Locally Preferred Alternative Summary

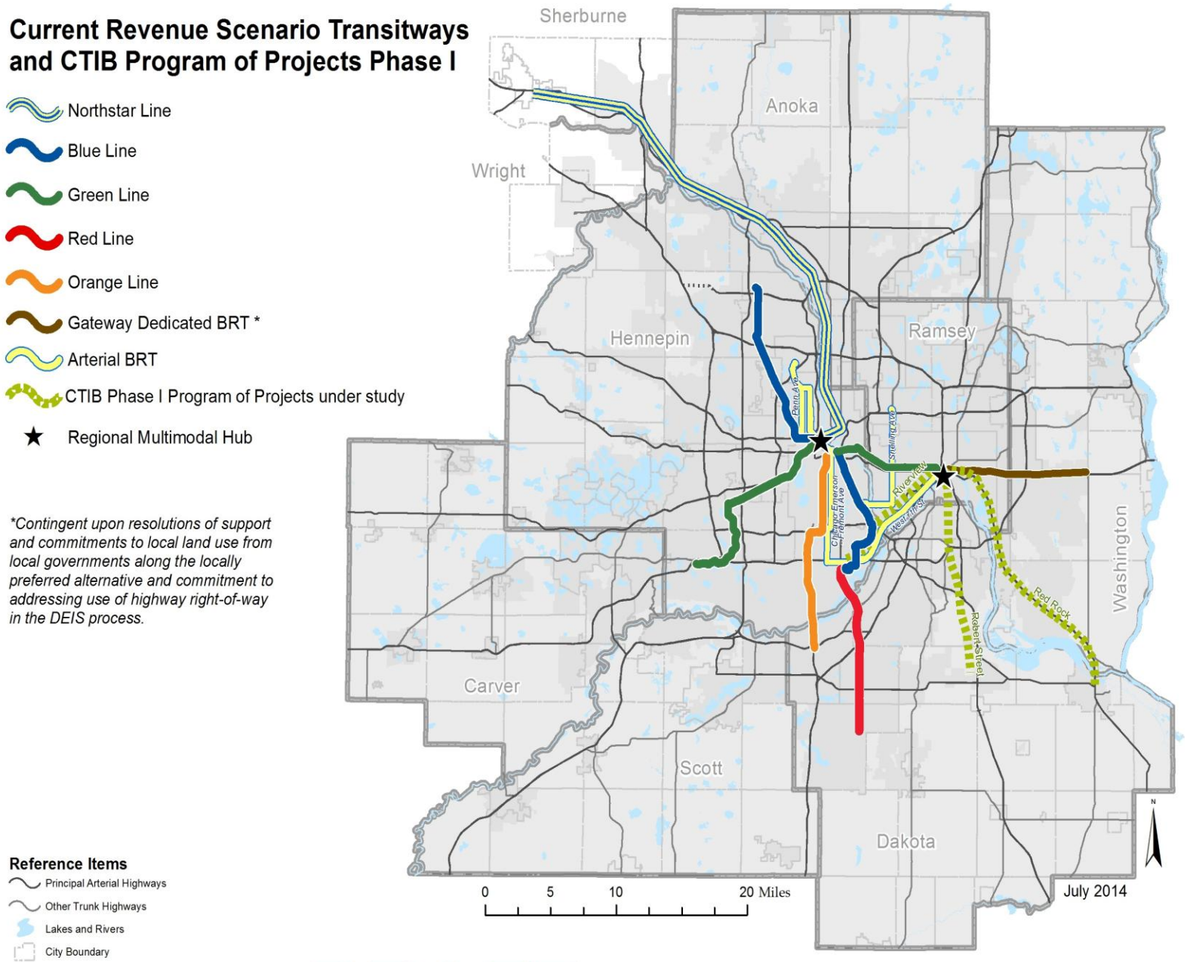
Gateway Corridor Transitway

Metropolitan Council, Nov. 12, 2014

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Gateway Corridor Transitway

- Proposed high-capacity transit improvement connecting east metro suburbs to St. Paul and Minneapolis



METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Alternatives Analysis (AA)

- Federal requirement under previous federal transportation funding law (SAFETEA-LU)
- Evaluation of costs, benefits, and impacts of transit alternatives
- Process for developing information needed for New Starts application
- Process for selecting the locally preferred mode and alignment

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

- Alternative identified by corridor cities, counties, and the Metropolitan Council
- LPA sets transit mode and alignment
  - Station locations finalized later during engineering
- LPA adoption completes the Alternatives Analysis project phase

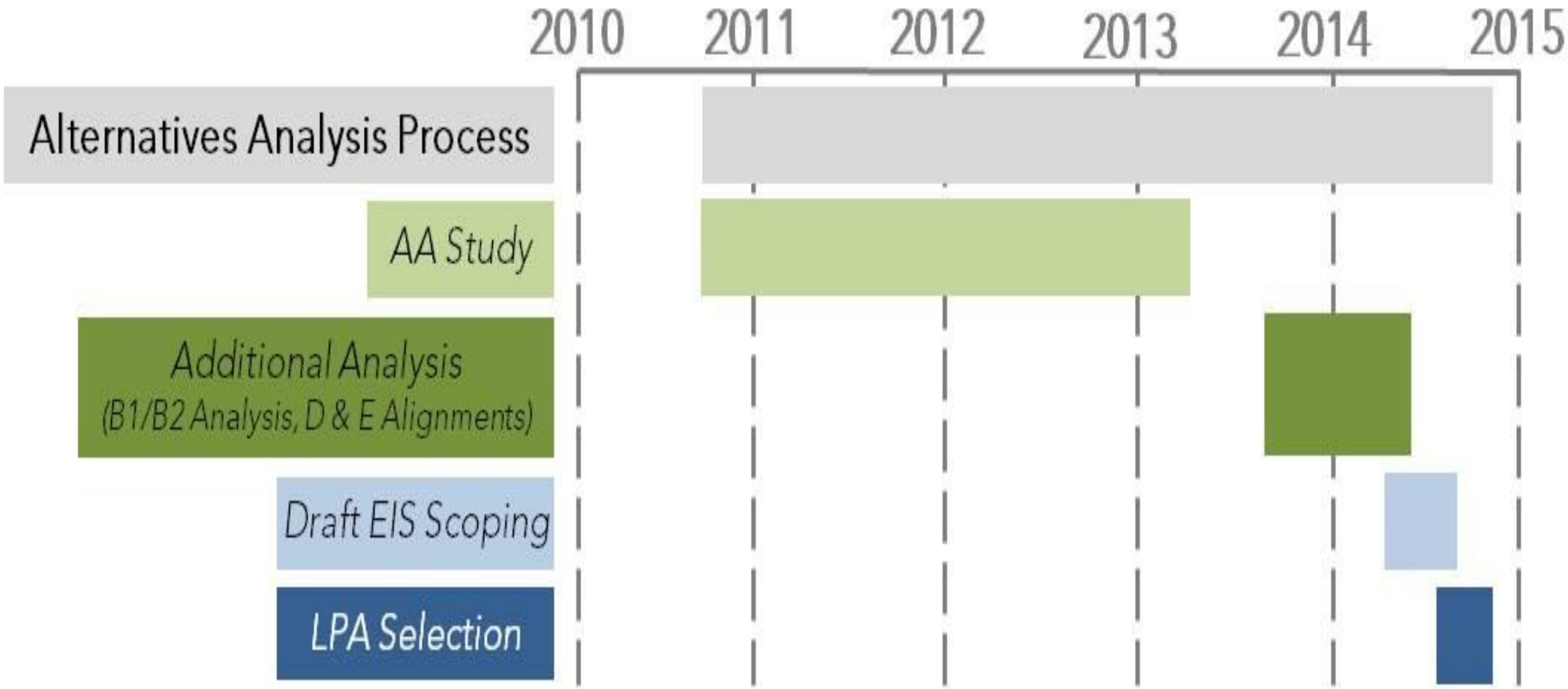
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Transitway Development Process

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Alternatives Analysis

2010 to Present



METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Gateway Purpose and Need

Purpose:

To provide transit service to meet the existing and long-term regional mobility and local accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public within the project area.

Need Factors:

1. Existing transit service options are limited
2. Policy shift toward multimodal travel choices
3. Growth in population and employment
4. Some corridor residents depend on transit
5. Local and regional goals for growth and prosperity

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Gateway Corridor Tier 1 Goals

Tier 1 Goals – Directly Addressing Primary Project Needs		
Goal 1: Improve Mobility	1	Maximize number of people served (future)
	2	Maximize transit ridership
	3	Maximize travel time savings
	4	Minimize traffic mobility impacts
Goal 2: Provide a Cost-Effective, Economically Viable Transit Option	5	Minimize costs and maximize cost-effectiveness

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

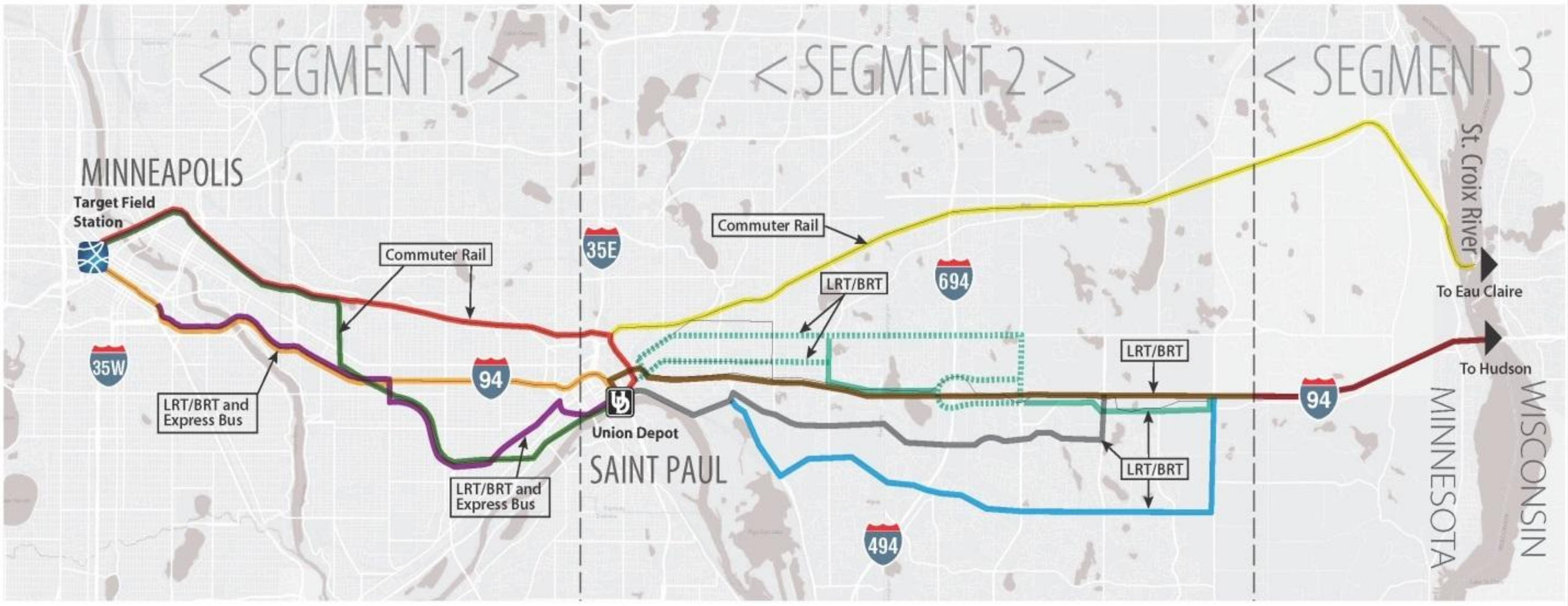
Gateway Corridor Tier 2 Goals

Tier 2 Goals – Reflecting Broader Community Goals		
Goal 3: Support Economic Development	6	Maximize number of people served (existing)
	7	Maximize future development opportunities
Goal 4: Protect the Natural Environmental Features of the Corridor	8	Minimize potential environmental impacts
Goal 5: Preserve and Protect Individual and Community Quality of Life	9	Maximize potential benefits to and minimize potential impacts on the community
	10	Minimize adverse parking, circulation, and safety impacts

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Alternatives Analysis Study 2010 to 2013

- Modes Considered – Commuter Rail, Light Rail, and Bus Rapid Transit
- Alignments Considered
  - UP Rail Corridor to Eau Claire
  - I-94 & parallel corridors to Hudson (LRT, Dedicated BRT, BRT Managed Lane)



AA Study Alternatives Ranking

Alternative	Ranking	Reason for Ranking
Alternative 2 (TSM)	Low	Very low ridership
Alternative 3 (BRT along Hudson Rd/I-94)	High	Higher ridership, lower cost, fewer traffic impacts, better transit travel times
Alternative 4 (BRT on E. 7th St/ White Bear Ave/ Hudson Rd)	Low	High property impacts, slow transit travel times, more traffic impacts
Alternative 5 (LRT along Hudson Rd/I-94)	Medium	Higher ridership, lower cost, fewer traffic impacts, better transit travel times
Alternative 6 (LRT on E. 7th St/ White Bear Ave/ Hudson Rd)	Low	High cost, high property impacts, slow transit travel times, more traffic impacts
Alternative 7 (Commuter Rail)	Low	Low ridership, high cost
Alternative 8 (BRT Managed Lane on I-94)	Medium	Lower cost, fewer property impacts, fewer traffic impacts

Note: Alternative 1 is the No-Build alternative

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Alternatives Analysis Study Decisions

- Retain two alternatives for further study:
  1. BRT along I-94/Hudson Road
  2. LRT along I-94/Hudson Road
- Eliminate Commuter rail to Eau Claire
  - high capital & operating costs and very low potential ridership
- BRT identified as preferred option
- LRT advanced for comparison
- Terminus points: Union Depot to Manning Ave

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

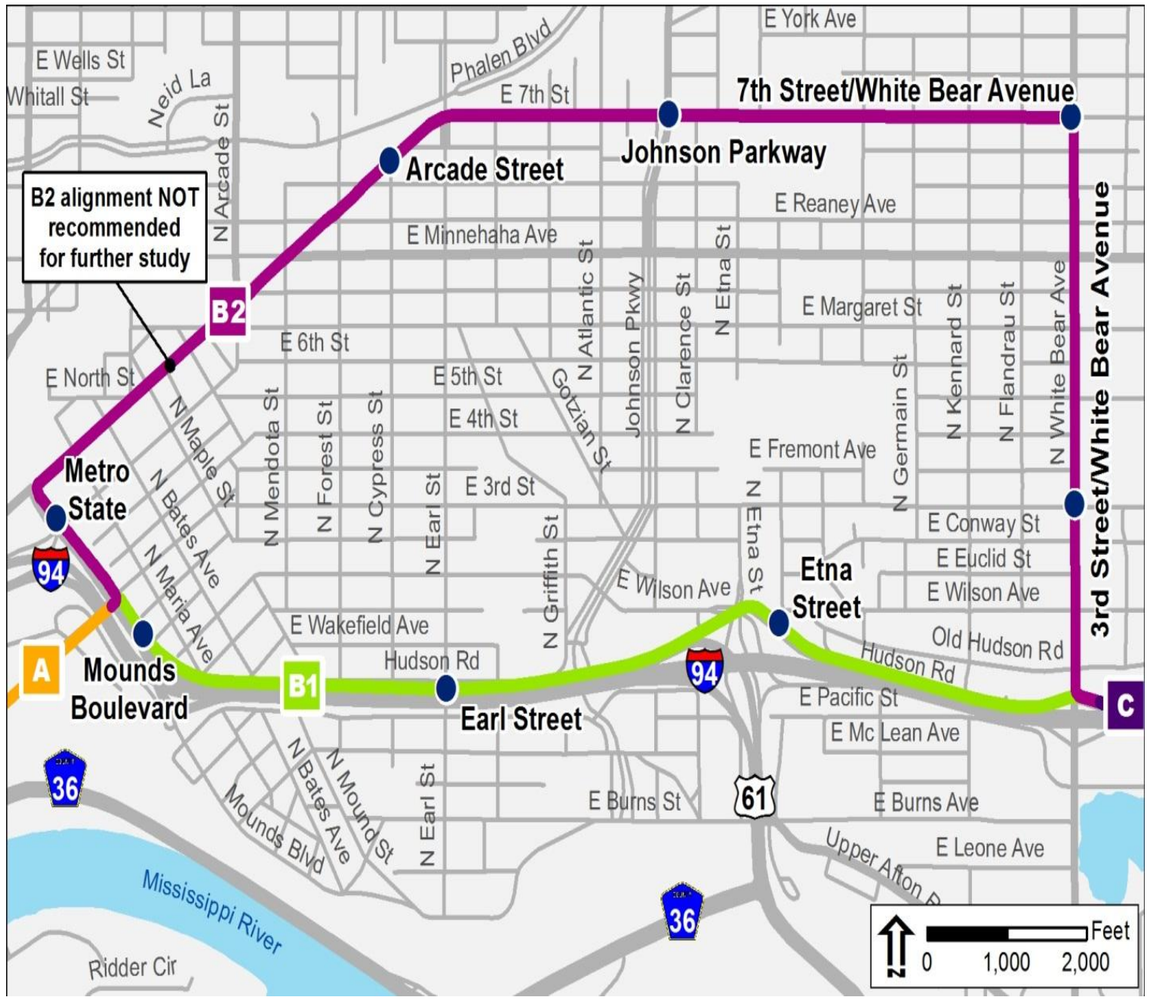
Additional Analysis

Post AA Study Decisions — 2013 to 2014

Reconsidered Alignment B-2 through east side via Mounds Blvd/7th Street/ White Bear Avenue

Decision: Maintain AA Study finding to eliminate Alignment B-2 from further consideration

Saint Paul East Side



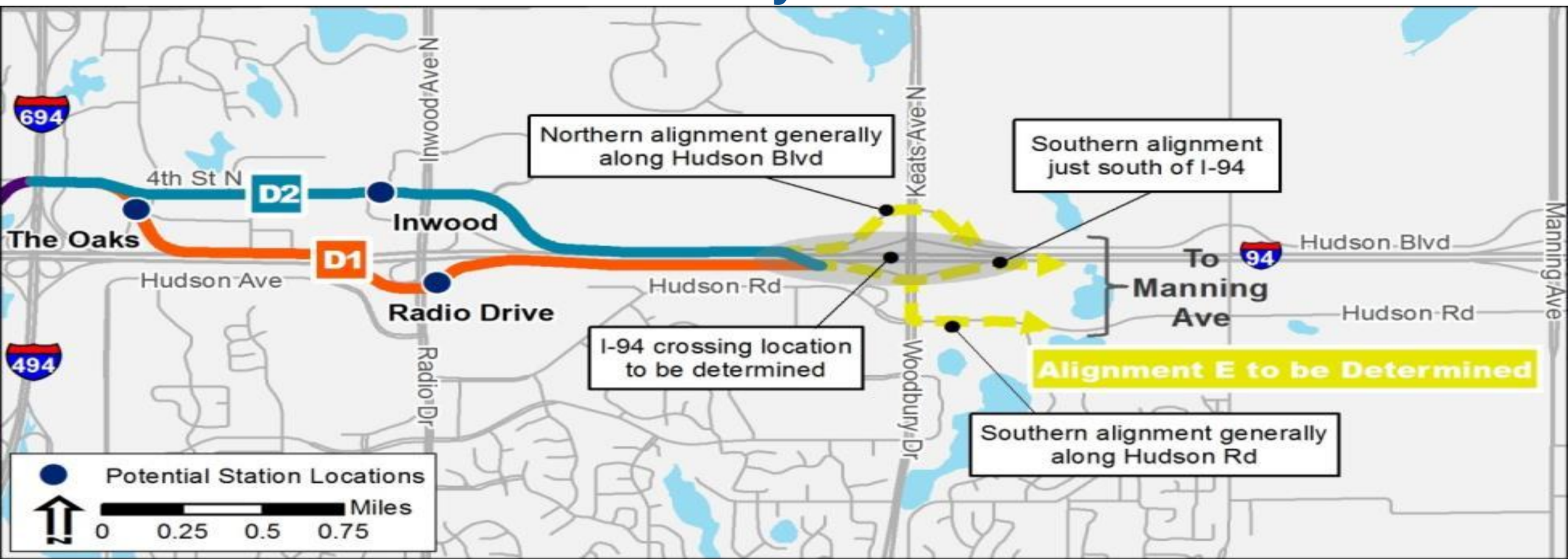
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Additional Analysis

Post AA Study Decisions 2013 to 2014

- AA Study included Alignment D1
- Further discussions with east corridor communities led to:
  a. Re-route D1 through “The Oaks” in Oakdale
  b. Adding Alignment D2 through Oakdale/Lake Elmo

Oakdale/Lake Elmo/Woodbury



Environmental Process

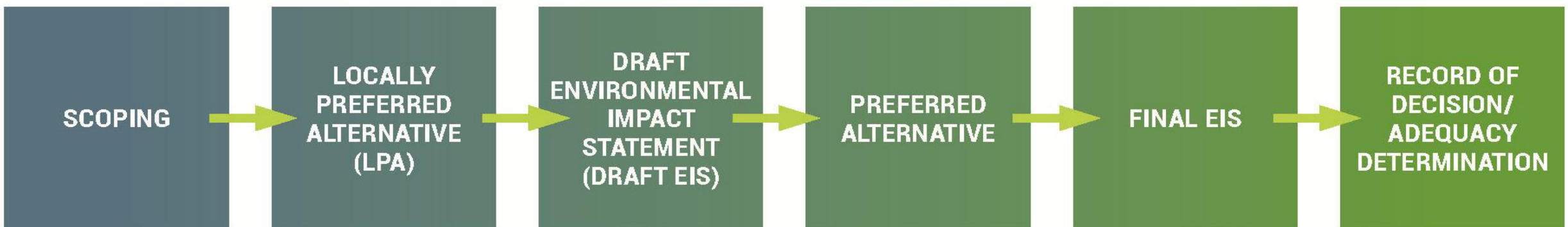
2013 to 2015

Draft EIS Scoping

- LRT or BRT
- What alignment
- Identify key issues
- Public comment period

Draft EIS Analysis

- Identify impacts
- Determine mitigation measures
- Further engineering
- Engage public

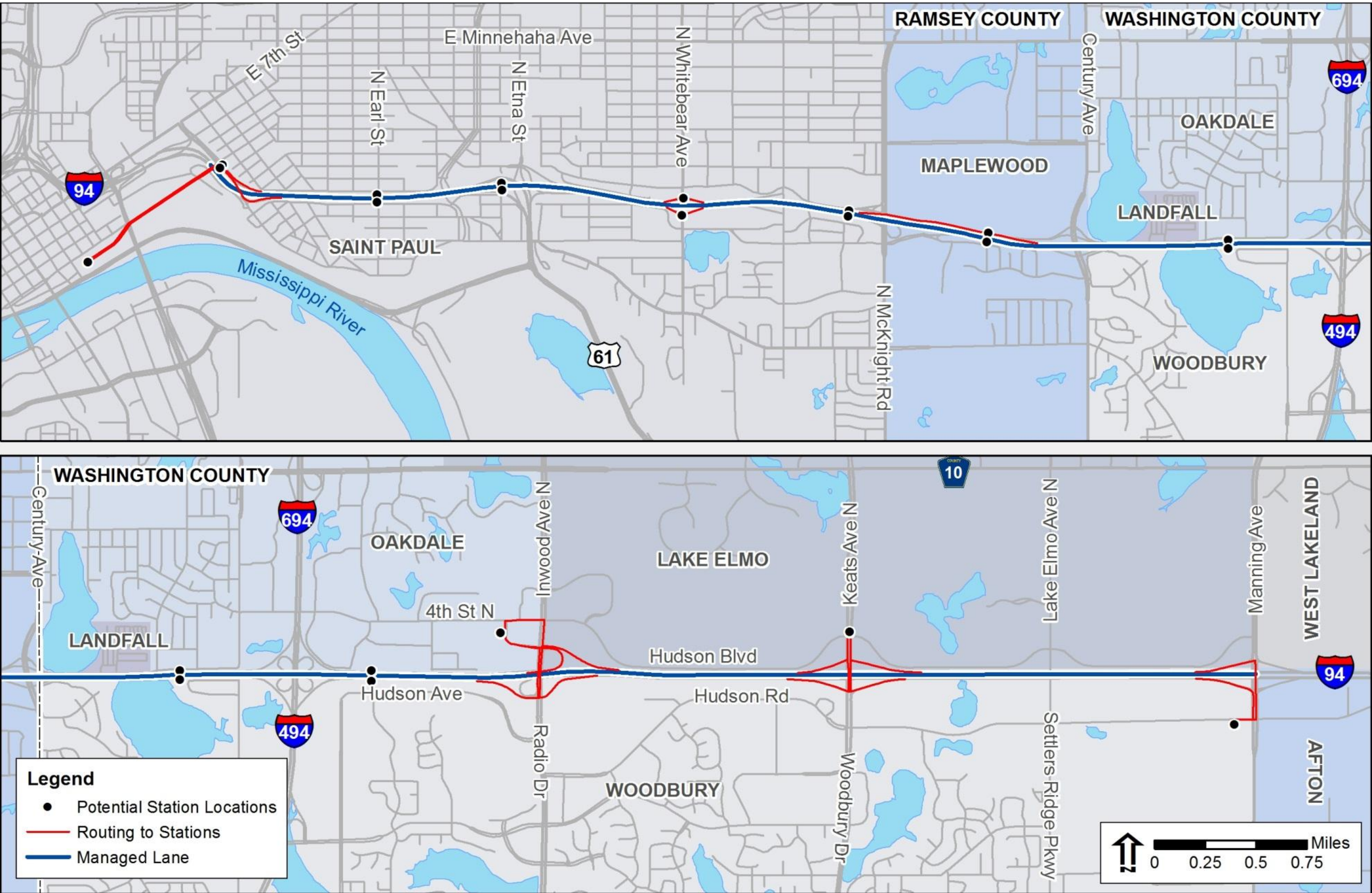


DEIS Scoping
Alternative Modifications/Additions

- Added Managed Lane BRT Alternative as requested by FHWA and FTA due to:
  - Concerns about eliminating a potentially feasible alternative
  - Need to fully inform decisions on allocation of limited ROW in I-94 corridor
  - Potential degradation of I-94 operations from dedicated BRT alternatives
  - Further refine and optimize

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Gateway Managed Lane Alternative



DEIS Scoping

Alternative Modifications/Additions

- Refined Segment E1 & E2 alignments between Keats Ave/Woodbury Drive and Manning Ave
- Added E3 alignment

DEIS Scoping Decisions

- Eliminate LRT from further evaluation
  - LRT had higher costs without substantial increase in ridership compared to BRT
  - Low cost-effectiveness rating under New Starts criteria
  - LRT would have limited flexibility in design options to avoid or minimize potential impacts

- Advance and optimize Managed Lane BRT Alt.
  - As requested by FHWA/FTA
  - But maintain AA study finding that alternative does not meet project purpose and need

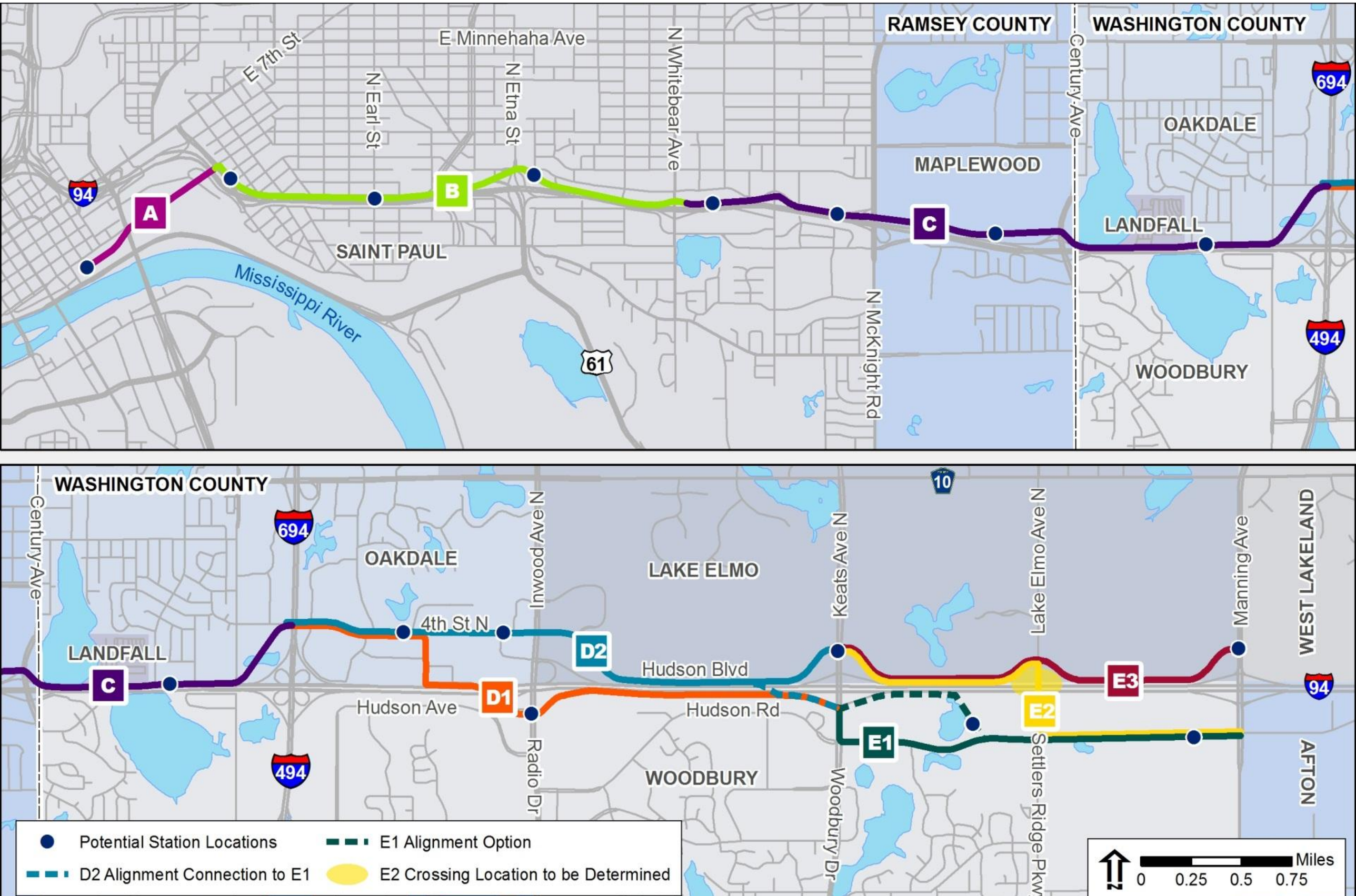
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

DEIS Scoping Decisions

- Study further in the Draft EIS the following Build Alternatives:
  - Dedicated BRT A-B-C-D1-E1
  - Dedicated BRT A-B-C-D2-E1
  - Dedicated BRT A-B-C-D2-E2
  - Dedicated BRT A-B-C-D2-E3
  - Managed Lane BRT

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Gateway Dedicated BRT Alternatives



LPA Technical Analysis

Summary of Alternatives

Measure	Dedicated BRT Alternatives				LRT Alternative	Managed Lane Alternative
	A-B-C-D1-E1	A-B-C-D2-E1	A-B-C-D2-E2	A-B-C-D2-E3		
Length (miles)	12	12	12	12	12	10
Number of Stations	12	12	12	12	12	6 online
2030 Daily Riders:						
• BRT Station to Station[1]	8,600	8,800	8,800	8,900	--	--
• Total BRT Guideway[2]	13,100	13,300	13,300	13,500	9,300	8,100
Est. Travel Time: Union Depot to Manning Ave (min.)	30.0-30.3	30.2-30.5	29.5-30.3	29.4	28	20
Est. Capital Cost ($ 2020)	$500-$505 M	$470-$475 M	$460-$465 M	$460 M	$950 M	$540 M

[1]Assumes all express buses would use I-94.
[2]Assumes all express buses would use BRT guideway.

Recommended LPA

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Other Technical Factors

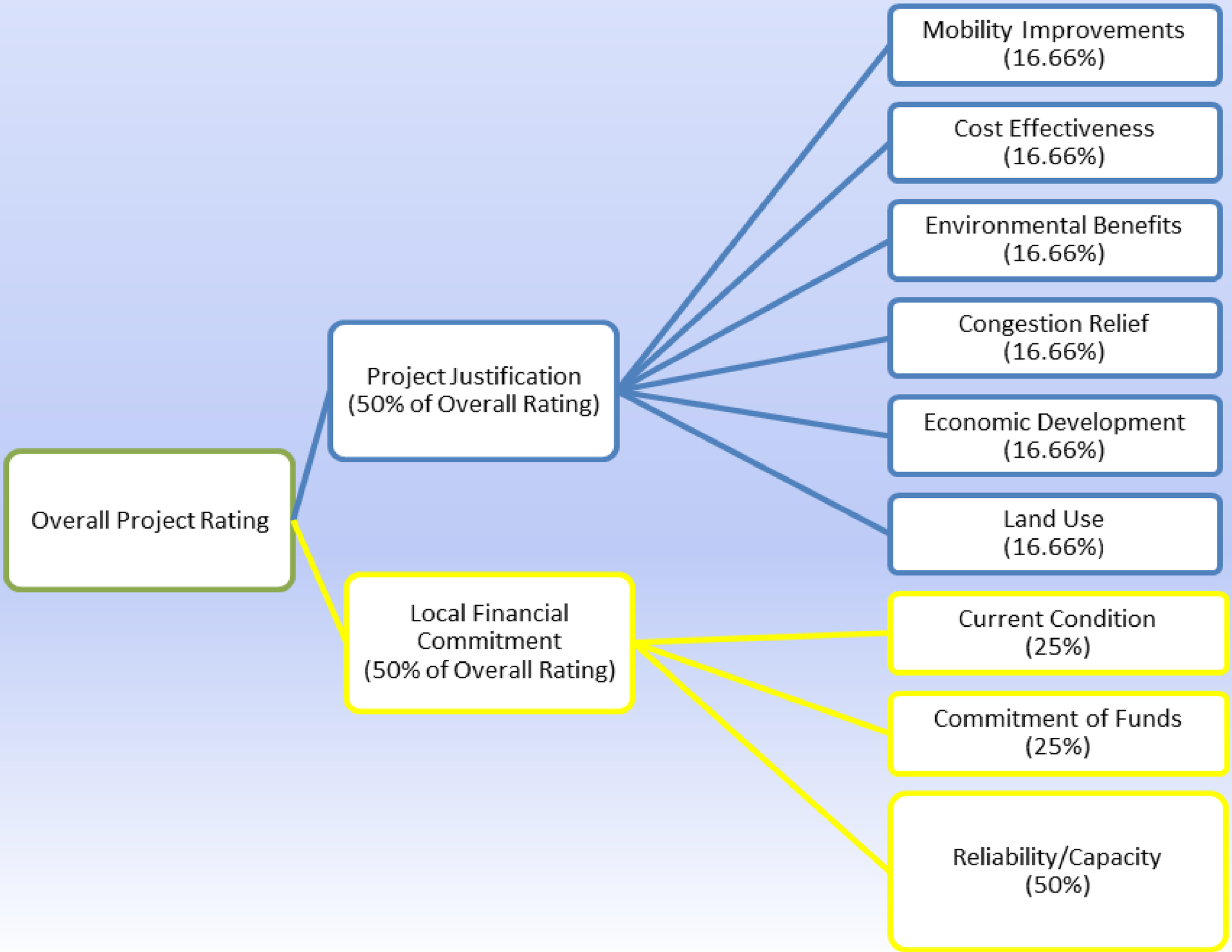
- Jobs/Transit-oriented Development Potential
  - Total jobs accessed is non-differentiator
  - Total jobs range from 120,300 to 121,300
  - Known and willing developer/owner in Woodbury (E1, E2) is differentiator for TOD

- Traffic Impacts – Segment ‘D’
  - Required grade separation at Radio/Inwood Ave (D1) is differentiator

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

LPA Technical Analysis

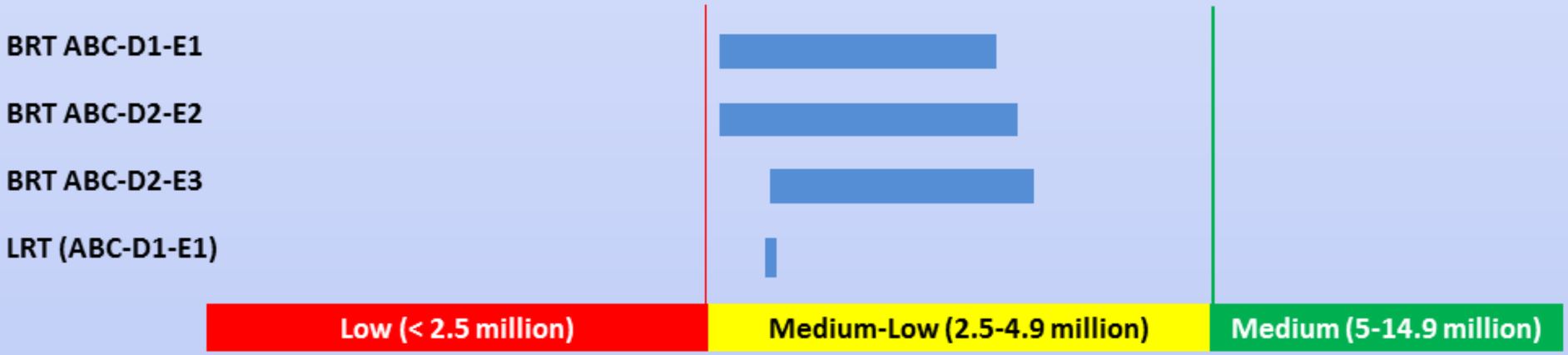
Federal New Starts Evaluation Criteria



LPA Technical Analysis

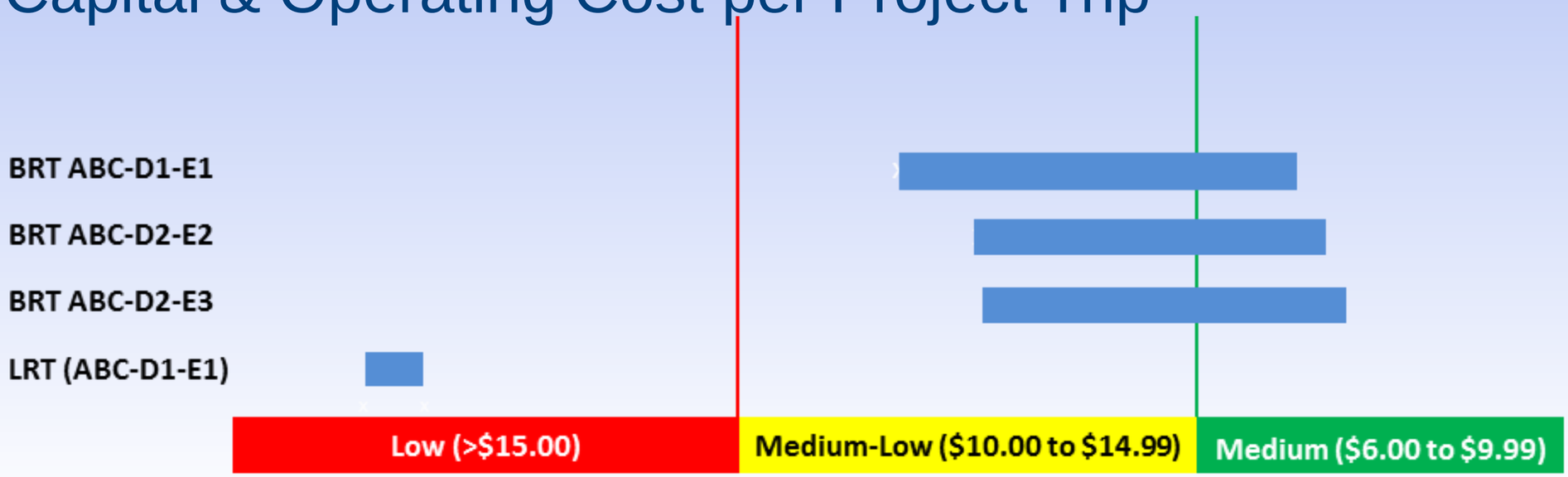
New Starts Potential Ratings

Mobility Improvements: Weighted Annual Riders



Daily riders (double-counted transit dependents) times annualization factor, averaged between current and 2030 time horizons

Cost Effectiveness: Capital & Operating Cost per Project Trip



New Starts Potential Ratings

Project Justification

- Mobility improvements: Med. Low
- Cost effectiveness: Med. Low – Medium
- Environmental benefits: Unknown
- Congestion Relief: Med. (until new fed guidance)
- Economic development: Unknown
- Land use: Unknown

Local Financial Commitment

- CTIB committed 35% of capital cost
- Could rate as Med. or Med. High

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Selection of the LPA

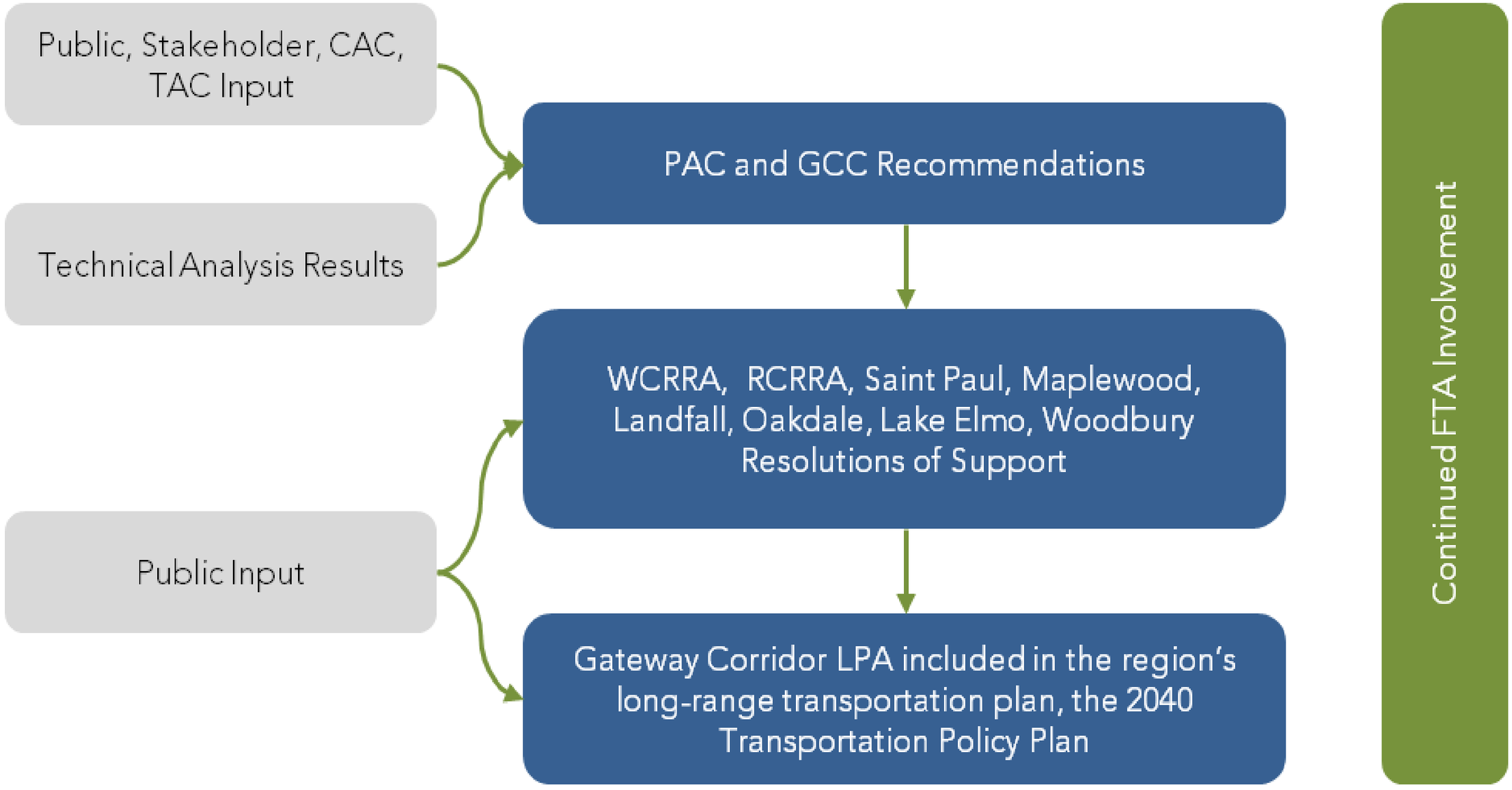
for Public Review

Gateway PAC & Corridor Commission passed supporting resolutions (July 24, 2014) that:

- Recommend LPA to Metro Council for inclusion in Draft 2040 TPP
- Advance four dedicated BRT alignments into DEIS, that are further defined to
  - Minimize impacts to properties and I-94
  - Enhance economic development
  - Reduce capital costs & provide operations efficiency

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

LPA Selection Process



LPA = Locally Preferred Alternative
CAC = Community Advisory Committee
TAC = Technical Advisory Committee
PAC = Policy Advisory Committee

GCC = Gateway Corridor Commission
WCRRA = Washington County Regional Railroad Authority
RCRRA = Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
FTA = Federal Transit Administration

Selection of the LPA

Resolutions of Support were adopted:

- Lake Elmo — Sept. 16, 2014
- Saint Paul/Landfall — Sept. 27, 2014
- Maplewood — Sept. 22, 2014
- Ramsey Co. RRA — Sept. 23, 2014
- Woodbury — Sept. 24, 2014
- Oakdale — Sept. 27, 2014
- Washington Co. RRA — Oct. 7, 2014

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Selection of the LPA

Station Area Plans

All local Resolutions of Support included a clause stating that the local agency:

> "is committed to undertaking and developing station area plans….for the proposed BRT guideway station areas within its jurisdiction based on the results of a market analysis, community input, and Metro Council guidelines and expectations for development density, level of activity, and design."

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Selection of the LPA

Connecting Bus Service

Local Resolutions of Support included whereas clause stating:

"that through the DEIS process the PAC and GCC will continue to evaluate and focus on transit service connections to the dedicated BRT system…including an efficient feeder bus network, as well as the number and locations of stations throughout the Gateway corridor to maximize service, accessibility and surrounding economic development opportunities, while minimizing impacts."

Selection of the LPA

I-94 Corridor Right-of-Way

WCRRA and RCRRA Resolutions of Support included whereas clause relating to I-94 stating:

> "the BRT alignments that advance into the Draft EIS will be further defined and evaluated to minimize impacts to surrounding properties and the I-94 corridor which may include operating in existing lanes with mixed traffic at pinch points where right-of-way is constrained…."

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Selection of the LPA

I-94 Corridor Right-of-Way

WCRRA Resolution:

- "Whereas through the Draft EIS process, the potential impacts to existing highway right-of-way will be addressed and documented."

WCRRA cover letter also committed to:

- "….working closely with MnDOT to identify and minimize potential right-of-way impacts, specifically to Interstate 94."
- "…. that all potential highway right-of-way issues will be addressed in 2015 and a framework for resolving issues in collaboration with and acceptable to MnDOT and Metro Council will be in place before Project Development."

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Recommended Gateway LPA

Gateway Locally Preferred Alternative:

"Dedicated BRT generally on a Hudson Road – Hudson Blvd alignment (A-B-C-D2-E2) that crosses to the south side of I-94 between approximately Lake Elmo Avenue and Manning Avenue, with an east terminus station in Woodbury."

Recommended Gateway LPA

LPA Characteristics

- BRT in a dedicated guideway from St. Paul Union Depot to Manning Ave in Woodbury
- Length = 12 miles
- Number of Stations = 12[1]
- Est. 2030 Daily Ridership
  - BRT Station-to-station = 8,800[2]
  - Total BRT Corridor = 13,300[3]
- Est. travel time = 29.5 to 30.3 minutes
- Est. capital cost = $460 M to $465 M ($ 2020)

[1]A potential additional station is under evaluation for Lake Elmo.

[2]Assumes all express buses use I-94.

[3]Assumes all express buses use guideway.

Gateway Project Risks

- Acceptance into FTA New Starts Project Development
- Secure FTA New Starts Funding
  - Overall project rating unknown
  - Several criteria scores unknown
- Maintaining support among stakeholders to secure state funding portion
- Involvement of multiple federal agencies
  - FTA, FHWA, Army Corps of Engineers
  - Timing risk could add to project costs due to inflation
- I-94 Right-of-Way Impacts

Next Steps

Timeline	Milestone
January 2015	Designate Gateway LPA in 2040 TPP
August 2014 – April 2015	Prepare Draft EIS
April 2015 – June 2015	FTA Reviews Draft EIS
Summer – Fall 2015	Incorporate FTA Comments
Late 2015	Publish Draft EIS
Early 2016	Apply for/obtain FTA approval into Project Development
2016 – 2017	Project Development, Final EIS and Record of Decision