

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT



Central and University Avenues Pedestrian Safety Plan

Why Do We Need a Plan?

In 2018, the MN Department of Transportation conducted an audit analyzing the safety of both the Central and University Avenue corridors starting at 37th Ave NE in Columbia Heights, and going north to Blaine and Coon Rapids. This audit found that both Central and University Avenues have significantly higher crash rates than the state average.

What's our Goal?

The ultimate goal is reducing pedestrian accidents in the Central and University Avenue corridors.

What are we doing?

We're providing both pedestrians and drivers with the education, resources, and enforcement programs to support both safe walking and safe driving along Central and University Avenues.

Who's involved?

The CHPD is working with Toward Zero Death (TZD – the State's cornerstone traffic safety program), Metro Transit, MN State Patrol, MN Safety Council, and other county and state agencies

What are the Details of the Plan?

This plan addresses the needs of walkers, bikers, and drivers by providing very clear-cut goals based on community equity and community safety. We're focusing on the following areas:

Make Walking Safe for Everyone

People of all ages and backgrounds should feel safe when walking in Columbia Heights and surrounding communities. We can accomplish this goal by

- prioritizing pedestrian safety in street and resource design (e.g. bus stop locations, crosswalks, signage, etc.),
- teaching safe walking and driving behaviors

We want to encourage the safe usage of public transportation by creating clean bus stops strategically placed along main roads, and allowing for the safest ways for pedestrians to cross streets coming to and from the bus.

Utilize Community Stakeholders and Community Outreach

- Rather than rely solely on enforcement, this plan will also focus on education and community outreach.

- Enforcement practices would still be employed, but they would be secondary to this plan's effectiveness and importance.
- Pedestrians and drivers will be educated through community outreach where the police department and community stakeholders will conduct lasting educational initiatives, such as pedestrian outreach at bus stops and frequent areas of foot traffic, as well as local businesses along Central Ave.
- Drivers and pedestrians alike will be given educational resources to inform them of our efforts and the reasons behind them, as well as the laws and ordinances they must obey to ensure community safety.

Enhance Media Outreach

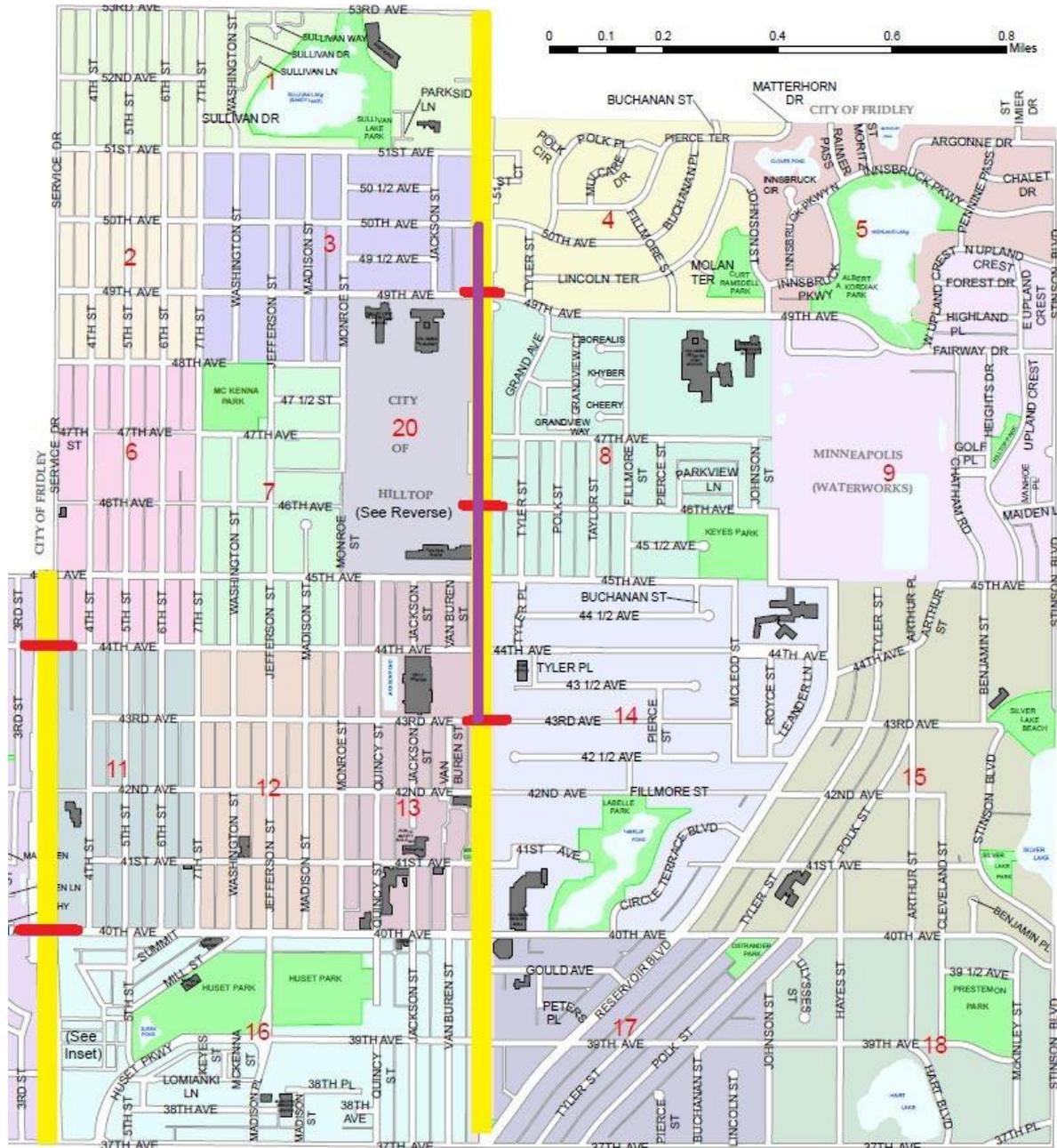
- This plan would effectively combine the social media platforms and traditional media to best reach the community
- We will utilize physical locations such as bus stops and local businesses, as well as mobile locations such as busses to share our message and ensure that people are being properly educated on our efforts.

Use Data to Affect Outcomes

- Using the findings of the 2018 MN Department of Transportation Safety Audit, we will tailor our outreach
 - Factors such as daylight, bus stop locations, intersections, pedestrian age and impairment played important roles at specific intersections. Our plan will use this data to enact initiatives and details aimed at being most affective.
 - Pedestrian education and outreach will occur during night-time hours when most pedestrian-involved accidents occur.
 - We'll work with MnDOT, Metro Transit, and other agencies to ensure bus stops are safe, pedestrian crossings are evident to drivers, and pedestrian safety is enforced.
 - The CHPD and our partners will use the data provided to educate about the cause of crashes, and ensure that the education is aimed at the populations who are most affected in these incidents (age groups, neighborhoods, etc.).

Enforcement

- The final goal of this plan will be to enforce the city ordinances and local laws designed to protect the community.
 - These laws include jay-walking, snow removal, speeding, careless and distracted driving, the "Ted Foss Move Over Law," and other statutes and ordinances specifically designed at creating a safe place for all residents to walk and drive.
 - Officers will issue written warnings and citations, as well as distributing educational materials. Enforcement details will be data driven, so that the times and populations served are in-line with the populations most affected.



The yellow lines mark the main arteries of traffic in Columbia Heights, that being Central and University Ave NE. The horizontal red lines mark areas of concerns for pedestrians, as they cross at these locations for local bus routes at seemingly higher rates, often at uncontrolled intersections or mid-block. The purple line will mark the proposed "Accident Reduction Zone," where a significant portion of these efforts will be focused.