions



- 20,000-23,000 AADT (2019)
- Variations in posted speed limit (30-40 mph)
- Poor infrastructure condition (all modes)
- Frequent access points (business driveways)
- Highest crash rates: Zones 3,4,5
- Right-of-way not uniform

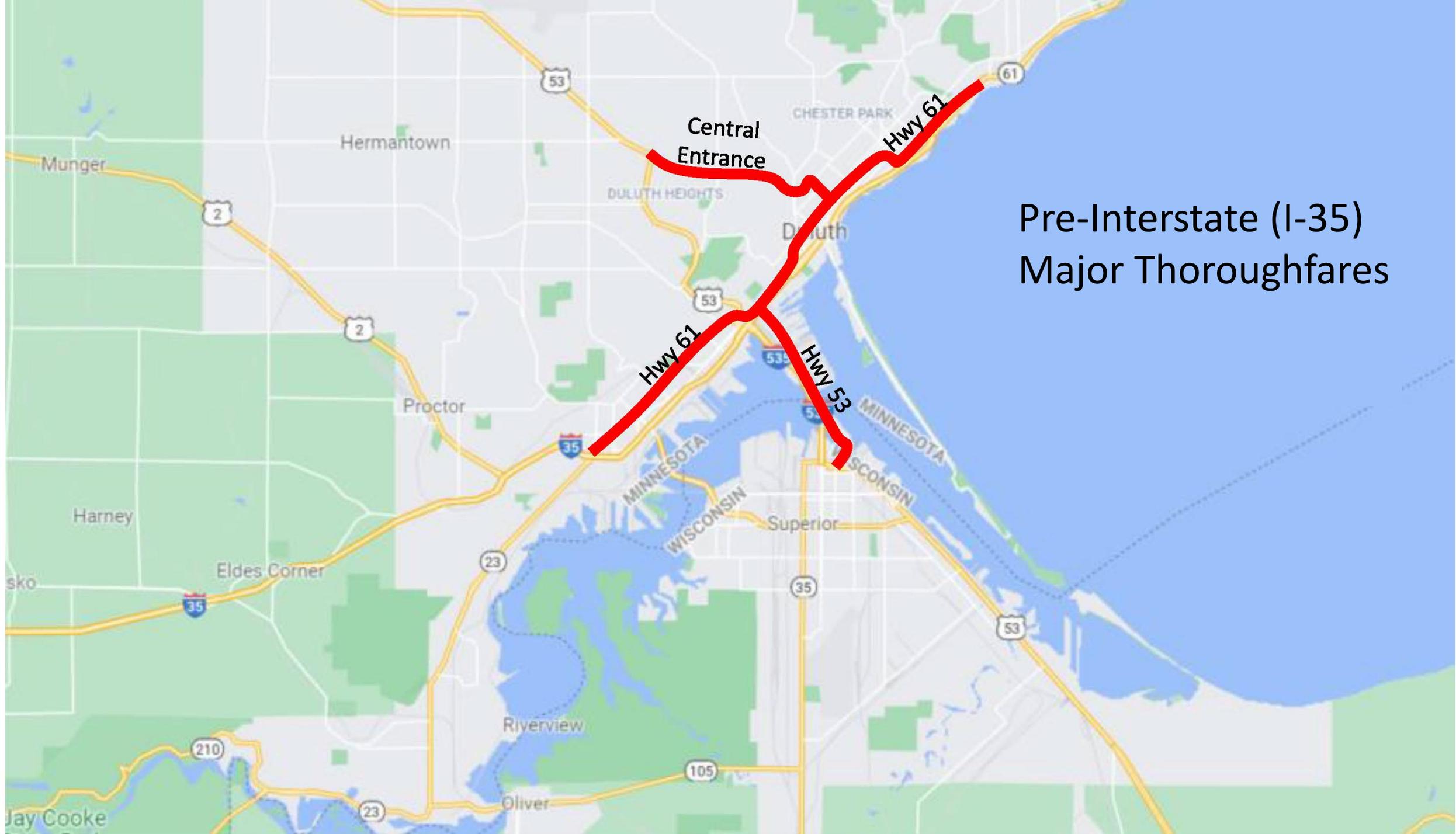


Location	Section Type	Divided/Undivided	Median/Turn Lanes
Zone1	Rural	4-lane Divided	Mix of grass ditch and raised concrete median
Zone2	Urban	Primarily 4-lane Undivided	Painted median and center left- turnlanes approaching intersections
Zone3	Urban	5-lane Undivided	Center left-turn lane
Zone4	Urban	5-lane Undivided	Center left-turn lane
Zone 5 (Blackman Ave to just west of E 14th St)	Urban	Primarily 4-lane Divided	Mix of painted and raised concrete median
Zone 5 (Just west of E 14th St to Mesaba Ave)	Urban	5-lane Undivided	Center left-turn lane



Big Picture Trends

- Changing travel patterns over time



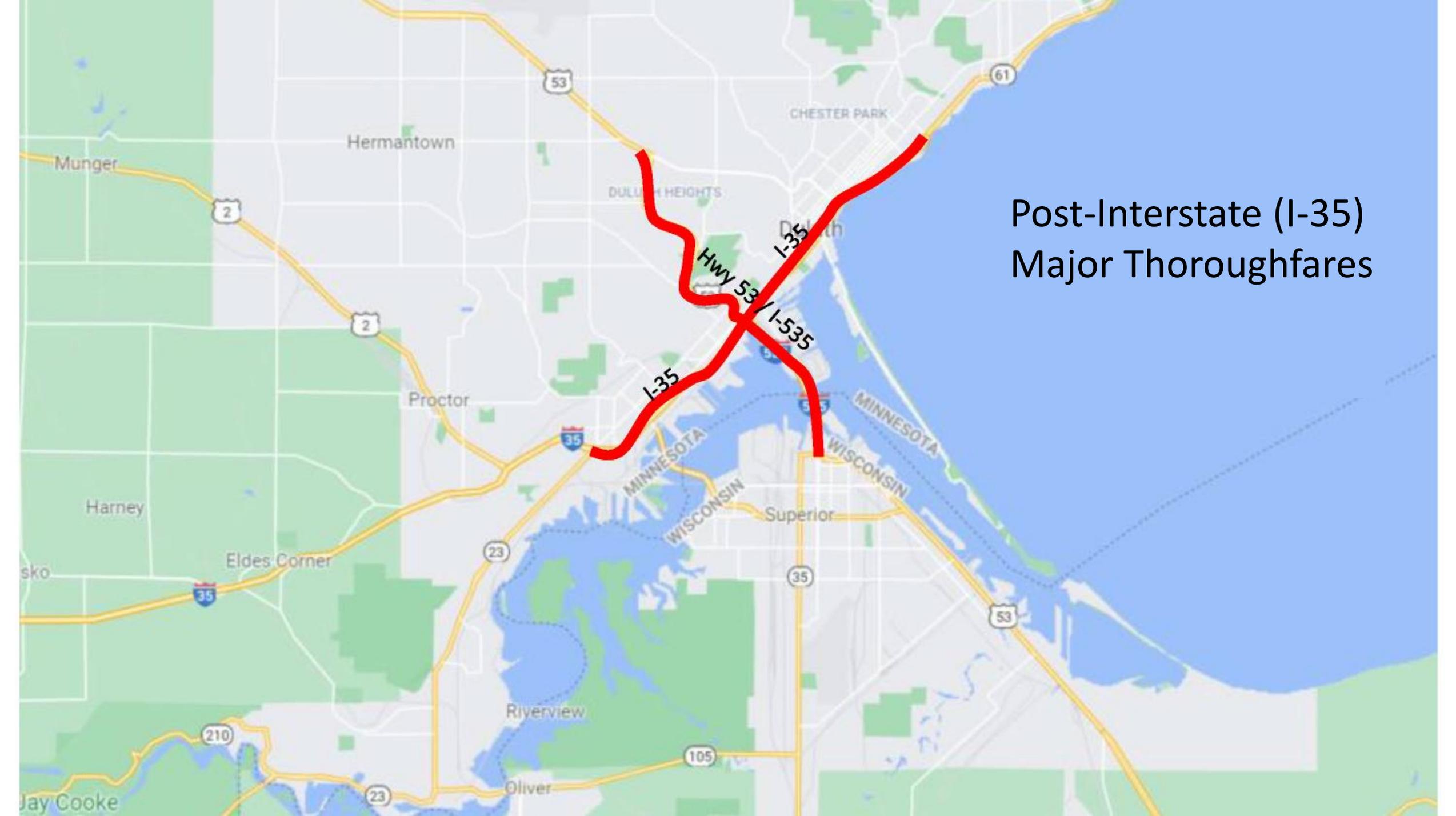
Central
Entrance

Hwy 61

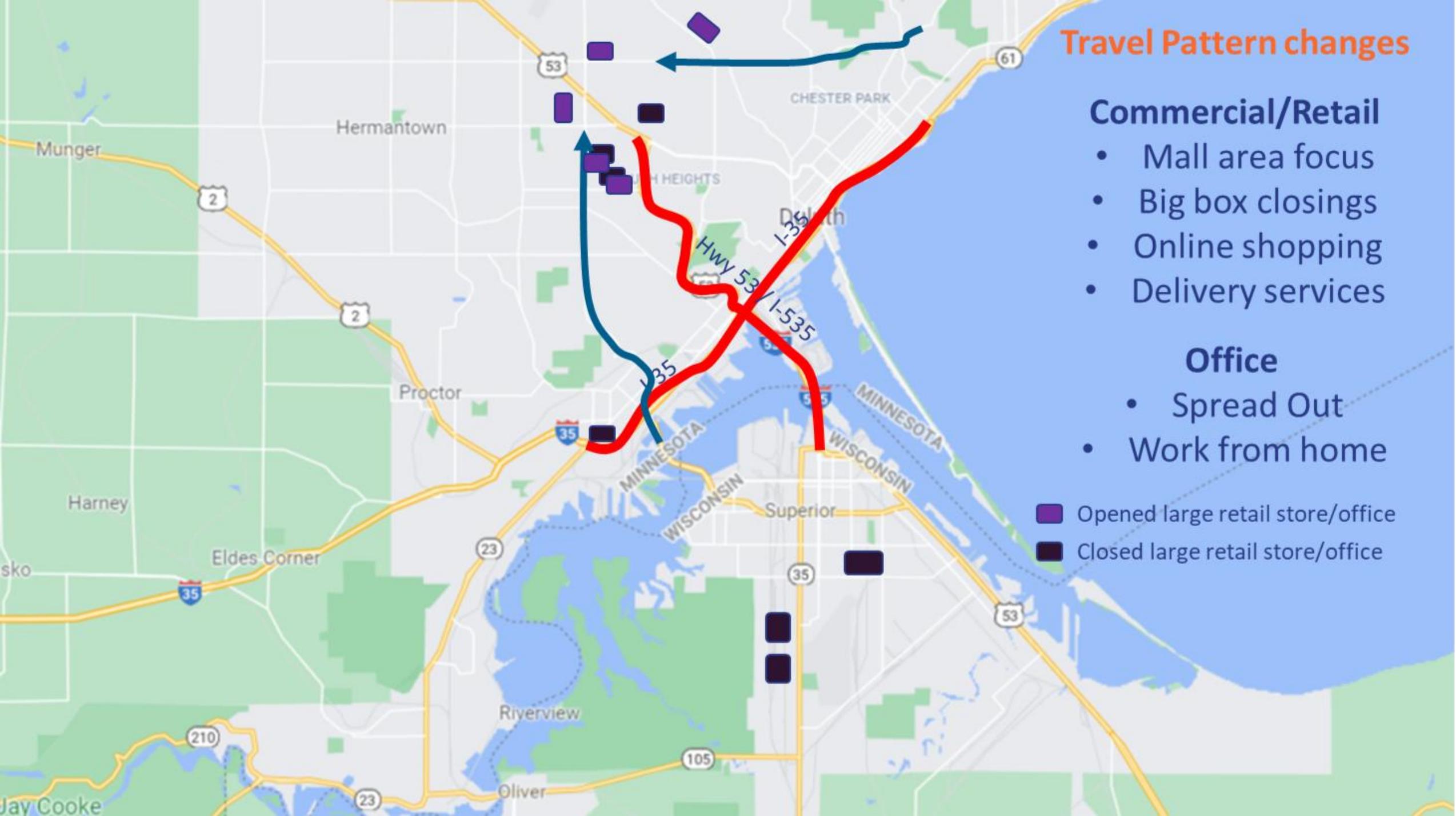
Hwy 61

Hwy 53

Pre-Interstate (I-35)
Major Thoroughfares



Post-Interstate (I-35)
Major Thoroughfares



Travel Pattern changes

Commercial/Retail

- Mall area focus
- Big box closings
- Online shopping
- Delivery services

Office

- Spread Out
- Work from home

- Opened large retail store/office
- Closed large retail store/office

A New Vision

- Walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented thoroughfare which will create an attractive destination that:
 - Is safe and comfortable to use for people of all ages and abilities
 - Encourages new types of residential and commercial development



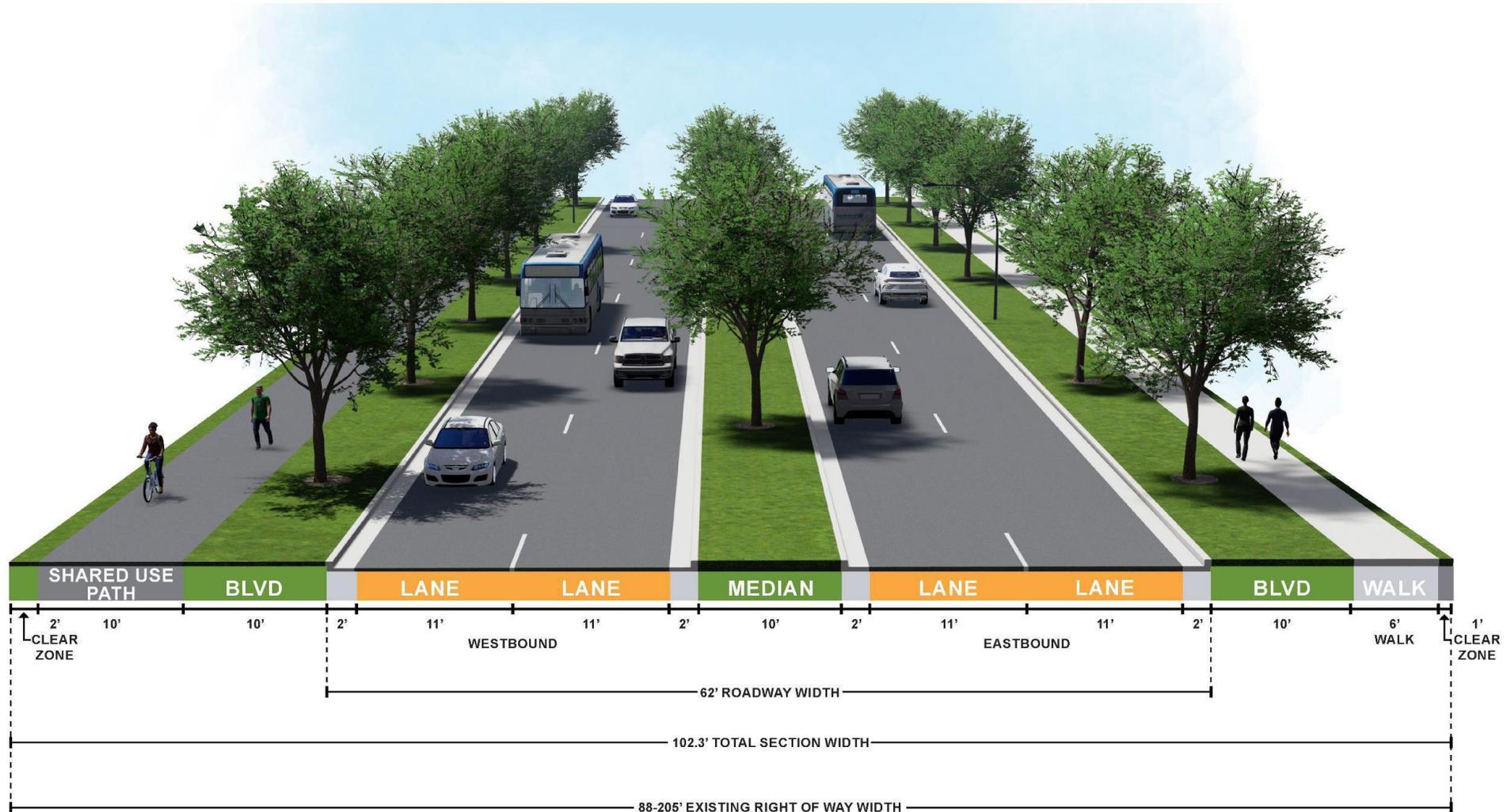
*“Better Central Entrance” Public Event
(June 4-5th, 2021)*





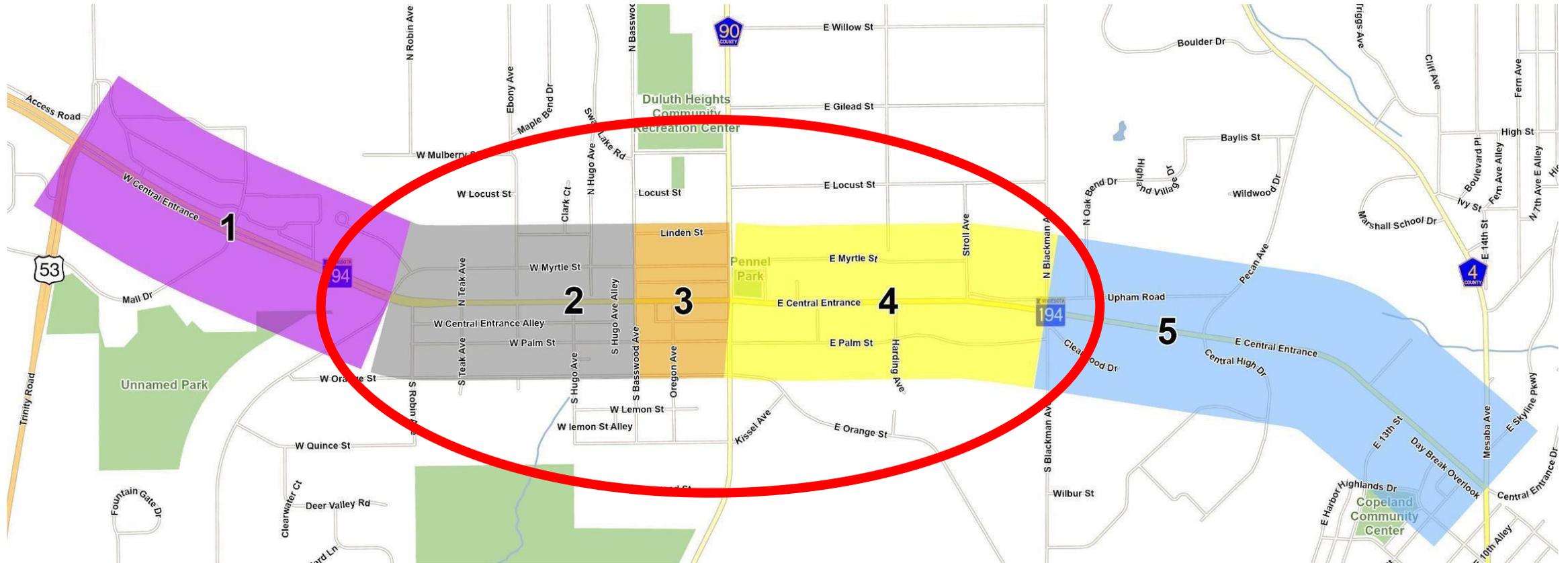
Proposed Design Options

Zones 1 & 5: 4-lane with center median



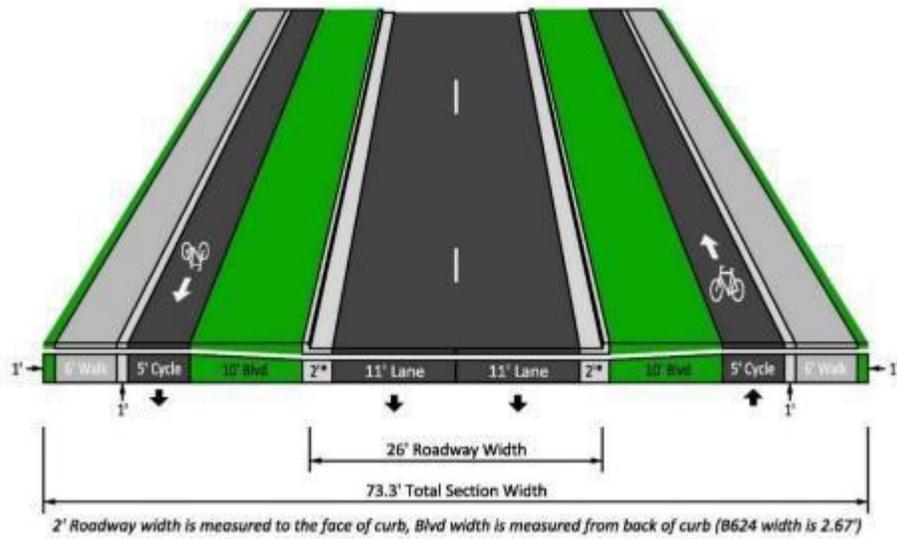


Central Entrance – Zones 2, 3 & 4

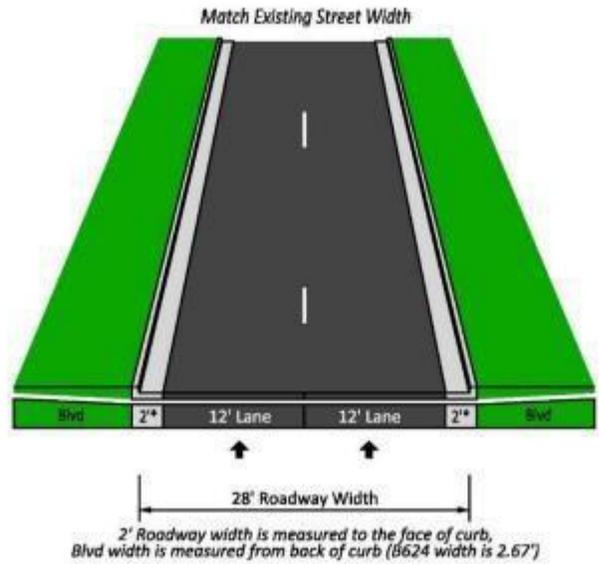




Zones 2-4: One-way pairs option

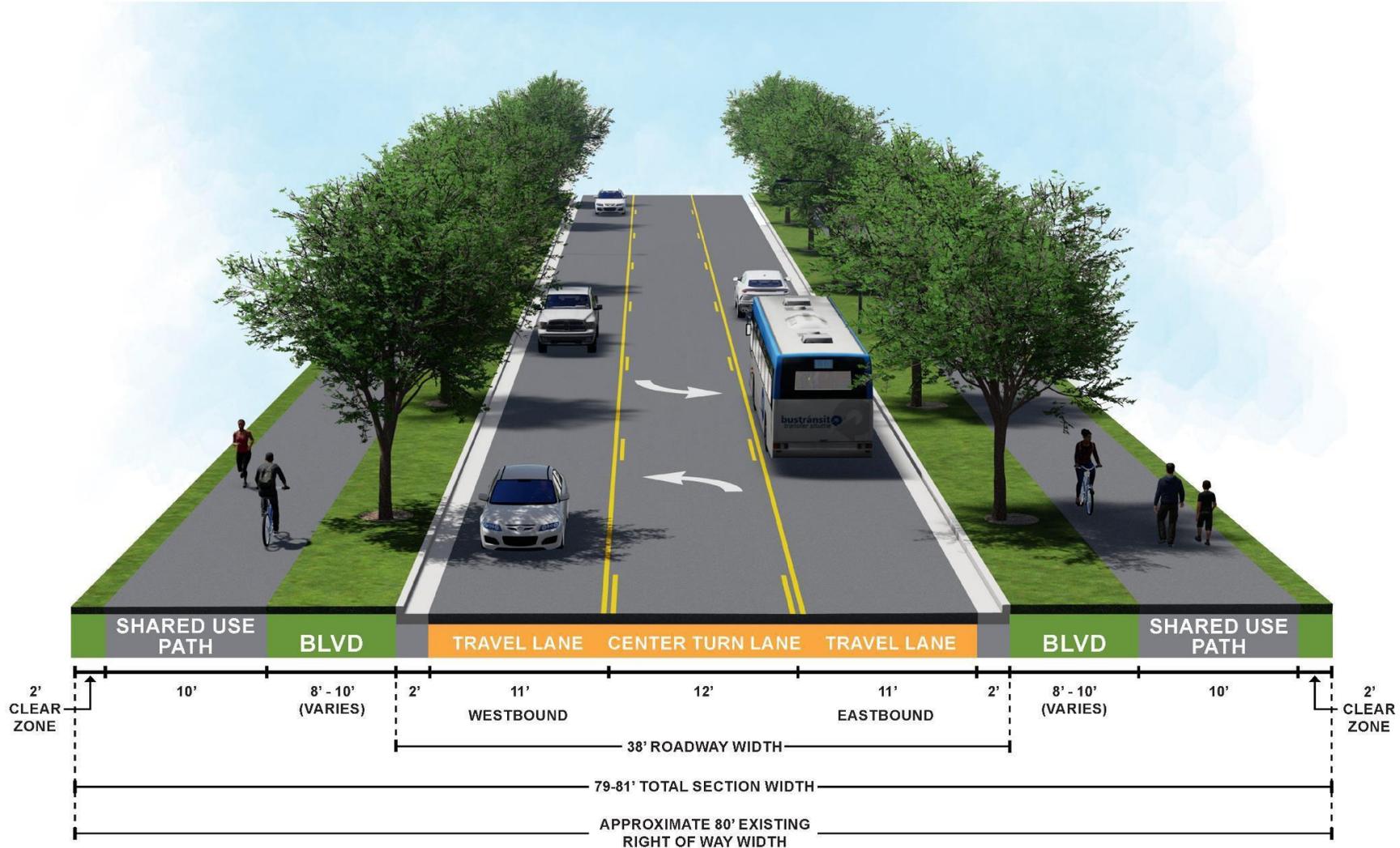


Central Entrance

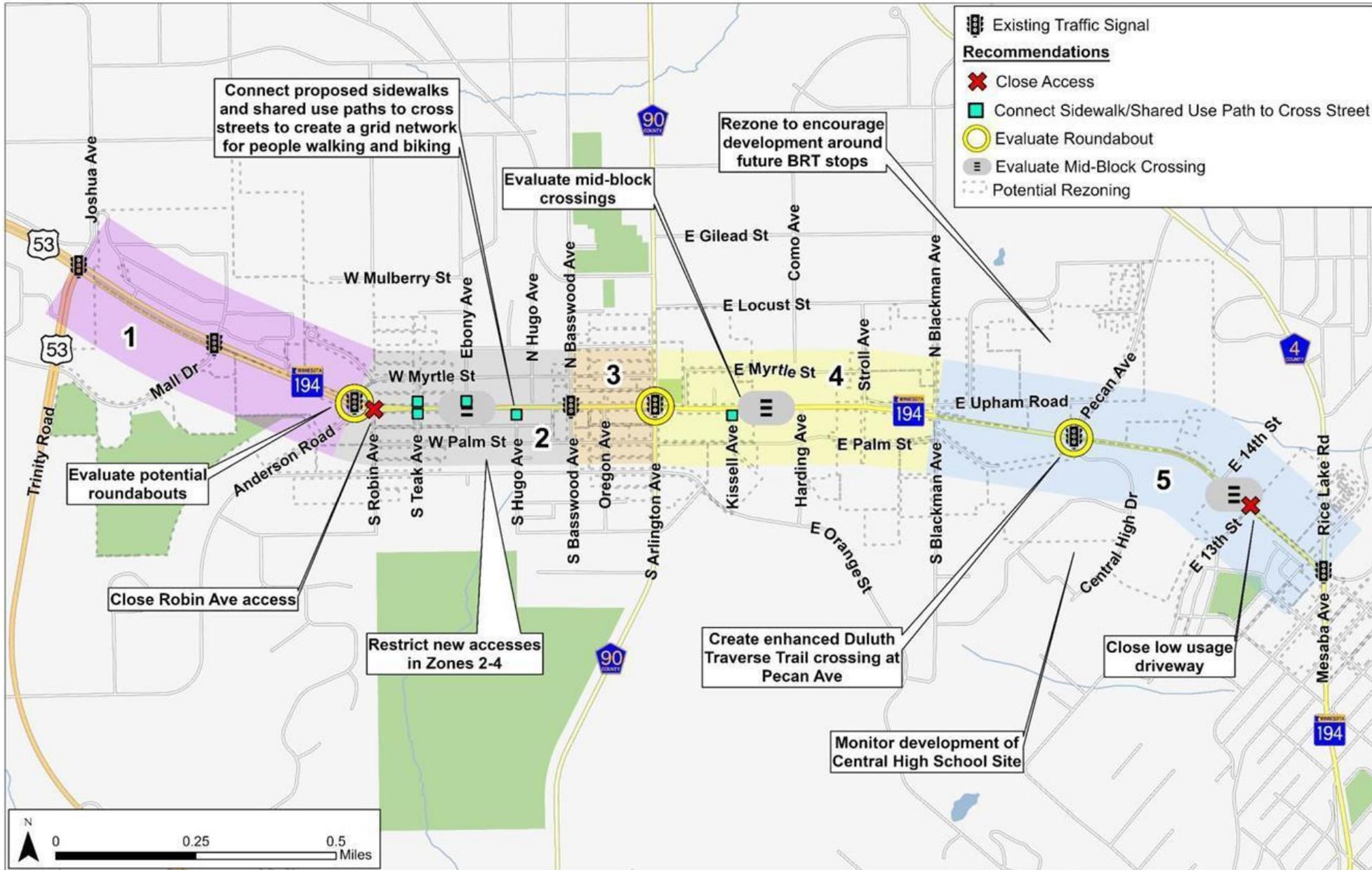


Palm Street

Zones 2, 3 & 4: 3-lane option

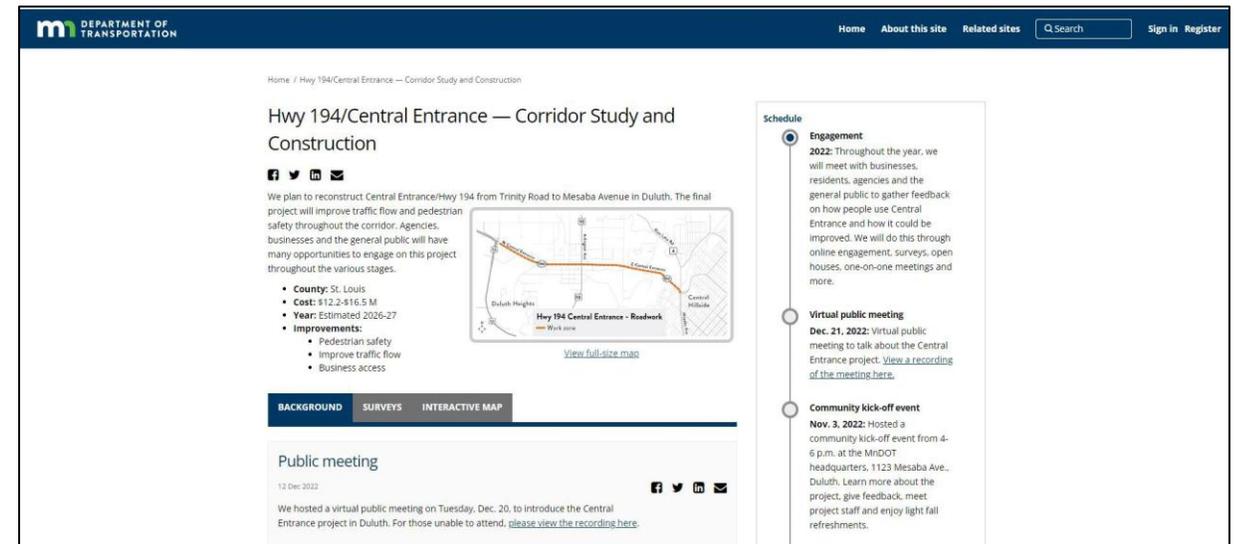


Recommendations



Project Status: Hwy 194/Central Entrance & Construction (MnDOT)

- Central Entrance design now underway
 - Additional stakeholder engagement
- Funding placeholders:
 - 2029: \$15M 2033: \$15M



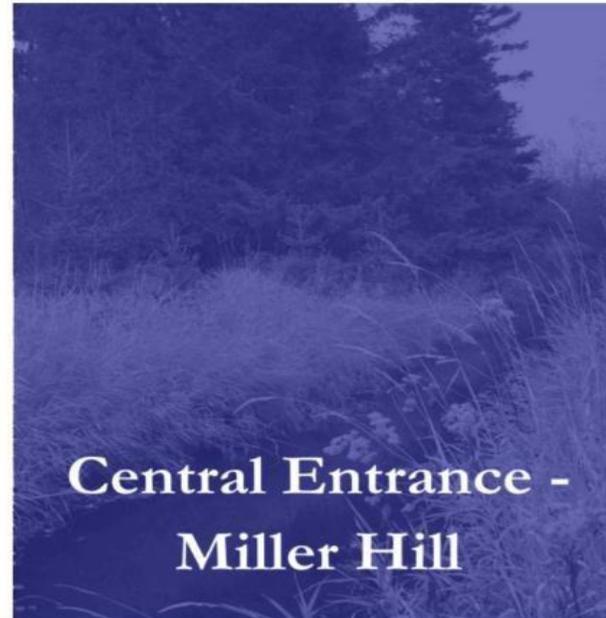
The screenshot shows the MnDOT website page for the Hwy 194/Central Entrance project. The page title is "Hwy 194/Central Entrance — Corridor Study and Construction". The main content area includes a map of the project area in Duluth, MN, showing the route from Trinity Road to Mesaba Avenue. The map is titled "Hwy 194 Central Entrance - Roadwork" and includes a "View full-size map" link. Below the map, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Email. The page also features a "Schedule" section with the following items:

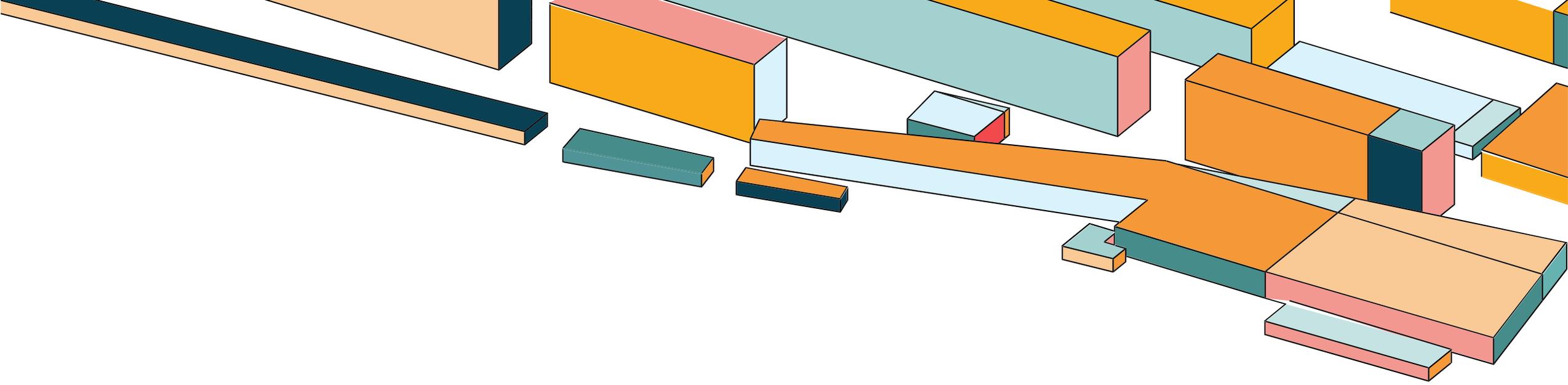
- Engagement 2022:** Throughout the year, we will meet with businesses, residents, agencies and the general public to gather feedback on how people use Central Entrance and how it could be improved. We will do this through online engagement, surveys, open houses, one-on-one meetings and more.
- Virtual public meeting Dec. 21, 2022:** Virtual public meeting to talk about the Central Entrance project. [View a recording of the meeting here.](#)
- Community kick-off event Nov. 3, 2022:** Hosted a community kick-off event from 4-6 p.m. at the MnDOT headquarters, 1123 Mesaba Ave., Duluth. Learn more about the project, give feedback, meet project staff and enjoy light fall refreshments.

At the bottom of the page, there is a "Public meeting" section dated 12 Dec 2022, which states: "We hosted a virtual public meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 20, to introduce the Central Entrance project in Duluth. For those unable to attend, [please view the recording here.](#)"

<https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/hwy-194-central-entrance>

2009 – Central Entrance Small Area Plan (City of Duluth)



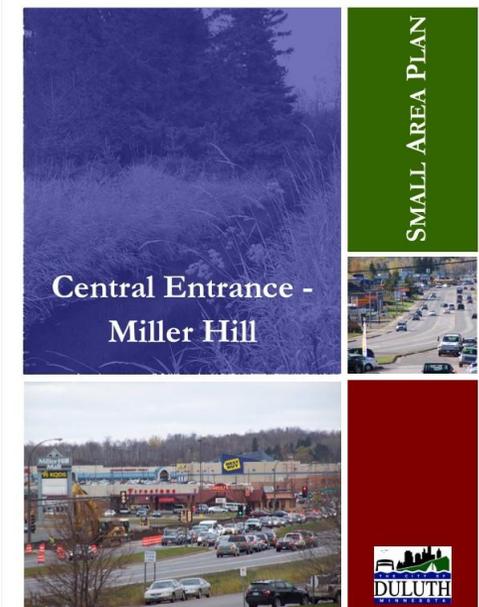
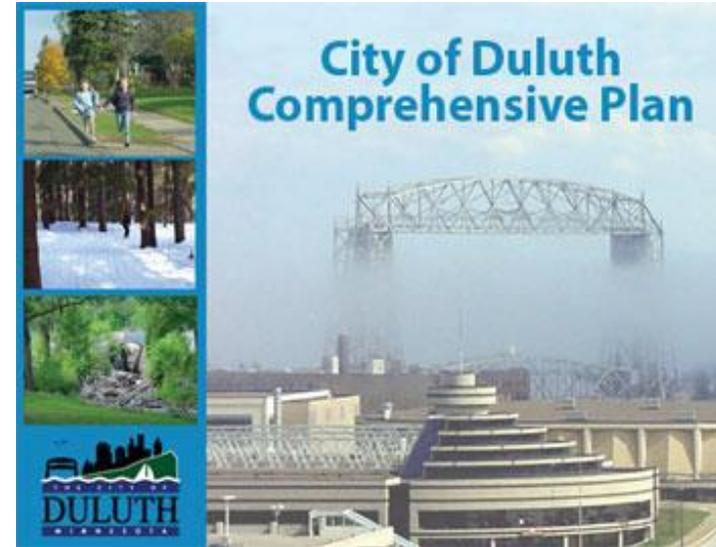


CENTRAL ENTRANCE — MILLER HILL SMALL AREA PLAN

LONG-RANGE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

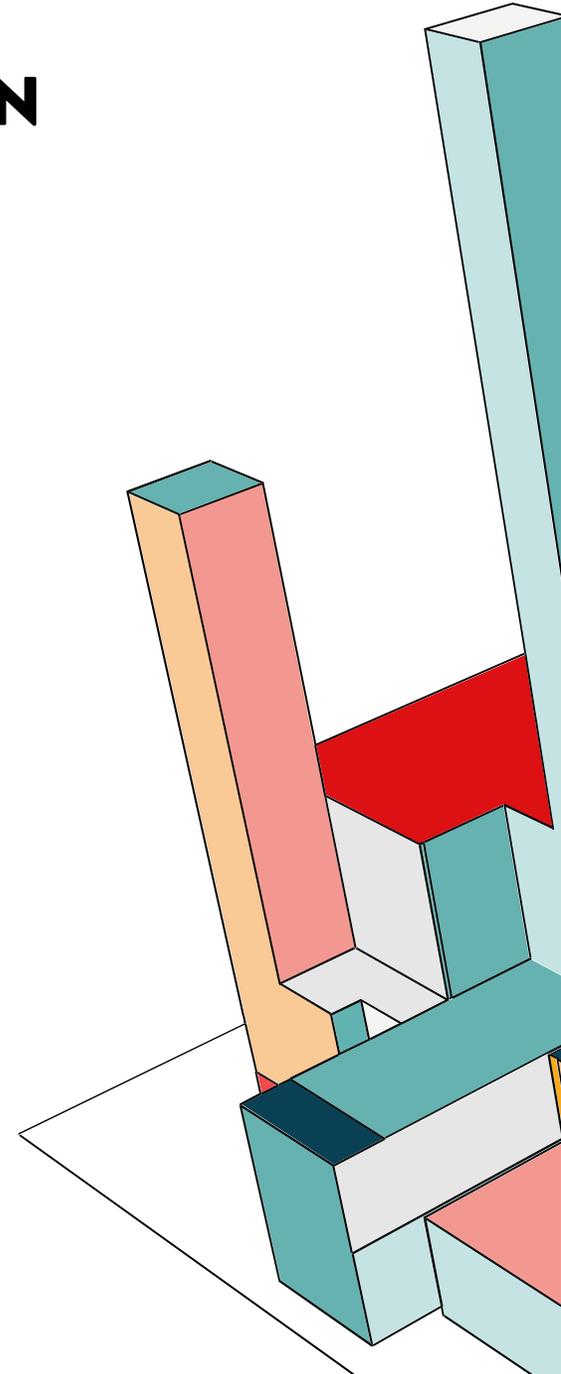
The City's Comprehensive Plan principles:

- Reuse previously developed lands
- Strengthen neighborhoods
- Reinforce the place-specific
- Create and maintain connectivity
- Encourage a mix of activities, uses and densities
- Support private actions that contribute to the public realm
- Take sustainable actions



CENTRAL ENTRANCE-MILLER HILL SMALL AREA PLAN

- Adopted by City Council Sept. 14, 2009
 - Community Engagement over 10-month planning process:
 - 2 media releases
 - 3 Duluth News-Tribune stories
 - Two Open Houses
 - Two public hearings
 - Web page
 - 14-member study committee:
 - 6 commercial property owners
 - 2 residential owners
 - City Councilor
 - Planning Commissioner
 - Chamber of Commerce staff member
 - MnDOT and Metropolitan Interstate Council
 - Environment staff



MARKET STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

MXD
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGISTS

Central Entrance - Miller Hill Corridor
Duluth, MN
Market Analysis

Presented to:
The City of Duluth
April, 2009

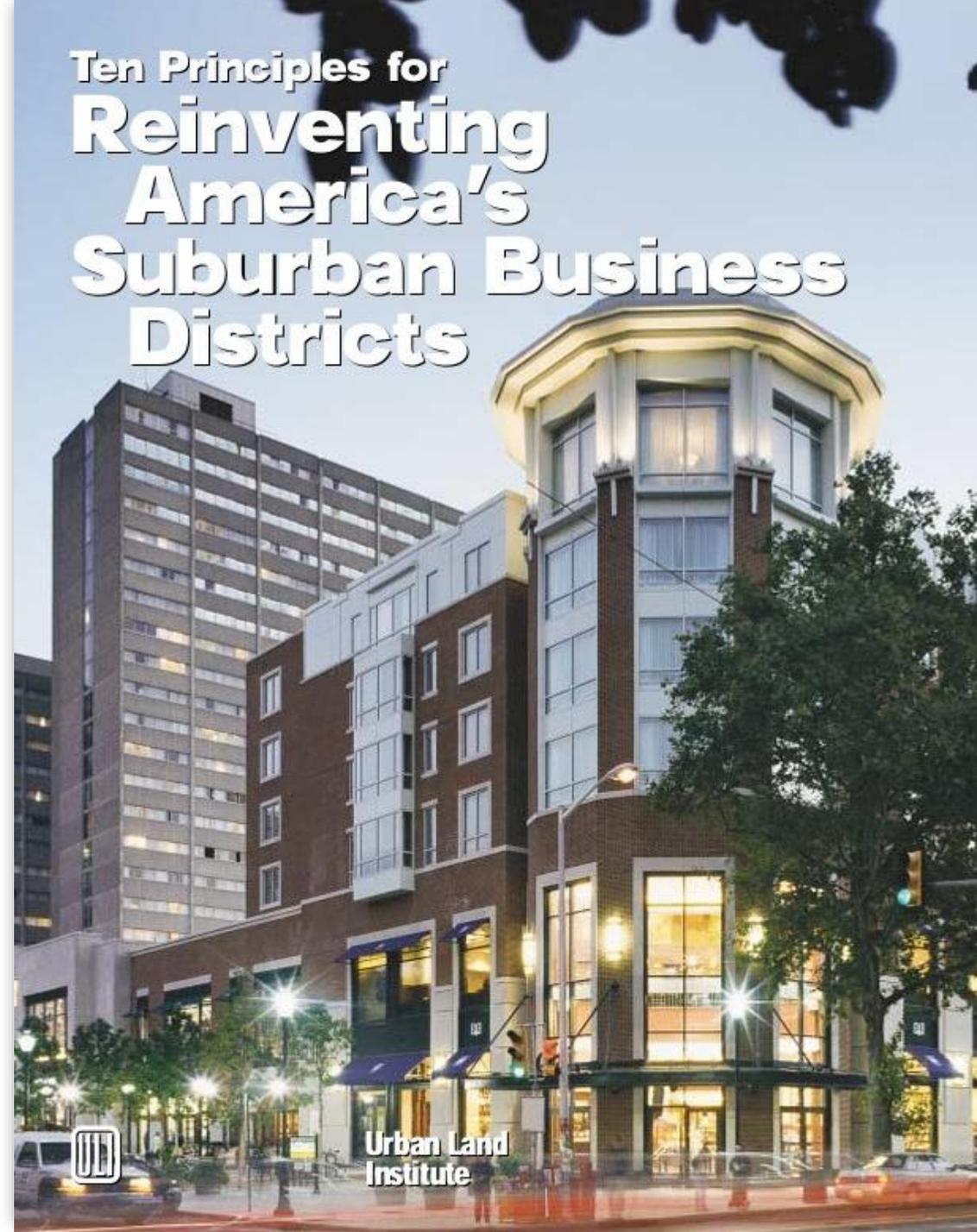
Prepared by:
MXD Development Strategists, Ltd.
www.MXDdevelopment.com

- “The longer-term outlook for Central Entrance is for more local, independent retail, smaller boutique office and professional services.” – *MXD Development Strategists, Ltd.*
- “Small and local shops, rather than larger formats, create an eclectic and lively image for commercial streets.” – *MXD Development Strategists, Ltd*
- “Central Entrance from Pecan to Anderson Road should become the “main street” for the Duluth Heights neighborhood. It should become a distinctive place rather than a collection of standalone businesses lining a highway.”

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE STUDY

- Too much traffic, or poorly planned traffic, can strangle the [commercial] strip. When traffic counts reach 20,000 to 30,000 or more per day, visibility of stores will be high and merchants will be happy, but access becomes increasingly difficult, and the [commercial] strip is at risk.
- To ensure continued mobility, traffic planning and design must resolve the inherent conflict between through traffic and traffic whose destination is the strip itself.

In other words, traffic must be tamed and managed so that the goose that laid the golden egg is not killed.



URBAN LAND INSTITUTE STUDY

- “Diverse, well-conceptualized developments in a coordinated, entertaining, and lively environment are worth more in real estate value than stand-alone buildings in a sea of parking.”
- This difference in value is called the ‘design dividend.’ It is no surprise that such places also maximize retail spending and rents and, as a consequence, capital value.”



A VISION FOR CENTRAL ENTRANCE

- A more attractive and walkable place with wide sidewalks on both sides of the street and businesses that front the sidewalks with inviting storefronts.
- The motoring public will enjoy traveling to and through the district as the roadway is redesigned to provide better access to businesses.
- Central Entrance will regain its previous function as the “main street” of Duluth Heights.





STREET REDESIGN CONTEXT

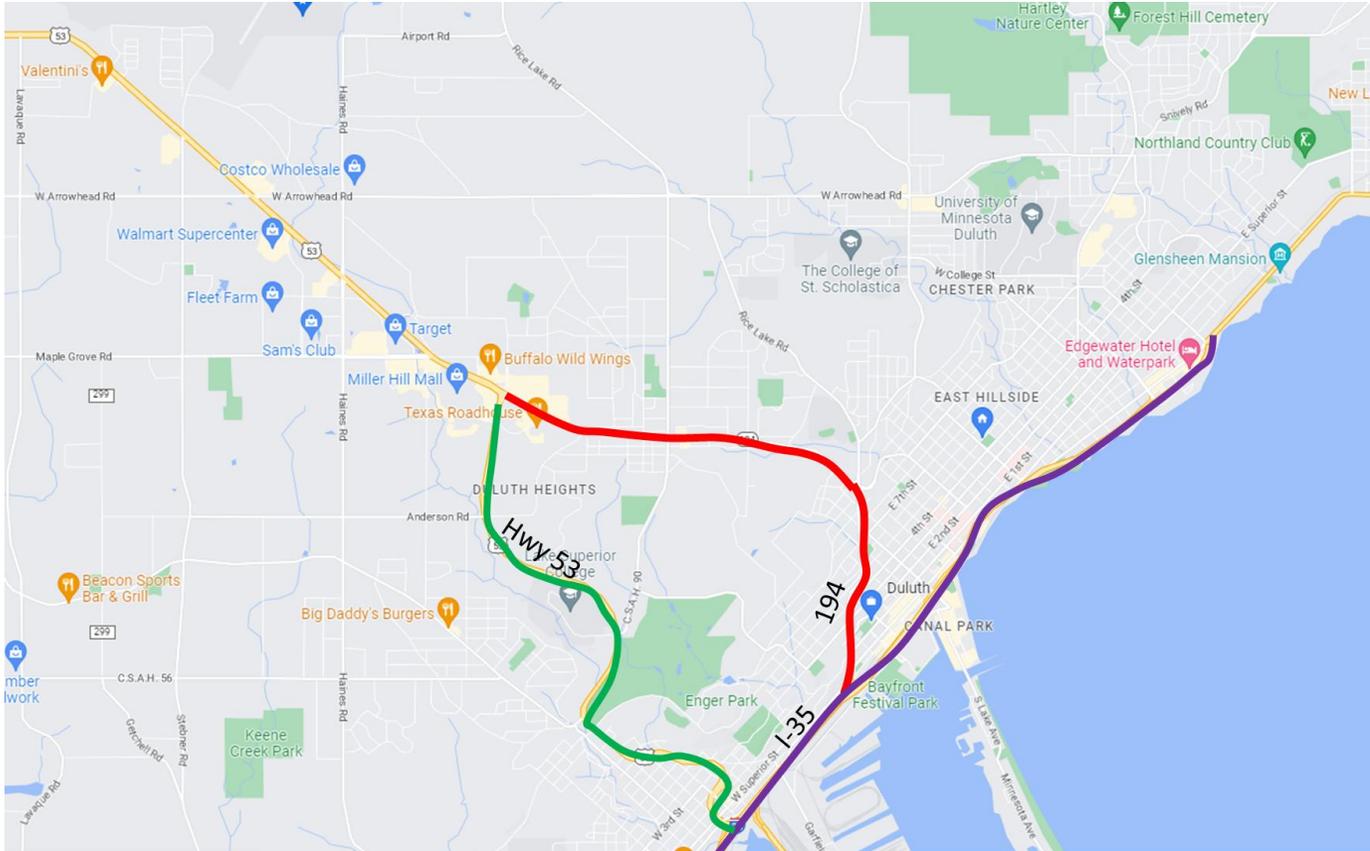
“When Central Entrance is reconstructed, it is critical that the context of the street as a walkable, urban thoroughfare be respected and the design solution permit comfortable use of the street by pedestrians and transit as well as vehicles.”

OTHER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish entry monument features at both ends of the business district: Pecan Ave. and Anderson Rd.
- When streets are reconstructed, look for opportunities to include space for trees and other vegetation that will shade pavement.
- Install and maintain business district signs including banners and distinctive lighting.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



- Transportation and land use connection
- The district and neighborhood need access.
- The road we design affects the land use.
- Financial health of the district depends on access.
- How to accommodate traffic without harming access?
- What kind of street do we want?





QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?



Ron Chicka, Director

Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council

rchicka@ardc.org

www.dsmic.org/centralentrance