

Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives

Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee

August 2013



Project Purpose

(approved by Policy Advisory Committee 10/25/2012)

- The purpose is to...
 - improve transit connectivity,
 - enhance the attractiveness of transit service,
and
 - catalyze development through an investment in transit infrastructure within the Nicollet-Central Corridor.

Alternatives for Detailed Evaluation

No Build (existing bus)



Enhanced Bus (9-mile)



Streetcar (9-mile)



Streetcar (Preliminary starter line)



Enhanced Bus Differs from Arterial BRT

Enhanced Bus

- Short trips/local circulation
- Slower speed
- Frequent stops (~¼ mile)

Arterial BRT

- Long trips/regional nature
- Higher speed
- Limited stops (½ mile +)

...yet similar in many other ways:

- Frequent service
- Reliable service
- Improved passenger experience



Three Key Questions

to identify a Locally Preferred Alternative:

- What Transit Mode is Best?
- What River Crossing is Best?
- What is the “Streetcar Starter Line”?

WHAT TRANSIT MODE IS BEST?

Goals and Evaluation Criteria

Connect People and Places

- Population and jobs
- Activity centers
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections

Increase Attractiveness of Transit

- Ridership
- Ability to accommodate growth

Catalyze and Support Economic Development

- Development capacity
- Ability to spur development

Integrate with Transportation System

- Traffic
- Parking
- Freight railroads

Support Healthy Communities and Environmental Practices

- Cultural, historic and natural resources
- Transit-reliant population
- Environmental benefits

Develop Implementable Project with Community Support

- Capital cost
- Annual operating and maintenance cost
- Public and business support

Summary of Evaluation

Connect People and Places

- No difference between alternatives; they connect the same number of people and jobs and places

Increase Attractiveness of Transit

- Streetcar has higher weekday ridership in 2030 than Enhanced Bus (19,900 vs. 13,400)
- Enhanced Bus and Streetcar would accommodate growth in transit demand
- No-Build would require current Route 10, 18 and 59 use of larger buses

Catalyze and Support Economic Development

- Same development capacity and value
- Streetcar has greater potential to spur development than Enhanced Bus
- No-Build has lowest potential

Integrate with Transportation System

- All alternatives would operate in mixed traffic
- Enhanced Bus and streetcar would have minimal/similar impacts on traffic, parking and freight rail operations



Comparison of Results for Enhanced Bus and Modern Streetcar

Support Healthy Communities and Environmental Practices

- Streetcar would serve more people who rely on transit than Enhanced Bus (7,500 vs. 4,500 per day in 2030)

Develop Implementable Project with Community Support

- Cost
 - Lower capital cost for Enhanced Bus than Streetcar (\$94 million vs. \$393 million)
 - Lower annual O&M cost for Enhanced Bus than streetcar (\$13.6 million vs. \$20.1 million)
 - Similar O&M cost per passenger
 - Enhanced Bus and Streetcar both appear competitive for federal funding
- Community Support
 - Streetcar has more community support through February 2013;
 - Additional feedback sought August/September 2013

What Mode Is Best?

	Enhanced Bus	Modern Streetcar
Capital Cost	\$94 million	\$393 million
O&M Cost	\$13.6 million	\$20.1 million
Ridership	13,400/weekday	19,900/weekday
Transit Reliant Riders	4,500/weekday	7,500/weekday
Economic Development Potential	Moderate	High

WHAT RIVER CROSSING IS BEST?

River Crossing Alternatives



Mississippi River Crossing Options

	Hennepin/1st	3rd/Central
1.4 Connections with Transitways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share river crossing with Hennepin/University streetcar 	
1.5 Major Activity Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full access to riverfront • Access to Nicollet Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial access to riverfront
1.7 Pedestrian Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible connections to both sides of river and Nicollet Island 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial access to riverfront
1.8 Bicycle Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not preclude planned bike lanes • Direct access to riverfront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No room for bike lane without parking impacts • Indirect access to riverfront
2.1 Ridership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +1,000 boardings for streetcar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter walk distance for some existing riders
4.3 Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 travel lanes/direction • Would not preclude traffic operation changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 travel lanes/direction
5.1 Historic Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge is on NRHP
6.3 Annual O&M Cost (varies by alternative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10.6 - \$20.1 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$11.4 - \$20.6 million
6.4 Capital Cost (varies by alternative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$94 - \$393 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100 - \$409 million

WHAT IS THE STREETCAR STARTER LINE?

Why a Streetcar Starter Line?

- Experience of other US streetcar systems
- Competitive for federal funding
- Serve as downtown spine of future streetcar network
- Capture majority of benefits of 9.2-mile streetcar

Initially defined as 3.4-mile segment between Eighth St NE to Lake St

PEER SYSTEM	OPENING YEAR	ROUTE LENGTH (MI)
Portland Phases 1-4	2001-2007	4.0
Portland - Phase 5	2012	3.3
Seattle South Lake Union	2007	1.3
Seattle First Hill	2014	2.5
Tucson	2013	3.9
Atlanta	2014	1.3

Additional Priorities for Identifying a Starter Line

- Strong existing and future development anchors
- Strong east-west transit connections
- Potential to replace existing buses

Eighth St NE-Lake Streetcar Starter Line



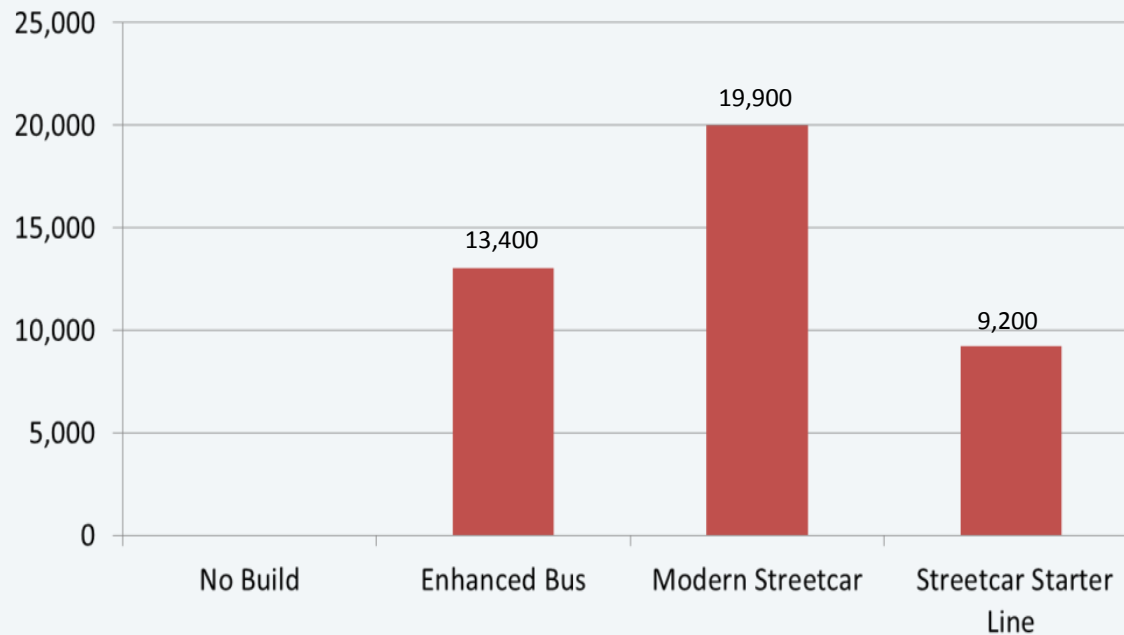
Connection between bridge and Nicollet Mall to be determined during environmental review/ advanced concept design

High Transit Ridership

Increase Attractiveness of Transit

- One-third the length but about one-half of ridership

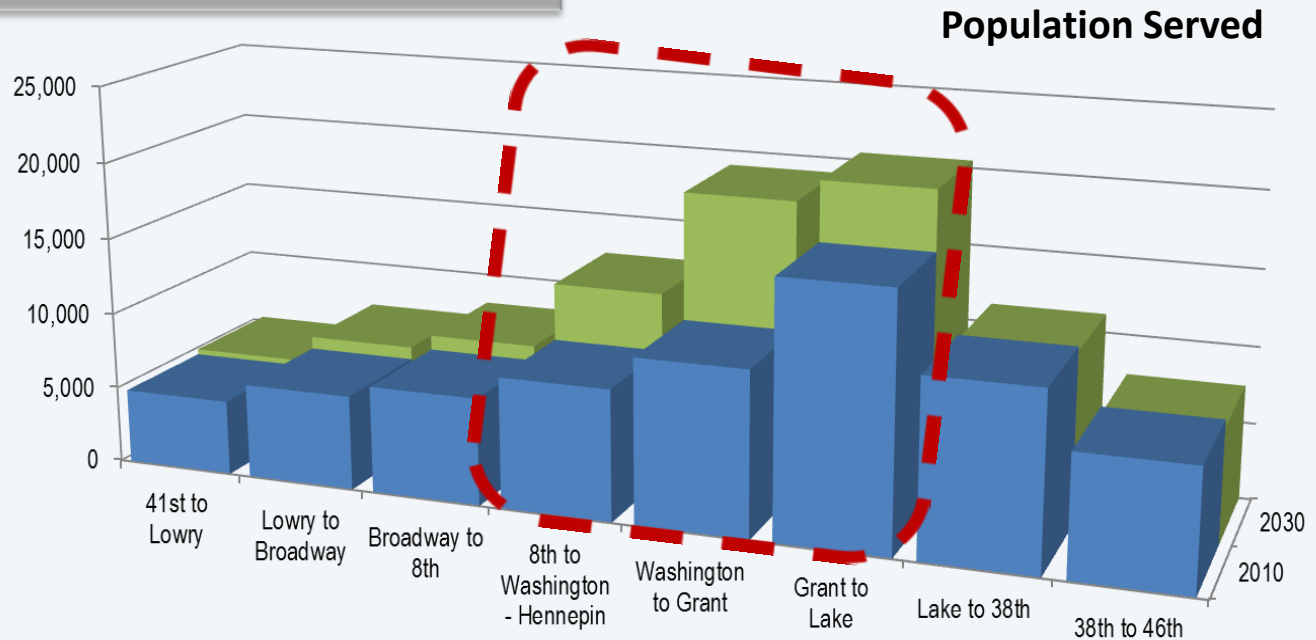
2030 Average Weekday Boardings



Serves Most People and Jobs

Connect People and Places

- 90% of growth in population and employment
- Connects all but two activity centers

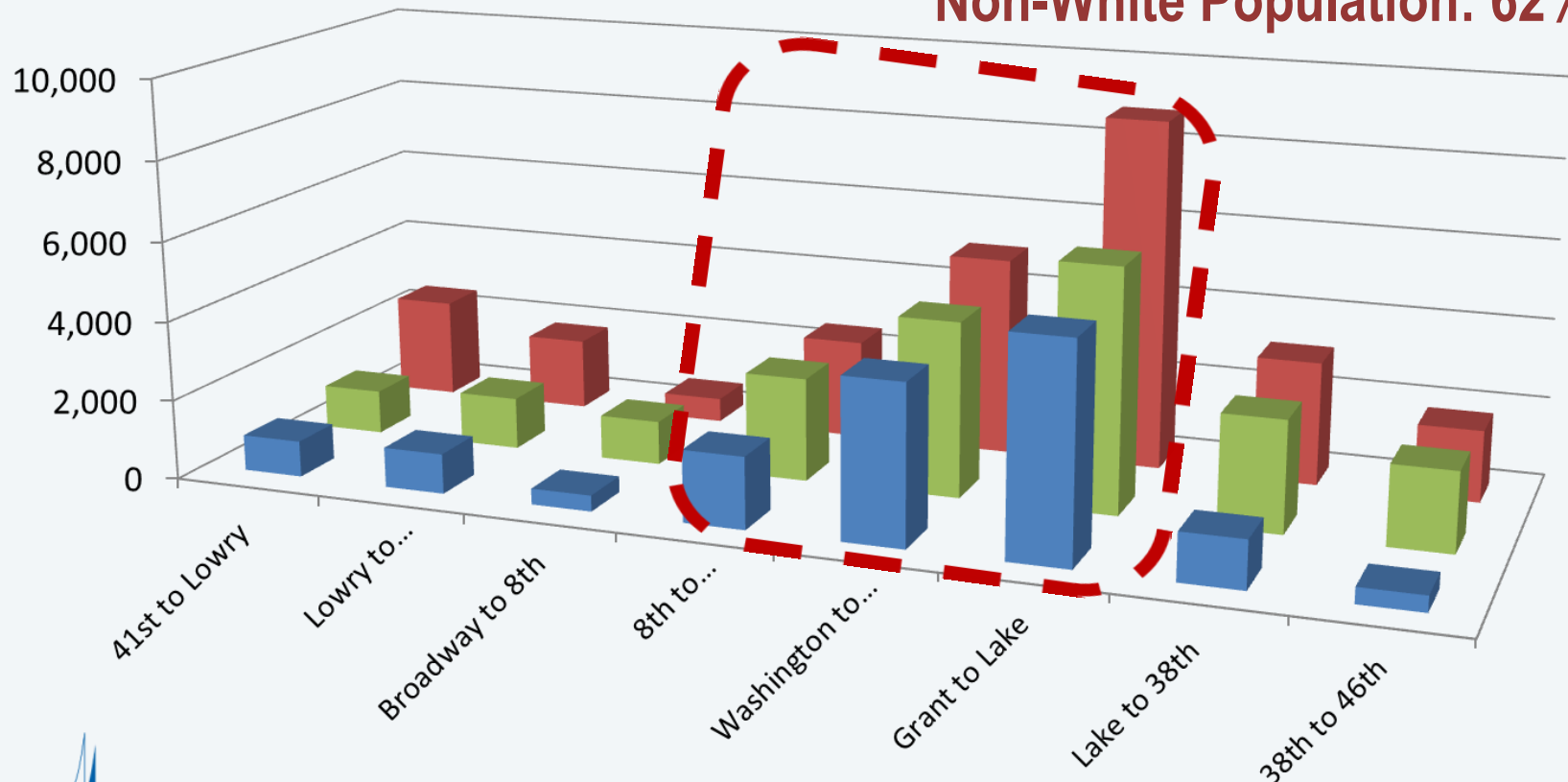


Serves Most Transit-Reliant People

Support Healthy Communities and Environmental Practices

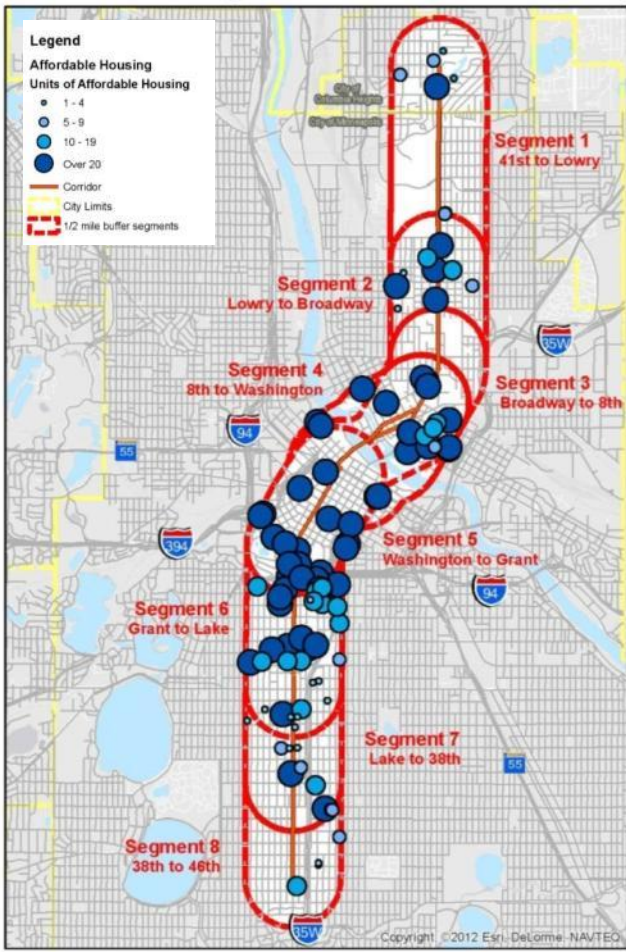
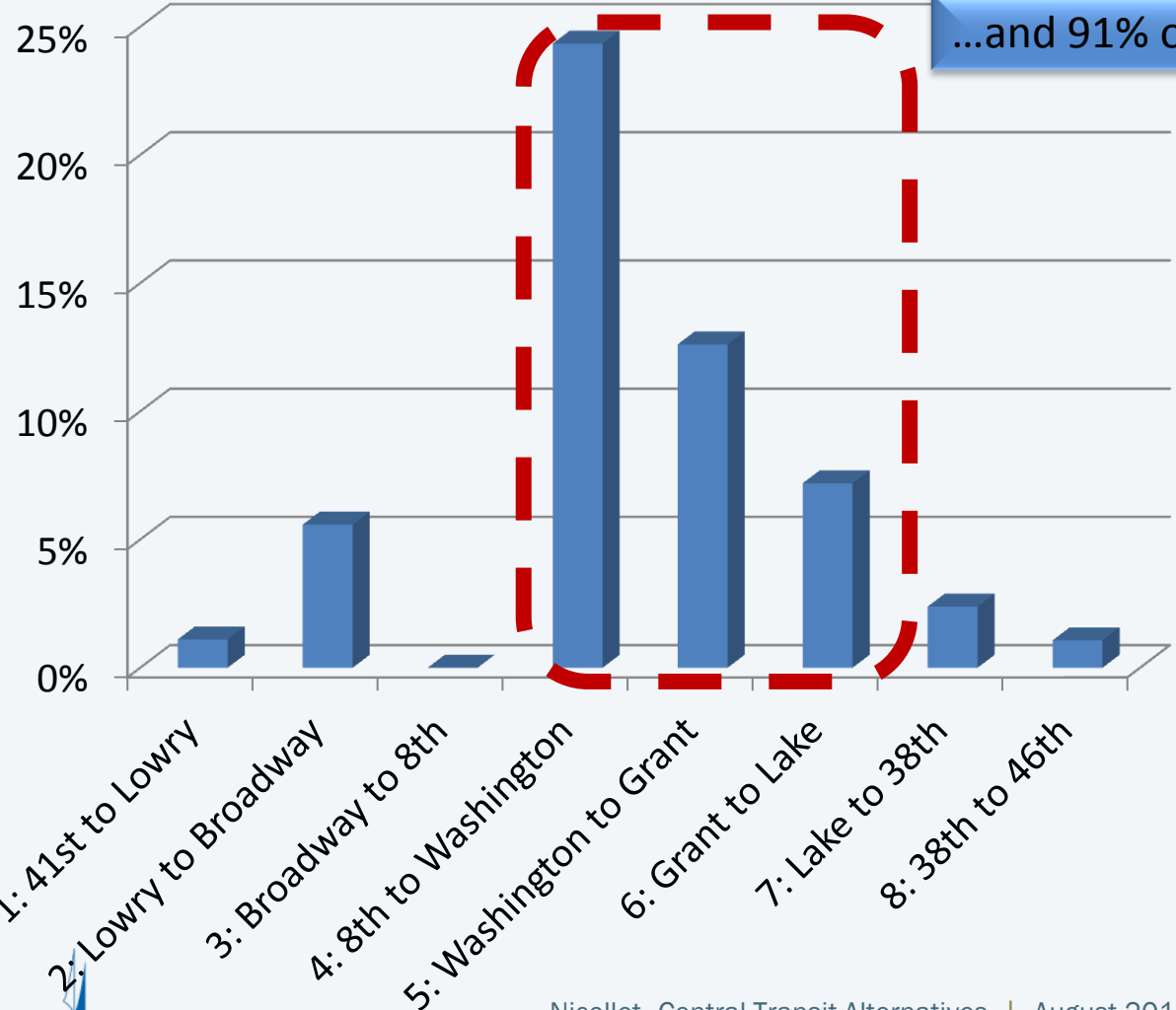
- Serves 60%+ of transit-reliant population

No Vehicle Population: 62%
Population Living In Poverty: 74%
Non-White Population: 62%



Serves Most Affordable Housing

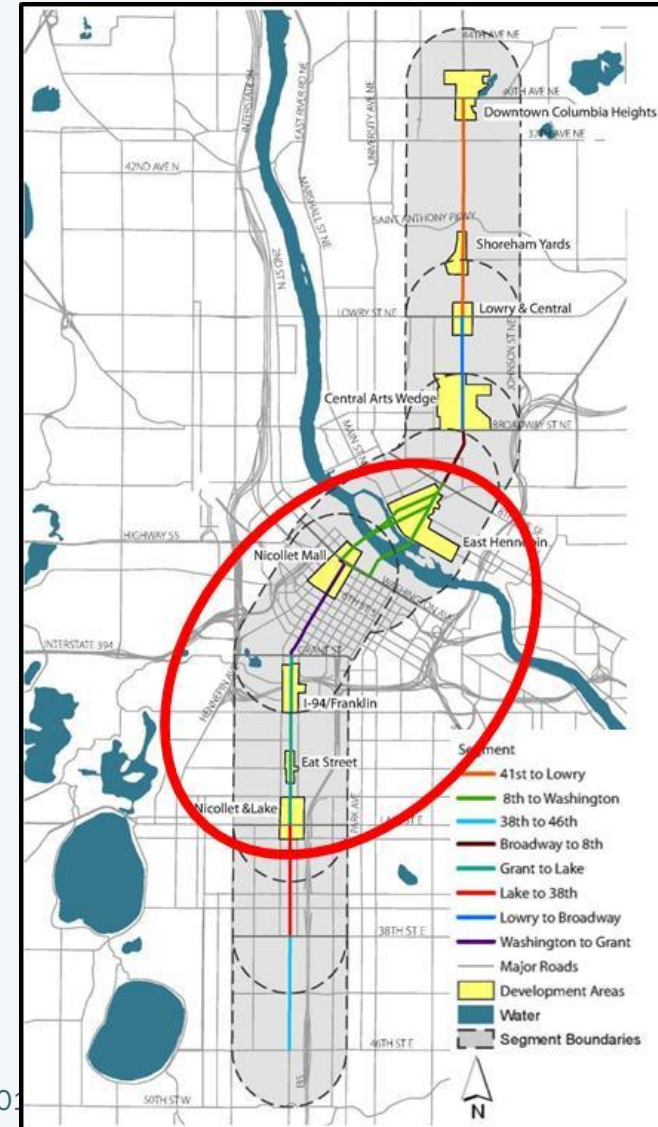
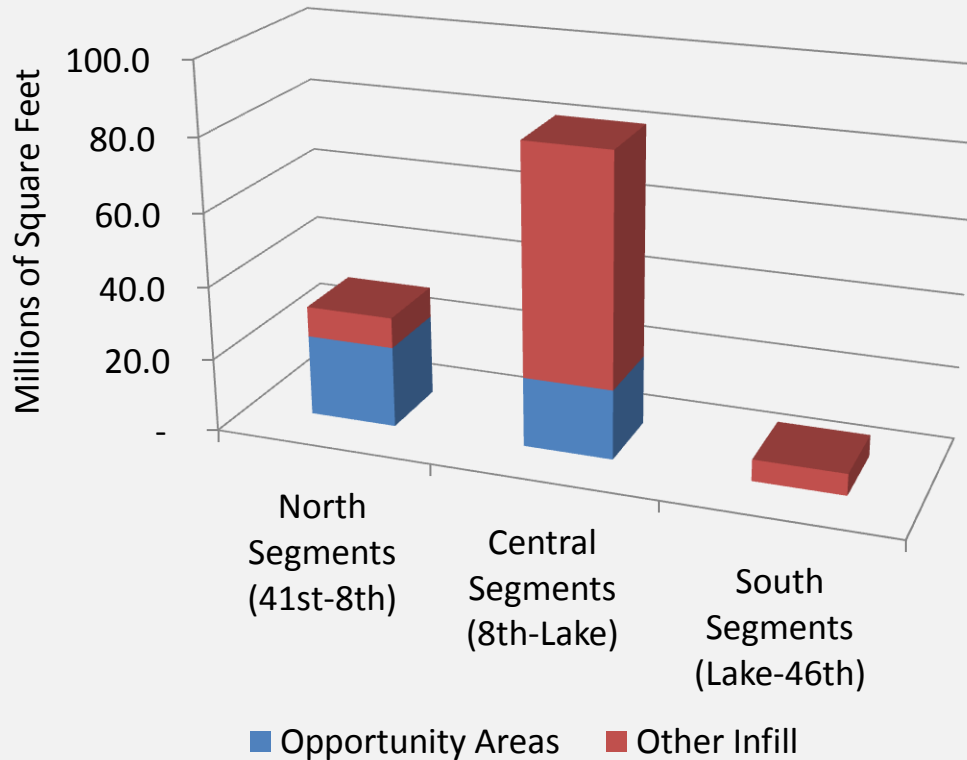
...and 91% of affordable housing units



Best Economic Development Potential

Catalyze and Support Economic Development

- 69% of development capacity
- Serves 5 of 9 opportunity sites



Streetcar Starter Line

- 9,200 weekday boardings
- Annual O&M Cost: \$10.6 million
- Capital Cost: \$180-\$200 million
- Potential FTA cost-effectiveness rating:
Medium or better

What Streetcar Might Look Like



Next Steps

- Obtain Public and Agency Feedback through September 6th
 - Open houses: August 6th, 7th and 14th
 - Online: www.minneapolis.gov/nicollet-central
 - Presentations to neighborhood and business associations
- Select Locally Preferred Alternative –September
- Complete Environmental Assessment
- Amend Regional Transportation Policy Plan to include LPA
- Funding Plan and Interagency Agreements

Thank You

www.minneapolismn.gov/nicollet-central

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