

# Community Advisory Committee

September 13, 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](mailto:Nkongo.Cigolo@metrotransit.org))

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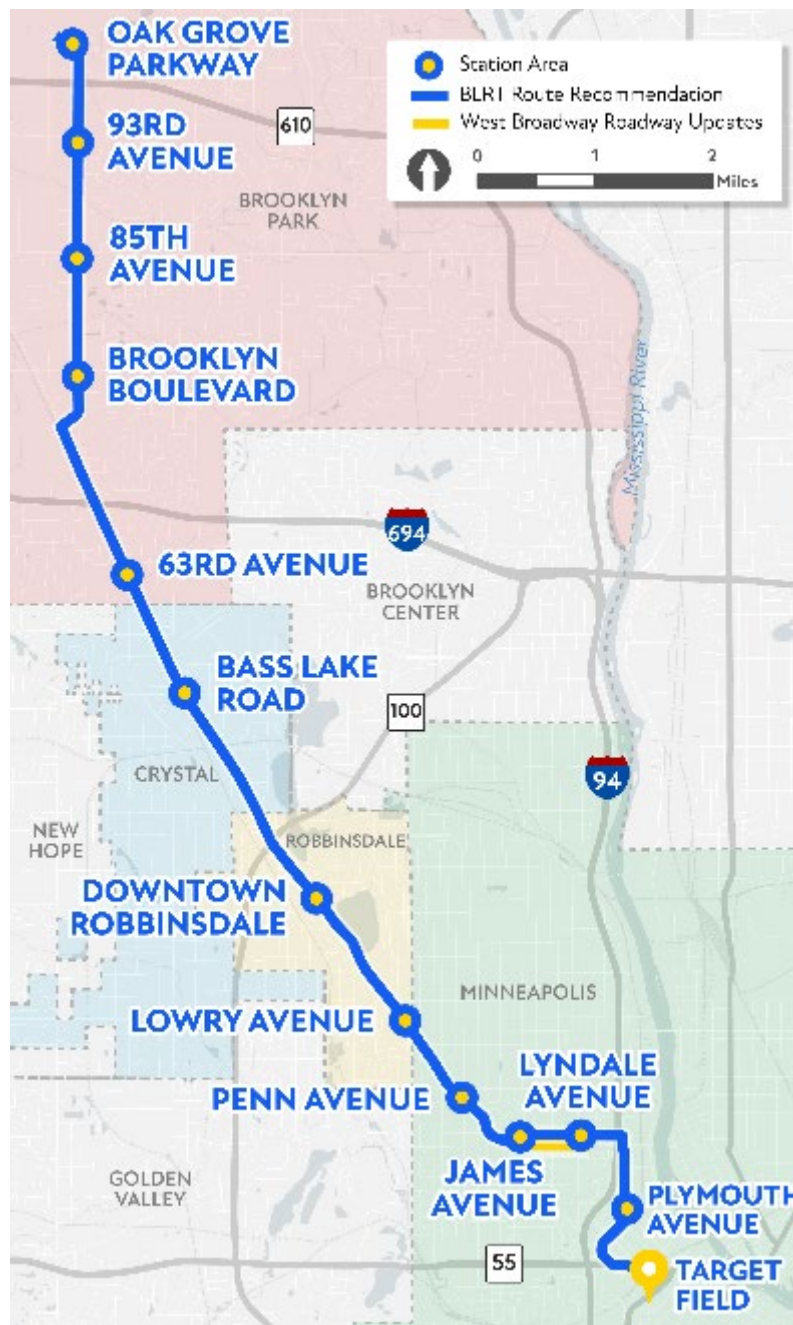
# Project Overview





# 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

Jul 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

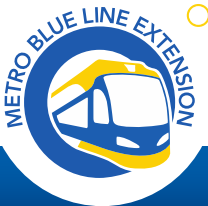


# Quarterly Engagement Meeting

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



*8/23 Quarterly Meeting*





# Project Timeline

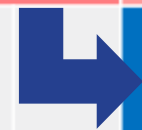


# Timeline to Publish SDEIS and Initiate Municipal Consent

**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
<b>CMC Meeting</b>	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑													
<b>Brooklyn Park</b>	X			X	X															
<b>Crystal</b>		X		X	X															
<b>Robbinsdale</b>			X	X	X															
<b>Minneapolis</b>				X	X	X	X													
<b>Anti-Displacement</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X													
<b>Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement</b>									<b>FTA Review #1</b>			<b>FTA Review #2</b>			<b>FTA Review #3</b>		<b>Publish SDEIS</b>		<b>Prepare SFEIS...</b>	
<b>Municipal Consent</b>																				



**Municipal Consent...**



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# 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

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- 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



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# Review Preferred Track Alignment and Stations for SDEIS



# Project Design Principles

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Maintain BLRT Purpose and Need

Minimize travel time

Maximize ridership

Maximize community and economic development

Maximize Federal Transit Administration New Starts project rating

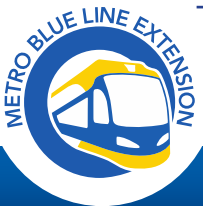
Pursue opportunities to serve even more people and destinations

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

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- 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 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave station  
Trail connections



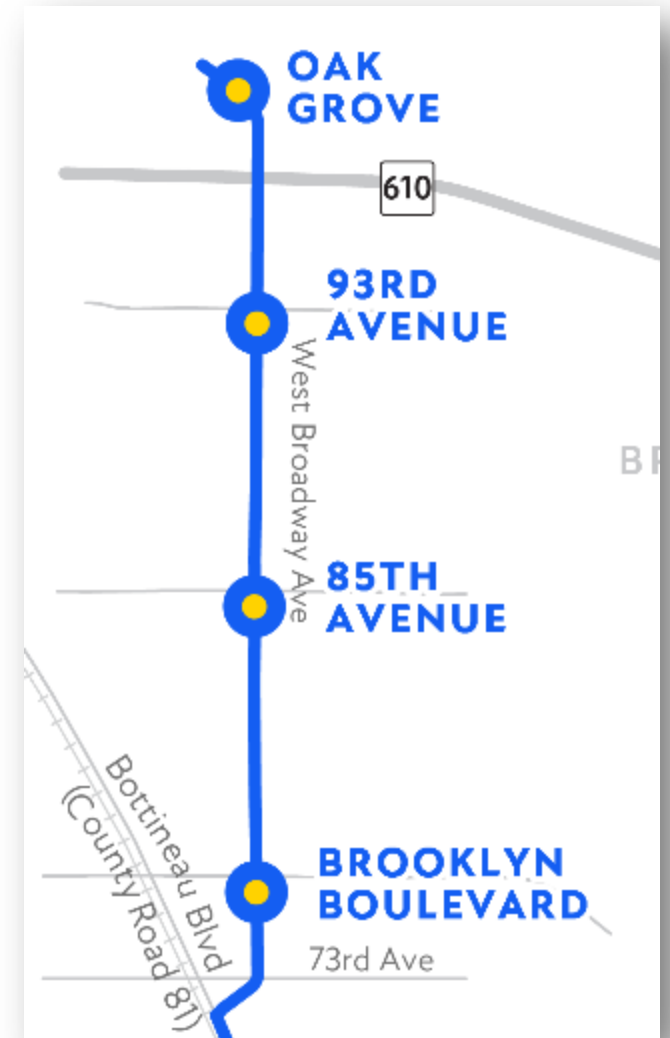
## Key themes we heard:

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



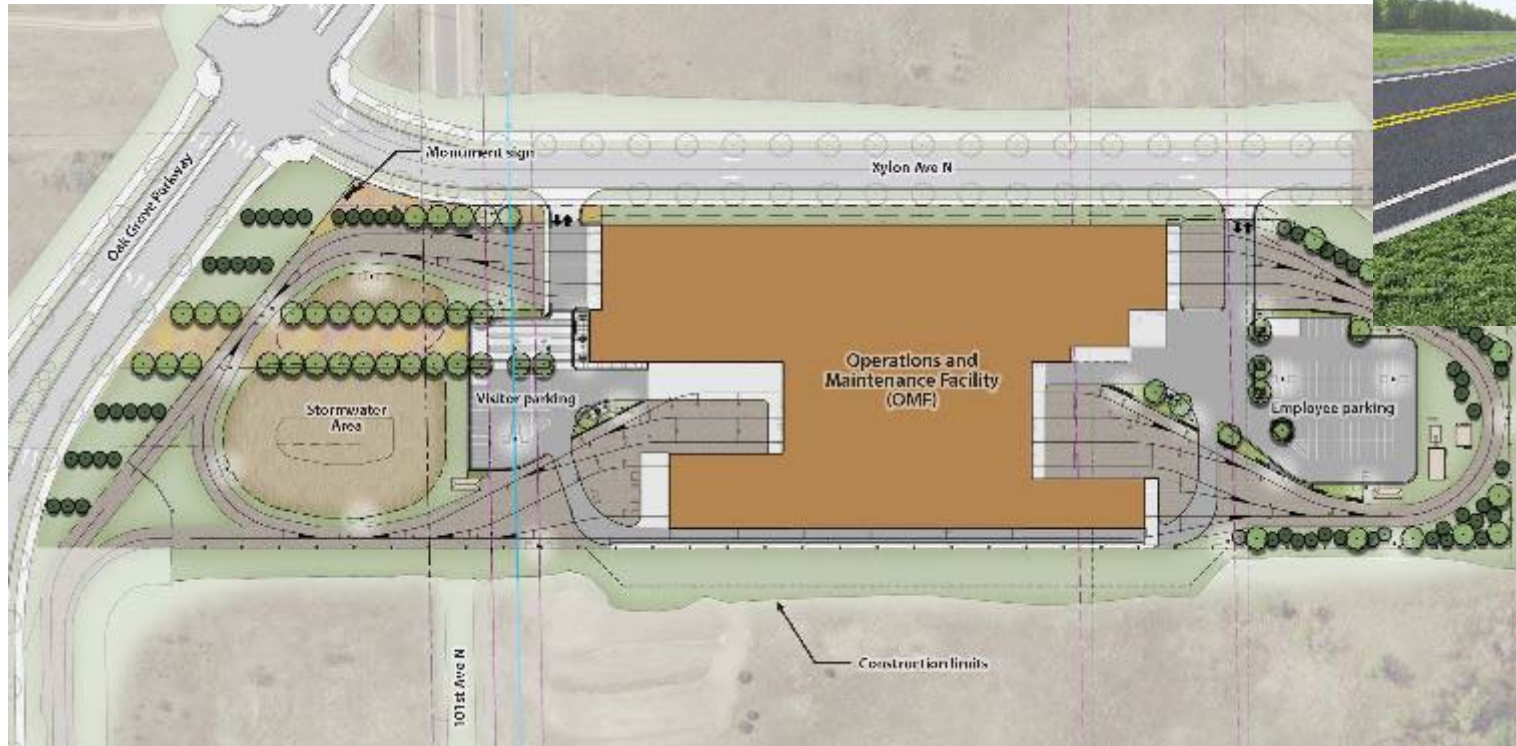
# West Broadway Ave: Oak Grove Pkwy to 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave

- 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 93<sup>rd</sup> 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



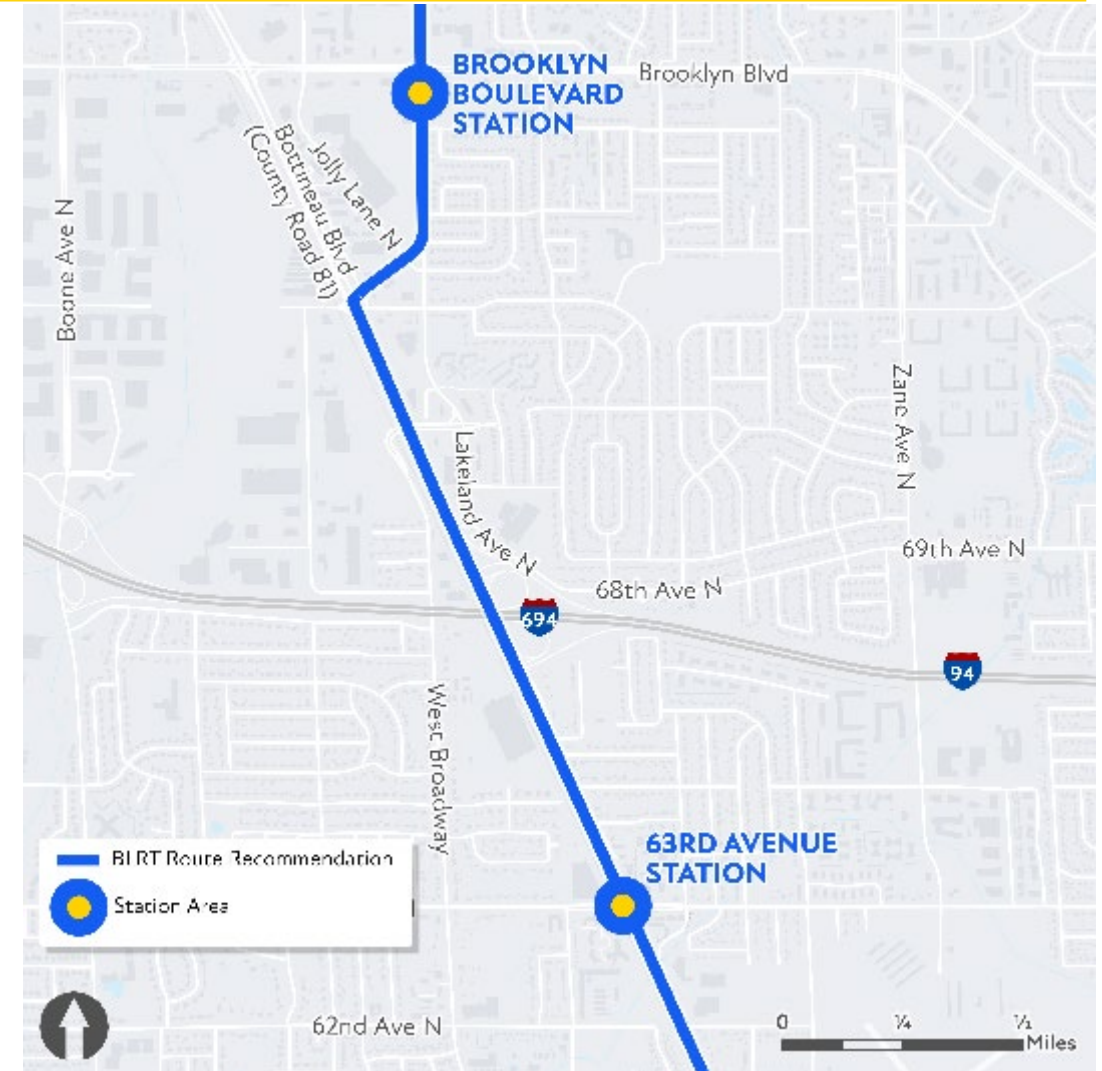
# Transition from West Broadway to County Road 81

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



# County Road 81: 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave to 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave

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





# 63rd Avenue Station



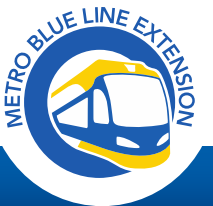
Existing



Proposed  
(grade-separated pedestrian crossing)

## Pedestrian crossing at 63<sup>rd</sup> 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



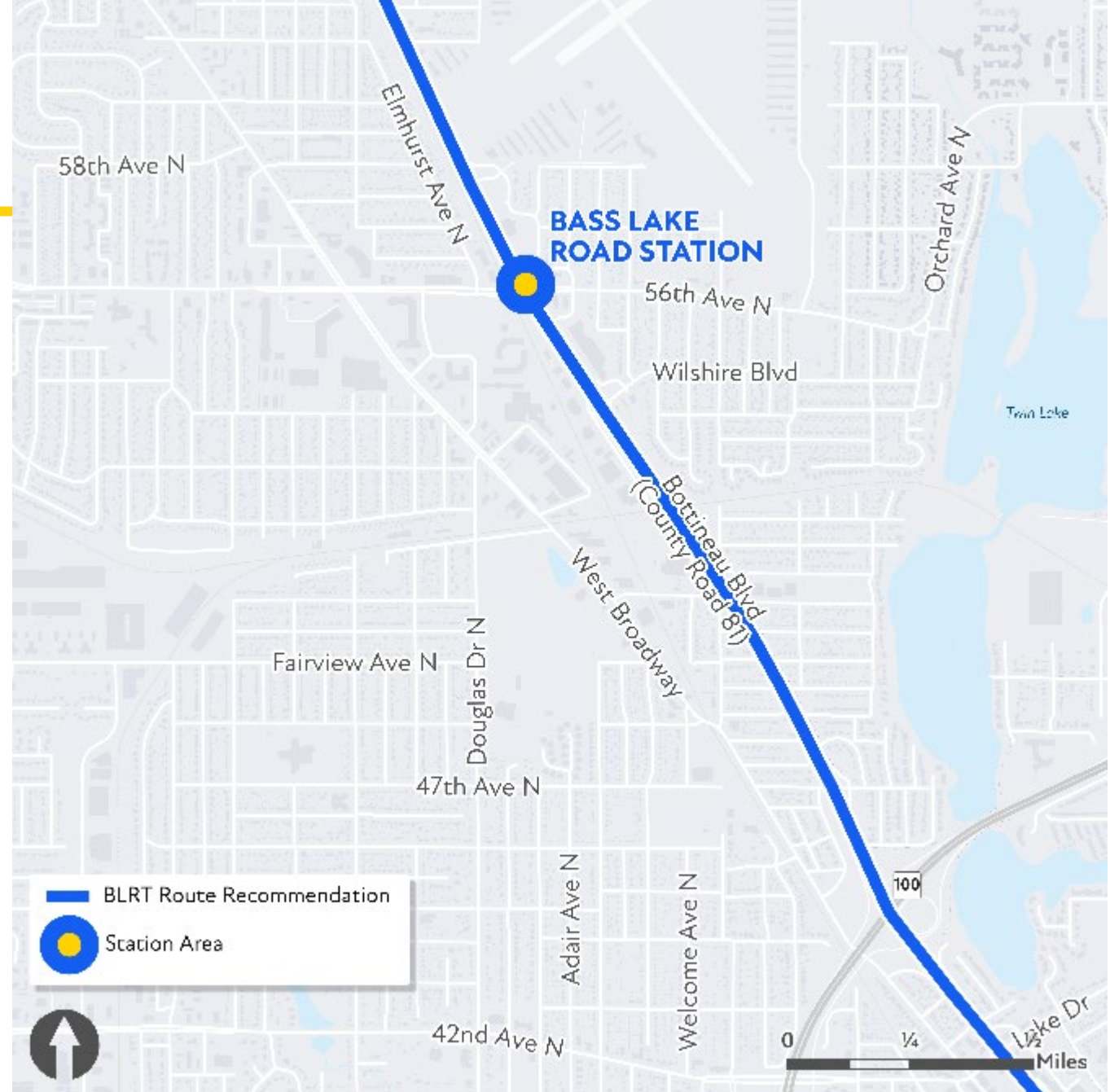
## Key themes we heard:

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

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- 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



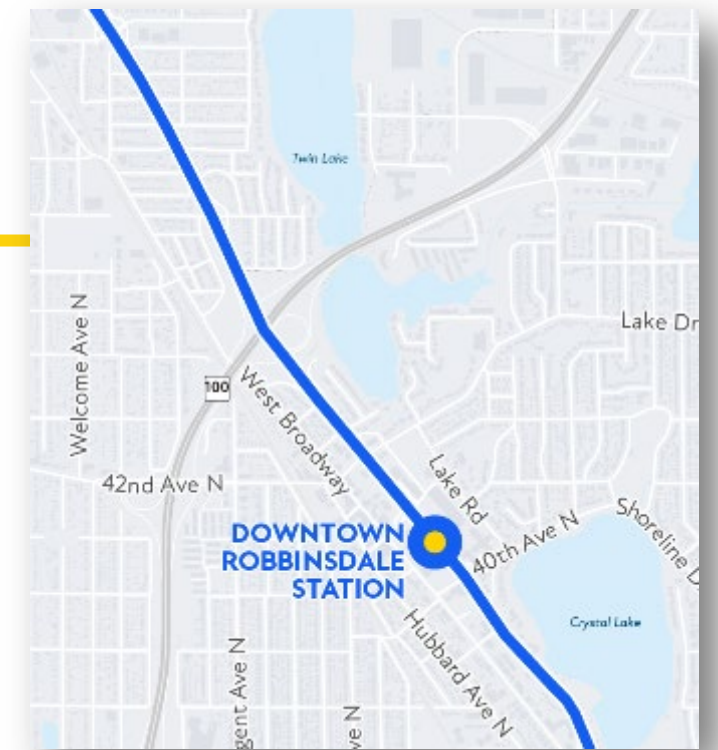
## Key themes we heard

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 21<sup>st</sup> Ave

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





# Benefits and Opportunities: East of I-94

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- 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\*

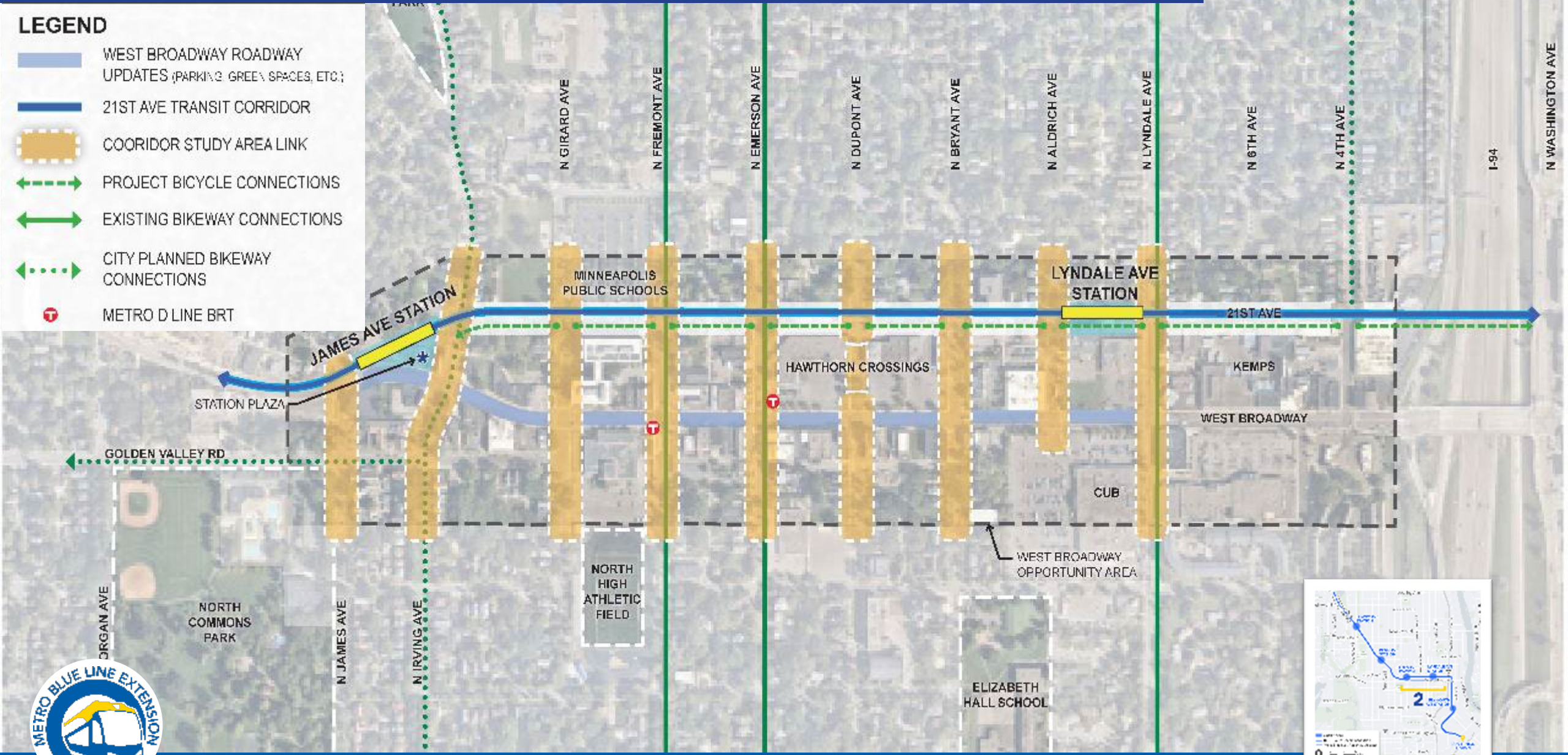
\*Photo Source: NEON



# West Broadway and 21<sup>st</sup> 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**

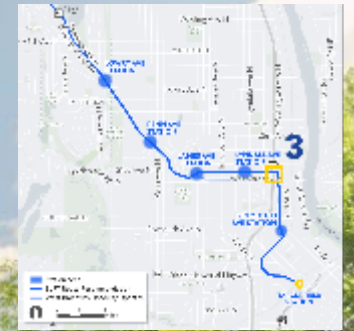
Note: Trees, landscaping, pedestrian crossings, lanes and other features are an ongoing topic of design



**DRAFT CONCEPT**



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



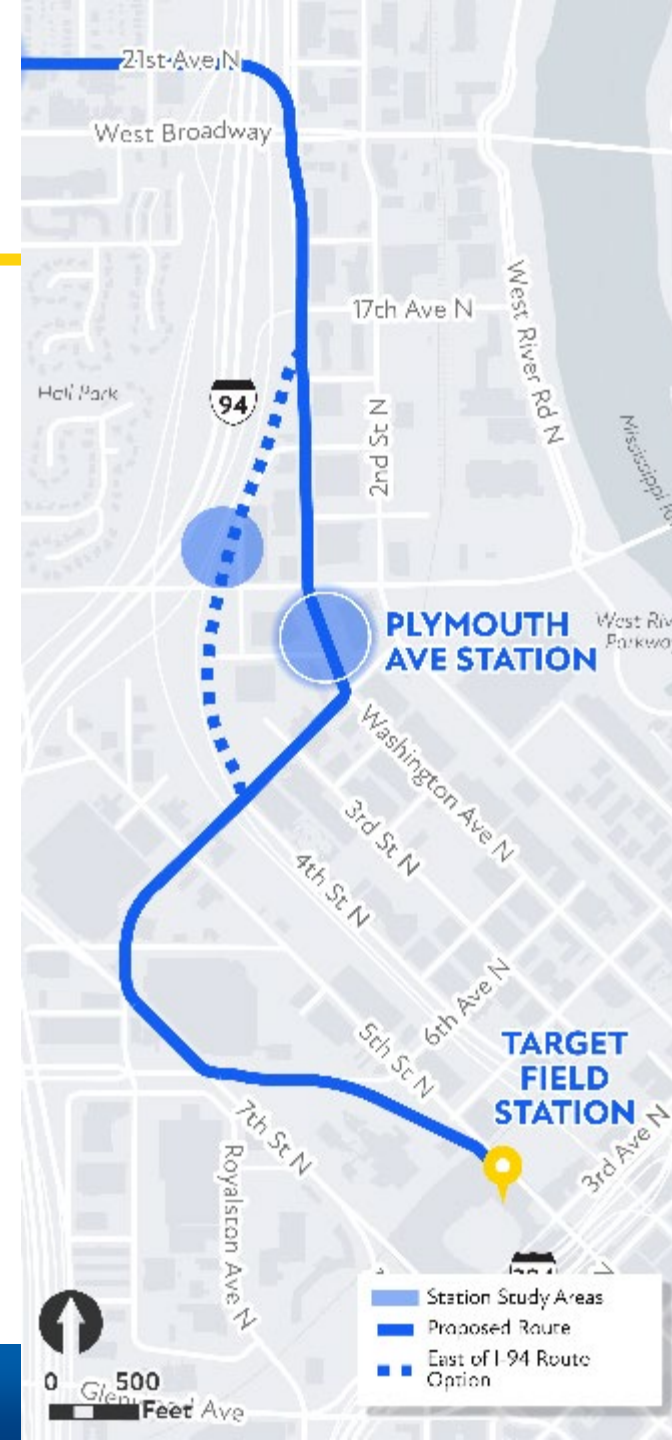
Bike, Ped, Vehicle, LRT  
Crossing on 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue



DRAFT CONCEPT

# East of I-94 Track Alignment

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

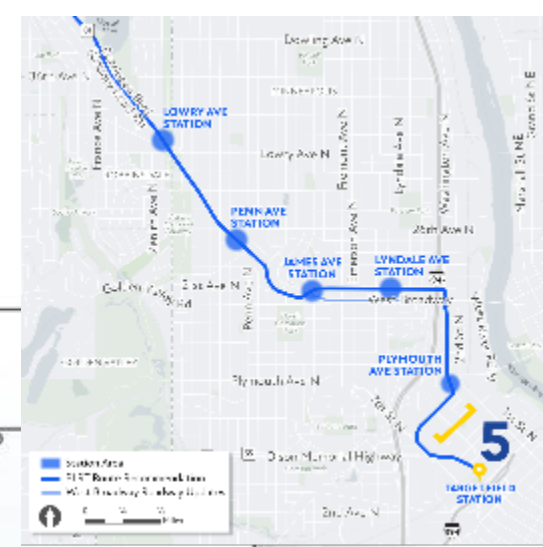
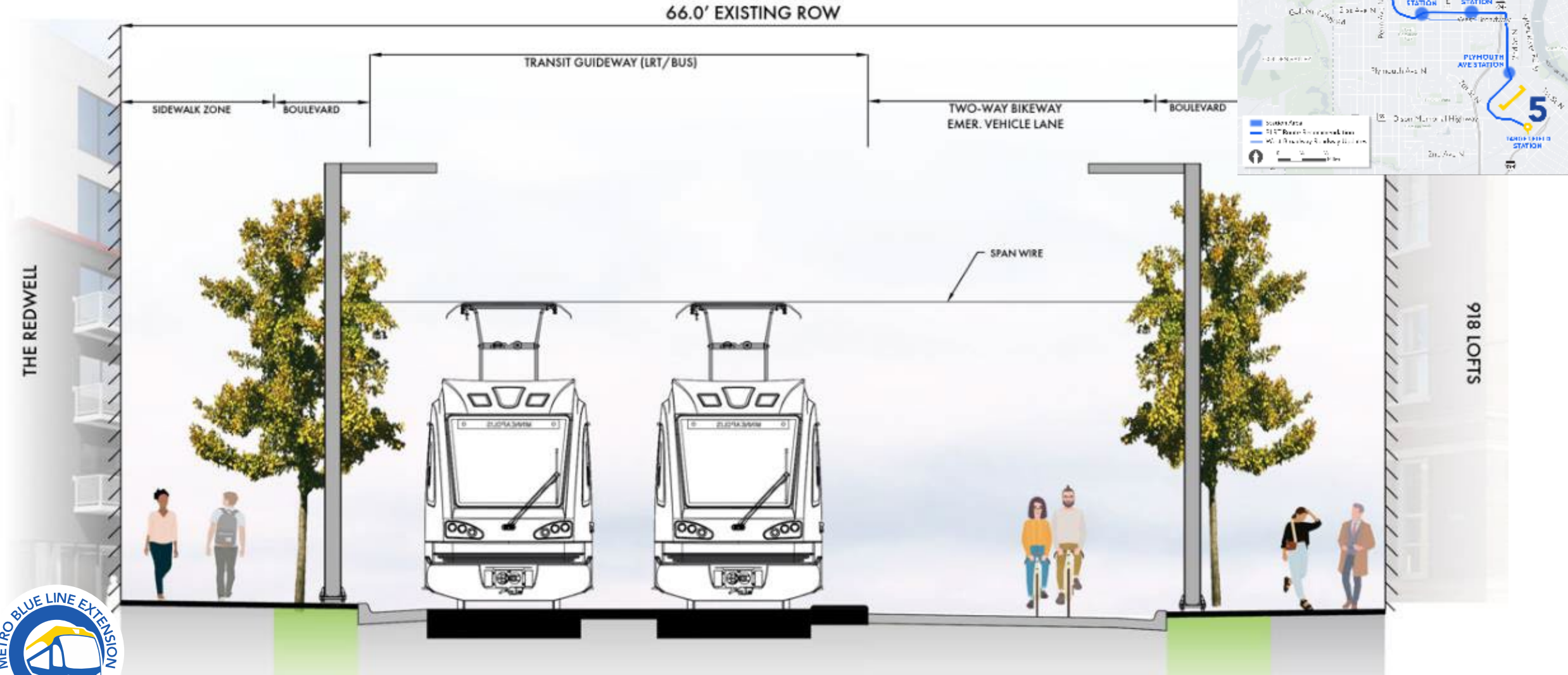


# Plymouth Station on Washington Avenue, *looking South*

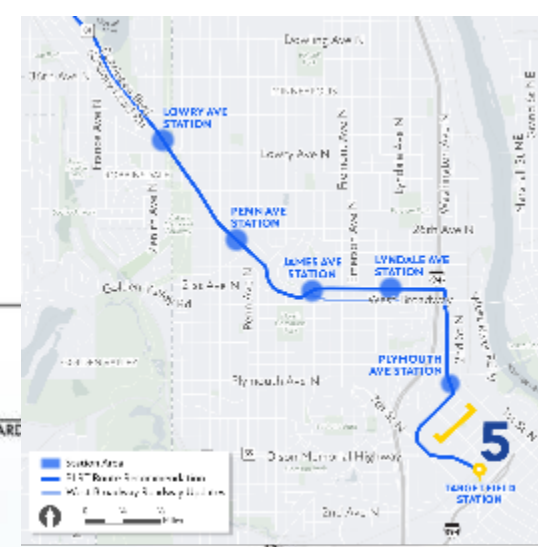
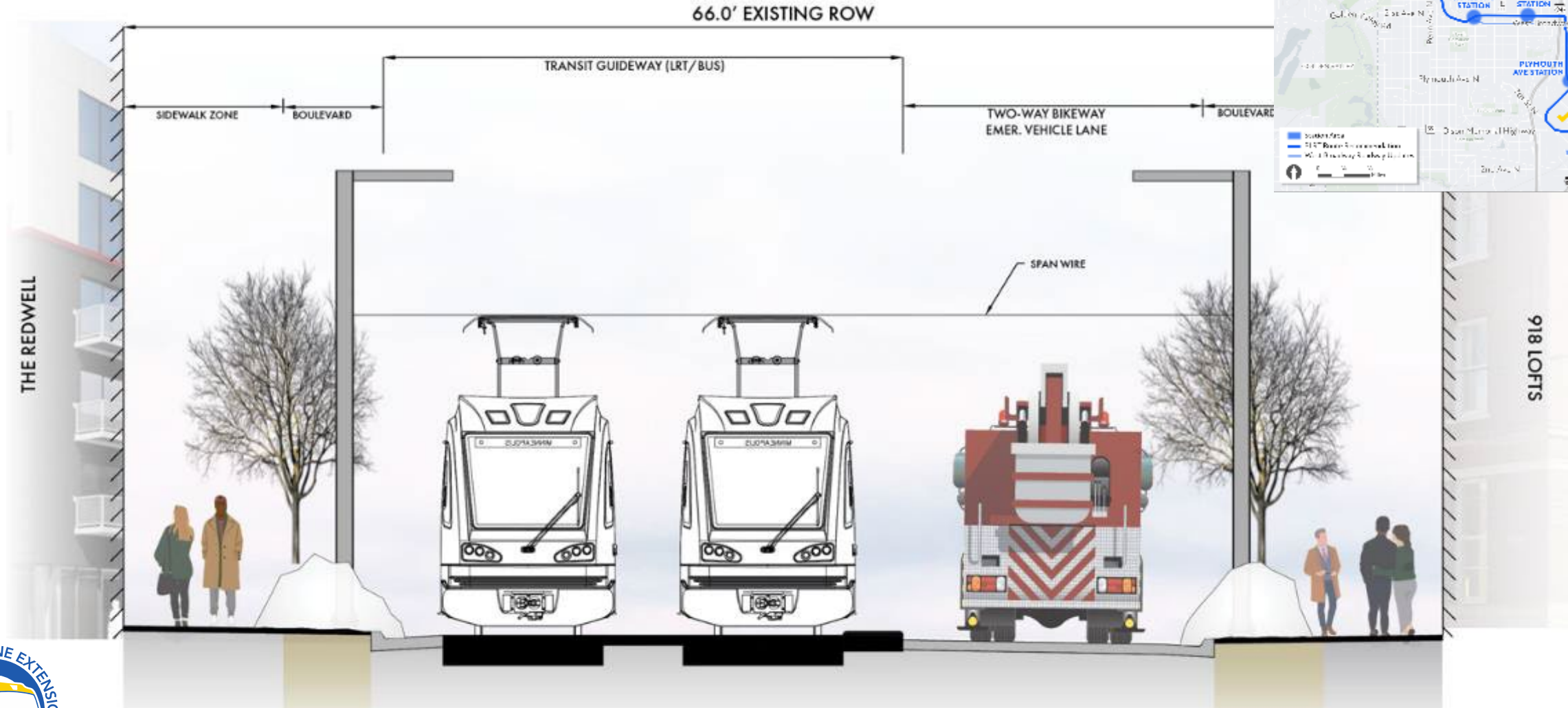


**DRAFT CONCEPT**

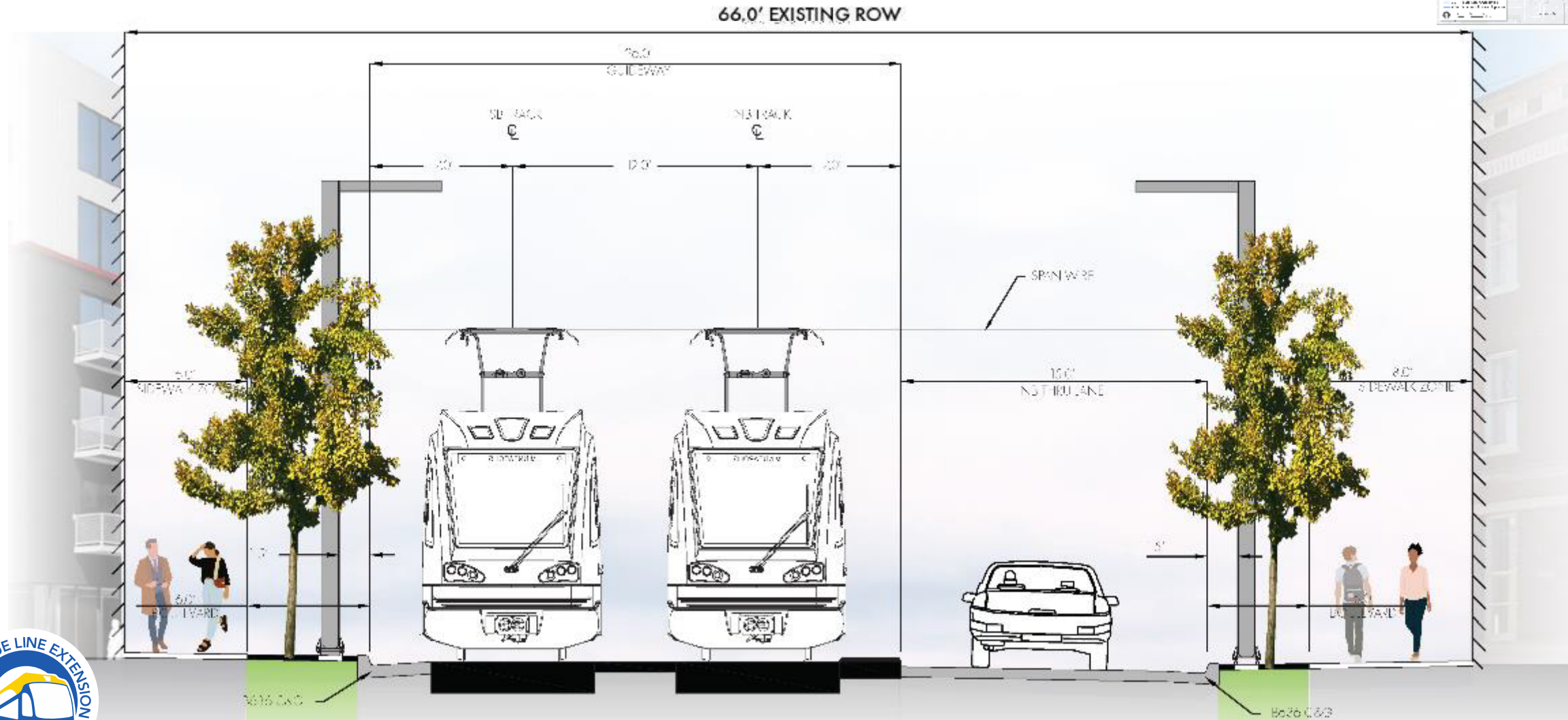
# 10<sup>th</sup> Ave: Transit Mall Option



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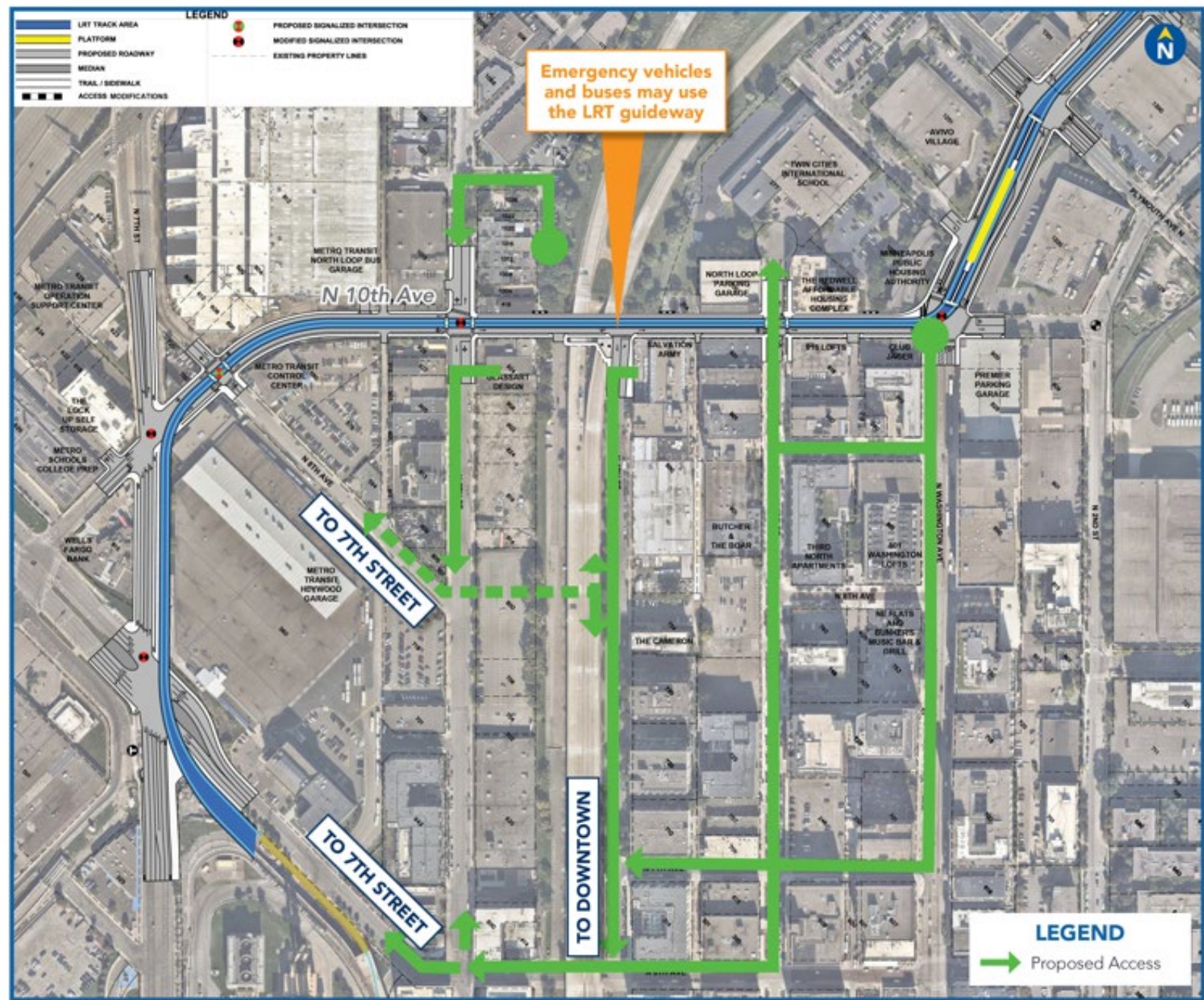


# 10<sup>th</sup> Ave: One-way Northbound



# 10th Ave Area: Potential Vehicle Access

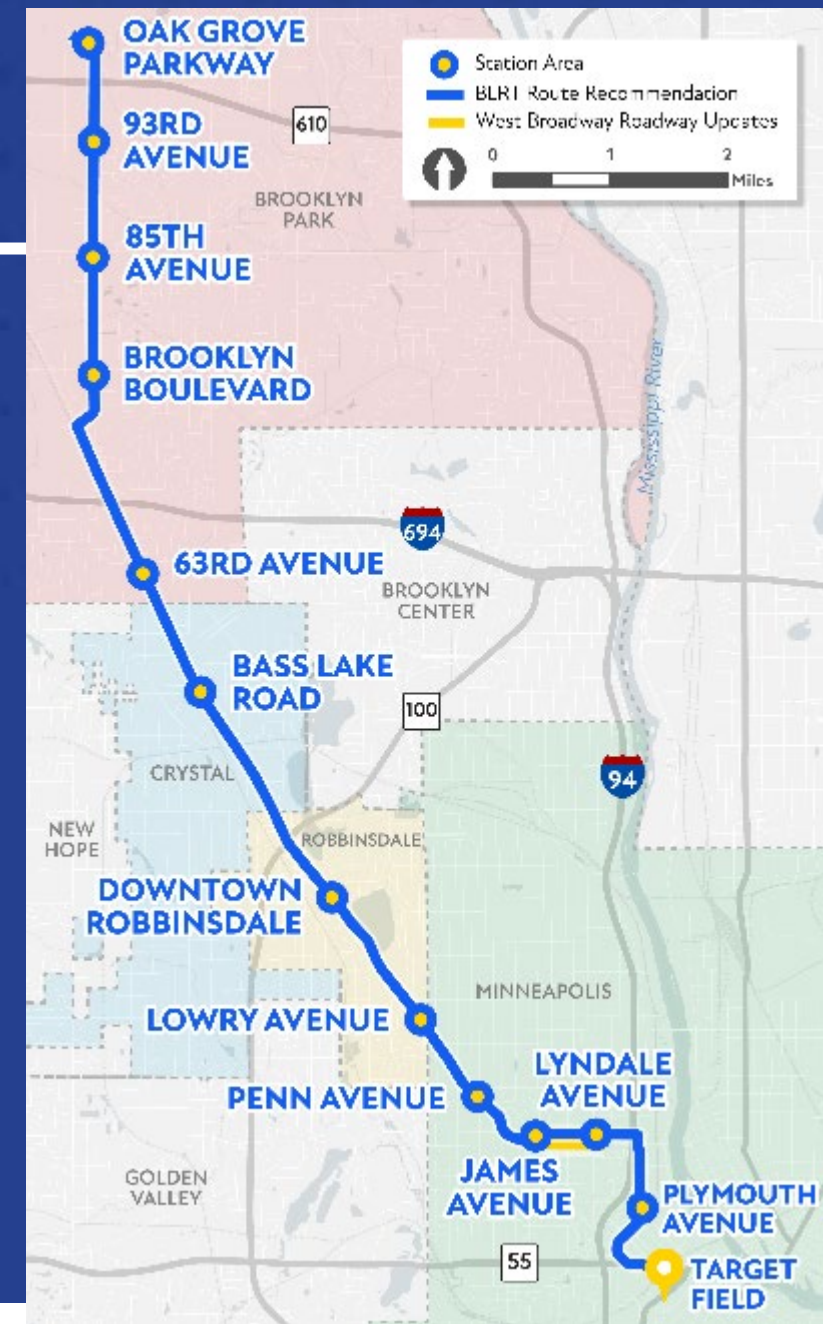
About 6,600 vehicles per day use this section of 10th Avenue



# CMC Resolution 2023-01

**Purpose:** to acknowledge the recommended track alignment and general station locations to be studied in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

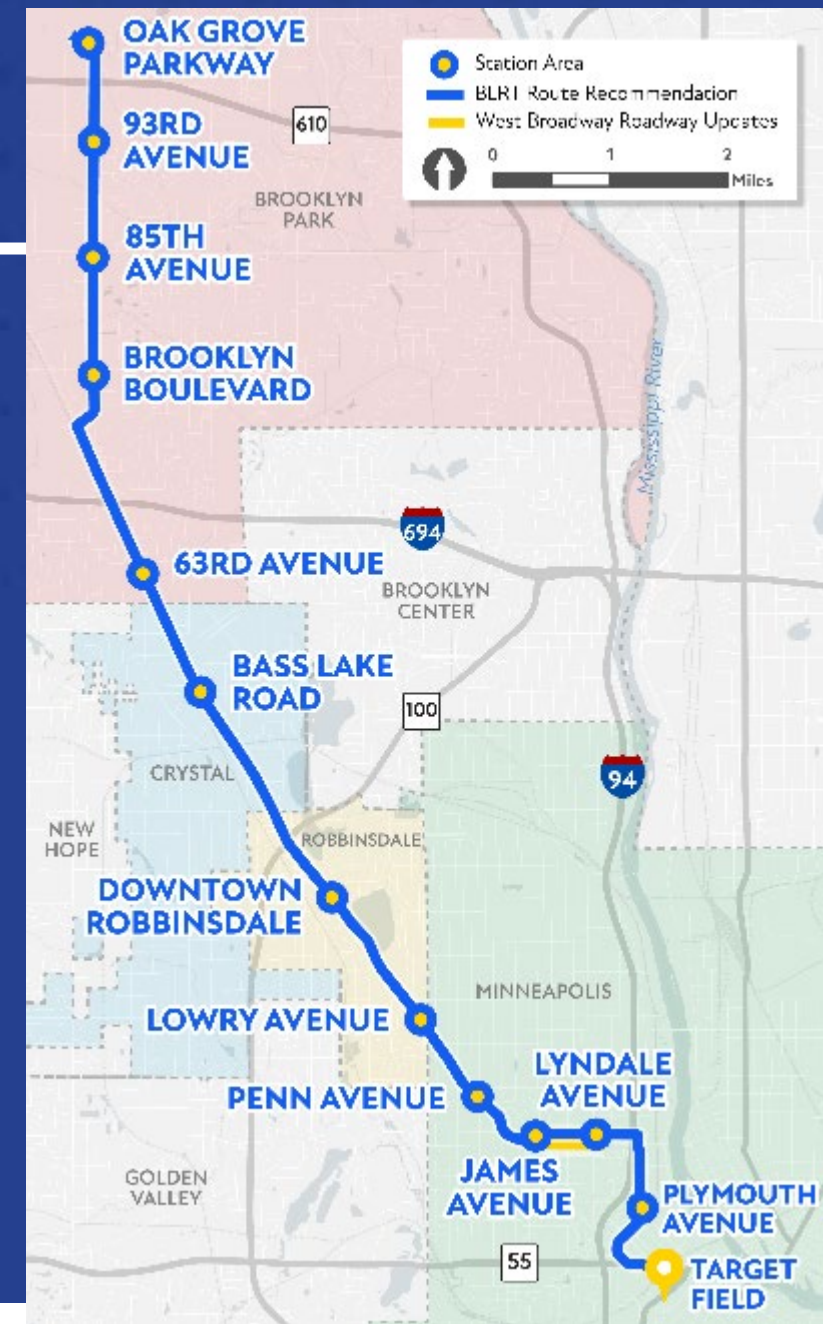
- Recommends design advancement and additional outreach
- Commits to working with project stakeholders on mitigation measures to offset environmental impacts identified
- Commits to ongoing coordination efforts around community prosperity and benefits
- Commits to ongoing design and station refinements in advance of municipal consent





# 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



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# Environmental Update & Next Steps



# Notice of Intent

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- 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](mailto: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

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- Anti-displacement engagement plan and transition to Advisory Committee – fall 2023 and ongoing
- SDEIS publication – Spring 2024
- Prepare SFEIS – Summer/Fall 2024
- Municipal consent – Summer 2024
- Ongoing engagement



# CMC Next Steps

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- Next CMC meeting is October 12



# Stay connected

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- **BlueLineExt.org**
  - For the latest project updates and to sign up for our newsletter
  - Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation
- Follow us:
  - Twitter: @BlueLineExt
  - Facebook: MetroBlueLineExtension



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