

Business Advisory Committee

September 12, 2023



BROOKLYN PARK | CRYSTAL | ROBBINSDALE | MINNEAPOLIS



Today's Topics

- Project Overview
- Anti-Displacement Update
- Review Track Alignment and Stations for SDEIS
- Environmental Update & Next Steps



The public can submit written comments to Nkongo Cigolo (Nkongo.Cigolo@metrotransit.org)

Project Overview

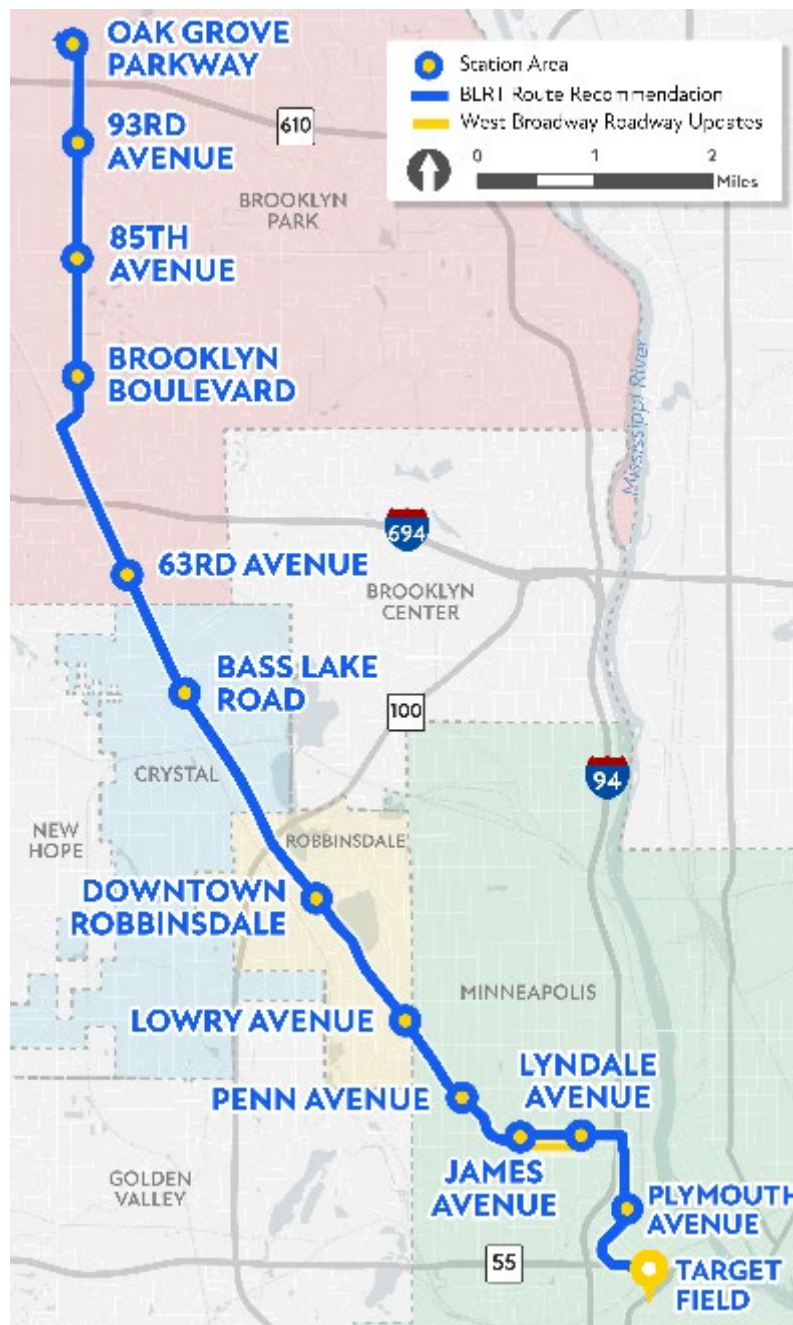




Blue Line

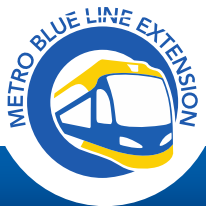
EXTENSION

- 13.4 miles & 12 new stations
- Connecting Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Brooklyn Park and surrounding communities to fast, frequent, all-day service across the METRO system
- Single seat ride to existing Blue Line stops downtown, MSP Airport and Mall of America
- Focus on building community prosperity through anti-displacement strategies before, during, and after construction



Next Steps

- Updated post-COVID ridership: early 2024
- Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Spring 2024
- Municipal Consent process to confirm final route: Summer 2024
- Updated cost estimate: 2024
- Final Design: 2024-2025
- Construction starts: 2026-2027
- Anticipated opening: 2030



Engagement Metrics: Aug 2020-Sept 2023

- **750** events resulting in nearly **18,000** points of contact with the public
- **80,000** reach on social media and **6.5 million+** reach through newsletters and paid ads on community and cultural media
- Approximately **4,750** survey responses
- **+3,000** comments on the interactive map
- **350** comments from comment forms
- Corridor postcards mailed to **+28,000**
- Over **4,000** emails and phone calls

July 2023 Outdoor Summer Event



Engagement Activities

Community meetings and workshops



Bike Tours



Business Workshops

Pop-ups and tabling at community events



Engagement Through Partnerships

Anti-displacement
Work Group



Elevate
Hennepin



Community
Cohorts



Cultivate Arts

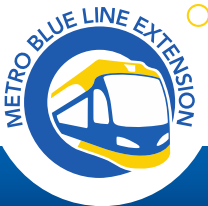


Quarterly Engagement Meeting

- 8/23 Quarterly Meeting at the Capri – corridor wide update
 - Presentation followed by Q&A
 - Discussion themes:
 - Traffic (vehicle access on 10th Ave)
 - Safety/Crime (ice/snow at stations, more security)
 - Displacement (business impacts)
 - Station location (connectivity to greater transit system, walkable areas)
 - Route location / design (5th Street should be considered instead of 10th)
 - Decision-Making process (community representation, data behind decisions)



8/23 Quarterly Meeting



Project Timeline



Timeline to Publish SDEIS and Initiate Municipal Consent

WE ARE HERE

	2023												2024								
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
CMC Meeting	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑														
Brooklyn Park	X			X	X																
Crystal		X		X	X																
Robbinsdale			X	X	X																
Minneapolis				X	X	X	X														
Anti-Displacement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X														
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement											FTA Review #1	FTA Review #2	FTA Review #3	Publish SDEIS	Prepare SFEIS...						
Municipal Consent																				Municipal Consent...	



Anti-displacement Update



Anti-displacement Timeline

	2023						2024								
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Project Timeline	Route Selection			FTA Review #1		FTA Review #2		FTA Review #3		Publish SDEIS		Prepare SFEIS			
														Municipal Consent	

Anti-displacement Timeline

Develop Implementation Framework Release Draft Finalize Framework

Resourcing Coordinated Budget/Staffing/IGR Strategies

Engaging with Community and Agency Partners Co-Develop Meeting Schedule and Engagement Strategy

Community Engagement Develop Community Engagement Plan
Late Q3 Convening with ADWG [Transition to Community Prosperity Advisory Committee]



Corridor Partner Participation Meeting Update

- Collective intergovernmental relations strategy
- General advocacy
- Connecting with philanthropic community
- No cost policy identification
- Project timeline: prioritization/expectations
- Framework draft development
- Shared actionable items



Next steps progress

In progress

1 Create a regional group to continue conversations about corridor-wide implementation of anti-displacement strategies



2 Create local government groups to receive recommendations and begin policy making processes

3 Create dedicated regional anti-displacement fund

In progress

4 Align anti-displacement research and recommendations with Blue Line Extension federal processes like supplemental environmental impact statement

In progress

5 Develop corridor-wide anti-displacement policy agenda for 2024 state legislative session



Illustrations by
Cori Nakamura Lin



Review Preferred Track Alignment and Stations for SDEIS



Project Design Principles

Maintain BLRT Purpose and Need

Minimize travel time

Maximize ridership

Maximize community and economic development

Maximize Federal Transit Administration New Starts project rating

Pursue opportunities to serve even more people and destinations

Complement existing and planned METRO transitways

Minimize residential, commercial and environmental impacts

Support safety and connections prioritizing people walking, biking, and rolling

Maximize carbon pollution reduction



Brooklyn Park



Benefits and Opportunities – Brooklyn Park

- Retains the work completed in previous phase
- City's investment in the project:
 - Transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning gives direction to the design of buildings, sidewalks, parking, and other infrastructure
 - Station area planning and West Broadway streetscape manual
- Other road and safety improvements planned to be incorporated
- Pedestrian crossing improvements at station



Engagement Summary – Brooklyn Park



Metrics:

In 2021, 1,035 attendees at 23 events
In 2022, 1,389 attendees at 36 events
In 2023, 376 attendees at 22 events



Focus areas/topics for engagement:

Introduction of new route options
Placement of 63rd Ave station
Trail connections



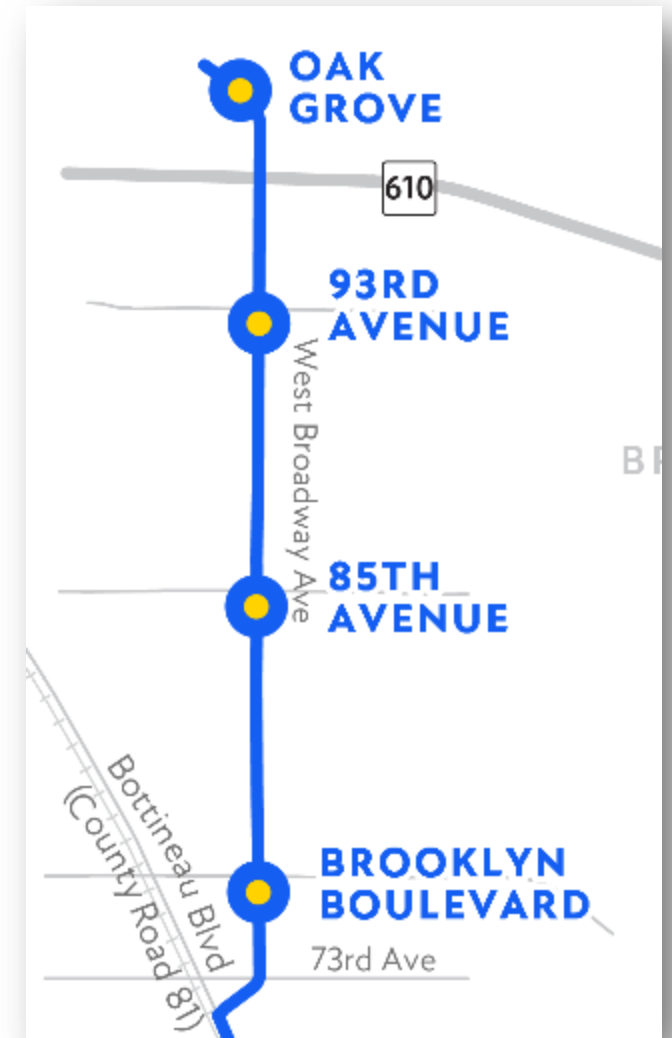
Key themes we heard:

Connectivity to current and future transit systems
Safe pedestrian and bicyclist access options at stations and along route



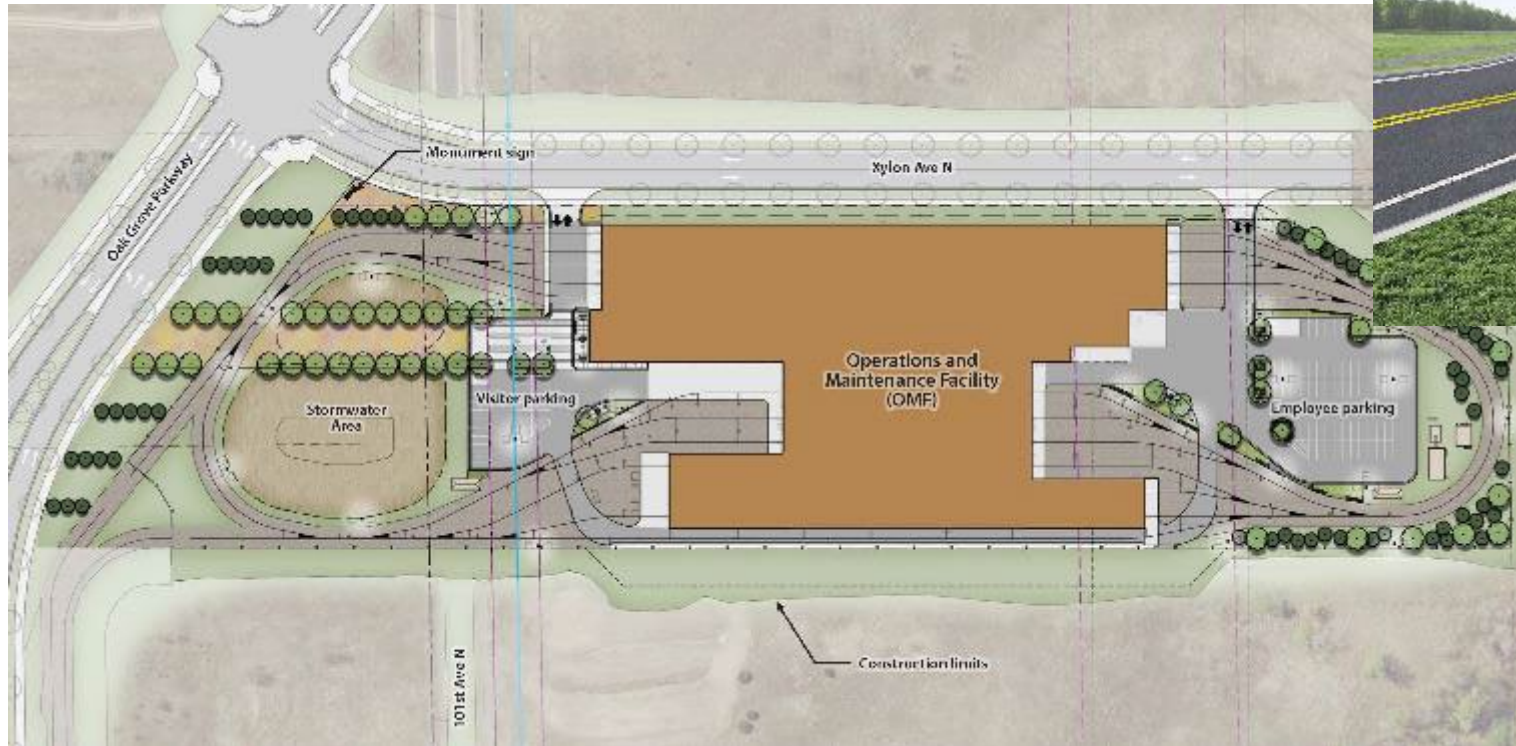
West Broadway Ave: Oak Grove Pkwy to 73rd Ave

- Same as Final EIS from July 2016:
 - LRT on West Broadway Avenue - 4 station locations
 - Operation and maintenance facility north of Hwy 610
- Center running LRT
- Reconstruction and expansion of West Broadway (from north of Brooklyn Boulevard to 93rd Avenue)



Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) at Oak Grove Parkway

- OMF is located at the northernmost portion of the project



Oak Grove Station and Park-and-Ride

- Park-and-Ride View



View Looking Northwest to Plaza and Park and Ride from Station



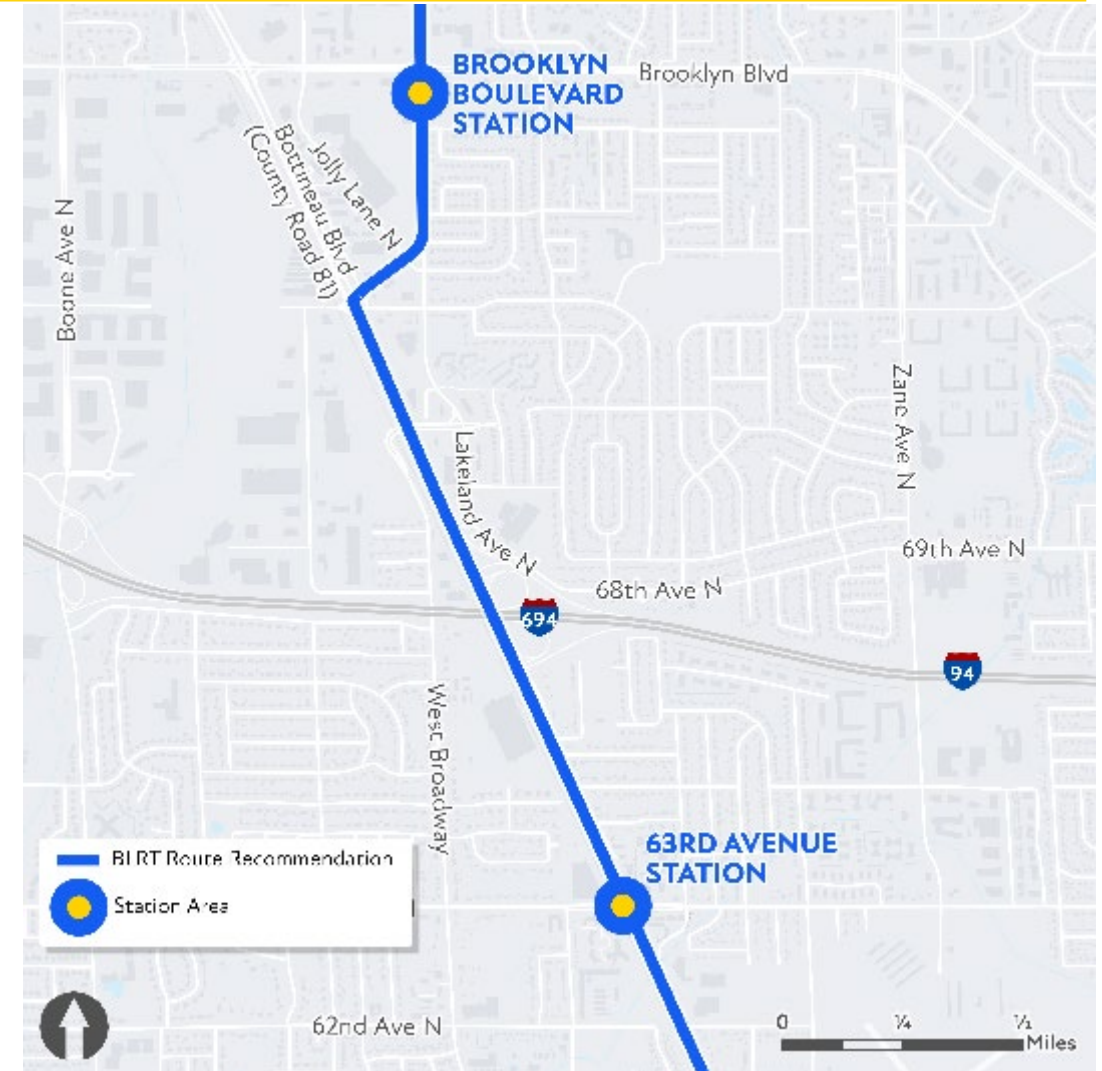
Transition from West Broadway to County Road 81

- Bridge from West Broadway to County Road 81
- Structure over northbound direction of traffic



County Road 81: 73rd Ave to 63rd Ave

- LRT alignment to run within the median on County Road 81
- Station at 63rd Avenue
 - Center platform at grade in the median
 - Evaluate intersection options, access and safety



63rd Avenue Station



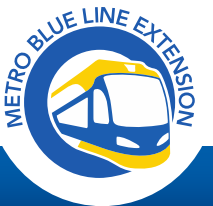
Existing



Proposed
(grade-separated pedestrian crossing)

Pedestrian crossing at 63rd Avenue Station

View looking south toward proposed BLRT 63rd Ave station and park-and-ride garage, from Lakeland Ave N



Crystal



Benefits and Opportunities – County Road 81

- CR 81 closest to original alignment, meeting project principles
- Uses CR 81 right of way, minimizing right of way impacts
- Improve pedestrian safety across CR 81 near station areas
- Continues to use Bass Lake Road station



Engagement Summary - Crystal



Metrics:

In 2021, 278 attendees at 5 events
In 2022, 331 attendees at 15 events
In 2023, 221 attendees at 11 events



Focus areas/topics for engagement:

Introduction of new route options
Interchange vs at-grade station at Bass Lake Road
Number of traffic lanes



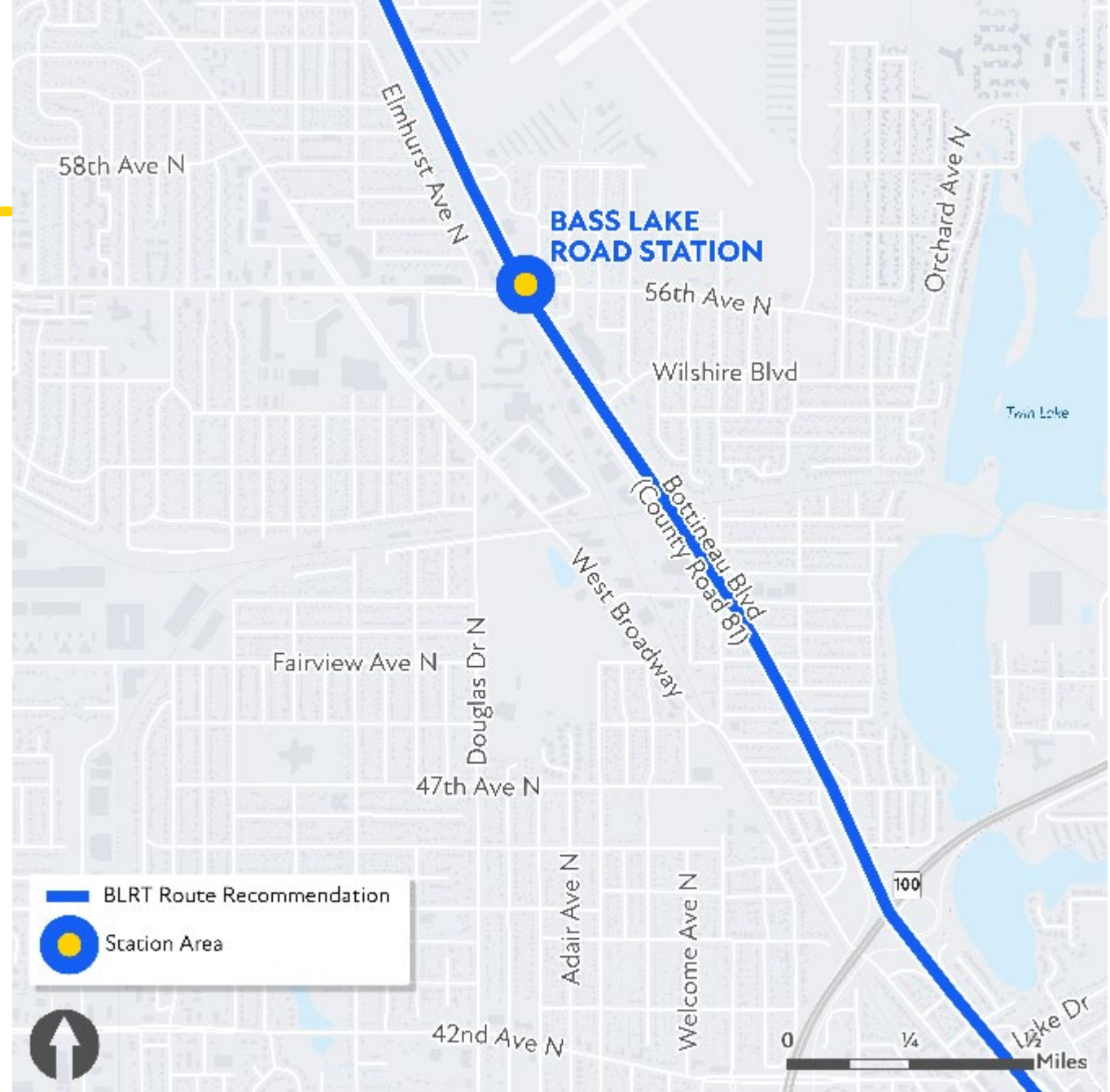
Key themes we heard:

Traffic concerns including vehicle congestion and stop times
Pedestrian safety and crossing options
Project costs



County Road 81

- LRT alignment to run within the median on County Road 81
- Station at Bass Lake Road (at-grade) with interchange



Bass Lake Road Interchange



Existing
(at-grade intersection)



Proposed
(grade-separated interchange)

County Road 81 view north toward Bass Lake Road



Interchange Benefits

- Improves vehicle operations at Bass Lake Road compared to existing
- Provides grade-separation of County Road 81
- Provides at-grade access to trails on either side and to the park and ride
- Easier and safer pedestrian crossings



At-grade pedestrian crossing with trail connections



Bass Lake Road Station



Ground view of station area looking south



Ground view of station area looking east
from park and ride

Robbinsdale



Benefits and Opportunities – County Road 81

- CR 81 closest to original alignment, meeting project principles
- Uses CR 81 right of way, minimizing right of way impacts
- Improves pedestrian safety and connections across CR 81 to Downtown Robbinsdale
- Connects to jobs and regional destinations (Downtown Robbinsdale, Theodore Wirth Regional Park, Victory Park, North Memorial Hospital)



Engagement Summary - Robbinsdale



Metrics:

In 2021, 587 attendees at 32 events
In 2022, 526 attendees at 32 events
In 2023, 6,721 attendees at 71 events



Focus areas/topics for engagement:

Introduction of new route options
Location of station in Downtown Robbinsdale
Location of park and ride



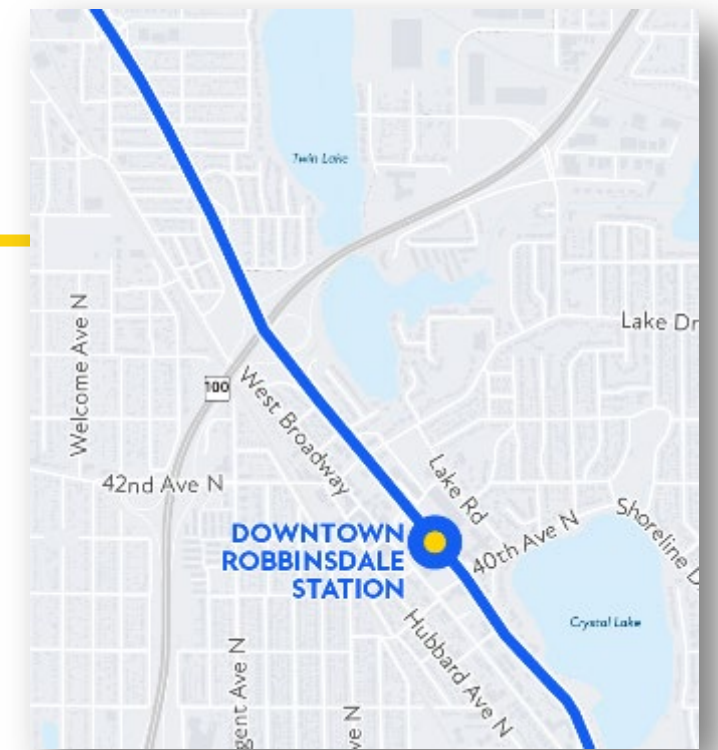
Key themes we heard

Safety and security for passengers and local residents
Project impact on community character
Noise concerns



Park and Ride

- Redevelop US Bank Site
 - Park-and-ride, bank branch, and transit oriented development



- Will incorporate bus transfers
 - 14, 19, 32, 716, 717
 - Plymouth Metrolink Click-and-Ride
- Paired with Station at 40th



Station at 40th Avenue

Proposed - view looking north along CR 81 toward proposed BLRT downtown Robbinsdale station, from northeast corner of 40th Ave



Lowry Ave Station

- Lowry Station provides access to the Grand Rounds trail, Victory Memorial Park, and North Memorial Hospital
- Currently investigating design solutions for a track alignment and station placement that meets the needs of project stakeholders, area residents and the North Memorial Health Hospital



Minneapolis



Benefits and Opportunities: Tracks on 21st Ave

- Minimizes business and property impacts
- Creates new connection across I-94 for pedestrian and bicyclists
- Creates opportunity for pedestrians and green infrastructure on 21st Ave
- Maximizes investment in the West Broadway corridor



Benefits and Opportunities: East of I-94

- Best leverages existing transit network (complements METRO C and D Line service)
- Creates a new community connection across I-94 for pedestrians and bicyclists
- The Plymouth Avenue station area serves the North Loop neighborhood and offers connections for residents and jobs
- Within a 10-minute walk of the Plymouth Station:
 - 2,500 residents
 - Less than 50% drive to work (lower than the rest of Minneapolis)
 - Over 400 units of affordable housing (30% are highly affordable)
 - Over 5,000 jobs
 - Access to the Mississippi River, parks and trails
 - Access to new restaurants and other developments



Engagement Summary - Minneapolis



Metrics:

In 2021, 3,400 attendees at 111 events
In 2022, 3,531 attendees at 157 events
In 2023, 1,695 attendees at 151 events



Focus areas/topics for engagement:

Evaluation of new route options in Minneapolis
Station locations
Project impacts to communities and environment



Key themes we heard:

Business and residential displacement prevention
Crime and safety concerns
Provide a variety of avenues for communication and engagement on project decisions



Engagement in August/September

- 8/23 - Quarterly community update meeting at Capri
 - Cultivate Arts events kick off
 - Recent North Loop engagement:
 - 8/1 - The Lock Up Storage
 - 8/2 - Minneapolis Fire Station 4 and Lundstrum Performing Arts
 - 8/3 – The Hitching Company
 - 8/4 - Salvation Army
 - 8/7 - Somni Workshop/ A&M Business Interior Service
 - 8/9 - Tractor Works and The Redwell
 - 8/16 – Minneapolis Public Schools
 - 8/21 – Urban Homeworks
 - 8/27 – Lao Center of MN Community Resource Fair
 - 8/30 - North Loop Neighborhood Association
 - 9/5 - 918 Lofts
- +Many more email, phone, one-on-one discussions



Community Meeting 8/23



*8/23
Quarterly
Mtg*



Minneapolis Preferred Route



1. Penn Avenue Station Area
2. West Broadway and 21st Avenue
3. 21st Avenue Extension
4. Plymouth Station on Washington Avenue
5. Transitway for a portion of 10th Avenue



Penn Avenue Station

- METRO C Line connection
- Capri Theater
- NEON food incubator

Capri Theater







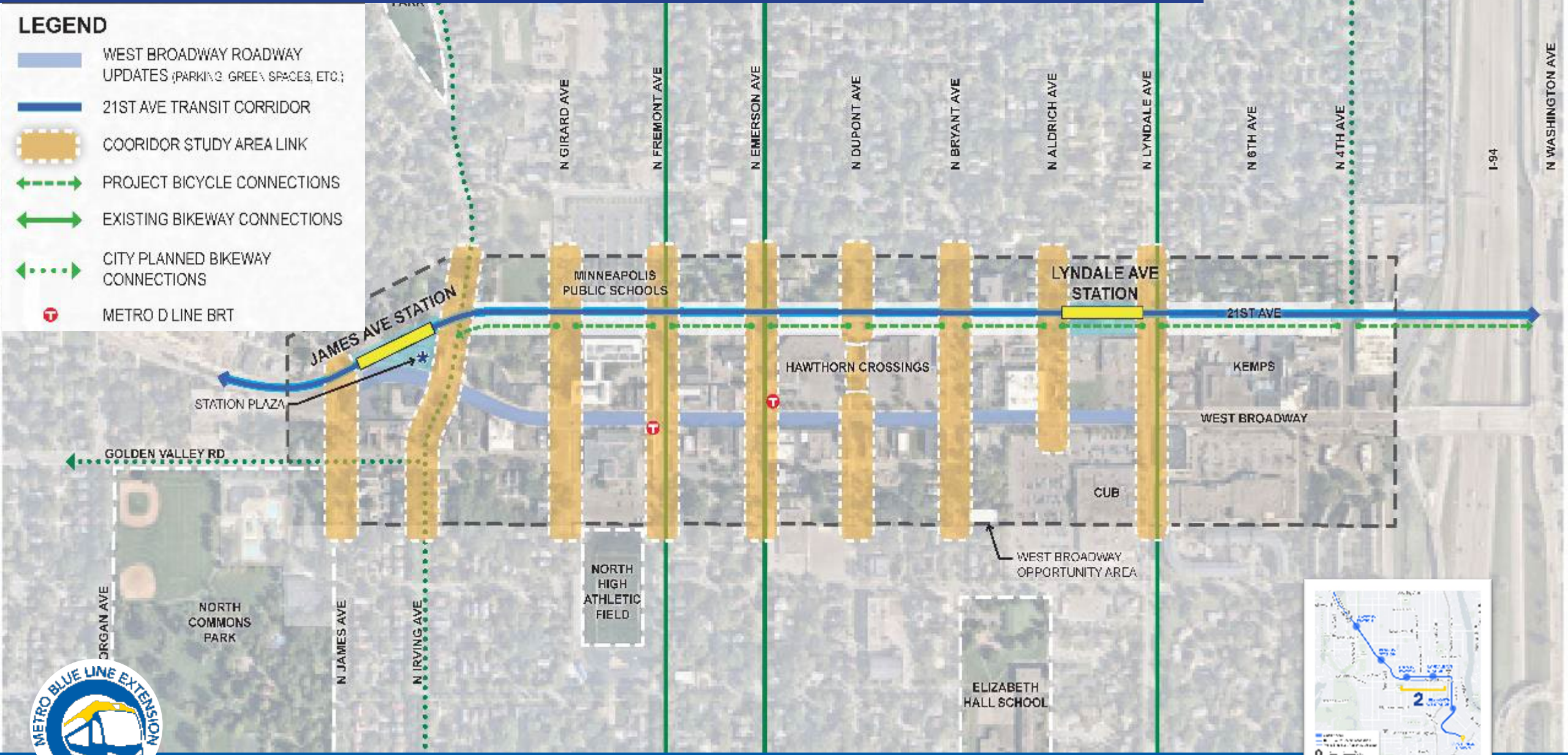
The Incubator Project*

*Photo Source: NEON



West Broadway and 21st Connections

- LEGEND**
-  WEST BROADWAY ROADWAY UPDATES (PARKING, GREEN SPACES, ETC.)
 -  21ST AVE TRANSIT CORRIDOR
 -  COORIDOR STUDY AREA LINK
 -  PROJECT BICYCLE CONNECTIONS
 -  EXISTING BIKEWAY CONNECTIONS
 -  CITY PLANNED BIKEWAY CONNECTIONS
 -  METRO D LINE BRT



West Broadway Potential Improvements



Washington, looking South



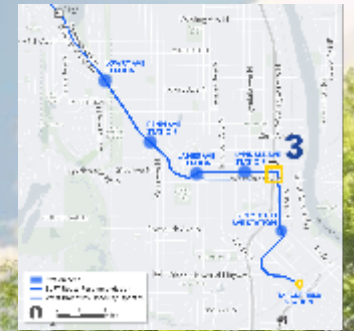
**INCLUDES SIDEWALK
AND BIKE LANES**

Note: Trees, landscaping, pedestrian crossings, lanes and other features are an ongoing topic of design



DRAFT CONCEPT

21st Ave Extension Bridge, *looking East (toward river)*



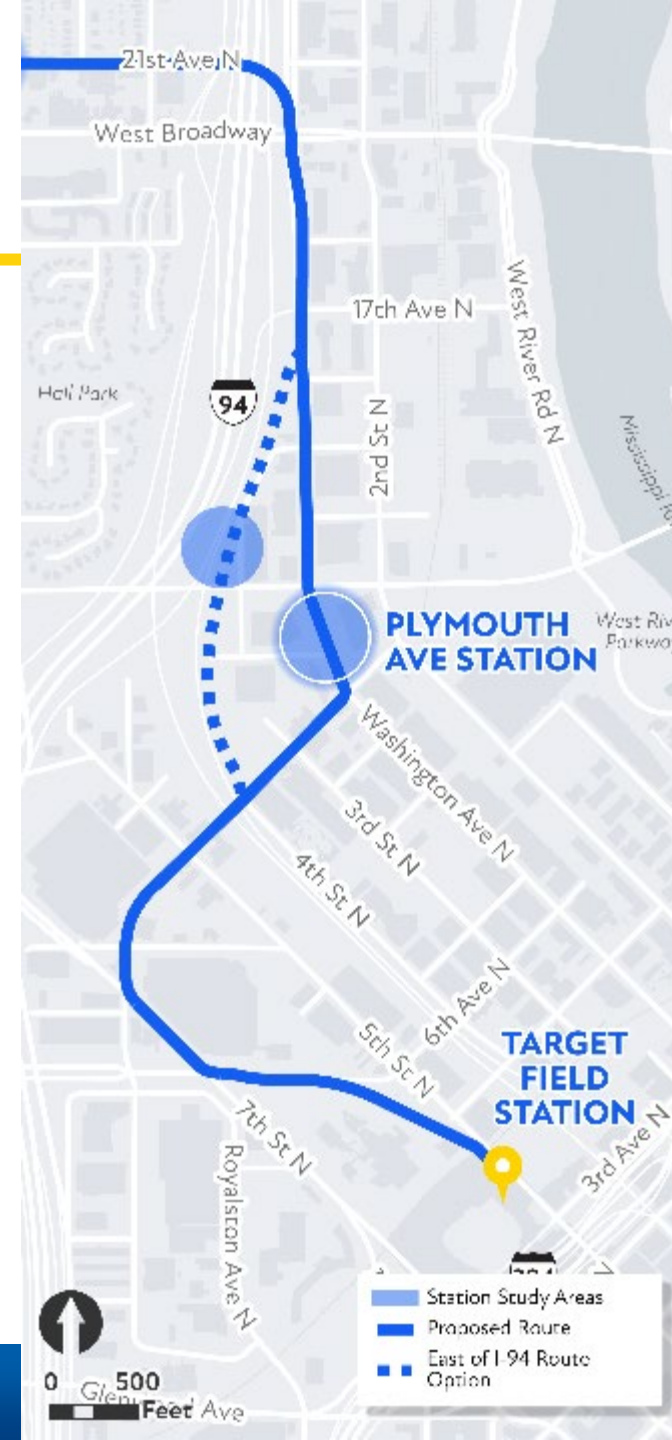
Bike, Ped, Vehicle, LRT
Crossing on 21st Avenue



DRAFT CONCEPT

East of I-94 Track Alignment

- Continued outreach to confirm recommended option for East of I-94

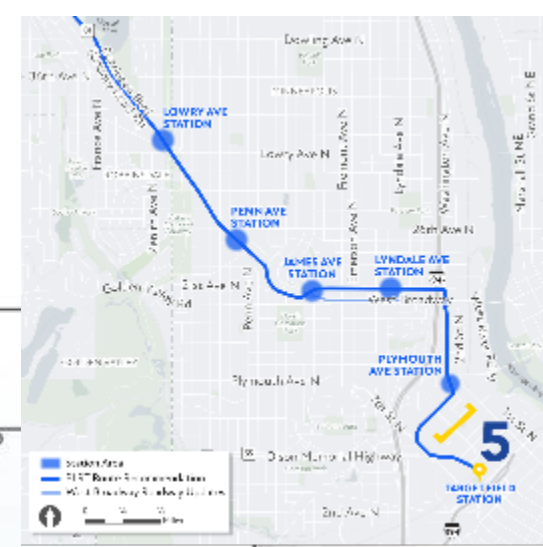
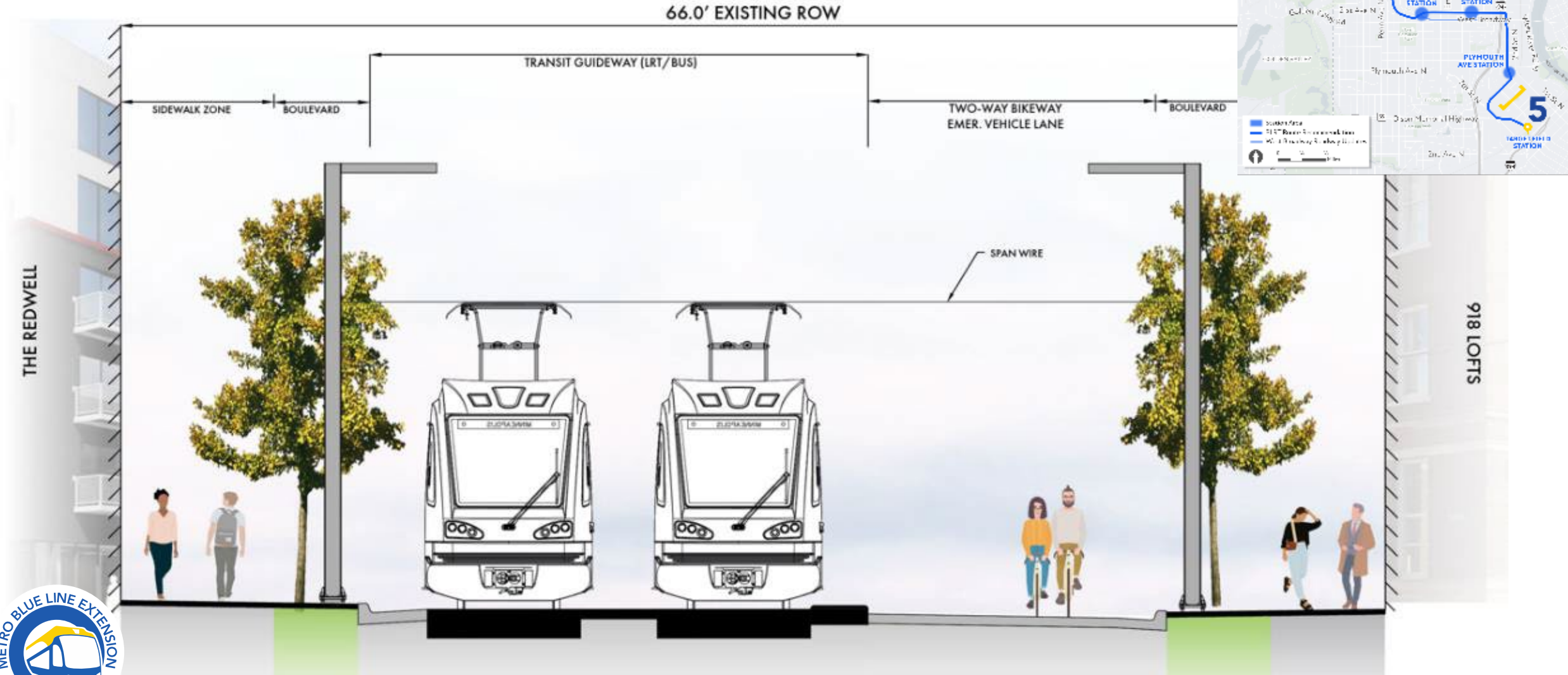


Plymouth Station on Washington Avenue, *looking South*

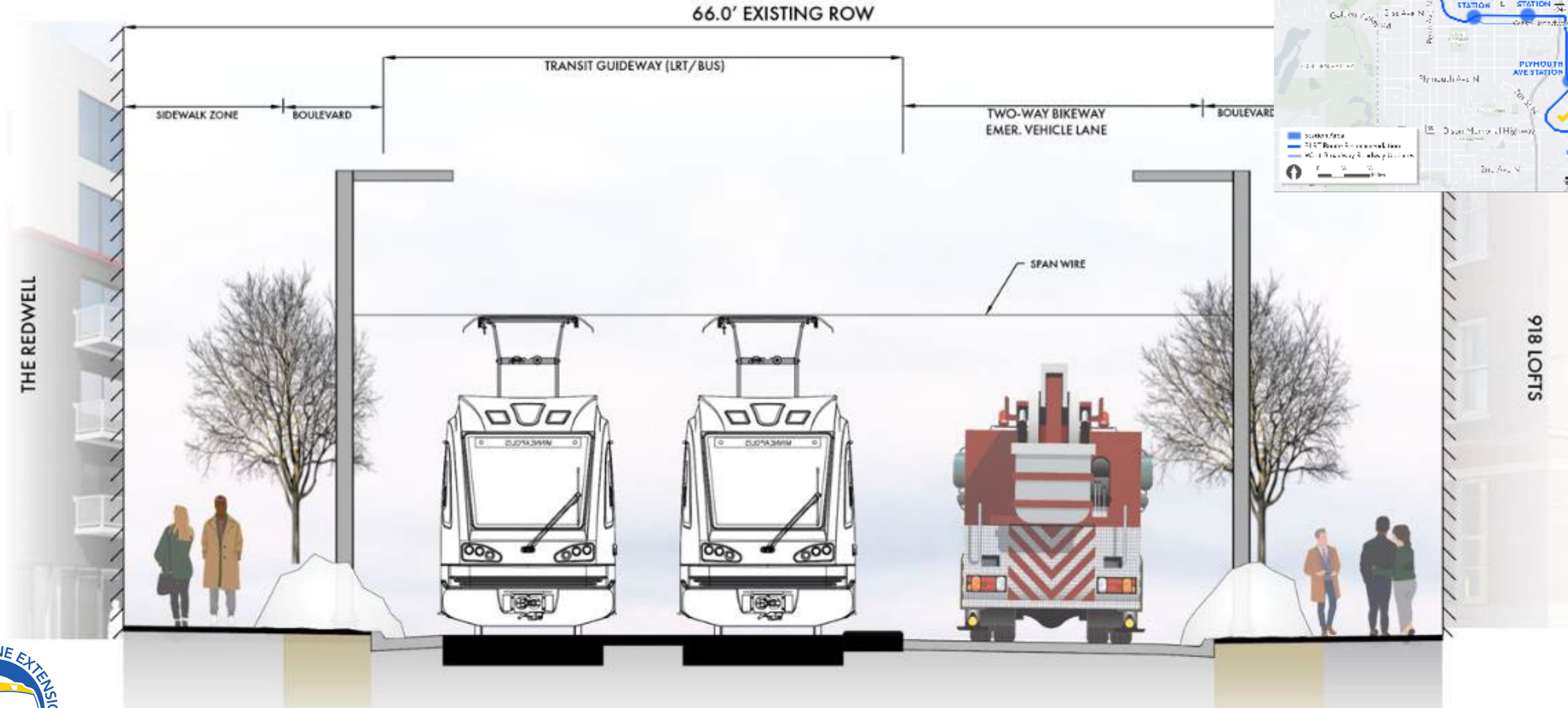


DRAFT CONCEPT

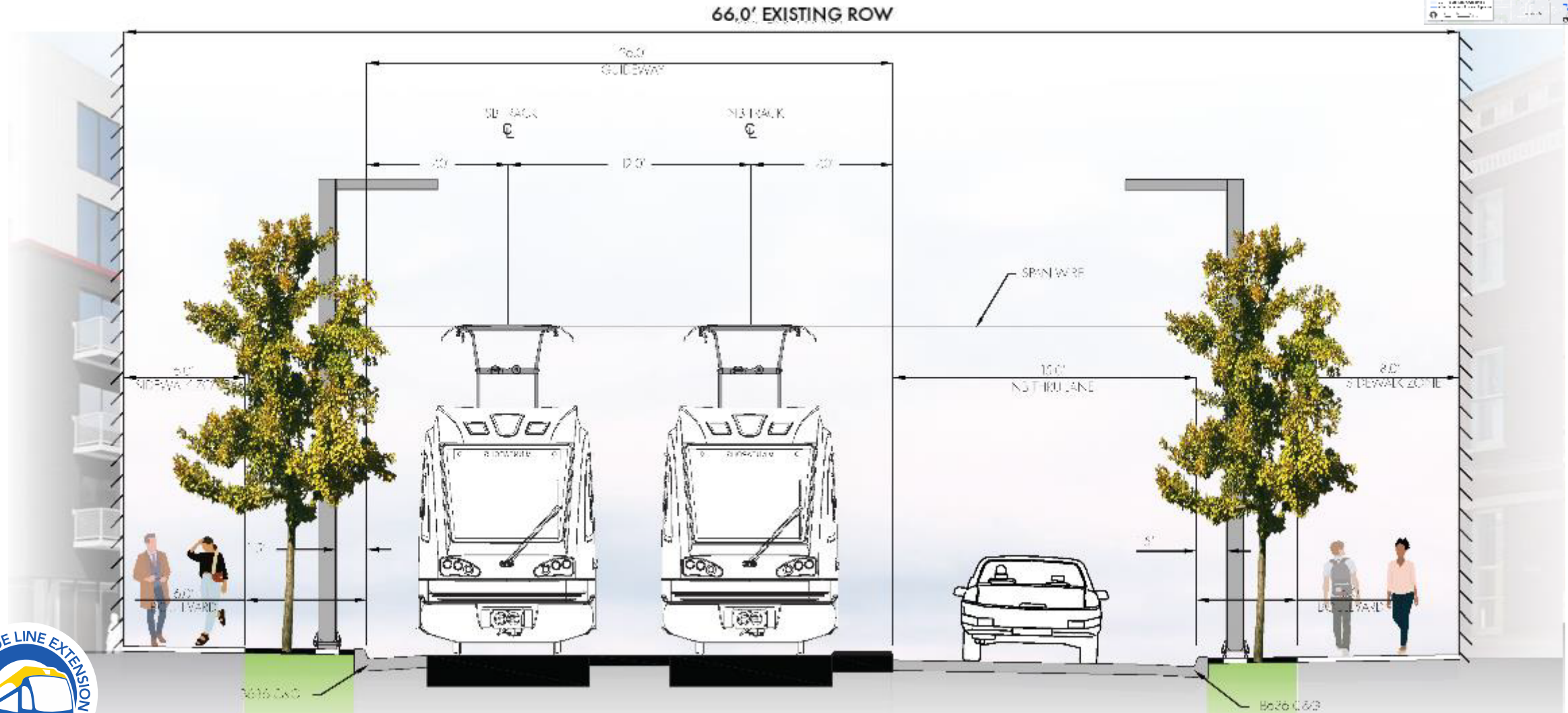
10th Ave: Transit Mall Option



10th Ave: Transit Mall Option

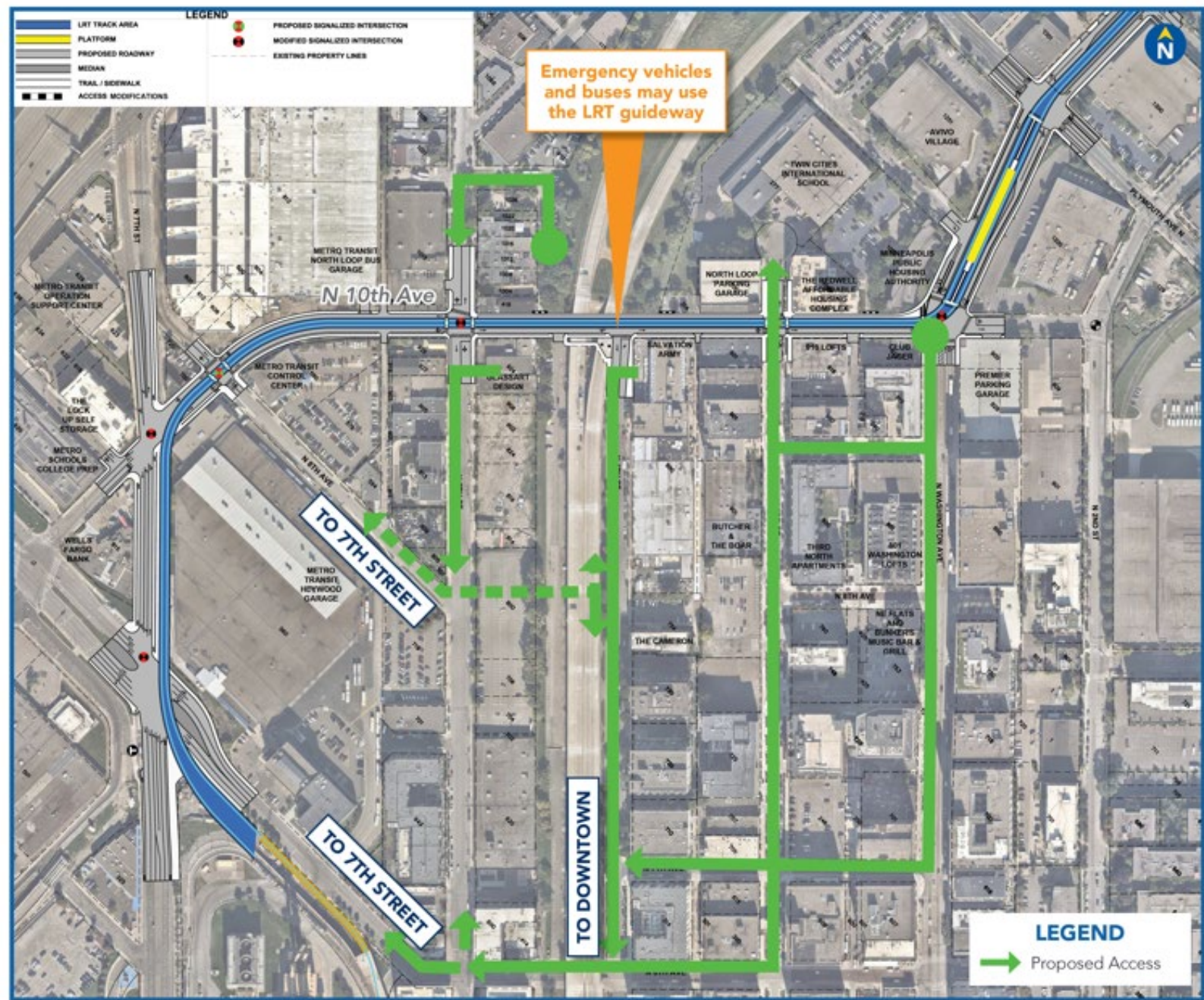


10th Ave: One-way Northbound



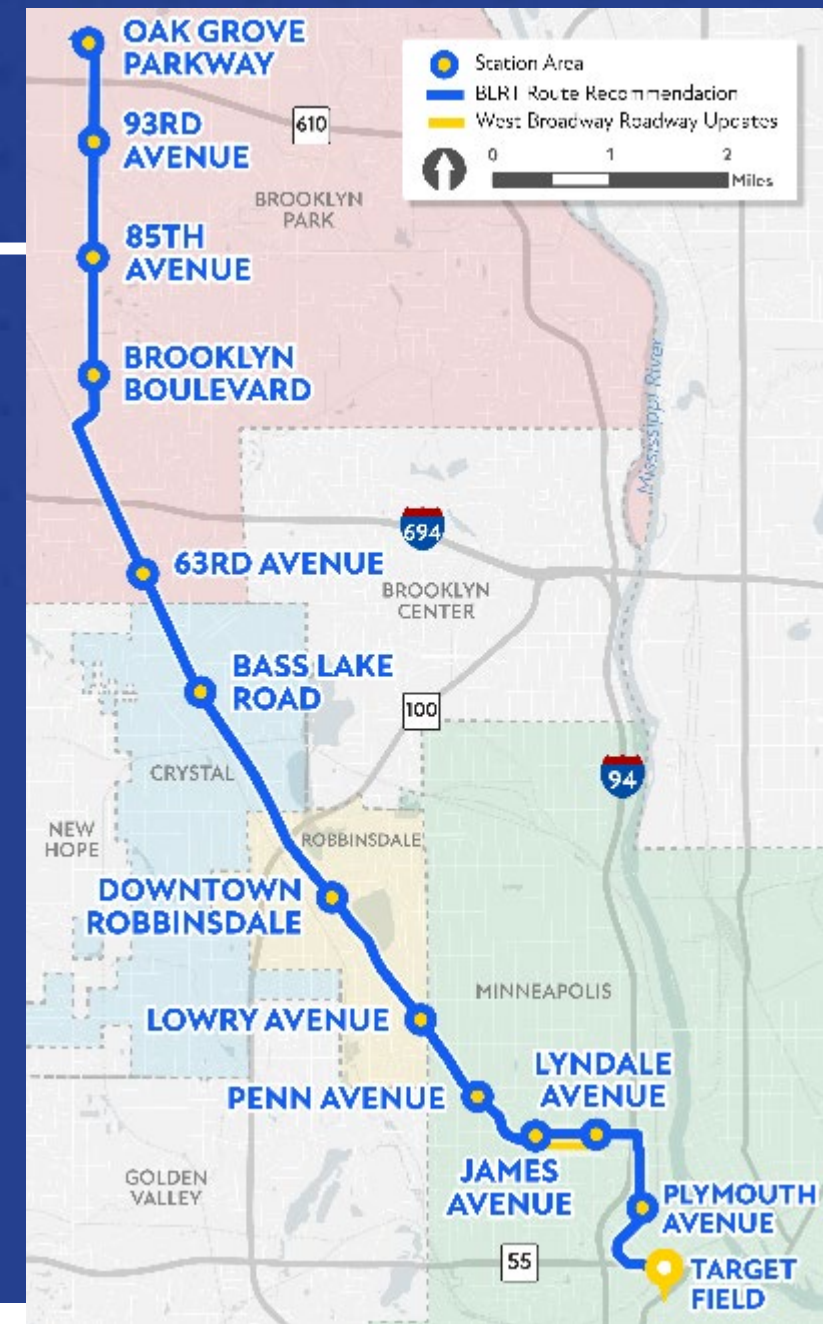
10th Ave Area: Potential Vehicle Access

About 6,600 vehicles per day use this section of 10th Avenue



CMC Resolution 2023-02

- Acknowledges the recommended track alignment and general station locations to be studied in the Supplemental Draft EIS
- Recommends design advancement and additional outreach
- Commits to working with project stakeholders on mitigation measures to offset environmental impacts identified
- Commits to ongoing coordination efforts around community prosperity and benefits
- Commits to ongoing design and station refinements in advance of municipal consent



Environmental Update & Next Steps



Notice of Intent

- Parallel federal step to publication of the Preparation Notice, published in October 2022 as a state level process.
- NOI publication purpose:
 - To alert interested parties regarding the intent to prepare the Supplement EIS;
 - To provide information on the nature of the proposed changes to the project since the 2016 FEIS;
 - To invite public participation in the Supplement EIS process, including comments on the scope of the SEIS proposed in this NOI; and
 - To announce that public and agency meetings on the proposed modifications to the Project will be conducted.
- Public comments to be submitted before September 18, 2023 to:
 - Neha Damle
 - Environmental Lead
 - Blue Line Extension Office
 - Neha.Damle@metrotransit.org



Topics Being Studied in the Environmental Review



Changes to land use, and how the project fits with existing or planned land uses



Effects on the community or communities surrounding the project



What property needs to be purchased and what residences or businesses may need to be relocated



Business impacts – access during construction, relocation, revenue



Impacts to historic properties



Impacts to parks



Visual impacts



Safety



Transportation impacts – bicycle, pedestrian, transit, vehicles (including parking), freight rail, aviation



Water resource impacts – wetlands, floodplains, stormwater, groundwater, water quality



Impacts to soils and geologic resources



Impacts to plants and animals, including threatened and endangered species



Noise impacts, and for transit and rail projects, vibration impacts



Contaminated properties and hazardous materials



Next Steps

- Anti-displacement engagement plan and transition to Community Prosperity Advisory Committee – fall 2023 and ongoing
- SDEIS publication – spring 2024
- Prepare SFEIS – summer/fall 2024
- Municipal consent – summer 2024
- Ongoing engagement



CMC Next Steps

- Next CMC meeting is October 12



Stay connected

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 - For the latest project updates and to sign up for our newsletter
 - Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation
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