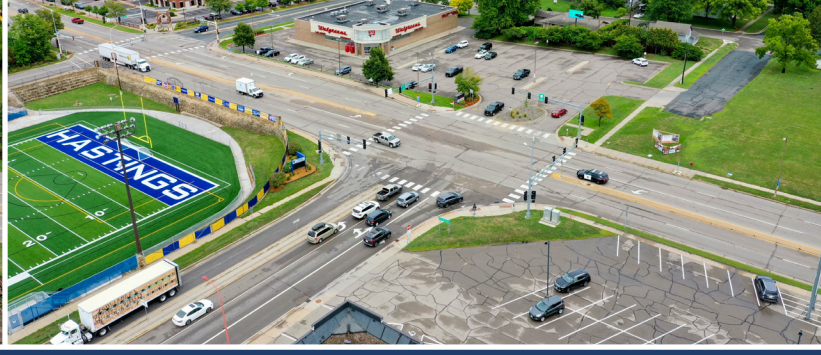




HIGHWAY 61 HASTINGS CORRIDOR VISIONING STUDY

JUNE 2024



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Since 1857 Hastings MINNESOTA

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Executive Summary

The goal of the Hastings Highway 61 Corridor Visioning Study was to obtain community input for the evaluation of alternatives that help to create long-term vision for Highway 61 between 4th and 36th Streets in Hastings. The existing roadway (portions of which were last reconstructed in 1931) is nearing the end of its useful life and warrants replacement. The Visioning Study project started in February 2022, with final recommendations recognized through a resolution of support passed by the Hastings City Council in June 2023.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES

An extensive public engagement program was conducted to facilitate three phases of work during the Visioning Study: 1) Issues, 2) Alternatives; 3) Recommendations. Public meetings and stakeholder outreach were conducted during each phase of work. With public input including a public open house held in May 2022, the project team identified the following key issues for the corridor:

- **Traffic volume and speed** - Over 30,000 vehicles use the corridor daily (projected to be at 40,000 by 2040), with significant portions of heavy truck use during the day. A majority of the 2.3-mile-long corridor is characterized by four 12-foot lanes (two running in each direction) plus an alternating 12-foot center left turn median lane. **This configuration is perceived as enabling high speeds that create discomfort for motorists and pedestrians**.
- **Safety** – over 370 crashes occurred during the five-year study period, with several pedestrian crashes identified. 13 of the 26 intersections have a crash rate higher than the statewide rate, including at Highway 316 where the rate is more than three times higher (0.43 vs. 0.13).
- **Multimodal uses** –Pedestrians and bicyclists have difficulty crossing Highway 61 and travelling along the corridor. From the Vermillion River to 36th Street, there are significant gaps in the sidewalk or trail network.
- **Access** - With more than 120 businesses fronting Highway 61, the density of access points along the corridor creates additional safety and congestion challenges.



This five-lane configuration is typical through the Hwy 61 study corridor.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

Through early public engagement and analysis, the project team was able to identify corridor needs that project alternatives would be intended to address. **The purpose of alternatives developed during the corridor study was to facilitate safe and efficient multimodal movement of people and goods on the Highway 61 corridor while maintaining infrastructure at a state of good repair and enabling community connections.**

The second public comment period and open house held in August 2022 was used to present, and obtain feedback on, a variety of alternative design concepts. In addition to the issues described above, key specific locations in the corridor that required analysis of multiple alternatives included the Highway 316 and the Highway 55 intersections. Both represent critical turning movements in the corridor.

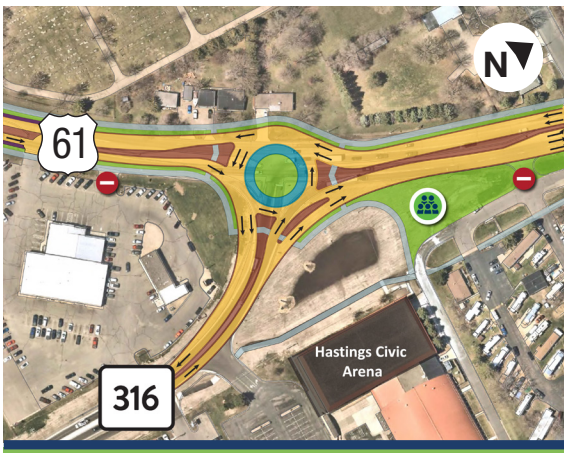
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Visioning Study's final phase of work involved presentation of preliminary corridor recommendations at the third and final public meeting in March 2023. Key recommendations included the following:

- **Downtown pedestrian safety** – closure of the median break at 5th and 7th Streets. A median at these locations that have fewer vehicle turning movements can serve as a "refuge" for pedestrian crossings.
- **Highway 55 intersection** – closure of some access points and reconstruction of the deteriorating Todd Field wall will allow for longer turn lanes for vehicles turning from Highway 61 to Highway 55. These movements currently back up and cause congestion on Highway 61.
- **Access closure and new traffic signals** – additional consolidation of access points between 12th Street and 18th Street reduce conflict points and enable safer mid-block pedestrian crossing locations in addition to a new traffic signals at 18th Street and 23rd Streets.
- **Highway 316 intersection** – Conversion of this intersection to a roundabout is proposed, providing continuity with the recently completed Highway 316 corridor improvements. This improvement helps resolve the traffic operations and safety issues caused by a heavy left turning movement from southbound Highway 61 to Highway 316.



Visualization of proposed median refuge for pedestrian crossings on Hwy 61.



Concept for a new roundabout at the Hwy 316 intersection

BENEFITS

The proposed project will include reconstruction of the corridor for a revitalization of all infrastructure assets. The improvements will be done in conjunction with the City of Hastings' planned reconstruction of critical utilities in the corridor.

Traffic modeling for the current and proposed corridor demonstrates some of the notable travel time benefits that are expected from this project. As shown in this table, southbound travel through this corridor during the afternoon peak period is at risk of becoming over four times longer than current conditions. The proposed improvements to this Hwy 61 corridor will retain travel times approximately at current levels while making the corridor safer and more accessible for all users.

The proposed improvements include new roundabouts, traffic signals, and trail segments, a backage road system for business access, and a new pedestrian bridge over the Vermillion River. New pavement, stormwater management features, and technology (such as lighting and electric vehicle charging) will create a more resilient roadway corridor to serve Hastings and the larger region for decades to come.

Analysis of Forecast Travel Times

Year	Morning Peak Period (~7:30 am)		Afternoon Peak Period (~5 pm)	
	Southbound from 4th Street to 36th Street	Northbound from 36th Street to 4th Street	Southbound from 4th Street to 36th Street	Northbound from 35th Street to 4th Street
2022 Existing Conditions	4.5 Minutes	4.6 Minutes	4.8 Minutes	4.3 Minutes
2040 No Build Conditions	8.0 Minutes	7.0 Minutes	21.8 Minutes	5.2 Minutes
2040 Recommended Alternative	5.4 Minutes	5.3 Minutes	5.2 Mintues	5.9 Minutes

PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

CHAPTER 1

Goals and Objectives of the Hastings Highway 61 Corridor Study

The purpose of the Hastings Highway 61 Corridor Study is to develop a vision for the future of Highway 61 (Hwy 61) in Hastings, Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the City of Hastings collaborated for the creation of the Corridor Study. The study outcomes serve as a vision for moving forward with future design phases, environmental documentation, and applications for project funding.



The Hwy 61 study corridor is approximately 2.25 miles from 4th Street to 36th Street in Hastings. Hwy 61 serves as a primary north-south route through Hastings. Immediately north of the corridor study area is historic downtown Hastings and the Highway 61 Mississippi River Bridge, a prominent crossing of the river. As such, the Hwy 61 study corridor provides service for wide-ranging local and regional traffic needs and figures prominently in multimodal movement choices across Hastings.

Over twenty-five intersections with Hwy 61 were included in this study. Noteworthy intersections in this corridor include:

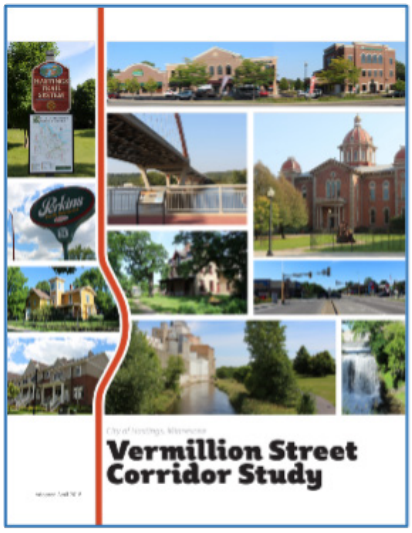
1. 4th Street (traffic signal, northern terminus of study)
2. 10th Street (traffic signal)
3. Highway 55 (traffic signal, state highway intersection)
4. 15th Street (traffic signal)
5. County Road 47 (traffic signal)
6. Highway 316 (intersection with state highway)
7. 36th Street (southern terminus of study, southernmost Hwy 61 intersection within city limits)



CHAPTER 2

Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted in Hastings and along the Hwy 61 corridor prior to this corridor study. The following studies were instrumental components of understanding key issues in the corridor and in the identification of potential solutions.

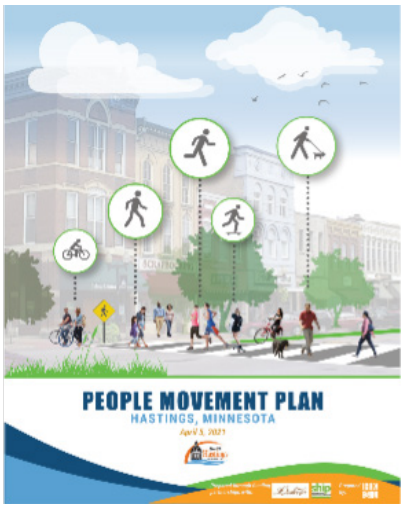


Vermillion Street Corridor Study - Vermillion Street is the local name for Hwy 61 in Hastings. This 2018 study evaluated the Hwy 61 corridor to create a "plan for the economic redevelopment and revitalization of Vermillion Street." This holistic evaluation of the corridor provided a wide range of development-oriented recommendations (including transportation related items) for the City of Hastings to consider.

Additionally, the Vermillion Street Corridor Study established four "districts" that define characteristic segments of the corridor. Those same districts were adopted for use in this Hwy 61 Corridor Study as follows:

- Downtown District (4th Street to 8th Street)
- Midtown District (8th to 16th Streets)
- Vermillion District (16th to 25th Streets)
- Southtown District (25th to 36th Streets)

Hastings 2040 Comprehensive Plan - The city adopted the 2040 comprehensive plan in December 2020. The Transportation chapter identifies a range of potential access modifications and transportation improvements to help address future community mobility needs.



Hastings People Movement Plan - Completed in 2021, the purpose of the People Movement Plan was to guide future improvements to the non-motorized movement system in Hastings. Features such as sidewalks, bike routes, trails, and road crossings are reviewed in the plan, with a focus on improvements that will have the greatest impact for priority populations including people over 60 years old, children, people with low incomes, or others experiencing a health disparity.

For MnDOT one of the key outcomes of these previous studies was the recognition that the hwy 61 corridor features significant components of existing development, historic resources, and other community assets that collectively suggest any vision for the corridor must be made with an effort to minimize impacts and taking of property.

VERMILLION STREET DISTRICTS

Corridor districts

The three-mile long corridor consists of varying topographies, periods of development, and relationships with the rest of the City as well as metropolitan region. For this Study, the corridor has been subdivided into four districts, Downtown, Midtown, Vermillion River, and Southtown.

Downtown

The portion of Vermillion Street from the City's northern border to 8th Street has a develoment style and feel reminiscent of traditional downtowns throughout the United States. This district, primarily developed in the late 19th century and early 20th century, is pedestrian friendly and, from north to south, has continuous two and three-story buildings transitioning into one and two-story buildings and historic homes.

Midtown

The portion of Vermillion Street from 8th Street to 16th Street consists of large-scale, post-World War II strip malls and standalone office buildings. It is an auto-oriented commercial area with high traffic volumes due, in part, to the intersection of two major roadways – Highway 55 and Vermillion Street.

Vermillion River

The portion of Vermillion Street from 16th Street to 25th Street has the most diverse collection of land uses and conditions, with the Ardent Mills, the largely windowless and one of the tallest buildings in town, next to Vermillion Falls Park. While largely commercial, properties along this stretch of Vermillion Street could take advantage of the park and the Hastings 10-Mile Scenic Circuit trail, which connects the Vermillion and Mississippi rivers, with mixed- use redevelopment.

Southtown

This portion of Vermillion Street from 25th Street to the City's southern border is definded by larger parcels and commercial uses with out-lots. This district is on the southern edge of Hastings, and the edge of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area's urbanized area.



CHAPTER 3

Existing Conditions and Issues

Land uses in the corridor ranges from the historic downtown and residential properties before transitioning to a heavily commercial corridor that features restaurants, gas stations, retail stores, and banks, often with access provided directly from Hwy 61. Further south in the corridor, land uses change to auto dealers, large lot retail, and an emerging residential growth area that includes single-family homes and planned multi-tenant apartment buildings.

TRAFFIC

Highway 61 in Hastings is a high-volume corridor, projected to reach up to 40,000 vehicles per day in 2040. As shown on the traffic volumes map, Highway 55 and County Road 47 are important connecting roadway that influence corridor dynamics. However, the Highway 316 intersection is perhaps the most notable intersection in the corridor. At that location, approximately two-thirds of the traffic consists of vehicles connecting to or from Highway 316. An important consideration in the Hwy 61 Hastings Corridor Study was MnDOT's recently completed reconstruction of Hwy 316, which included the addition of multiple roundabouts and a parallel trail on both sides of the highway.



Hastings AADT 2019 and 2040

2019: 32,000
2040: 40,000

2019: 28,000
2040: 33,000

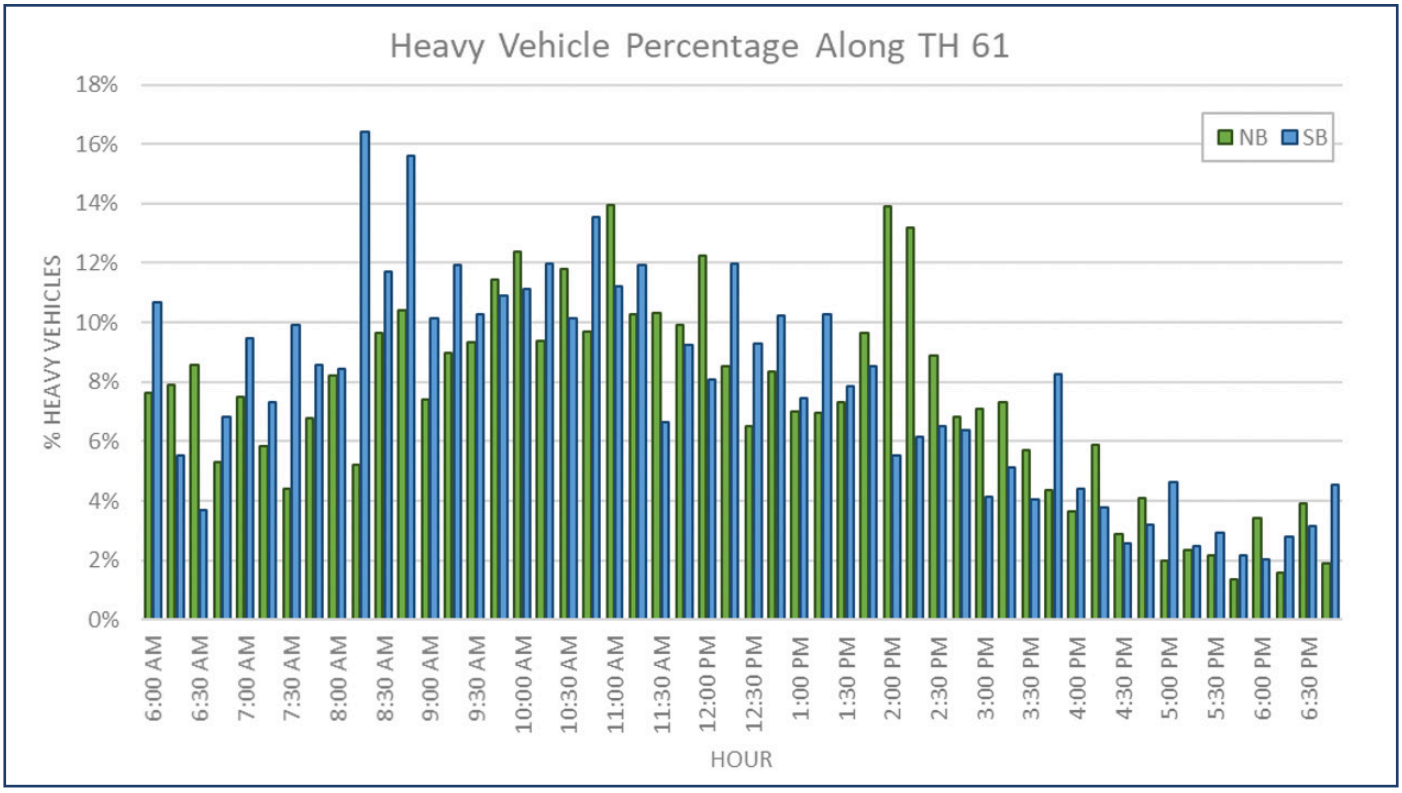
2019: 28,000
2040: 33,000

2019: 9,500
2040: 14,300

2019: 29,000
2040: 32,000

2019: 19,000
2040: 21,000

2019: 10,200
2040: 11,000



Highway 61 acts as a major freight corridor as well. A large proportion of the vehicle mix using the corridor is heavy vehicles (large trucks), with percentages up to 15% of the traffic mix depending on time of day. With the higher number of trucks, any evaluation of improvements must consider factors such as turning movements, lane width, and business access.

Future Traffic Conditions Portions of the Hwy 61 corridor are expected to see traffic volumes increase by up to 20% by 2040. With this kind of growth, traffic operations are anticipated to deteriorate compared to present day. As an example, under current (2022) traffic levels, operations are considered generally acceptable on the A-to-F scale used for Level of Service (LOS) classifications. The corridor is operating at LOS D or better in all locations, with some small pockets of delay at Hwy 316 and Hwy 55. In a corridor like Hwy 61, a LOS of E or F is considered less acceptable and warrants steps to improve operations. Forecasting to 2040, traffic operations at 18 of the 26 locations studied are anticipated to operate at LOS E or F.

To put the impact of greater traffic volumes in terms of travel time through the corridor, the challenges become most apparent when looking at future southbound travel. Present day travel from 4th Street to 36th Street during the afternoon peak period (approximately 5 p.m.) takes approximately 5 minutes. Based on modeling done for this Visioning Study, the project expects the same trip to take almost 22 minutes in 2040 if no changes are made to the roadway corridor.

ANALYSIS OF FUTURE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Year	Morning Peak Period (~7:30am)		Afternoon Peak Period (~5pm)	
	Southbound from 4th Street to 36th Street	Northbound from 36th Street to 4th Street	Southbound from 4th Street to 36th Street	Northbound from 36th Street to 4th Street
2022 Existing Conditions	4.5 Minutes	4.6 Minutes	**4.8 Minutes**	4.3 Minutes
2040 No Build Conditions	8.0 Minutes	7.0 Minutes	**21.8 Minutes**	5.2 Minutes

ACCESS

A key contributor to the congestion and safety challenges within the Hwy 61 corridor is the number of locations that provide access to Hwy 61. With over 100 access points throughout the corridor, there are multiple locations where the density of accesses becomes challenging for managing vehicular conflicts and providing safe pedestrian mobility across the accesses. An example is between 10th and 18th Streets. Many businesses in this stretch have multiple driveways or a separate access immediately adjacent to another business access. An important challenge of the Visioning Study is to identify methods for eliminating or consolidating access as a means toward improving safety and mobility.

SAFETY

Given the high traffic volumes and number of access locations in the Hwy 61 corridor, it is not a surprise that safety is a top concern for the community. The project corridor experienced 371 crashes between 2017 and 2021. The primary crash type was rear end collisions (approximately 40%) which are indicative of a corridor that has cars traveling at high speeds, too close to each other, and at volumes that limit the number of available gaps for turning vehicles to come on-to-or-turn-of-off Highway 61. Intersection crashes accounted for 74% of the crashes in this corridor, resulting in 13 of the 26 corridor intersections with a crash rate that exceeds the statewide average crash rate.

Pedestrian safety is also a concern in the corridor. During the same 2017-2021 data period, there were nine bike or pedestrian-related crashes. Seven of those crashes occurred in the commercial area between 12th and 18th Streets, where popular businesses line both sides of Hwy 61 and the corridor features a high number of access points to those businesses from Hwy 61.

SAFETY DATA

Years of Analysis	2017-2021	
Total Crashes	371	
Top Intersections by Total Crashes	Tenth Street	28 crashes
	Highway 55	23 crashes
	Highway 316	21 crashes
Top Intersections by injury Crashes	Highway 316	10 crahses
	15 Street	7 crashes
	Tenth Street	6 crashes
Manner of Collision	Read End	37% of crashes
	Angle	29% of crashes
	Sideswipe	13% of crashes
Bike/Pedestrian Crashes	9	7 of 9 crashes occurred between 12 and 18 Streets

CRASH DATA

Segment Crashes	4th St to TH 316	TH 316 to 36th St	Total
Segment Type	Urban 4-lane Divided	Urban 2-lane (AADT 8000+)	-
Miles	1.63	0.61	2.24
Total Crashes	344	27	371
Fatal Crashes (K)	0	0	0
Serious Injury Crashes (A)	6	0	6
Crash Cost ($/year)	$3,955,200	$392,400	$4,347,600
Statewide CR	1.99	1.31	1.81
Observed CR	4.13	2.50	3.94
Critical CR	2.40	2.25	2.17
Statewide FAR	2.73	2.23	2.60
Observed FAR	7.20	0.00	6.37
Critical FAR	5.65	12.68	5.25

Note: Highlighted denotes higher than Critcal CR (Crash Rate) or FAR (Fatal and Incapacity injury Crash Rate).

As part of data collection for the corridor study, the project team conducted a field walk of the project corridor in April 2022. Walking through key sections of the corridor, the project team was able to observe real-time traffic operations and identify patterns and risk areas for safety and mobility. One of the key benefits of conducting touring the corridor in this way was to understand mobility and safety concerns specifically for pedestrians.



The project team walked portions of the Highway 61 corridor in April 2022 for a first-hand evaluation of issues and opportunities.

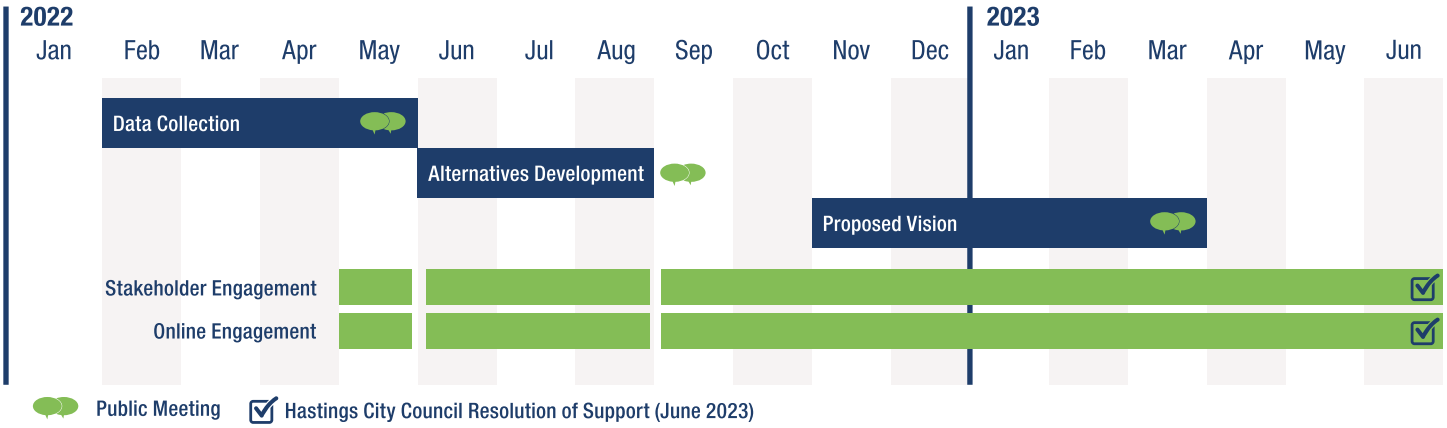
The Hastings People Movement Plan also emphasized bike and pedestrian safety - in this case the chief concern for this corridor is for safe crossings of Hwy 61. Other locations likely serve the community better for comprehensive north-south bike/pedestrian movement, but in order to make the Hastings system function as desired, better crossings of Hwy 61 are necessary.



CHAPTER 4

Public Engagement

The Highway 61 Corridor Study incorporated three phases of public engagement that were generally aligned with the phases of data collection, alternatives development, and proposed vision. The public engagement component of the study used multiple modes of outreach to obtain feedback from community members, businesses, commuters, and other stakeholders regarding the future of this study area.



Each phase included an in-person event as a key information-sharing moment. Community newsletters, business outreach, postcard mailings, and local radio promotions were used to generate awareness of the project, online engagement opportunities, and events. In-person feedback was gathered during open houses, a community event pop-up, and business outreach. Online feedback was gathered through the project website through online surveys and a comment map tool. Feedback was then utilized to develop alternatives then refine alternatives to the proposed vision.

Key engagement themes included:

- Reduce traffic speeds
- Improve safety at pedestrian crossings
- Improve traffic flow at intersections

These themes persisted throughout the study as important factors in the evaluation of design concepts and alternatives. Other factors such as the need to minimize right-of-way acquisitions, maintaining traffic flow, and managing or reducing access points were expressed by the community and were incorporated into evaluation criteria for the determination of a corridor vision.

Through the three rounds of engagement, more than 200 people attended in-person public meetings and more than 350 surveys or online map comments were received including 454 comments on the design concepts during phase 2. The City of Hastings is neighbors to the Prairie Island Indian Community (PIIC). We have engaged with their leadership and understand the economic and cultural importance regional access of TH 61 provides to Treasure Island Resort and Casino and events such as Pow Wows. The safety improvements along the corridor and specific to major intersections will result in less crashes, reduced congestion, and engineered solutions to give more decision making time to drivers along the corridor. TH 61 carriers the majority of visitors to PIIC's facilities, and support for these timely safety and mobility improvements is vital to their future success in the region.

STEP 1: INITIAL PUBLIC INPUT

The first phase of public engagement was conducted in the spring and summer of 2022, during which community members were asked about their experiences traveling along and across the highway. Input was gathered through an open house, online survey, online comment map, and door-to-door canvassing.

Phase One of engagement focused on presenting the existing conditions to the community and identifying their issues and experiences traveling along and across Highway 61 in Hastings. An in-person public meeting was held Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at Hastings City Hall. 41 people signed in at the open house. The meeting included a presentation and discussion with staff, utilizing boards and roll plot exhibit stations. Approximately 1,100 postcards were sent to addresses surrounding the corridor to promote the open house.

A pre-recorded presentation along with an online survey and interactive comment map were available on the project website from May 18 through mid-June 2022.

Additional communication for in-person and virtual engagement opportunities included social media advertisement, a City of Hastings e-newsletter and printed newsletter, and an interview with the project manager on the Hastings radio station.

Key themes from the first phase of engagement include:

- Reduce traffic speeds
- Improve safety at pedestrian crossings
- Improve traffic flow at intersections and at left hand turns

Safety and traffic flow were identified as the top two areas for improvement across the project corridor in phase one of engagement. High traffic speeds, pedestrian crossings, and sidewalks were the main areas of concern within the topic of safety. Community members noted high speeds near the downtown area as vehicles enter the city over the Hastings bridge. Additionally, crossing and safety improvements are needed on crossing Highway 61 at the south end of the corridor near the Highway 316 intersection. Community members related the dual uses of Highway 61 as both a main street to access local businesses and a regional highway for travel, commuting, and freight.

Community members recognized the importance of Highway 61 in the city of Hastings and asked that it be improved to increase safety in their community, support existing industry and business, and allow or more ease through the corridor.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Through this process of issues identification and public feedback, the project team was able to develop a list of the evaluation criteria that need to be considered in the development and refinement of corridor alternatives.

The project team organized corridor alternatives evaluation criteria into four categories: Safety, Community Identify/Economic Development, Operations, and Feasibility Measures. Within each of the categories are multiple factors that could be considered collectively when evaluating project alternatives against any one criterion. For each of the criteria listed, there is a brief description of the concerns raised or aspects of the issue that may be evaluated in screening.

These evaluation criteria are used to compare any alternative relative to existing conditions (the No Build alternative). That is, an analysis of impacts or changes created by an alternative, and how that compares to present day status.

EVALUATION CRITERIA CATEGORIES

Primary Evaluation Criteria	Considerations for Evaluation
Safety	▪ **Pedestrian/Bike Facilities** – number of signed and controlled crossings ▪ **Intersection safety** – angle and rear end crashes. SSAM weighted conflicts based on crash history ▪ **Corridor safety** – sideswipe and single vehicle crashes, Cross section factors, potential for speed reduction ▪ **Access density** - ability to comply with MnDOT access spacing standards for public and business access
Community Identity/ Economic Development	▪ **Access to businesses/neighborhoods** – impacts to business access locations or change from current "practice" in the community ▪ **Aesthetics/Placemaking** – an assessment of opportunities to make an identity in the corridor or otherwise enable an environment more consistent with community interests/visions ▪ **Stormwater** – ability to manage stormwater and drainage related features, including ability to be resilient over many years ▪ **Historic Resources** – an assessment of potential impacts to historic resources such as buildings, walls, or other landmark features in the corridor ▪ **Community Cohesion/Consistency with previous plans** – an evaluation of how the project changes mobility across Hastings, in particular the extent to which Highway 61 is a barrier; also an evaluation of previous plan recommendations ▪ **Equity** – evaluation of an alternative's ability to address transportation-related needs for all people
Traffic Operations	▪ **Hwy 61 operations** – evaluation of expected operational performance of the Hwy 61 corridor and all turning and crossing traffic. ▪ **Local network operations** – potential impacts to the local (County and City) street network, including community destinations, route continuity, and long-term system plans ▪ **Truck/Freight mobility** – ability to allow for truck turning movements, space for stacking at intersections, operations in Hastings (including business access)
Feasibility Measures This fourth category was provided primarily to allow an evaluation of the long-term feasibility of any corridor vision and is intended to support decision-making for the creation of an implementation plan once a recommended vision is determined in the future.	▪ **Cost (Benefit-Cost)** – an assessment of an alternatives benefits versus the estimated costs ▪ **ROW** – right-of-way related effects ▪ **Maintenance/Sustainability/Resilience** – potential long-term maintenance needs and ability to limit significant future construction costs ▪ **Constructability/Staging** – how well an alternative enables construction, staging, and contractor access. Also applies to potential detour routes or ability to replace utilities.

CHAPTER 5

Alternatives Development

After completion of issues identification and the establishment of project evaluation criteria, the project team turned to the development of alternatives for the Hwy 61 corridor. To remain consistent with the history of project studies for the corridor, the corridor was segmented based on the districts established in the 2018 Vermillion Street Corridor Study. Each district has a distinct character, so by focusing on district-level visions, the project team was able to create alternatives that are appropriate to the district's unique features.

DOWNTOWN DISTRICT CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The Downtown District, which runs from approximately 4th Street to 8th Street is characterized by several historic structures and well-established sidewalks with boulevards and mature trees. Hwy 61 is a five-lane corridor in this District, featuring two through lanes in each direction and a center left turning lane with a narrow concrete median that delineates the left turn lanes. Alternative concepts created for the Downtown District need to consider the following:

- minimize purchasing of additional right-of-way,
- improve or maintain traffic flow while slowing vehicles speeds, and
- manage or reduce access points to minimize safety hazards among turning vehicles.

Proposed alternatives for this district aimed to maintain appropriate lane widths for vehicles while accommodating green space, aesthetic treatments, and stormwater management. Concept development in this district focused on safety improvements for pedestrian crossings and driver sightlines by eliminating on-street parking on Highway 61.



The Downtown District of Hastings features several historic and community resources (such as City Hall) and businesses adjacent to long-standing residential neighborhoods.

Downtown District



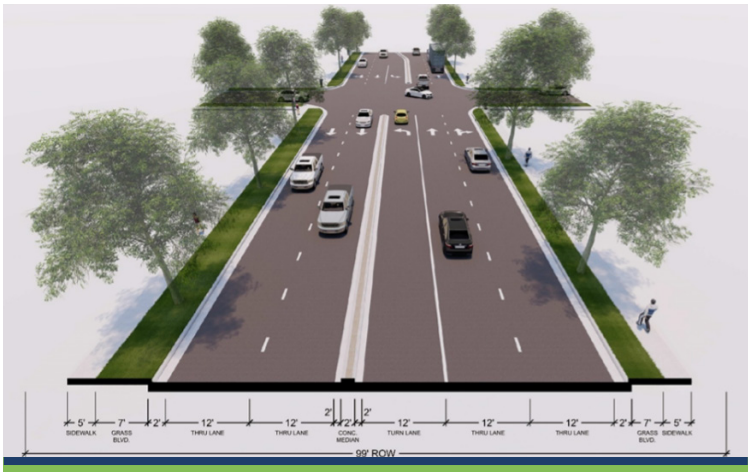
Pedestrian crossing improvements

One of the key opportunities identified for the Downtown District was to consider methods for creating safer pedestrian crossings of Hwy 61. The current cross section of the highway includes four through lanes with a fifth lane in the middle of the roadway to provide left turn movements off of Hwy 61 to the local street system at 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Streets. Analysis of turning movement counts through this section of the corridor indicated that the volume of cars making left turns at any one of the four intersections is relatively insignificant to overall traffic volumes through the corridor[1]. This enabled the consideration of selectively closing left turn movements at up to two of the four intersections, recognizing that overall disruption to travel patterns would be minimal while doing so would create new opportunities for pedestrian mobility.

The existing Hwy 61 cross section with five lanes creates a barrier to pedestrian and bicycle travel patterns in Hastings. With no protected spaces, a user must try to cross all five lanes at one time, navigating two directions of traffic and potential turning vehicles as well.

The project team developed a center median concept that could be applied to any of the intersections from 5th Street to 8th Street. Key benefits of the center median include:

- "Refuge" space for pedestrians or bicyclists, so that they only need to cross two lanes at a time
- Creation of a more constrained cross section, making the driving area less open and encouraging slower driving speeds
- Opportunity for aesthetic treatments that can serve as "placemaking" spaces for community identity.



The existing Hwy 61 cross section with five lanes creates a barrier to pedestrian and bicycle travel patterns in Hastings. With no protected spaces, a user must try to cross all five lanes at one time, navigating two directions of traffic and potential turning vehicles as well.

The following example of what a center median could look like was provided as part of phase two of public engagement for the project.





Example of a potential Hwy 61 median closure in the Downtown District, where the crossing distance for a pedestrian is reduced by providing a "refuge" center median.

[1]Many of the peak hour movements at these four intersections had fewer than five left turns made within that hour, compared to over 1,200 vehicles moving through the intersection during that same time. See Appendix X for detailed turning movement count data for the corridor (existing and 2040 forecast).

In order to optimize the concept for use in the Downtown District, the project team considered options for placing a center median at two of the four intersections. To limit the amount disruption to overall travel patterns in the area, the team considered two options for alternating the intersections between full access and center median (also known as “right-in, right-out”). The first option would be to implement a center median at 5th and 7th Streets, leaving 6th and 8th Streets open for all turning movements. The second option is the reverse, creating a center median at 6th and 8th Streets.

Recognizing that the fire station is located at the intersection of 5th Street, the project team talked with the Hastings Fire Department to understand their operations and use of Hwy 61. Through these discussions, the Fire Department described their primary movements and travel patterns. Of note was that they access Hwy 61 directly from 5th Street only to southerly destinations. This means their trucks are using the 5th Street intersection only to make a right turn on Hwy 61. For movements that require fire trucks heading north from the fire station, the trucks will use the local street network (Eddy Street) so that they can use the traffic signal at 4th Street for a safer, signalized left turn to the north. When asked if a center median at 5th Street would pose a problem for first response operations, the Fire Department was not concerned about impacts to operations. However, the Fire Department did suggest that a “traversable” median could further limit any risk to operations by creating a median that could be crossed by fire trucks if necessary.



Parked vehicles on Hwy 61 create visual obstructions for pedestrian and motorists attempting to make intersection crossing or turning movements.

Other District Concept Features

As part of the project team’s field walk of Hwy 61, many concerns about the provision of on-street parking on Hwy 61 were identified. In addition to blocking lines of sight for many users, the use of parking spaces on Hwy 61 creates challenging circumstances around accessibility. For example, the act of parking often requires stopping and conducting movements for parallel parking. This action causes a temporary obstruction in the through lane of traffic with potential safety consequences related to braking and sudden, unexpected lane movements. For those parking, the safety risks continue simply through the act of getting in and out of a parked vehicle immediately adjacent to an active lane of traffic.

MIDTOWN DISTRICT CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The Midtown District (from approximately 8th Street to 16th Street) is characterized by a large concentration of businesses, many of which have direct driveway access onto Hwy 61. The Tenth Street and Hwy 55 signalized intersections are important locations for addressing traffic mobility through the corridor. 15th Street serves as an important east-west local route through hastings; that intersection is also signalized. Alternatives developed for the Midtown District considered the need for

- improved or maintained traffic flow,
- optimizing the existing two traffic signals at 10th Street and Hwy 55 (or possibly eliminating one signal)
- managing access points to minimize conflicts among turning vehicles while maintaining access to businesses,
- providing safer pedestrian and bike crossings.

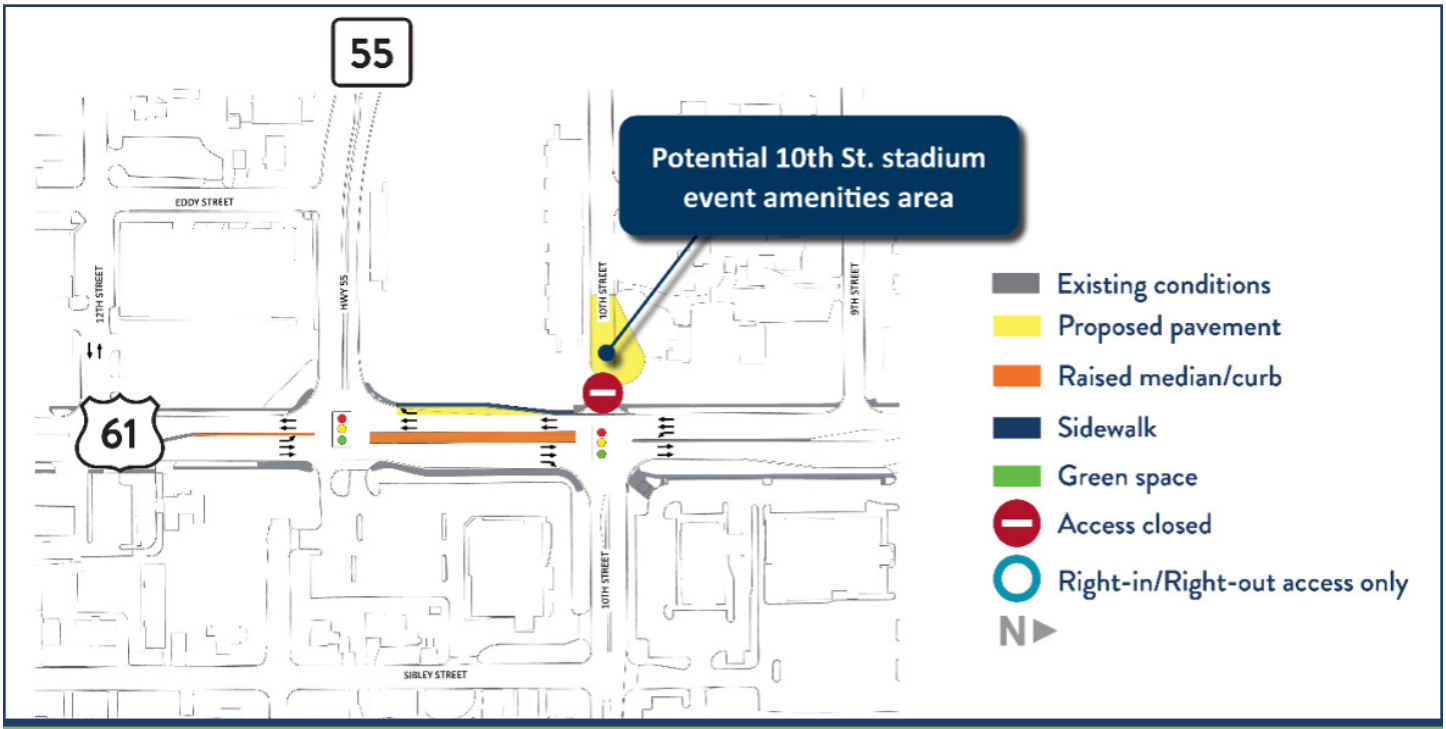
Highway 55-Tenth Street Intersection Concepts

The project team focused early efforts in the Midtown District specifically on the Hwy 55 intersection due to the regional significance of the location. Combined with the 10th Street intersection, turning movements in all directions are of noteworthy value and need to be considered in the development of concepts. Ultimately, three concepts were developed for sharing with the public as representative of the range of possibilities at this location.



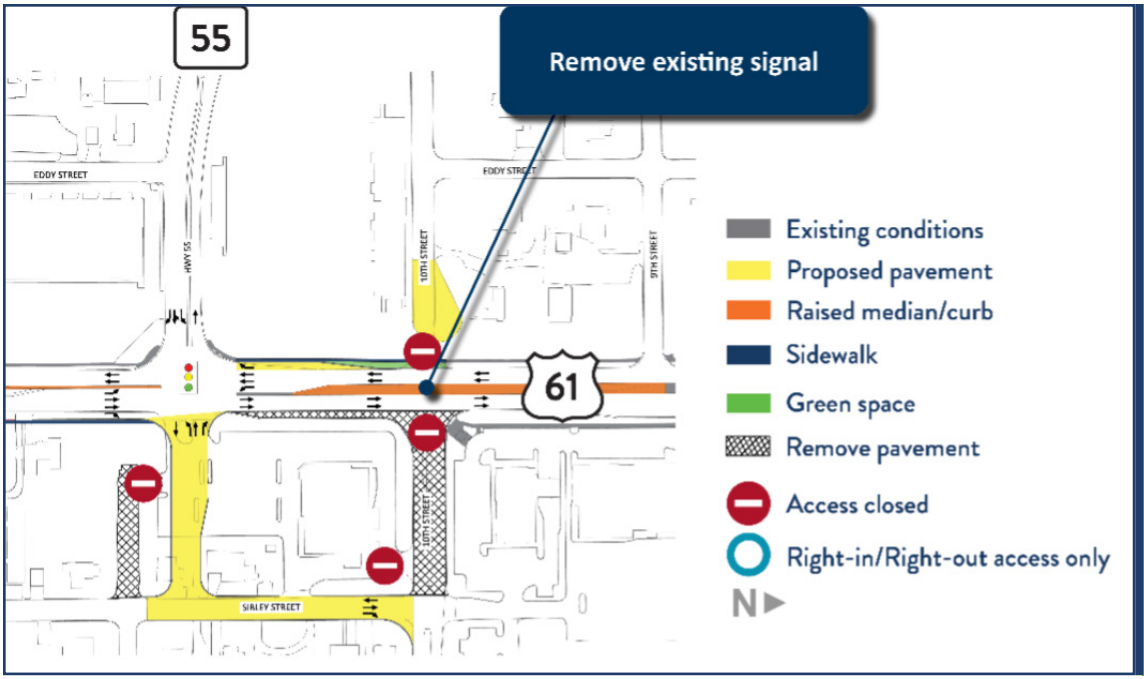
The Midtown District features several businesses immediately adjacent to and dependent upon Hwy 61 for access. The dense assembly of business driveways along this portion of Hwy 61 is a safety and operations concern.

Note that one of the key considerations in developing these options was to identify methods for simplifying the number of turning movements at each intersection. By eliminating turning movements at a signal, that means more time is available to be dedicated for other movements through that intersection. An example could be the elimination of the left turn from southbound Hwy 61 into the private driveway access on the east side of the Hwy 55 intersection. By closing that turn, the time that had been dedicated for permitting that movement could be used for other movements through the intersection and reduce overall congestion in the corridor.



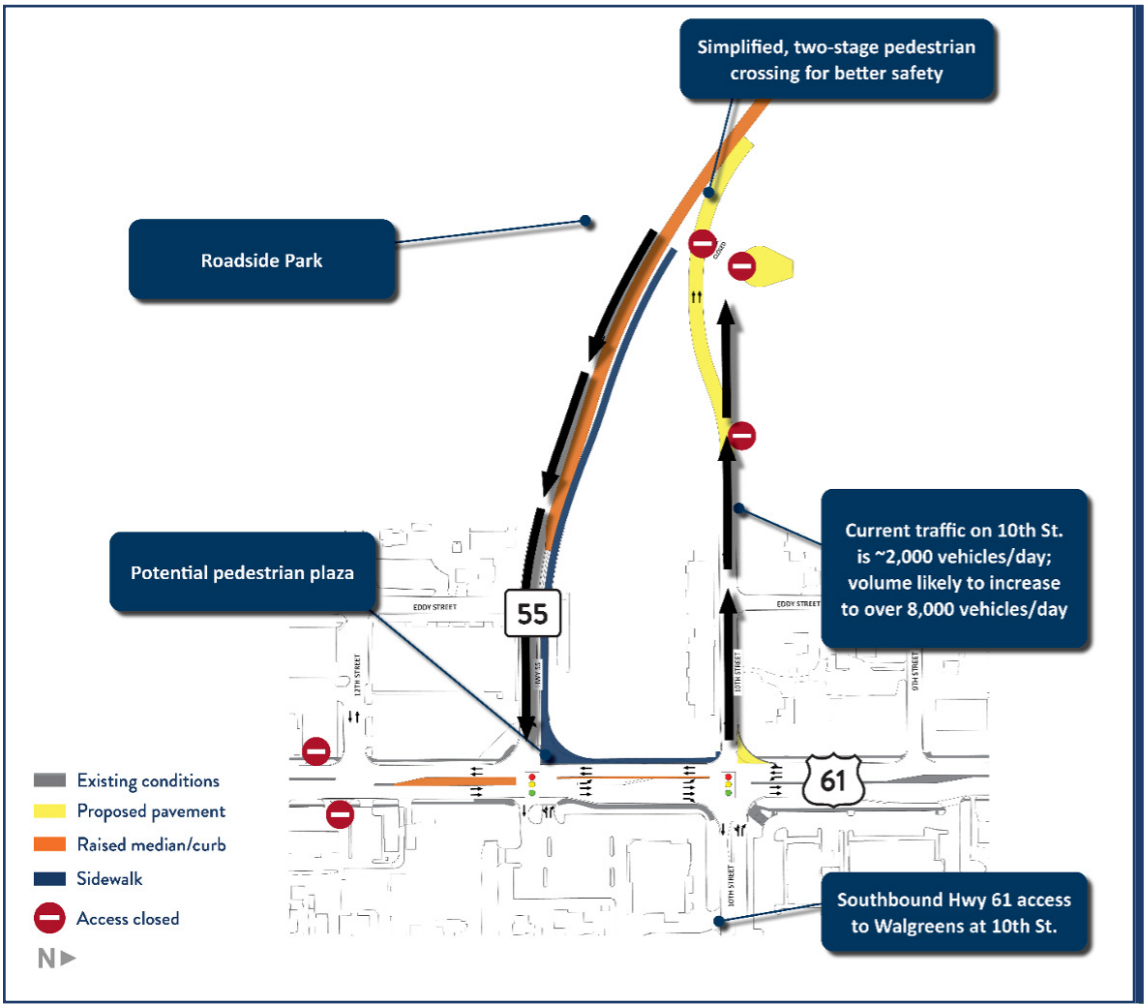
OPTION A: 10TH STREET WEST LEG CLOSURE

This option for the Hwy 55 and 10th Street intersection closes the west leg of the 10th Street intersection to simplify signal timing between these two closely spaced signalized intersections.



OPTION B: CLOSE THE 10TH STREET INTERSECTIONS

This option eliminates the traffic signal at 10th Street by routing traffic to a newly developed east leg of the Hwy 55 intersection.



OPTION C: CREATE A HWY 55/10TH STREET ONE-WAY PAIR

Converting the 10th Street corridor to a westbound only portion of Hwy 55 is proposed with this option. Existing Hwy 55 would become eastbound traffic only for approximately three city block adjacent to Todd Field.

Getting public feedback on these three options would be of critical importance for making a decision about how to proceed with improvements at the Hwy 55 and 10th Street intersections.

Todd Field Wall

Originally constructed in 1934, the Todd Field Wall adjacent to Hwy 61 is part of the iconic Hastings School District athletic complex, home to many events including High School football games. The wall segment adjacent to Hwy 61 is substantially undersized from what is needed and showing signs of deterioration. Any changes to the wall should be made in consideration of issues such as the existing right turn lane from southbound Highway 61 to Highway 55, which is undersized. Further accenting constraints in this area, the existing sidewalk between the wall and Hwy 61 is undersized and does not meet design standards for providing a safe, passable are for pedestrians.

Due to the importance of this constraint in project design solutions and decision-making, the project team contacted the Hastings School District during early stages of the study to learn more about the wall at Todd Field wall and to understand important aspects of ownership, history, the condition of the wall, and School District uses of Todd Field.

Key aspects of the wall for consideration in this study include:

- Deteriorating conditions evident with the current “tilt” of the wall visible from street level at Hwy 61
- Previously identified deficiencies in the subsurface, where erosion of material behind the wall caused failure of the sidewalk, and is the source of the wall’s current “sag” visible from street level
- The wall does not meet standards for crash barrier design; that is, it is uncertain the wall would prevent a vehicle from crashing through and into Todd Field
- The southbound right-turn lane from Hwy 61 to Hwy 55 is substandard, frequently becoming a source of congestion and delay in the intersection
- The current right-of-way line, which runs along the middle of the wall, creating uncertainty about ownership of the wall between the School District and MnDOT, and responsibilities for maintenance,
- Historic elements of the wall and community interests in preserving its features,
- Sidewalks immediately adjacent to the wall are substandard, including non-compliant ADA features

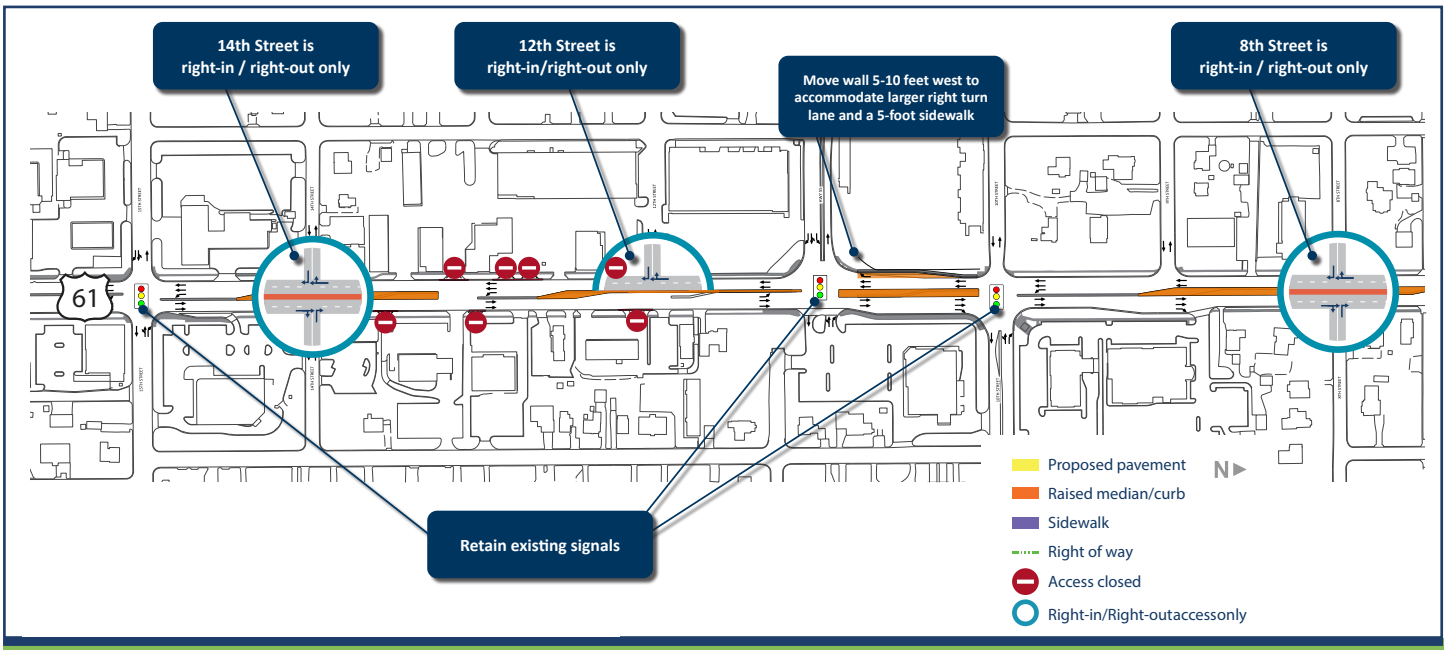


Current condition of Todd Field wall along Highway 61.

The project team's investigation of the wall culminated in a separate report completed in November 2023. Recommendations from the report included a determination that there are no preservation alternatives that meet the long-term vision of the Hwy 61 corridor without impacting the integrity of the wall. The final recommendation was for reconstruction of a wall to current standards and in so doing, also enable the construction of facilities on Hwy 61 that meet traffic and mobility needs for all users of the corridor.

South of the Hwy 55 intersection

The remainder of the Midtown District south of the Hwy 55 intersection, from 12th Street to 16th Street, features a dense mix of business access driveway and median breaks for left hand turns from Hwy 61 to businesses and local streets. At this stage of concept development, the project team focused on presenting potential ideas for center medians to close off turning movements and the consolidation of access points to simplify movement conflicts through the corridor.



The dense business district that from 12th to 16th Streets features a high number of access points that create conflicts for turning vehicles and pedestrians - options such as converting full intersections to "right-in/right-out" design help reduce those conflicts.

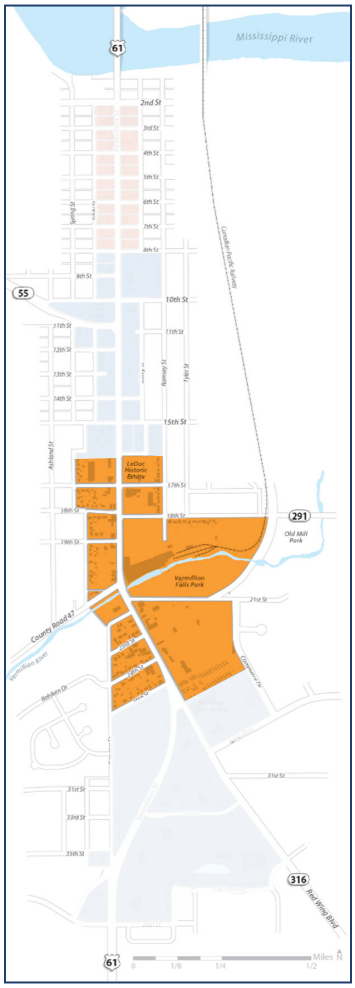
As shown in figure above, one of the intersections initially identified for a center median conversion to right-in/right-out movements was the 12th Street intersection. This proposed improvement at 12th Street creates additional benefits for traffic operations on Hwy 61, by enabling a longer dedicated left turn lane for the northbound left turn from Hwy 61 to westbound Hwy 55. Traffic modeling as well as real-world observations from that intersection indicate that traffic queues will frequently extend through the existing left turn lane and into the northbound through movement lane on Hwy 61, causing delays and congestion for the whole corridor.

VERMILLION DISTRICT CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The Vermillion District is characterized by the Vermillion River crossing and larger freight-generating businesses. This portion of the Hwy 61 corridor has one traffic signal at County Road 47 (CR 47) but with added development pressures in Hastings, traffic growth is expected to place more pressure for new intersection controls, such as traffic signals, elsewhere in the District. Alternatives developed for the Vermillion District considered the need to

- Maintain appropriate signalized or roundabout intersection spacing,
- Improve or maintain traffic flow while encouraging slower speeds.
- Manage or reduce access points to minimize safety hazards and conflicts.
- Provide sidewalk or trail continuity for pedestrians and bicyclists including to or from the Vermillion River Trail.
- Align improvements at County Road 47 with Dakota County's corridor plan.

Vermillion District



North of the Vermillion River – 18th Street and County Road 47 Intersections

In this northern portion of the Vermillion District, the primary focus is on intersection improvements or modifications that improve mobility and operations. For example, the 18th Street intersection features an expansive paved intersection area due to the mis-aligned 18th Street legs. The existing 18th Street corridor east of Hwy 61 is aligned further south than the leg of 18th Street west of Hwy 61. One of the challenges that is created by this condition is a lack of clarity regarding the proper travel paths for turning vehicles. The confusion it causes is a risk for crashes in the intersection. Realigning one of these legs of the intersection will help to reduce the size of the intersection and eliminate driver confusion while also making pedestrian crossings at the intersection more manageable. For the public review of concept alternatives, the project team presented an alternative that realigns the eastern leg of the intersection further north into an existing parking lot area.

Adjacent properties at the 18th Street intersection, notably the Ardent Mills plant between 18th Street and the Vermillion River, are generators of truck traffic. The lack of a traffic signal at 18th Street further compounds the current navigation challenges by making access to and from Hwy 61 a challenge during peak hours. Given these needs and early feedback from the community, the project team proposed showing a traffic signal at 18th Street for public feedback at the second public open house.



Intersection improvements at and north of County Road 47 are desired for the opportunity to eliminate driver confusion and create a safer pedestrian environment, while the Vermillion River corridor is a valuable recreational asset.

The proposed improvements at 18th Street create safer and more reliable access conditions for this portion of the corridor, enabling the consideration of additional improvements nearby, at 19th Street. Currently, there are left turn lanes dedicated for both north and southbound left turns from Hwy 61. Closure of the median break at this location is a reasonable accommodation to consider given the proposed traffic signal at 18th Street. The local street network west of Hwy 61 can easily handle the minimal number of left turns (less than 10 during the peak hour) made here.

Prior to development of the Hwy 61 Corridor Study, Dakota County prepared a revised vision for the CR 47 corridor west of Hwy 61. The improvements focused on the longer CR 47 corridor, with minimal modifications at the Hwy 61 intersection. The project team examined options for improvements at this intersection with the County's proposed corridor vision in mind. Some of the operational challenges found at the CR 47 intersection included:

- The southbound right turn from Hwy 61 to CR 47 is confusing to motorists due to the existence of on-street parking on southbound Hwy 61. The parking areas are rarely used, creating what appears to be a right turn lane. However, a curb "bump out" is at the intersection, preventing use of the parking spaces as a right turn lane. Vehicles need to turn back into the through traffic lane to make the right turn.
- The CR 47 roadway connects to Hwy 61 at an angle (a "skewed" intersection). This creates challenges for sightlines when making turning movements at the intersection.
- Pedestrian mobility through the intersection is fairly clear, however the skewed intersection adds uncertainty to visibility of pedestrians in addition to the provision of a "free right turn" from CR 47 to southbound Hwy 61, where moving motorists may not be paying close attention for the presence of pedestrians.

The project team created a modification to this intersection for presentation at the second open house. The changes included slight realignment of CR 47 to get the intersection closer to perpendicular and also removal of on-street parking, with conversion of that space into a dedicated right turn lane for southbound Hwy 61 to CR 47. Other locations of on-street parking exist further north of this intersection and those were recommended for removal as well for reasons similar to those described in the Downtown District.

Pedestrian mobility – trail connections at the Vermillion River

The Vermillion River is a natural node for bicycle and pedestrian mobility along the Hwy 61 corridor. The City of Hastings takes pride in its network of trails, highlighted by the 10-mile loop Vermillion River Trail that runs alongside the river, crossing Hwy 61 at two locations, the baks of the Mississippi River and Vermillion River. The Vermillion River crossing is notable for its proximity to the County Road 47 intersection and also its lack of clear wayfinding for connections between the Hwy 61 corridor and the Vermillion River Trail. Additionally, the existing sidewalk network along Hwy 61 uses the road bridge to provide a standard 6-foot sidewalk along the back of the curb (no barrier separation from highway traffic).

The proposed closure of access driveways to Ardent Mills along the east side of Hwy 61 creates an opportunity for a much more comfortable bike/pedestrian environment from 18th Street to the Vermillion River. The project team built upon this opportunity to suggest consideration of a new pedestrian bridge over the Vermillion River immediately east of Highway 61. In the process of building a new bridge, a more direct connection to the Vermillion River Trail could also be built. This improvement would provide a safer environment for trail users, with easier to navigate wayfinding possibilities.

South of the Vermillion River – Local Access and Circulation Improvements

An important piece of documentation that guided the development of alternatives in the portion of Hwy 61 between the Vermillion River and 25th Street was the City of Hastings 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan recognized some of the key challenges along the Hwy 61 corridor south of the Vermillion River:

- Full access intersections that serve a limited number of turning vehicles while creating multiple conflicting movements in the corridor
- Several business access driveways, notably along the east side of Hwy 61,
- Gaps and deficiencies in the bike and pedestrian trail or sidewalk network

The Hastings 2040 Comprehensive Plan presented a new system of local streets that could help to resolve many of these issues by creating a new “backage” road to provide access to businesses along the east side of Hwy 61. The proposed improvements also included closure of the median break at 21st Street. The 21st Street intersection is close to the CR 47 traffic signal – the close proximity of turning vehicles in this area on either side of the Vermillion River created safety concerns for turning vehicles. Instead of providing full access at 21st Street, the new proposal shifts the primary intersection access location south to 23rd Street, where there is greater separation from CR 47 while also remaining distant from the Hwy 316 intersection further south. The 23rd Street intersection would be a natural candidate for a traffic signal as well. This Comprehensive Plan concept was presented to the public at Open House #2 along with modest variations on the concept (for example, making 24th Street the primary intersection for access instead of 23rd Street).

Roundabouts

Because the corridor features the potential addition of two new traffic signals in the corridor at 18th and 23rd Streets, the project team decided it would be appropriate to consider the construction of roundabouts at those locations as well. Given the proximity of those intersections to the CR 47 intersection and potential concerns with a scenario of closely spaced changes from traffic signals to roundabouts, the project team considered the feasibility of a roundabout at CR 47. Concept footprints for roundabouts at all three locations (18th Street, CR 47, and 23 Street) were presented to the public at Open House #2.

SOUTHTOWN DISTRICT CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The dominant transportation feature in the Southtown District is the Highway 316 intersection. With the major traffic pattern being movements to and from Highway 316, the current intersection design is a source of inefficiencies and delays for travel in the corridor that will only get worse as traffic volumes increase. Additionally, improvements at the intersection of Hwy 61 and Hwy 316 are anticipated by the community as a natural outgrowth of Hwy 316 corridor improvements that were constructed by MnDOT and the City of Hastings in 2021 and 2022. That corridor reconstruction included a major change in the Hwy 316 roadway, with the creation of three roundabouts and adjacent pedestrian facilities on either side of Hwy 316.

Further south of the Hwy 316 intersection, the Hwy 61 corridor is characterized by a rural cross-section, with no curb and gutter segments and neither are trails or sidewalks available along the corridor. The 36th Street intersection marks the southern limit of the corridor study with the southern city limit of Hastings approximately 500 feet south.



The existing intersection at Hwy 316 features a single lane left turn for the highest demand turning movement in the corridor.

Alternatives developed for the Southtown District considered the need:

- To consider long-term regional travel patterns.
- Improve traffic operations at Highway 316 intersection.
- Provide sidewalk or trail continuity for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Evaluate long-term development patterns near 33 and 36 Streets.
- Improve transition from higher speed area south of Hastings to lower speed area within the city.
- Consider a gateway treatment on Hwy 61 to better identify entry into the city.

Highway 316 Intersection

As shown in the existing traffic conditions data, a significant portion of Hwy 61 traffic diverts to and from Hwy 316 on the southside of Hastings. The existing single-lane left turn from southbound Hwy 61 to Hwy 316 is currently a source of congestion in the corridor and is a long-term risk for traffic operations breaking down through the corridor. Current and forecast traffic data were key elements in decision making about the range of concepts to present for public consideration at Open House #2. Another noteworthy feature near the intersection is the newly constructed stormwater pond nearby as part of the Hwy 316 improvements. However, MnDOT and the City of Hastings were taking a long-term view to create a vision for the whole Hwy 61 corridor. Therefore the pond was a consideration for cost-effective implementation of the vision, but it did not prevent the development of concept alternatives that directly impact the pond.

Three alternative concepts for modification of the Hwy 316 intersection were developed for public review:

- Option A: A multi-lane roundabout that features capacity for two lanes on key portions of the roundabout to improve operations through the intersection.
- Option B: Direct routing between Hwy 61 and Hwy 316. A reversal of the directionality of roadway travel patterns at the intersection, with the route to Hwy 316 becoming the natural through-movement (called the “direct connect’ alternative) of a newly signalized intersection.

- Option C: Modification of the existing intersection into a “continuous green” style of intersection, where the intersection adds a traffic signal to moderate turning movements between Hwy 61 and Hwy 316. A distinctive feature of this type of intersection is that the southbound traffic on Hwy 61 would be allowed to flow through the intersection without any traffic controls, helping to move traffic through the intersection and reducing the risk of congestion at the turning movements.

Pedestrian/Bicyclist Mobility and Safety

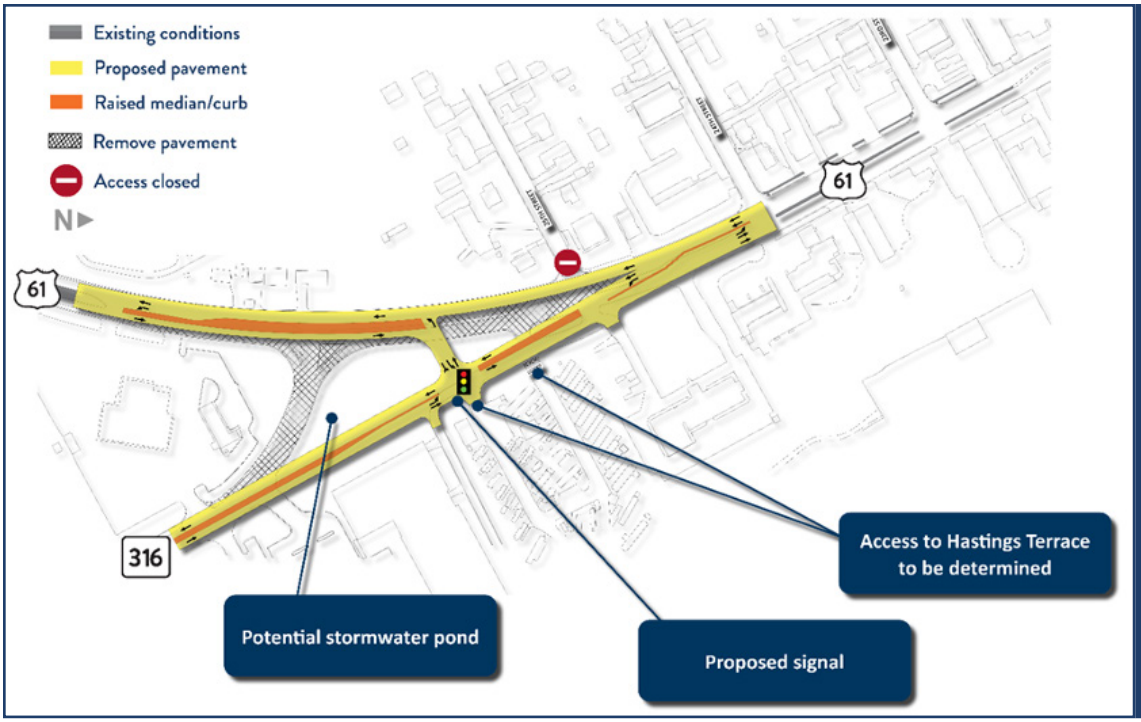
With no available bike or pedestrian accommodations along Hwy 61 south of Hwy 316, this was a notable concern raised by community members and the project team. This southern portion of the corridor is expected to gain a variety of residential and commercial developments in the coming years, where pedestrian mobility and connectivity to the rest of Hastings will be desirable.

36th Street Segment Improvements

The 36th Street intersection at the south end of the study corridor received several comments from the community during the first phase of this study. The intersection is widely used by area residents who walk in the area and cross the highway for access to neighborhoods on either side. Community members also expressed a desire for some type of “gateway” feature at this intersection – some type of indicator to motorists that they are entering the City of Hastings. As part of the initial alternative concepts, the project team considered the addition of a traffic signal here and also developed a representative footprint for a roundabout to help evaluate the feasibility of one at the intersection.

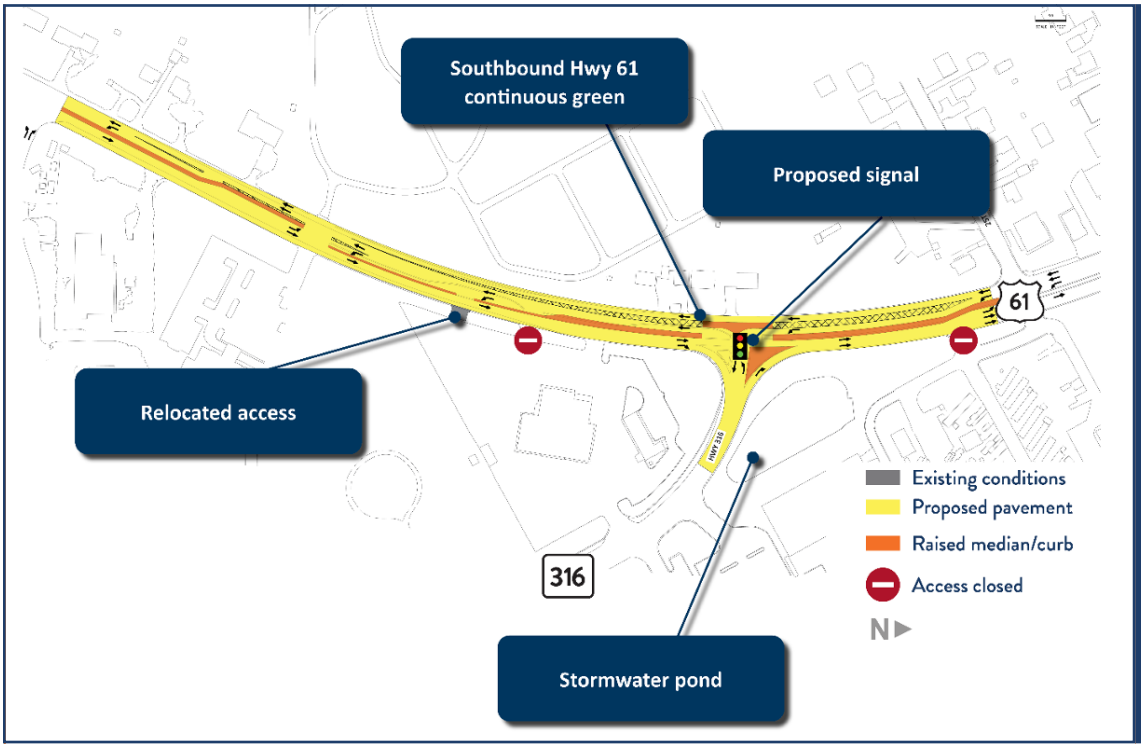


Highway 316 Intersection Improvement
Option A: Multi-lane Roundabout



Highway 316 Intersection Improvement

Option B: Create a Direct Connection between Hwy 316 and Hwy 61



Highway 316 Intersection Improvement

Option C: "Continuous Green" intersection with new signal added and continuously available through movement on southbound Hwy 61

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STEP 2

In Phase Two of engagement, community members were asked to provide feedback on the project's evaluation criteria and concepts created by the study team. The criteria and concepts were developed using past studies of the area and feedback from Phase One of engagement.

Staff gathered input on criteria and concepts through the following methods:

Pop-up: Project staff attended Rivertown Days on July 16, providing visibility to the project with a table and promotional materials encouraging public input.

Open house: One open house was held at Hastings City Hall on Wednesday, August 24, 2022, from 6 to 8 p.m. 30 people signed in at the open house.

- **In-person surveys**: 22 participants completed the in-person survey and submitted 32 feedback comments on design concepts presented at the open house.
- **Token Rating Activity**: 197 tokens were used to rate the 14 different design concepts displayed at the open house.
- **Online survey**: 186 participants completed the online survey and submitted 454 feedback comments on design concepts.



The August 2022 Open House was used to present and obtain feedback on concept options for potential improvements to the corridor.

In the second phase of engagement, community members provided feedback on the project's evaluation criteria and on concepts created by the study team. Input was gathered through an open house, online survey, token activity, map activity, and pop-up booth.

Feedback themes on design alternatives:

Traffic flow and overall safety

- Consolidation of traffic signals to increase traffic flow was desired. At the same time, people recognized the need for slower speeds and increased safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- There was an understanding among some respondents that closing off access across 61 at some intersections would result in increased traffic to side streets nearby.

Business impacts

- The plans to close access to businesses raised concern from residents. While improving traffic flow, the closures would hurt businesses and Hastings overall in the long run. If access points are closed, communicating new access to limit the impact to existing business will be important.

Roundabouts

- Roundabouts were widely mentioned in the comments, even on design alternatives that did not include roundabouts. There were mixed views on roundabouts, with those against roundabouts expressing strong feelings (e.g. typing all caps, some profanity included).
- There was support for full-size roundabouts. The small roundabouts along 316 were mentioned unfavorably in comments, from both those in favor and those against roundabouts. In several cases, those against would be supportive if the roundabouts were full size.

Placemaking/Aesthetics

- Many of the proposed improvements create opportunities for additional aesthetic treatments. Locations like proposed new medians, closed parking spots, or closed accesses offer spaces for placemaking features (similar to the colored pavements in downtown Hastings) that help to create a sense of place and community through the corridor.

Initial screening of alternative concepts at key intersections

Feedback received through this second phase of engagement was used as a first screening of the design concepts developed by the project team. Key factors in determining whether an alternative concepts would continue to be considered were the evaluation criteria for 1) safety and 2) community identity/economic development. The focal areas for weighing the criteria against alternative concepts were at the Hwy 55/10th Street intersection and at the Hwy 316 intersection.

At the Hwy 55/10th Street intersection, a variety of options for access closure or redirection of traffic were considered. Through this stage of public engagement, the depth of negative feedback received about the “One Way Pair” option was enough to guide the project team toward elimination of that alternative due to the large impacts it could create on local neighborhoods and uncertain safety outcomes with daily traffic volumes raising to approximately 8,000 vehicles per day on what is currently a relatively low volume local street. Additionally, the One-Way Pair would create a more permanent traffic-related barrier to users of Todd Field, where a new traffic lane immediately adjacent on the north side of the field could become a crossing and safety hazard during events.

With elimination of the One-Way Pair concept, the project team then conducted traffic modeling to compare the remaining design concepts for the Hwy 55/10th Street intersection area. All concepts included an improved southbound right turn lane to Hwy 55. The turn lane improvement depends on relocation of the Todd Field wall in order to make the space available for an improved sidewalk and better functioning right-turn lane. The tables below depict modeling outcomes for the “Level of Service” (LOS) expected for each intersection starting at 9th Street through to 12th Street. A LOS rating of “A” is the best possible, and LOS F is the lowest possible rating.

As shown in the 2022 Existing Conditions table, current corridor traffic operations show Levels of Service that are considered to be acceptable (generally meaning rated A, B, C, or D in an urban environment). However by 2040, many of the intersection legs are rated below, with ratings of ratings of E or F.

2022 Existing Conditions

Intersection (with TH 61)	AM Peak					PM PEAK				
	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int
TH 61 & 9th Street	A	A	A	-	A	A	A	A	-	B
TH 61 & 10th Street	***A***	***B***	***C***	***C***	***B***	***A***	***B***	***D***	***C***	***B***
TH 61 & TH 55	***B***	***C***	***C***	***D***	***C***	***B***	***C***	***C***	***D***	***C***
TH 61 & 12th Street	B	A	A	-	B	A	A	B	-	B

2040 No Build Conditions

Intersection (with TH 61)	AM Peak					PM PEAK				
	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int
TH 61 & 9th Street	A	E	A	-	E	A	F	F	-	F
TH 61 & 10th Street	***B***	***D***	***C***	***C***	***C***	***A***	***D***	***D***	***F***	***D***
TH 61 & TH 55	***C***	***D***	***C***	***D***	***C***	***C***	***D***	***F***	***E***	***E***
TH 61 & 12th Street	F	A	C	-	F	B	E	E	-	E

The following tables present four alternatives considered for improvements at Hwy 55. Each option involved reductions in access, or in the case of Alternative 3, the complete elimination of a traffic signal at 10th Street (in which 10th Street would be re-routed to the south to connect at Hwy 55). The best performing option was Alternative 4, where the west leg of 10th Street only allows westbound traffic for one block and the east leg of the Hwy 55 intersection is closed.

2040 ALTERNATIVE 1: Close the Left Turn lanes on Hwy 61 (Northbound LT to 10th Street, and Southbound LT to business access at Hwy 55 intersection)

Intersection (with TH 61)	AM Peak					PM PEAK				
	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int
TH 61 & 9th Street	A	A	B	-	B	A	A	D	-	D
TH 61 & 10th Street NBLT Closed	***B***	***B***	***D***	***C***	***B***	***B***	***B***	***D***	***C***	***B***
TH 61 & TH 55 SBLT Closed	***C***	***C***	***D***	***D***	***C***	***C***	***B***	***D***	***E***	***C***
TH 61 & 12th Street RIRO	F	A	A	-	F	D	A	A	-	D

2040 ALTERNATIVE 2: Close the West leg of 10th Street intersection

Intersection (with TH 61)	AM Peak					PM PEAK				
	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int
TH 61 & 9th Street	A	A	A	-	A	A	A	B	-	B
TH 61 & 10th Street Closed W leg, No NBLT	***B***	***B***	***A***	***C***	***B***	***B***	***B***	***A***	***C***	***B***
TH 61 & TH 55 No SBLT	***C***	***C***	***D***	***D***	***C***	***C***	***B***	***D***	***E***	***C***
TH 61 & 12th Street RIRO	F	A	A	-	F	F	A	A	-	F

2040 ALTERNATIVE 3: Close 10th Street and Redirect Traffic to one signal at Hwy 55

Intersection (with TH 61)	AM Peak					PM PEAK				
	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int
TH 61 & 9th Street	A	A	A	-	A	A	D	F	-	F
TH 61 & 10th Street Closed and Redirected to TH 55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TH 61 & TH 55 No SBLT	***C***	***C***	***F***	***E***	***E***	***D***	***D***	***F***	***F***	***F***
TH 61 & 12th Street RIRO	F	A	A	-	F	F	A	A	-	F
TH 61 & Cannon Street	A	A	C	-	C	A	A	D	-	D

2040 ALTERNATIVE 4: Westbound only traffic on west leg of 10th Street intersection and close east leg of Hwy 55 intersection

Intersection (with TH 61)	AM Peak					PM PEAK				
	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int	NB	SB	EB	WB	Int
TH 61 & 9th Street	A	A	A	-	A	A	B	D	-	D
TH 61 & 10th Street W Leg One-Way WB	***B***	***B***	***-***	***C***	***B***	***C***	***C***	***-***	***C***	***C***
TH 61 & TH 55 Closed E Leg	***B***	***C***	***C***	***-***	***C***	***C***	***B***	***C***	***-***	***C***
TH 61 & 12th Street RIRO	B	A	A	-	B	A	A	A	-	A

NB = Northbound leg of intersection; SB = Southbound leg; EB = Eastbound leg; WB = Westbound leg; Int = rating for the whole intersection (all legs combined)

A similar process of evaluation for the roundabout concepts at Hwy 316 was conducted. Ultimately, the traffic operations results were critical for the determination of a recommendation for that intersection. The project team used the evaluation to determine a roundabout is the most appropriate intersection type at Hwy 316.

CHAPTER 6

Recommended Alternative – Corridor Vision

After these two rounds of project development and sharing of results with the public, the project team developed a recommended vision for the Hwy 61 corridor. The vision was previewed to the public at a February 2023 Hastings City Council meeting and shared formally with the public at an open house meeting event in March 2023 at Hastings City Hall. Several other stakeholder meetings and outreach actions were conducted by the project team to support the corridor vision.

In this third phase of engagement, community members were asked to provide feedback on a proposed vision of the corridor. The concepts were developed using past studies of the area, feedback from Phase Two of engagement, and traffic modeling. Input was gathered by open house, online survey, and map activity.

Themes heard from the public at the third public meeting about project recommendations included:

Right-in/right-out access

- Adding center medians for right-in/right-out access was widely mentioned in the comments. Comments were more favorable to this design concept in the Downtown District, whereas in the Midtown District, there was large opposition to the design. Impacts to local businesses was the primary reason given for this opposition.

Roundabouts

- There are mixed views on roundabouts, with nearly equal distribution of comments in favor and in opposition. Larger roundabouts with more capacity (such as including two lanes on segments of the roundabout) were favored over the perception of “mini” roundabouts.. Roundabouts received more mixed reviews in Phase 3 of engagement compared to the strong opposition seen in previous phases.

Eliminating parking

- Most comments about parking were in favor of keeping existing spots or increasing parking access in the area, although compared to other design concepts, parking received a relatively small number of mentions. Business owners in the Downtown District mention a desire for more parking nearby, and although they recognize the safety concerns for existing parking on Highway 61, they use the parking to access their businesses. Eliminating parking in the Vermillion District received a small number of opposition comments.

Eliminating driveways

- The elimination of direct driveway access on Highway 61 in both Midtown and Vermillion were mentioned by a few respondents who are against the change. Most respondents who are concerned about local businesses also mentioned medians or eliminating parking as detrimental. Eliminating driveways (most notably at locations with multiple access points) received little opposition from open house participants, survey respondents, and businesses during door-knocking.

Miscellaneous

- Ramsey Street (a city street that runs parallel to Hwy 61) was mentioned by some as unsafe for a bikeway with too many cars and too much speeding.
- People expressed concern about how changes to Highway 61 would impact the surrounding side street traffic and congestion on local roads.
- People expressed confusion on how some of the design concepts in the vision would create better traffic flow through the corridor.

Business Community and Key Stakeholder Engagement

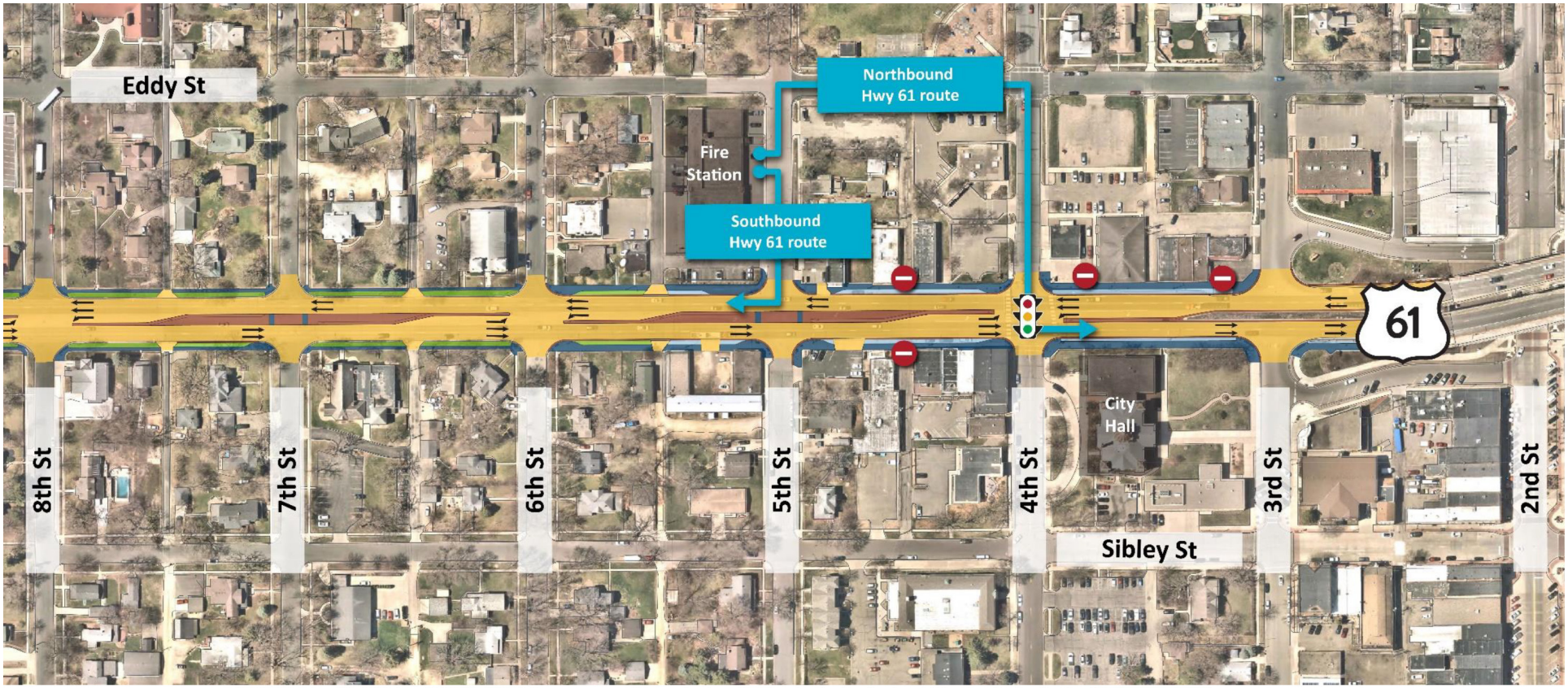
After presentation of the corridor vision to the public, the project team reached out to business owners along the Hwy 61 corridor to review the plans for specific implications to each property owner. The discussions were used to consider the individual operations of businesses and to identify opportunities for further reducing impacts to individual property operations without substantively modifying the design solutions for the overall corridor.

This process of engagement with businesses and property owners on the corridor resulted in several refinements and clarifications to the vision for Hwy 61 in Hastings. As part of the project team's approval process for incorporating the modifications, additional traffic modeling and consideration of feasibility was conducted to confirm there are no reductions in expected corridor mobility and related benefits as previously described at the final public meeting. The following list highlights the notable modifications.

- The east leg at the Hwy 55 intersection is proposed for closure. Further communications with the business were made to convey the rationale for closure of that leg (including the need for more efficient signal operations between the Hwy 55 and 10th Street signals and the value for pedestrians in eliminating a southbound Hwy 61 left turn lane and making the crosswalk safer). The project team's incorporation of a right turn from northbound Hwy 61 into the property helps to retain access for customers coming from the south.
- Concerns about access to shopping malls west of Hwy 61 at 12th Street were addressed by the commitment to consolidate access into one more prominent location – the current 12th Street corridor, which will be turned back to the property and enable improvements to internal parking lot circulation and wayfinding, while reducing the density of access on Hwy 61.
- Collaboration with adjacent property owners to improve access across multiple businesses on the east side of Hwy 61 near 12th Street. Commitments from the city include coordination around agreements for access and improved wayfinding.
- A review of the proposed access reduction at 16th Street with the affected business owner resulted in a modification to allow access from Hwy 61. This move made the intersection similar to 14th Street and was determined to pose minimal safety and Hwy 61 mainline operations risks while retaining access to the business and the preferred travel patterns for customers on site.
- The City of Hastings made a commitment with businesses in the downtown district to continue efforts to identify and develop off-street parking options that are in close proximity to the businesses impacted by on-street parking removals.
- In response to ongoing concerns about traffic speed coming off the Mississippi River Bridge into Hastings, the project team committed to further efforts to calm traffic and provide clear, prominent signing to the Downtown Business District.

After consultation with area businesses and stakeholders identified through the public engagement process, the project team prepared a proposed corridor vision for presentation to the Hastings City Council. The following presentation of corridor recommendations is consistent with the vision as it was presented to the Council on June 5, 2023. The Hastings City Council unanimously approved the recommendations with a resolution at that meeting. (attachment)

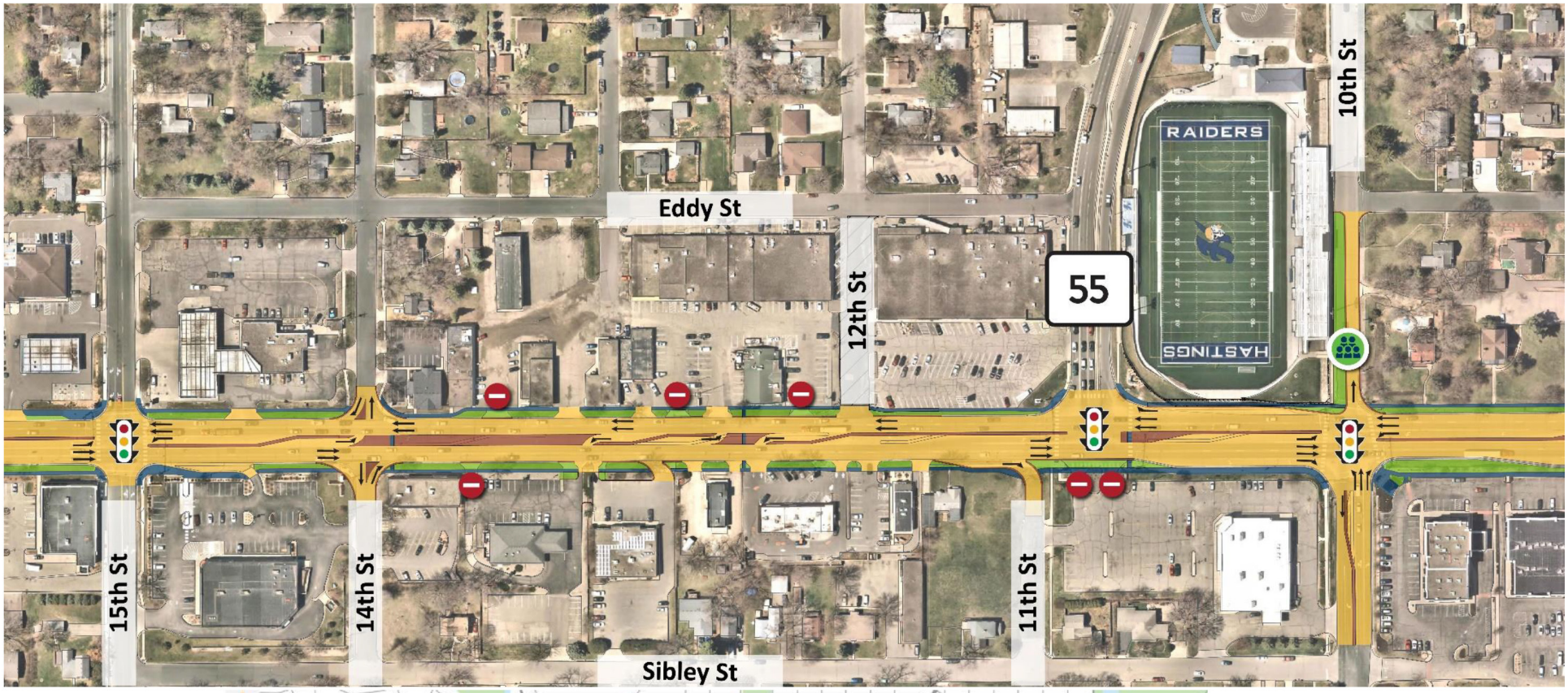
Hastings Hwy 61 Corridor Vision (Page 1 of 7) – Downtown District Vision





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Hastings Hwy 61 Corridor Vision (Page 2 of 7) – Midtown District Vision





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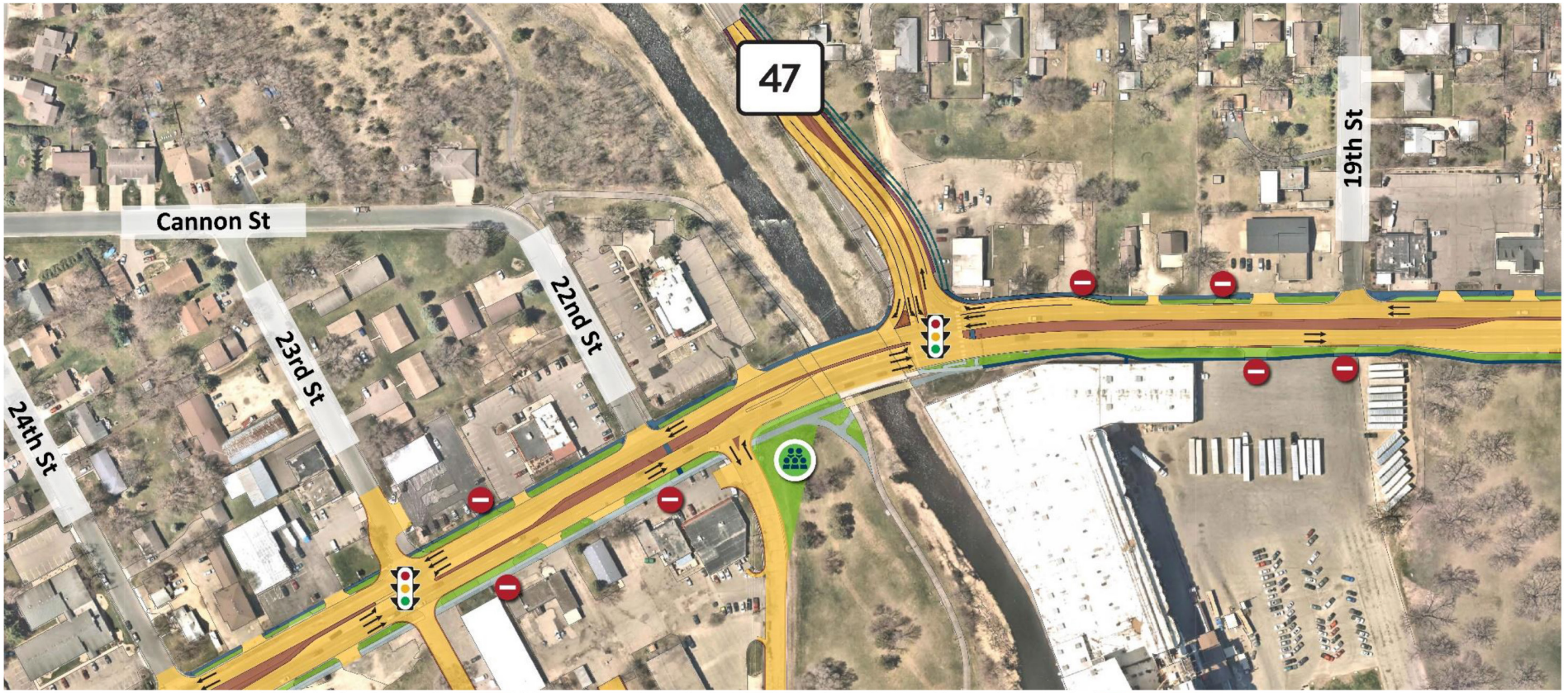
Hastings Hwy 61 Corridor Vision (Page 3 of 7) – Midtown District Vision





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Hastings Hwy 61 Corridor Vision (Page 4 of 7) – Vermillion District Vision





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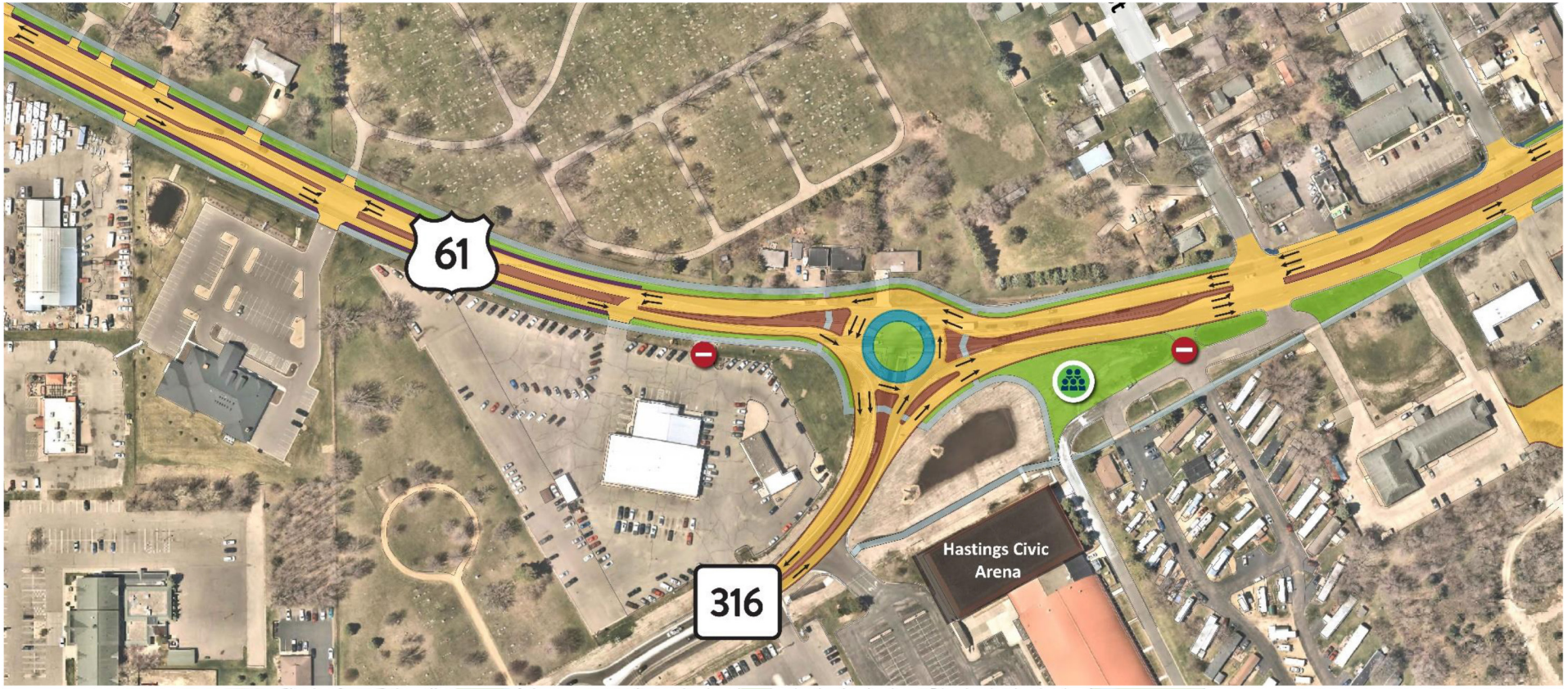
Hastings Hwy 61 Corridor Vision (Page 5 of 7) – Vermillion District Vision





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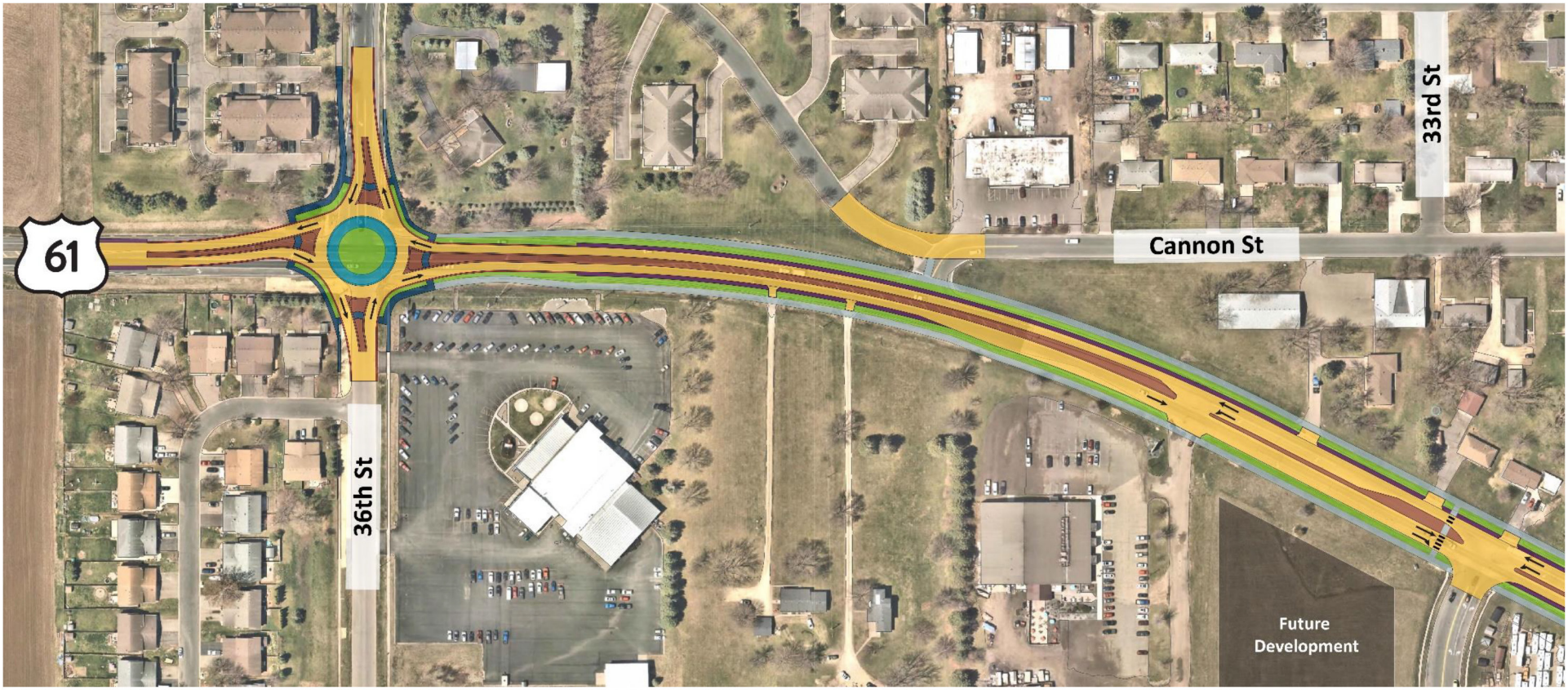
Hastings Hwy 61 Corridor Vision (Page 6 of 7) – Southtown District Vision





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Hastings Hwy 61 Corridor Vision (Page 7 of 7) – Southtown District Vision





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CHAPTER 7

Next Steps

FUTURE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STEPS

Programming Status

Future improvements to the Hwy 61 Hastings corridor are programmed in a pair of MnDOT projects. One project is programmed in its 2024-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as planned for construction in fiscal year 2027. The segment of Hwy 61 covered by this project is from 4th Street to the intersection of Hwy 316. The remainder of the Hwy 61 corridor from the intersection of Hwy 316 to 36th Street is planned for improvements in fiscal year 2029 in the 2024-2033 Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP). MnDOT's project programming process involves continual evaluation of project needs and is reviewed annually for modifications to address the specific needs of a project corridor. Ongoing coordination and design development steps may result in revisions to the corridor segmentation and progression of projects.

Pursue Additional Funding Sources

MnDOT and the City of Hastings have worked collaboratively to pursue additional funding for completion of the vision described in this visioning study. Federal discretionary grant programs such as the Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG) and the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) offer opportunities to pursue significant funding with minimal local match required. Other State of Minnesota funding sources such as the Metropolitan Council's Regional Solicitation program, which disperses federal funding through a competitive process, are also anticipated options for obtaining funding.

The City of Hastings was notified in December 2023 of selection for a Minnesota Transportation Economic Development (TED) grant. That grant for approximately $2.7 million, will support the construction of a local street portion of the corridor vision. The segment of the corridor is the area between 21st and 24th Streets. This TED grant provides funding to build the local access roads that will augment access to businesses while also creating a safer Hwy 61 corridor.

Future Stages

Upon completion of this Corridor Study, MnDOT intends to initiate the stage of project development with a project for preliminary design and environmental documentation. This stage of work will result in a staff approved geometric layout for the project that is ready for formal "municipal consent" from the City of Hastings. Parallel with the geometric layout process, MnDOT will pursue completion of environmental documentation according to guidelines from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Consistent with efforts during the Corridor Visioning Study, MnDOT and the City of Hastings will continue to offer wide-ranging opportunities for public engagement during development of the preliminary design and NEPA documentation.

Receipt of municipal consent from Hastings is a precursor to the development of final design plans that will be used for construction of improvements to the Hwy 61 corridor. In order to leverage construction in the corridor, the City of Hastings plans to reconstruct utilities within the corridor in conjunction with the roadway project. A core objective of MnDOT and Hastings for completion of the proposed improvements is to limit disruption caused by construction. This may take various forms such as segmentation of the project if it helps with maintaining traffic or reducing the the timeline for construction activities.