F Line Corridor Plan Amendment #1

November 2026

1. Introduction

This F Line Corridor Plan Amendment documents changes to the METRO F Line alignment through downtown Minneapolis, affecting all adopted F Line stations downtown, and a platform siting change for the northbound Central & 49th Avenue Station in Columbia Heights. When the F Line Final Corridor Plan was adopted in July 2023, Metro Transit noted potential changes that could result from ongoing coordination with the City of Minneapolis on their project to re-envision the future of Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis and with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) on their Highway 47 (University Avenue) & Highway 65 (Central Avenue) Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study.

This Corridor Plan Amendment reflects developments in those City of Minneapolis and MnDOT-led projects, and associated coordination between Metro Transit and these partner agencies, since the F Line Final Corridor Plan was adopted. These project developments necessitate changes to the F Line corridor alignment and stations as currently adopted.

2. Downtown Minneapolis Alignment and Station Changes

2.1 Nicollet Mall Background

The City of Minneapolis has prioritized converting Nicollet Mall into a pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized public plaza, which would require transit move off Nicollet Mall to an alternative north-south transit spine. Read more at the City's project website: Nicollet Mall and Downtown Transit Changes project.

This work is informed by existing city transportation policy and recent recommendations for downtown. In 2023, the Vibrant Downtown Storefronts Workgroup recommended that the city evaluate the future of Nicollet Mall as a pedestrian-only zone and explore alternative options for transit service. In 2024, the city published the Downtown Action Plan, which further developed the concept of Nicollet Mall as a pedestrianized space.

Since 2023, City of Minneapolis and Metro Transit have been coordinating on the implications of removing transit service from Nicollet Mall. The conversion of Nicollet Mall into a pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized space only would require changes to Routes 10, 11, 17, 18, and 25, along with the planned METRO F Line and K Line.

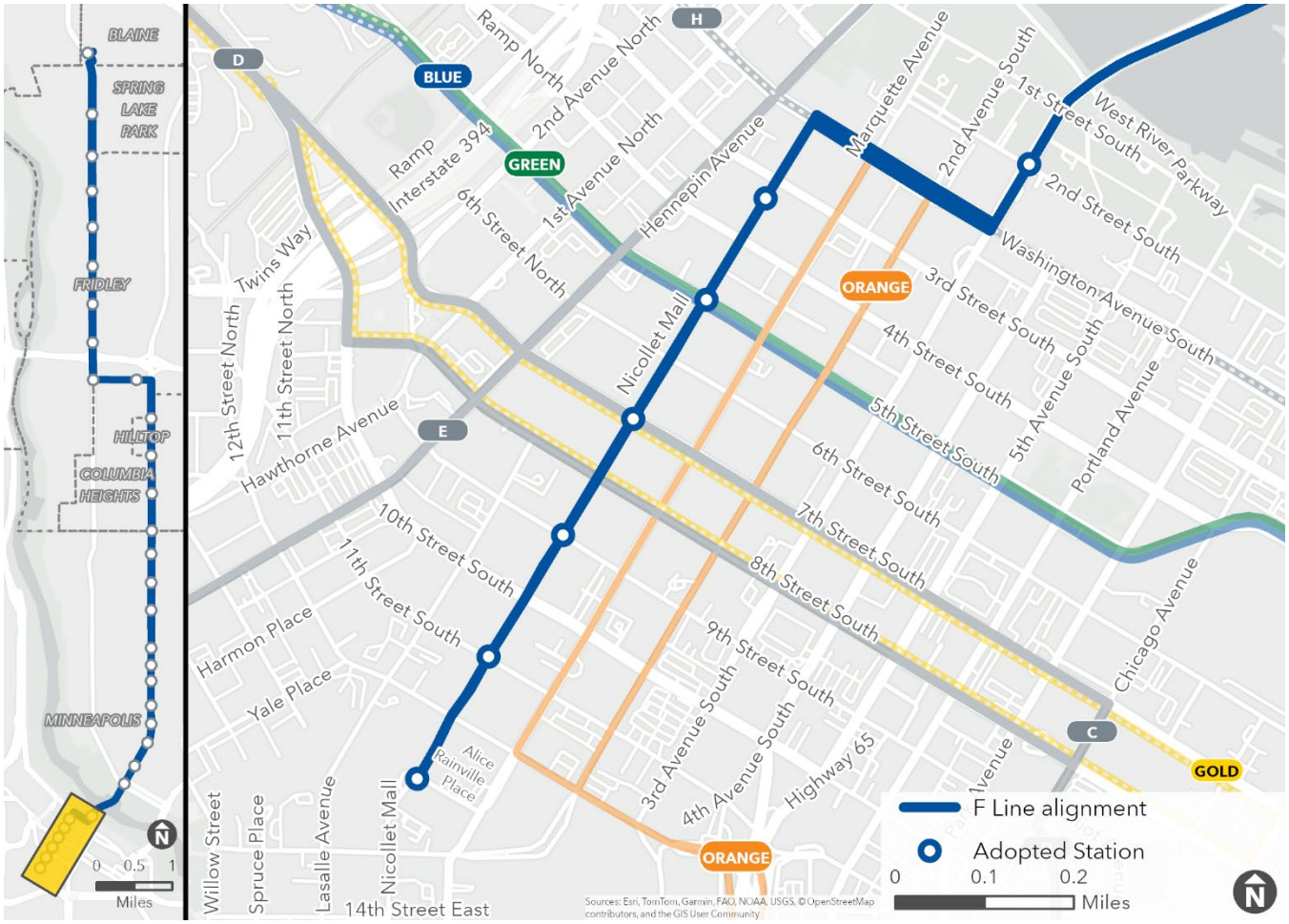
Coordination between the City of Minneapolis and Metro Transit on the overall approach to an alternative to Nicollet Mall is ongoing. This amendment applies exclusively to the METRO F Line alignment and does not specify changes to other existing or planned transit service on Nicollet Mall.

Beyond fully closing the street to transit, Nicollet Mall has increasingly become a priority location to host events downtown, resulting in frequent detours and slowdowns due to event-driven street closures. It is anticipated that additional events will continue to occur as programming for Nicollet Mall is identified as a priority for city-led downtown revitalization efforts.

2.2 Impacts on F Line Alignment and Stations

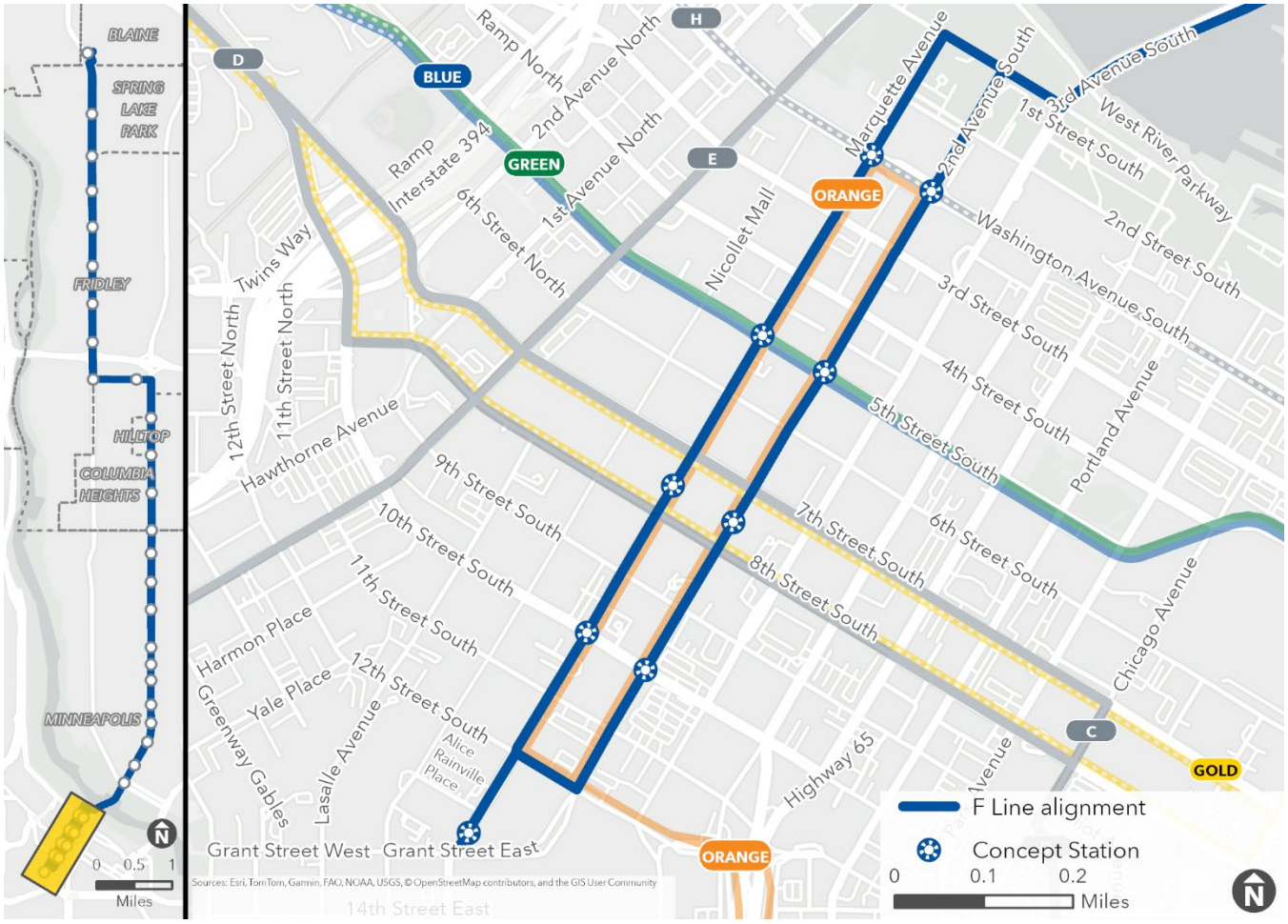
The previously planned F Line alignment included in the Final Corridor Plan adopted in July 2023 is shown below (**Figure 1**). It crosses the Mississippi River on the Central Avenue/3rd Avenue bridge, operates on Washington Avenue between 3rd Avenue and Nicollet Mall, on Nicollet Mall between Washington Avenue and Grant Street. The station on Nicollet Mall at Alice Rainville Place is the last public station for southbound trips and the first public station for northbound trips.

Figure 1: Adopted F Line Alignment and Stations in Downtown Minneapolis



The revised F Line alignment would primarily operate on Marquette Avenue and 2nd Avenue in downtown Minneapolis (**Figure 2**). It would cross the Mississippi River on the Central Avenue/3rd Avenue bridge. Southbound buses heading into downtown would operate on 1st Street South between 3rd Avenue and Marquette Avenue, and along Marquette Avenue from 1st Street to Grant Street. Northbound buses would operate Marquette Avenue between Grant Street and 12th Street, on 12th Street from Marquette Avenue to 2nd Avenue, along 2nd Avenue between 12th Street and 1st Street, and along 1st Street to the Central Avenue/3rd Avenue bridge. The concept station on Marquette Avenue at Grant Street would be the last public station for southbound trips and the first public station for northbound trips.

Figure 2: Amended F Line Alignment and Concept Stations in Downtown Minneapolis



Due to this alignment change, F Line will no longer serve the following stations that were identified in the Final Corridor Plan:

- 3rd Avenue & 2nd Street
- Nicollet Mall & 3rd Street
- Nicollet Mall & 5th Street
- Nicollet Mall & 7th Street
- Nicollet Mall & 9th Street
- Nicollet Mall & 11th Street
- Nicollet Mall & Alice Rainville Place

The stations for this amended alignment are not yet finalized; however, the City of Minneapolis and Metro Transit have developed preliminary layouts for the Marquette and 2nd avenue corridor that indicate where BRT routes would stop. All existing and planned BRT routes on Marquette and 2nd avenues

(METRO Orange Line and planned METRO F) would serve the same stations. Metro Transit will work to refine these BRT concept station locations through coordination with the City of Minneapolis.

2.3 Public Engagement Summary

The City of Minneapolis led communication and engagement on the broader Nicollet Mall and Downtown Transit Changes Project. To date, the city has led two phases of community engagement, with Phase 1 from August to October 2024 and Phase 2 in January 2025. Engagement tactics included surveys (online, in person, and on the bus on Nicollet Mall-area routes), open houses, and pop-up events. Key stakeholders during engagement included transit riders, downtown residents, workers, and businesses, and neighborhood and community organizations.

Phase 1 of engagement focused on introducing the project to the public and seeking feedback on the three options under consideration to replace the Nicollet Mall transit corridor. Option 1 was Marquette and 2nd avenues as one-way pair transit corridor (like current express and METRO Orange Line operations on Marquette and 2nd avenues), Option 2 was Marquette and 2nd avenues as a two-way streets with local service on Marquette Avenue, and Option 3 was 3rd Avenue as a two-way transit corridor. The city and Metro Transit gathered input on features that people liked and disliked about each transit option.

Phase 2 shared more detailed technical information on each transit option and presented tradeoff information to help the public compare the options. Of these options, Option 1 scored highest against the city's project goals and was the most popular of the three options based on public input.

Key feedback themes from this effort include concerns about the distance between transit service and destinations on Nicollet Mall, including major retail destinations and medical destinations, the Minneapolis Central Library, and transfer connections, and concerns about the waiting environment relative to Nicollet Mall, including perceptions of safety and comfort.

2.4 Recommendation

Two primary factors related to the overall context and vision for Nicollet Mall guide this recommendation. As discussed above, the City of Minneapolis has prioritized converting Nicollet Mall into a pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized public plaza. This change would require transit to move from Nicollet Mall to an alternative location.

Beyond fully closing the street to transit, Nicollet Mall has increasingly become a priority location to host events downtown, resulting in frequent detours and slowdowns due to event street closures. It is anticipated that additional events will continue to occur as programming for Nicollet Mall is identified as a priority for city-led downtown revitalization efforts.

This amendment updates the F Line downtown alignment to primarily operate on Marquette and 2nd avenues.

3. Central & 49th Avenue Station

3.1 Background

In the F Line Final Corridor Plan, the Metropolitan Council adopted a nearside platform for the northbound Central & 49th Avenue Station in Columbia Heights. This platform location aligned with the existing pedestrian bridge on the southern side of the intersection. Both platforms at this intersection were sited near that grade-separated crossing to facilitate safe access to and from F Line stations (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3: Adopted Central & 49th Avenue Station

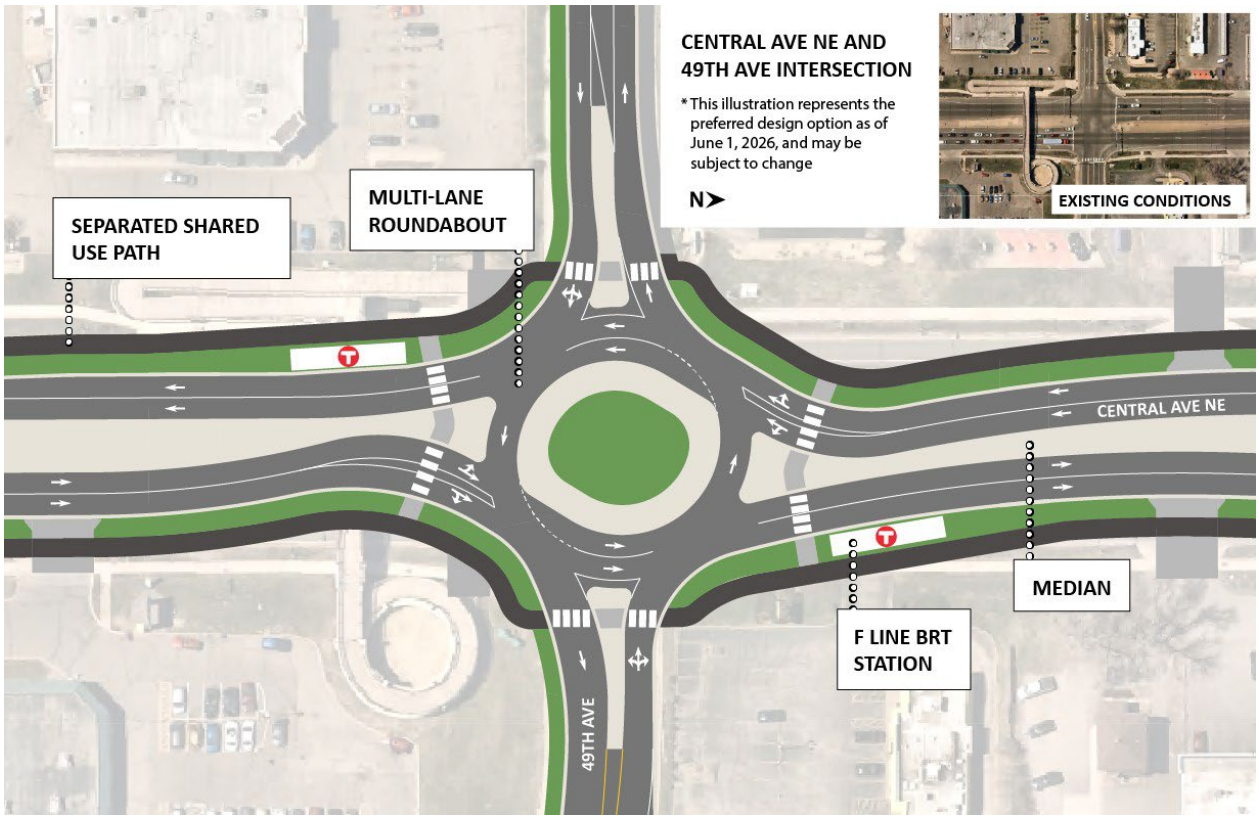


The Final Corridor Plan documented that the Central & 49th Avenue Station was within the area of MnDOT's PEL Study and that development of this station would be coordinated as the MnDOT study advanced. The Final Corridor Plan also documented that Metro Transit, MnDOT, and partner cities and counties would continue to explore opportunities to increase pedestrian access and safety at and near the intersections within MnDOT's study area.

Upon completion of the PEL study in fall 2024, MnDOT began design for the Highway 47 (University Avenue) and Highway 65 (Central Avenue) corridors. As design advanced, MnDOT proposed a multi-lane

roundabout on Central Avenue at 49th Avenue (**Figure 4**). Metro Transit and MnDOT coordinated on the implications of this intersection design change for F Line and determined that, with the new roundabout and at-grade pedestrian crossings, a farside northbound platform would be safer for pedestrians and for transit operations.

Figure 4: MnDOT Preferred Design Option for Central Ave and 49th Avenue Intersection



Source: [MnDOT Central Avenue Northeast Project Website]

3.2 Public Engagement Summary

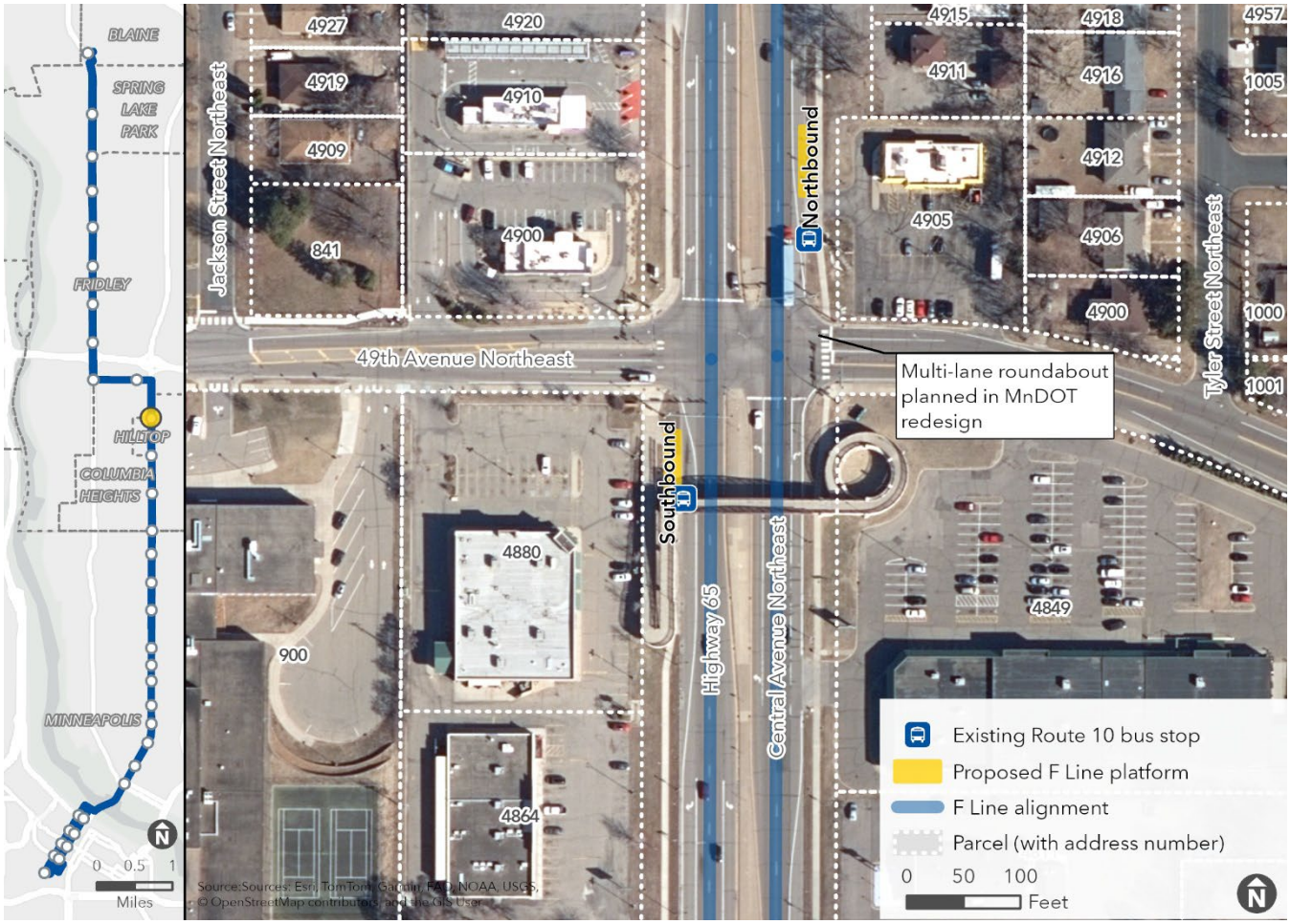
MnDOT's proposed design for Central Avenue was informed by technical analysis and community engagement. The project's community engagement addressed transit facilities for future F Line service. Community engagement activities in Columbia Heights, Hilltop, and Fridley included an in-person meeting, multiple virtual public meetings and community pop-up events, meetings with local businesses, and mailers to surrounding properties.

As of summer 2026, MnDOT is going through the municipal consent process for the proposed final layout, including in Columbia Heights. Metro Transit anticipates that the multi-lane roundabout at Central Avenue and 49th Avenue with a farside northbound F Line platform will be included in the final design based on the outcome of the technical analysis and MnDOT's engagement process to date.

3.3 Recommendation

To accommodate MnDOT's recommended redesign of the Central Avenue and 49th Avenue intersection as a multi-lane roundabout, this Corridor Plan Amendment updates the northbound F Line platform at this intersection to a farside location in the northeast quadrant of the intersection (**Figure 5**). This change reflects coordination between MnDOT and Metro Transit focusing on safety considerations for platform siting and MnDOT has communicated this change to the public through the project's engagement process.

Figure 5: Amended Central & 49th Avenue Station



4. Conclusion

This F Line Corridor Plan Amendment updates the F Line alignment and stations in downtown Minneapolis and updates platform siting for the northbound Central Avenue & 49th Avenue station (**Figure 6**). Both changes reflect developments in partner agency coordinated projects since the F Line Final Corridor Plan was adopted in 2023.

Figure 6: Amended METRO F Line Corridor

