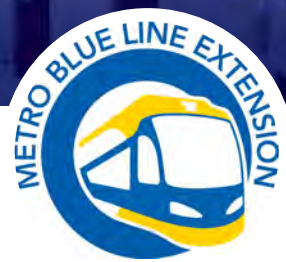


# Committee of the Whole METRO Blue Line Ext.

**July 8, 2024**

Nick Thompson  
Deputy GM - Capital Programs  
Project Director Blue Line Extension



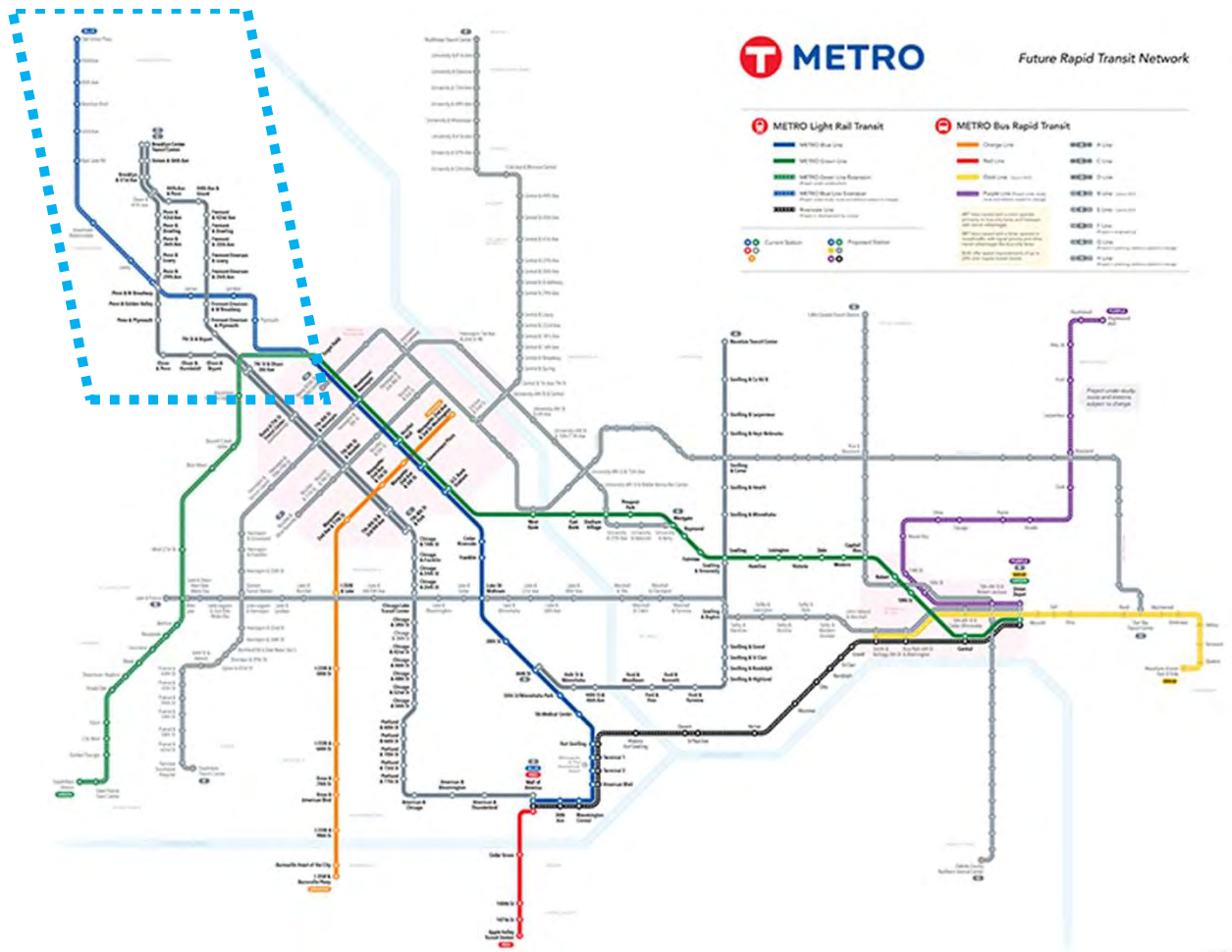
BROOKLYN PARK | CRYSTAL | ROBBINSDALE | MINNEAPOLIS



# Project History, Purpose, Schedule



METRO line	Opened/Opening
Blue Line	2004
Red Line	2013
Green Line	2014
A Line	2016
C Line	2019
Orange Line	2021
D Line	2022
Gold Line	2025
B Line	2025
E Line	2025
Green Line Ext	2027
F Line	Engineering
G Line	Planning
H Line	Planning
Blue Line Ext	Engineering -2030
Purple Line	Planning



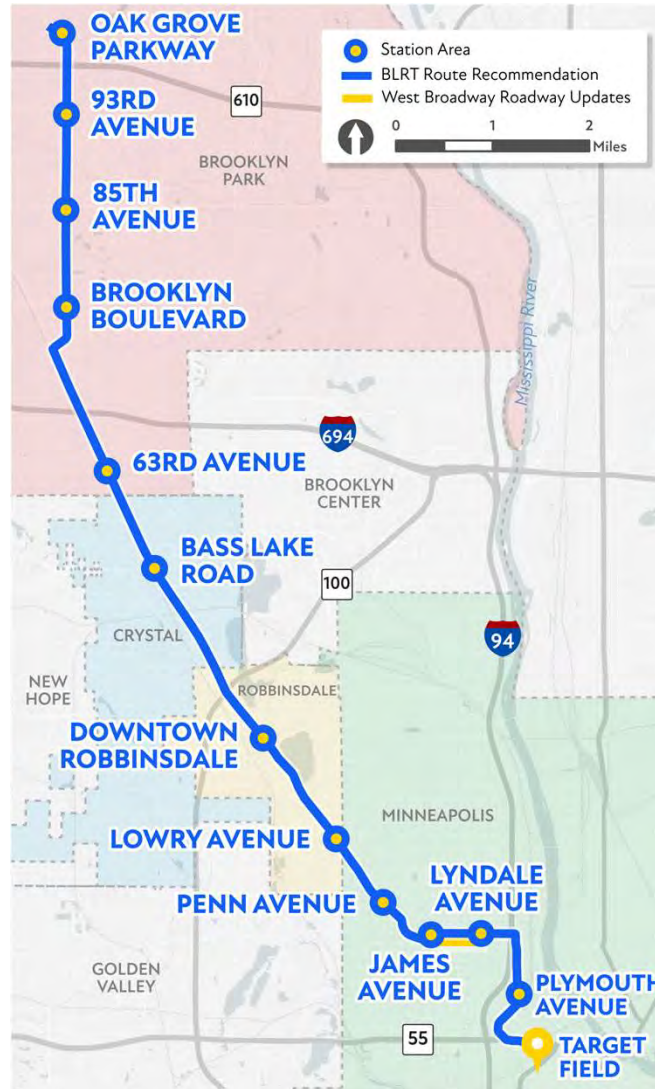
# METRO Transitway Vision



## Blue Line

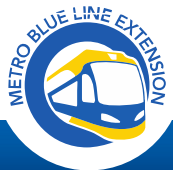
### EXTENSION

- 13.4 miles & 12 new stations
- Connecting Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Brooklyn Park and surrounding communities to fast, frequent, all-day service across the METRO system
- Single seat ride to existing Blue Line stops downtown, MSP Airport, and Mall of America
- Focus on building community prosperity through anti-displacement strategies before, during, and after construction



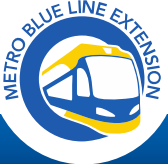
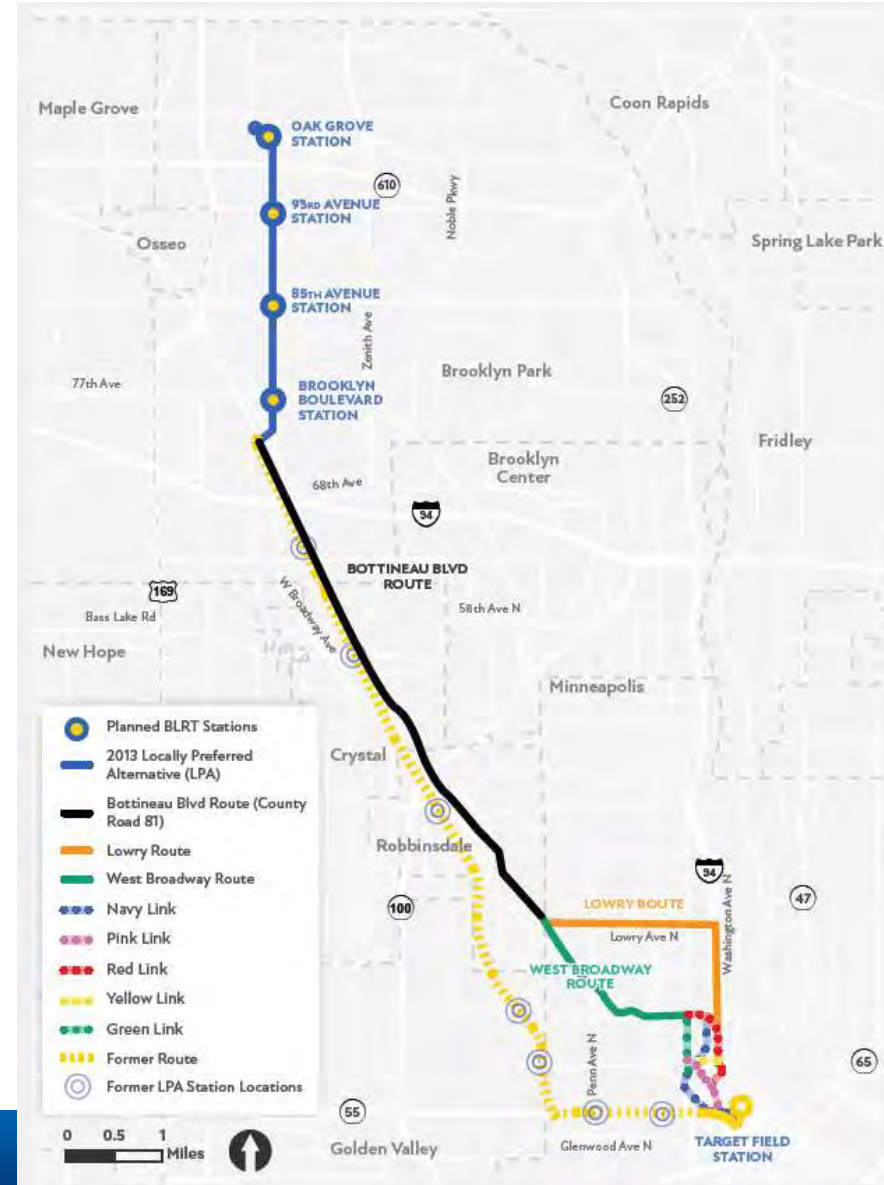
## Next steps

- ✓ Updated post-COVID ridership and initial cost information: March 2024
- ✓ Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Spring 2024
- Municipal Consent : Summer 2024
- Updated 60% cost estimate: Fall 2024
- Finalize Design: 2024-2026
- Construction starts: 2026-2027
- Anticipated opening: 2030

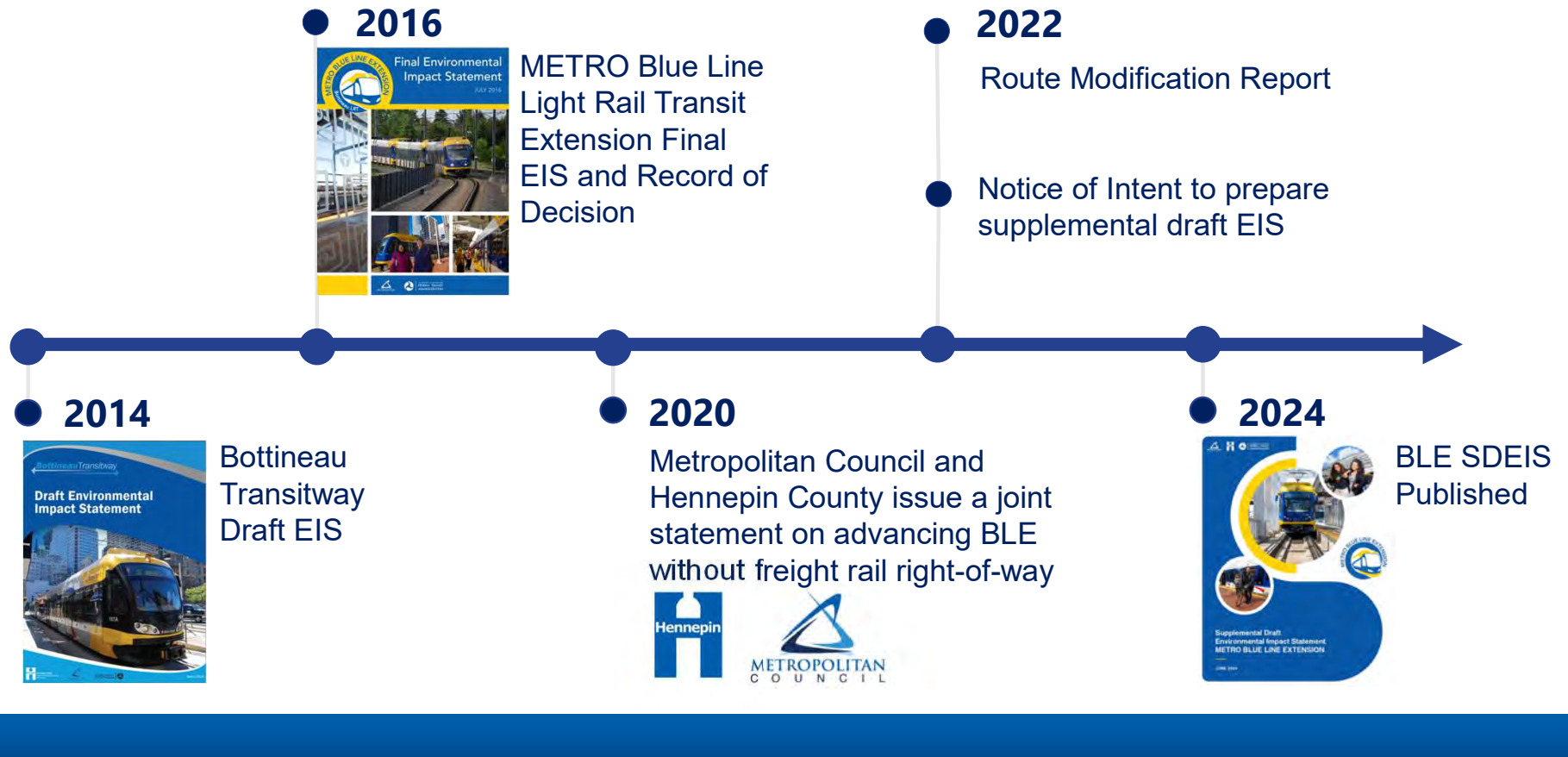


# Route Modification Process

- **2015-2020:** Alignment used railway right-of-way
- **August 2020 – March 2021:** Project transition, goal development, route study areas
- **March 2021:** Potential routes released for input
- **December 2021:** *Draft* Route Modification Report published for 45-day comment period
- **June 2022:** West Broadway Route selected with east of I-94 alignment
- **August 2023:** Staff recommended east of I-94 alignment to include a station at Washington Ave and Plymouth Ave and a transit mall on 10<sup>th</sup> Ave as the preferred route



# Project Background



# Purpose and Need

*Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS)*

## PROJECT PURPOSE

*To provide transit service, which will satisfy the long-term regional mobility and accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public.*

## PROJECT NEED

*To effectively address long-term regional transit mobility and local accessibility needs while providing efficient, travel time-competitive transit service that supports economic development goals and objectives of local, regional, and statewide plans.*



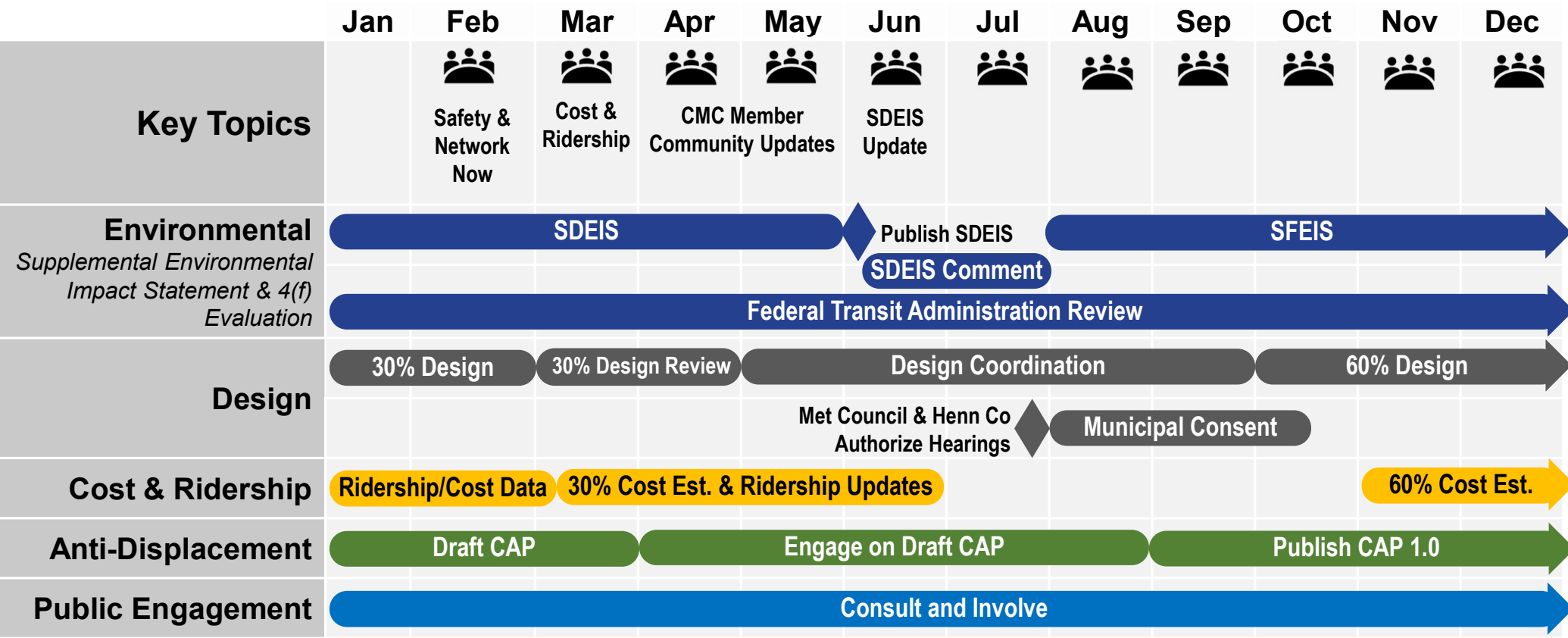
# Project Timeline





# 2024 Schedule

**WE ARE HERE**



# Design Update

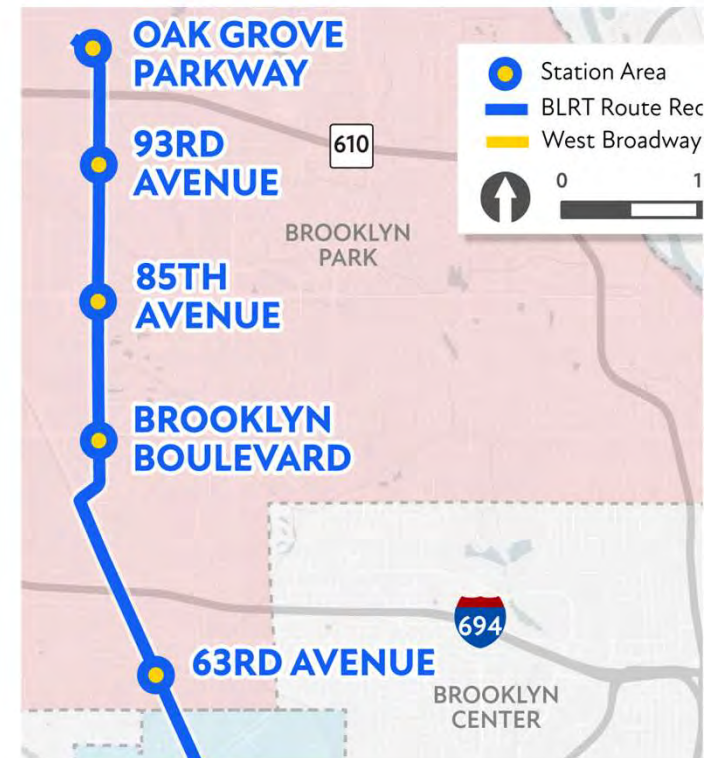


# Brooklyn Park



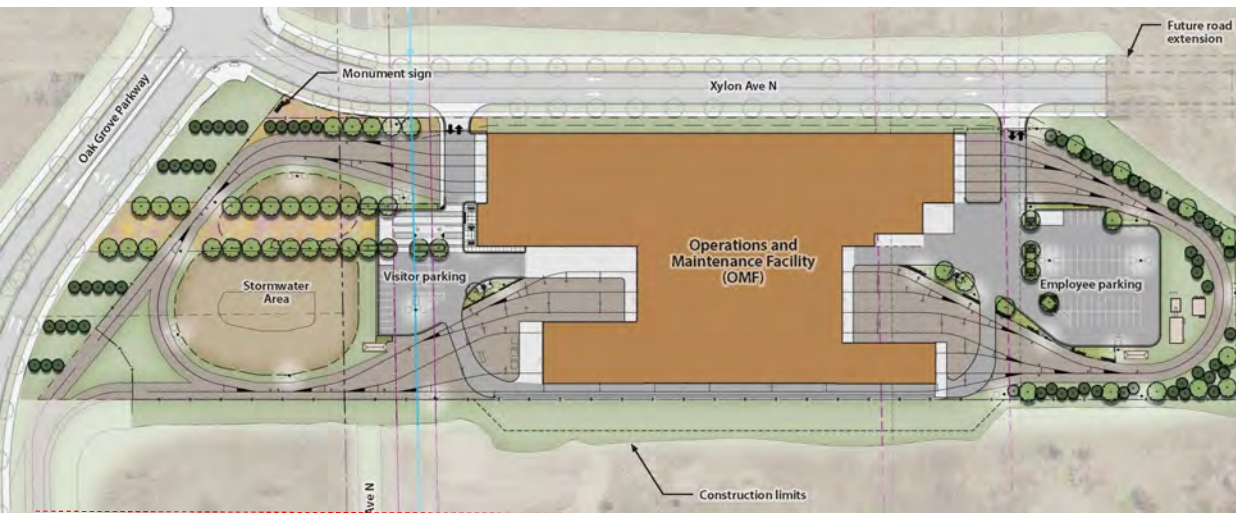
# Brooklyn Park Stations

- Five stations in Brooklyn Park
- Station finishes designed to complement the surrounding community
  - Color
  - Roof lines
  - Finishes



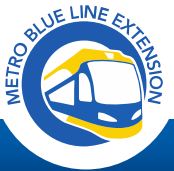
# Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) at Oak Grove Parkway

- OMF is located at the northernmost portion of the project



# Oak Grove Station and Park-and-Ride

- Park-and-Ride



# Oak Grove Parkway Station



Site Plan



View from platform entry looking North



View from sidewalk looking Northwest



# Brooklyn Park Stations



Site Plan



View from platform entry looking North



View from sidewalk looking Northwest





# Crystal



# Bass Lake Road Interchange



Existing  
(at-grade intersection)



Proposed  
(grade-separated interchange)

County Road 81 view north toward Bass Lake Road



# Interchange Benefits

- Improves vehicle operations at Bass Lake Road compared to existing
- Provides grade-separation of County Road 81
- Provides at-grade access to trails on either side and to the park and ride
- Easier and safer pedestrian crossings



# Bass Lake Road Station



Ground view of station area looking south



Ground view of station area looking east from park and ride



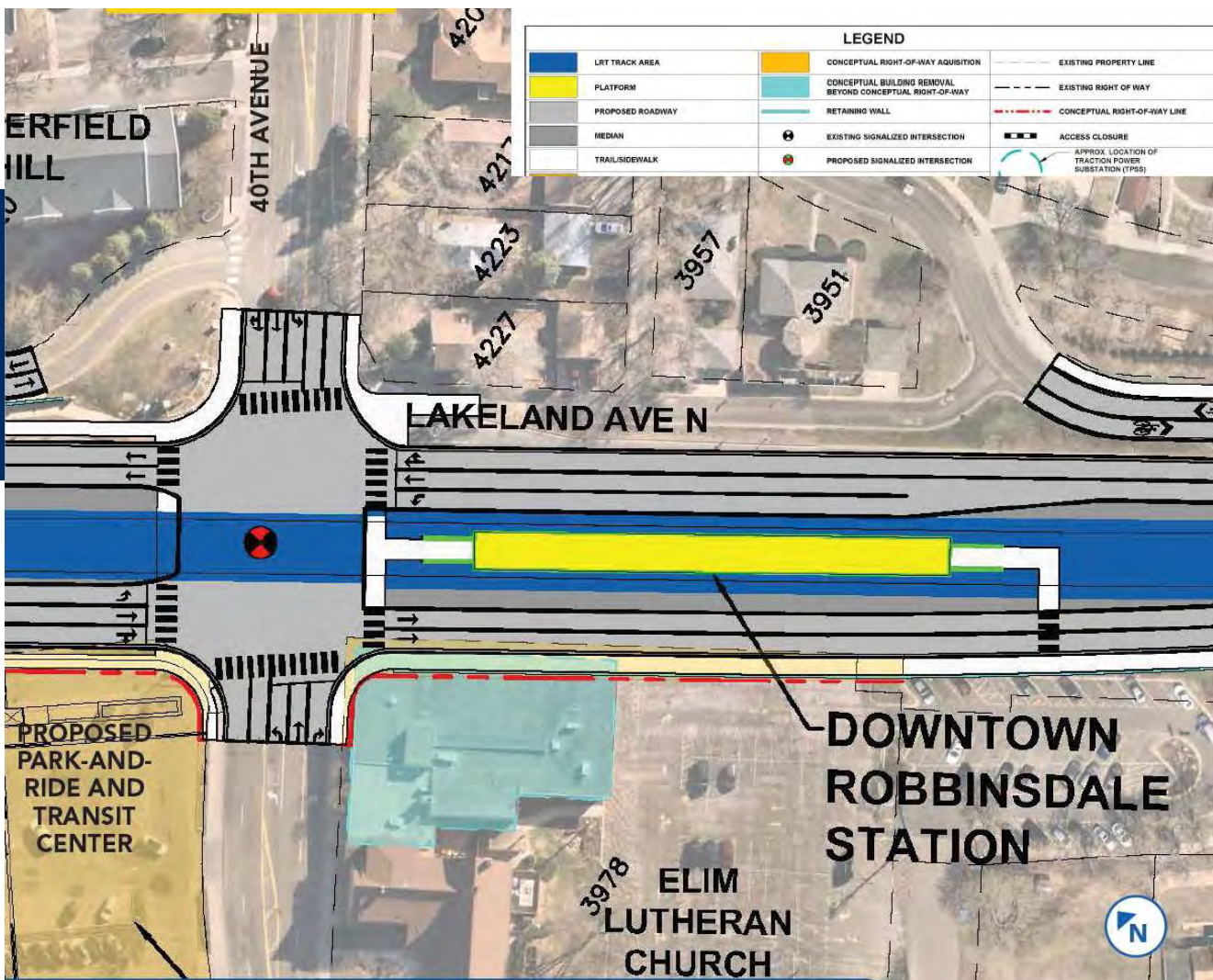
# Robbinsdale



# Downtown Robbinsdale Station

The station in downtown Robbinsdale is proposed to be located south of 40th Ave for several reasons:

- To provide better bike/pedestrian connectivity
- Serves nearby residential area and downtown Robbinsdale
- Close to proposed park-and-ride at US Bank site



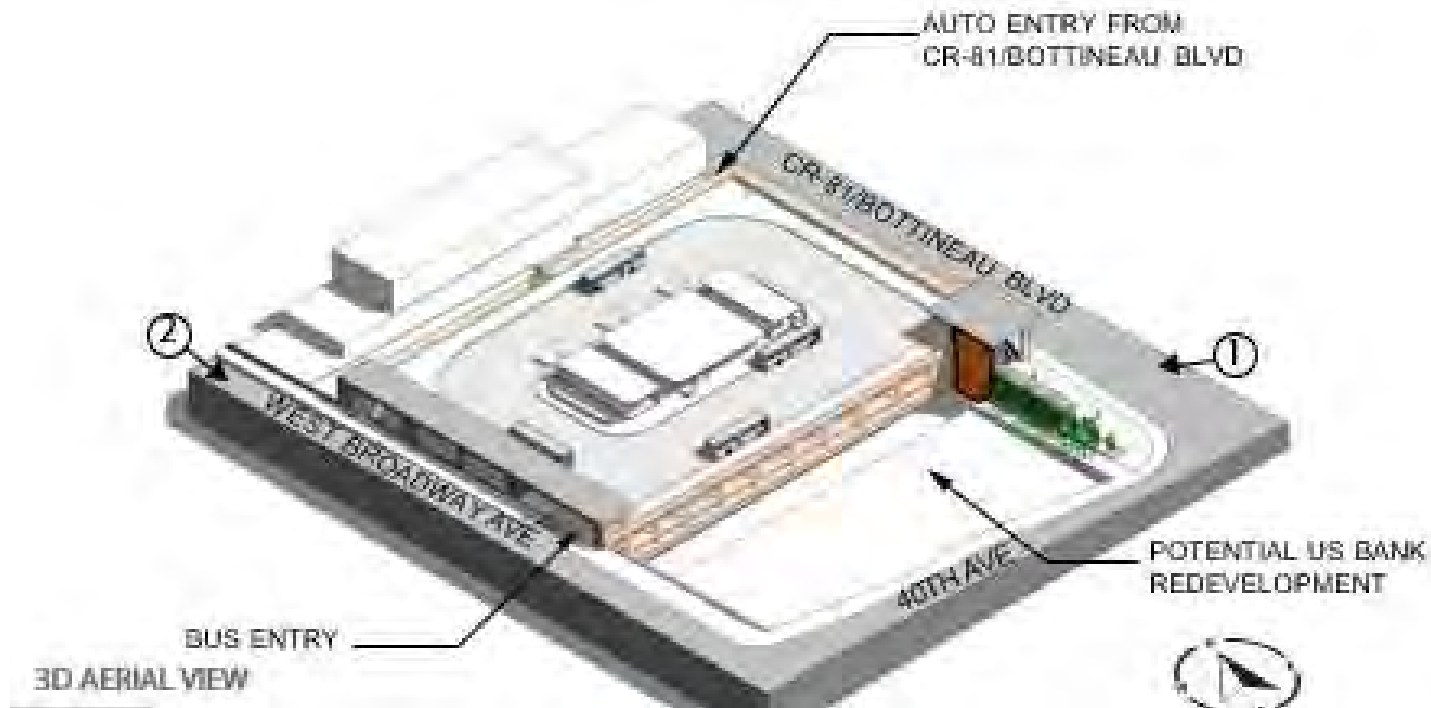
# Robbinsdale Park and Ride



*Concept Only* - view looking from station at 40th Ave toward the northwest



# Robbinsdale Park and Ride

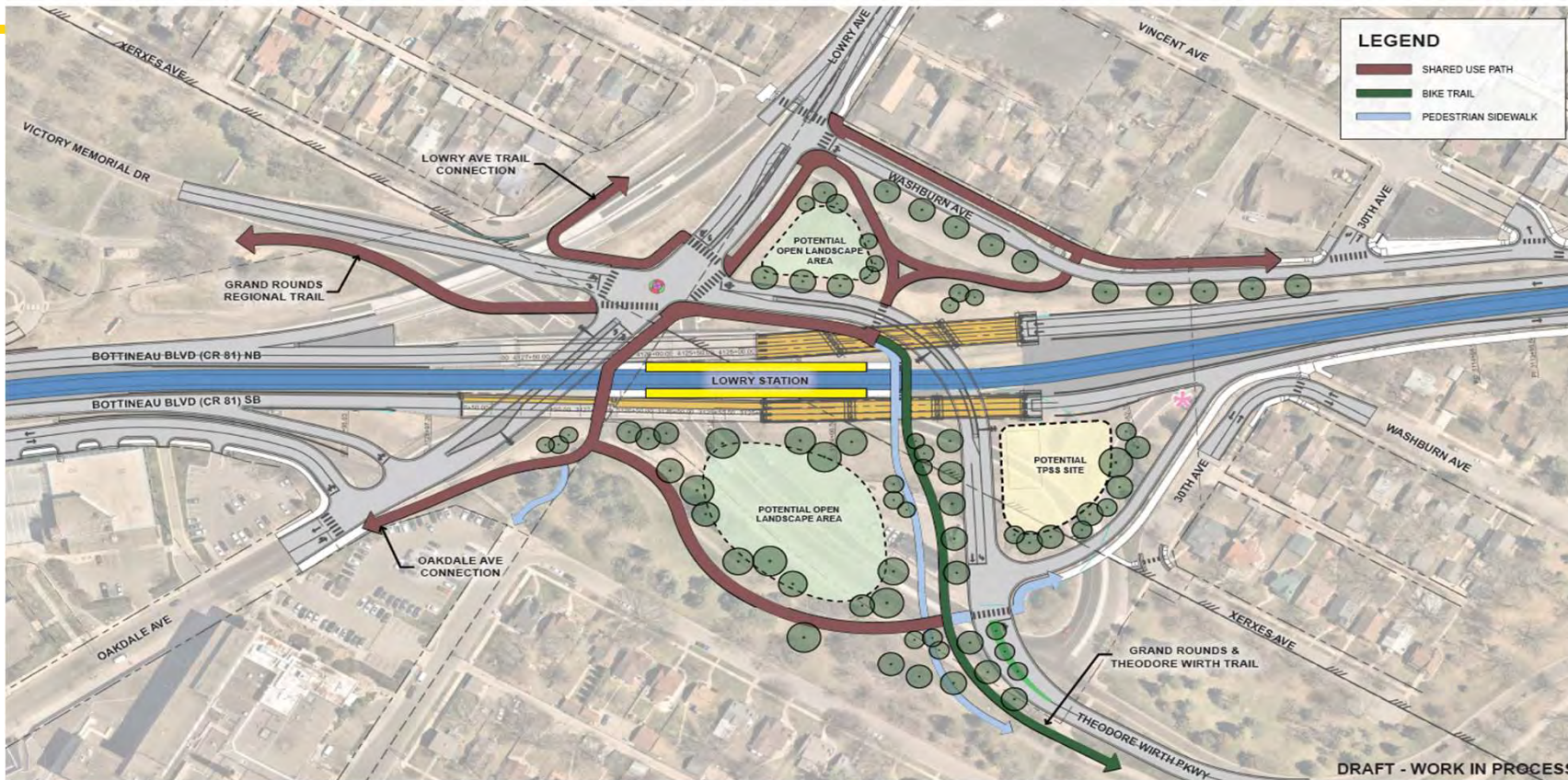




# Robbinsdale – Visualization

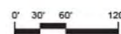


# Lowry Avenue Station



## BLUE LINE EXTENSION Lowry Station - Potential Trail Layout

May 22, 2024



# Lowry Avenue Station



# Minneapolis





# West Broadway and 21st

**JAMES AVE STATION**

LRT Tracks on 21st

**LYNDALE AVE STATION**

21st Ave N

West Broadway

Golden Valley Rd

West Broadway Improvements

North Commons Park

Fremont Ave N

Emerson Ave N

Lyndale Ave N

Hall Park

2nd St N

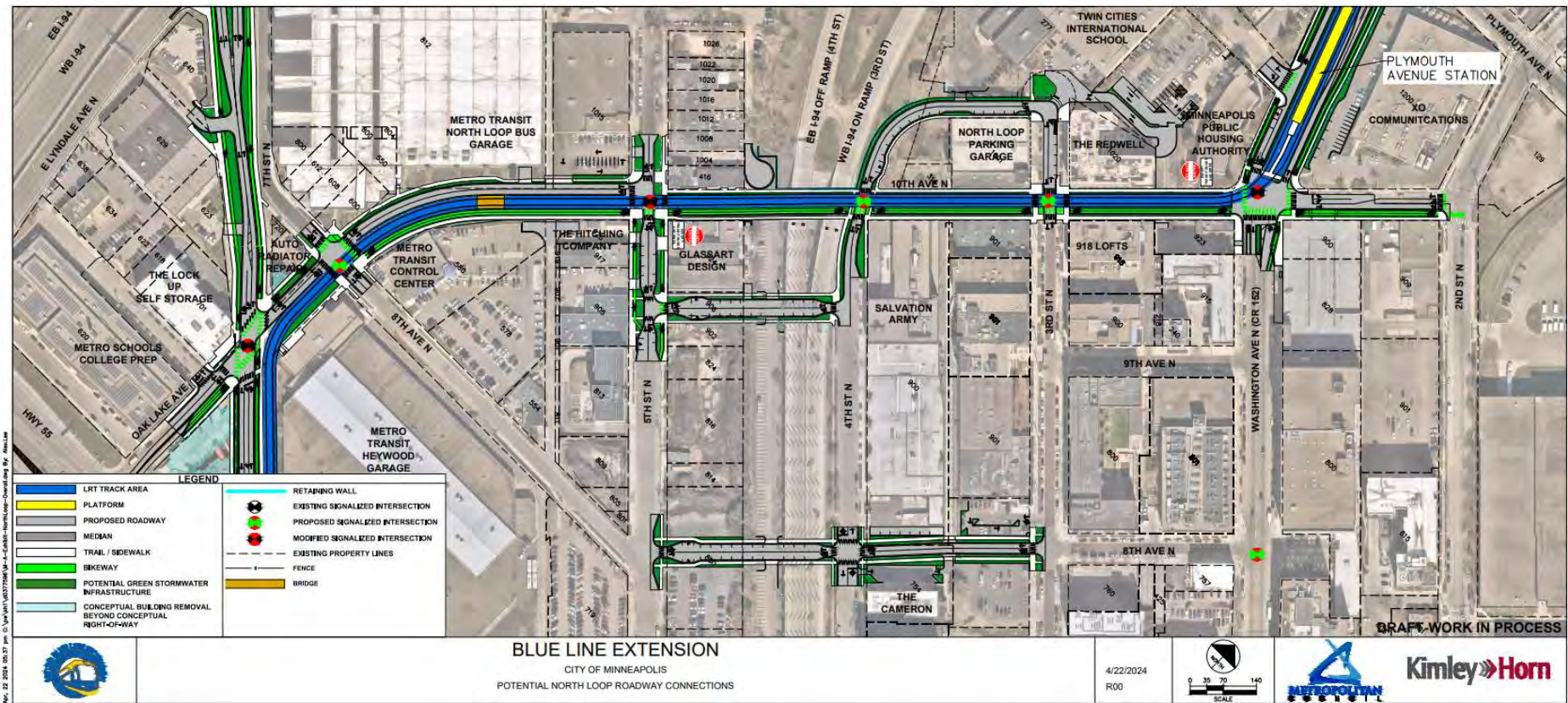
-  Station Area
-  BLRT Route Recommendation
-  West Broadway Roadway Updates



# West Broadway Reconstruction Benefits



# Potential Traffic Configuration in North Loop

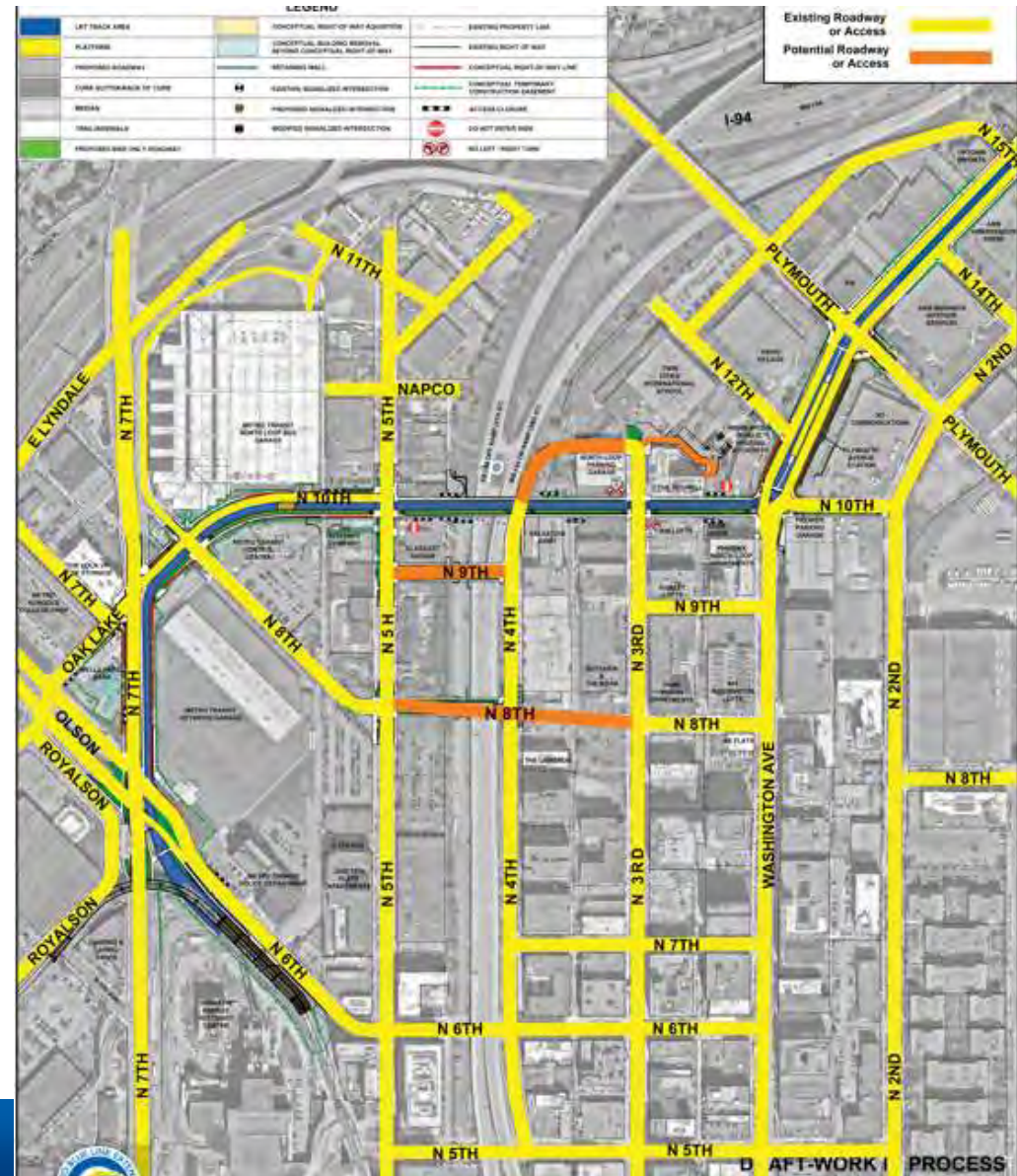


# Minneapolis - Visualization



# North Loop Access Improvements

- New potential access roads in the North Loop would be part of the project
- Evaluated existing and projected traffic patterns in the neighborhood
  - Proposing a new connection from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave
  - New sections of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>



# Design Changes based on Engagement

---

- Brooklyn Park
  - Streetscape design along the corridor
  - Station finishes designed to fit the surrounding community
- Crystal
  - Design of station for access and safety
  - Improved pedestrian and bike connections
    - Crystal Lake Regional Trail
    - Bass Lake Road Bikeway



# Design Changes based on Engagement

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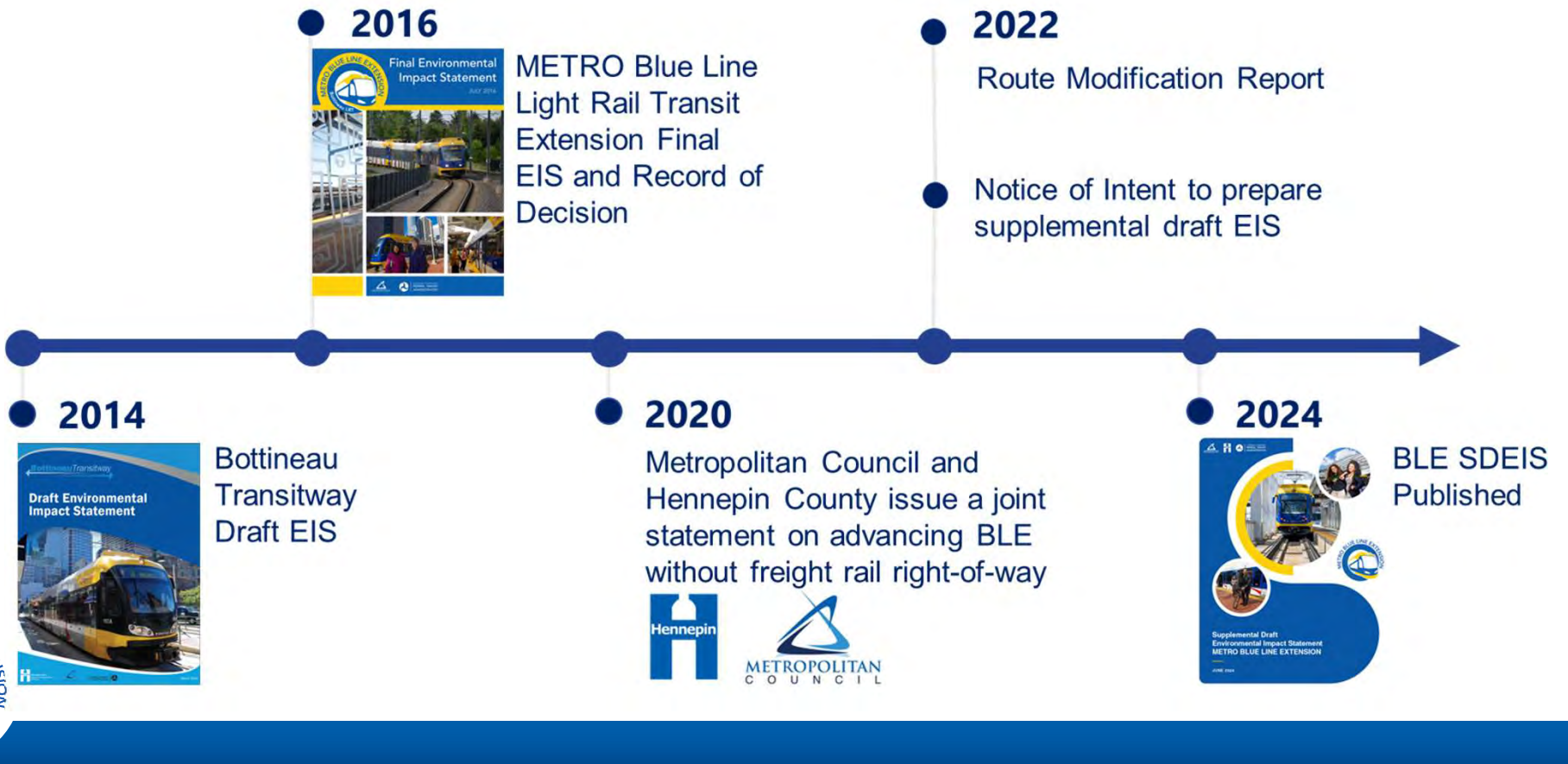
- Robbinsdale
  - Focus on east/west accessibility and intersection safety across CR 81
  - Refined Lowry station design for accessible at-grade station
- Minneapolis
  - West Broadway and 21st corridor to address West Broadway impacts
  - Additional station added on 21st Ave
  - Added 21st Ave bridge across I-94 to reconnect to the river



# Environmental



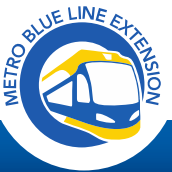
# Project Background



# SDEIS Status

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- SDEIS published on June 14, 2024
- Federal Register Notice of Availability on June 21, 2024
- Comment period through August 6, 2024
  - Multiple commenting opportunities, including public hearings 7/16/24 and 7/23/24 and other events



# Environmental Next Steps

---

- Comments received inform development of Supplemental Final EIS
- Supplemental Final EIS and Amended Record of Decision concludes environmental review
  - Continue evaluation of project changes during design development
  - Continue efforts to confirm impacts, explore avoidance, minimization, and mitigation for the Supplemental Final EIS



# Anti-Displacement





# Next steps progress



1

Create a regional group to continue conversations about corridor-wide implementation of anti-displacement strategies



2

Create local government groups to receive recommendations and begin policy making processes

In progress

3

Create dedicated regional anti-displacement fund

In progress

4

Align anti-displacement research and recommendations with Blue Line Extension federal processes like supplemental environmental impact statement



5

Develop corridor-wide anti-displacement policy agenda for 2024 state legislative session



Illustrations by  
Cori Nakamura Lin



# 2024 Minnesota Legislative Session Update

Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit Extension Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program to allocate funding for:

- Affordable housing
- Small business support
- Community ownership and commercial development
- Public realm enhancement
- Job training and placement

Proposed Appropriation:

- Beginning in fiscal year 2024 and expiration date of June 30, 2030
- \$10M + local match



# 2024 Schedule

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Anti-Displacement	2024 Legislation Prep			Draft CAP			ADWG/CP Board Meetings			Issue CAP			Policy and Planning

- **Anti-Displacement Coordinated Action Plan:**
  - City Partner Review
  - Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board Review
  - Public Feedback/Input
- **Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board:**
  - 3-Meetings Scheduled **June/July/August**
    - Chair/Co-Chair Assigned
    - Sub-Committee Assigned Tasks:
      - Create By-Laws
      - Create Funding/Fundraising Processes



# Cost, Ridership, Federal Rating



# Ridership Approach

---

- Project follows FTA guidance - using FTA required STOPS model
- FTA requires use of Post Pandemic ridership data to calculate ridership results (Project using 2023 data)
- FTA allows ridership in Forecast year 2045



# Estimated Ridership

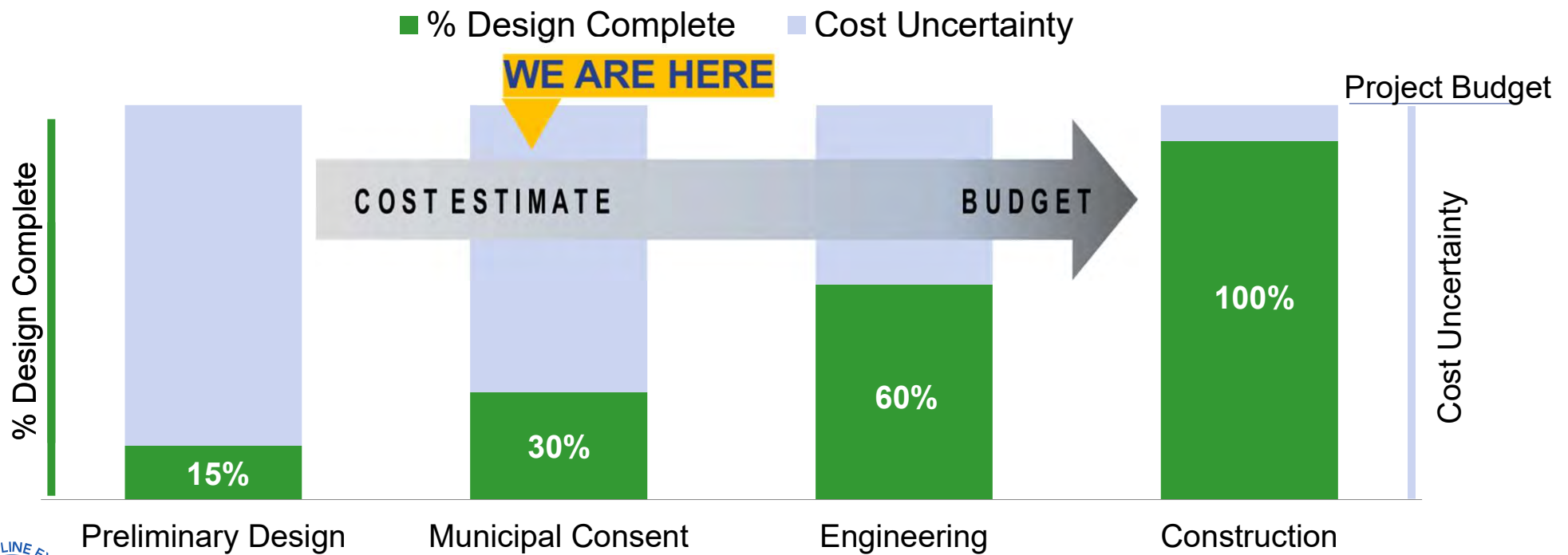
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Metric	FTA Blended Forecast (Forecast Year)*	Overall Blue Line (w/ extension)
Trips on Project	12,000-13,700	30,000+

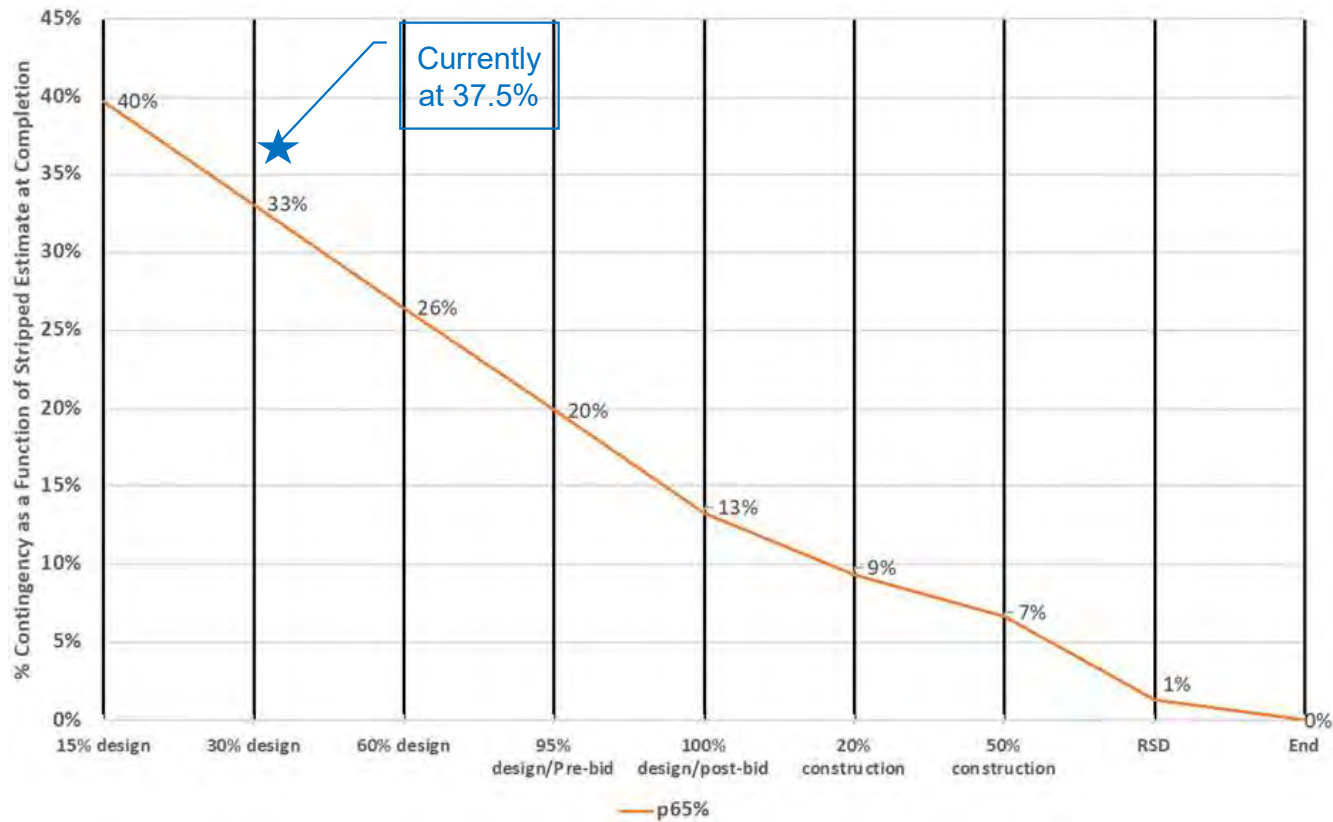
\*Ranges based on FTA's New Starts CIG template



# Cost Uncertainty by Project Phase



# FTA Contingency Drawdown





# Base Cost Breakdown

Base Project Definition	37.5% Contingency
Construction Costs	\$1.4 B
Right-of-Way	\$220 M
Vehicles	\$205 M
Professional Services	\$480 M
Finance Charges	\$50 M
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$2.3 B</b>
Contingency	\$900 M
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$3.2 B</b>

*\*All costs represented in Year of Expenditure dollars*



# Operating Cost and Staffing Estimate

Light Rail Cost Drivers	BLE O&M (March 2024)
Annual Revenue Car Miles	\$15.5 M
Annual Revenue Train Hours	\$17 M
Peak LRV in Service	\$4.6 M
LRT Stations (12)	\$1.7 M
Direct Track Miles	\$8.7 M
Number of Train Yards	\$6.4 M
<b>Annual Total (Opening Year):</b>	<b>\$54 M</b>

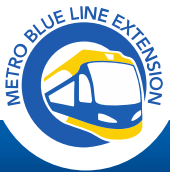
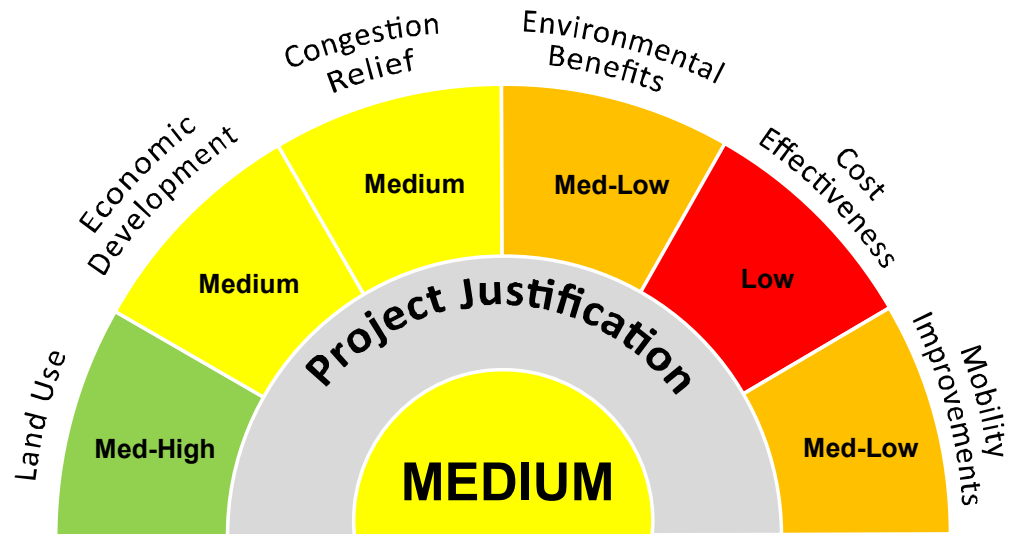
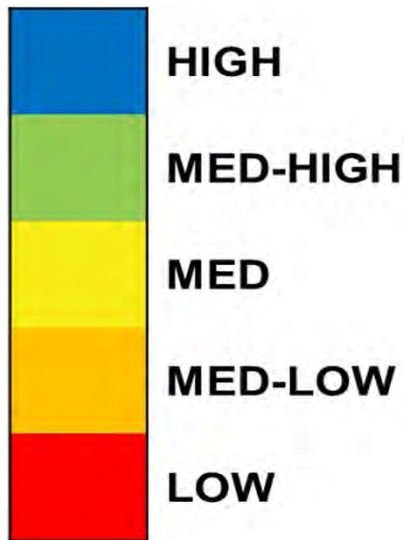
Estimated new FTEs: 200 to 250

*Similar FTE levels as Green Line Extension*



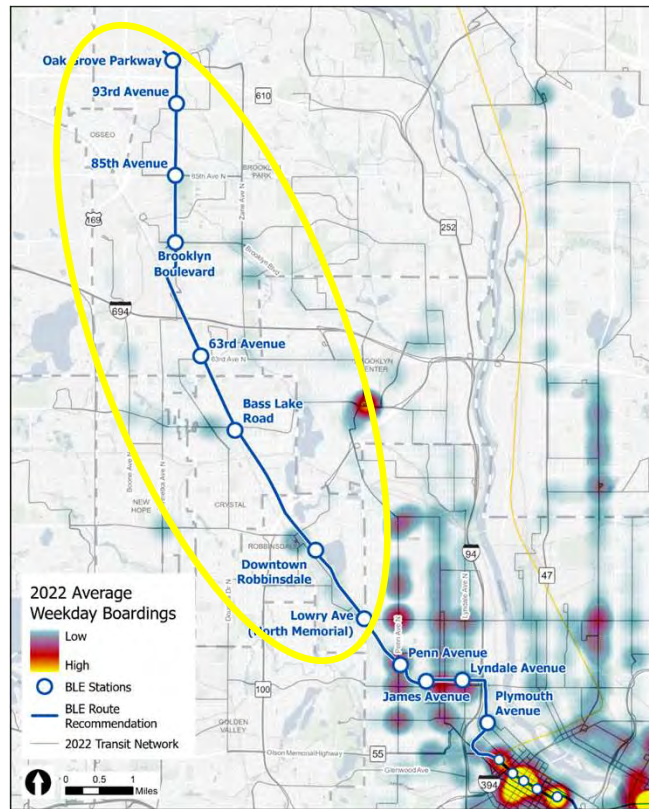
# FTA Rating Criteria

- Project anticipates a Medium or higher overall rating to be eligible for Federal funding

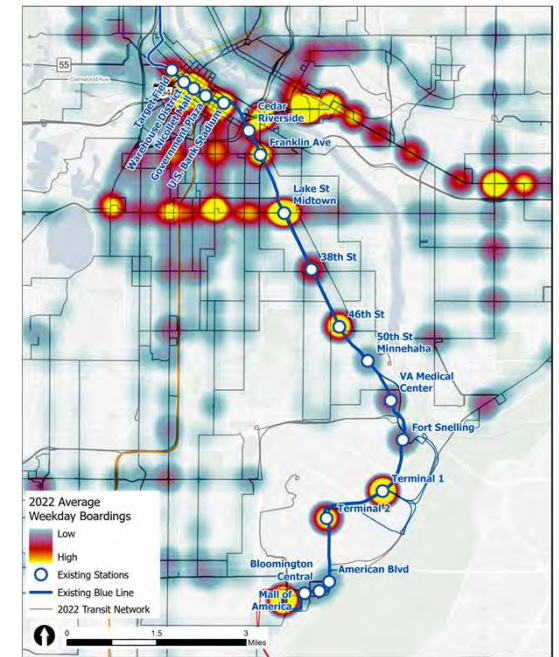


# Existing Service

- Blue Line Extension corridor is under-served today



Blue Line Extension Corridor

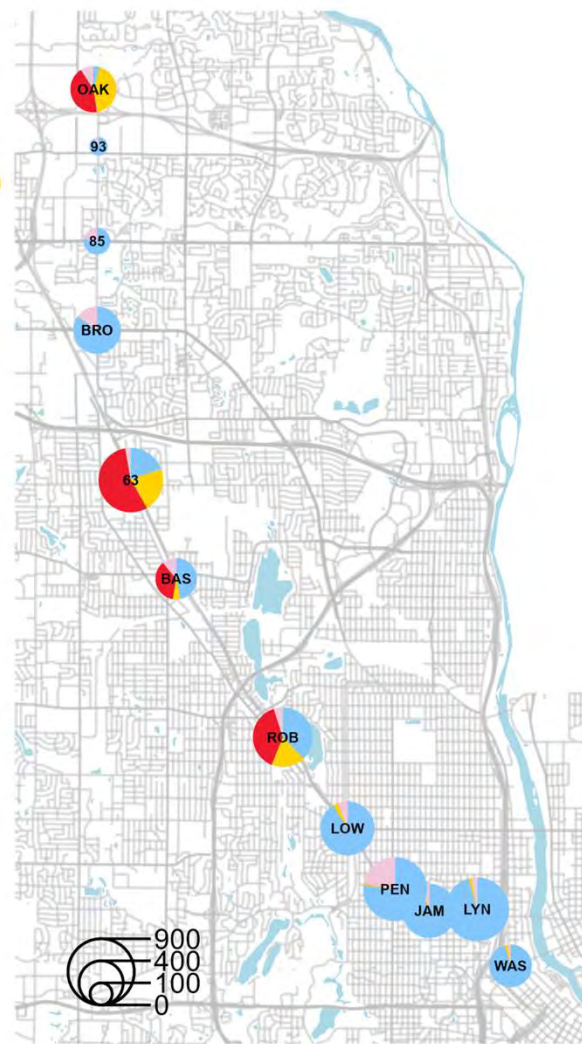


Existing Blue Line LRT Corridor



# Station Boardings

- Lyndale Ave, James Ave, and Bass Lake Road are the most prominent stations in terms of ridership
- Northern Brooklyn Park stations (93<sup>rd</sup> Ave and 85<sup>th</sup> Ave) currently have low-density land use and low existing transit ridership
- Transfer activity greatest at Penn Ave



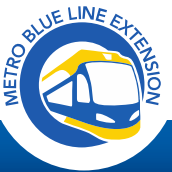
Boardings by Access Mode



# Key Takeaways

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- Project remains a federally competitive project in the CIG program
- Forecasts have modestly increased along with regional ridership recovery from 2022 to 2023
- Nearly 50% of BLE riders are anticipated to be from 0-car households



# Project Risks



# Project Risk Management

- Risk and Contingency are managed in accordance with FTA's Oversight Procedures (OP40)
- Key risk areas may include: Project Funding/CIG Program, Design, ROW, Utilities, Environmental, Communications, Anti-Displacement, Construction, Operations





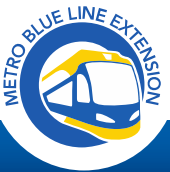
# Project Organization and Delivery



# Project Decision Making

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- **Project Team:** Integrated Agency Team, Metropolitan Council lead, Hennepin County in key roles, MnDOT staff lead Right-of-Way
- **Project Decision Board:** 3 Commissioners/ 2 Council Members. Approve key Project Decisions including Scope, Schedule Budget, Invitation for Bids, Change Orders
- **Corridor Management Committee:** Recommend Route and Stations, advise on key project items
- **Hennepin County:** Local funding Partner, Roadway authority for most of LRT route
- **Metropolitan Council:** Project Owner, Recipient of Federal Funds, Lead procurements, Accountable for oversight
- **Corridor Cities:** Municipal Consent, Technical Input/Requirements, Station area planning, Land use
- **FTA:** Full Funding Grant Agreement, Oversight
- **Community:** Anti-Displacement, Feedback on Project Design and Mitigation
- **Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program:** Governance body managing anti-displacement program, allocating funding



# Project Delivery

---

- Best Value Contracting as primary procurement type
- Council's standard contract language is being updated
- Project delivery and procurement packaging decision in 2024
- Key procurement schedule milestones
  - Industry input: August – November
  - RFQ Q1 2025
  - Shortlist Prime Contractors: Summer 2025
  - Issue Final RFP for Construction: Q1 2026
  - Notice to Proceed: Fall 2026



# Engagement Update



# Engagement Metrics: Aug 2020-Jun 2024

- **883** events resulting in nearly **37,699** points of contact with the public
- **80,000** reach on social media and **6.5 million+** reach through newsletters and paid ads on community and cultural media
- Approximately **4,750** survey responses
- **+3,000** comments on the interactive map
- **350** comments from comment forms
- Corridor postcards mailed to **+30,000**
- Over **5,000** emails and phone calls

July 2023 Outdoor Summer Event



# Schedule for Public Comment Periods

---

- **June – August 2024 Comment Period:** draft environmental findings in SDEIS
  - Public hearings scheduled for July 16 and July 23
- **July – October 2024 Municipal Consent Comment Period:** on the 30% design plans to decide final route
  - Joint Metropolitan Council/HCRRA public hearing
  - Public hearings in each city
- **Spring 2025 Comment Period:** finalized environmental findings and commitments in SFEIS
  - Right-of-way process can begin Spring 2025 after Record of Decision




# Municipal Consent



# What is Municipal Consent?

- State process that requires local approval of physical design components of the preliminary design plans ([Minnesota Statutes Sec. 473.3994](#))
- Hennepin County and corridor cities vote to approve the physical design of the LRT facilities coordinated to-date, including location, length, termini of routes, general dimensions, and approximate station locations
- One step in the design coordination process, not the end of the process

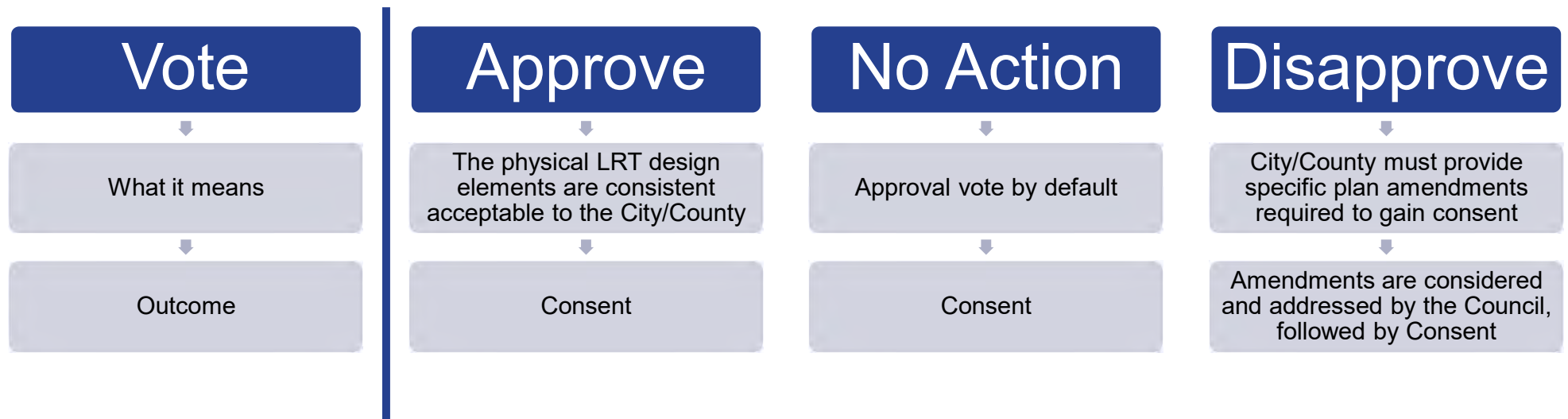


The screenshot shows the Minnesota Legislature website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for House, Senate, Joint, Schedules, Committees, Bills, Law, Multimedia, and Publications. Below the menu is a banner image of the Minnesota State Capitol building. The main heading is "Office of the Revisor of Statutes". Below this is a search bar with the text "Retrieve by number" and a "GO" button. To the right of the search bar are links for Statutes, Laws, Rules, Court Rules, Constitution, Revisor's Office, and Search Law by Keyword. Below the search bar is a breadcrumb trail: "2023 Minnesota Statutes > METROPOLITAN AREA > Chapter 473 > Section 473.3994". Below the breadcrumb trail is a link for "473.3993". The main heading is "2023 Minnesota Statutes". Below this is the text "473.3994 LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT; DESIGN PLANS." and a link for "Subdivision 1. [Repealed, 1989 c 339 s 24]".





# Municipal Consent Outcomes

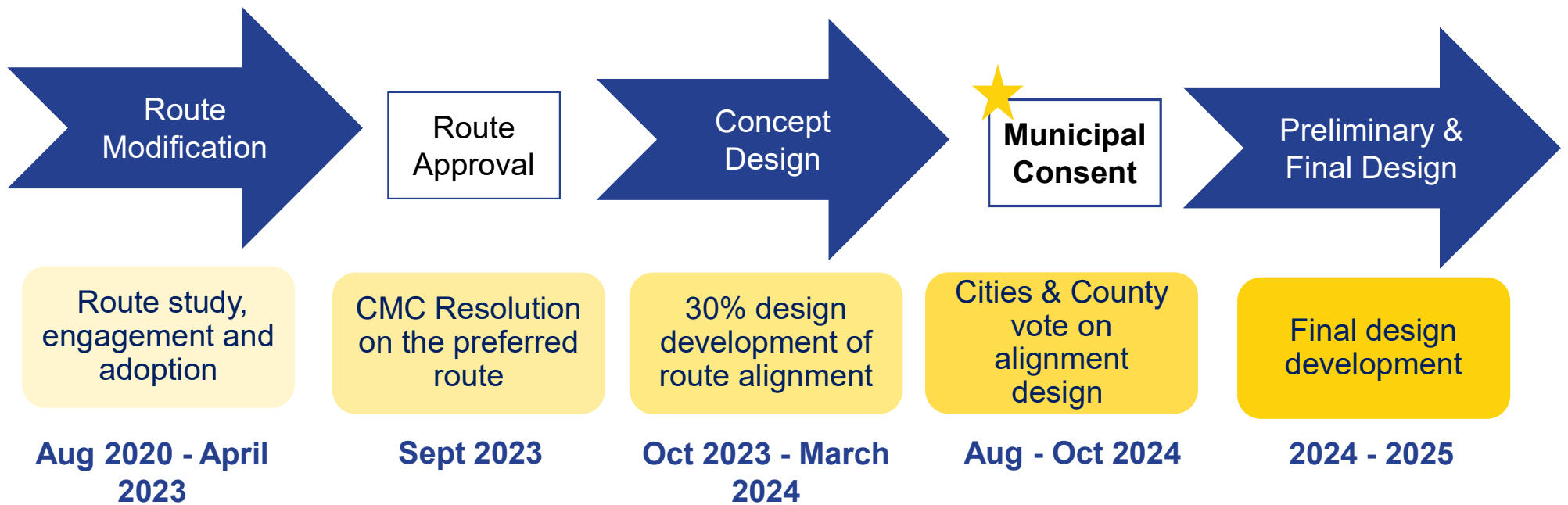


- Hennepin County and each city along the line vote to approve preliminary design plans

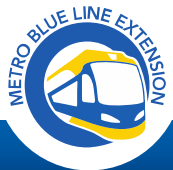
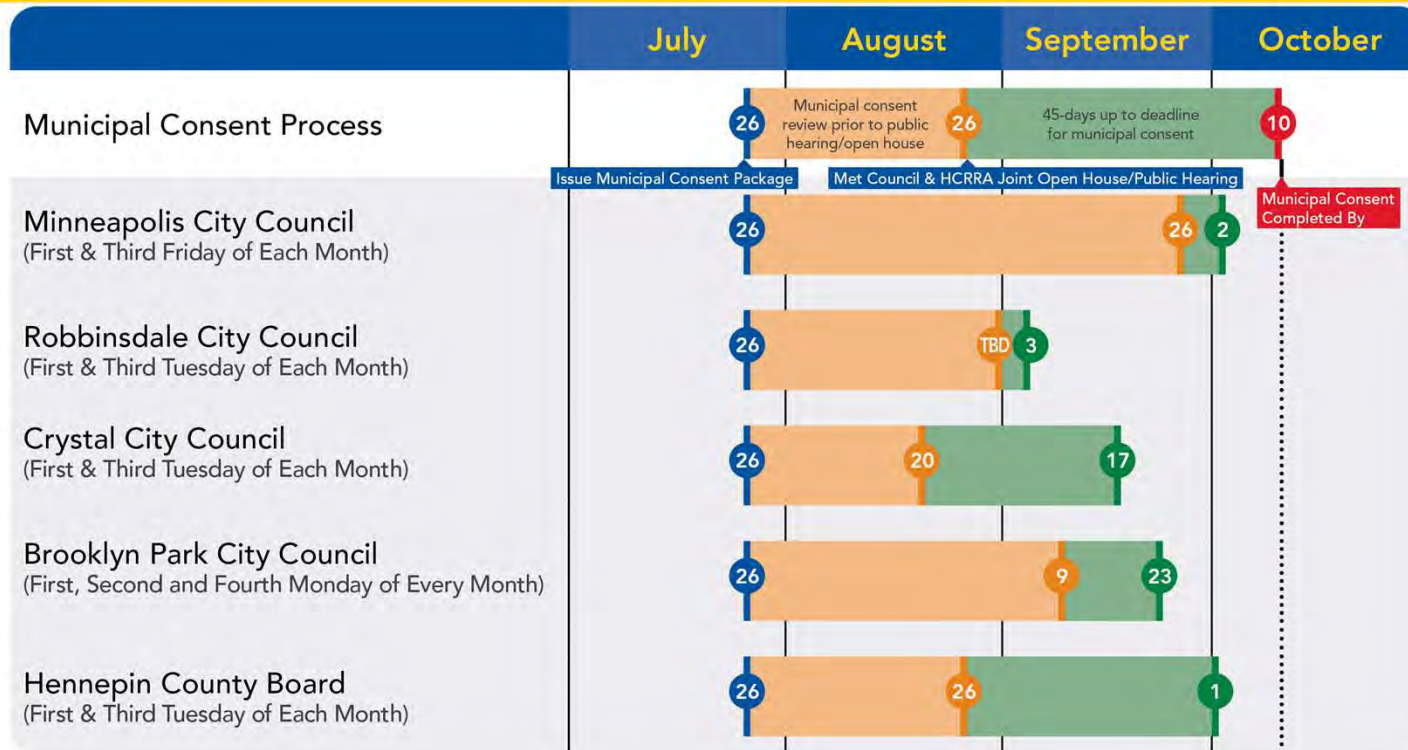


*The municipal consent period is expected to be from Aug to October 2024*

# Design before and after Municipal Consent



# Municipal Consent Timeline



● Begin Municipal Consent Review

● Public Hearing

● Council/Board Action

# Stay connected

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- **BlueLineExt.org**
  - For the latest project updates and to sign up for our newsletter
  - Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation
- Follow us:
  - Twitter: @BlueLineExt
  - Facebook: MetroBlueLineExtension



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