

1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

This document is a supplement to the April 2006 *Central Corridor Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS)*. This chapter summarizes the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project's history and context. It also summarizes the project purpose and need as originally presented in the AA/DEIS.

Section 1.1 presents an overview of how the Central Corridor LRT Project was initiated and the beginning of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) involvement.

Section 1.2 discusses the role of the Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) in supporting the overall project decision-making process.

Section 1.3 briefly describes the project, the purpose of the project, and why it is needed. An overview of the characteristics of the Central Corridor is presented to demonstrate the need for the Central Corridor LRT and the expected benefit to the neighborhoods, transit-dependent individuals, businesses, institutions, and regional transportation system.

Section 1.4 describes how the Central Corridor LRT is an outcome of state, regional, and local transportation studies and plans, and the Central Corridor's role in the regional transportation network. Additionally, this section briefly outlines the environmental review and project development process that has been underway since 1999. The public involvement and agency coordination process, as well as the proposed schedule for completing the SDEIS process, are presented to round out the discussion of Central Corridor LRT's planning context.

1.1 Project History and Overview

Rail mass transit has been an issue in Minnesota for more than 25 years. In the 1970s, heavy rail and "downtown people movers" were studied as transit options for the Twin Cities. By the early 1980s, light rail transit was beginning to be seen as a possible alternative to other methods of mass transit. For the past 20 years, the Central Corridor has consistently been identified as a location where mobility and mass transit capacity should be improved. It has been the focus of several studies to determine the feasibility of various mass transit technologies and their potential alignments. Each of these studies identified the Central Corridor as the region's priority corridor for mass transit investment. Because the Central Corridor is the physical spine of the overall regional transportation network, its high transit ridership potential represents one of the region's best opportunities for a significant capital investment that can be leveraged to increase ridership and positively impact the region's transit system.

Rapid transit in the Central Corridor was initially explored in the *Midway Corridor Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, 1991. Transit options were explored as alternatives to traditional roadway improvements in the Central Corridor because physical and funding constraints in this developed area would make expansion of the existing roadway system costly, as well as socially and environmentally disruptive.

A few years later, the idea of providing a rapid transit connection between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis was further evaluated in the *Twin Cities Metropolitan*

Commuter Rail Feasibility Study, Phase II, Final Summary Report, which was prepared by the Office of Freight, Railroads, and Waterways of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (January, 1999).

To further evaluate those recommendations and respond to the continued need for transportation improvements in the Central Corridor, Ramsey County (with financial support from Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota), the Metropolitan Council, and the FTA prepared the *Central Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS)*, which was published in April 2006 to document the evaluation of alternative transit improvements for the corridor.

As conceived by these studies, the Central Corridor LRT is an approximately 11-mile line that would serve the Minneapolis and St. Paul downtown areas, as well as the University of Minnesota (U of M) and the State Capitol complex. In downtown Minneapolis, it would integrate with the Hiawatha Light Rail Line, establishing a seamless regional transit system.

The Central Corridor LRT was identified in 2005 as one of the candidate projects to receive federal funding from FTA under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) for preliminary engineering. According to Sec. 3043, Project Authorizations for New Fixed Guideway Capital Projects, Subsection C – Preliminary Engineering and, in Sec. 3037. Alternatives Analysis Program, Subsection C – Projects:

“The following projects are authorized for preliminary engineering for fiscal years 2005 through 2009 under paragraphs (1)(A) and (2)(A) of section 5309(m) of title 49, United States Code: (134) Minneapolis-St. Paul—Central Corridor Transit Project...”

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, requires federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences associated with all alternatives for a project involving federal action. This evaluation of environmental consequences is required to assist decision-makers and the public in evaluating the relative merits of the project (as compared to a No-Build Alternative) and in selecting a preferred course of action from the alternatives evaluated.

The information presented in the AA/DEIS was based on technical studies documenting effects on the human and natural environments, and reflected comments or suggestions received over the course of public review and agency coordination activities conducted during the evaluation of alternatives. Based on the analysis in the AA/DEIS, public hearings (four hearings held at various locations in May 2006), and comments received on the AA/DEIS, the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the project was adopted by the Metropolitan Council in June 2006 (Resolution #2006-15). For details on the LPA, please see Chapter 2.

1.2 Basis for the SDEIS

An SDEIS is being prepared because key changes to the LPA as previously defined are being considered, as well as to update demographic and technical documentation previously prepared. In response to comments received on the AA/DEIS subsequent to the selection of the LPA, several design options for key project elements are being considered. These

options reflect conditions that exist within the Central Corridor LRT Study Area, technical, operational and financial constraints, major infrastructure requirements that were not fully documented in the AA/DEIS, and physical conditions that have changed within the Central Corridor LRT Study Area since the AA/DEIS.

This SDEIS documents and discloses potential impacts relating to Key Project Elements that have changed and/or remain uncertain since issuance of the AA/DEIS. These include:

- Hiawatha/Central Corridor LRT Connection: Alternative alignments connecting to the existing Hiawatha LRT tracks are evaluated.
- University of Minnesota (U of M) Alignment (tunnel vs. at-grade and stations): The LPA included a tunnel, primarily under Washington Avenue, as the preferred alignment alternative through the U of M campus. The SDEIS examines the impacts of an at-grade alignment alternative through the East Bank of the U of M campus, as well as an alignment change through this segment of the line, largely due to the new TCF Bank Stadium presently under construction on the LPA alignment.
- Potential Infill Stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, or Western Avenue: The impact of adding an infill station to the Central Corridor LRT at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, or Western Avenue in the City of St. Paul is being evaluated.
- Capitol Area Alignment/Stations: Potential changes to the alignment and location of stations within St. Paul's Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board Area (CAAPB) are documented and disclosed.
- Downtown St. Paul alignment/station modifications: Alternative means of accessing St. Paul's Union Depot, including potential impacts to LRT station location and alignment, are documented and disclosed.
- Traction power substations: The AA/DEIS discussed the need for traction power substations (TPSS) as part of Central Corridor LRT operations, but did not identify the number or potential location(s) of TPSS. The SDEIS documents and discloses this information.
- Three-car train requirement: The impacts associated with development of 300-foot long stations to accommodate potential three-car trains on the Central Corridor LRT are evaluated.
- Vehicle maintenance facility: The need for, and impacts of, constructing a storage and maintenance facility to serve the operational needs of the Central Corridor LRT is documented and disclosed.
- Washington Avenue Bridge: The need for, and impacts of, modifications or improvements required to the Washington Avenue Bridge for LRT purposes is documented and disclosed.
- Other key project elements determined through the on-going decision-making process to have potential significant impacts to human and natural environments.

The purpose of the SDEIS process is to explore in a public setting the potentially significant effects of implementing proposed changes to the LPA on the physical, human, and natural environment. Areas of investigation include, but are not limited to, land use, historic and archaeological resources, visual and aesthetic qualities, traffic and parking, modification to existing infrastructure, noise and vibration, environmental justice, regulatory floodway or

floodplain encroachments, coordination with transportation and economic development projects, and construction impacts. Other issues addressed in the SDEIS include natural areas; ecosystems; rare, threatened and endangered species; water resources; air quality; surface water and groundwater quality; energy; potentially contaminated sites; displacements and relocations; Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act; and indirect and cumulative effects.

The SDEIS is not intended to repeat all the analyses contained in the AA/DEIS of the Central Corridor LRT. Most analyses are limited to the Central Corridor LRT area of potential effect corresponding to the Key Project Elements outlined above, as well as other project elements that have yet to be identified and may arise during the current decision-making process. Potential impacts are evaluated for both the short-term construction period and the long-term effects of operations. Measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any significant adverse impacts are identified.

After public hearings on the SDEIS are complete, a Final EIS (FEIS) will be prepared that will address impacts to resources (both human and natural) at a higher level of detail, project benefits, and any possible mitigation activities. The FEIS will form the basis for a Record of Decision (ROD) by FTA.

1.3 Purpose and Need

The purpose and need for the Central Corridor LRT is fully presented in the AA/DEIS, which was approved by FTA in 2006. A summary of the purpose and need presented in the AA/DEIS with updated social and economic data is presented below.

The purpose of the Central Corridor LRT is to meet the future transit needs of the Central Corridor LRT Study Area and the region, and to support the economic development goals for the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. The Metropolitan Council's regional 2030 Transportation Policy Plan identified this corridor as a top priority for early implementation. Due to increasing traffic congestion and major redevelopment in the physically constrained Twin Cities Corridor, a need currently exists for a viable alternative to auto travel. The introduction of fixed guideway transit to the Central Corridor LRT Study Area is proposed as a cost-effective measure aimed at improving mobility by offering an alternative to auto travel for commuting and discretionary trips. The Central Corridor LRT would help to minimize congestion increases, offer travel time savings, provide better transit service and capacity to the diverse population of existing and future riders in the corridor, and optimize significant public investments in the regional transit system.

1.3.1 Corridor Description

The Twin Cities metropolitan area is unique among major metropolitan areas in that it has two contiguous central cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, and two downtown central business districts, which are linked by the Central Corridor LRT Project. It is also one of the few northern metropolitan regions that continued to grow over the past 30 years as growth in the U.S. has shifted to the south and west. The approximately 11-mile long Central Corridor LRT Study Area is a major transit and transportation link that runs from downtown St. Paul to downtown Minneapolis (Figure 1-1 Study Area). For ease of discussion and analysis purposes, the Central Corridor LRT Study Area was divided into six planning segments that correspond to the geographic areas, landmarks, and land uses that characterize each of the

segments. These segments are illustrated in Figure 1-2 Community Planning Segments. The planning segments are:

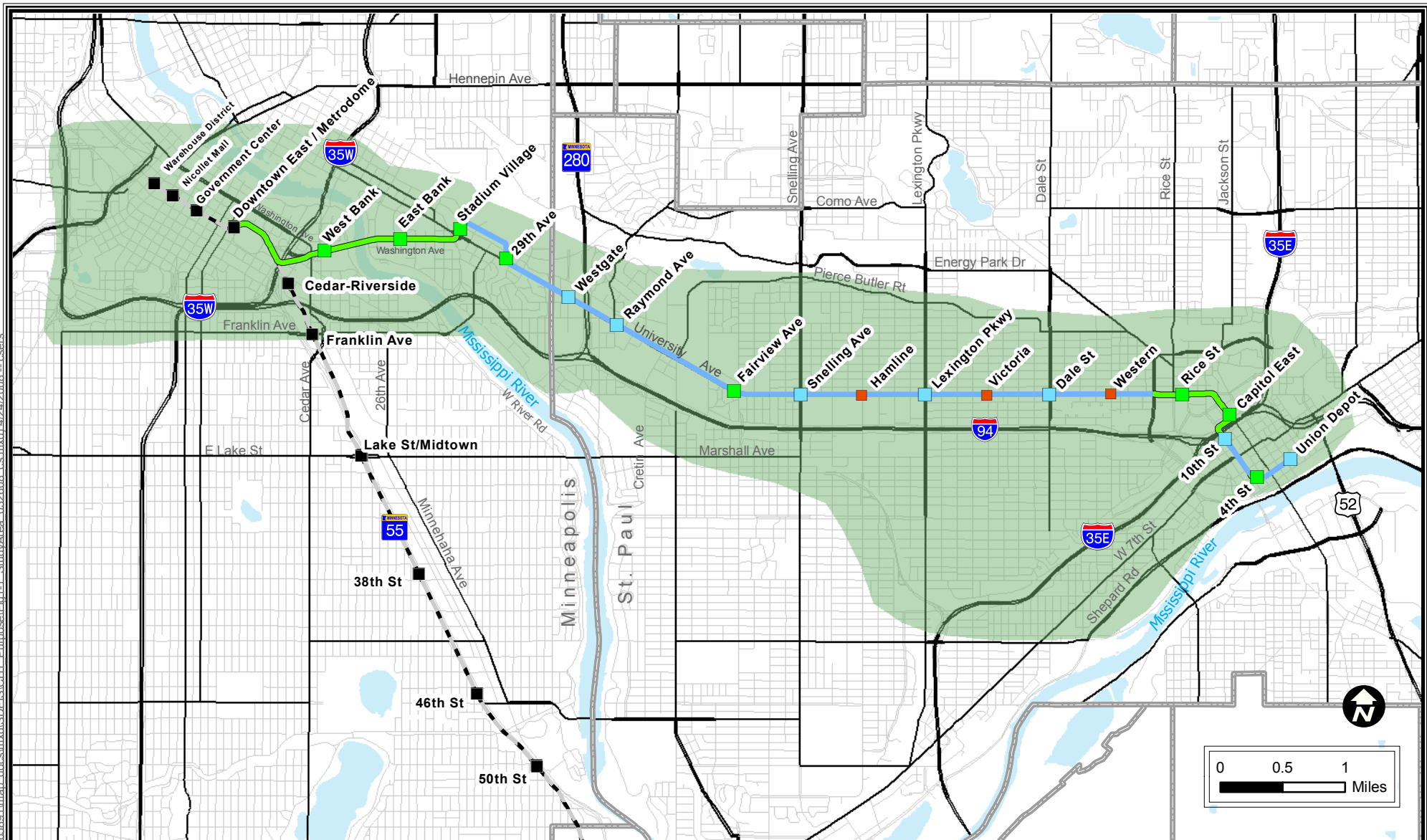
- Downtown St. Paul
- Capitol Area
- Midway East
- Midway West
- University/Prospect Park
- Downtown Minneapolis.

The Central Corridor LRT Study Area is vibrant, with strong neighborhoods, institutions, businesses, and cultural attractions. It is one of the strongest transit corridors in the Midwest, with ridership rivaling that of any transit corridor between Chicago and the West Coast. Coupled with the Hiawatha LRT, the Central Corridor LRT will provide convenient, reliable transit access to the major travel generators in the region, including the employment districts of downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul, the U of M—Twin Cities campus, the Midway area, and the State Capitol.

Overall, according to the Metropolitan Council's 1999 State of the Region Report, the seven-county metropolitan area had a population in 1997 of 2,515,119 and ranked as the 16th most populated metropolitan area in the nation. By 2000, the population in the metropolitan area had risen to 2,642,062, a 5 percent increase within three years. The January 9, 2008, Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Development Framework forecasts a nearly 37 percent increase in metropolitan area population by 2030 to 3,608,000.

The Central Corridor LRT Study Area is one of the region's most ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse areas and it is experiencing rapid growth in population, housing, and employment. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3 - 2001), 150,578 people lived in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area in 2000 (Table 1-1).

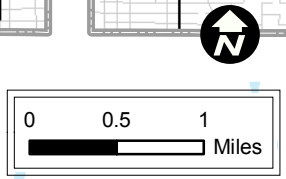
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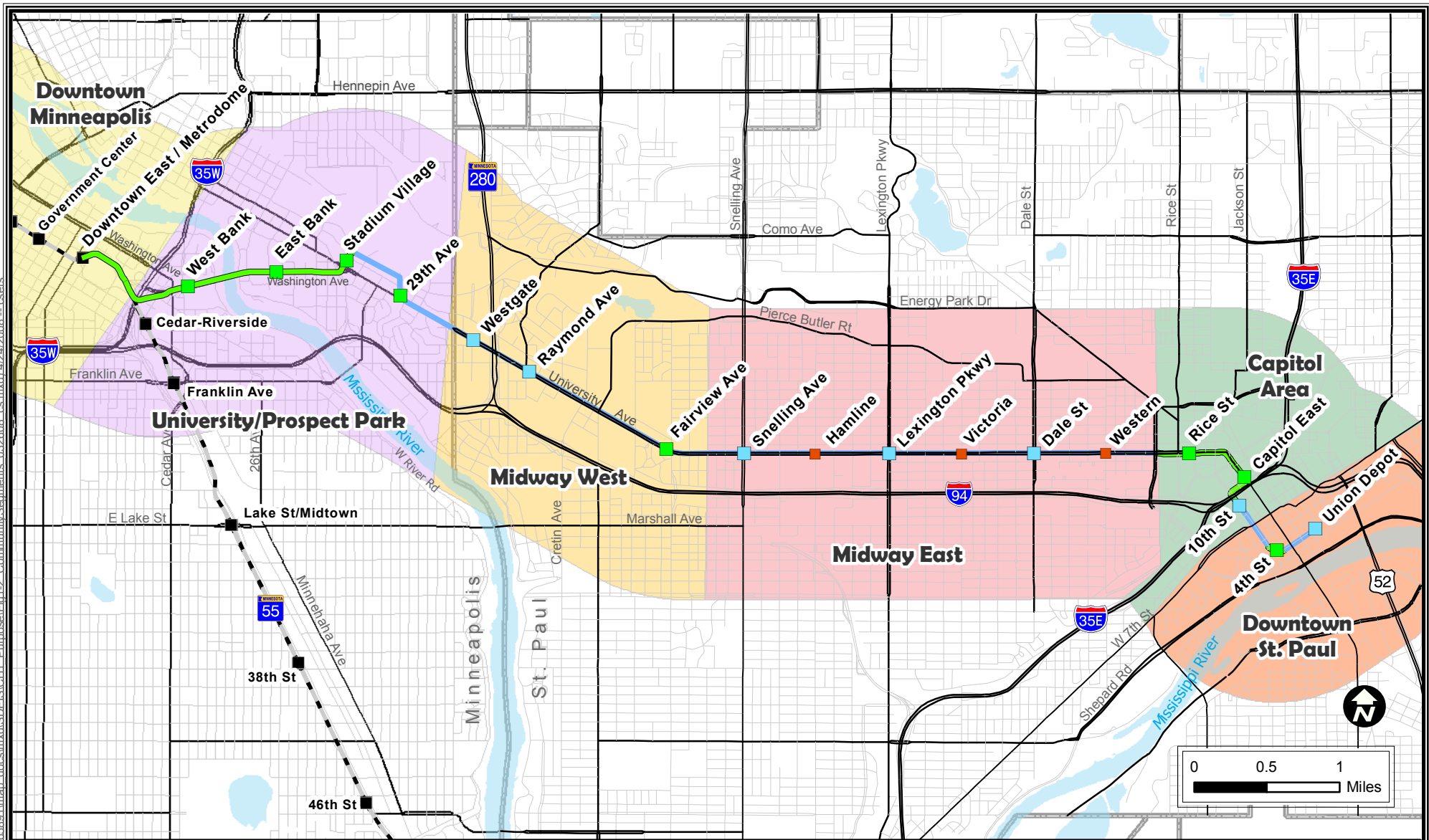
- CCLRT Station**
- Identical to DEIS
 - Changed from DEIS
 - Future Infill Station
- CCLRT Alignment Status**
- Identical to DEIS
 - Changed from DEIS
 - HLRT station
 - - - Hiawatha Light Rail

Figure 1-1
AA / DEIS Study Area

Metropolitan Council
Central Corridor
Light Rail Transit



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- CCLRT Station**
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Figure 1-2
CCLRT Planning Segments

Metropolitan Council
Central Corridor
Light Rail Transit

Table 1-1 Year 2000 Central Corridor Demographic Characteristics

	Twin Cities Metropolitan Area ^a	Hennepin County	Ramsey County	City of Minneapolis	City of St. Paul	Central Corridor LRT Study Area ^a	Central Corridor (percent of Metro Area ^a)
Population	2,642,062	1,116,206	511,035	382,747	286,840	150,578	5.7
Persons below poverty level ^c	179,316	90,384	52,673	62,092	43,266	34,737	19.4
Number of households	1,021,456	456,131	201,236	162,363	112,109	63,574	6.2
Median household income	\$ 54,332	\$ 51,711	\$ 45,722	\$ 37,974	\$ 38,774	\$29,956 ^b	N/A
Zero car households	87,091	48,930	23,666	31,991	18,866	19,152	22.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3), 2001. Retrieved online from the Metropolitan Council

^a For this table, the Central Corridor LRT Study Area is defined as the land area one-half mile from the AA/DEIS LPA alignment and station areas. The Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is defined as the seven-county region under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council. Thus, the Study Area is within the metropolitan area. The Study Area values were calculated using Census Tract level data. To ensure the integrity of the data used, if only a portion of the Census Tract was included in the Study Area, the entire Census Tract was included in the analysis. The percent of Metro Area (last column) is calculated by dividing the values in the Study Area by the values in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (first column) and multiplying by 100.

^b This number represents the weighted average of median household incomes for the Census Tracts located within the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. A weighted average was used because median household incomes for Census Tracts within the corridor varied. To determine the median household income for the entire corridor, the total number of households in each Census Tract were weighted against the median household incomes for the Tract, and averaged across the entire number of households in the Study Area. The final amount was rounded to the nearest whole dollar value.

^c U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Definition: "Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition uses money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps)."

The Central Corridor LRT Study Area is among the most densely populated in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and has some of the highest household growth rates (Figure 1-3, Population Density by Transportation Analysis Zone Year 2000).

The Central Corridor LRT Study Area also has a high percentage of minorities, of households without automobiles, of people with low incomes, and of households below poverty level. Much of the population in the Study Area depends on transit for mobility and access to jobs. As shown in Table 1-1, where the "number of persons below poverty level" and "zero car households," are surrogates for transit dependency, 22 percent of the households in the Study Area are without a car, thus, a substantial percentage of that population depends on transit to get to work, health care facilities, shopping destinations, schools, and recreational facilities.

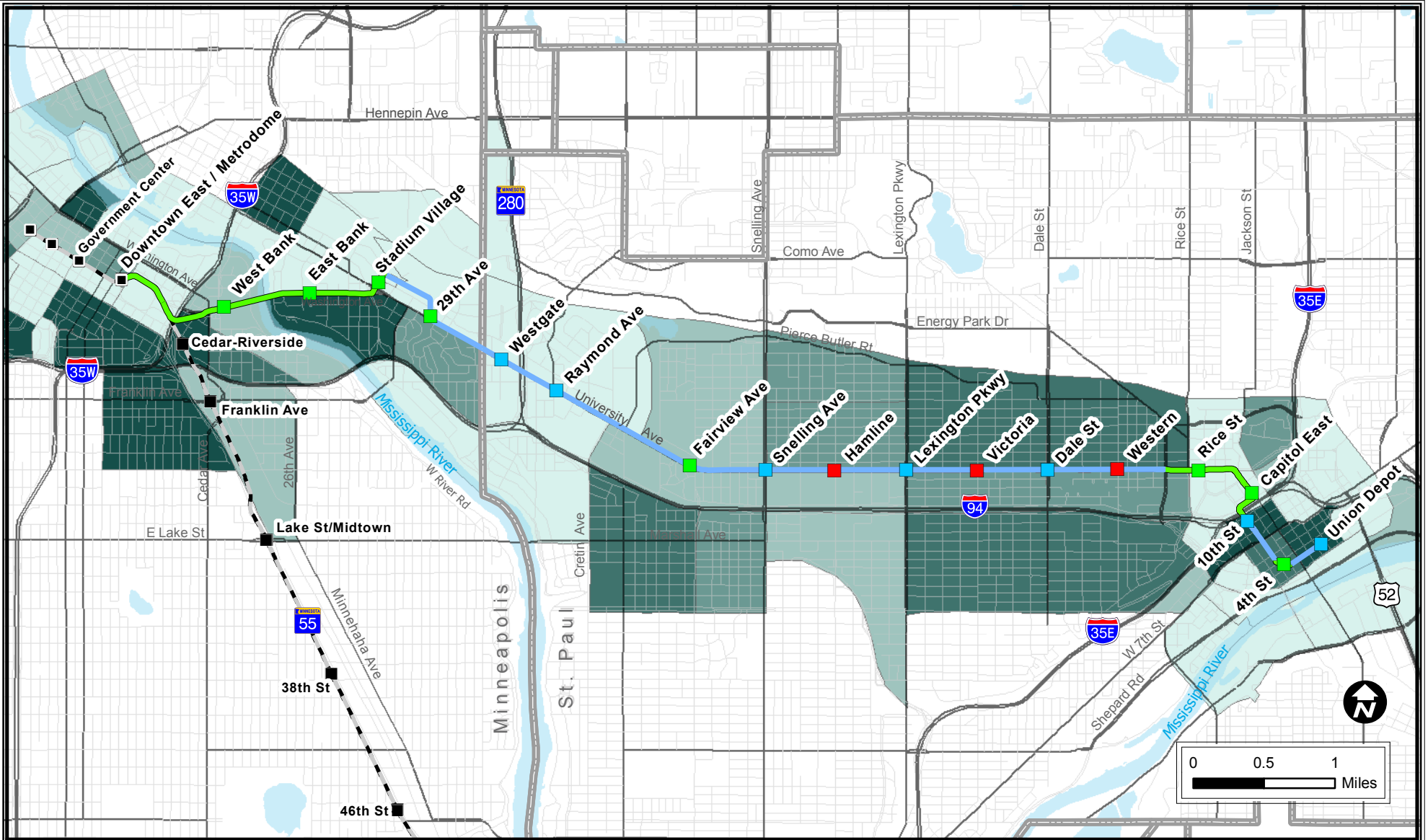
The last few years have seen a surge in residential development in downtown Minneapolis, with the addition of 9,968 new residential units from 2000 to 2006. Another 9,295 more are proposed. The Draft Central Corridor LRT New Starts Application, on page A-2-2, states the downtown Minneapolis neighborhood has added the most housing units in recent years of any neighborhood in Minneapolis or St. Paul. Table 1-2 compares current population in the six corridor segments to projected 2010 and 2030 population. As shown, population growth is anticipated in all six segments. Of particular note are the population projections for the segments Downtown St. Paul, Midway West, and Downtown Minneapolis, where population in 2030 is projected to increase by 119.4 percent, 30.4 percent, and 60.6 percent, respectively.

Table 1-2 Central Corridor Population by Segment

Central Corridor LRT Study Area Segment ^a	2000	Projected 2010	Percent change from 2000	Projected 2030	Percent change from 2000
Downtown St. Paul	7,320	10,540	44	16,060	119
Capitol Area	5,820	6,650	14	7,820	34
Midway East	45,500	47,280	4	51,360	13
Midway West	18,110	20,370	13	23,610	30
University of Minnesota	32,670	33,860	4	37,500	15
Downtown Minneapolis	19,850	27,600	39	31,870	61
Total Corridor	129,270	146,300	13	168,220	30

Source: The Metropolitan Council and the State of Minnesota Department of Administration, Land Management Information Center, October 2005

^a For this table, the Central Corridor LRT Study Area is defined as the land area one-half mile from the AA/DEIS LPA alignment and station areas. Small differences exist between the New Starts Application and the SDEIS analysis of population, housing, and employment totals in the Study Area. The differences occur because the New Starts Application includes the 10th Street Station among the other Downtown St. Paul stations, whereas the SDEIS analysis places the 10th Street Station among the Capitol Area stations.



CCLRT Station		Population/Acre	
■	Identical to DEIS	■	0 - 5
■	Changed from DEIS	■	6 - 10
■	Future infill station	■	11 - 15
CCLRT Alignment Status		■	16 - 20
—	Identical to DEIS	■	> 20
—	Changed from DEIS		
■	HLRT station		
—	Hiawatha Light Rail		

Figure 1-3
Population Density
by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)
Year 2000

Metropolitan Council Central Corridor
 Light Rail Transit

Household growth is projected throughout the Central Corridor LRT Study Area, especially in the downtowns and their riverfront areas where new developments are under construction with many already open for occupancy. Figure 1-4 and Figure 1-5 illustrate the relative population density projected in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area for 2010 and 2030. Notice that in comparison to 2000 (Figure 1-3), the areas of higher density increase in size around downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis.

The Twin Cities region is expected to add approximately one million people to its 2.7 million population base by 2030. Table 1-3 compares the current number of households in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area to the number projected for 2030. Although growth in the number of households for each of the six segments is projected, Downtown St. Paul, at 137 percent, and Downtown Minneapolis, at 78 percent, are projected to have the highest growth. The overall percentage of housing growth for the Central Corridor LRT Study Area is projected to be 41 percent.

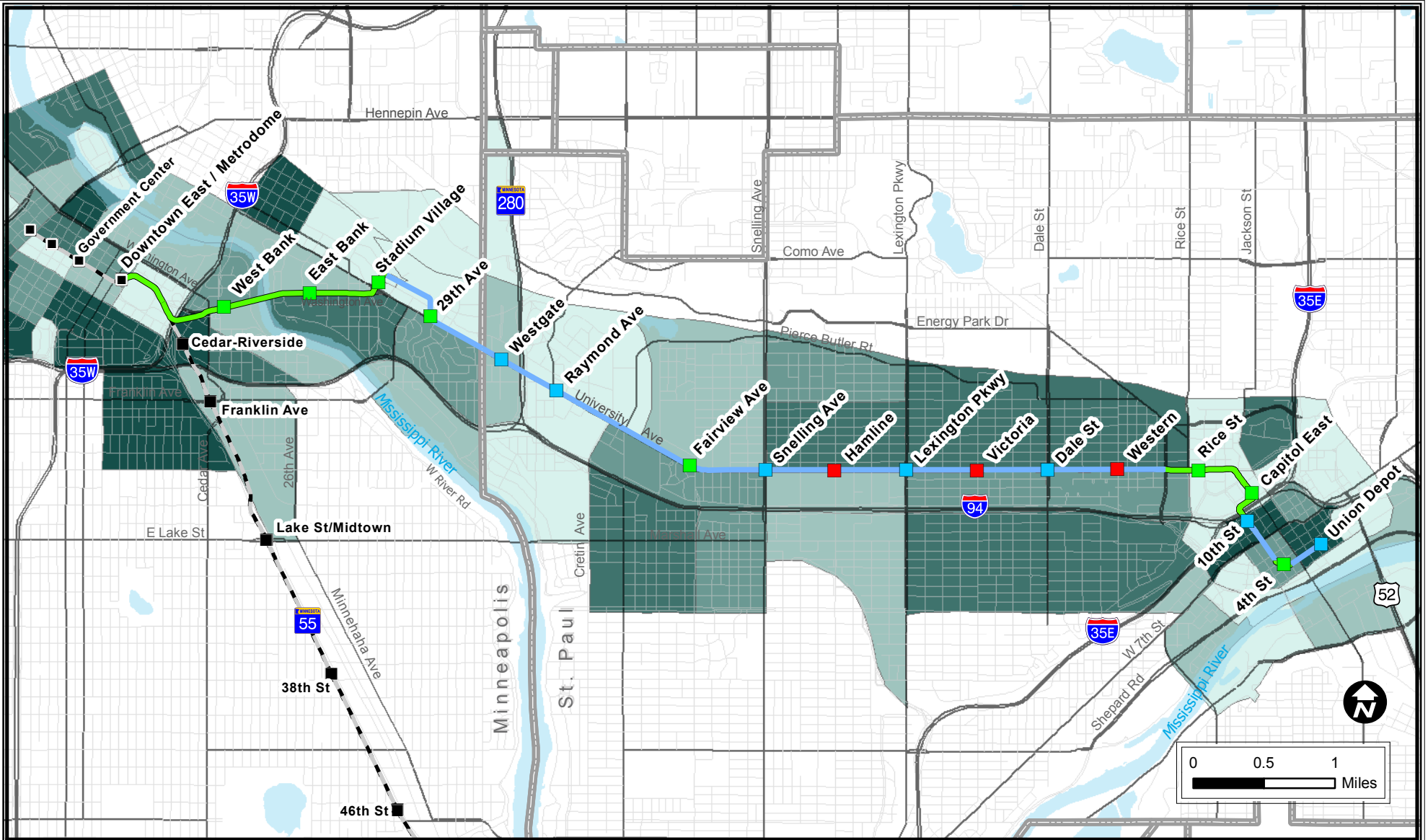
Table 1-3 Central Corridor Households by Segment

Study Area Segment ^a	2000	Projected 2010	Percent change from 2000	Projected 2030	Percent change from 2000
Downtown St. Paul	3,560	5,400	52	8,430	137
Capitol Area	2,580	2,940	14	3,460	34
Midway East	16,630	17,270	4	18,740	13
Midway West	7,330	8,340	14	9,750	33
University of Minnesota	10,940	12,180	11	13,330	22
Downtown Minneapolis	11,040	16,990	54	19,620	78
Total Corridor	52,080	63,120	21	73,330	41

Source: The Metropolitan Council and the State of Minnesota Department of Administration, Land Management Information Center, October 2005

^a For this table, the Central Corridor LRT Study Area is defined as the land area one-half mile from the AA/DEIS LPA alignment and station areas. Differences exist between the New Starts Application and the SDEIS analysis of population, housing, and employment totals in the Study Area. The difference is the result of how the data were allocated across the Study Area, with one analysis considering station areas, and the other considering planning segments. Specifically, the New Starts Application includes the 10th Street Station with all the other Downtown St. Paul stations, whereas the SDEIS analysis places the 10th Street Station in with the Capitol Area stations. This would mean that certain TAZs may have been excluded from one analysis and included in another, changing the totals.

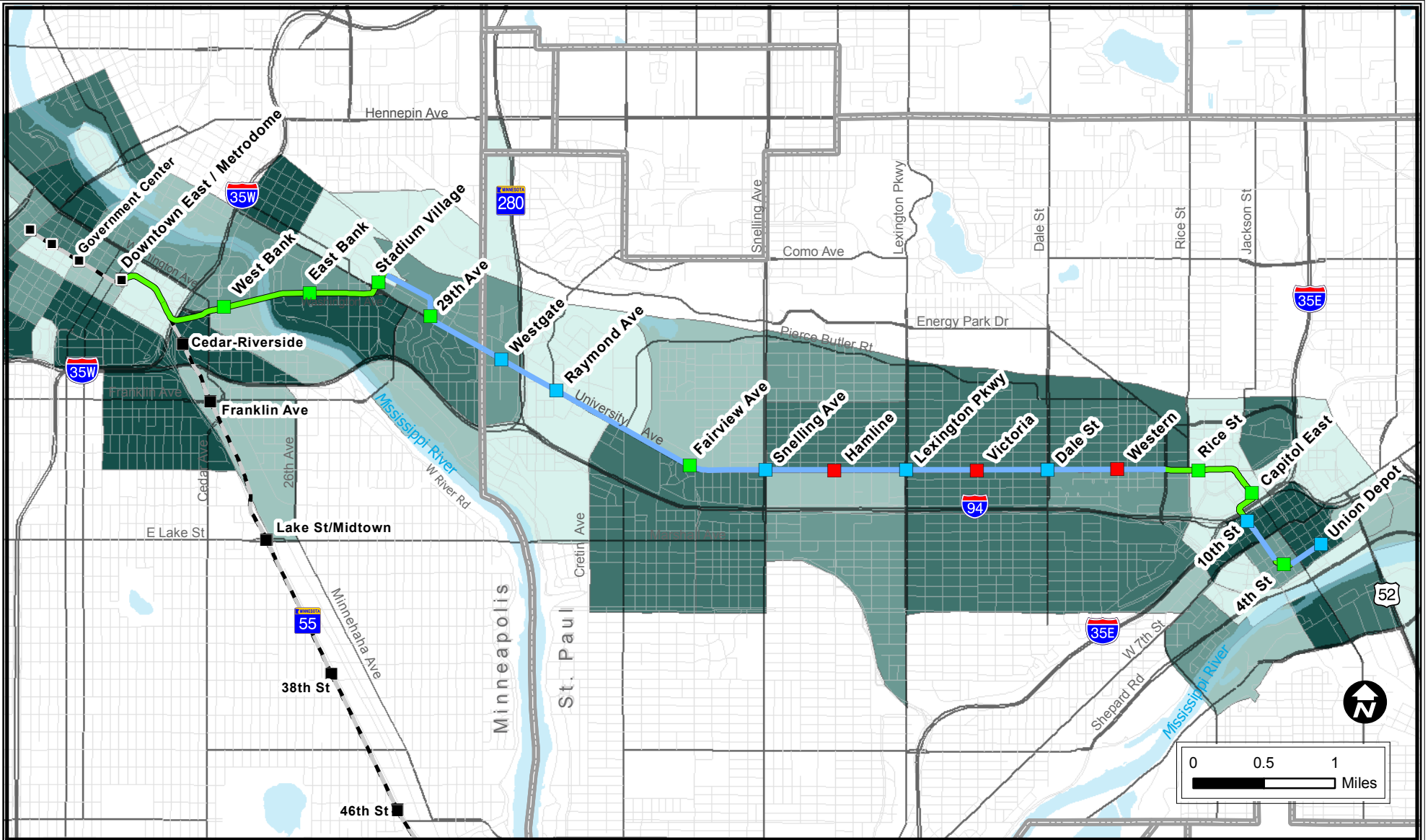
As reflected in the population and household growth tables, and the figures illustrating population density, the highest regional concentrations of urban activity, government, commerce, education, regional services, transit, and highways are all located in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area.



CCLRT Station		Population/Acre	
■	Identical to DEIS	■	0 - 5
■	Changed from DEIS	■	6 - 10
■	Future infill station	■	11 - 15
CCLRT Alignment Status		■	16 - 20
—	Identical to DEIS	■	> 20
—	Changed from DEIS		
■	HLRT station		
—	Hiawatha Light Rail		

Figure 1-4
Population Density
by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)
Year 2010

Metropolitan Council Central Corridor
 Light Rail Transit



CCLRT Station		Population/Acre	
■	Identical to DEIS	■	0 - 5
■	Changed from DEIS	■	6 - 10
■	Future infill station	■	11 - 15
CCLRT Alignment Status		■	16 - 20
—	Identical to DEIS	■	> 20
—	Changed from DEIS		
■	HLRT station		
- - -	Hiawatha Light Rail		

Figure 1-5
Population Density
by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)
Year 2030

Metropolitan Council Central Corridor
 Light Rail Transit

Each of the six Central Corridor segments includes employment opportunities, as presented below:

- Downtown St. Paul is a major employment center with office towers and retail businesses.
- Capitol Area is the location of state government offices and administration facilities and Regions and Bethesda hospitals.
- Midway East is home to a large number of successful, independently-owned retail businesses. Many of these businesses are owned and operated by recent immigrants, as well as entrepreneurs who have long been residents of this area.
- Midway West employers include large retail shopping centers, commercial offices, and the West Midway Business Park. West Midway is the location of light industrial, manufacturing, shipping and warehousing, and technology research businesses.
- University of Minnesota/Prospect Park's largest employer is the U of M, with its administrators, faculty, and hospital staff. Additional employers are heavy to light industries that benefit from railroad services in the Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI) area, which is just north of University Avenue.
- Downtown Minneapolis is a major employment center with office towers, retail businesses, and major sports venues.

Employment within one-half-mile of the corridor was 332,350 in 2000 and is projected to increase to 428,320 in 2030. The Central Corridor LRT would serve approximately 150,000 employees as potential transit riders in Downtown Minneapolis, 46,000 in Downtown St. Paul, and 45,000 in the Midway area, based on current employment figures. In addition, according to the Draft Central Corridor LRT New Starts Application, it would serve approximately 80,000 students, faculty, and staff at the U of M.

At the same time, many residents of the Central Corridor LRT Study Area are transit-dependent (Table 1-1). Effective transit is required to bring employees to jobs in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area, as well as provide access to jobs for transit-dependent residents within the Study Area.

Overall, the entire Central Corridor LRT Study Area is projected to experience 35 percent growth in employment (jobs) through 2030 (Table 1-4). Figures 1-6, 1-7, and 1-8 (Employment Density by Transportation Analysis Zone Year 2000 (2010 and 2030 respectively) illustrate how the growth in jobs is anticipated to be distributed along the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. When one compares the employment density maps with the population density maps (Figures 1-3, 1-4, and 1-5), it is possible to identify some changing land use patterns—from industrial and institutional to higher-density residential—in some of the Central Corridor LRT Study Area neighborhoods.

Table 1-4 Central Corridor Employment (jobs) by Segment

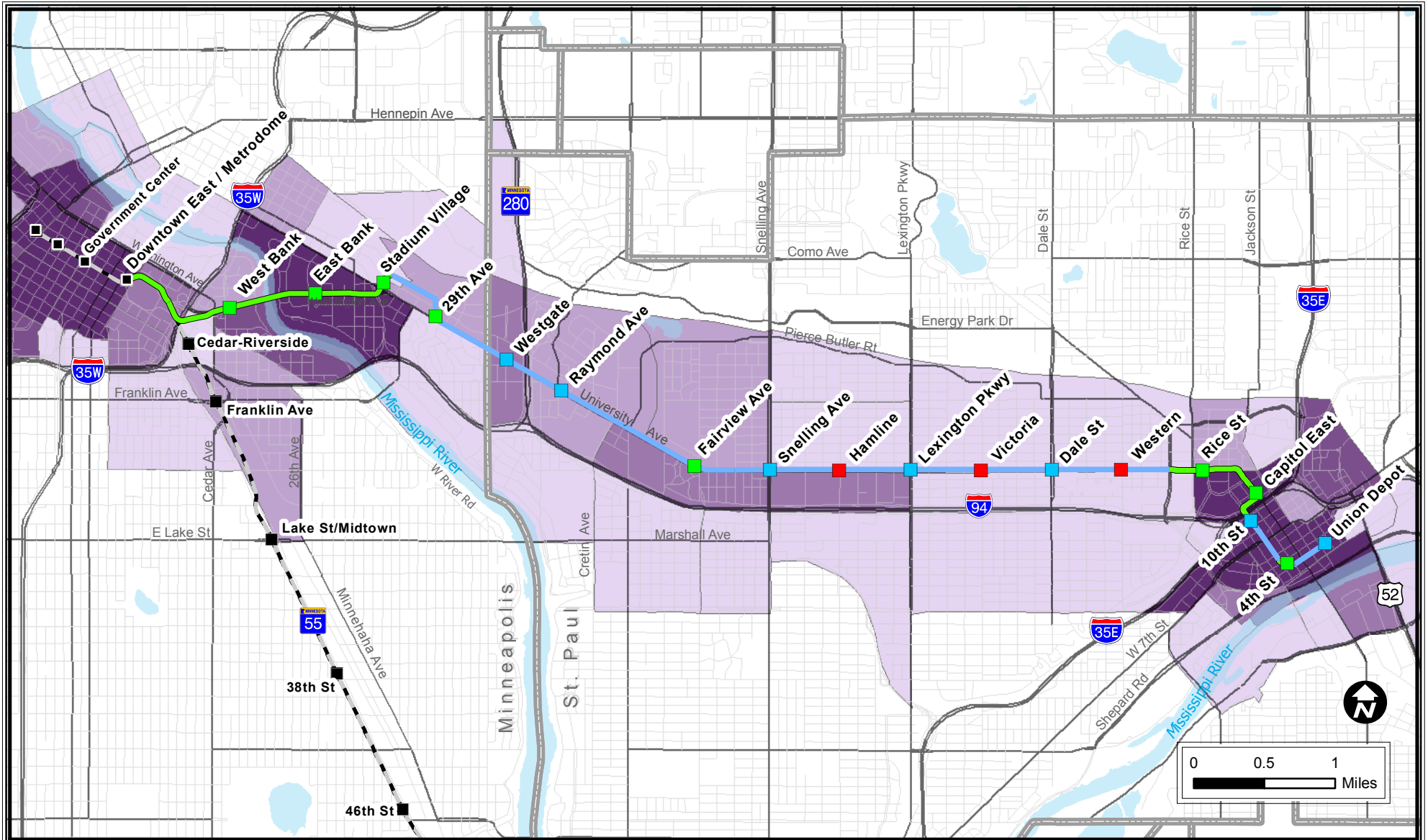
Study Area Segment ^a	2000	Projected 2010	Percent change from 2000	Projected 2030	Percent change from 2000
Downtown St. Paul	46,040	57,580	25	72,610	58
Capitol Area	32,560	31,470	-3	31,910	-2
Midway East	16,190	17,650	9	20,070	24
Midway West	30,400	29,950	-2	30,990	2
University of Minnesota	44,060	46,130	5	46,990	7
Downtown Minneapolis	148,880	150,010	1	195,260	31
Total Corridor Study Area	318,130	333,880	5	428,320	35

Source: The Metropolitan Council and the State of Minnesota Department of Administration, Land Management Information Center, October 2005

^a For this table, the Central Corridor LRT Study Area is defined as the land area one-half-mile from the AA/DEIS LPA alignment and station areas. Differences exist between the New Starts Application and the SDEIS analysis of population, housing, and employment totals in the study area. The difference is the result of how the data were allocated across the Study Area, with one analysis considering station areas, and the other considering planning segments. Specifically, the New Starts Application includes the 10th Street Station with all the other Downtown St. Paul stations, whereas the SDEIS analysis places the 10th Street Station in with the Capitol Area stations. This would mean that certain TAZs may have been excluded from one analysis and included in another, changing the totals.

1.3.2 Roadway System

Existing and future traffic conditions are fully reported in the AA/DEIS and updated in Chapter 6 of this SDEIS. In summary, the Central Corridor LRT Study Area is located at the core of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The AA/DEIS reported results of the Metropolitan Council's regional travel demand model that indicate travel in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area includes more than 900,000 daily trips. The regional model is discussed in Section 6.1.1. . Of these trips, 702,000 were either external or internal trips, with either the origin or destination within the Study Area. Of these, 210,000 trips had both origins and destinations in the Study Area.



CCLRT Station	Employment/Acre
■ Identical to DEIS	■ 0 - 10
■ Changed from DEIS	■ 11 - 20
■ Future infill station	■ 21 - 30
CCLRT Alignment Status	■ 31 - 40
— Identical to DEIS	■ > 40
— Changed from DEIS	
■ HLRT station	
- - - Hiawatha Light Rail	

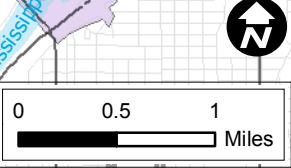

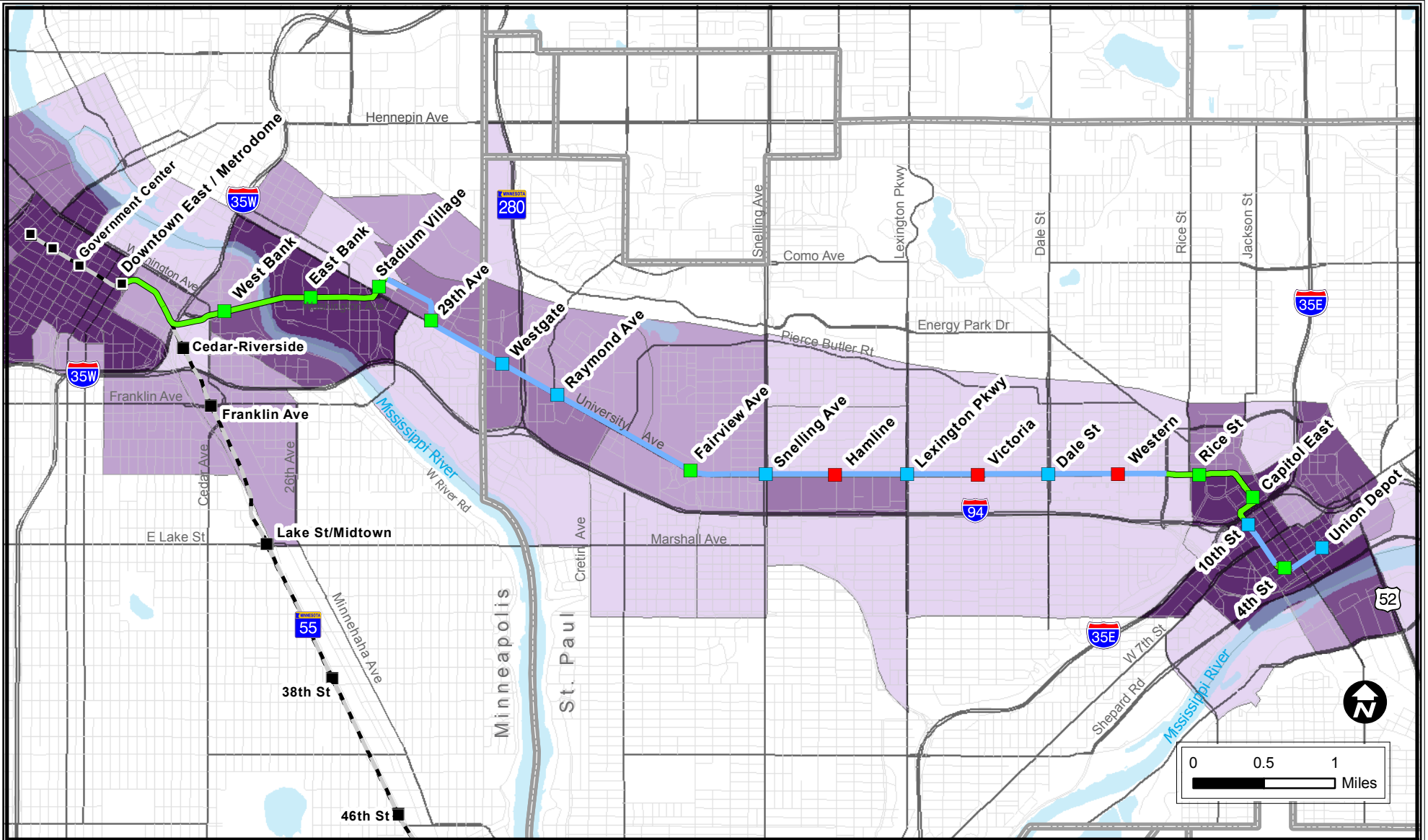


Figure 1-6
Employment Density
by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)
Year 2000


Central Corridor
Light Rail Transit

Data Sources: LMIC, Metropolitan Council, Mn/DOT



CCLRT Station	Employment/Acre
■ Identical to DEIS	■ 0 - 10
■ Changed from DEIS	■ 11 - 20
■ Future infill station	■ 21 - 30
CCLRT Alignment Status	■ 31 - 40
— Identical to DEIS	■ > 40
— Changed from DEIS	
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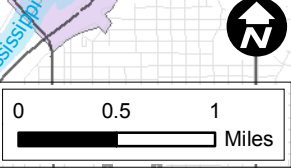
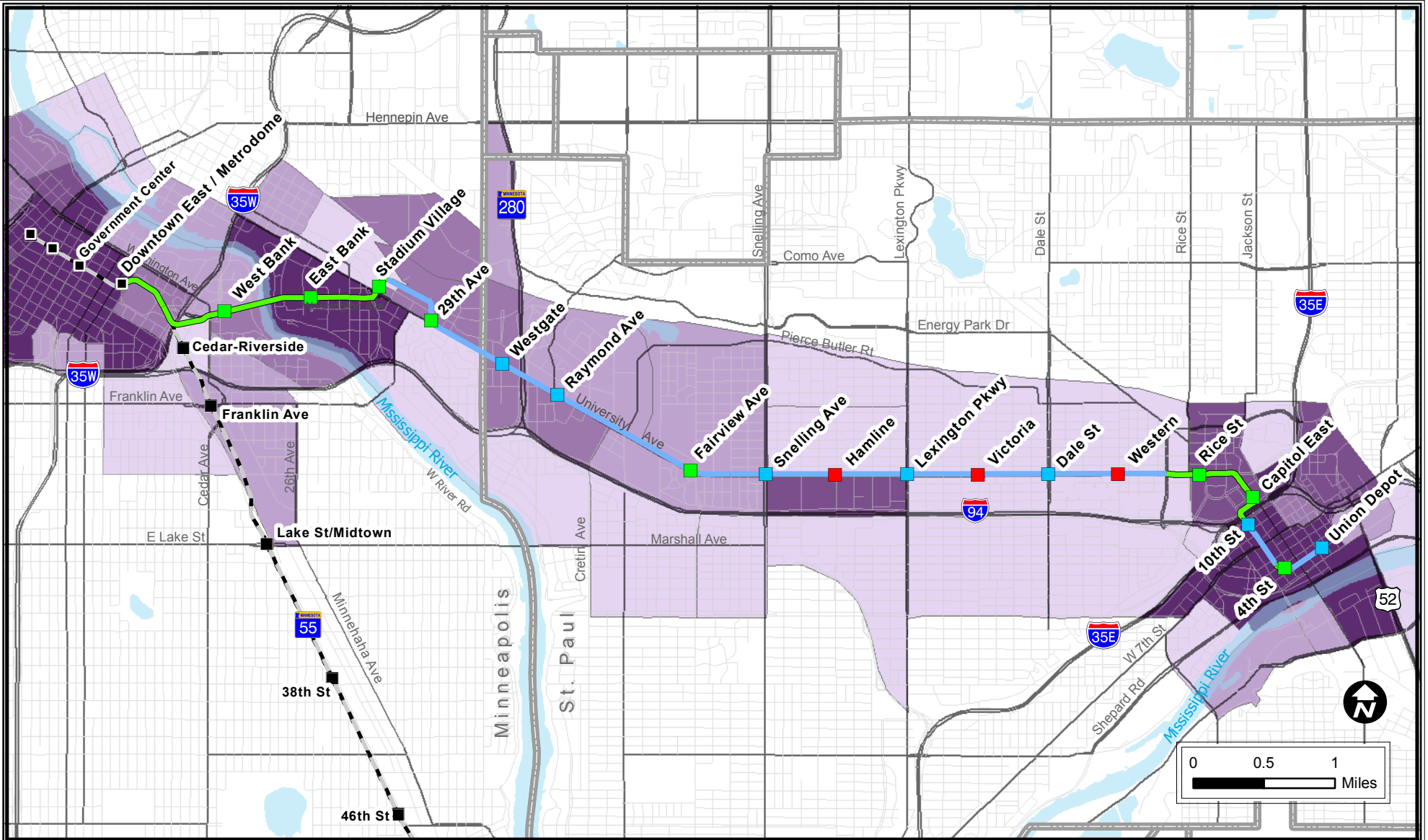


Figure 1-7
Employment Density
by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)
Year 2010

Metropolitan Council Central Corridor
 Light Rail Transit



CCLRT Station	Employment/Acre
■ Identical to DEIS	■ 0 - 10
■ Changed from DEIS	■ 11 - 20
■ Future infill station	■ 21 - 30
CCLRT Alignment Status	■ 31 - 40
— Identical to DEIS	■ > 40
— Changed from DEIS	
■ HLRT station	
- - - Hiawatha Light Rail	

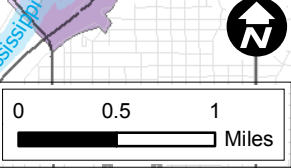


Figure 1-8
Employment Density
by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)
Year 2030

Metropolitan Council Central Corridor
 Light Rail Transit

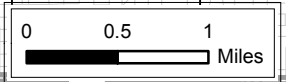
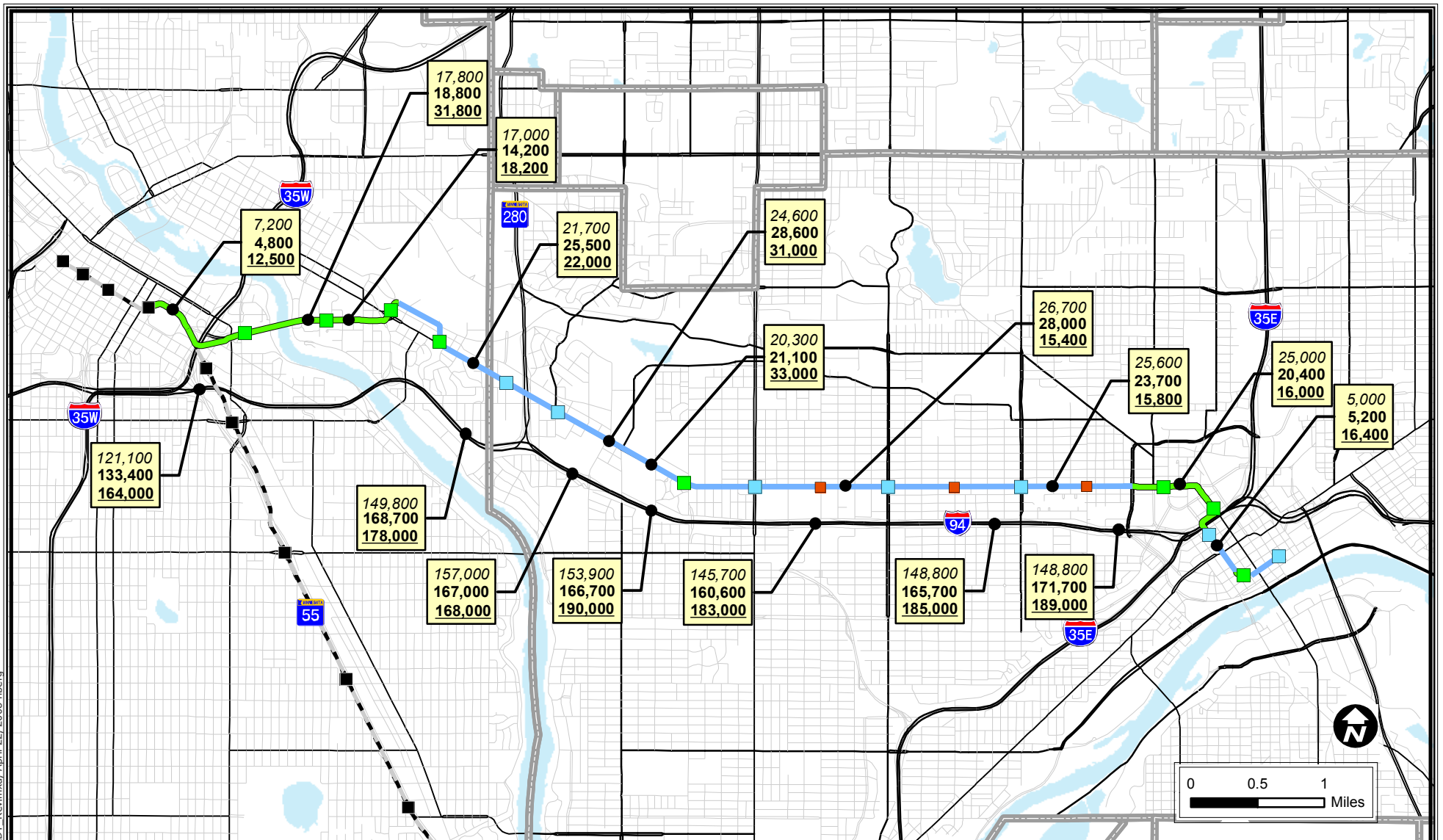
The AA/DEIS acknowledged that traffic congestion is a problem for the Central Corridor LRT Study Area, especially on I-94, which is a critical link in the Twin Cities road network. I-94 was completed in 1966 as part of the Interstate highway connecting Port Huron, Michigan, to Seattle, Washington. Through the Twin Cities, its route also relieved congestion on University Avenue. I-94 is currently the most direct transportation link between the three major activity centers in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area, but the freeway is reaching its capacity. As reported in the AA/DEIS and cited in the Draft Central Corridor LRT New Starts Application, I-94 has experienced a 107 percent increase in average daily traffic in Minneapolis in the last 25 years. Between 1990 and 1998, daily traffic volumes increased between 29,000 and 40,000 vehicle trips at seven locations along I-94 within the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. Daily traffic volume is projected to continue to grow. Based on travel demand forecasts for 2020, cited in the Metropolitan Council's 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan, nearly all portions of I-94 located in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area will reach capacity. Adding lanes would present difficult engineering, cost, and environmental issues. According to the Draft Central Corridor LRT New Starts Application, expansion plans are not included in the region's long range plans. Figure 1-9, Historic and Projected Traffic on University Avenue, I-94, and Washington Avenue, illustrates 1995 to projected 2030 traffic volumes.

Continued demand increases may cause a breakdown of the transportation system served by I-94. Drivers are expected to seek relief by taking parallel routes, potentially causing system-wide congestion. University and Washington avenues are the main east-west arterial routes located in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area and serve as Reliever-type "A" Minor Arterials. Half of the locations on both University and Washington avenues were projected to be operating near capacity in Year 2000 (Metropolitan Council, 2000), and the projections for Year 2030 show traffic growth at most locations along these arterial roadways. Although none are projected to reach the existing roadway capacity, it may be anticipated that breakdowns and congestion of the system will occur on both Washington and University avenues, causing increased travel times and safety concerns within the Central Corridor LRT Study Area.

1.3.3 Transit

Existing transit service, facilities, and future needs in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area are fully described in the AA/DEIS. In summary, the corridor is currently served by several major bus routes, including Route 16, Route 50, and express service on I-94. The combined average weekday ridership on Routes 16 and 50 in 2007 was more than 23,600, up from 2000 ridership of about 20,000. Figure 1-10 Existing Bus Routes shows the location of park-and-ride facilities, bus routes, and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and how the proposed Central Corridor LRT would fit into the overall system.

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CCLRT Station

- Identical to DEIS
- Changed from DEIS
- Future Infill Station

CCLRT Alignment Status

- Identical to DEIS
- Changed from DEIS

HLRT Station

- HLRT Station

Hiawatha Light Rail

- Hiawatha Light Rail

Daily Traffic Volumes

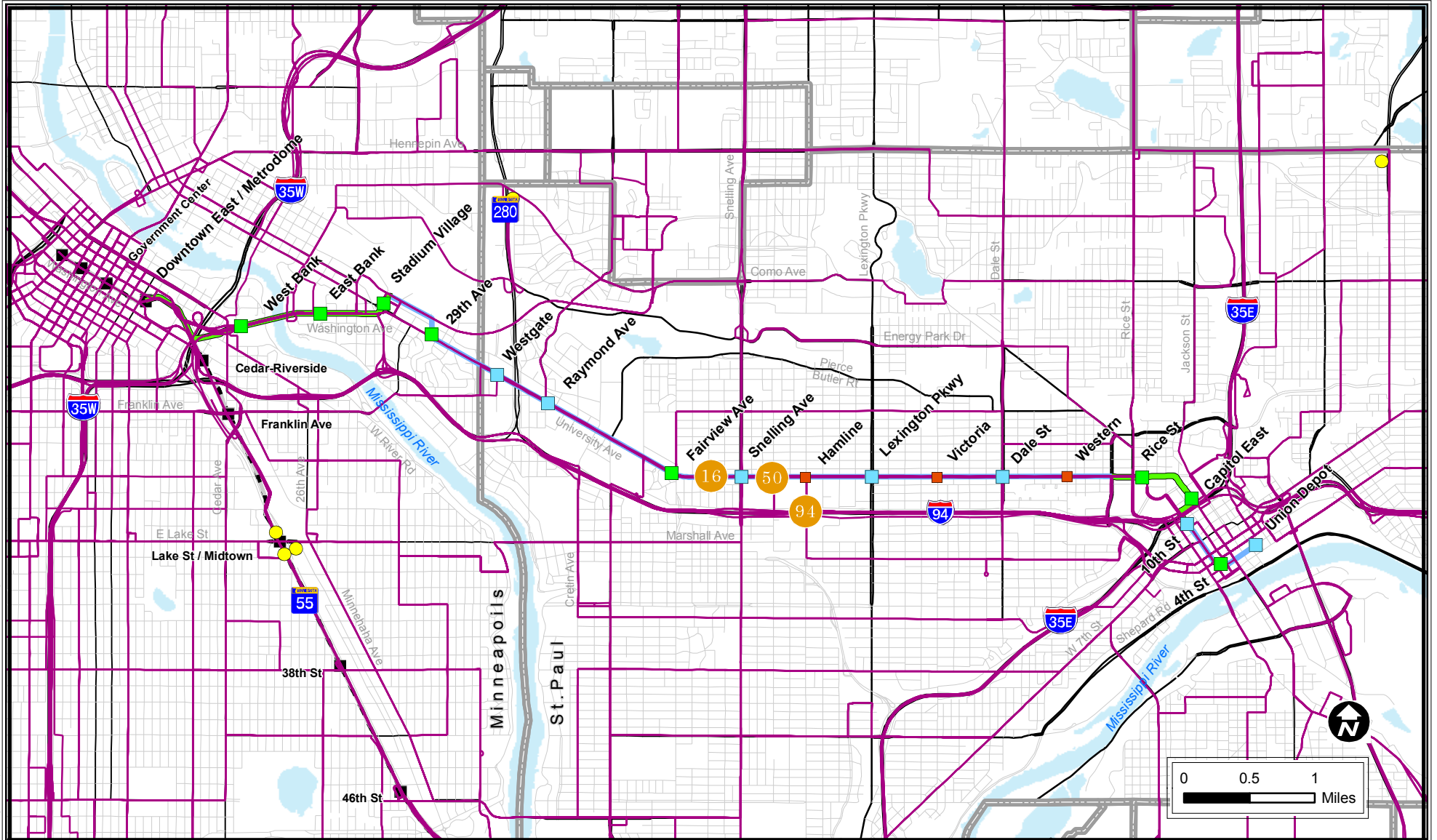
1995 Counts
2005 Counts
2030 Projected

Figure 1-9

Historic and Projected Traffic on University Avenue, I-94, and Washington Avenue

DRAFT

Metropolitan Council Central Corridor Light Rail Transit



CCLRT Station

- Identical to DEIS
 - Changed from DEIS
 - Future Station
- CCLRT Alignment Status**
- Identical to DEIS
 - Changed from DEIS
 - HLRT Station
 - Hiawatha Light Rail

Route Information

- Bus Routes
- 16 Bus Route Numbers
- Park-n-Rides

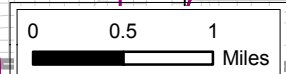


Figure 1-10
Existing Bus Routes

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Unlike other typical radial route corridors, University Avenue has multiple major origins and destinations along the entire length of the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. Employer transit pass programs and student transit pass programs have increased ridership and caused overloads, bus bunching, and passing up passengers. In response to these problems in service quality and reliability, a variety of service changes have been made. Articulated buses are used on the route to add capacity. In 1998, Route 50 was added to provide limited stop service. Additional bus trips from the two downtowns to the U of M were added, and buses on Routes 50 and 16 now provide six-minute headways at major stops. Additional running time continues to be required because increased boardings and alightings from high ridership have resulted in greater dwell times—slower service. Express service is provided on I-94, which parallels University Avenue.

Current ridership on these three routes (16, 50, and I-94) is approximately 27,800 passengers per day. A variety of other routes serve segments of the Central Corridor LRT Study Area, particularly in the downtowns and the U of M. Thirty-five percent of U of M students have a semester transit pass and approximately 40 percent of downtown Minneapolis employees are transit customers today.

1.3.4 Parking

As documented in the AA/DEIS, a 1998 study for downtown St. Paul reported a 2,340 parking space shortage and stated that new developments have further reduced the number of surface parking spaces. New parking structures were developed to fill the need, but the structures are costly and take time to build. Further, it was projected that new developments in the central business districts would add nearly five million square feet of office space, one million square feet of retail space, more than 1,300 new housing units, and nearly 1,300 new hotel rooms. As discussed in Section 1.3.2, approximately 210,000 daily trips in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area originate and have destinations within the corridor. The transfer of some of these automobile trips to the Central Corridor LRT could reduce the need for new parking spaces.

1.4 Planning Context

As indicated in the many state, regional, and local transportation and transit-oriented development (TOD) studies and plans that have been prepared over the years, transit improvements and developments are important to the Twin Cities. State and regional studies have long recognized the importance of the Central Corridor LRT Study Area as a critical link in the existing transit system that serves the most intense all-day transit ridership in the metropolitan area. The Central Corridor LRT Study Area has been addressed in the following studies:

- *City of St. Paul Central Corridor Development Strategy*, City of St. Paul, adopted as a chapter of the Comprehensive Plan on October 24, 2007.
- *Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan*, City of St. Paul, adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan on August 16, 2006, addresses LRT as part of balancing modes in downtown.
- *2030 Regional Development Framework*, Metropolitan Council, January 2004
- *2030 Transportation Policy Plan*, Metropolitan Council, December 2004

- *Transit 2020 Master Plan*, Metropolitan Council, February 2000
- *Twin Cities Metropolitan Commuter Rail Feasibility Study, Phase II, Final Summary Report*, Office of Freight, Railroads and Waterways, Minnesota Department of Transportation, January 1999
- *Commuter Rail System Plan*, Minnesota Department of Transportation, January 1999
- *Twin Cities Metropolitan Commuter Rail Feasibility Study, Phase I, Summary Report*, Office of Freight, Railroads and Waterways, Minnesota Department of Transportation, January 1998
- Central Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, 1994
- Midway Corridor Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement, 1991

Transit 2020, Regional Transit Master Plan, February 2000

In response to a directive by the 1999 Minnesota Legislature, the Metropolitan Council published Transit 2020 Master Plan, February 1, 2000. The plan describes strategies and an implementation program for the Twin Cities region's future transportation system. Evolving from earlier regional transportation plans, the Transit 2020 plan includes the goal to "develop dedicated transitways, (including) exclusive busways, light rail transit, and commuter rail" as components of an integrated, region-wide system.

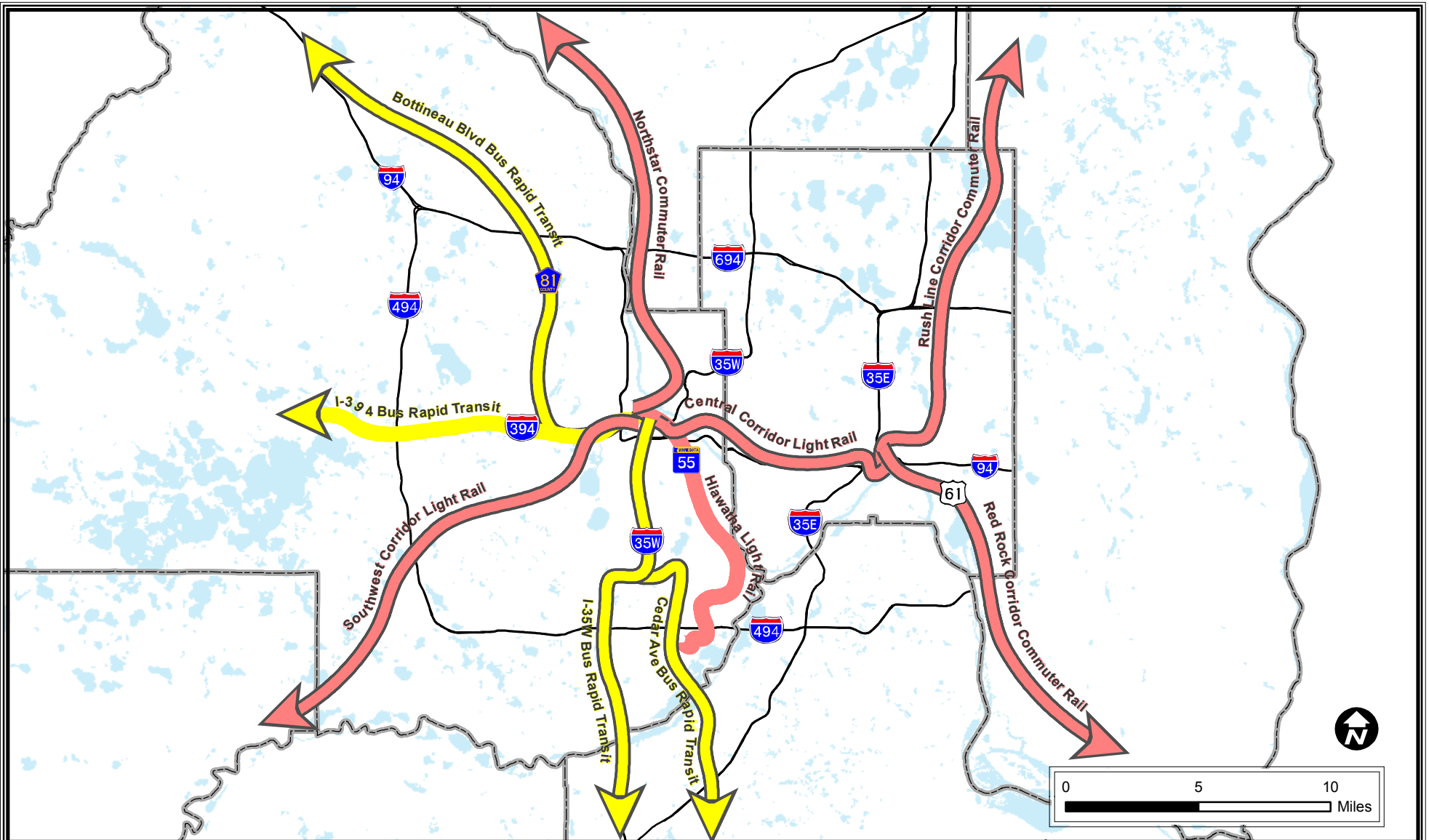
2030 Transportation Policy Plan, December 2004

In 2004, the Metropolitan Council adopted the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan for the region. It identifies several high priority corridors for implementation in the near term, including the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. It also includes the Northwest Corridor (or Bottineau Boulevard), Cedar Avenue, and I-35W bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors that would connect with the Central Corridor. The plan also calls for improvements to arterial bus services that feed these corridors.

The Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan is intended to provide a guide for doubling transit ridership by 2030, slowing the growth in traffic congestion, and improving mobility for everyone. The strategies include developing a network of rail and bus "transitways," with mode choices based on a careful cost-benefit analysis. The region now has two such transitways: a high occupancy toll lane on I-394 and light rail transit in the Hiawatha corridor linking downtown Minneapolis, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America. Under the Council's plan, additional transitways will be built between 2005 and 2020. Figure 1-11 illustrates the planned transitways. Transit facilities being constructed or planned in the metropolitan area are described below.

As the region moved to upgrade its transit network, the **Hiawatha Corridor** was the first light rail corridor in the region. This 12-mile LRT line was opened in phases in June and December 2004 and serves downtown Minneapolis, the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America. A reorientation of local and regional bus routes that were providing downtown-oriented capacity in this corridor has allowed Metro Transit to better meet other transportation needs in the region and attract additional riders to the total transit network. The Hiawatha LRT has exceeded ridership expectations by more than 60 percent and has promoted private investment and growth along the corridor.

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2030 Transitway System

- Proposed Rail Corridor
- Proposed Bus Rapid Transit
- Existing Rail Corridor
- Existing Bus Rapid Transit

Figure 1-11

Planned Transitways

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Central Corridor Light Rail Transit

The **Southwest Transitway** is a proposed high frequency transit line connecting Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Minneapolis neighborhoods and the Minneapolis downtown area. The Hennepin County Regional Railroad (HCRRA) has been leading the preparation of studies and plans for a multi-modal facility that includes two community amenities—a trail and transit—to serve this growing part of the Metro Area. The three recommended routes range from 15.7 to 18.3 miles. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be conducted to help officials make a final route selection. (Southwest Transitway Web Site, March, 27, 2008).

The **Northstar Commuter Rail** project, as described on the Northstar Commuter Rail Web site, is being constructed along a 40-mile-long transportation corridor that runs along Highway 10 from Big Lake to downtown Minneapolis using the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) right-of-way. This corridor is one of the fastest growing urban- to-suburban corridors in the nation and needs the support of better transportation services. Project planners hope to extend the line to the full 82-mile corridor in the future.

A feasibility study for the **Red Rock Corridor** analyzed the potential for commuter rail passenger service between downtown Minneapolis, downtown St. Paul (Union Depot Station) and Hastings, Minnesota. The main purpose of the Red Rock Corridor line is to foster a more sustainable development pattern to accommodate the expected growth in the area.

Several **BRT corridors** are in various stages of planning and development, including the Cedar Avenue Corridor and I-35W. The Central Corridor will serve as a distributor for these corridors.

The redevelopment of the **Union Depot** as a multi-modal hub for downtown St. Paul has been designated by Congress as a project of national and regional significance (Sec. 1301, Projects of National and Regional Significance, August 10, 2005). The eastern terminus of Central Corridor LRT would be at the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul. The Ramsey County Rail Authority is preparing an environmental assessment. Although the environmental assessment is currently not available to the public, Metropolitan Council is coordinating with the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority because the Regional Transportation Plan includes several transit corridors that would converge at Union Depot including the Central Corridor LRT.

An additional corridor of note is the line southeast from downtown St. Paul toward Hastings and Red Wing, which will contain the Upper **Midwest High Speed Rail** connection from Chicago. The federal government has designated the St. Paul Union Depot as the northern terminus for high speed rail.

1.4.1 Environmental Review and Project Development Process

In accordance with federal regulations, full consideration of environmental effects, as disclosed during the NEPA process, is required before the project can be advanced to the funding stage for final design, right-of-way acquisition, equipment and facilities, and system construction.

The overall environmental review process and schedule are shown in Table 1-5. Because of modifications to the project resulting from public and agency coordination in 2007 and 2008,

this SDEIS has been prepared to provide the basis of further public discussion of the potential effects of the project on the human and natural environment associated with key changes and design options to the LPA.

After consideration of the comments received during circulation of the SDEIS, a more detailed engineering design will be completed and used as a basis for the Metropolitan Council to make a final decision on the selection of a locally preferred strategy. Based on the results of public review of this SDEIS, an FEIS will be prepared, which will also include responses to comments received during circulation of the AA/DEIS and the SDEIS. Based on the FEIS, the FTA will issue a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will describe the proposed project, summarize the environmental findings, and identify the mitigation requirements associated with project implementation.

State law requires cities, counties, and regional rail authorities to hold public hearings on preliminary engineering plans for the Central Corridor LRT Project. This is known as the municipal consent process. The first series of public hearings was held by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority, and Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority on a May 29, 2008, at the Goodwill Easter Seals building on University and Fairview avenues from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. In June, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Hennepin and Ramsey counties will hold public hearings prior to their city councils and county boards approving the plans in late June or early July. The hearings will focus on preliminary design plans for stations, tracks, and electrical systems. When the hearing dates and locations are set, they will be posted under Meetings at www.centralcorridor.org

The project milestones and proposed schedule for completion of the EIS for a Central Corridor LRT are outlined in Table 1-5.

Table 1-5 Project Milestones

Activity	Date
NOI to Prepare EIS	June 5, 2001
Notice of Availability (NOA) of Scoping Booklet and Scoping Meetings in <i>EQB Monitor</i>	June 11, 2001
Interagency Scoping Meeting	June 26, 2001
Public Scoping Meetings (3)	June 26, 2001 8:00 AM June 26, 2001 5:00 PM June 27, 2001 5:00 PM
Close of Scoping Comment Period	July 20, 2001
Scoping Decision	October 11, 2001
AA/DEIS NOA	April 2006
Public Hearings on AA/DEIS	May 2006
AA/DEIS Comment Period Ends	May 2006

Activity	Date
Adoption of AA/DEIS LPA	June 2006
NOI to Prepare SDEIS	<i>Federal Register</i> Vol. 73, No. 37, publication date February 25, 2008, and <i>Minnesota EQB</i> . Vol. 32, No. 4 Publication Date: February 25, 2008
SDEIS NOA	June 2008 ^a
Public hearings	July 2008 ^a
Public and agency comment period	June to August, 2008 ^a
FEIS NOA published in the <i>Federal Register</i>	Early 2009 ^a
FTA ROD	Early 2009 ^a
Minnesota Adequacy Determination	Early 2009 ^a

^a Dates are proposed.

Given the issues in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area today, local and regional governments recognized that alternatives needed to be developed to address those needs and further growth. Goals and objectives were developed to serve as the framework for the study and for decision making for the future of the Central Corridor. The full text of the goals and objects are provided in the AA/DEIS, and are summarized below.

GOAL 1: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND INVESTMENT

Objectives

- Support investments in infrastructure, business, and community that sustain the heart of the region.
- Promote a reliable transit system that allows an efficient, effective land use development pattern in major activity centers that minimizes parking demand, facilitates the highest and best use of adjacent properties, and gives employers confidence that employees can travel to/from work.

GOAL 2: COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

Objectives

- Facilitate the preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area.
- Acknowledge the individual character and aspirations of each place served, and of the region as a whole.
- Support regional goals for cleaner air and water, more efficient energy use and a safer and healthier environment.

GOAL 3: TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Objectives:

- Create transportation improvements that add people-carrying capacity, minimize operating costs, improve operating efficiency, provide high-quality modal alternatives, and reinforce the region's transportation system.
- Expand opportunities for all users to move freely to, through, and within the Central Corridor LRT Study Area.
- Enhance the existing transportation infrastructure to serve the high number of transit dependent persons in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area.

1.4.2 Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

A comprehensive public involvement program was implemented at the beginning of the preliminary engineering (PE) process and has been continued throughout planning and project development and the environmental review process to support decision-making. The program is guided by a public involvement plan that is described in full in Chapter 11.

Briefly, the plan has been to:

- Communicate with and involve local residents in refining the proposed alternatives;
- Communicate with and educate the public, neighborhoods, and agencies in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area on the opportunities and impacts the proposed project presents for their community or area of interest;
- Gain insights into issues of greatest concern or interest to the public and municipalities of the Central Corridor LRT Study Area and incorporate them into the decision-making process;
- Involve local residents in the decision-making process thereby creating a sense of public ownership of the project; and
- Meet and exceed the requirements and intent of federal, state, and local public involvement policies in a manner that is consistent with the federal NEPA process.

The Central Corridor Transit Study (CCTS) process was completed in two parts, 1) a feasibility study for commuter rail, which was completed in 2001 and 2) a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for baseline, LRT and BRT in the corridor, which was completed in 2006. During the initial stages of the CCTS, the public was invited to participate in the process through public information meetings, telephone surveys, and other outreach activities.

As detailed in Chapter 11, the following outreach techniques are used throughout the project development process:

- Web site—Updated frequently with Central Corridor LRT information
- Newsletters—Published periodically
- PowerPoint Presentation—For public presentations

- Media Alerts and News Releases—To generate interest in, and educate the public on, Central Corridor LRT progress
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Survey of residents within the Central Corridor LRT
- Presentations at meetings of neighborhood and business groups within the Central Corridor LRT Study Area

1.4.2.1 Scoping

The initiation of the EIS for the proposed Central Corridor LRT began with a formal scoping process, which was used to publicly announce the alternatives being considered for inclusion in the AA/DEIS and to seek out additional alternatives which could be examined. The process provides opportunities to inform the public, government agencies, elected officials, organizations, and businesses that the EIS process is commencing, to hear about issues of concern, and identify issues to be considered and/or resolved.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS on the project was published in the Federal Register on June 5, 2001. Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Central Corridor Scoping Booklet and announcement of the scoping meetings were published in the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Monitor on June 11, 2001. Public notices were placed in twelve newspapers in May and June 2001. Letters of invitation to the scoping meetings were sent to federal, state, local agencies, and elected officials involved in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. Three public scoping meetings and one agency scoping meeting were held in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. The formal scoping comment period extended from June 11 to July 20, 2001.

The Central Corridor Scoping Booklet with meeting notices was mailed to approximately 800 people on the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) mailing list, which includes federal, state, and local agencies having jurisdiction in the project, and all interested parties, elected officials, neighborhood organizations, and civic groups.

All written and verbal comments received at the formal public scoping meetings, by mail or via the Web site during the scoping period, are recorded and addressed in the Central Corridor Scoping Summary Report. Comments made during the scoping process were incorporated into the selection of the proposed alternatives for inclusion in the EIS; incorporated into the design of the impact assessment criteria used in evaluating the alternatives; used to help define the social, economic, environmental, and transportation factors addressed in the EIS; and used to determine the types of technical analyses to be completed.

1.4.2.2 AA/DEIS

The AA/DEIS was released for public and agency comment on April 3, 2006. Public hearings were held at four locations from May 22 to May 24, 2006. The comment period was from April 21, 2006 to June 5, 2006, and 933 comments were received. All of the comments received on the AA/DEIS were compiled into a database. The responses to the comments will be included in the FEIS. On June 28, 2006, the Metropolitan Council adopted an LPA for the Central Corridor LRT operating on Washington and University Avenues (Metropolitan

Council Resolution No. 2006-15). The SDEIS is intended to communicate changes to the AA/DEIS LPA as previously presented in the 2006 AA/DEIS

1.4.2.3 SDEIS

Public Involvement

Upon completion of the AA/DEIS, the Metropolitan Council became the lead agency responsible for the Central Corridor LRT Project's oversight and implementation. In February 2007, the Metropolitan Council drafted the Central Corridor LRT Communication and Public Involvement Strategic Plan, which is described completely in Chapter 11. After considering comments received during circulation of the AA/DEIS and the public hearing, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Business Advisory Council (BAC) were established by the Council in partnership with local stakeholders to consider the resolution of outstanding issues.

The Metropolitan Council has also established a Central Corridor Communications Office, which consists of a manager of public involvement, a communications manager, seven community outreach coordinators, and a public involvement intern. Each community outreach coordinator is assigned to one of seven geographic areas, approximately 1 to 2 miles in length. The coordinator is familiar with the area's technical issues and community characteristics. It is his or her responsibility to share information with the community about the Central Corridor LRT Project's progress and collect feedback and information on critical aspects of the Central Corridor LRT.

Ongoing outreach activities and stakeholder coordination have continued since November 2006—15,500 people have been reached at over 400 meetings and community events. The Web site is continuously updated, project publications are continuously distributed, and project news is released to the media. Of particular note are listening sessions held in February 2008, where public comments were solicited by members of the Metropolitan Council prior to decision-making on key project elements. A total of four listening sessions were held at various venues along the Central Corridor LRT Study Area with a total of 288 comments submitted. These comments were collected and presented to Metropolitan Council members prior to the February 27, 2008 project decision day to inform their actions.

Agency Coordination

In the planning, design, and construction of the Central Corridor LRT, the Metropolitan Council is working closely with the FTA, MnDOT, Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and the U of M. The project draws on several advisory committees that provide input from policy makers, government entities and community groups, businesses, and residents. These committees, described in Chapter 11, are the Central Corridor Management Committee (CCMC), Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Central Corridor Partnership (CCP), Business Advisory Council (BAC), Central Corridor Project Office (CCPO), Project Advisory Committee (PAC), Communication Steering Committee (CSC), and the Land Use Coordinating Committee (LUCC).

In addition to the ongoing coordination with stakeholders and the public, the CCPO has had ongoing coordination with other federal, state, and local agencies and interested parties, including the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), CAAPB, the Department of

Agriculture, the Department of Administration, the Department of Commerce, the Minnesota EQB, the Department of Health, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the State Archaeologist, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council. Opportunities for ongoing public input on historic and archaeological resources will continue throughout the remainder of the project development process.

This SDEIS will determine the environmental effects of the revised LPA prior to the development of an FEIS and will be circulated for review by interested parties, including private citizens, community groups, the business community, elected officials, and public agencies in accordance with federal and state requirements. Public hearings will be held to provide a forum for agency and citizen participation and comment. The result of these decisions will then be documented in the FEIS, which will also include responses to comments received during circulation of the SDEIS.

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