

THE NEW WEST 7TH CORRIDOR

A CONCEPT FOR
**DOWNTOWN SAINT PAUL
TO MALL OF AMERICA**



Concept Overview & Engagement Summary

Transportation Committee

May 12, 2025



SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

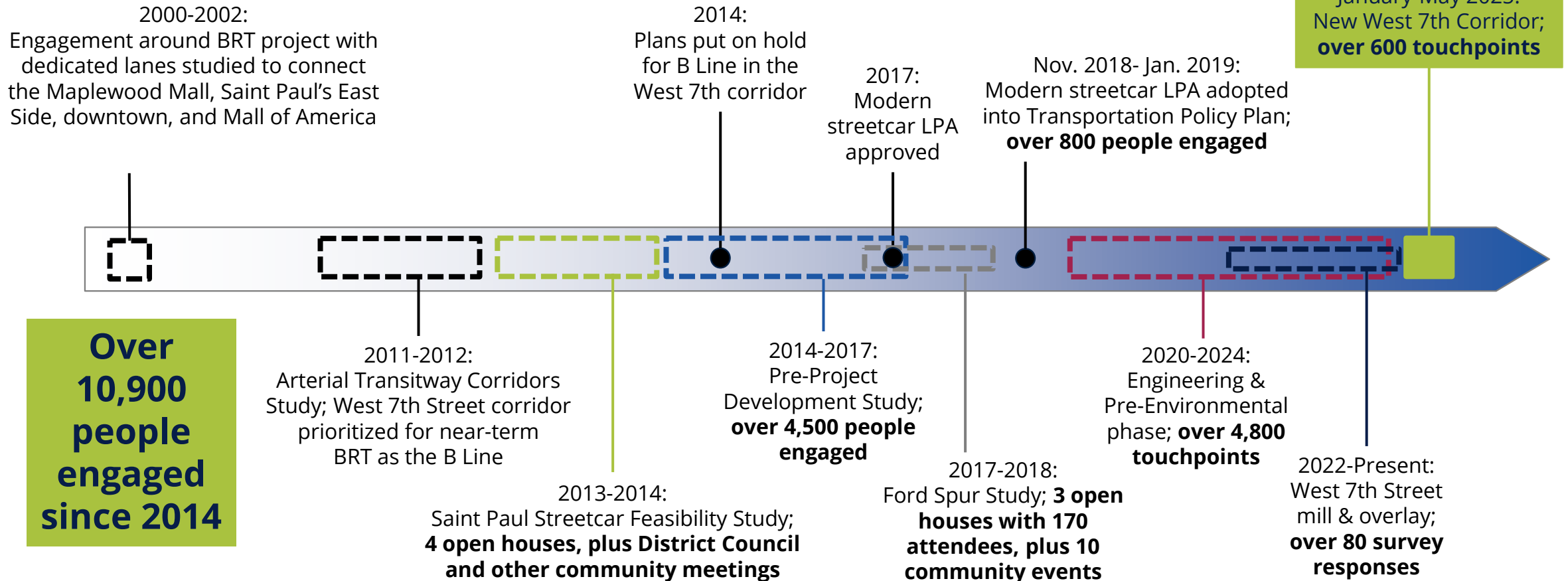


Agenda

- Concept overview
- Engagement summary
- Next steps & discussion



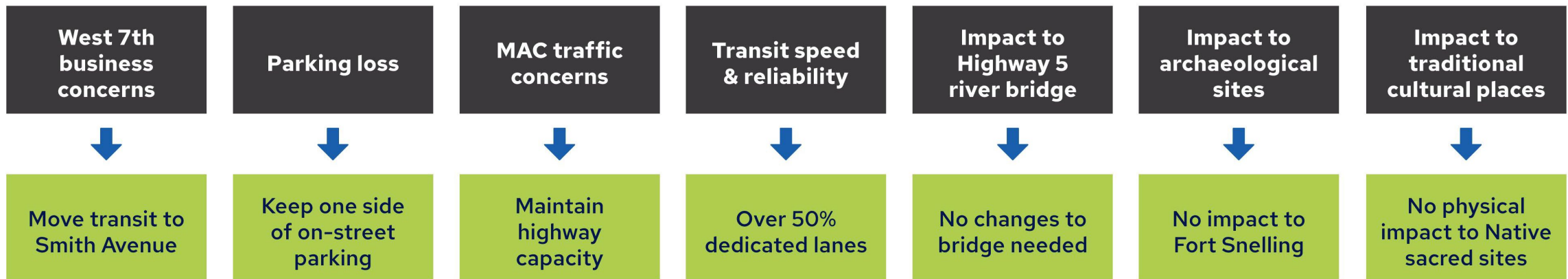
Over two decades of study and engagement focused on a major transit improvement





A new, multimodal approach

- ✓ Builds on years of work led by Ramsey County to achieve shared goals
- ✓ Creates opportunities to transform the corridor
- ✓ Focuses on near-term implementation
- ✓ Avoids or mitigates known issues





Shared goals



SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

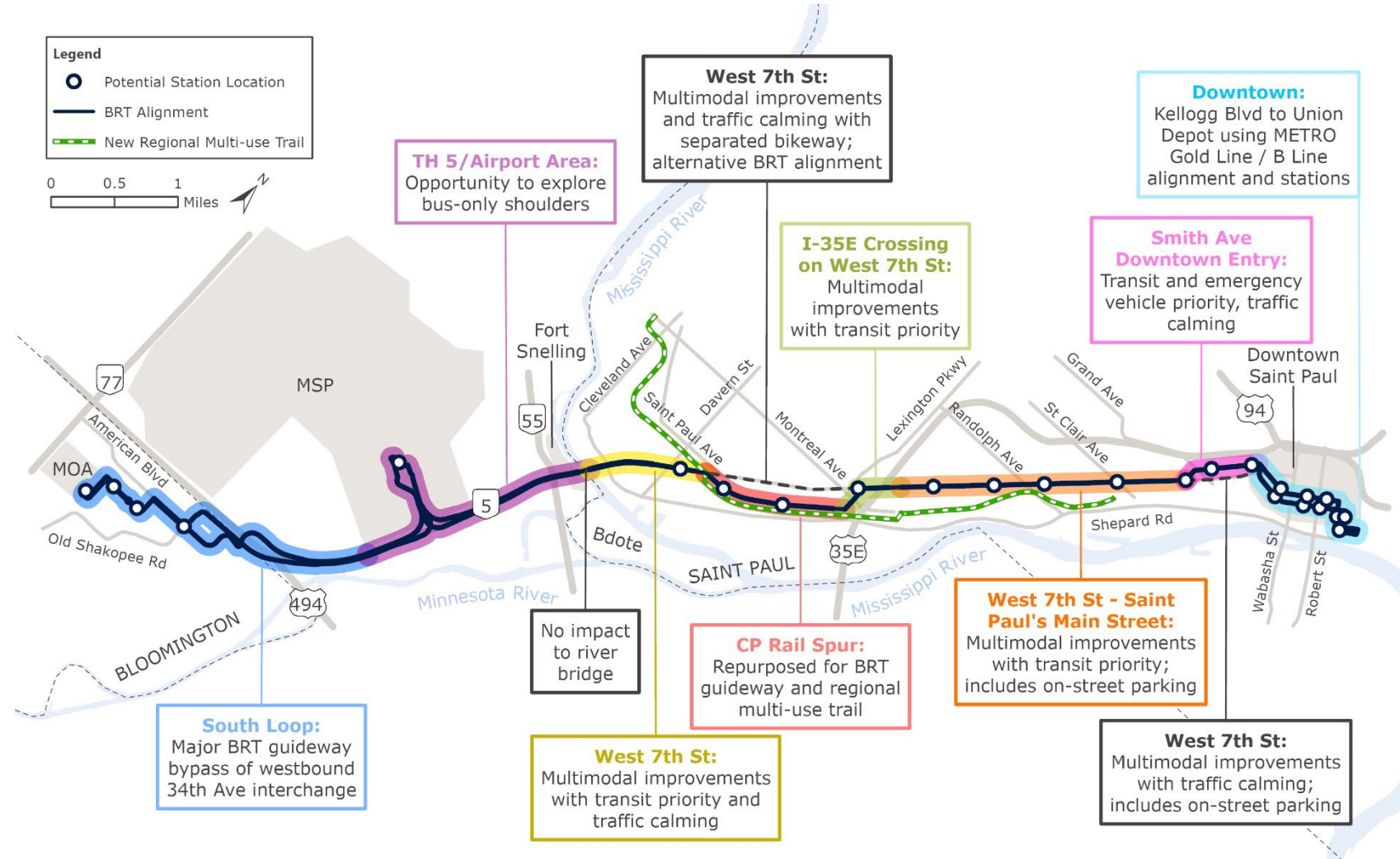


Each agency brought goals to the table – many of them shared – that will be best accomplished through an integrated, multimodal project. Goals include:

- ➔ Make a generational reinvestment in West 7th Street and address ownership for long-term maintenance
- ➔ Invest in transit that is fast, reliable, safe, comfortable, and easy to use that connects major destinations and neighborhoods
- ➔ Improve safety, calm traffic
- ➔ Improve the pedestrian experience by improving multimodal connections for community health and advancing parallel bicycle connections
- ➔ Support economic development opportunities and thriving commercial districts
- ➔ Improve tree canopy and add green space
- ➔ Protect the corridor's natural, cultural, and historic resources
- ➔ Develop a cost-competitive project with local and regional support
- ➔ Reflect community feedback
- ➔ Don't delay – Advance a project in the near term

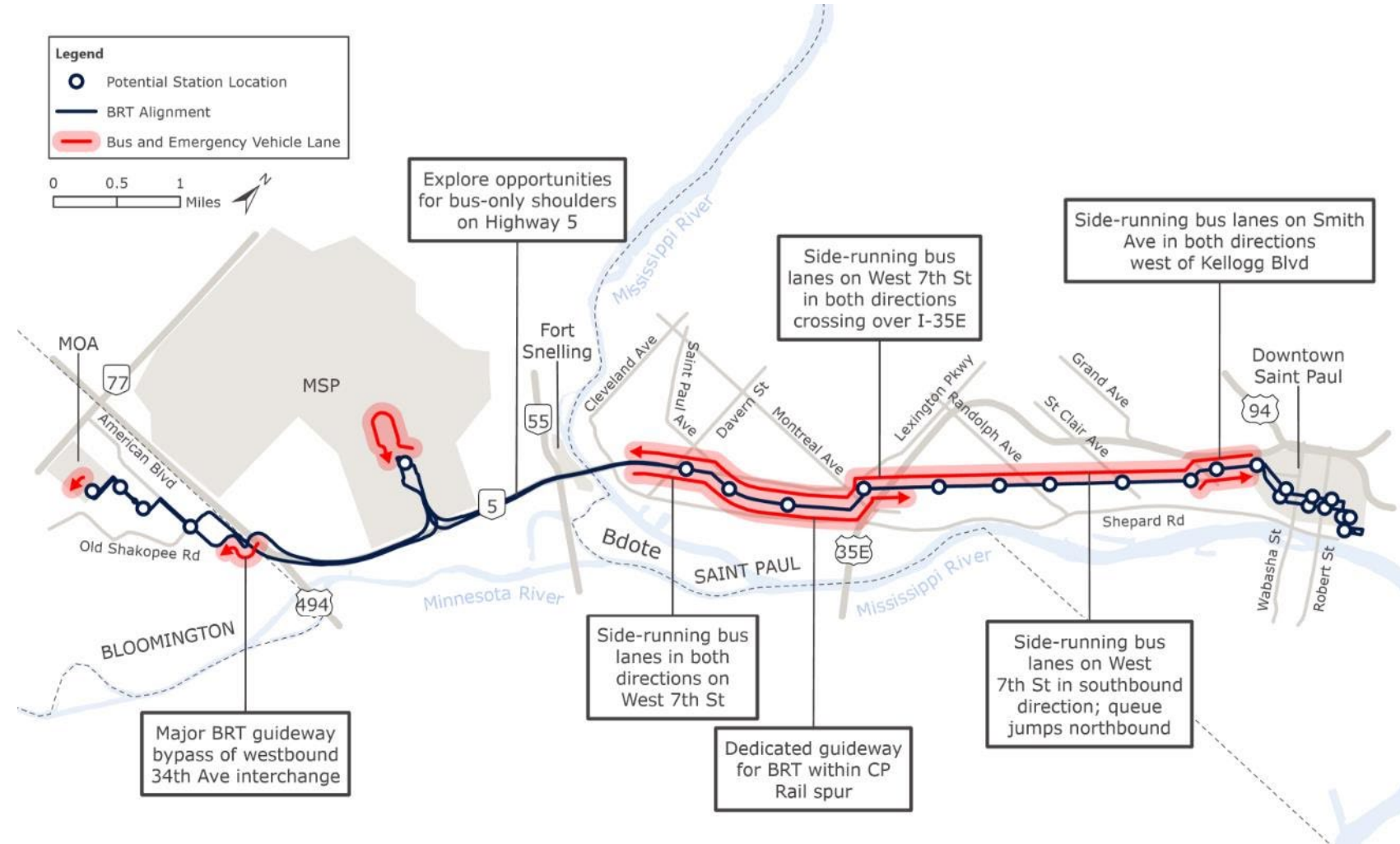
Opportunities to transform the corridor

- A fast, frequent, and reliable **BRT line** – tailored to localized needs and opportunities
- Significant **multimodal improvements** along West 7th Street
- New **multi-use trail** and **BRT dedicated guideway** in the CP Rail spur



Opportunities to transform the corridor: BRT

- **12.5 miles** from Mall of America to Union Depot
- **21 BRT stations** (16 built new with project)
- **65% dedicated guideway** from Union Depot to the river

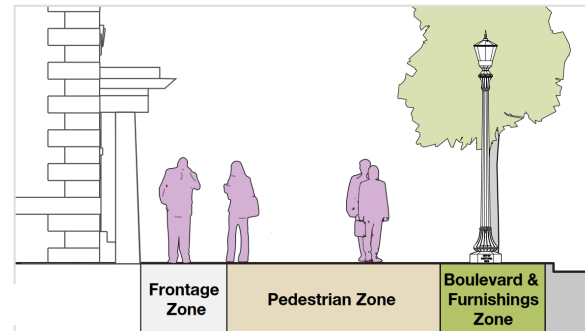
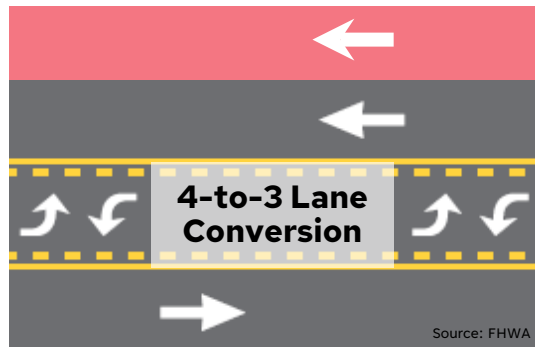


Opportunities to transform the corridor: West 7th improvements

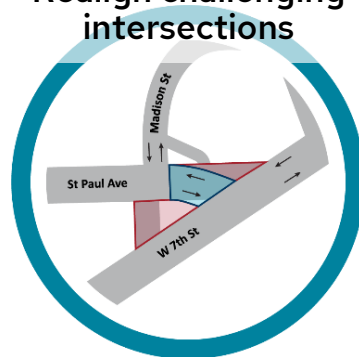
Generational investment in West 7th Street for safety, multimodal improvements & economic development—within and beyond the BRT corridor

Current sidewalk widths maintained to support safety, comfort, greening, lighting & neighborhood businesses

Traffic calming
Transit & emergency vehicle priority lanes



Realign challenging intersections



Replace signals



Curb extensions, greening & street trees



Address poor pavement & sidewalk conditions

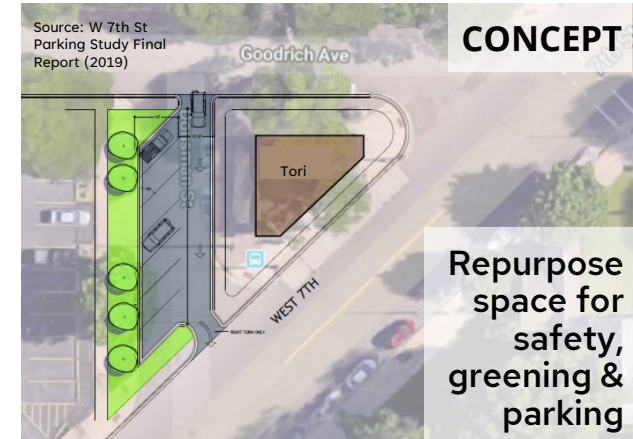


Retain half of existing on-street parking

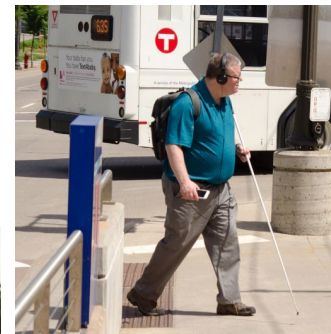


to support businesses

Source: NACTO



Street design & crossings that work for people of all abilities & ages

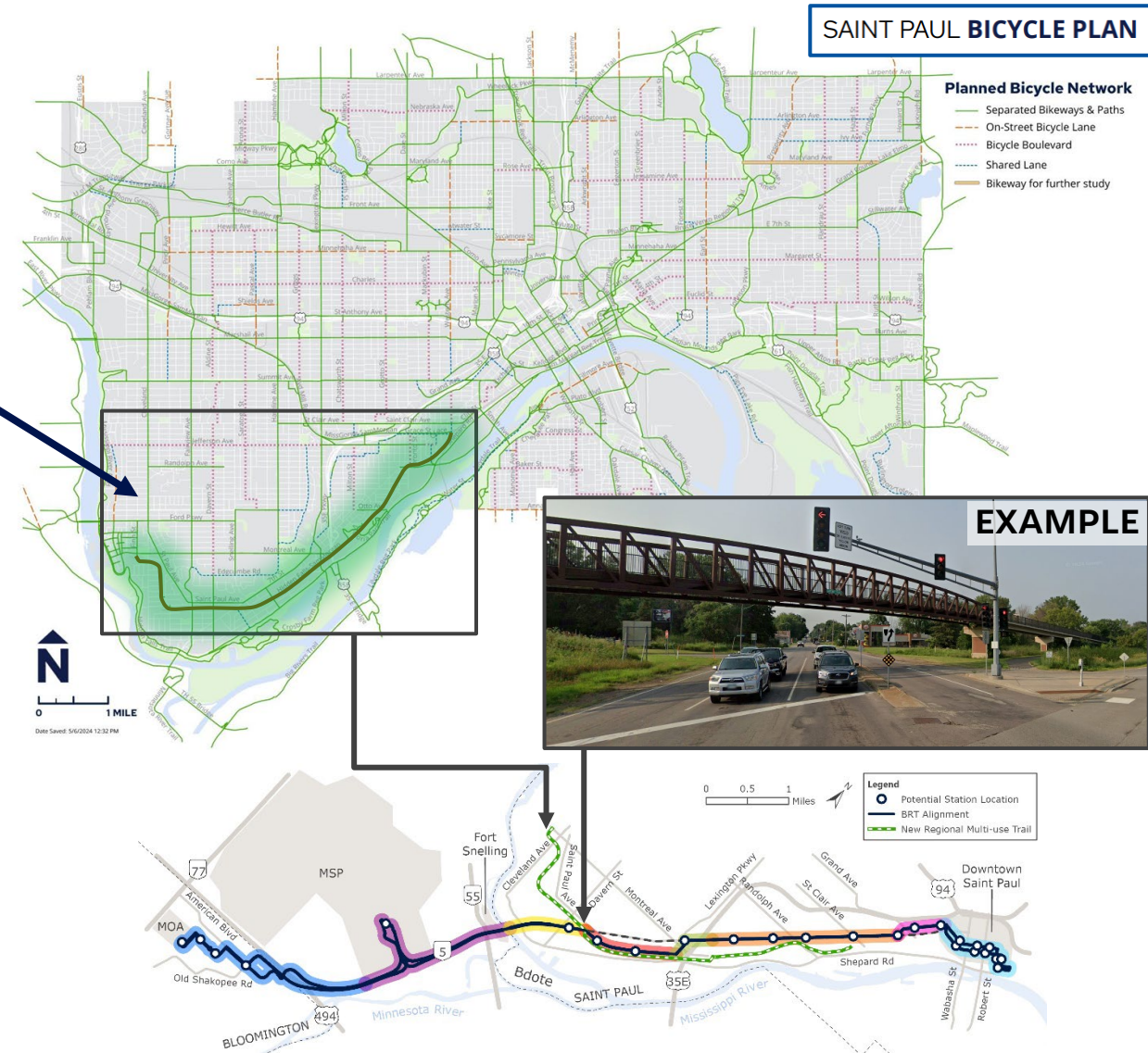


Source: The accessible icon project

Opportunities to transform the corridor: Trail

Hidden Falls-Samuel Morgan trail vision realized through CP spur acquisition

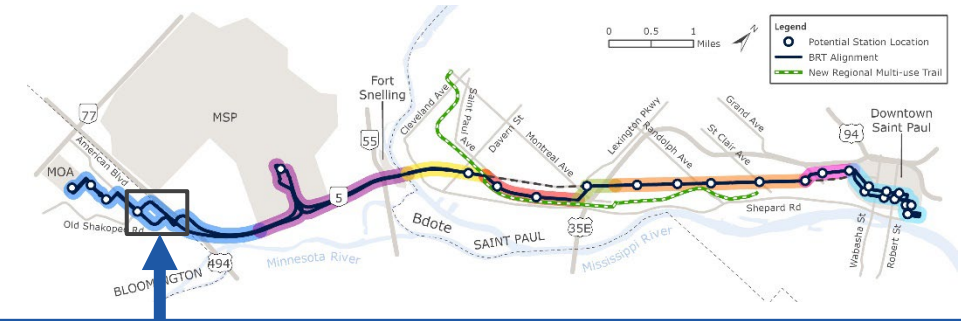
- 5 miles of new multi-use trail connecting Highland Bridge and Shepard Road/Randolph Avenue
- Identified in the 2024 Saint Paul Bicycle Plan
- Trail bridge over West 7th St



Opportunities to transform the corridor: BRT

Concept: Westbound dedicated guideway bypass

- Avoids congested 34th Ave interchange, source of existing delay and unreliability
- Improves transit speed and reliability
- 34th Ave expected to see increased traffic volumes & Blue Line LRT service in the future





A concept focused on near-term implementation

**WE ARE
HERE**



schedule is tentative and subject to change

Cost estimates

- **Total: \$450-550 million**
- Estimates based on preliminary information, building on cost estimation methodology used in previous Riverview process



Community Engagement Summary

Approach

- Purpose of engagement
 - Explain the concept
 - Provide a status update to an active and engaged community
- Goal: Get a reaction to a change in direction and gauge level of enthusiasm
- Why: To build momentum and transform a community!

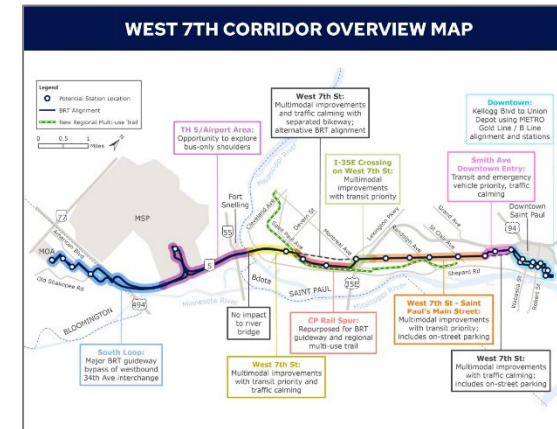


Engagement by the numbers

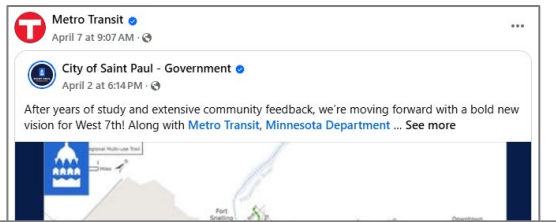
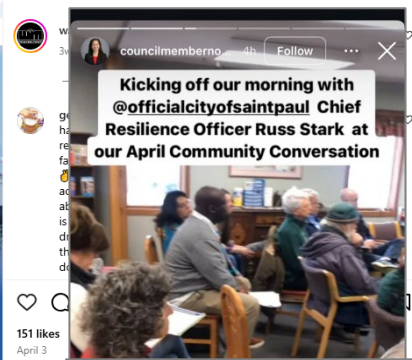
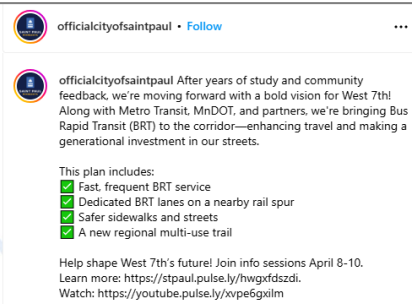
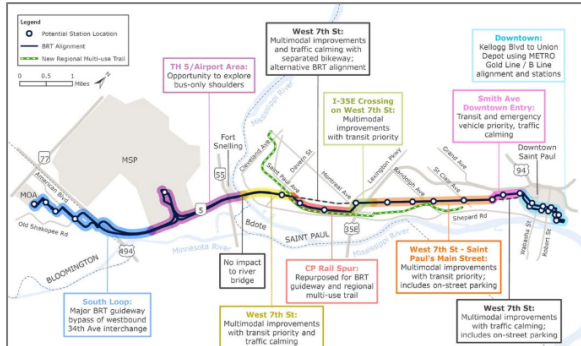
- 600+ total touchpoints
- 3 community meetings
- 18 stakeholder meetings and events
- 286 survey responses
- 47 interactive map comments
- Multiple email newsletters
- 6 agency social media posts
- 1 promotional video
- 8 news media articles



- Project website launched March 10
- Email newsletters
- Promotional video
- Handouts (digital and print)
- Translation: Hmong, Somali, Spanish
- Social media
- Press and media coverage



Social media & press coverage



Opinion Cityscape

MINNPOST

There's reason for optimism over the new plan for bus rapid transit along West 7th Street in St. Paul

West 7th is desperately in need of investment, and a new option could finally be a solution to years of neglect.





Tactics and strategies: Meetings

- **3** community meetings
 - April 8, 9, and 10 – held in person and virtual, evening and afternoon
 - Attended by **88** people
- **18** stakeholder meetings and events
 - Fort Road Federation (3), Highland District Council (3), Ward 2 events (2)
 - Saint Paul Area Chamber (3), United Hospital (2), Mancini's
 - Metropolitan Council American Indian Advisory Council
 - Saint Paul - Transportation Committee
 - Hennepin County, MAC, City of Bloomington
 - Ongoing communication with Ramsey County

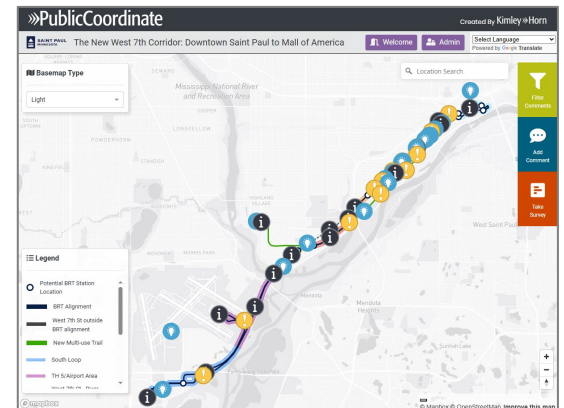


THE NEW WEST 7TH CORRIDOR: DOWNTOWN SAINT PAUL TO MALL OF AMERICA



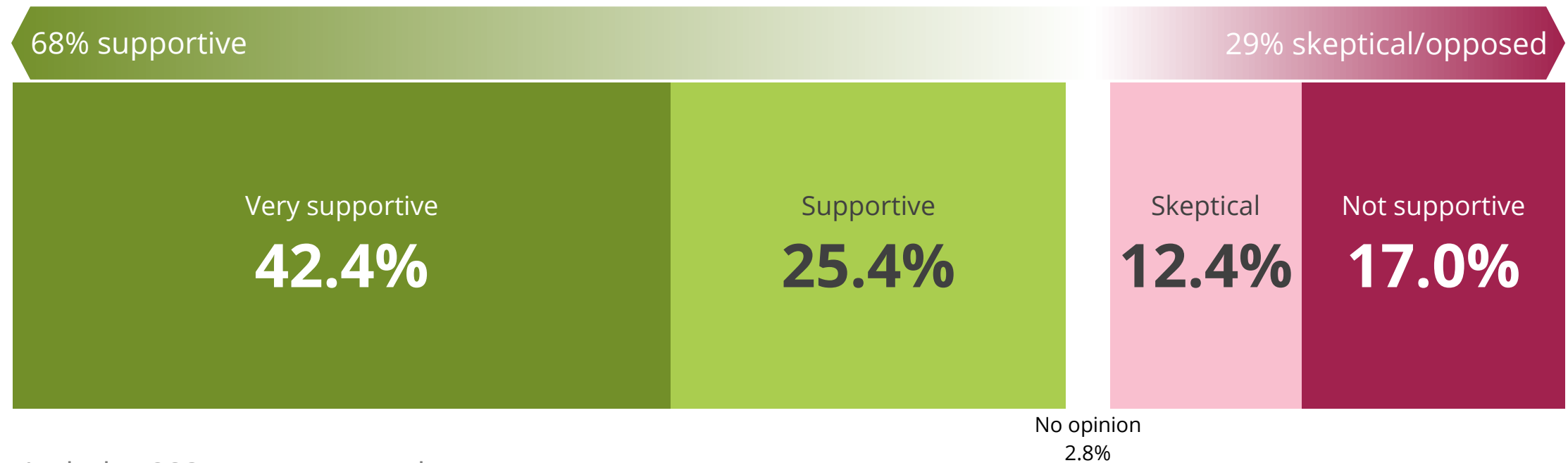
Tactics and strategies: Comment tools

- **286** responses to survey; online and on paper
 - Do you support this new concept for the West 7th corridor?
 - What do you like about this approach? What are you concerned about?
 - What questions do you have about this concept?
- **47** comments collected on [interactive comment map](#)
- Open 8 weeks: March 11 through May 4





Most people are supportive of the New West 7th concept



Includes 283 survey respondents



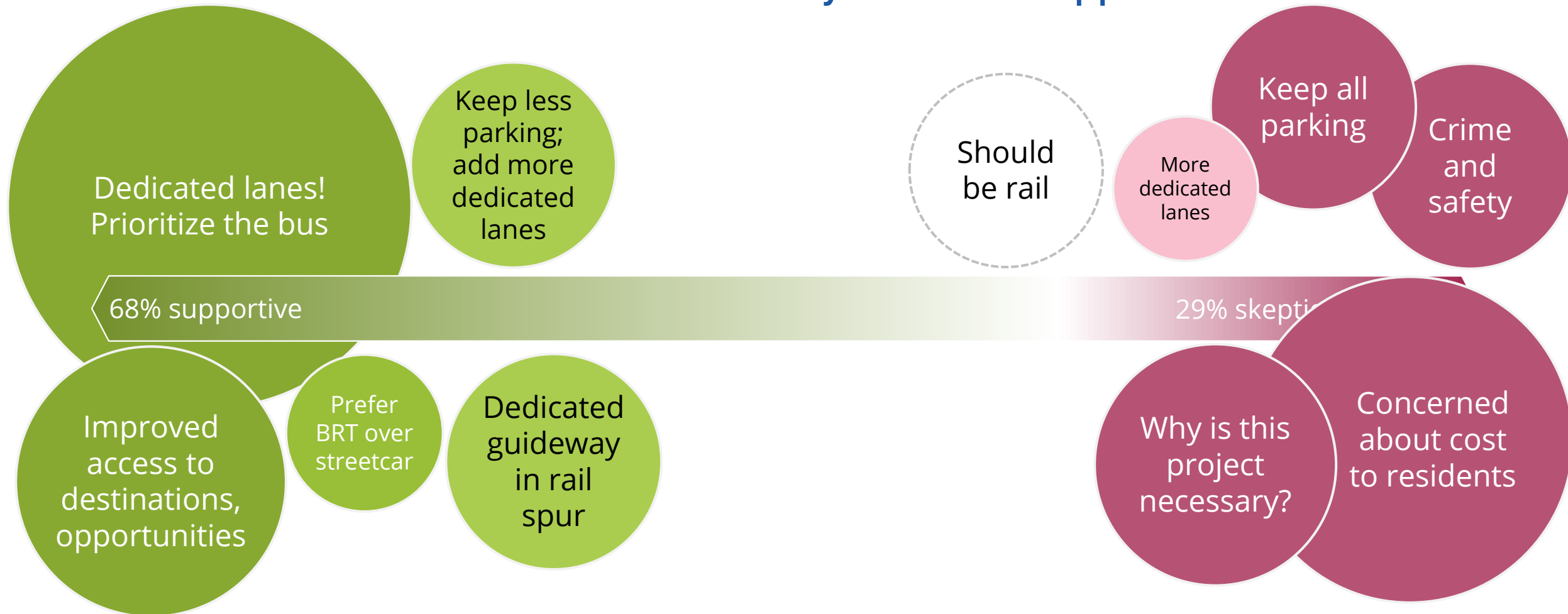
Key takeaways from across the spectrum of support



- Transit
- Reconstruction
- Trail
- Implementation



Most people think the investment in dedicated lanes for transit strikes the right balance – and those who do not show why a balanced approach is needed.



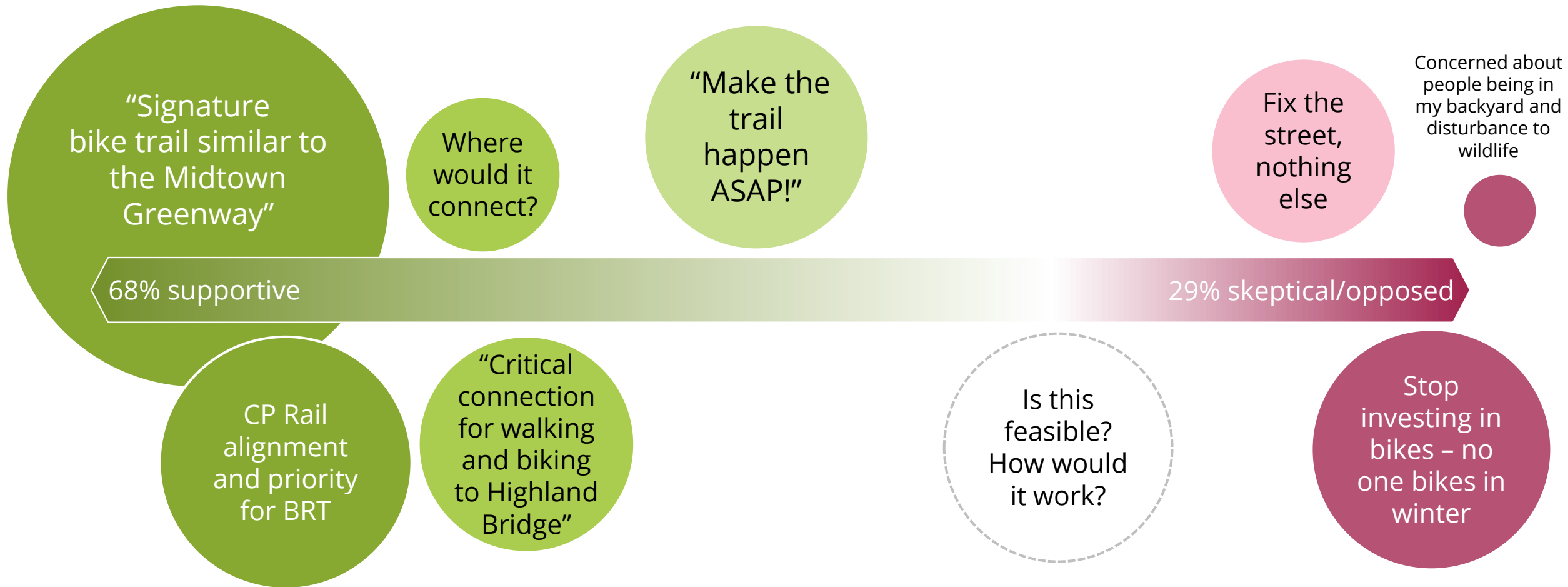


Most people want to see the street reconstructed now with multimodal improvements, and retaining some parking is important.



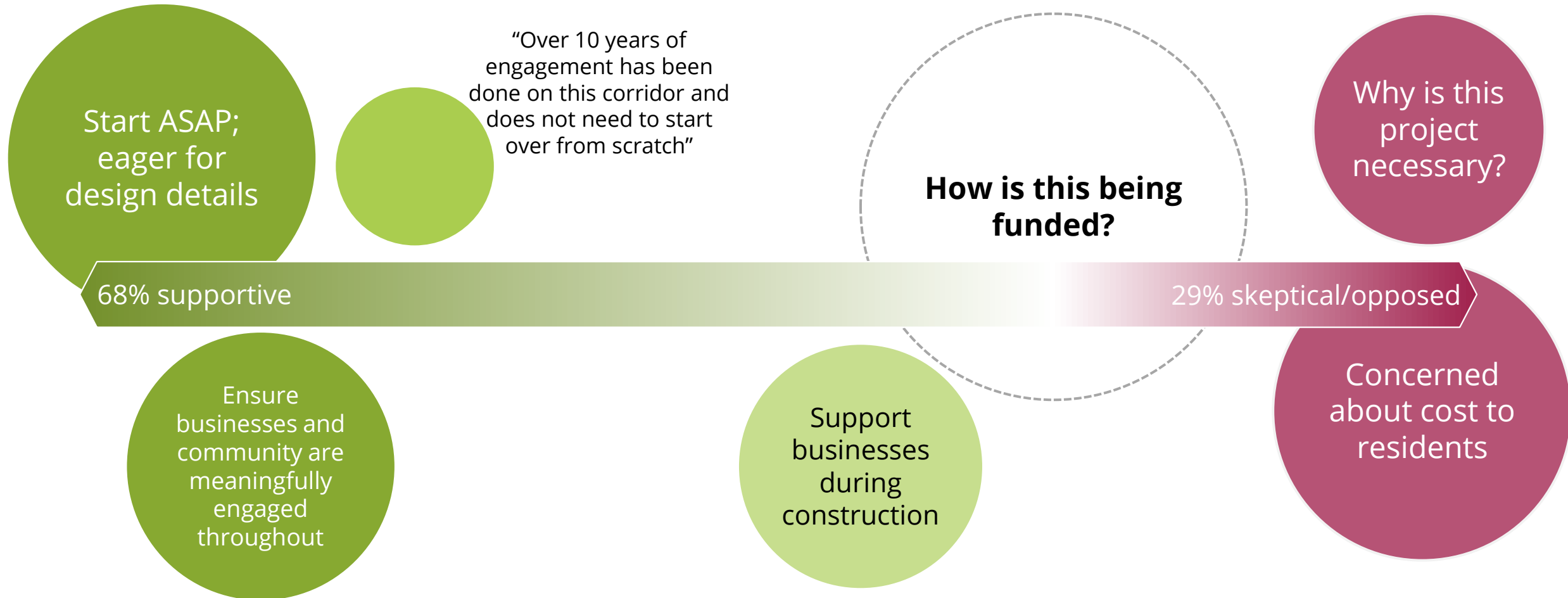


Many people are excited about a new trail and busway in the CP spur, but some want to keep the project simple and avoid the rail.





Engagement in design is important, but most people are eager to see improvements move forward with a funding plan





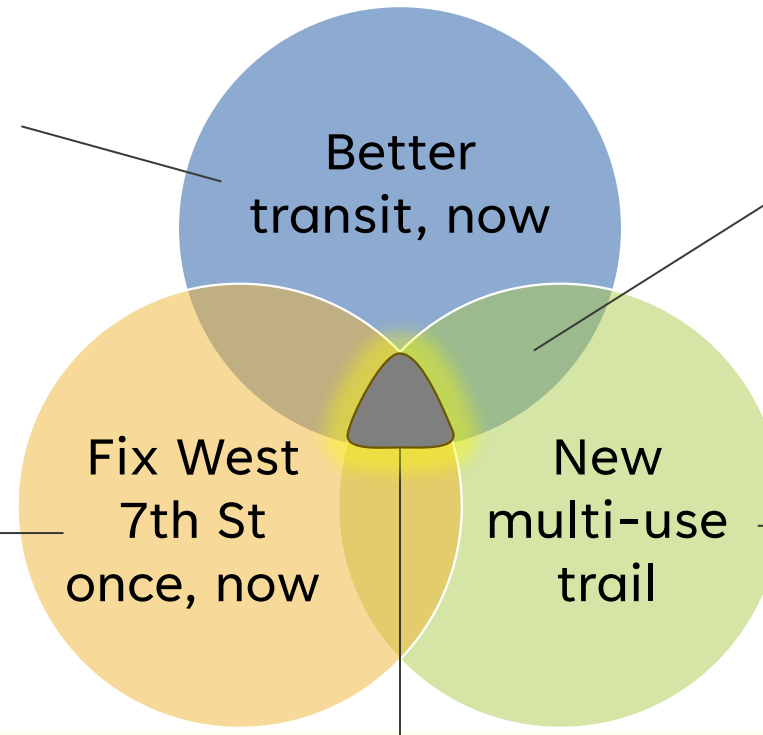
This concept delivers three well-supported elements

Full investment in transit lanes on West 7th St achieved through higher level of BRT.

Would not be included as part of arterial BRT project.

Without BRT concept, near-term investment in West 7th St limited to mill & overlay; curbs remain unchanged, utilities untouched, reconstruction deferred.

Arterial BRT construction on separate timeline.



New multi-use trail achieved through investment in CP Rail spur for BRT guideway.

Would not be included as part of arterial BRT project.

No multi-use trail, fewer economic development opportunities in the spur without BRT concept

**Higher level of investment
in BRT unlocks full
investment in West 7th St and
opportunity for multi-use trail**



Future work

Further study in next phase: Key topics

- Canadian Pacific (CP) rail spur extent and design; best use of the rail spur
- Traffic & geometric analysis: Smith Avenue, near I-35E, south of Alton Street to River
- On-street parking locations and access management
- Repurposing triangles for parking, greening, safety
- Further development of design

Questions to address in the near term

- How will this be funded?
- When will this move forward?





Next steps

- **Secure funding commitments from agency partners**
 - Need for a decision is quickly approaching given related efforts
 - ABRT Plan Update: June
 - MnDOT's West 7th Street mill & overlay project (would be replaced by concept)
 - Ramsey County's formal reallocation of funds previously dedicated to Riverview
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- If proceeding with the concept
 - Project formation and delivery structure
 - Issue resolution in response to agency and community engagement findings