



Committee of the Whole: August 18, 2021



Brooklyn Park | Crystal | Robbinsdale | Golden Valley | Minneapolis



Today's Topics

- Project Update
- 2021 Engagement Overview and Takeaways
- Anti-Displacement Work Update
- Development of Route Modification Alternatives
- Route/Station Modification Selection Process
- Discussion and Next Steps

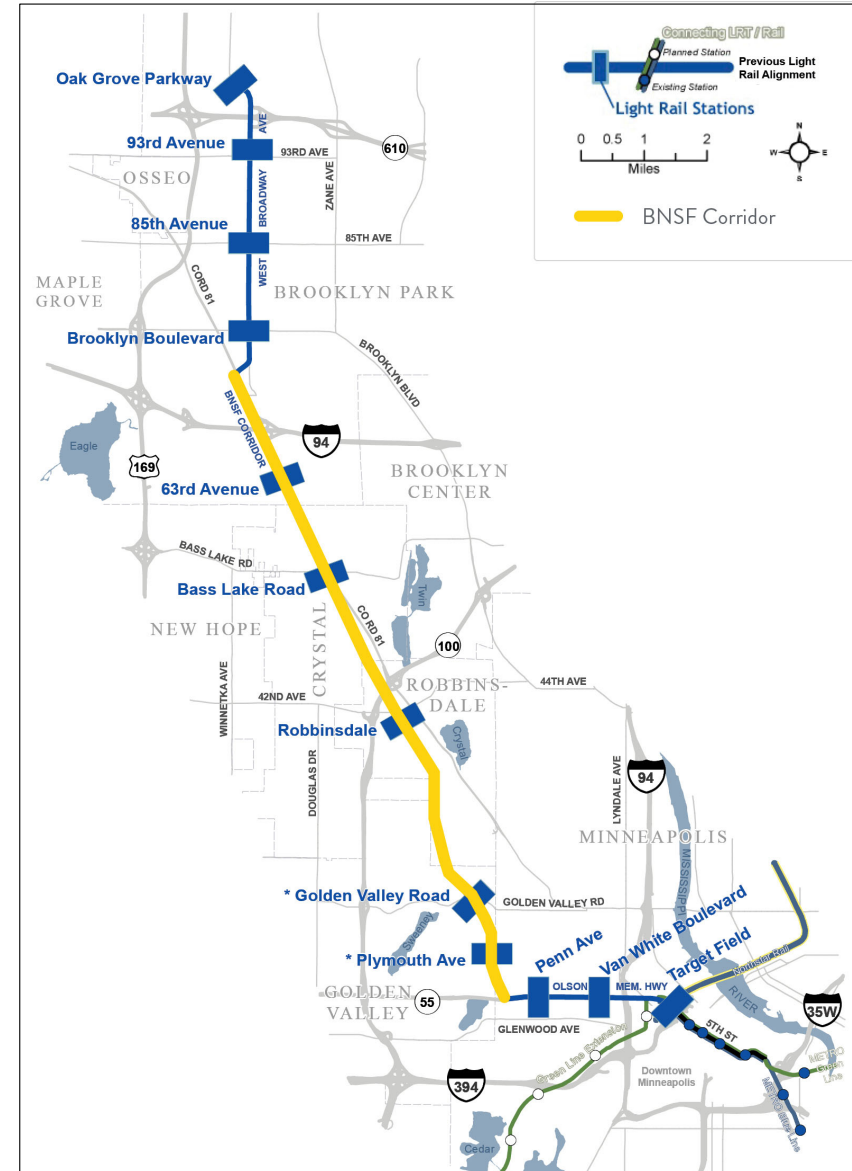


Project Update



Project Transition

- August 2020: After a multi-year effort to negotiate with BNSF that included many levels of government and offers including buying the corridor, it was time to move the project forward



Project Update: BLRT Milestones

- Aug 3, 2020: Joint Met Council and Hennepin County statement on new direction for the Blue Line Extension
- Sept 2020 – Jan 2021: Reconvened advisory committees, contracted with community organizations for Phase I community engagement
- March 2021: Released initial LRT route modifications, Community Engagement Cohort and project staff begin Phase 2 community engagement
- July 2021: Released initial station and LRT alignment visualizations, community open-houses, released anti-displacement RFP
- August 2021: Station/alignment community engagement

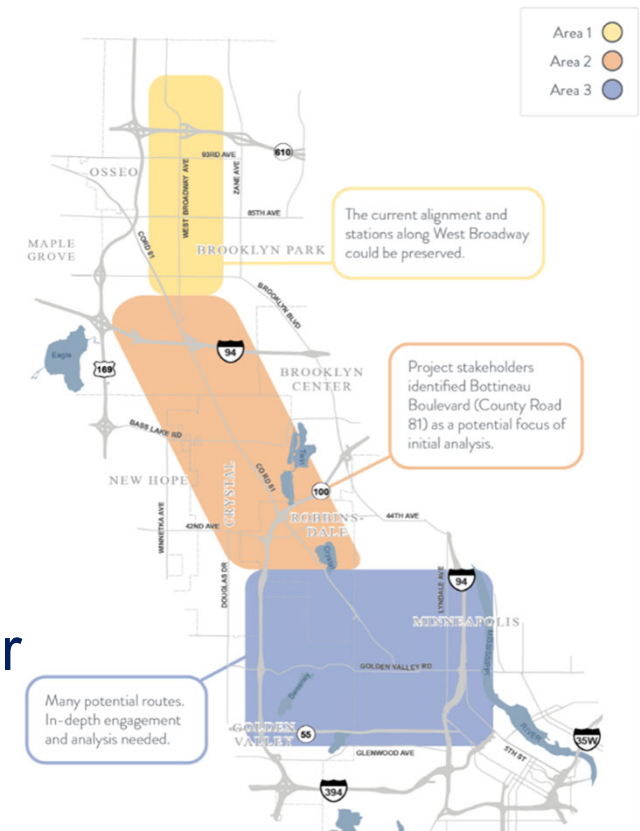


2021 Community Engagement Overview and Takeaways



Community Engagement Cohort Contractors

- 14 community organizations that are trusted community partners with expertise on cultures and geographies
 - Area 1: Focus of 4 community organizations
 - Area 2: Focus of 2 community organizations
 - Area 3: Focus of 13 community organizations
- Four groups focused on communications
- Collaborative and coordinated across the corridor
- 10-month contracts



Community Engagement Cohort

Contact	Organization	Areas
Ange Hwang	Asian Media Access Inc	Area 1, 2, 3
Ekta Prakash	CAPI USA	Area 1, 3
Tezzaree El-Amin Champion	Encouraging Leaders	Area 3
Nichole Buehler	Harrison Neighborhood Association	Area 3
Kristin Murray	Juxtaposition Arts	Area 3
Sunny Chanthanouvang	Lao Assistance Center of MN	Area 1, 3
Jackson George	Liberian Business Association	Area 1, 2
Warren McLean	Northside Economic Opportunity Network	Area 2, 3
Martine Smaller	Northside Residents Redevelopment Council	Area 3
Felicia Perry	West Broadway Business Coalition	Area 3
Cathy Spann	Jordan Area Community Council	Area 3
Danecha Goins	Cleveland Neighborhood Association	Area 3
Diana Hawkins	Hawthorne Neighborhood Council	Area 3
Markella Smith	McKinley Community Neighborhood Association	Area 3



2021 Engagement Events/Activities

- Advisory Committee meetings
- 80 community meeting including three public townhall meetings: ~ 2,000 participants
- Open houses (5 in-person, 4 virtual): ~400 participants
- Community and business stakeholder check-ins
- Interactive map: ~500 comments
- Survey: 2,000+ responses
- General comments via online form/email
- 14 engagement contracts with community and cultural groups



Top Picture: TALK OUT LAO'D Facebook Live
Bottom Picture: Liberian Business Association Event



Takeaways: Feedback on Project Goals

- Equitable approach, focus on anti-displacement early
- Route through high-density, walkable, accessible, and highly visible areas
- Need for increased safety and cleanliness on transit
- Minimize disruption of existing traffic and neighboring communities
- Connect people to jobs, education, healthcare facilities, groceries and other destinations



Minneapolis Fresh Market

Takeaways: Opportunities

- Improve access to/serve communities of color, lower-income communities, and those with limited mobility or limited access to a vehicle/other transportation options
- Support local business and economic development in communities along the line
- Improve transit experience
- Addresses climate-change goals



Hennepin County Commissioner Robbinsdale Driveway Talks

Takeaways: Concerns

- Gentrification and displacement were the top concern, including housing affordability and small business leasing affordability
- Avoid negative impacts/disruptions to existing community assets
- Ensure stations are easy and safe to access

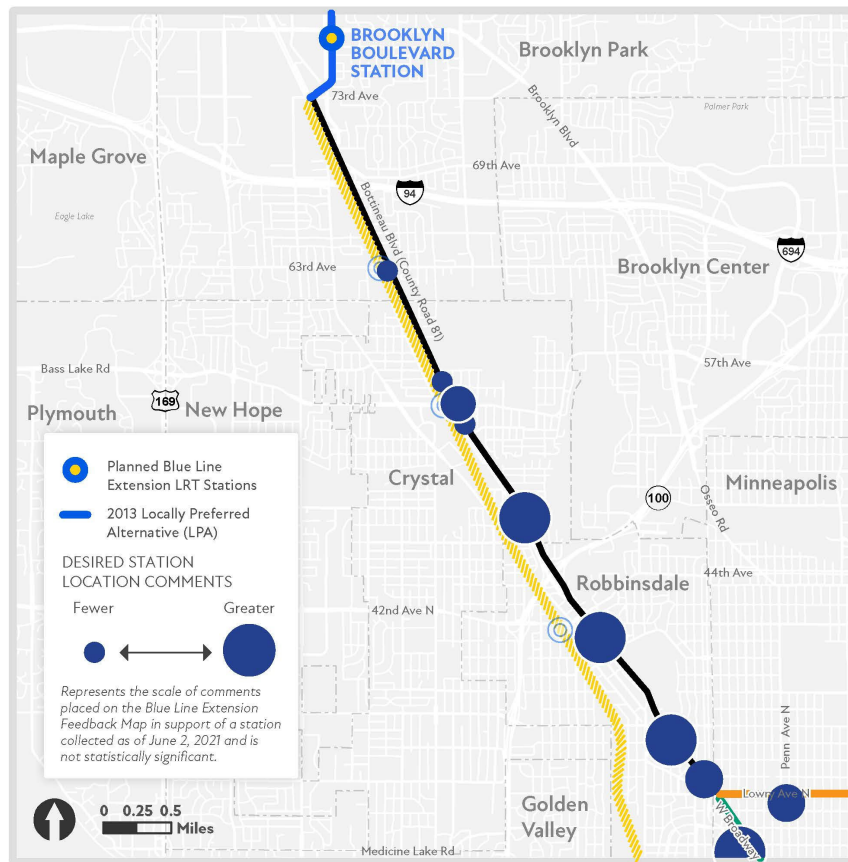


Top Picture: Met Council Member Chamblis Brooklyn Park Listening Session

Bottom Picture: NEON/W. Broadway Business & Area Coalition Discussion in Minneapolis



Public Comments on Station Locations



Anti-Displacement Work Update



Anti-Displacement Work Update

- In process of forming an Anti-Displacement Working Group
 - Include agencies and community partners
 - Recommend policy/programs to positively impact communities and minimize displacement
- July 2: RFP release to contract with an individual or group to convene, facilitate, and manage the work of the Anti-Displacement Working Group
- July 22: Hennepin County Commissioner Fernando and Met Council Chair Zelle discussed local and national anti-displacement activities with FTA Administrator Fernandez
- July 28: Contractor selected by review committee that included representatives of Hennepin County, Met Council, City of Minneapolis, Business and Community of Advisory Committees
- September: Introduce Contractor to BLRT Advisory Committees



Development of Route Modification Alternatives



Route Refinements

- Potential routes are based on:
 - Adopted Project Principles
 - Conceptual review of LRT right of way and operational needs
 - Applicable project work
 - Community and stakeholder input



Visualization: Existing Conditions on W. Broadway



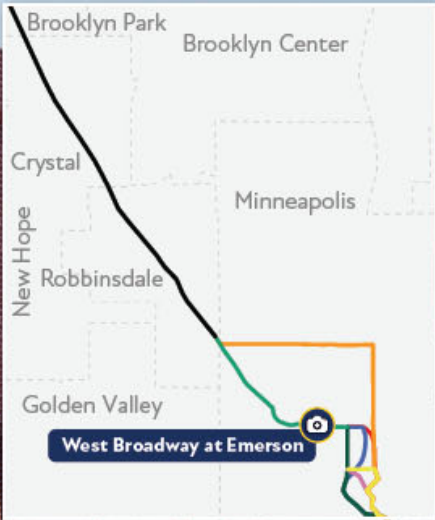
Visualization: Center Running LRT



Visualization: Side Running LRT



Visualization: Elevated



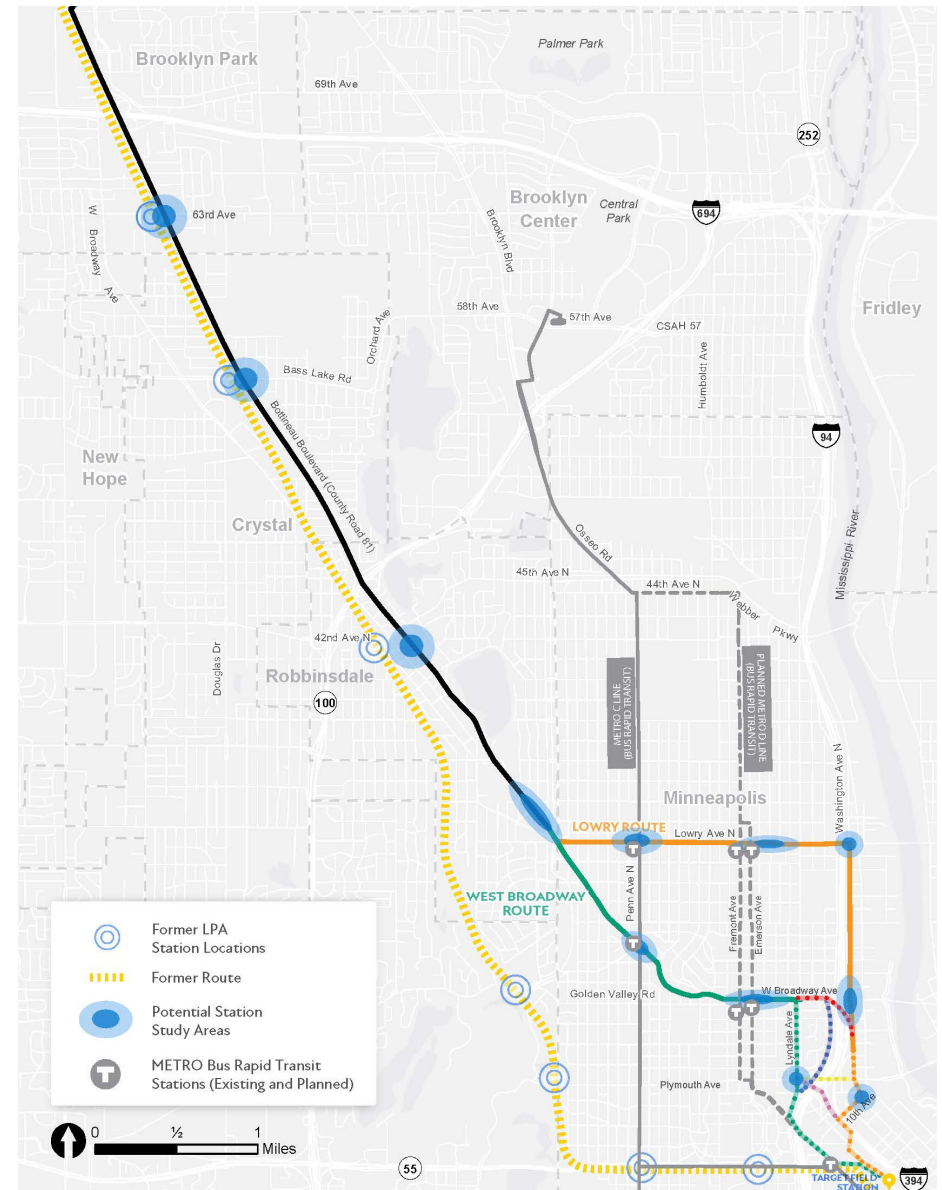
**ELEVATED (AERIAL)
LIGHT RAIL**



Potential Station Study Areas

Based on:

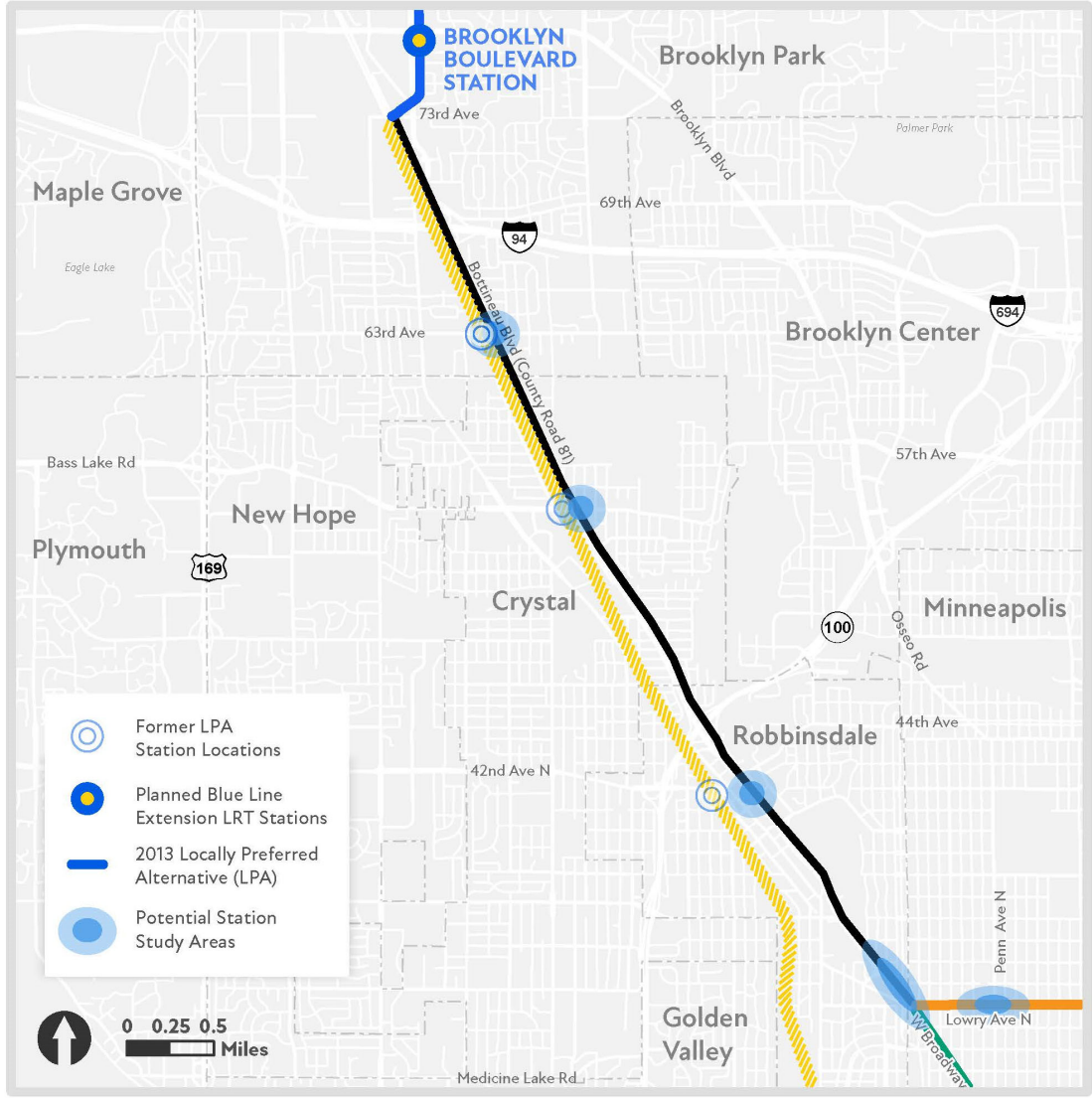
- Project principles, project goals
- Previously planned stations
- Stakeholder and community input
- Key destinations
- Transit connections
- ½ to 1 mile spacing
- Engineering requirements



Brooklyn Park Planned Stations



Proposed Station Study Areas Crystal & Robbinsdale



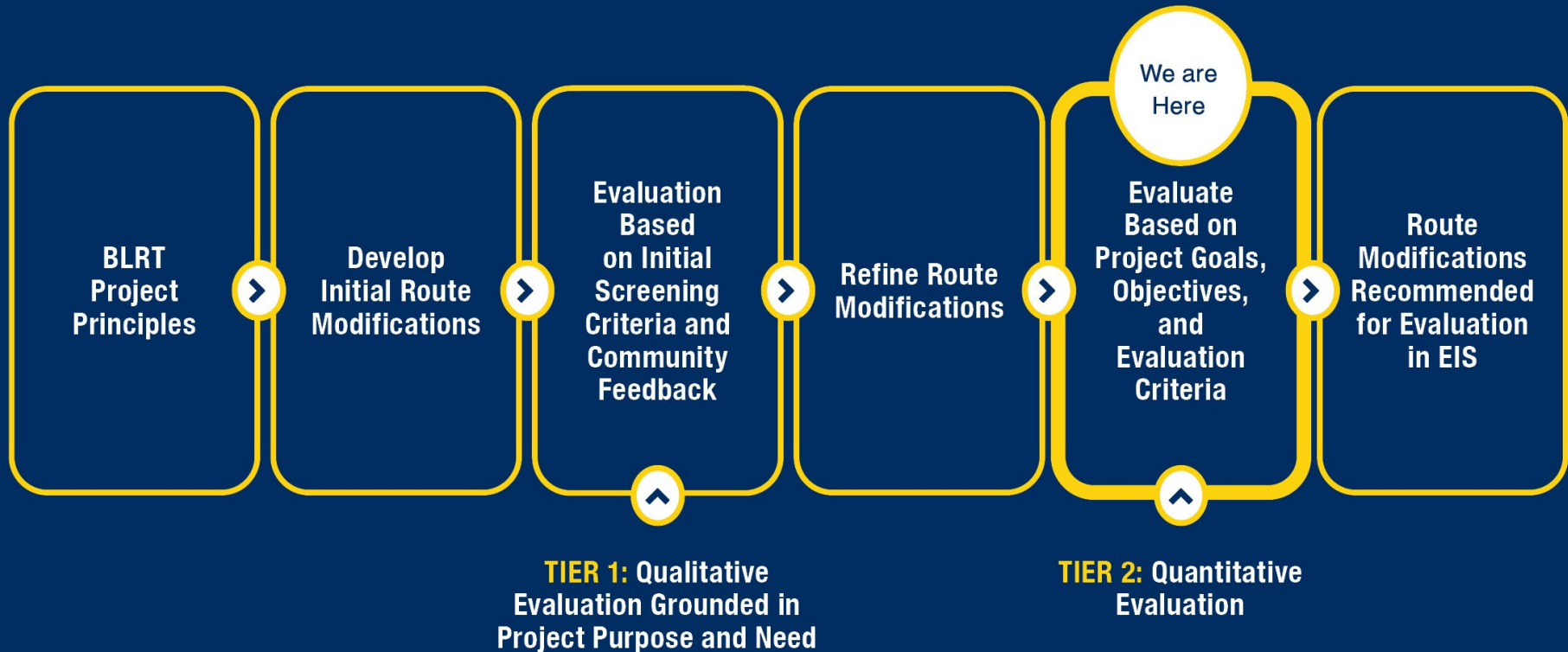
Proposed Station Study Areas Minneapolis



Route/Station Modification Selection Process



Approach to Evaluation




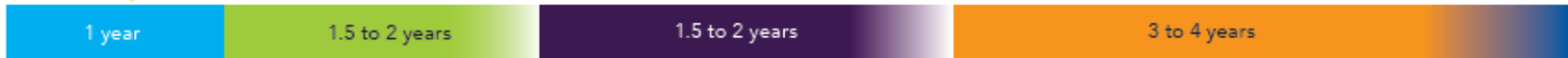
Route Modification Recommendation Report

- Report includes:
 - Purpose of report, history of BLRT, process overview
 - Summary of public engagement in 2020 and 2021
 - Route identification and evaluation process:
 - Initial potential candidate routes
 - Criteria used to make decisions
 - Assessment of routes based on application of evaluating criteria and Project Principles
 - Route recommendation(s) in final draft



Project Development Schedule/Next Steps

We're here 



1 year
Identify community supported route

Blue Line Extension Community Supported Route:

- Best meets the Project Principles and Goals
- Grounded in community feedback through collaboration with stakeholders
- Supported by Project corridor communities and decision-makers

1.5 to 2 years
Environmental review
Document benefits and impacts of the project

Municipal Consent

Seek city support of the LRT design

1.5 to 2 years
Engineering
Develop construction ready design plans

3 to 4 years
Construction and Full Funding Grant Agreement
Federal funding

Goal— Line opens in 2028

Light Rail Transit projects are complex and unforeseen challenges arise. Schedules and timelines are subject to change.



Stay Connected!

- Project website: BlueLineExt.org
 - Project news, maps, surveys, what we're hearing
 - Committee meeting materials: agenda, handouts, presentations, meeting minutes
 - Sign-up for GovDelivery project updates
 - Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation
- Follow us:
 - Twitter: [@BlueLineExt](https://twitter.com/BlueLineExt)
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