



Committee of the Whole: May 4, 2022



Brooklyn Park | Crystal | Robbinsdale | Minneapolis



Today's Topics

- Project Overview
- Anti-Displacement Work Group
- Route Recommendation
- Next Steps
- Discussion



Welcome Commissioner Fernando and Lunde



Project Overview

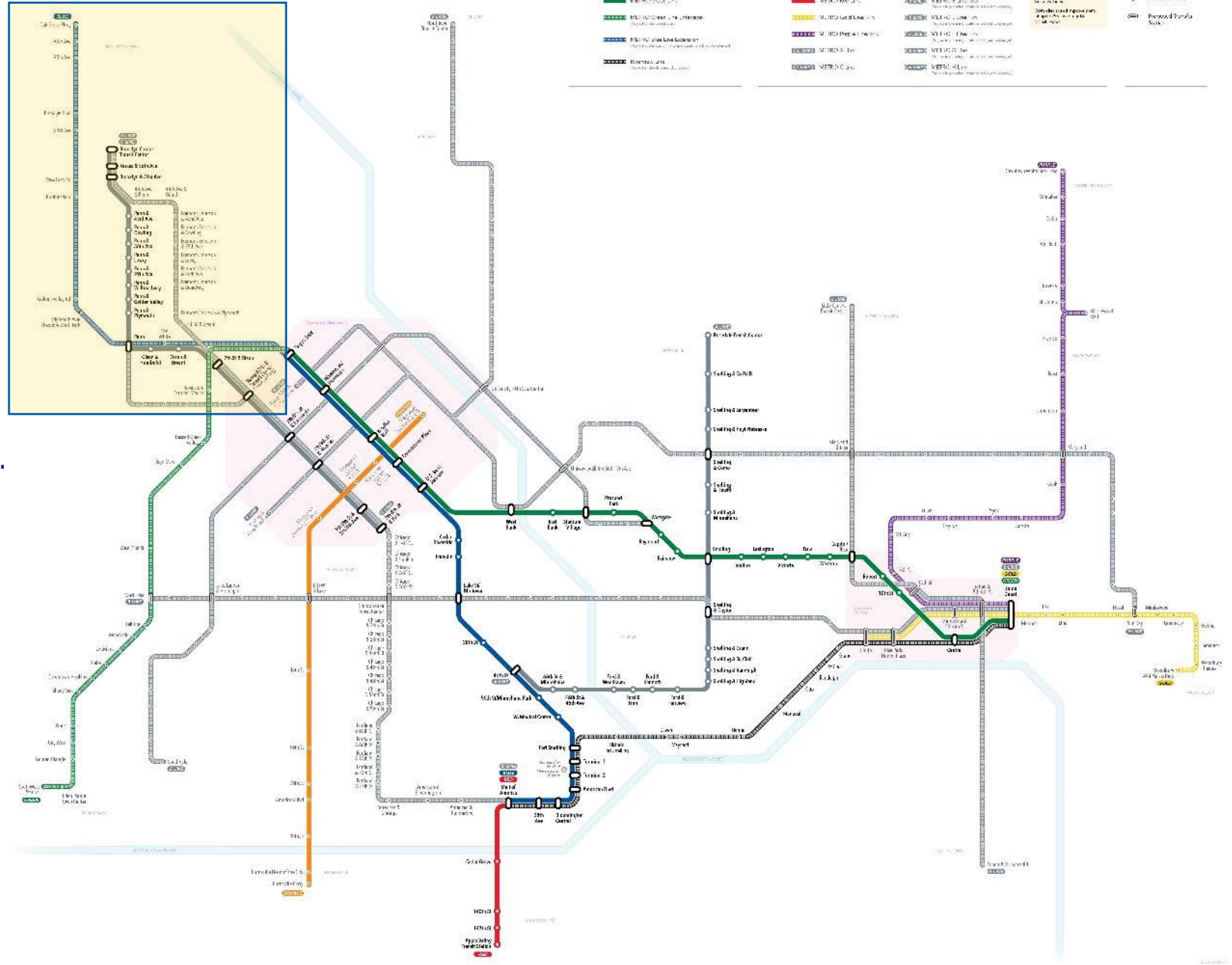


Blue Line Extension

- Connecting communities to fast, frequent, reliable transportation
- Will provide single seat trips to downtown Minneapolis, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and Mall of America

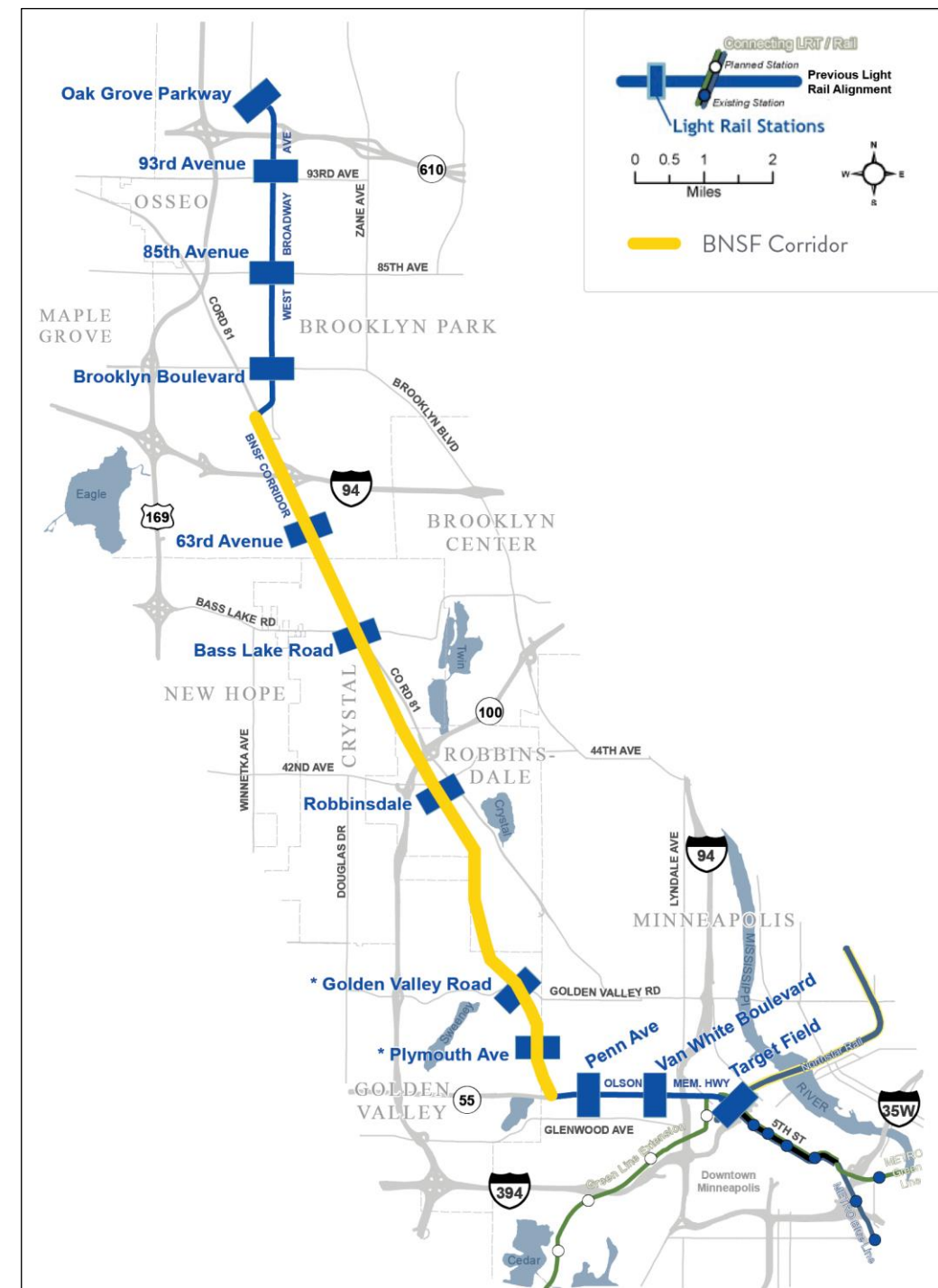


Future Rapid Transit Network



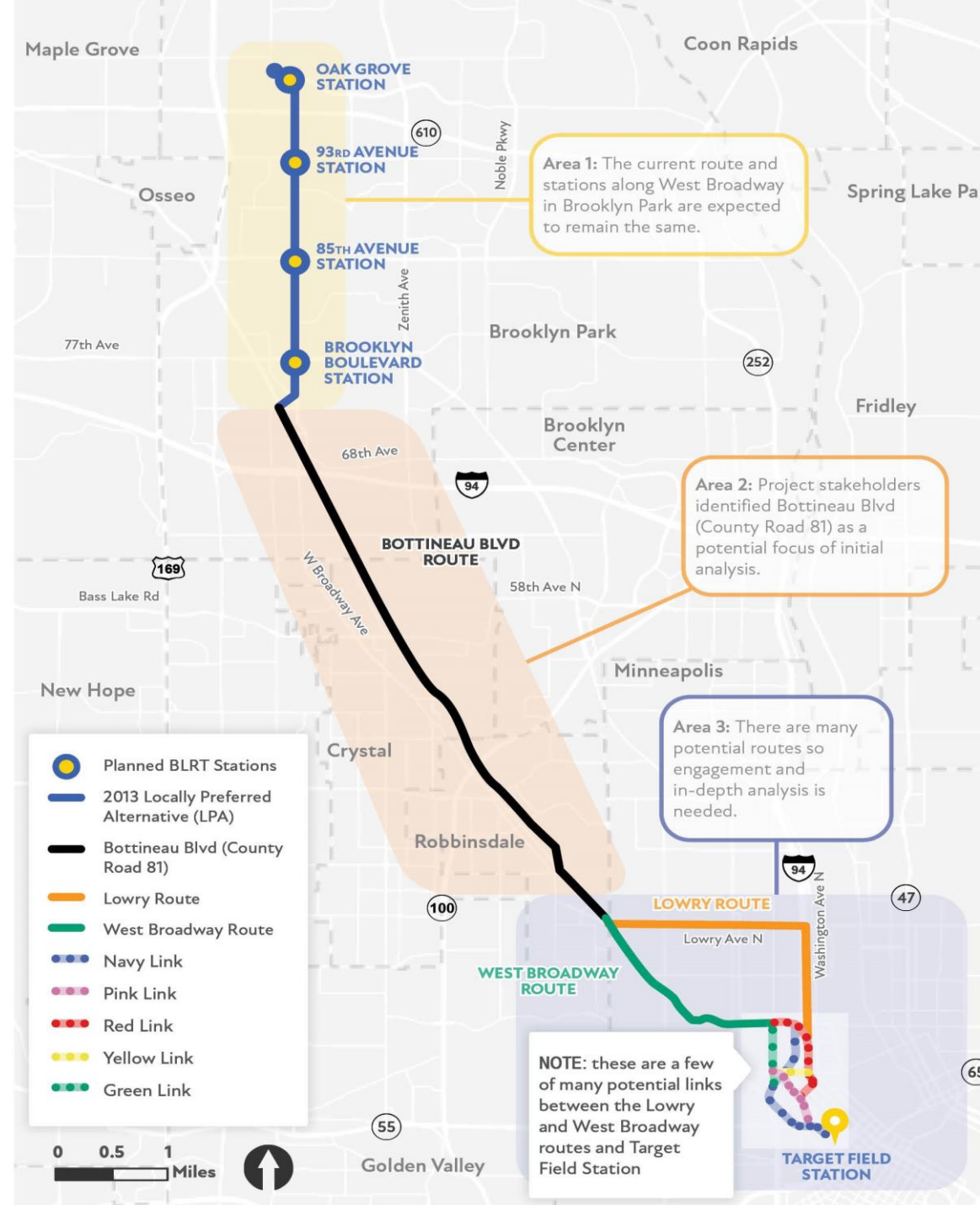
Project Transition

- 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



Route Options Explored

- **Brooklyn Park** – former route and stations along West Broadway remain the same
- **Brooklyn Park, Crystal and Robbinsdale** – proposed route along Bottineau Blvd (County Road 81) closes parallels the original route for most of this area
- **Minneapolis** – two route options evaluated: one along Lowry/ Washington and one along West Broadway Avenue



2020-2022 Milestones

ONGOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

We're here 

AUGUST
2020

Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council issued a joint statement on advancing the project without using 8 miles of railroad right-of-way

MARCH
2021

Release of the Initial Route Evaluation Report that identified potential route options

JULY
2021

Release of potential station study areas and visualizations of light rail

NOVEMBER
2021

Release of preliminary design options on how LRT could fit into each community

DECEMBER
2021

Release of Draft Route Modification Report

SPRING
2022

Release of Route Modification Report

SUMMER
2022

Route recommendation approval by Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council; Environmental review phase & advanced engineering begins



Rounds of Engagement

- **August 2020 to January 2021:** Input on project goals, concerns, opportunities, and thoughts on potential new routes
- **March to June 2021:** Input on new route options released as part of the Initial Route Modification Report
- **July to August 2021:** Input on the connections that light rail would make within communities and station locations within those areas
- **September to December 2021:** Input on updated design concepts and potential opportunities and impacts of light rail options
- **December 2021 to March 2022:** Input on the Draft Route Modification Report findings and answered questions on how comments were shaping the route recommendation.



Community Cohort

- To ensure voices from all backgrounds are involved in decisions, the project continues to work with a community engagement cohort
- Direct contracting with community and cultural organizations for outreach and/or communications support
 - Three rounds of cohort member: foundation setting, route investigation/ community interests, route selection

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COHORT	AREAS SERVED
Asian Media Access Inc ↻	Area 1, 2, 3
CAPI USA	Area 1, 3
Encouraging Leaders ↻	Area 3
Harrison Neighborhood Association	Area 3
Juxtaposition Arts	Area 3
Lao Center of MN ↻	Area 1, 3
Liberian Business Association ↻	Area 1, 2
Northside Economic Opportunity Network ↻	Area 2, 3
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council	Area 3
West Broadway Business Coalition	Area 3
Jordan Area Community Council	Area 3
Hawthorne Neighborhood Council	Area 3
Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza ⚡	Area 1, 2, 3

↻ Continuing cohort engagement in 2022

⚡ Began in February 2022



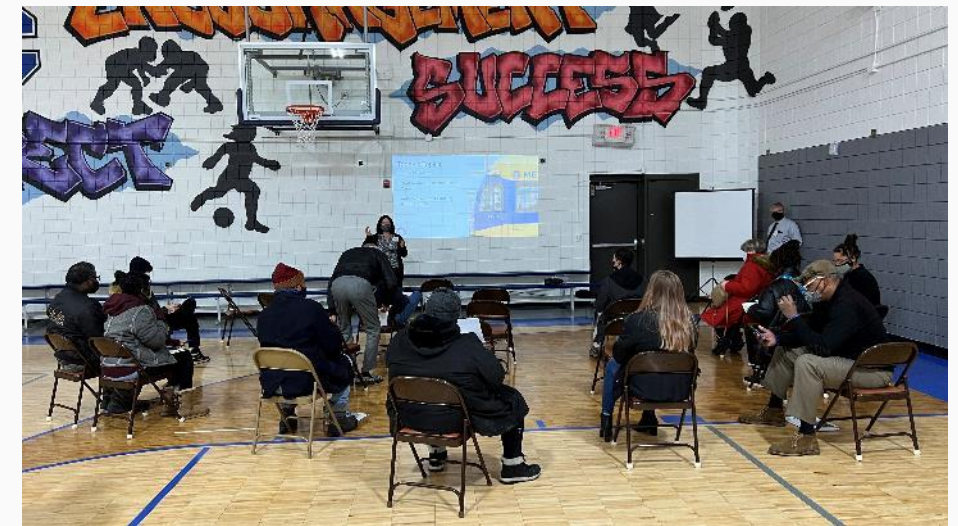
Advisory Committee Decision-Making Process



Engagement Metrics, August 2020-February 2022

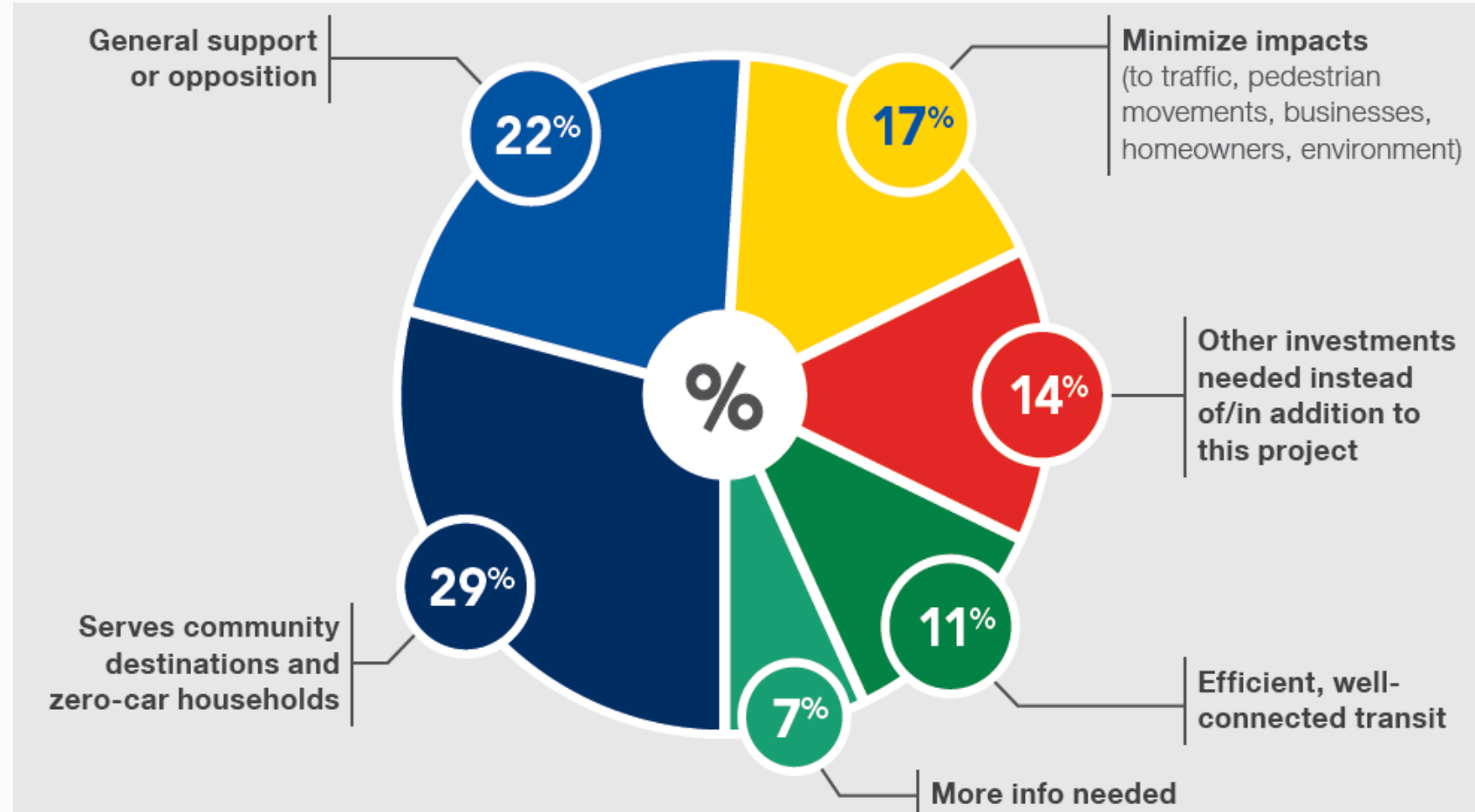
- **300** events resulting in nearly **11,000** points of contact with the public
 - Community event attendance, door-knocking, stakeholder 1-to-1, project hosted events, driveway talks, etc.
- **75,000** reach on social media and **1 million** + reach through paid ads on community and cultural media
- Approximately **4,000** survey responses
- **1,500** comments on the interactive map
- **217** comments from comment forms
- Corridor postcards mailed to **26,000** households/businesses
- Over **500** emails and phone calls
- Majority of activities with environmental justice communities

Community Meeting: January 2022



Comments on the Draft Report

- Comment Form: 132 responses
- Emailed Comments: 13
- Agency Comment Letters: 5 (Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Brooklyn Park, and Maple Grove)
- Interactive Map Comments: 296 (during the comment period)
- Open House Comments: 55 comments



Anti-Displacement Work Group



Building the Table

- Goal: Establish an Anti-Displacement Work Group to create implementable recommendations
- Build a team that has the support, expertise, and resources to deliver measurable outcomes
 - Convened and managed by a third-party facilitator
 - Meets on a regular basis through the duration of the project
 - Reports regularly to Blue Line Extension Advisory Committees and Community Works Steering Committee
 - Develops workplan

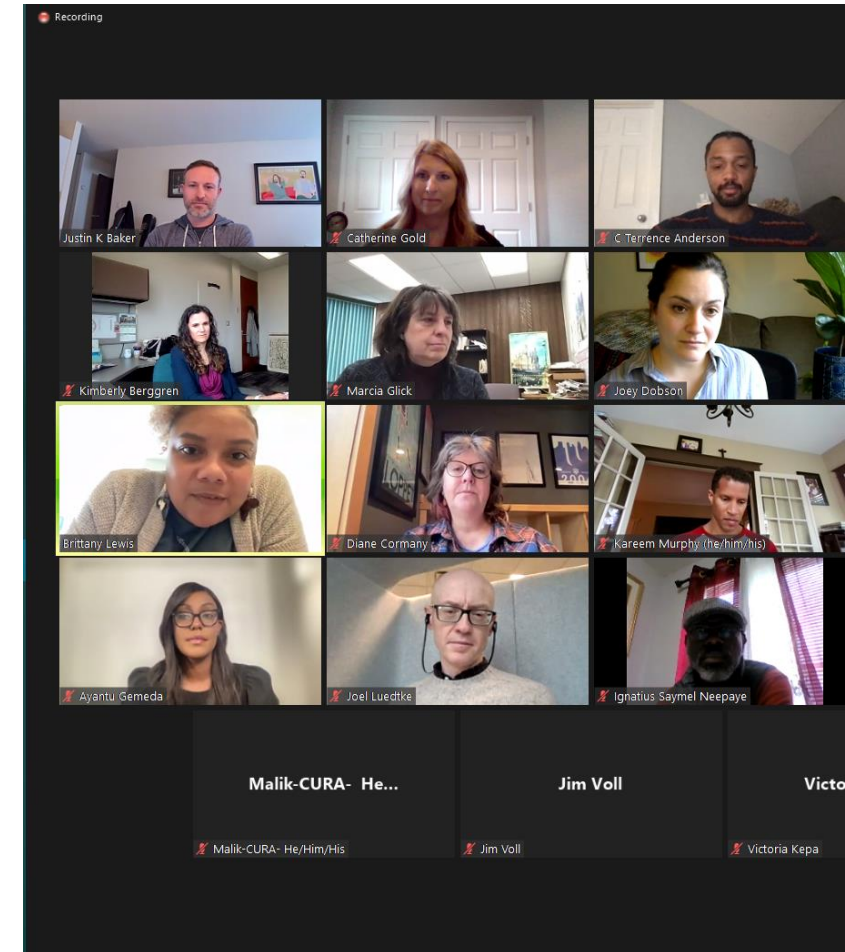


Community Feedback Influenced the RFP

- Clear priority for local experience
- Implementable strategies that address all phases of the project: planning, construction and operations
- Sense of urgency around the timeline & need to coordinate with route selection
- Case studies must be relevant and preferably local

Anti-Displacement Work Group

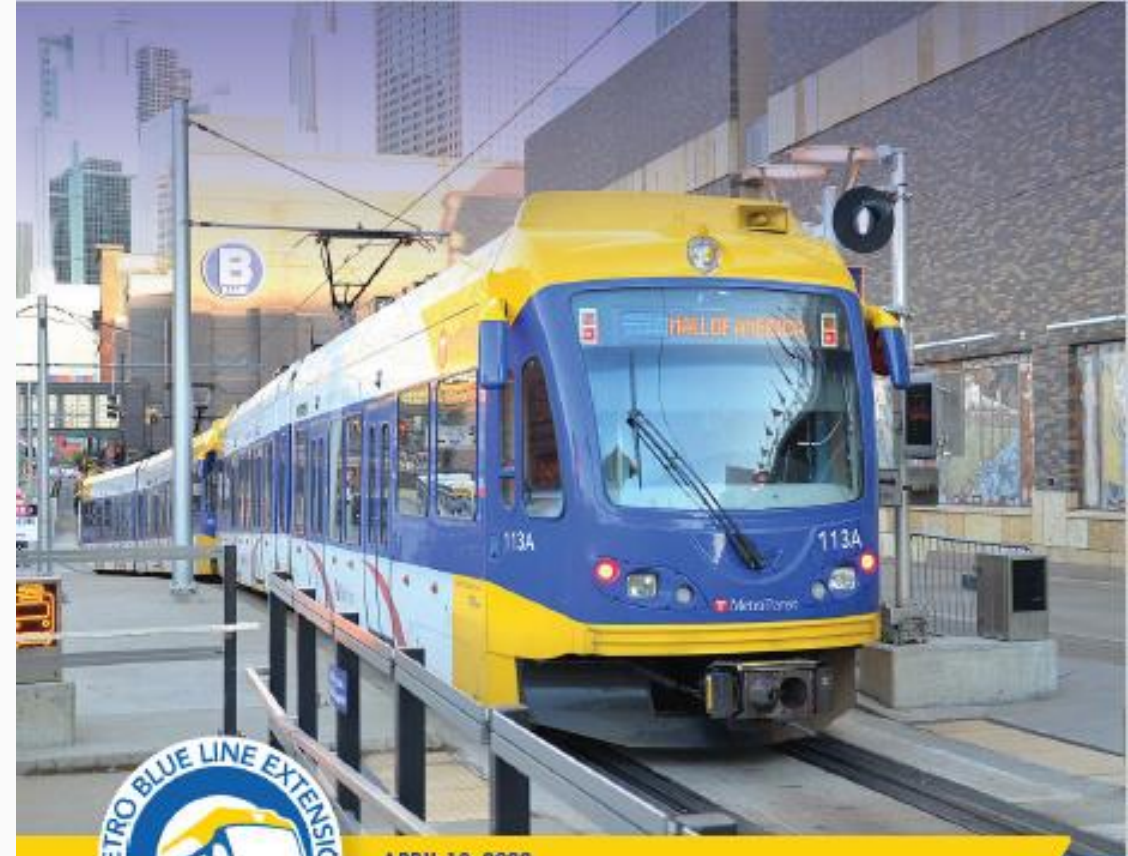
- Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the University of Minnesota is facilitating the Work Group and conducting research
- Work group consist of government, community members affiliated with organizations businesses, non-affiliated community members and philanthropic organization representatives
- General Principles of the Work Group:
 - Develop recommendations that can be practically implemented
 - Work through existing tensions between various interests
 - Support community to take a deep dive into displacement, while also respecting their lives and commitments
 - Develop structures around the group that allow the group to develop clarity on ideas while also bringing along implementers for the discussion



Anti-Displacement Work Group Timeline

- First Anti-Displacement Work Group meeting was held on March 10, 2022
- Future meeting topics include:
 - May 2022 (lessons from existing light rail projects)
 - September 2022 (housing and cultural displacement)
 - October 2022 (business displacement)
 - February 2023 (finalizing recommendations)
- Qualitative and quantitative research has begun
- Planning overall outreach and engagement on the project

Route Modification Report Overview



APRIL 18, 2022

METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION Route Modification Report



METRO
POLITICS



Route Recommendation

- The route recommendation is to extend the existing Blue Line from Target Field Station along West Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis to County Road 81 in Crystal and Robbinsdale, and along West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park.



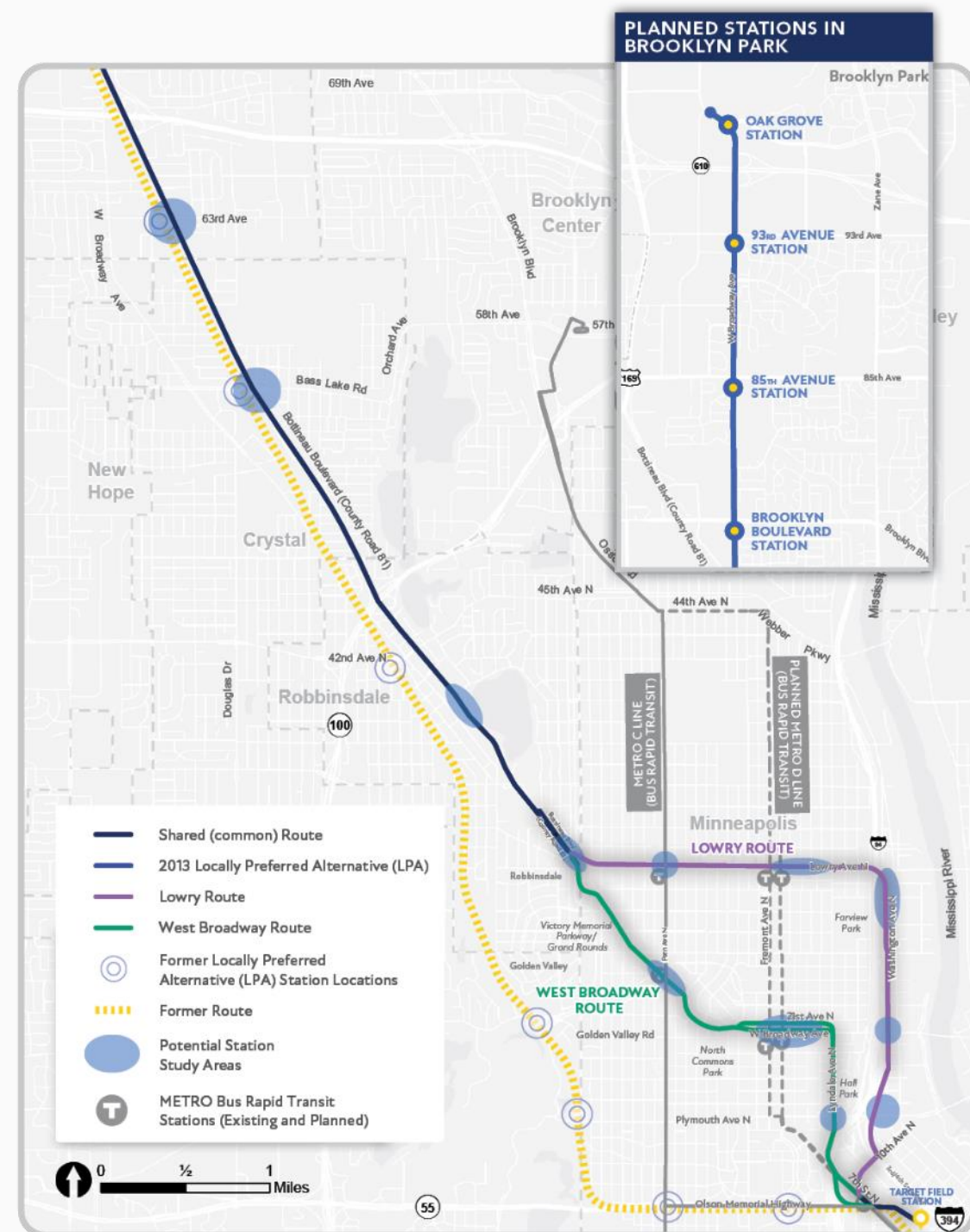
Route Comparison

- Much of the previous route maintained
- New opportunity to serve the cultural/economic heart of North Minneapolis



Purpose of the Route Modification Report

- Documents the overall process since the new route options were released in March 2021
- Evaluation incorporates public input from engagement efforts over the past year
- Provides an overview of technical work that informs the route modifications
- Evaluates each route against the Project Principles and Project Goals









Report Assessments

- Each route was reviewed for its ability to achieve the Project Principles and Project Goals and achieved an assessment of Excellent, Good or Poor
- **POOR:** did not meet project goals
- **GOOD:** meets project goals and provides benefits in serving the community
- **EXCELLENT:** route has unique characteristics and/or has the potential to deliverer exemplary positive benefits

Summary Matrix

ASSESSMENT OF ROUTE OPTIONS TO DEFINED GOALS

PROJECT GOAL	BOTTINEAU BOULEVARD (COUNTY ROAD 81) IN BROOKLYN PARK AND CRYSTAL	BOTTINEAU BOULEVARD (COUNTY ROAD 81) IN ROBBINSDALE	LOWRY ROUTE	WEST BROADWAY ROUTE
 Goal 1: Improve transit access and connections to jobs and regional destinations	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT
 Goal 2: Improve frequency and reliability of transit service to communities in the corridor	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD
 Goal 3: Provide transit improvements that maximize transit benefits, while being cost competitive and economically viable	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
 Goal 4: Support communities' development goals	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	EXCELLENT
 Goal 5: Promote healthy communities and sound environmental practices including efforts to address climate change	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
 Goal 6: Advance local and regional equity and work towards reducing regional racial disparities	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	EXCELLENT



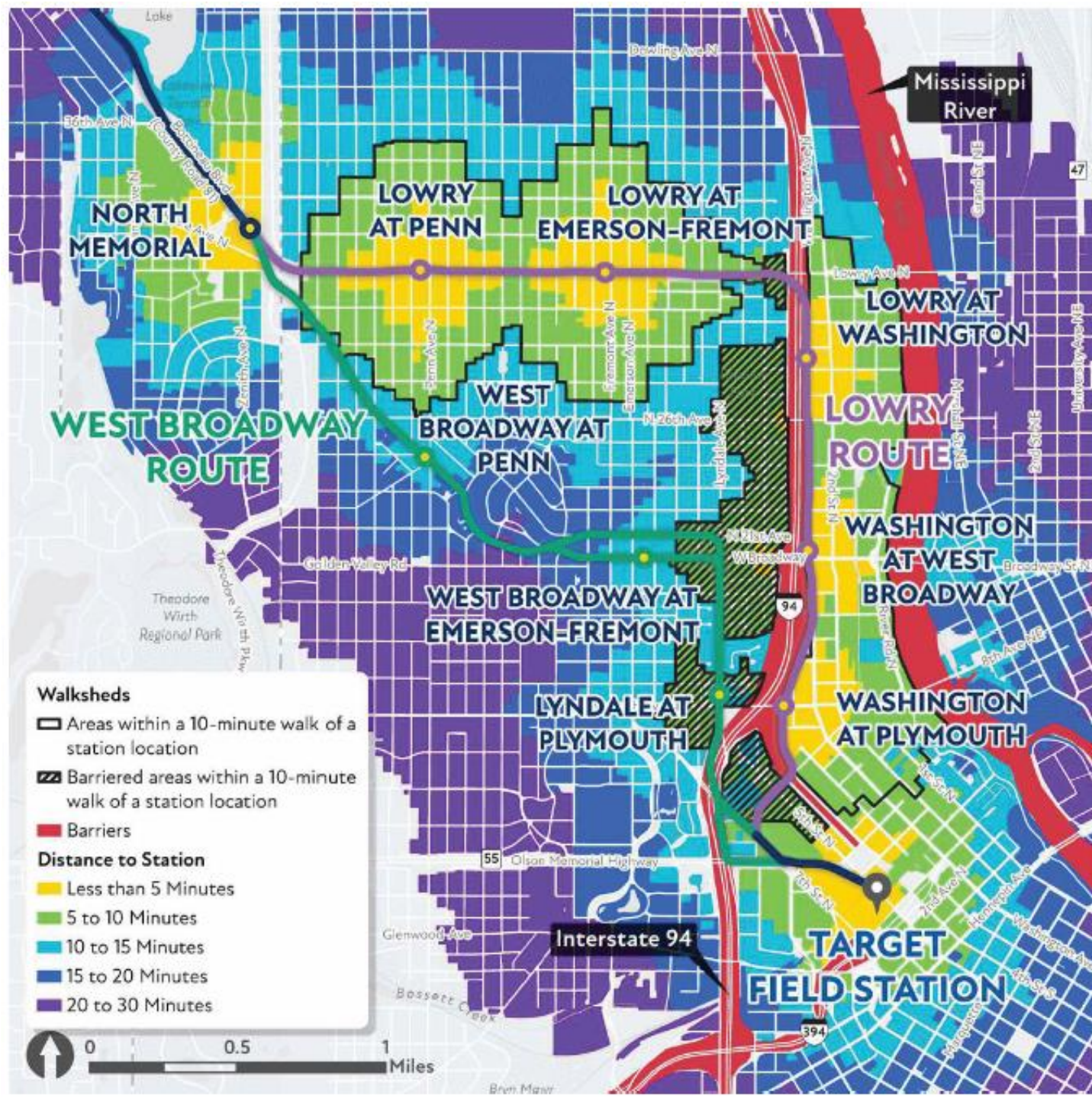
Goal 1: Improve transit access and connections to jobs and regional destinations.

What informs this goal:

- Overall ridership potential indicators and ability to expand and improve service to zero-vehicle households
- Reverse commute and off-peak transit opportunities
- Opportunity to expand and improve transit system linkages and multimodal transportation opportunities
- Maximize transit access to housing, employment, schools, community services, health care facilities, shopping, parks, activity centers and other destinations

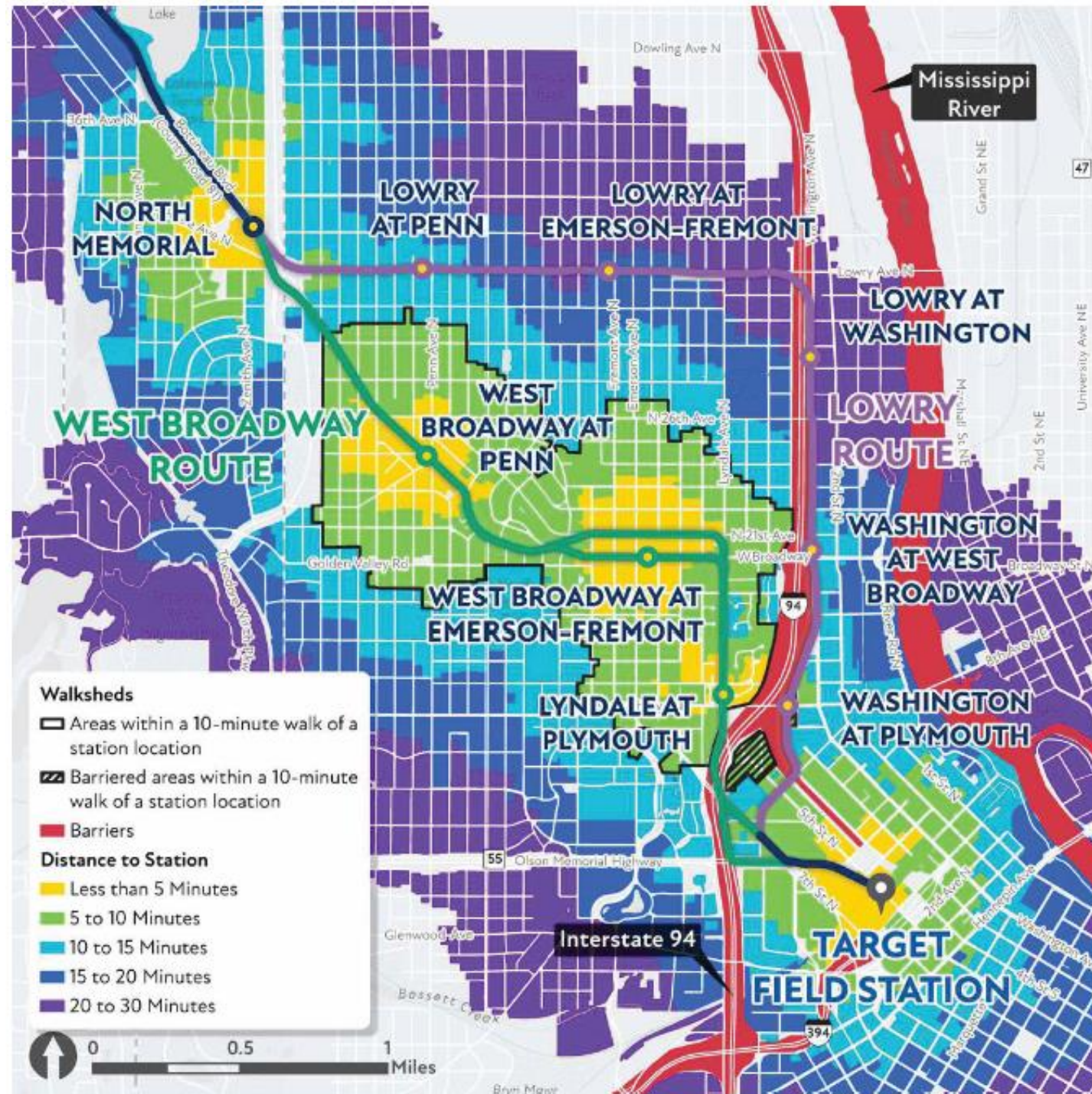
Walksheds and Barriers to Stations

- Lowry/Washington Route:
 - Walkshed areas west of I-94 are cut off and difficult to access station areas



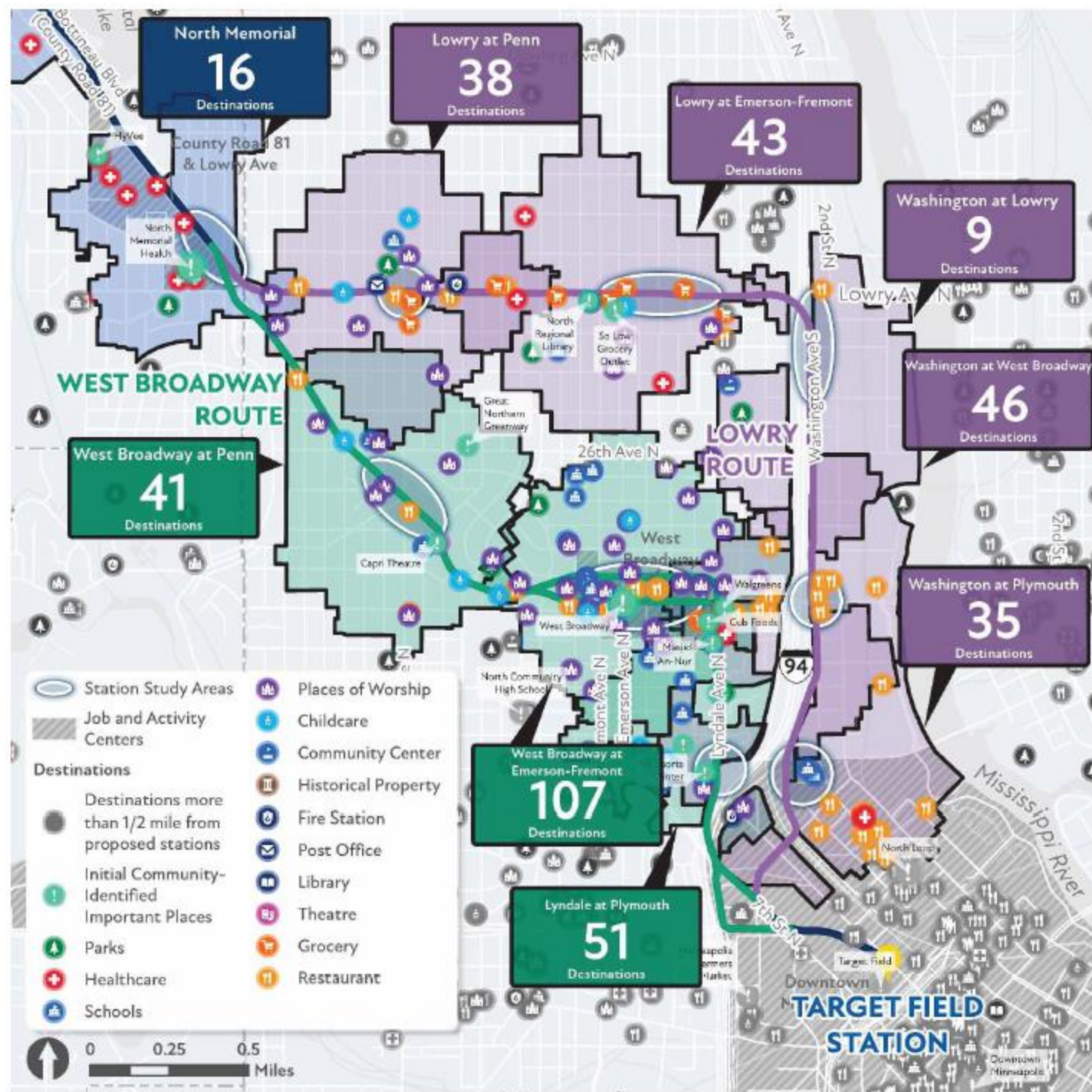
Walksheds and Barriers to Stations (continued)

- West Broadway Route:
 - Walksheds largely accessible, except for small portion of Lyndale at Plymouth walkshed



Regional Destinations

- West Broadway is a vibrant cultural/economic corridor with regional destinations and services (i.e., Capri Theater, Masjid An-Nur)





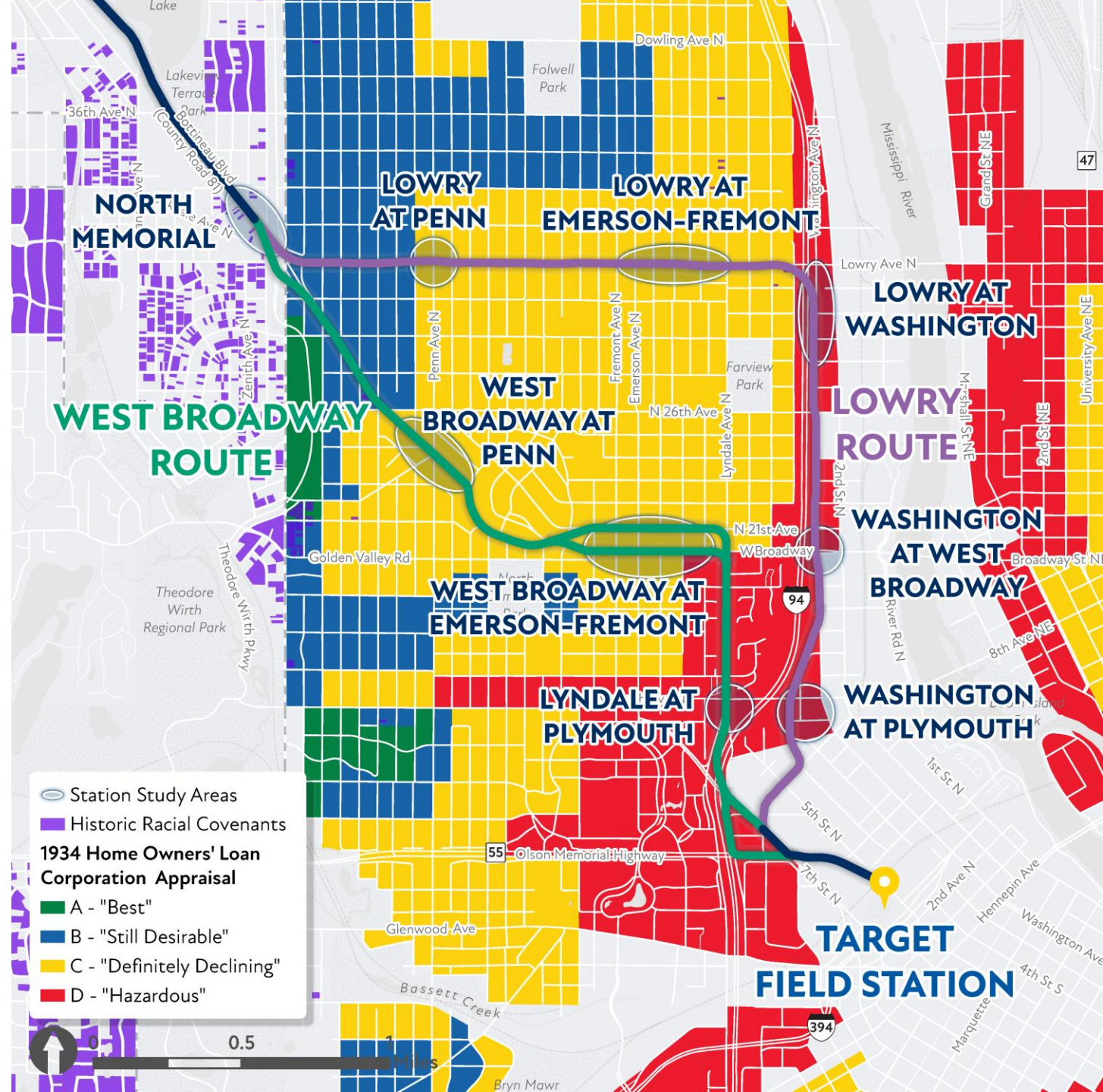
Goal 6: Advance local and regional equity and work towards reducing regional racial disparities.

What informs this goal:

- Opportunities to invest in historically disinvested communities and minimize displacement of corridor residents and businesses
- Maximizing cohesion, preservation, and enhancement of BLRT communities through assessment of improved access and connections to cultural and community assets along with opportunities to honor local heritage and character of BLRT communities
- Minimizing short-term and long-term impacts to property and property access, including providing vehicle access, sidewalk access, on-street parking, and right-of-way acquisition

Redlining & Racial Covenants

- HOLC designations were used to make lending inaccessible to homeowners and homebuyers in neighborhoods with high concentrations of people of color
- Historic racial covenants dictated that homes could not be sold to people of certain races
- Both routes provide opportunity to rectify this lack of investment and provide significant benefits to the community



Pedestrian Access Closures

- West Broadway:
 - Fewer closures and less tightly packed
- Lowry/Washington:
 - Access closures at almost every intersection



West Broadway at Newton Ave

EXISTING

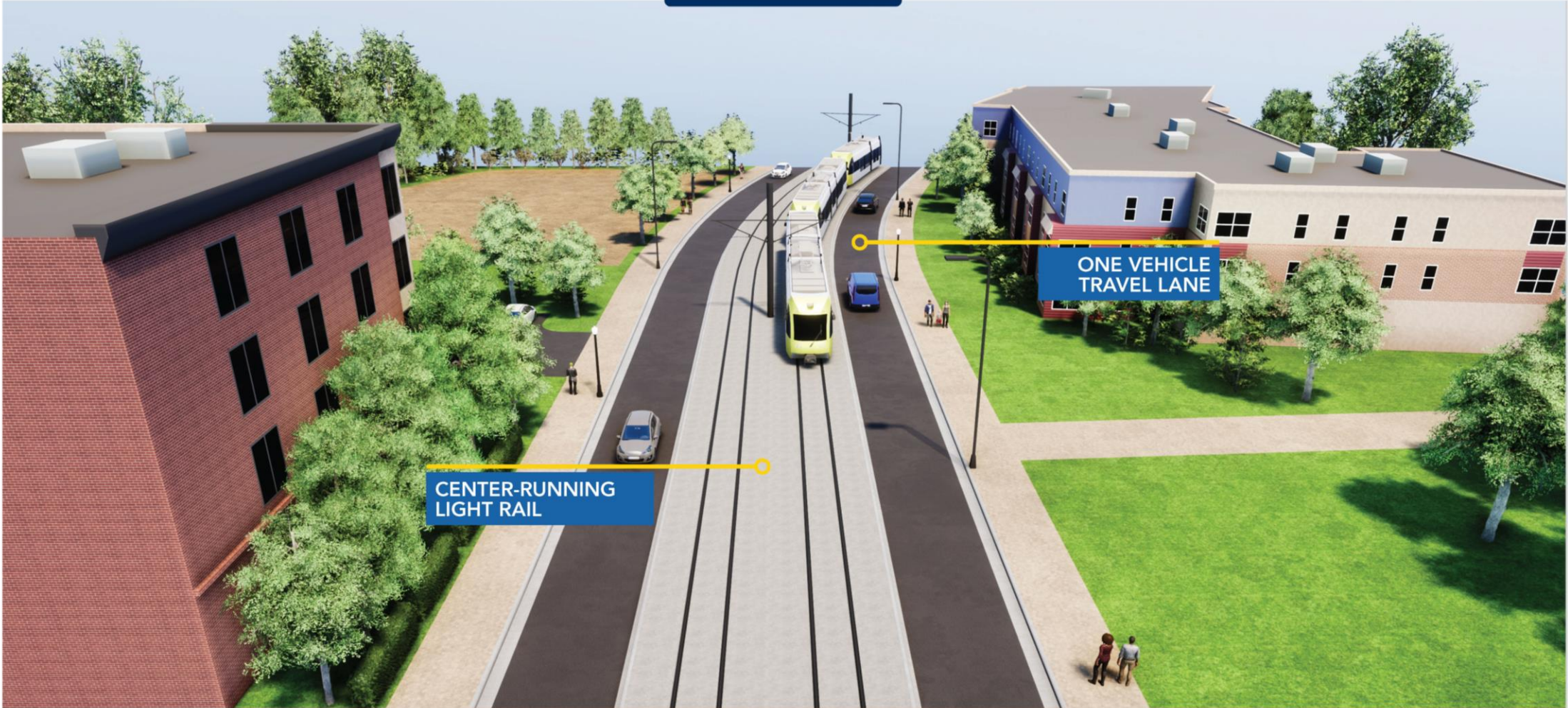
This is a visualization of a section of West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



West Broadway at Newton Ave

CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis. The picture uses the typical width of West Broadway.



CENTER-RUNNING LIGHT RAIL

ONE VEHICLE TRAVEL LANE



NOTE: Proposed trees and other landscape material omitted for visual clarity. These elements will be added as the design progresses.

WEST BROADWAY ROUTE OPTION & STATION CONCEPT NEAR NORTH MEMORIAL



DRAFT: CONCEPT IN DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Robbinsdale

EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of Bottineau Blvd (County Road 81) in Robbinsdale as it exists today.



Location (looking northbound)

DRAFT: CONCEPT IN DEVELOPMENT



Downtown Robbinsdale

CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit in Robbinsdale along Bottineau Blvd (County Road 81). This picture uses the typical width of the roadway at this location.



CENTER-RUNNING
LIGHT RAIL

NOTE: Proposed trees and other landscape material omitted for visual clarity. These elements will be added as the design progresses.

DRAFT: CONCEPT IN DEVELOPMENT



Crystal: South of Bass Lake Road

EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of Bottineau Blvd (County Road 81) in Crystal as it exists today.



Crystal: South of Bass Lake Road

CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit in Crystal along Bottineau Blvd (County Road 81). This picture uses the typical width of the roadway at this location.



CENTER-RUNNING
LIGHT RAIL

MAINTAINS EXISTING
CURB LINE

NOTE: Proposed trees and other landscape material omitted for visual clarity. These elements will be added as the design progresses.

DRAFT: CONCEPT IN DEVELOPMENT

Next Steps



Upcoming Council Action

- Public comment period closed May 18, 2022
- In June the Corridor Management Committee will take action on the staff recommendation
- The recommendation will then come to the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County for approval



Next Steps & Schedule

- **Summer 2022:** begin environmental process: an opportunity for deeper analysis and further engagement



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
- Share your Blue Line Extension story at: MyBlueLineExt.org
- Follow us:
 - Twitter: [@BlueLineExt](https://twitter.com/BlueLineExt)
 - Facebook: [MetroBlueLineExtension](https://www.facebook.com/MetroBlueLineExtension)



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