

April 9, 2026

TO: Carleton Neighbors

FR: Eric Runestad, Vice President and Treasurer
Linda Weingarten, AVP for Facilities and Capital Planning

RE: Background on College Street Closure, Bus Stop Location Evaluation

We write to follow up on the meeting held with a group of neighbors on Friday, April 3, with regard to the closure of College Street and the relocation of the campus bus stop. We hope that this memo will help address some questions that were raised about the project's history, and the key points of consideration involved in the decision to seek relocation of the campus bus stop to the proposed site rather than alternative locations.

[The 2020 Carleton Campus Circulation Plan](#) evaluated the campus circulation as a whole, and identified College Street north of First Street as a problem area. It recommended eliminating traffic on College Street north of First Street by reconfiguring the turnaround and relocating the transit station.

The Transportation Study commissioned from Walker Consultants in 2022 made recommendations for the location of new bus stop stations, building on the Circulation Plan. The proposed alternate locations were at First/Maple and First/College Street. The rationale for these locations was to bring the stops closer to the student residence halls to encourage student use of public transportation.

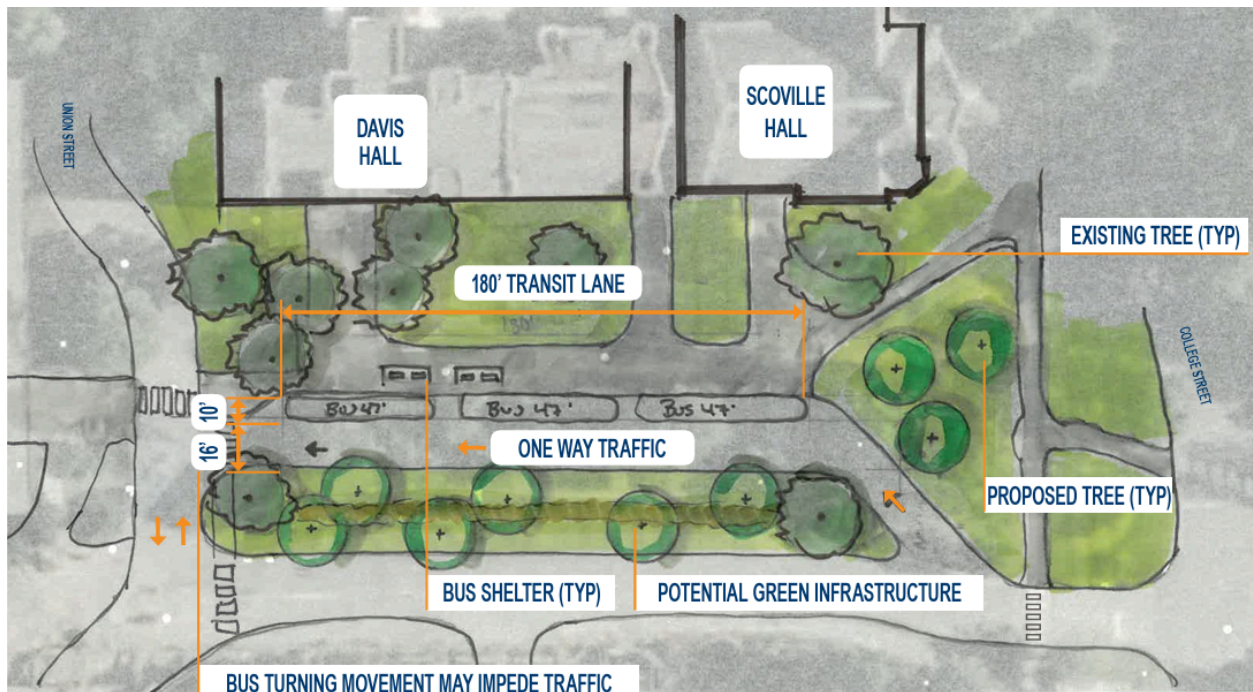
When the Class of 1974 Center (also known as the Student Health and Counseling Center) was being designed in 2022-2023, ideas from these studies were brought forward to the design team and Planning Committee working on that project. Our initial hope was that the campus bus stop could be incorporated into the planning for the Class of 1974 Center. In April of 2023, this concept was discussed at the [Campus Design Advisory Committee](#) meeting, where a conceptual rendering was presented. The Committee recommended against this location. The rationale for this included concerns that the Class of 1974 Center was not compatible as a student waiting area, as it conflicted with the generally private nature of Student Health and Counseling and Title IX services. In addition, proximity to services such as restrooms, vending, etc., was not ideal, and the location was not sufficiently centralized. Following the April 2023 Campus Design Advisory Committee meeting, and with consultation from the Student Health and Counseling Center Planning Committee and President's Cabinet, the plan for including the bus stop in the design work for the Class of 1974 Center was abandoned. The conclusion was to reject this location, and at the time, no suitable alternative was identified.

In October of 2025, the College contracted ISG consultants to evaluate additional potential locations for the bus stop, which are noted in the Planning Commission materials. The goals of the project to close College Street and relocate the bus stop are to:

- Reduce vehicular traffic and pedestrian conflicts
- Enhance the heart of campus through a pedestrian-friendly corridor
- Provide a central, alternative location for transportation pickups
- Maintain required emergency vehicle access
- Minimize impacts on parking
- Repair damage to the existing roadway

ISG developed schematic plans that took into account the existing infrastructure, our goals for the project, and current bus stop design best practices. Locations studied are on page 27 of the Planning Commission materials.

Location T3 (on 1st Street, rendered below) was reviewed by the Campus Design Advisory Committee in October of 2025, and President’s Cabinet in January of 2026, and was rejected due to the impact on the green spaces south of Davis and Scoville Halls, as well as the pedestrian and vehicle conflicts that would remain at the intersection with Union Street.



More context about the challenges and limitations of locating the bus stop on the block bounded by First, Second, Union and College Streets may be useful. As noted in the testimony provided during the public hearing at the Planning Commission, we have studied this area extensively over the last few years.

It is important to note that the final site design for the Class of 1974 Center makes locating the bus stop in proximity to that building extremely challenging. 1st Street has been narrowed significantly and is now designed to encourage service vehicles to use the Burton Service Drive

(Union Street north of 1st) rather than continuing east on 1st. The project also included the installation of significant stormwater infrastructure around the Class of 1974 Center between the north side of the building and 1st Street. In addition, grading presents a significant challenge for accessibility, as noted by the unusual configuration of the accessible sidewalk north of the building. Taken together, these features present significant challenges to locating the bus stop in that corner of the block. An evaluation of the potential for a bus stop elsewhere in the block reveals significant conflicts with our stated goals for the project, notably:

- Locating the bus stop within the right of way on any of these streets would not be in line with industry best practice. It would also require almost all student users to cross First Street and/or College Street to access it, and this would not sufficiently reduce vehicular and pedestrian conflicts.
- Developing the necessary staging and waiting areas with accessible features would repurpose a great deal of the space within that block. Parking would be significantly impacted, and there would be material disruption to this area, a key entry corridor for Admissions where the College places a high priority on convenient, proximate visitor parking.
- This location is not well centralized with respect to where students live on campus.

Neighbors have asked about other locations, including east of Highway 19 and at the Rec Center. The grading east of Highway 19 would present significant accessibility challenges, and a bus stop there would be inconvenient for almost all students. That area is already rife with pedestrian-vehicle conflicts related to Laird Stadium, West Gym, and Facilities, and adding more foot or vehicle traffic there runs counter to our goal of reducing such conflicts. That location would also require the State of Minnesota to allow changes to the public right of way to accommodate this project, an effort that, based on our experience, would not be successful. The Rec Center location would be convenient for only a small percentage of our students and would also require significant retooling of Hiawathaland Transit routes. This would likely result in the elimination of stops elsewhere in the community in order to maintain the current schedule.

Locating the bus stop in lot C2 (T1) meets all of the goals that were identified for the project.

- By locating the bus stop out of the right of way, pedestrian-vehicle conflicts would be nearly eliminated at this location, as most students will not have to cross any streets to get to the stop. Almost every rider has to cross a street to access the current bus stop. This is an important point often lost in the discussions surrounding this project. By closing College Street, we will be eliminating thousands of weekly vehicle-pedestrian conflicts for students crossing and or walking in on College Street north of 1st. Those conflicts are not pushed into the neighborhood, they simply disappear. This is not to say we remove all pedestrian/vehicle conflicts, but by removing thousands of them, we are significantly improving safety in support of the goals of the project.
- The new location provides shelter, seating, appropriate lighting, and maintains unobstructed, accessible paths. The waiting area design would comply with ADA standards, including proper curb heights for boarding, minimum landing pads, and

smooth, direct pathways.

- Vending machines, restrooms and severe weather shelter can be accessed in Anderson Hall or other nearby buildings.
- This site affords sufficient room for staging as needed, and is centralized such that over 80% of our students would be living within a five-minute walk of the site.

The information provided as part of the CUP process focused on the campus, but we did consider the potential impact on the neighborhood. The current bus route has not generated complaints, and we did not expect a slightly altered route to be disruptive. Clearly, we underestimated the concerns that could be generated by the prospect of such a change.

Other follow-up items that came up in our recent meeting:

- Trash/Waste: Currently, on the east side of Lot C2 near James Hall, there is a waste collection and pick up site, which is not currently screened. The existing waste collection totes will be relocated to the new enclosure on the west side of C2. No changes to waste collection, service routes, or frequency are anticipated.
- Parking: parking lots already exist at Nevada/First Street. This project will add 13 parking spaces to lot C2 (83 to 96, or a 16% increase), including two ADA-compliant stalls. The additional spaces will be located north of the existing parking lot, away from the College's property line. No destinations near this lot generate high parking turnover, and general parking patterns should not change as a result of this project.

Finally, it is important to note that this proposed relocation does not introduce permanent structures. We view this as an adaptable solution that can be adjusted over time. We value the College's close connection to the surrounding neighborhood and look forward to continuing to work with the City and our neighbors to address ongoing concerns.