



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

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Date: June 4, 2026
To: Members of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
From: Peter Musty, Principal Planner and Administrator of the Rules for Zoning and Design

Rice Street Reconstruction: Approval of 60% Design



Memo and Board Meeting Preview

This memo summarizes the stakeholder process to date leading to a midpoint design for reconstruction of Rice Street. Please see attachments below for early design, layout, community engagement, and alternatives considered. At the October 3, 2025 Board Meeting, the board received a short presentation from Haila Maze, project manager for lead consultant Bolton & Menk. Both the attached information and the presentation will focus on the following:

- **review of stakeholder engagement** activities in 2025 and 2026
- **alternative designs** considered in 2025 and 2026
- **60% design** proposed by consultant team in 2026
- **summary of issues** the team is currently working through on way to 90%

Background

A major initiative of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area, ([profiled in Chapter \(Principle\) 4](#)) was to transform the “Capitol Rice Corridor” (includes portion of Como, Rice, 12th Street across interstate to St. Peter).



*The project was enabled by a \$25 million provision from the 2023 MN State Legislature, appropriated to Department of Transportation (but just for Rice Street itself – **the length shown in green above**) to include collaborative work with City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Metropolitan Council, State of Minnesota, and the CAAPB. The project must include implementation of a multi-modal (mobility) hub at University and Rice. (Legislation details can be found in [June 2023 Board Memo](#).) Appropriation is available until June of 2029.*

Public Works and Planning staff from Ramsey County, MnDOT, City of Saint Paul, Metro Transit, METRO G Line BRT and CAAPB are partnering to conduct design and implementation. There have been regular meetings of the Project Management team over the



course of 2025 and 2026. CAAPB Staff is attending all meetings twice a month and is providing interdisciplinary team policy, studies, and community surveys, and is summarizing recent studies that embody CAAPB priorities in our Comp Plan, stormwater management, urban design, public realm safety, CMDF, mobility, and integration with the Sears site.

Summaries of engagement to date, and latest plans, can be found at the County project page created for Capitol Rice Street Reconstruction: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transportation/future-road-projects/future-road-construction-projects/rice-street-capitol-area-reconstruction>

During spring and summer 2025, staff began vetting alternatives, with an alternative developed based on open house feedback, surveys, and street and traffic engineering studies, and released a 30% design. Work continued to refine the design in collaboration with landowners and the State of Minnesota. Project leads and designers, including the interagency staff team (County, City, and CAAPB), **are now continuing review and refinement of the 60% design, published earlier in 2026.**

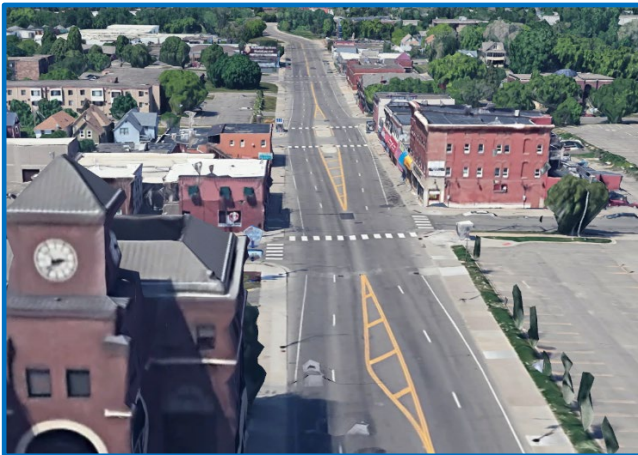
60% Design Reflects Best Practices and Community Priorities

As shown in the attached design summary, the updated 60% design for Rice Street features several best practices supported by the County, City public works, and follows policy of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol as outlined in the attached Staff Evaluation:

- One lane of traffic in each direction with a two-way left turn lane in the center
- Two-way bikeway with a separate sidewalk from John Ireland Boulevard to University Avenue
- Shared use path from University Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue,
- Medians at Charles Avenue to provide pedestrians with a refuge island to only cross one direction of traffic at a time, and south of Fuller Avenue to keep drivers from driving around stopped buses
- Boulevard spaces to allow for trees and greening.

Additionally, the design maintains these upgrades

- safer intersections to cross Rice Street and slower 'design speed' on Rice
- increased tree canopy
- stormwater management best practices
- space for on-street parking north of University Avenue (spaces south under study)
- better snow storage
- accessible/universal design best practices
- improved lighting and safety features
- four-lane to three-lane conversion (narrower curb to curb dimensions and narrower crossings, while retaining traffic and increasing transit volumes)



North of University: Shared Use Path



South of University: Two-Way Cycle Track

Engagement Activity: 2024, 2025, and 2026

Full documentation of input of engagement activities, takeaways, and concepts considered are available via:

- October 3, 2025, and June 4, 2026 CAAPB meeting presentations include(d) summary of continuing engagement activities presented with updates.
- October 3 2025 Board Memo Attachment C: **Concept Screening Report with Community Engagement Takeaways** https://mn.gov/caapb/assets/Item%208%2C%20Att.%20C%20-%20Concept%20Screening%20Report%20with%20Community%20Engagement%20Takeaways_tcm1087-706996.pdf
- **Project Webpage** - <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transportation/future-road-projects/future-road-construction-projects/rice-street-capitol-area-reconstruction>

Phase 1 Engagement snapshot (August – December 2024):

- 100 door hanger invitations distributed
- In-person open house: 18 attendees
- Project website
- Community stakeholder group newsletters
- Open house postcard
- Email and text subscription list
- Social media posts, CAAPB webpage, and GovDelivery Notices

Phase 2 Engagement Snapshot (January – August 2025):

- The purpose of this phase of engagement was to gather feedback on three design concepts for Rice Street:
 - Concept 1: Two-way bicycle track on west side, sidewalk on east side
 - Concept 2: Shared-use path on west side, sidewalk on east side
 - Concept 3: Hybrid option – two-way bicycle track south of Univ., shared-use path north of Univ.
- Survey (open from June 3 to July 13): 72 responses
- Online comment map: 30 comments
- Virtual open house: 11 attendees
- In-person open house: 20 attendees
- Nine community pop ups: 303 attendees
- Meetings with Good Neighbor Group, Capitol Heights Block Club

Phase 3 - 30% Corridor Design Review and University & Rice Design (August 2025-May 2026):

They have included:

Design Presentations/Reviews Offered to State of Minnesota and Leadership

- CAAPB Members
- Legislators (Leadership)
- Mayor (with City Staff)
- Commissioners' Offices (Transportation, Administration, Public Safety, Veterans)

CAAPB Staff and Partner Reviews

- Advisory Committee Special Meetings (with Minnesota Historical Society)

Topical Reviews with Partners:

- Capitol Region Watershed District
- Minnesota Council on Disability
- Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deaf Blind, and Hard of Hearing
- Capitol Security
- Department of Administration Consultations (RECS, Events, Grounds, OES, SHPO)
- Good Neighbor Group/Rice Street Businesses and Capitol Heights Block Club
- Adjacent Major Private Properties (University and Rice) – Former Sears, League of MN Cities, Saint Paul City School, Good Neighbor Center, (411 Rice), Capitol Ridge, apartment buildings, others

Design Team Community Engagements

- Virtual and In-person options
- Two online open houses
- Open Gallery at Capitol Commons hosted by CAAPB
- Two Pop-Ups – one in March at Capitol Commons hosted by artist team and CAAPB

Advisory Committee (Advisors) Reviews

Advisor Joe Favour has been present at several project management team meetings. Haila Maze visited the Advisors in early 2025. Then on September 10, 2025, project team lead street designer Cody Christiansen presented the 30% design to the full Advisory Committee. The Advisors reviewed and were asked to comment on the 60% plan in the spring of 2026.

CAAPB Advisory Committee Member Joe Favour maintains this statement after review of 60%:

“The design alternative recommended by the Rice Street design team will be a significant improvement for the Rice Street corridor within the Capitol Area. The improvements planned for pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal transit connectivity will pay dividends far beyond the monetary investment in the physical upgrades. The design emerging from the engagement to date integrates meaningful improvements without disrupting the traffic flow or expanding the right of way. Overall, the architectural/design advisors see this proposed alternative as an important investment in positive change.” – CAAPB Advisor Joe Favour

Remaining Refinements Now in Discussion with Agencies and Landowners

Several of the issues flagged by staff and advisors that CAAPB that are still in deliberation with owners:

- ✓ Details at intersection of John Ireland, and design coordination with bridge and 12th street projects
- ✓ Resolution on connections to former Sears site (including full intersection at the new Central) (achieved)
- ✓ Upgraded access to Transportation Building site
- ✓ University and Rice Commons: continued collaboration between Administration, CAAPB and Rice Street team on design of mobility hub amenities and green spaces at University and Rice (action requested in separate June 4th meeting item)
- ✓ Aurora & Rice, including review and design options developed after meeting with Good Neighbor Center for new street design (narrowing of street and improved crossing, site access) at Aurora and Rice

Multi-Agency Maintenance and Operations Planning

A map of primary responsibilities for maintenance is being developed by project partners.

The Design and Location of Three BRT Stations Have Not Changed

Three new Metro G-Line BRT Stations remain in the locations the Board previously approved, and the design of those stations remains as proposed and approved previously by the Board. They are located at Como and Rice, University and Rice, and New Central and Rice serving future redevelopment at former Sears (by Transportation Building where Central used to connect to Rice). Please see attached 60% design.

For Project Timeline and Updated Construction Start Date, see [Project Webpage](#)

Currently, the project is scheduled to move through final design stages, bidding and then construction by 2028.

Next Steps

- 1) **Approval of Board Requested of Preliminary (60%) Design** - Board action on the 60% design is requested on June 4, 2026, see suggested language below*. Approval signals ability to proceed with development of the design and is not a final approval of the design.
- 2) **Issue Resolution** - Additional direct feedback will be invited from owners, businesses, residents, workers, Legislators, Agency partners, and other relevant community members on technical issues the length of the corridor. Board members are invited to identify issues with the 60% design at the board meeting or 'off-line' by contacting CAAPB staff.
- 3) **90% Design Release** - A 90% design will be developed from the input and published for community review later in 2026. The board and public will be notified of the release.
- 4) **Final Approval** - To ensure continued alignment with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, CAAPB's Statutory approval requirements in MN Statute 15B, and specific Rules in MN Rules 2400, the final design will be brought back before the Board during or after design development for approval prior to development of final construction documents.

* Suggested Language for Board Action

"The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) reviewed the information provided in June 4, 2026 board meeting memo provided by CAAPB staff that includes the summary of engagement process to date, a summary of design elements represented in the 60% plan drawings provided by project consultant Bolton & Menk. The Board approves the direction of the 60% design and supports further development of the design."

Attachments

Attachment A: Consultant Team Summary of Project Design (two-page PDF Flyer)

Attachment B: 60% Design Layout of Entire Corridor (one large PDF drawing)

Attachment C: CAAPB Staff Evaluation of 60% Design (no change, originally published October board meeting)