

# **Rush Line Transitway Draft Locally Preferred Alternative Update**

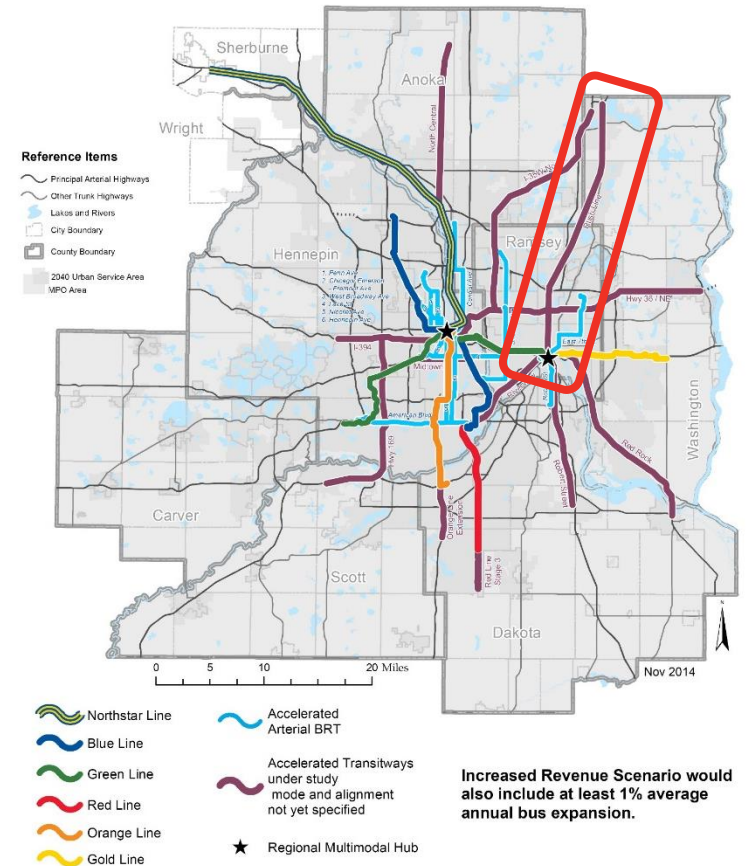
Transportation Committee, April 24, 2017



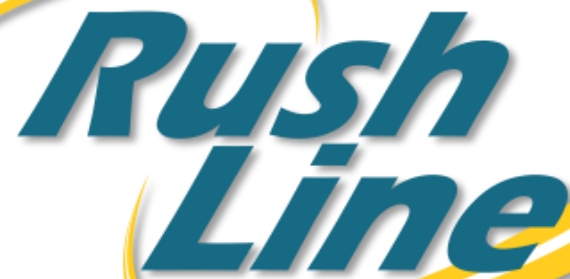
# Rush Line in the 2040 TPP

- Not funded in current projected revenues and adopted funding strategies (CTIB Program of Projects)
- Next steps for consideration in the Plan:
  - Local resolutions of support
  - LPA report on project process and addressing TPP requirements
  - Funding partner planning action (CTIB and/or County)
- Regardless of next steps, status of recommended LPA will be updated in the Plan

**Increased Revenue Scenario Transitways**  
Building an Accelerated Transitway Vision



2040 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN | METROPOLITAN COUNCIL  
Figure 8

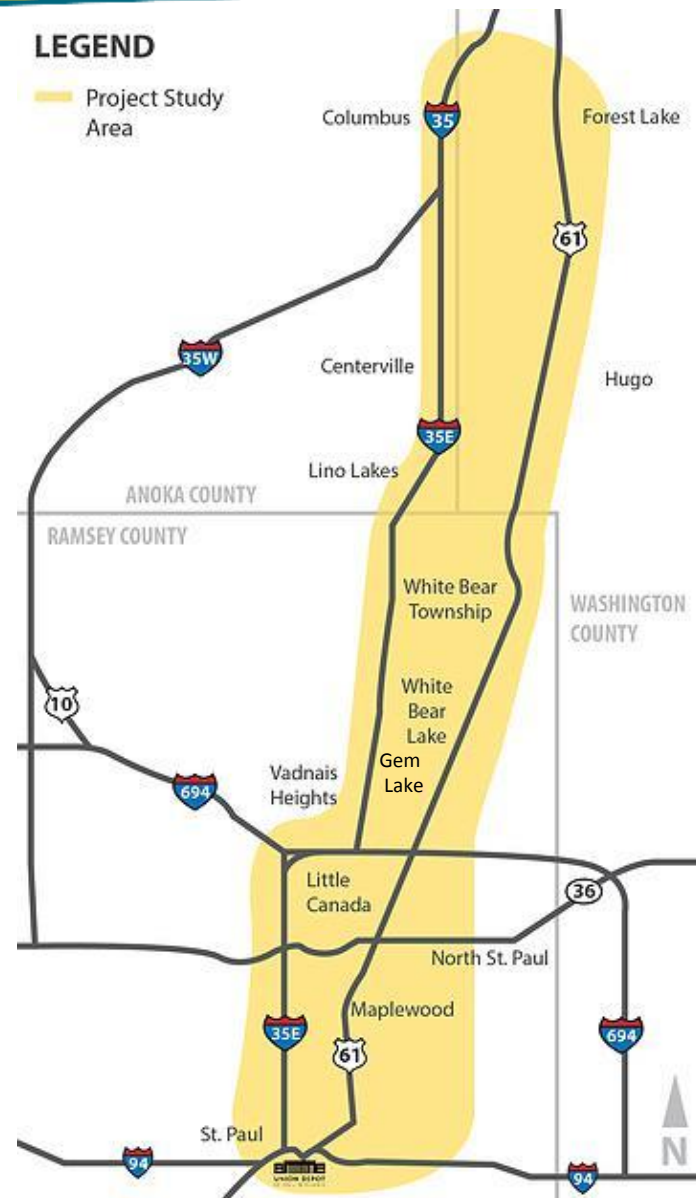


**Transit Study Update**  
**Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee**

April 24, 2017

# Study Area

- 30-mile study area between Union Depot in St Paul and Forest Lake
- Connects major destinations, neighborhood activity centers and job concentrations
- Serves diverse and growing population



# Need for Improved Transit

## #1 Sustainable Growth and Development

**↑ 24%** Forecasted population growth by 2040

Forecasted employment growth by 2040 **↑ 30%**

## #2 Serve People Who Rely on Transit

**46,100** Number of people over age 65

People living below poverty line since 2000 **↑ 55%**

**↓ 11%** Median household income

## #3 Sustainable Travel Options are Limited

**↑ 17%** Commute times between 35-90 minutes

Traffic volumes are increasing



**↑ 3%** I-35E **↑ 9%** Hwy. 61

## #4 Transit Demand is Increasing

Transit demand in northern oriented routes **↑ 10%**



Demand by route type

- ↑ 33%** Express
- ↑ 9%** Suburban Local
- ↑ 3%** Urban Local

# Study Milestones

1

Complete

## CORRIDOR VISION

- Review of Relevant Work
- Current and Future Conditions
- Purpose/Need
- Goals/Objectives

2

Complete

## ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION

- Tier 1 Screening
- Detailed Definition of Alternatives
- Tier 2 Screening
- Tier 2 Refinement

3

In Progress

## LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA)

- Identify LPA
- Implementation Plan

We Are Here

*Community Engagement*





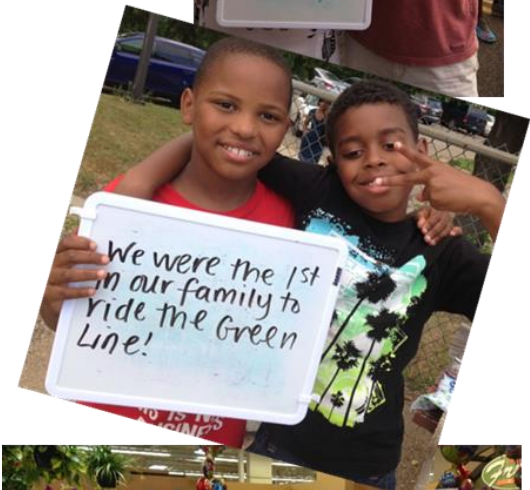
# Public Engagement

More than **5,000 people** participated in the Rush Line Study through community events, workshops, business outreach, presentations, pop-up events, social media, and online engagement forums.



# What We Heard

- All-day transit service needed
- Connect people to businesses, services, jobs and education
- Preserve natural spaces
- Concern about property and business impacts
- Pursue highest transit investment possible to make areas more desirable
- Transit options should also be cost-effective





# Evaluation Criteria by Project Goal

## *Increase Transit Use*



Ridership

New Transit Riders

Transit-Dependent Riders

Travel Time

## *Implementable Project*



Construction Costs

Operations and Maintenance Costs

Cost Effectiveness

## *Improves Quality of Life*



Wetland/ Water Resources

Noise/Vibration

Parkland

Cultural/ Historic Properties

Traffic Safety

Below Poverty Households

Transit-Dependent Households

## *Improves Sustainable Travel Options*



Population at Stations

Bike/Ped Access

Bike/Ped Level of Travel Stress

## *Enhances Regional Connectivity*



Access Changes

Traffic Operations

Transit Connectivity

Parking

## *Supports Local Vision*



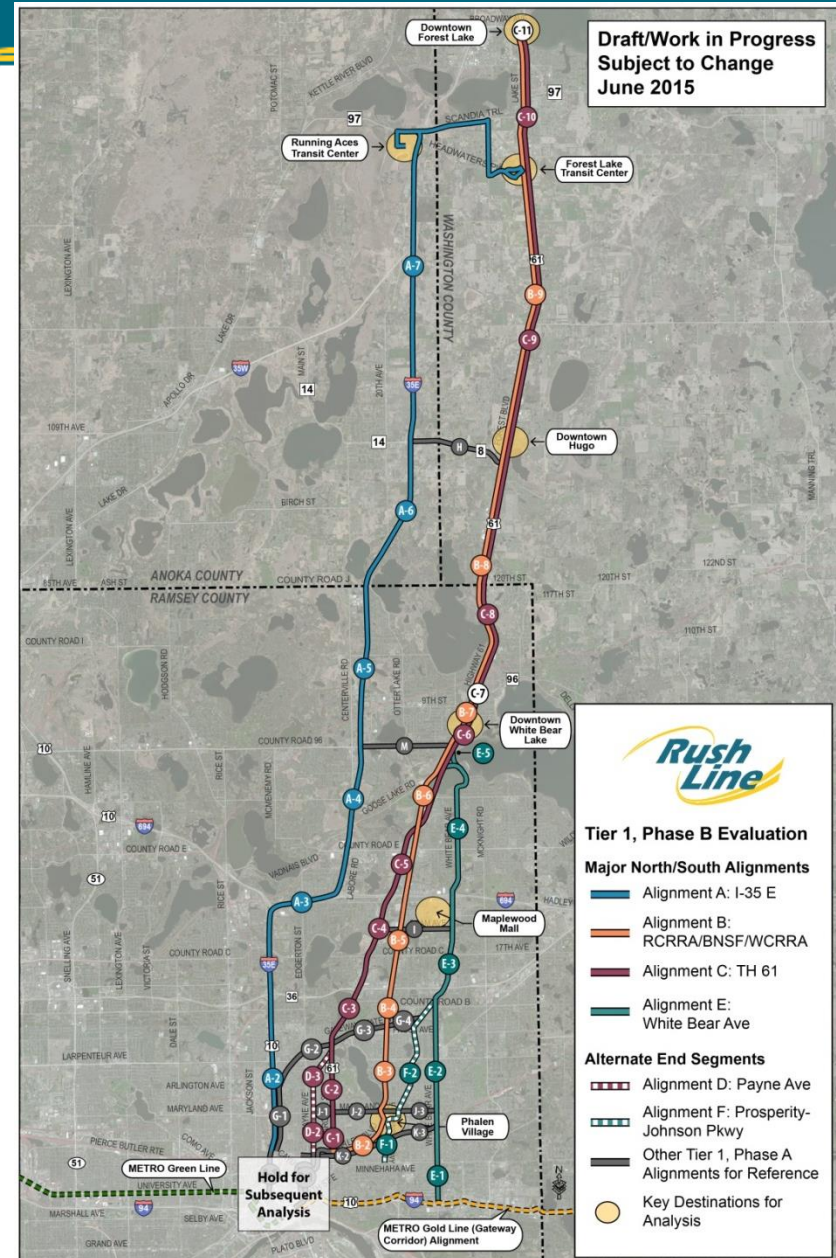
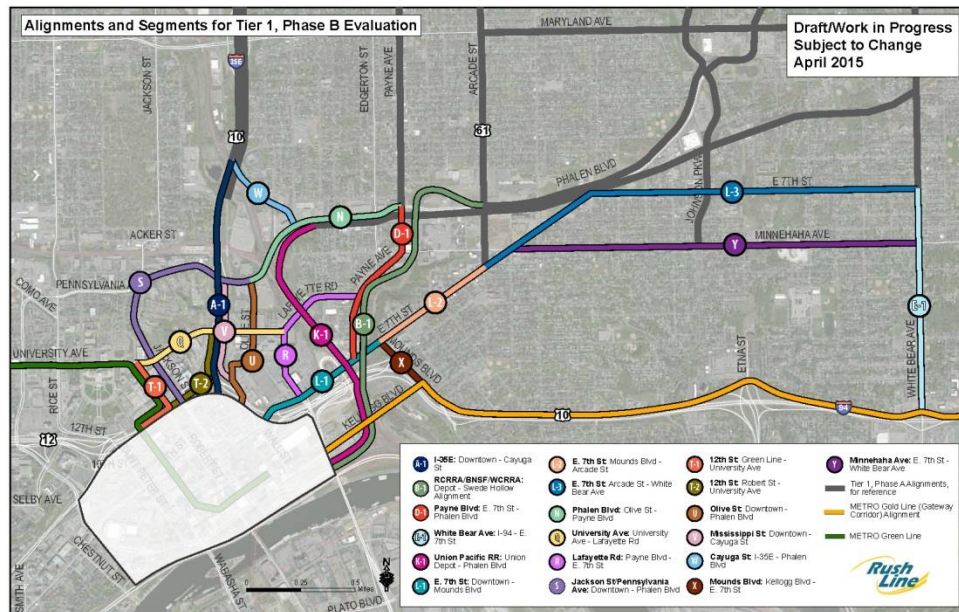
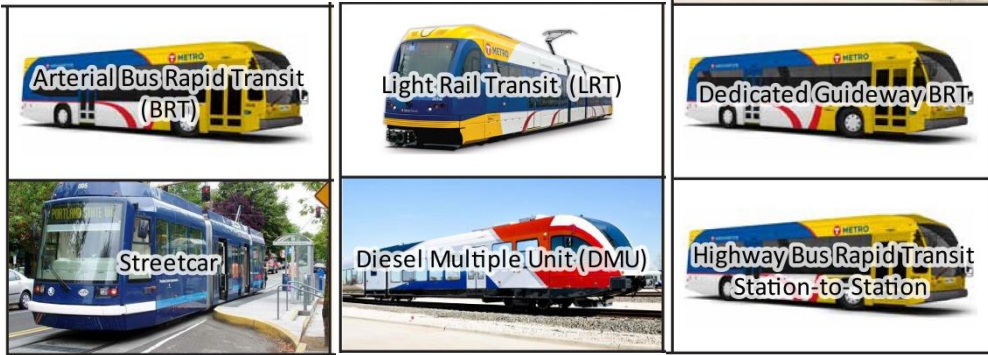
Corridors with Constrained Right-of-Way

Employment At Stations

Development Potential for Transit Oriented Development

Development Potential Survey

# Where We Started: Tier 1





# Tier 2 Screening

## ALTERNATIVES 1 & 2 County/Rail ROW



## ALTERNATIVE 3 White Bear Ave. & County/Rail ROW



## ALTERNATIVE 4 White Bear Ave.



# Tier 2 Screening



LRT



Dedicated BRT



Arterial BRT



## RIDERSHIP

- Highest ridership
- 6,400-9,500 riders/day
- About 60% of riders are new transit riders

- 4,800-5,400 riders/day
- About 70% of riders—new transit riders

- 5,700-6,000 riders/day
- About 30% of riders—new transit riders
- Lowest total corridor ridership



## COST EFFECTIVENESS

- Highest cost of all 3 modes
- Construction costs: \$1.2B-1.7B
- Yearly operating: \$22M-29M
- Would not qualify for FTA funding

- Middle range for cost
- Construction costs: \$600M-900M
- Yearly operating: \$9M-12M
- Potential to qualify for FTA funding with refinement

- Lowest cost
- Construction costs: \$75M
- Yearly operating: \$10M
- Could qualify for FTA funding



## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- Highest development potential of all three transit vehicles

- Second highest level of development potential due to presence of a fixed guideway

- Lowest development potential because there is no fixed guideway

# Evaluation of Vehicles by Project Goals

# Recommended Vehicle

## ***Dedicated Bus Rapid Transit***



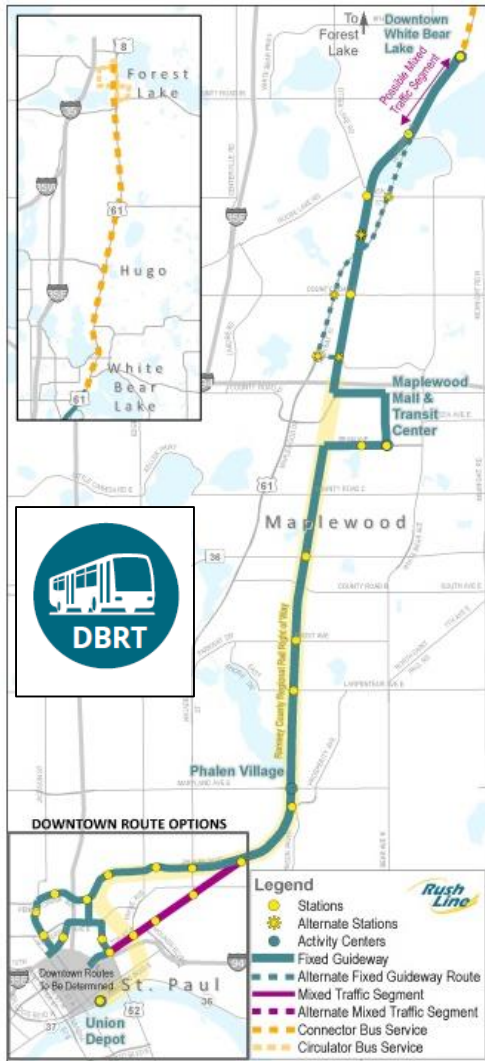
- Less than half the cost of Light Rail Transit
- Cost per rider could qualify for federal funding with refinements
- Similar level of service as LRT
  - Operates in own lane
  - Frequent and reliable
  - Upgraded stations and vehicles
- Can be catalyst for economic development





# Alt 1: DBRT on County/Rail ROW to White Bear Lake

*Co-locate with Bruce Vento Trail; Explore Connector Bus to Forest Lake*



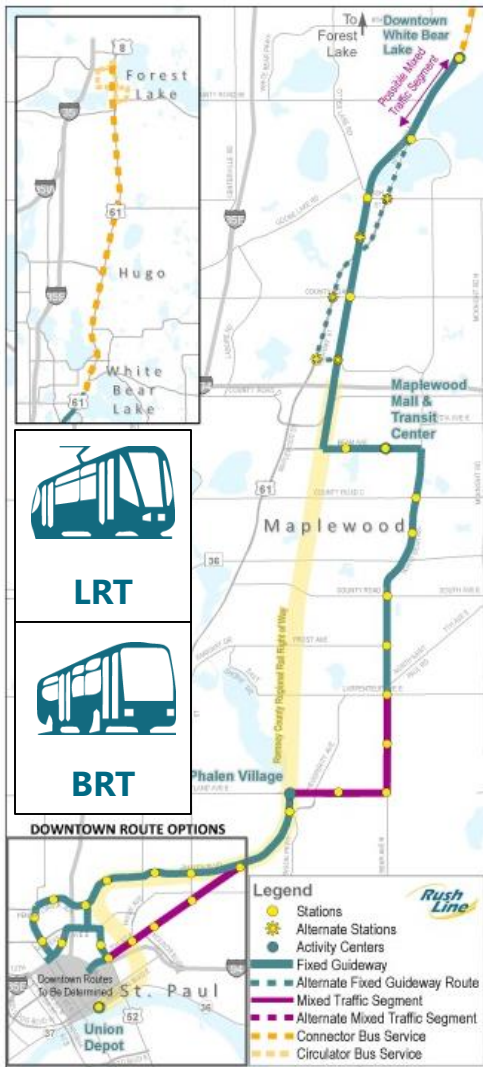
## **Recommendation:** *ADVANCE FOR REFINEMENT AS LPA*

- Ranks the best for meeting the project goals based on the transit vehicle and route assessment
- Longest route with fixed guideway, maximizing development potential
- No private property acquisition along County / Rail ROW portion of route
- Shortest travel time between St Paul and White Bear Lake
- Cost per rider, with further refinement, could qualify for FTA funding



# Alt 2 or 3: LRT or DBRT on County/Rail ROW to White Bear Lake

*Co-locate with Bruce Vento Trail; Explore Connector Bus to Forest Lake*



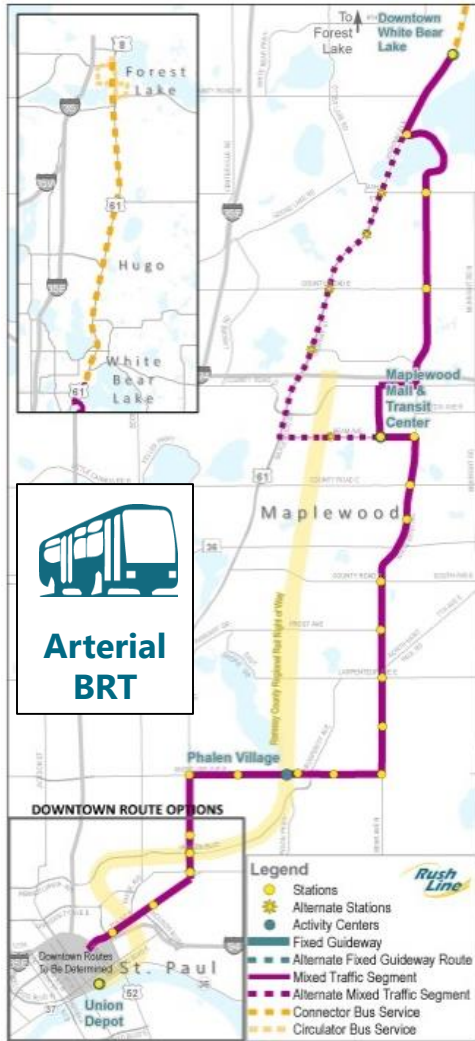
## **Preliminary Recommendation:** **DO NOT ADVANCE**

- Does not meet the project goals as well as other alternatives based on the route and transit vehicle assessment
  - Greatest private property, traffic, and access impacts (businesses and residents on White Bear Avenue)
  - The route has the longest travel time - over 10 minutes longer than the County/Rail ROW
- Cost per rider would not qualify for federal funding



# Alt 4: ABRT on White Bear Avenue to White Bear Lake

## Explore Connector Bus to Forest Lake

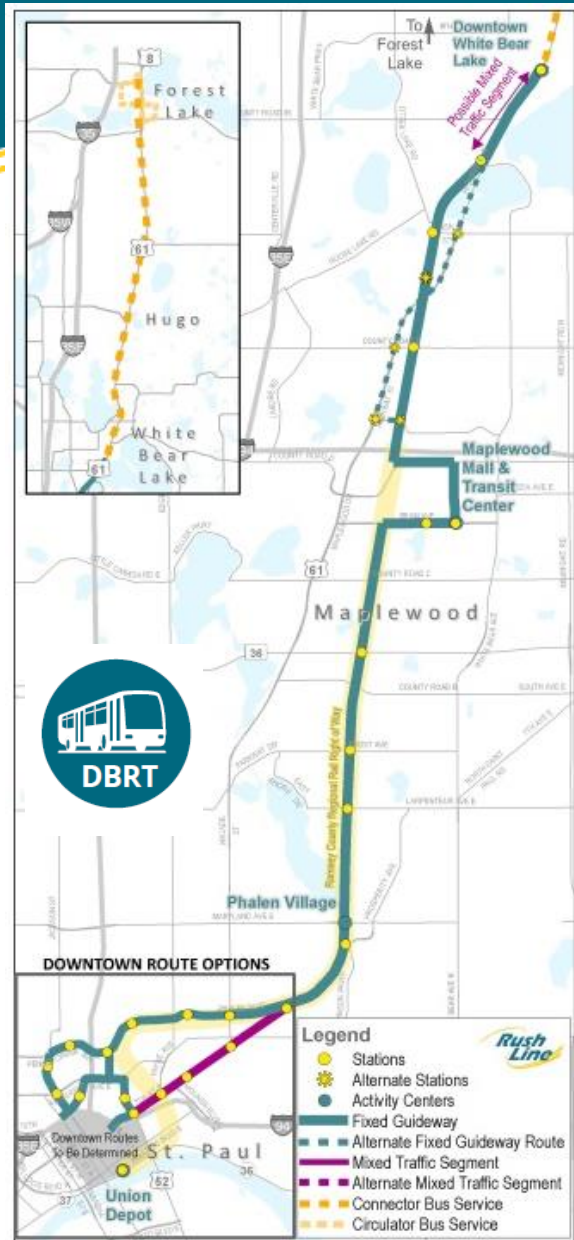


## **Preliminary Recommendation:** **DO NOT ADVANCE**

- Although it would likely qualify for federal funding it does not meet the project goals based on route and transit vehicle assessment
  - Lowest number of new riders and total corridor ridership
  - Lowest potential to generate economic development due to lack of a fixed guideway
- Planned Route 54 extension to provide similar service
- Recommended not advancing as part of Rush Line project; potential to be pursued by others as a separate projects after monitoring the performance of the Route 54



# Tier 2 Refinements – Spring 2017



- Review public input refine Alternative 1 as the LPA
  - Determine preferred routing into downtown St. Paul
  - Consider whether to use Highway 61 or BNSF Rail ROW north of 694
  - Optimize to reduce cost and improve ridership
- March 23<sup>rd</sup> PAC approved Draft LPA for public comment



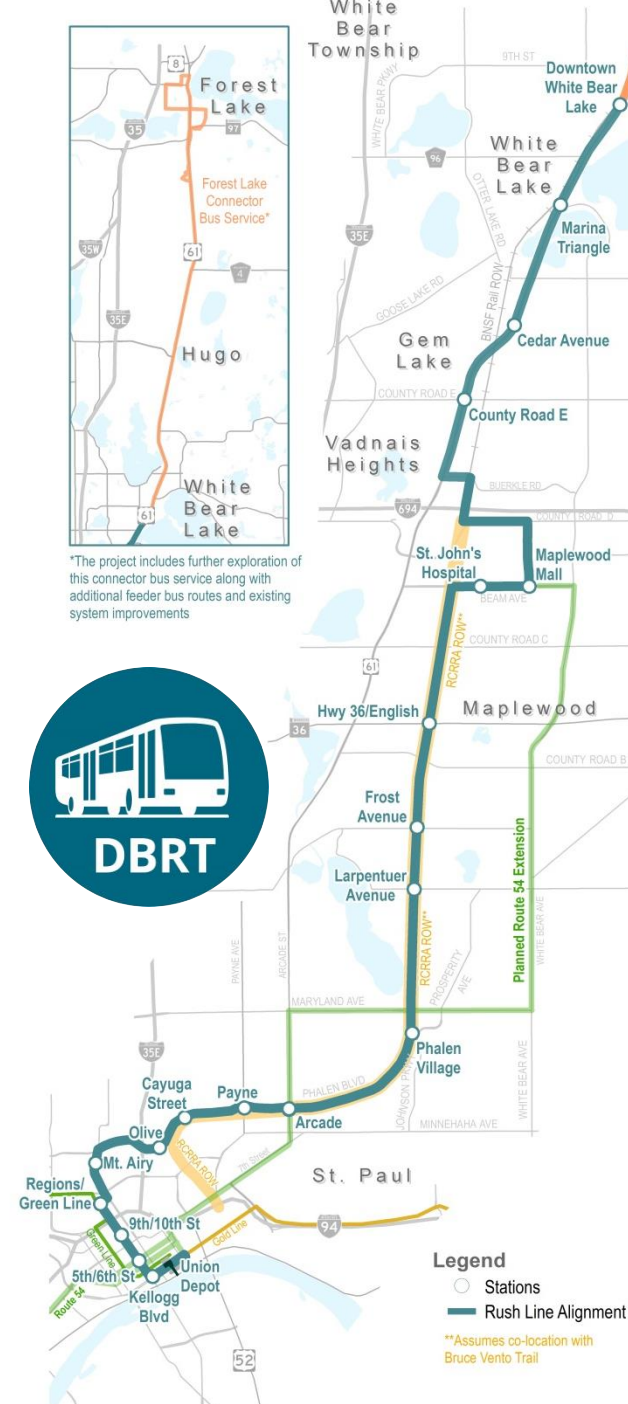


# Draft Locally Preferred Alternative

- Dedicated BRT generally along Phalen Boulevard, Ramsey County Regional Railroad right-of-way (Bruce Vento Trail), and Highway 61
  - Best meets the project goal
  - Would likely qualify for FTA New Starts funding
- Co-locate with Bruce Vento Trail
- Bus connection to Forest Lake and bus system improvements will be further explored
- Support separate transit investments on E 7<sup>th</sup> Street



\*The project includes further exploration of this connector bus service along with additional feeder bus routes and existing system improvements

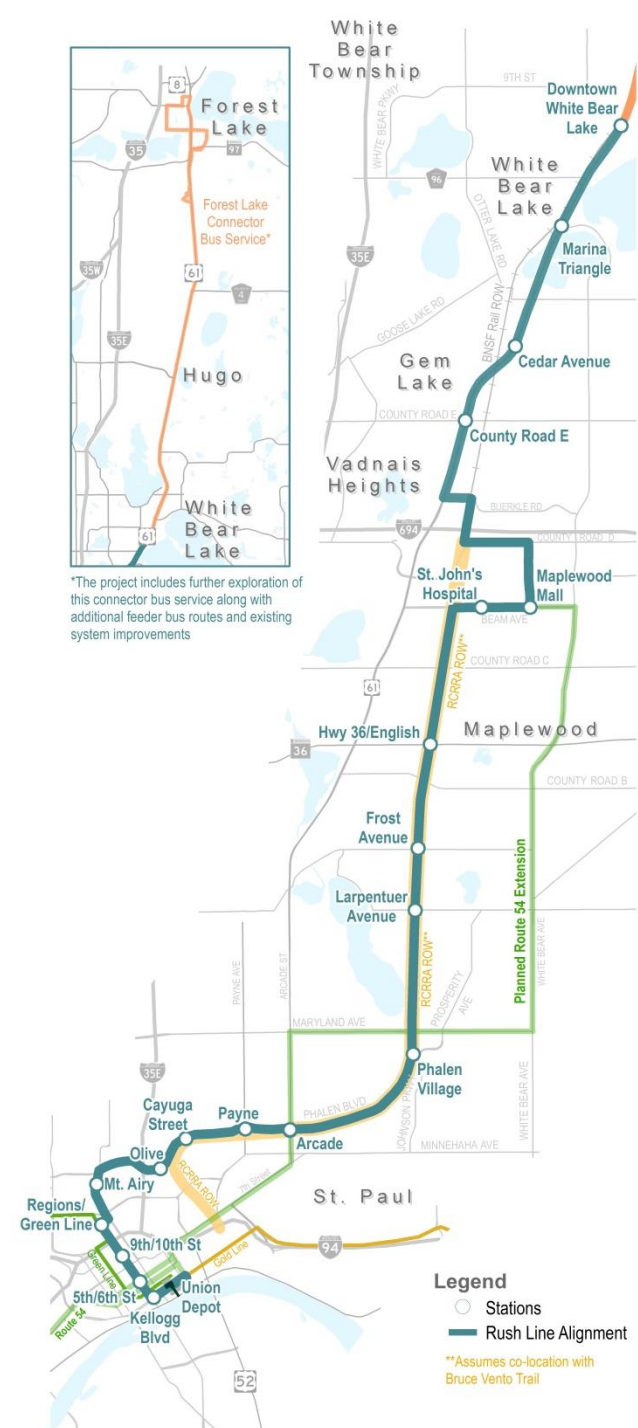


**Legend**  
 ○ Stations  
 — Rush Line Alignment  
 \*\*Assumes co-location with Bruce Vento Trail



# Why use RCRRA ROW?

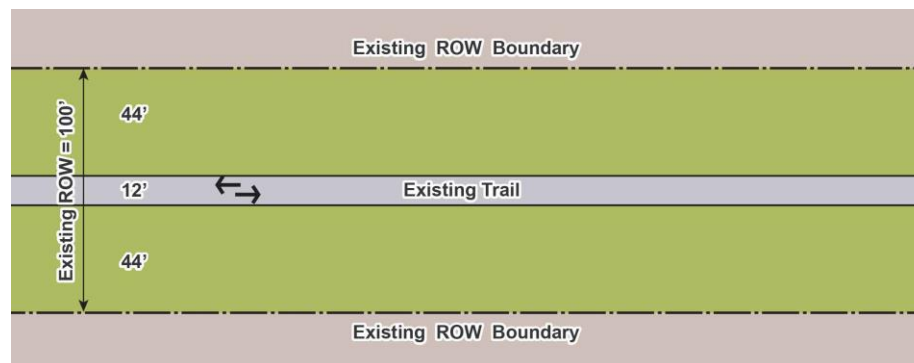
- Cost-effective due to public ownership of ROW
- Longest route with fixed guideway, maximizes development potential at station areas
- Shortest travel time between St. Paul and Maplewood
- Direct routing to St John's Hospital and Maplewood Mall serves over 7,000 jobs



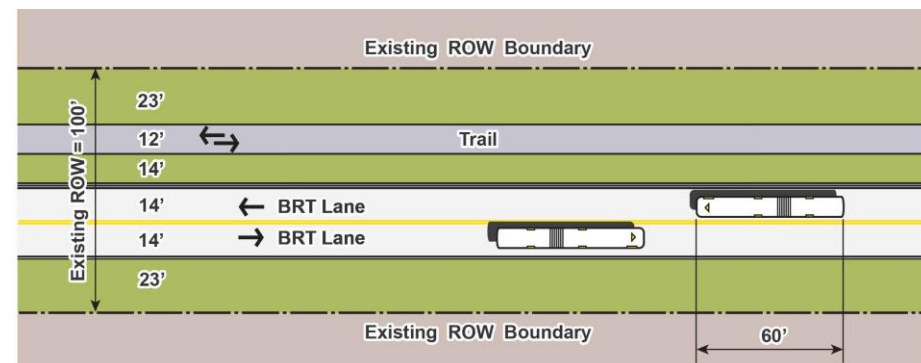
# Why use RCRRA ROW?

- BRT Lanes will share RCRRA ROW with Bruce Vento Trail
- No private property acquisition anticipated because ROW is already in public ownership
- Potential environmental impacts can be addressed as design progresses

Current

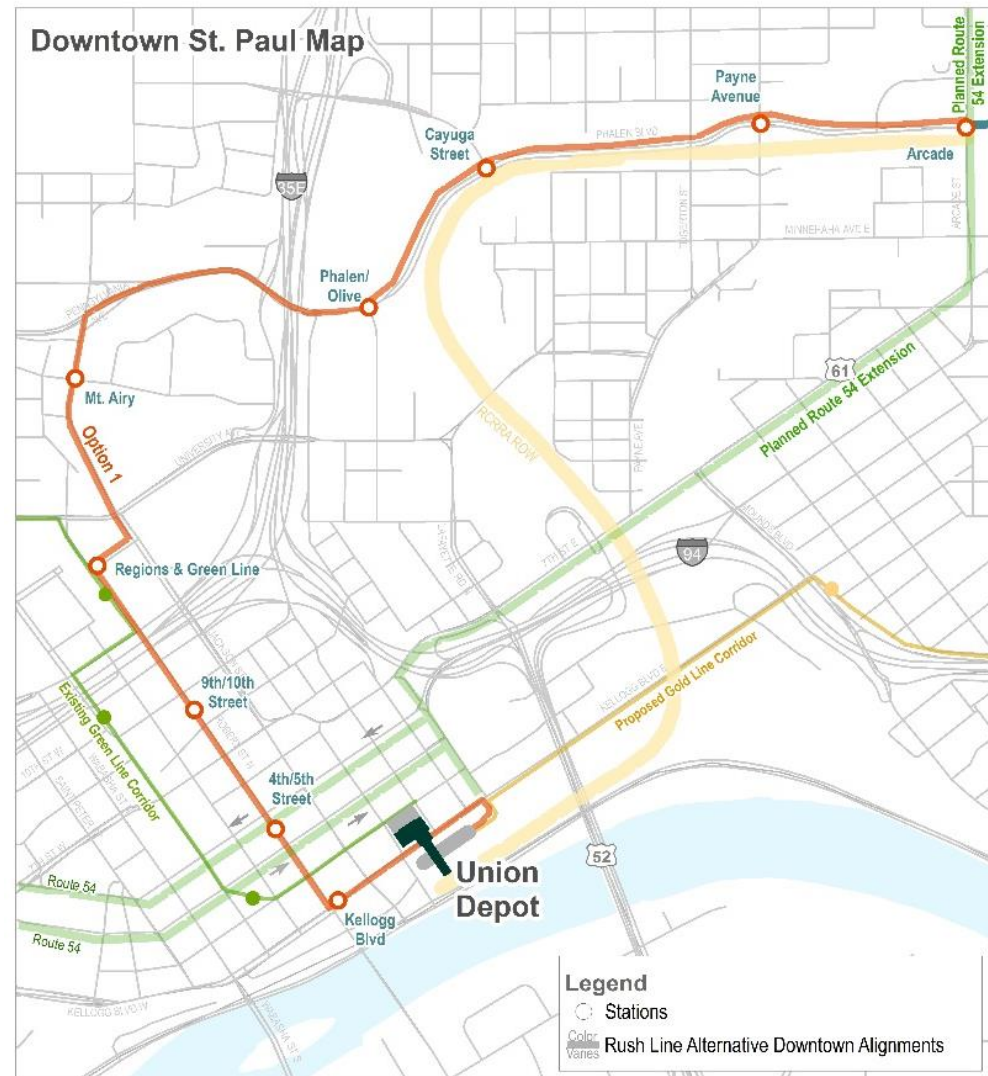


Future Concept



# Why use Phalen into Downtown?

- Serves the most jobs and equity populations (zero-car households, households below poverty)
- Highest potential ridership
- Shortest travel time
- Convenient transfer to METRO Green Line near Region's Hospital



# Why use Hwy 61 North of I-694?

- More cost effective than using adjacent private BNSF ROW due to public ownership
- Similar potential ridership and travel time
- Stations along the way serve higher employment areas



# Draft Locally Preferred Alternative

Approx. Length: **14 miles**

Dedicated Guideway: **85-90%**

Number of Stations: **20**

Schedule: **5A-12A, 7 days/week**

Frequency: **Rush hour: every 10 mins**  
**Non-rush hour: every 15 mins**

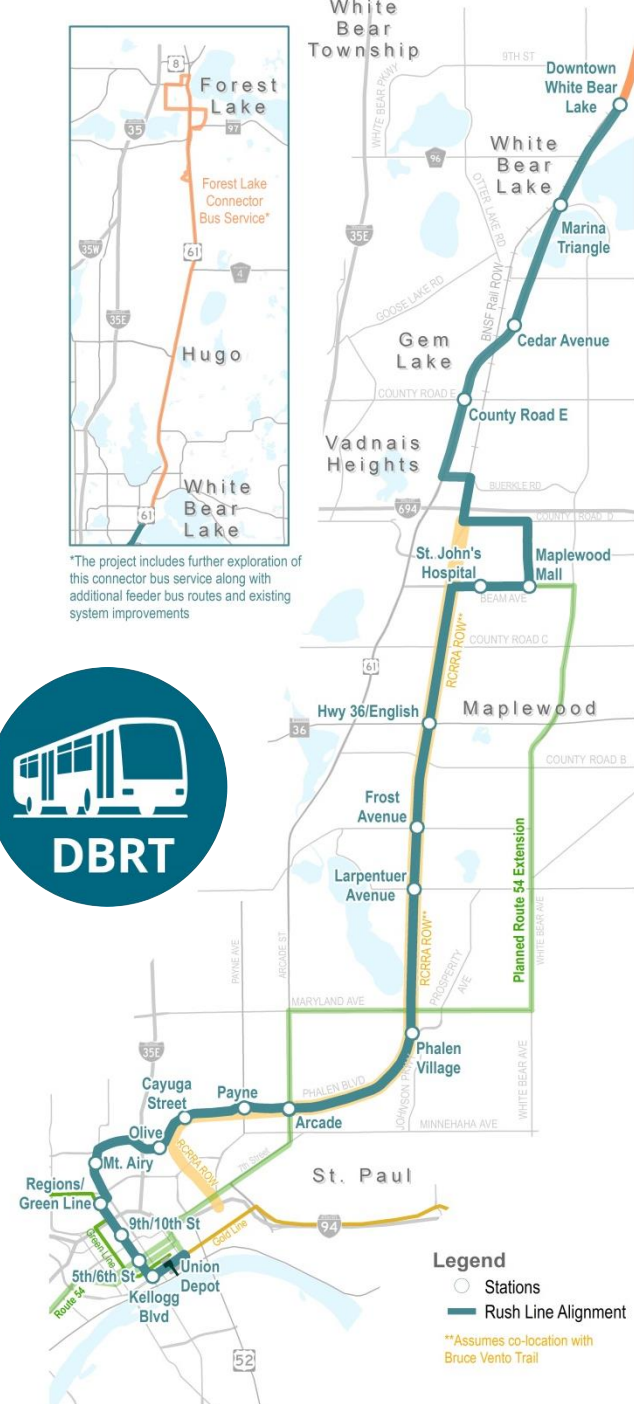
Travel Time: **14 mins**  
 One way, White Bear Lake > Maplewood

**36 mins**  
 One way, Maplewood Mall > Union Depot

**50 mins total**  
 One way, White Bear Lake > Union Depot



\*The project includes further exploration of this connector bus service along with additional feeder bus routes and existing system improvements





# Draft Locally Preferred Alternative

Capital Cost (\$2021): **\$420 M**  
 (\$55 million higher cost if other routes in guideway)

Annual Operating Cost (\$2015): **\$7.8 – 8 M**

Average Daily Ridership (2040): **5,700**  
**+4,000 existing routes**  
 (higher ridership if other routes use guideway)

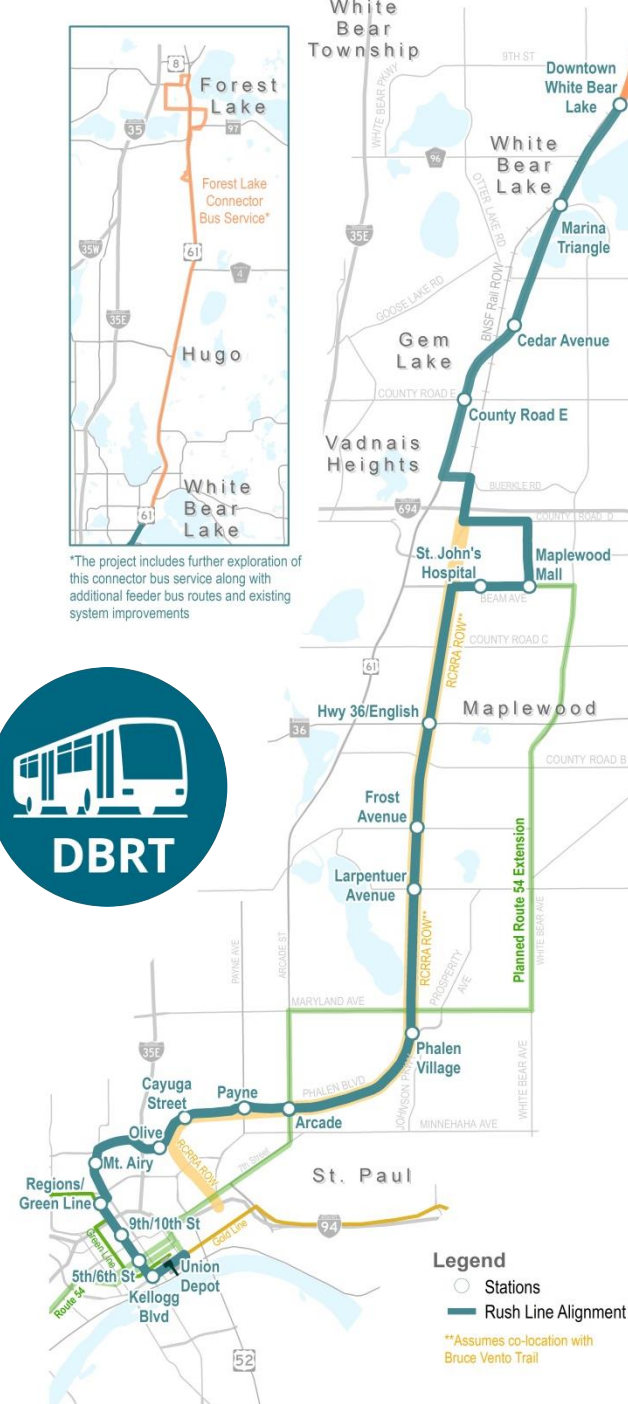
# of Residents in Station Areas (2040): **60,200**

# of Jobs in Station Areas (2040): **106,700**

# of People Living below Poverty in Station Areas (2040): **11,700**



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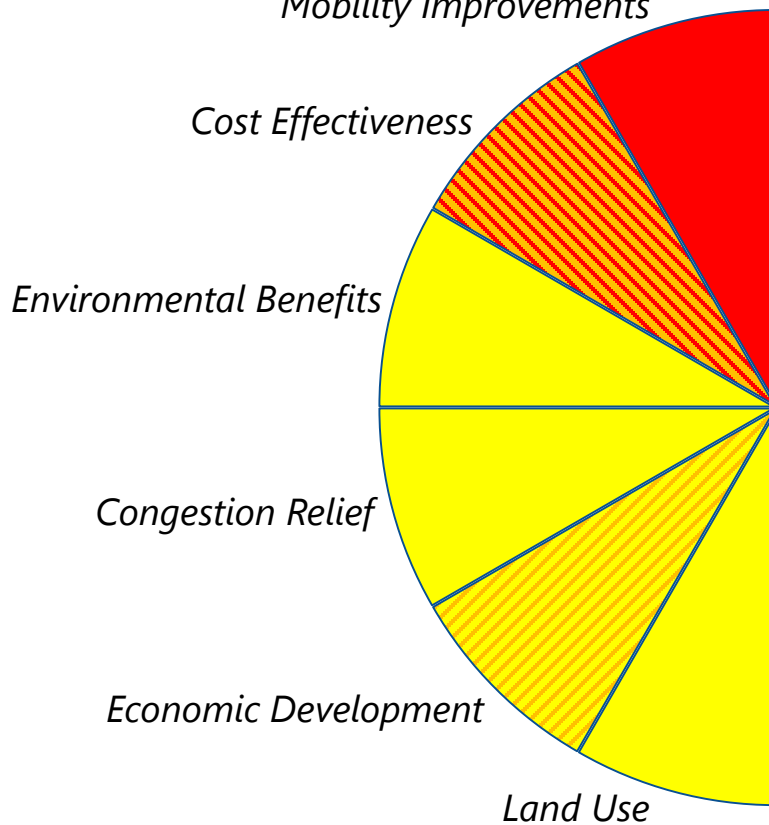


**Legend**  
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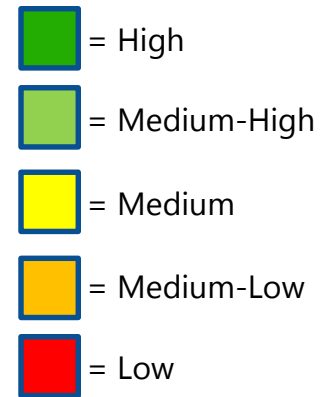
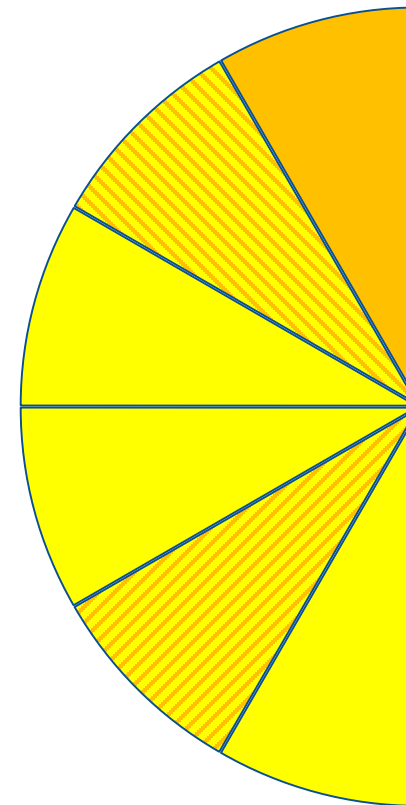
# Preliminary New Starts Project Justification Rating – (Medium Required)

## **BRT Only: Medium to Medium-Low**

*Mobility Improvements*



## **BRT + Transit Routes on Guideway: Medium**



**Using guideway for other bus routes will improve FTA rating**

Economic Development medium rating will require station area planning and transit supportive zoning changes prior to project rating.

# Ongoing LPA Engagement Activities

- Timeline for public comment
  - March 24 - May 4, 2017
- PAC Public Hearing and Open House:
  - April 27, 5 - 8 pm
  - Location: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1390 Larpenteur Avenue
- Pop-Up Information Tables
  - Merrick Food Shelf: April 17
  - Lafayette Business Park: April 20
  - Maplewood Community Center: April 20
- Website notice and email updates
- Presentations upon request



# Input Received on Draft LPA

## Opportunities

- Less visual and noise impacts than LRT
- Less expensive than LRT or other routes
- Possibility to convert to LRT in future
- Perceived as safer than LRT
- Faster travel times
- Preference for hybrid or electric buses

## Challenges

- Need to consider how people will access service at stations
- Concerns about potential impacts to existing green space, trail, and private property
- Perception that it will lower property value and quality of life and/or change character of neighborhood
- Concerns about safety in neighborhood and along route



# Input Received on Draft LPA

*“Good transportation access is key in guiding redevelopment decisions”* – **Sherman Associates**

*“High quality transit in a dedicated guideway will create value for employers, employees, clients, customers, and residents along the corridor”* – **St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce**

*“The proposed Rush Line route and strategically placed stations will provide transportation options for our clients to connect with our state of the art health care services”* – **HealthEast St. Johns Hospital**





# Next Steps

APRIL 2017

- **Public hearing** to obtain feedback on draft LPA

MAY 2017

- **Project committees** vote on whether to approve the LPA

JUNE - JULY 2017

- **County and Cities** along the route will be asked to confirm support for the LPA

- More detailed environmental analysis to begin Fall 2017

