



Community Meeting Summary

METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE)

METRO Blue Line Extension Community Update Meeting – Quarterly

2nd Quarterly Meeting for 2023

In this Packet:

1. Agenda
2. Meeting Summary
3. Attendance Sheet
4. PPT Presentation



METRO Blue Line Extension Community Update Meeting - Quarterly

Wednesday, November 8th, 2023

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Metro Transit North Loop Garage
600 North 8th Avenue, Room 104
Minneapolis, MN 55411

AGENDA

Presenters: Chris Beckwith (Metropolitan Council), Nkongo Cigolo (Metropolitan Council), Nick Landwer (Metropolitan Council), Kelcie Young (Metropolitan Council) , and Cathy Gold (Hennepin County)

1. Welcome – 6:00 PM
2. Presentation – 6:05 PM
3. Questions and Answers in Breakout Groups – 7:00 PM
4. Adjourn – 8:00 PM



Community Meeting Summary

METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE)

Community Quarterly Update Meeting

Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 6 – 8 p.m.

Metro Transit North Loop Garage, 600 N. 8th Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55411

Attendance: 21 (signed in)

Format: 1 hour 20-minute presentation followed by 40-minute Breakout/Small Groups sessions.

Formal Presentation:

Presented by: Chris Beckwith (Metropolitan Council), Nkongo Cigolo (Metropolitan Council), Nick Landwer (Metropolitan Council), Kelcie Young (Metropolitan Council), and Cathy Gold (Hennepin County)

Project staff gave a project update on the following topics:

- A project overview given by Chris Beckwith of progress that has been made since the last quarterly meeting three months ago (Aug 2023). Shared the staff recommend alignment and next steps and that next year in 2024, is when municipal consent will occur.
- An environmental update given by Kelcie Young, highlighting that the project is currently working on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) that will be published in late spring of 2024; highlighted the environmental justice analysis that is a requirement for FTA and NEPA.
- Nick Landwer reviewed the preferred track alignment and stations for the Blue Line Extension for all proposed 12 stations.
- Nkongo Cigolo gave an overview of community engagement feedback that has been collected. Placed an emphasis on business canvassing the team has been doing to understand business operations.
- Cathy Gold shared information on Anti-Displacement. Ms. Gold revealed that community members, business owners, project staff, and government officials are working together to achieve the Anti-Displacement outcomes created by the Anti-Displacement Work Group in 2021; the set outcomes are for Blue Line Extension planning and construction. Ms. Gold shared about ongoing work to develop an anti-displacement policy agenda and informed the group of the Anti-Displacement theme that it's not about the train, but the people.
- Three breakout groups were split up by anti-displacement, design, and general project information/environmental to give community members to ask questions about specific topic and design elements by geographical area. Group conversations went until 8 p.m.

Comment Summary/Themes:

Parking

- Concerns for maintaining and potentially improving parking on/around West Broadway for businesses in the area

Construction

- Construction impacts to community and businesses

Alignments



Community Meeting Summary

METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE)

- Concern that calling one alignment the “preferred alignment” is “teaching to the test”; would rather see study results that show it’s the better alignment before hearing that phrase.
- Proponent of the preferred alignment, as walkshed for the alternate “pink line, along I-94” alignment is worse than that of preferred.
- Station location of the preferred alignment is “where people want to be.”
- Preference for the 10th street transit alignment, with additional idea to extend 8th street for peds cars and bikes past the viaduct to become another good throughway.

Design

- Those who reside near Target Field would like to know what that design will look like, how that area will be impacted (renderings, design details).
- Concerns with how 918 lofts can continue building maintenance with a transitway and nowhere to get a truck.
- Preference for transit malls wherever proposed; safer and easier ped crossing.
- Walkability to station areas – participant said that a 10-minute walk is a bit too far.
- Loved the idea that 10th avenue to be a transit mall.
- Concerns for residents who have moved in around Target field not having adequate access for their cars, and the compression of traffic on Washington and the safety concerns around that (ped safety, crash safety).

Robbinsdale

- Robbinsdale concerns, why is park & ride going where it is? Concerns for adding traffic to an already busy intersection near a hospital and Senior Living, and nearby residents giving up what could be developed space.
- Is there a preferred stop location for Robbinsdale? **Answer:** two stations are planned for Robbinsdale, the Lowry Station and the Downtown Robbinsdale Station.
- Would there be any consideration for not having park & ride in Robbinsdale? **Answer:** conceptual plans show a park-and-ride in Robbinsdale at 40th Avenue; removing the park-and-ride may have other negative impact to the project such ridership impacts.

Safety

- Safety concerns around crime and drug usage on station platforms. Shared information on Metro Transit safety and security action plan and the recent gains from its implementation.

Questions/Comments heard During Break Out/Small Groups:

General Project/Environmental

- Who would pay for damage caused by operating LRT, for example: street, sidewalk, nearby dwellings, cracks in homes etc. Wants to know the process of reporting and submitting for reimbursement. **Answer:** a damage claims process will be in place, a 24-hour construction hotline will be in place, a pre-construction survey will be conducted prior to construction to ensure that the pre-existing conditions are documented prior to construction.
- General questions about the Green Line Extension and comparing it to the Blue Line Extension.
- Can there be protected bike lanes on Washington Avenue? **Answer:** the comment is noted, and this will be addressed with municipal partners while design plans are advanced.



Community Meeting Summary

METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE)

- Is the project team planning to include BRT studies in the SDEIS report, and why LRT was chosen over BRT? **Answer:** the mode of transportation for the Blue Line Extension is light rail; prior analysis had already identified light rail as the mode for this corridor.
- How long would it take to ride LRT from Brooklyn Park to downtown Minneapolis? **Answer:** Travel time is not yet finalized, and we anticipate to have that information early next year (2024).
- Question about ridership analysis, and how often those are completed. **Answer:** ridership forecast for the Blue Line Extension is expected to be released early next year (2024).
- Question about where visualizations can be found. Directed to project website.
- What happens if municipal consent isn't given by a city? **Answer:** the project office will continue to work with our municipal partners to ensure that the municipal consent requirement is met.

Anti-displacement

- Conversation around what is anti-displacement and what that group does. **Answer:** a program to work with the community to prevent displacement as much as possible and support businesses before, during, and after construction.
- Conversation around where the funding for this support is coming from. **Answer:** the program is still in the planning stages, but hoping to get philanthropic donations, as well as support from the federal level.
- Concern that the parking ramp (with 500 spaces) will affect Robbinsdale businesses.
- Conversation/concern about those who have put in money for investments or start-ups – if they have already put in the money for a new business/investment and now they are being displaced due to LRT construction, will they be reimbursed or eligible for funding support? Or will they just lose all the money they put into something that cannot open. Make sure we think about that, and not just the pre-existing businesses.

Design

- Concerns regarding impact on historic buildings and what work is being done with protecting historical locations and buildings.
- Some that live in the North Loop were concerned with train noise and if there could be consideration for a “quiet zone.”
- Conversation about BRT and LRT.
- Why did the project team decide to keep some street parking on West Broadway – in North Minneapolis? **Answer:** in response to community concerns, parking impacts and other potential project impacts were analyzed prior to developing a staff-recommended route through North Minneapolis.
- Will there be pedestrian and bike lanes on the structure going over East of 194? **Answer:** Current concept includes bike facilities on this bridge. Design for this bridge is ongoing and in collaboration with municipal partners.
- Question about if more research is needed, why are we choosing a route now before that research is completed (10th Ave). **Answer:** additional analysis is needed to identify all of the impacts related to the proposed route; development of mitigation measures will also be addressed as part of the environmental assessment. Other route options previously identified will also be included in the environmental assessment report, but in order to begin the Federal Transit Administration's reviews, a preferred alignment ought to be selected.

Event Photos:



Community Meeting Summary

METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE)



Project Design Principles

- Maximize BLE's efficiency and speed
- Minimize travel time
- Maximize ride time
- Maximize community and economic development
- Maximize Transit Administration's BLE project goals
- Place all purchases to obtain best value goods and services
- Compliance with general BLE's procurement
- Minimize construction, operation and environmental impact
- Reduce energy and operations including system safety, security, and energy
- Maximize public-private partnership



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Please sign in!

Name	Email	Check below if you'd like to join the email list
Aileen Johnson	fritzdris@comcast.net	✓
Jackson Hampton	hampt hampt146@umn.edu	✓
J. Lee	greatgranny_hi@hotmail.com	✓
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MICHAEL WESTBROOKS	MEWEST15@GMAIL.COM	✓
Sardis Grant	sgrants@yaho.com	✓
Ross Lubrant	"	
Tom Ottason	tsparkway@comcast.net	✓
PATRICK DAWSON	pat@conjax.com	✓
Tashi		✓
Tedo Wilson	wilsonsimage@gmail.com	✓



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Please sign in!

Name	Email	Check below if you'd like to join the email list
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Bart Weelborg	bart.weelborg@gmail.com	yes
Rachel Weelborg	rweelborg01@gmail.com	yes
James Lyle	protosforce1@gmail.com	yes
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Tom Ottoson	tcparkway@comcast.net	yes
Krista Ottoson	tcparkway@comcast.net	yes
Farrington Llewellyn	farrington@westbroadway.org	yes
Joey Rezac	joeyrezac@gmail.com	no
Aileen Johnson	fritzdoris@comcast.net	yes
Jackson Hampton	hampt146@umn.edu	yes
J. Lee	greatgranny_hi@hotmail.com	yes
Michael Westbrooks	medwest65@gmail.com	yes
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Patrick Dawson	pat@congacx.com	yes
Taushi?	not provided	n/a
Teto Wilson	wilsonsimage@gmail.com	yes

Total: 21



BLRT Community Update Meeting

November 8, 2023



BROOKLYN PARK | CRYSTAL | ROBBINSDALE | MINNEAPOLIS



Welcome/Introductions



Today's Topics

- Project Overview
- Schedule
- Environmental Update
- Project Design Updates
- Engagement Feedback
- Anti-Displacement Update



Project Overview

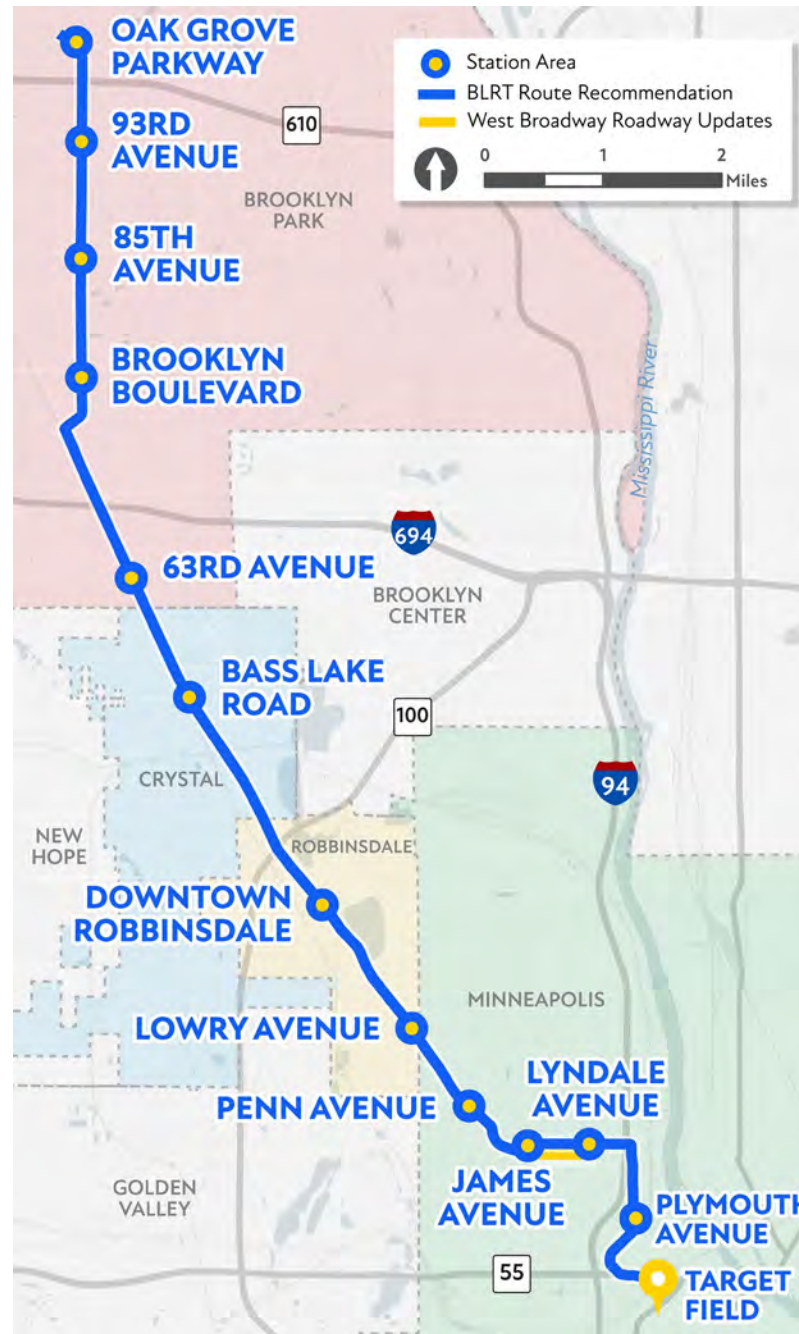




Blue Line

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

Project Video



Project Schedule



Environmental Update

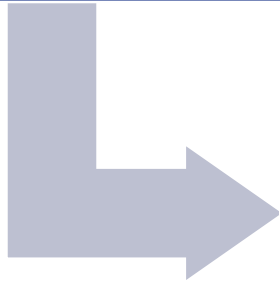


Environmental Schedule

1. Selected design options studied in Supplemental Draft EIS*

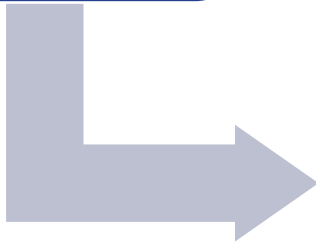
COMPLETED

- Public comment period on the design options (Oct 18 – Nov 7, 2022)



2. Begin Supplemental Draft EIS

- Public comment period on the findings
Anticipated publication Spring 2024



3. Prepare Supplemental Final EIS and mitigation commitments

- Public comment on the mitigation commitments
- Anticipated Spring 2025



Original FEIS completed July 2016



*EIS = Environmental Impact Statement

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



Environmental Justice Analysis

- Identifying Environmental Justice Communities
- Continuing outreach to understand EJ-specific concerns by location and community
- Analysis of project impacts and benefits to EJ communities
 - How impacts and benefits relate to past harms
- Continue exploring avoiding, minimizing, potential mitigation for impacts



Preferred Track Alignments and Stations



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

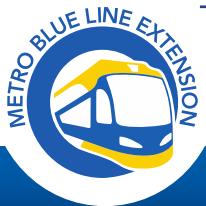
Pursue opportunities to serve even more people and destinations

Complement existing and planned METRO transitways

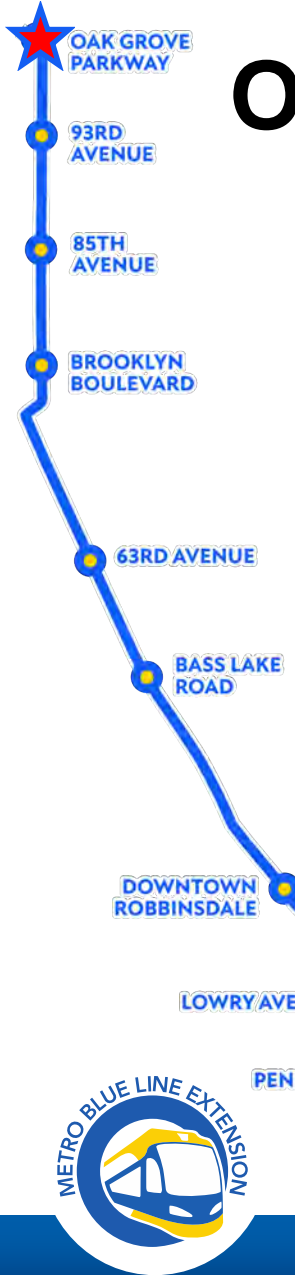
Minimize residential, commercial and environmental impacts

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

Maximize carbon pollution reduction



Oak Grove Parkway Station and Park and Ride



View Looking Northwest to Plaza and Park and Ride from Oak Grove Parkway Station

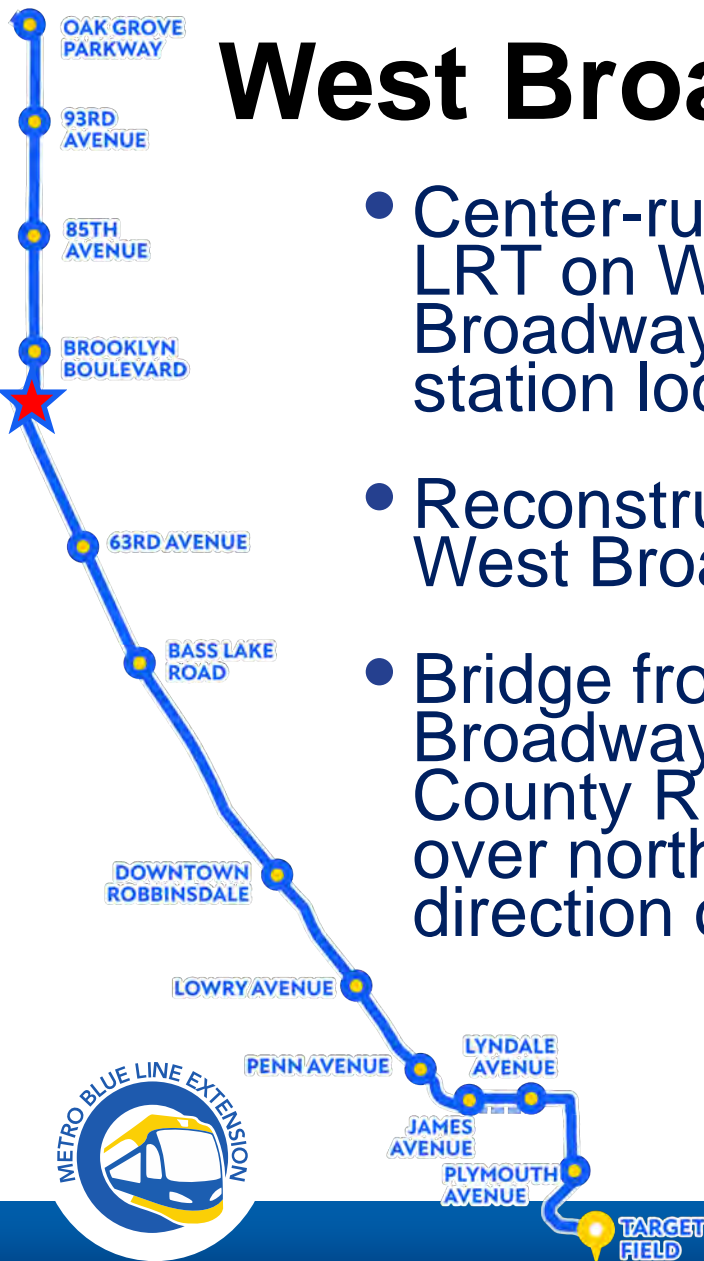


Operations and Maintenance Facility is also located at the northernmost terminus of the



West Broadway Avenue to County Road 81

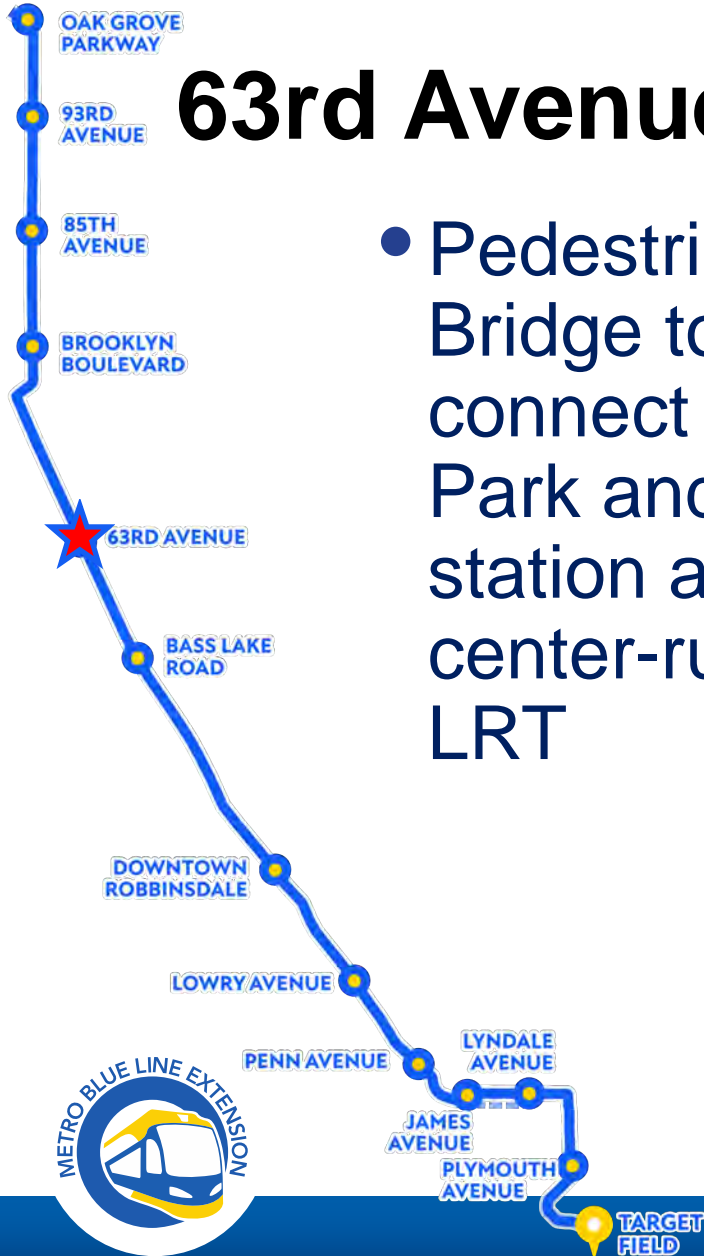
- Center-running LRT on West Broadway with 4 station locations
- Reconstruction of West Broadway
- Bridge from West Broadway to County Road 81 over northbound direction of traffic



Transition from West Broadway to County Road 81

63rd Avenue Station

- Pedestrian Bridge to connect existing Park and Ride to station and center-running LRT

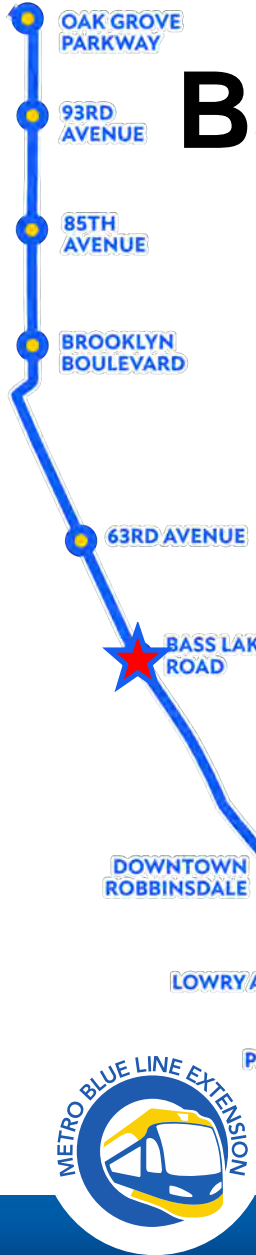


Existing



Proposed Pedestrian Crossing at 63rd Ave Station

Bass Lake Road Station



Existing



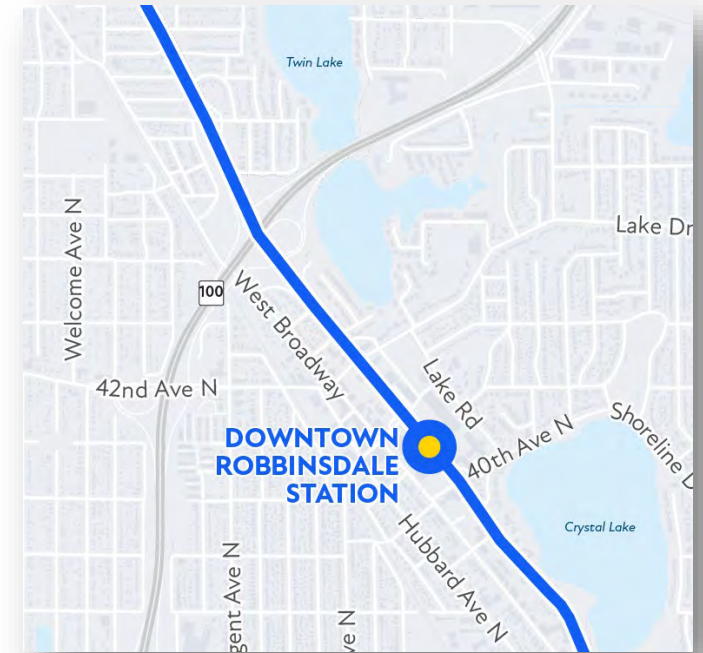
Proposed Interchange at Bass Lake Road



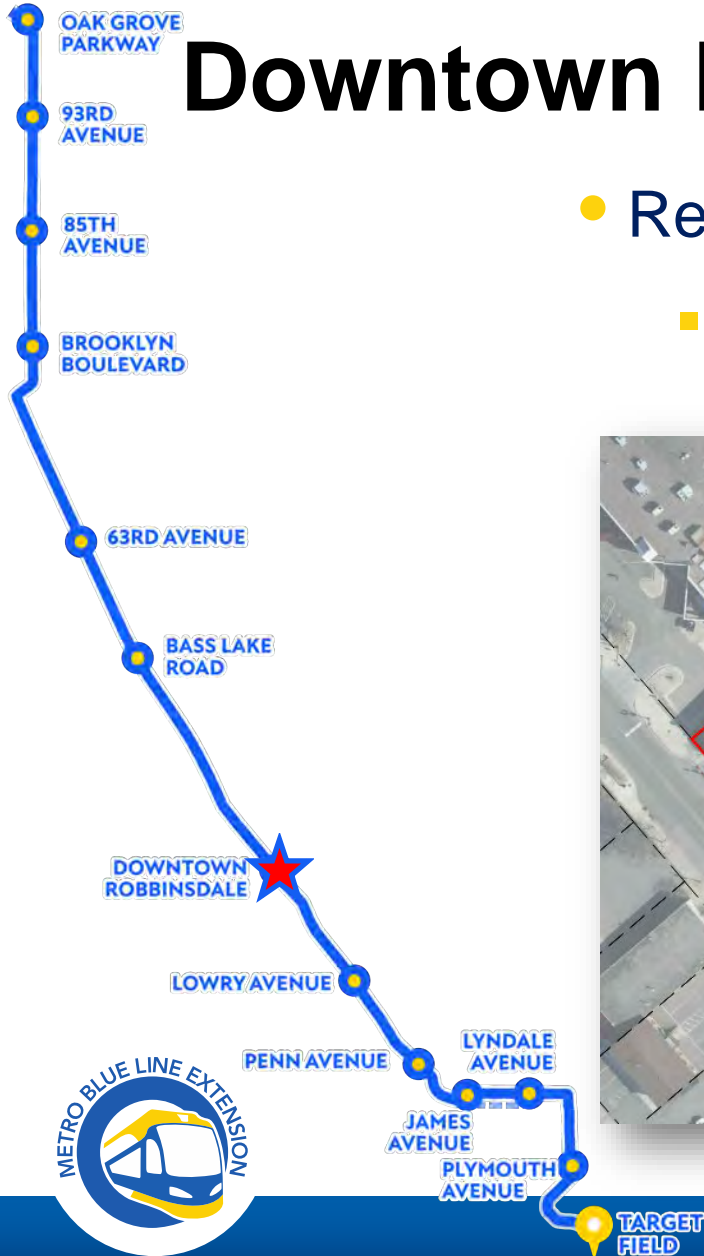
Ground view of station area looking south

Downtown Robbinsdale Park and Ride

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

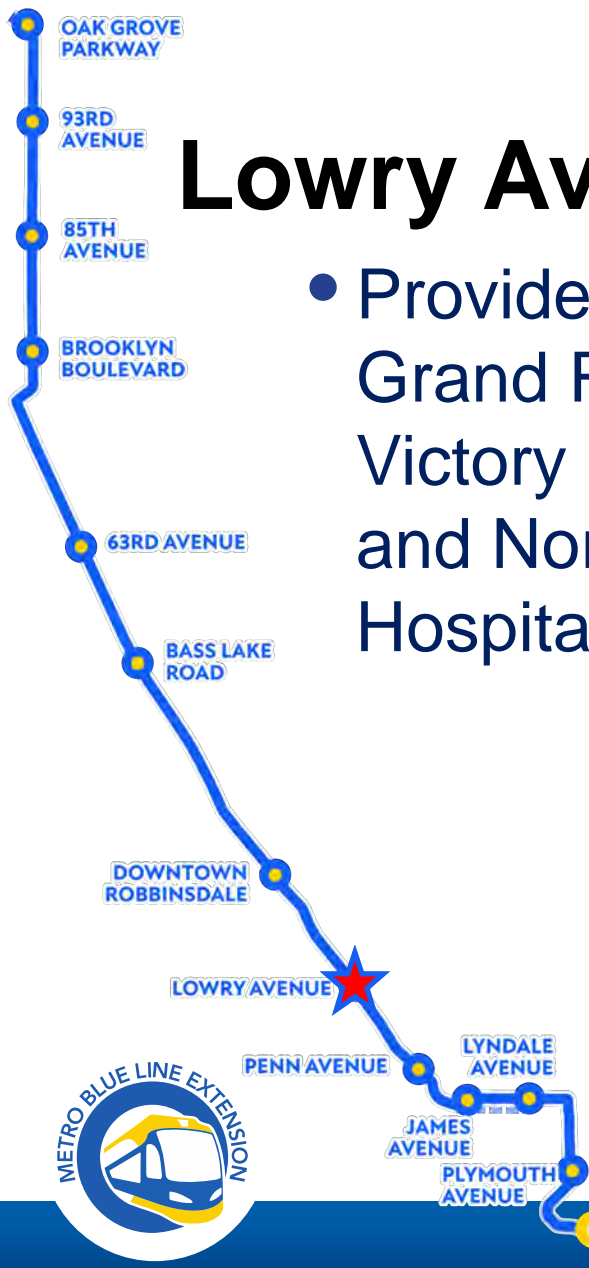


- Paired with Station at 40th
- Will incorporate bus transfers
 - 14, 19, 32, 716, 717
 - Plymouth Metrolink Click-and-Ride



Lowry Ave Station

- Provides access to the Grand Rounds trail, Victory Memorial Park, and North Memorial Hospital



Capri Theater



Penn Avenue Station

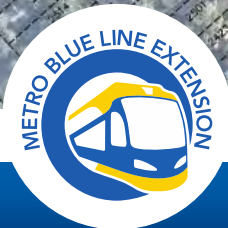
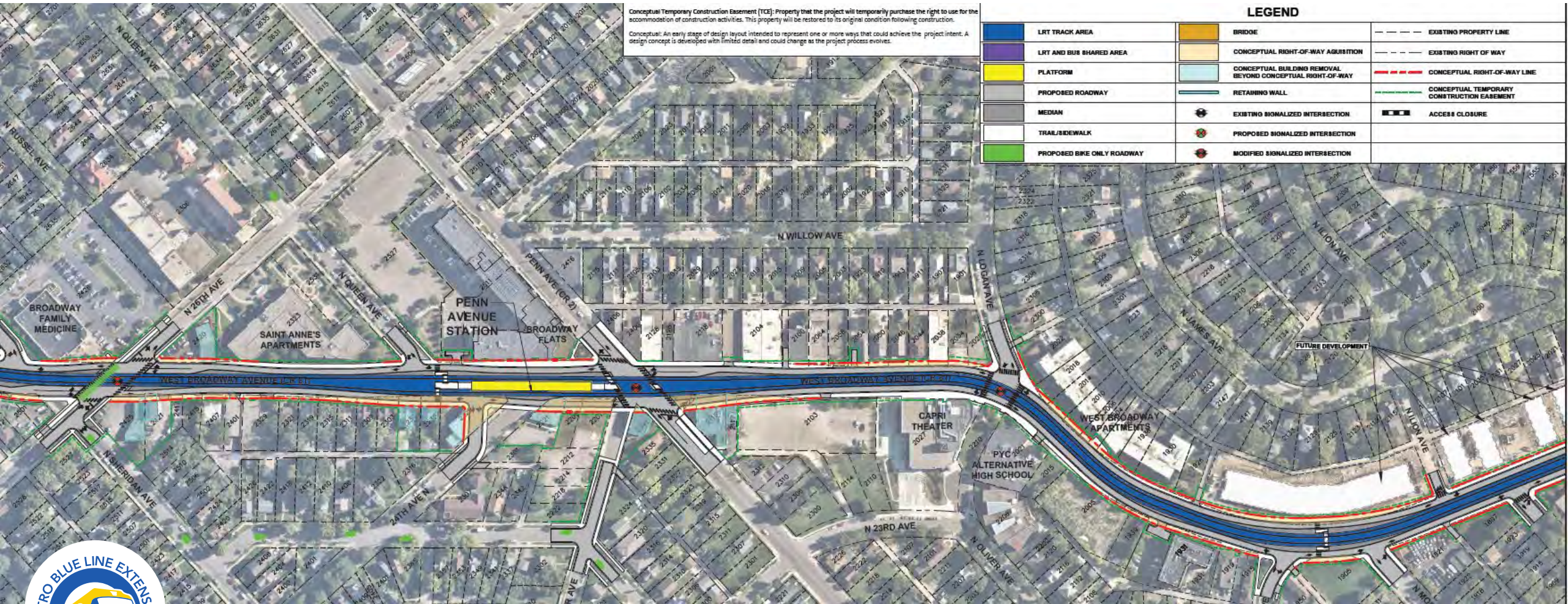
- METRO C Line connection
- Capri Theater
- NEON food incubator

The Incubator Project*

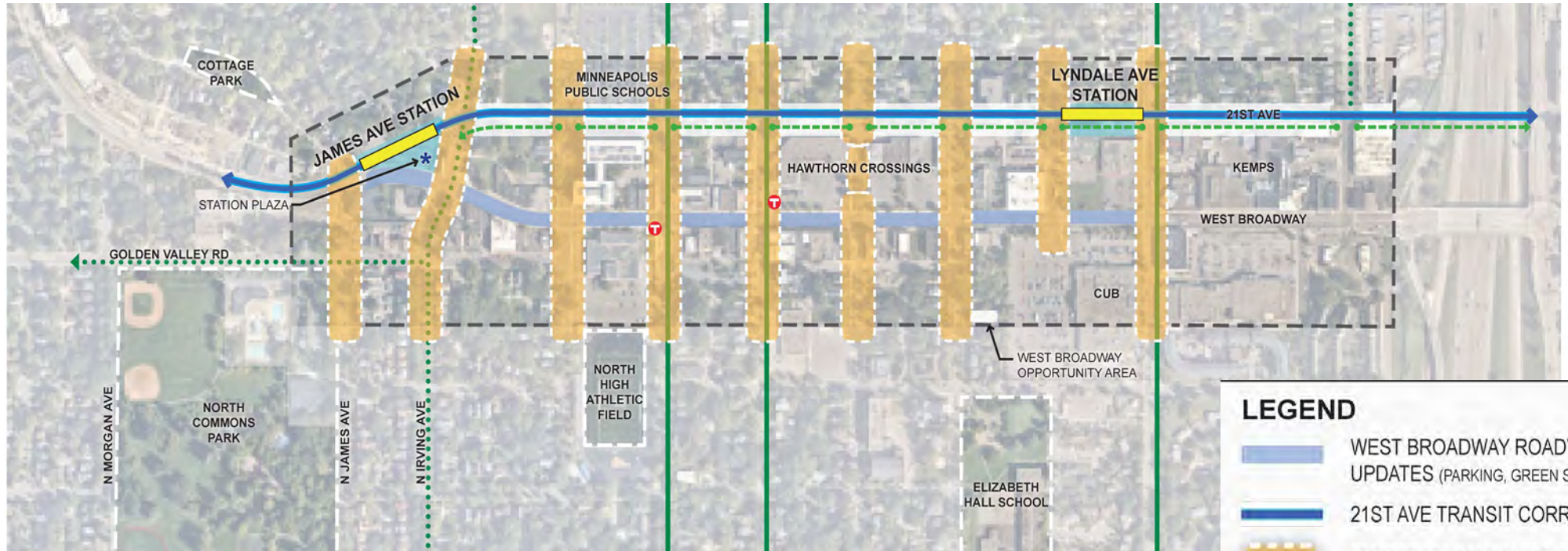
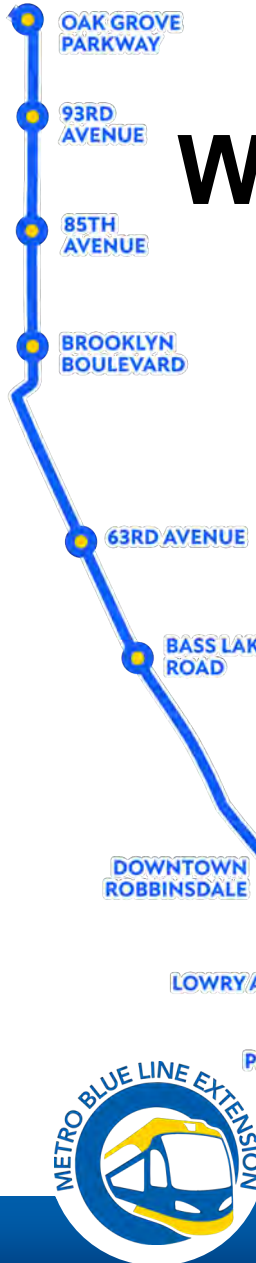
*Photo Source: NEON



Station at Penn



West Broadway and 21st Connections



LEGEND

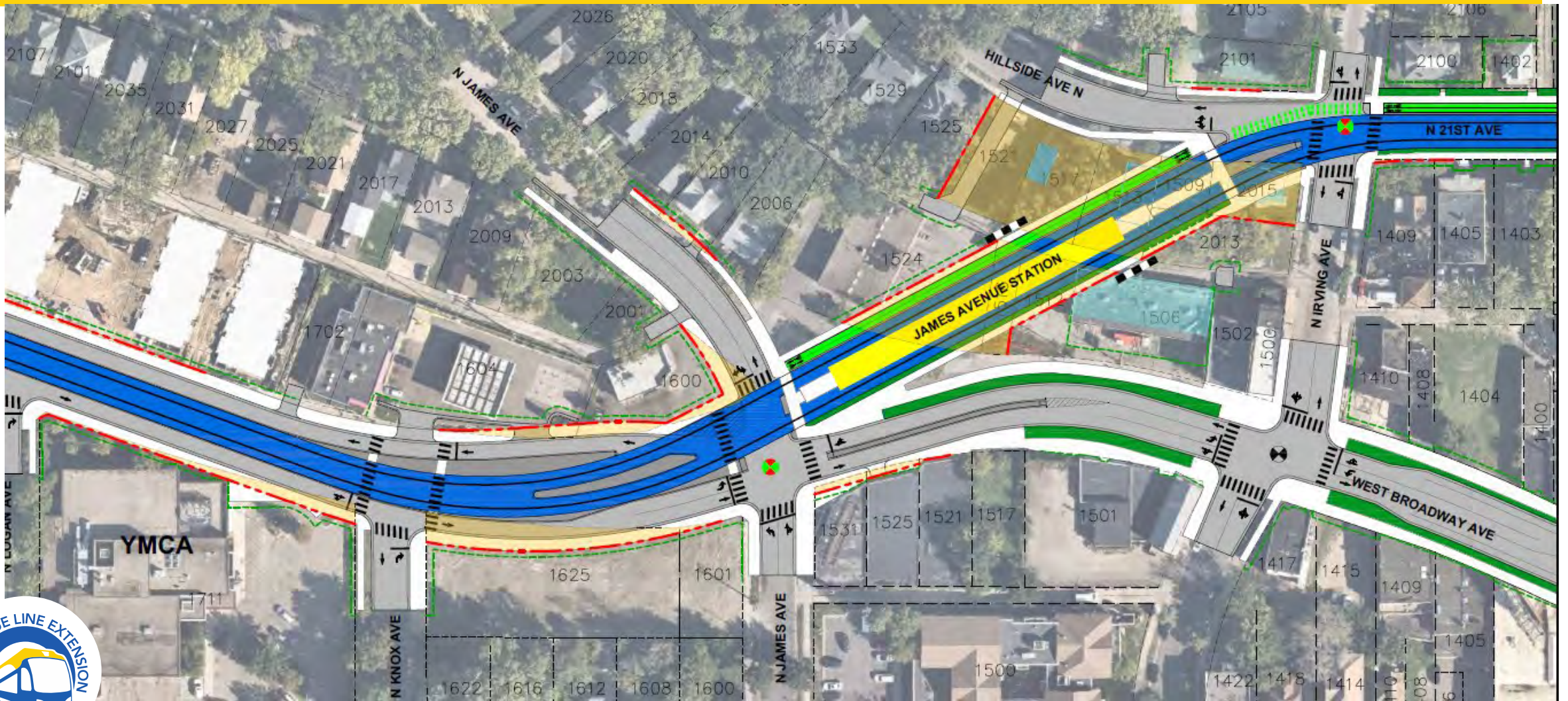
- WEST BROADWAY ROADWAY UPDATES (PARKING, GREEN SPACES, ETC.)
- 21ST AVE TRANSIT CORRIDOR
- COORIDOR STUDY AREA LINK
- PROJECT BICYCLE CONNECTIONS
- EXISTING BIKEWAY CONNECTIONS
- CITY PLANNED BIKEWAY CONNECTIONS
- METRO D LINE BRT

Benefits and Opportunities: Tracks on 21st Ave

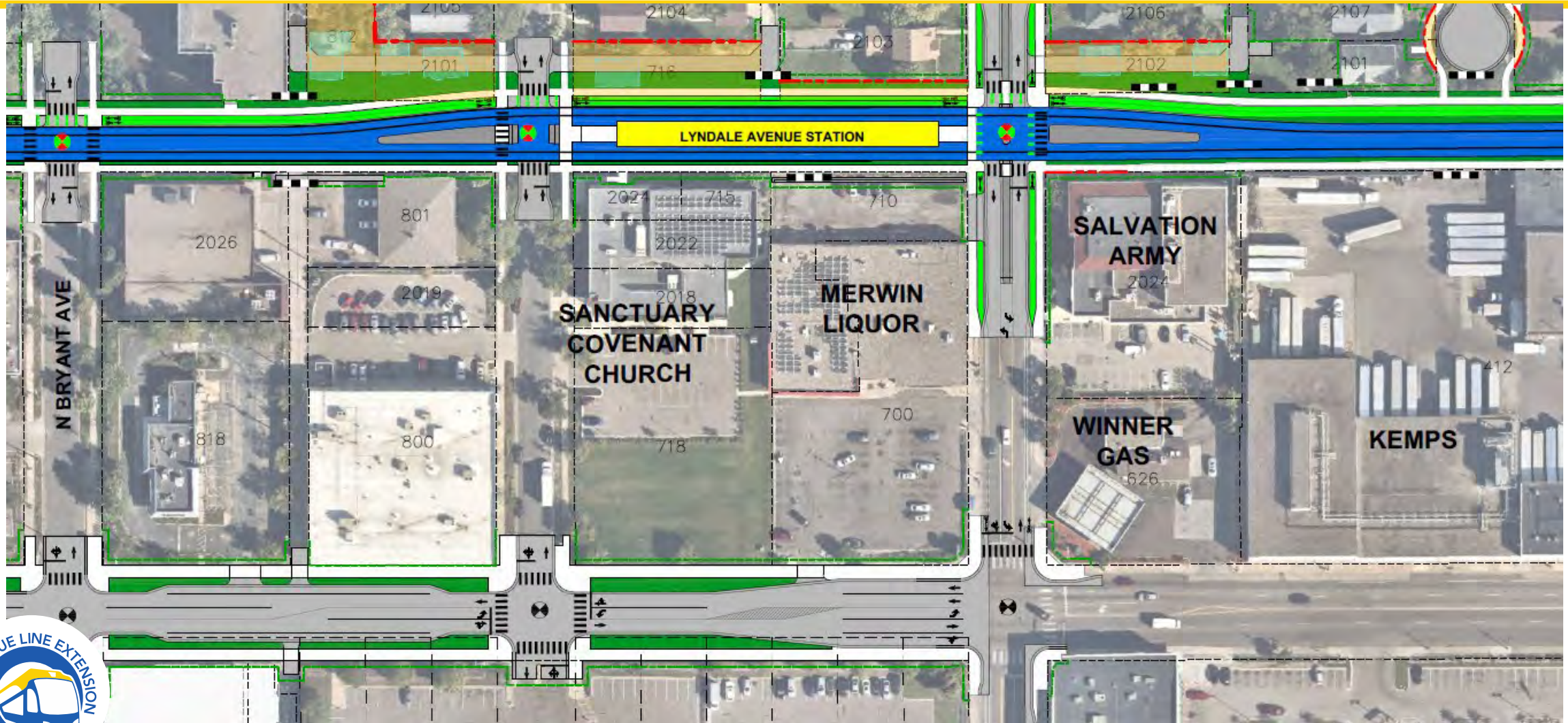
- Reduces direct property and business impacts
- Creates new connection across I-94 for pedestrian and bicyclists
- Creates opportunity for green infrastructure on 21st Ave
- Also includes improvements to West Broadway infrastructure



Station at James Avenue



Station at Lyndale Avenue



Parking

- With LRT on 21st Ave, road improvements are still planned for West Broadway and includes on-street parking between Irving Ave and Lyndale Ave
- In coordination with project partners, staff are taking steps to understand parking needs and potential mitigation strategies for parking around the Penn Ave area
 - City will need to approve final plans



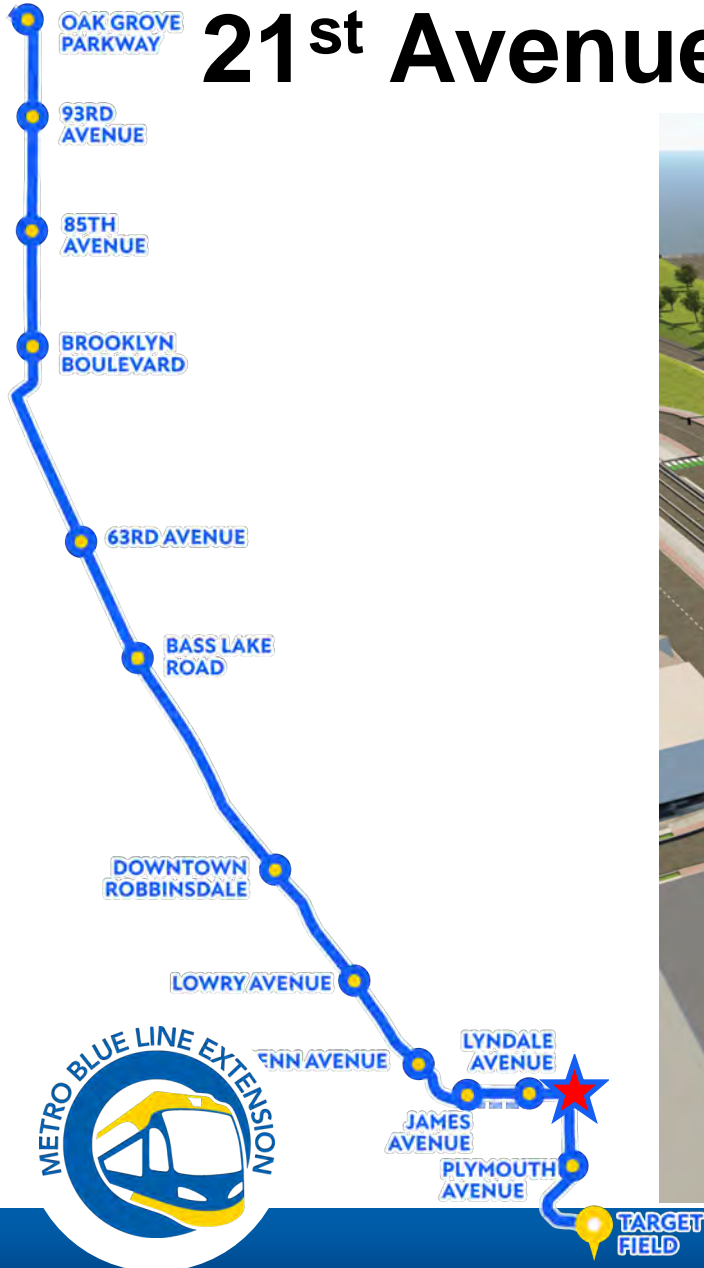
West Broadway Potential Improvements



21st Avenue North, looking West



21st Avenue to Washington Ave Bridge over I-94



INCLUDES BIKE AND PED CONNECTION

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

DRAFT CONCEPT

LYNDALE AVE STATION



21st Ave N

New connection for bikes and pedestrians

West Broadway




Cross I-94 on an extension of 21st Avenue

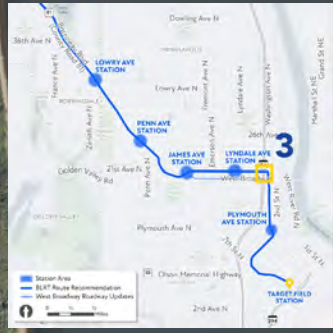
Lyndale Ave N

2nd St N

17th Ave N

West River Rd N

-  Station Area
-  BLRT Route Recommendation
-  West Broadway Roadway Updates



21st Avenue Bridge



Design Charette for Lyndale Avenue Station by JXTA Youth Apprentices



JXTA, October 28, 2023



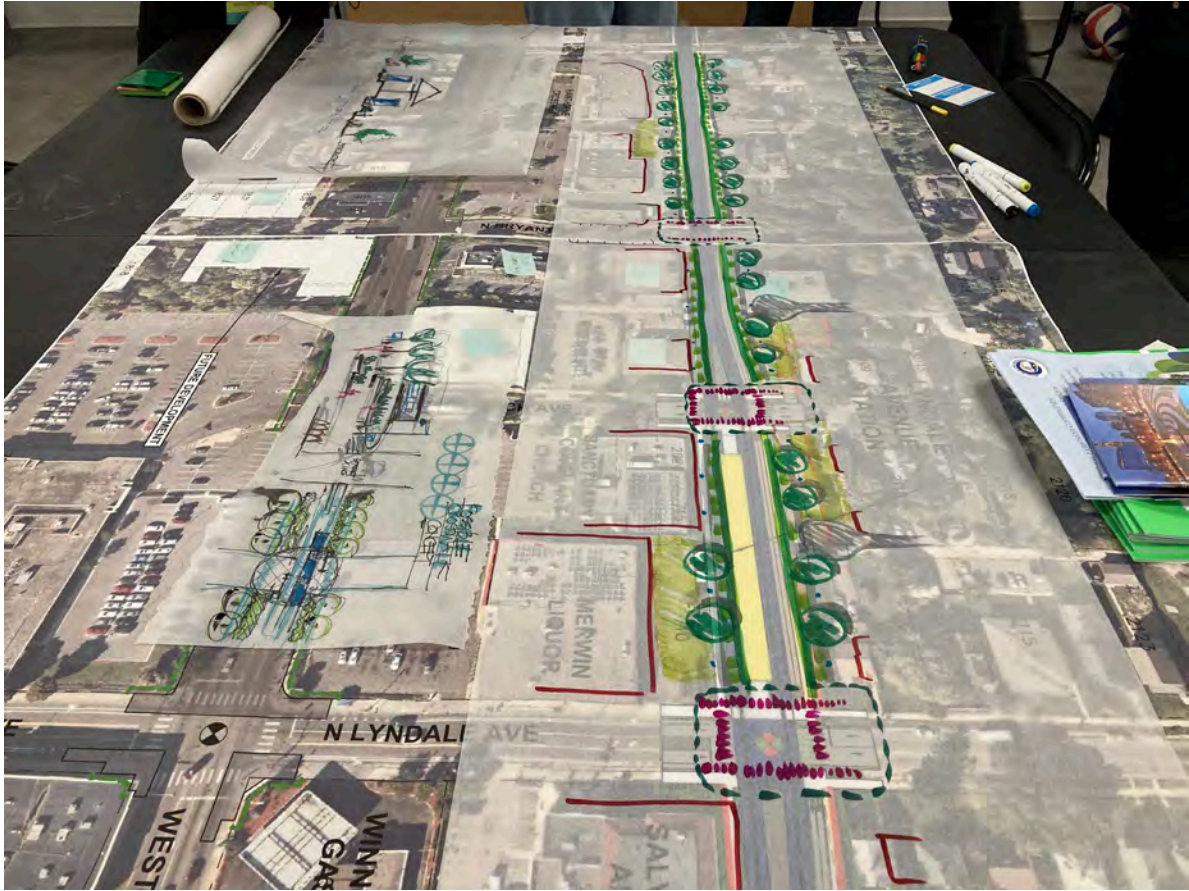
Lyndale Avenue Station Concept, October 28, 2023



Design Charette for Lyndale Avenue Station by JXTA Youth Apprentices Cont.



West Broadway & 21st Avenue as a corridor, October 28, 2023

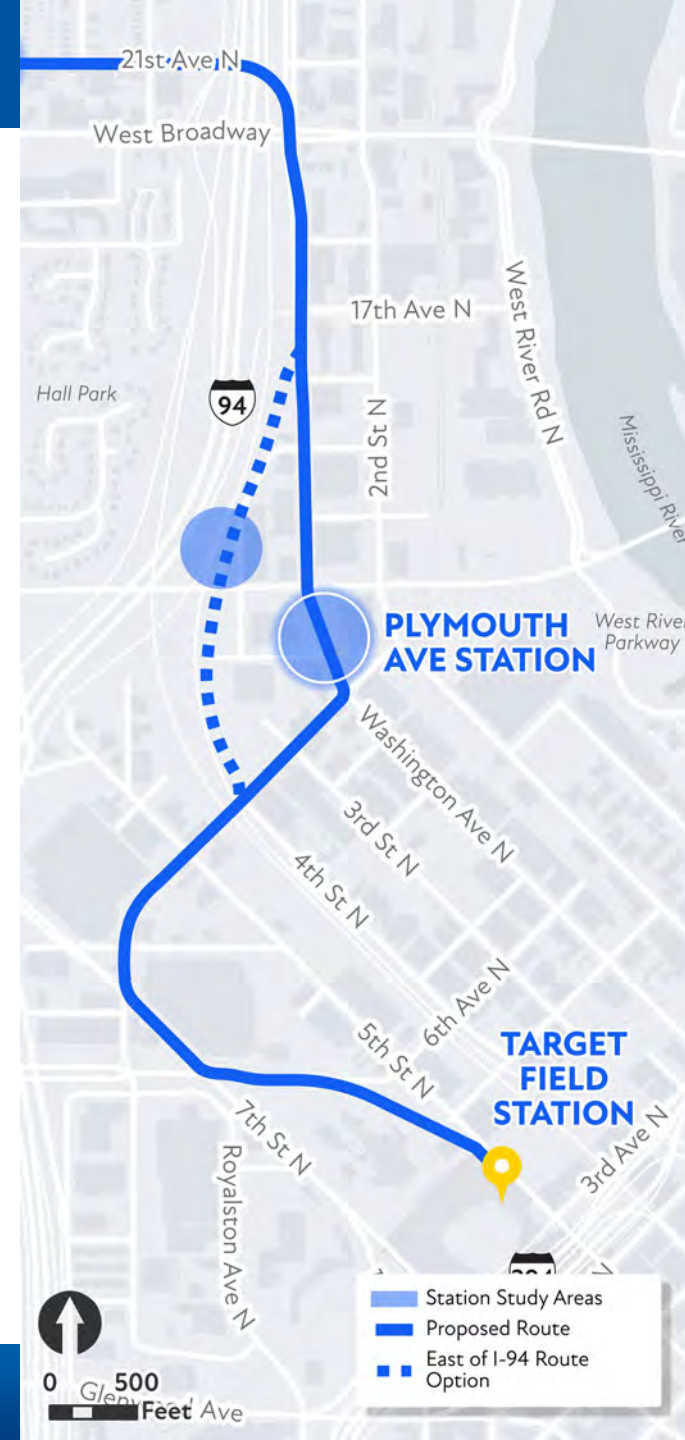
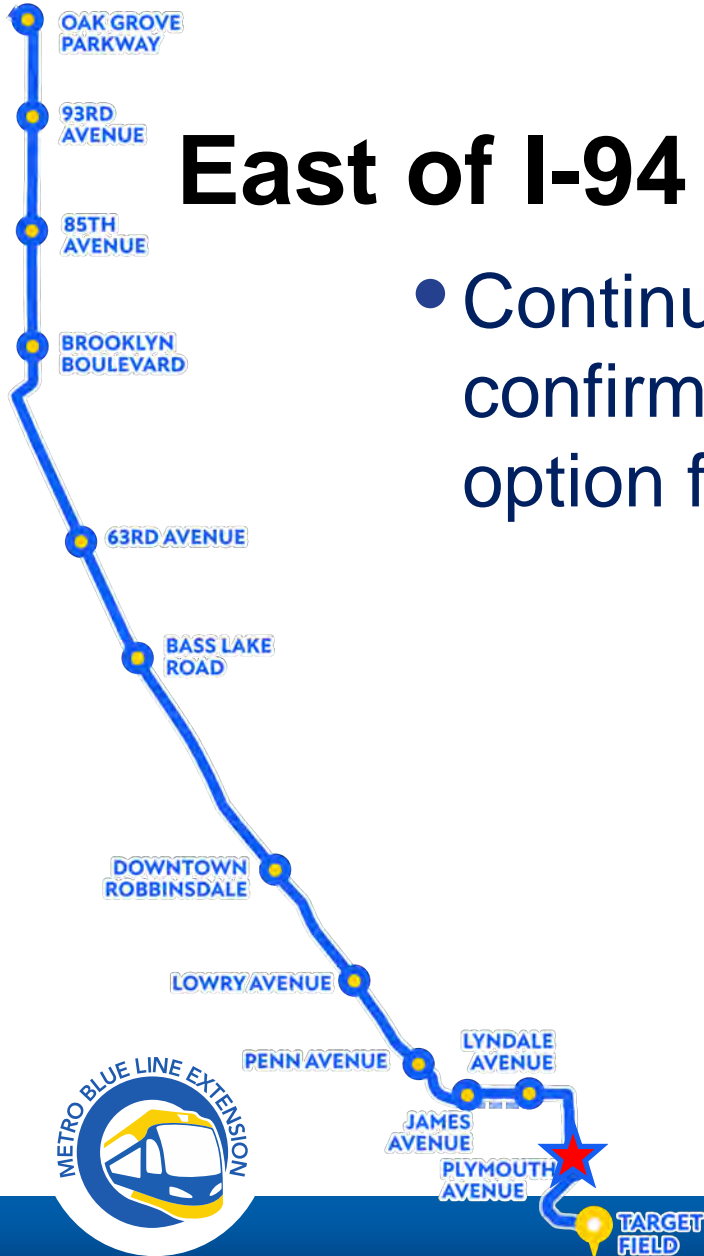


21st Avenue Concept, October 28, 2023



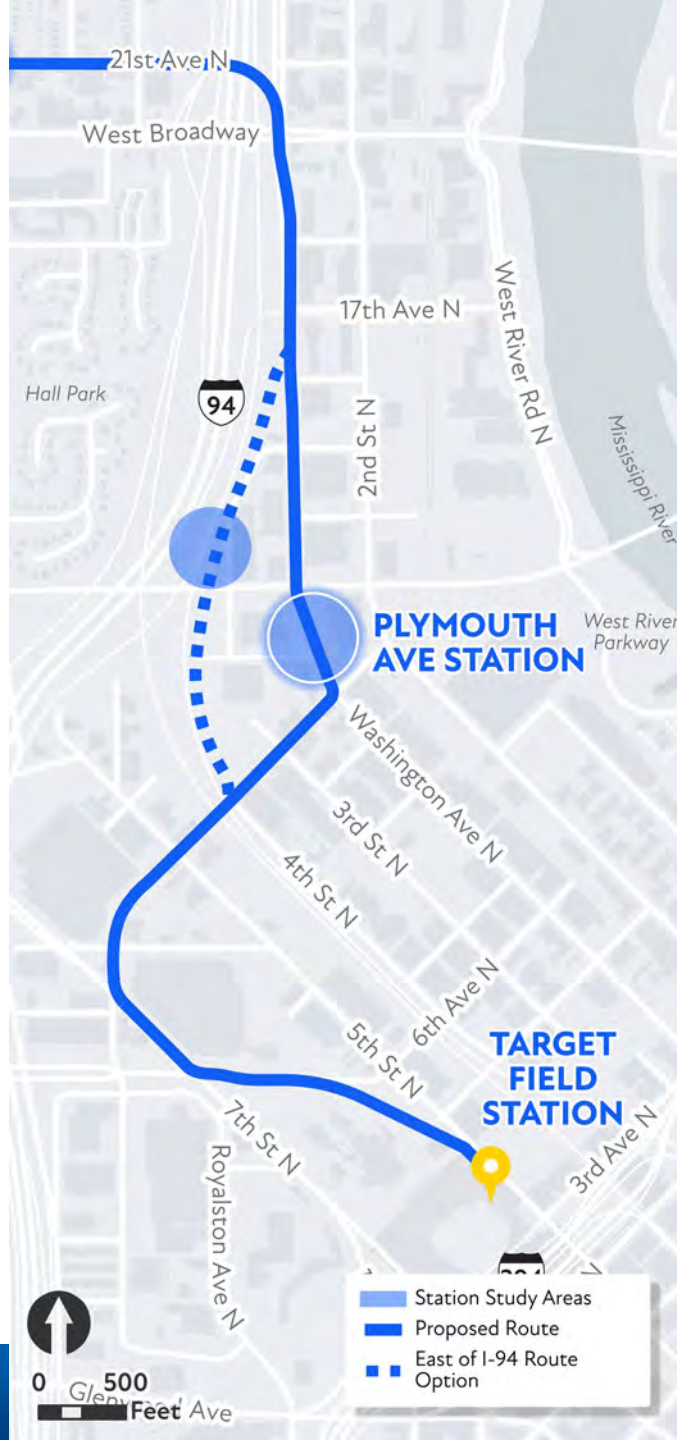
East of I-94 Track Alignment

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



Improved East of I-94 Track Alignment (Solid Line)

- Alignment: 10th to Washington
- Leverages existing transit services that exists W of 94
- Benefits
 - Better station location (visibility, accessibility, serves land uses/potential)
 - No impact to existing I-94 infrastructure
 - Alternatives that enhance bike and pedestrian infrastructure
 - Less building impacts

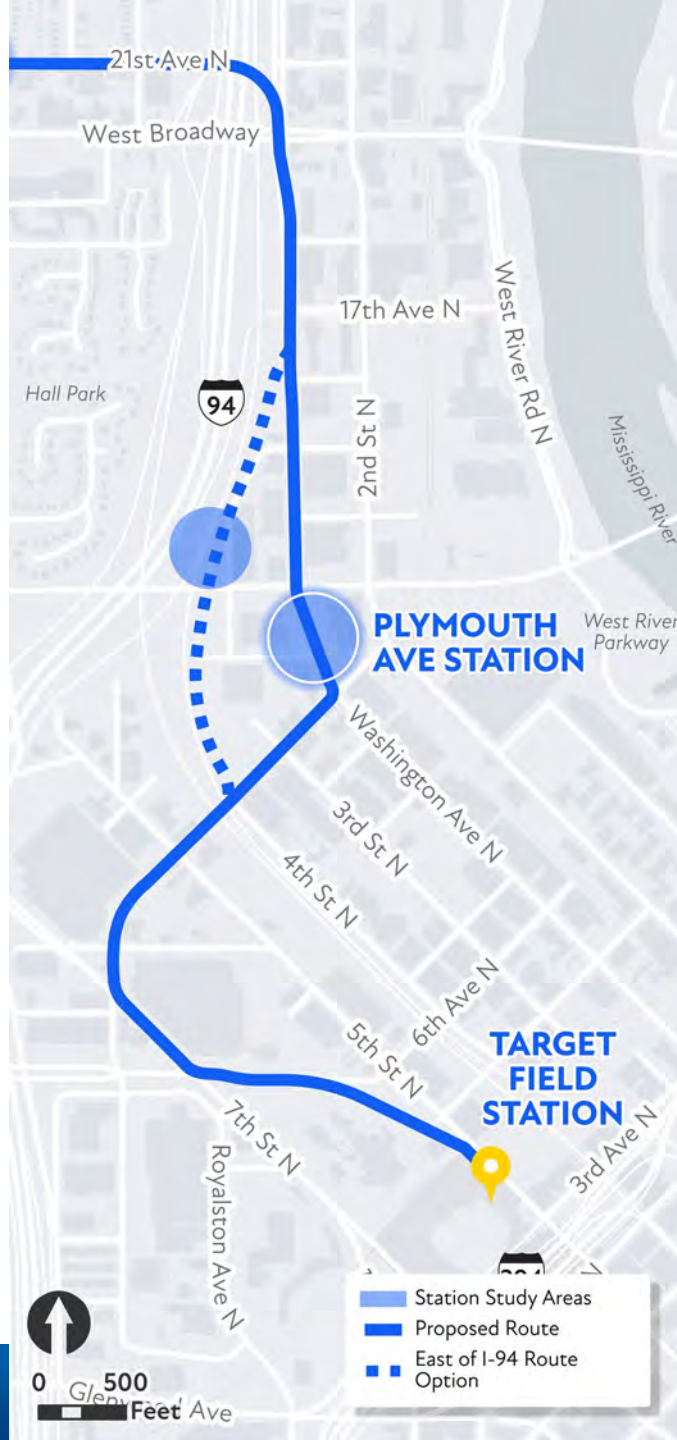


0 500
Feet Ave

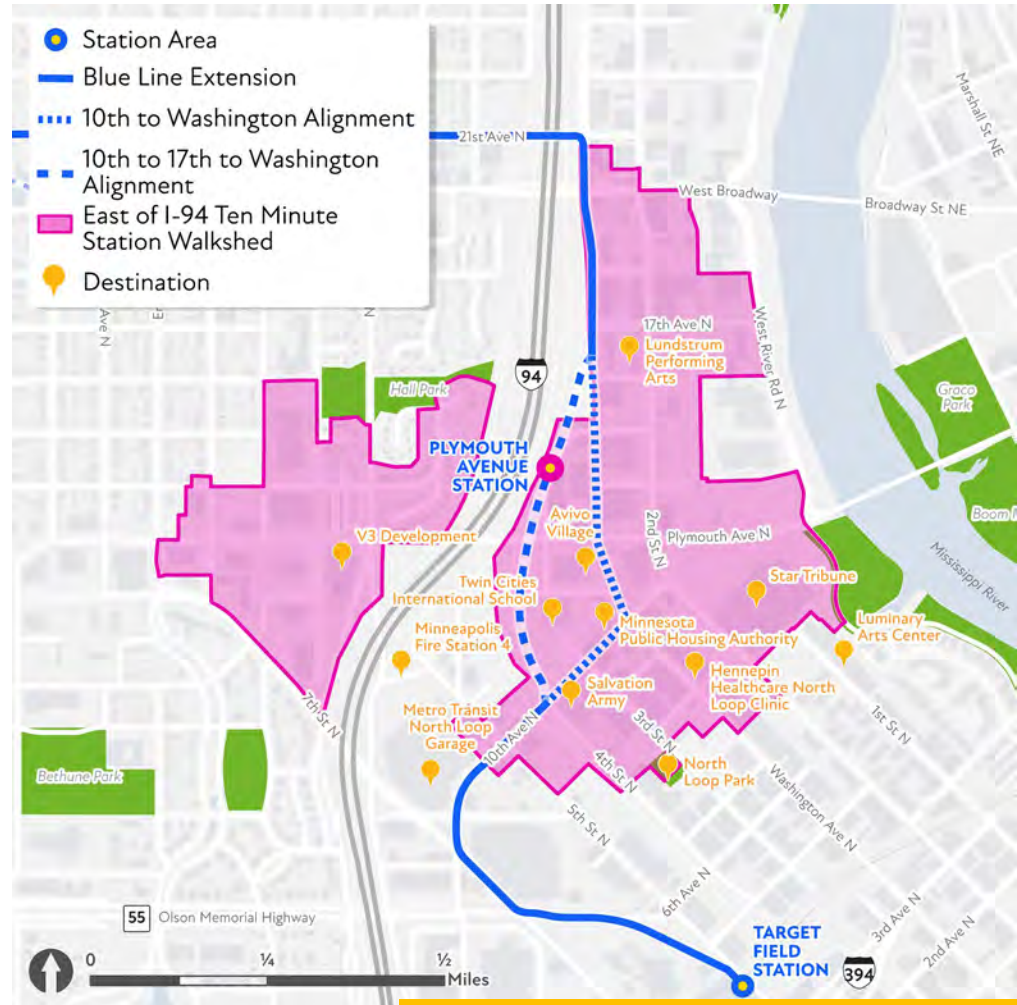
- Station Study Areas
- Proposed Route
- East of I-94 Route Option

Working Design Challenges

- Changes in access and traffic circulation
 - Local traffic redistribution
 - New routes to key destinations like farmer's market, I-94
 - Maintaining access to all properties with access off 10th
- Managing the right-of-way width (modal choices in limited right-of-way)
- Environmental analysis
- Managing existing and proposed utilities and utility services



10-Min Walkshed at Plymouth Station



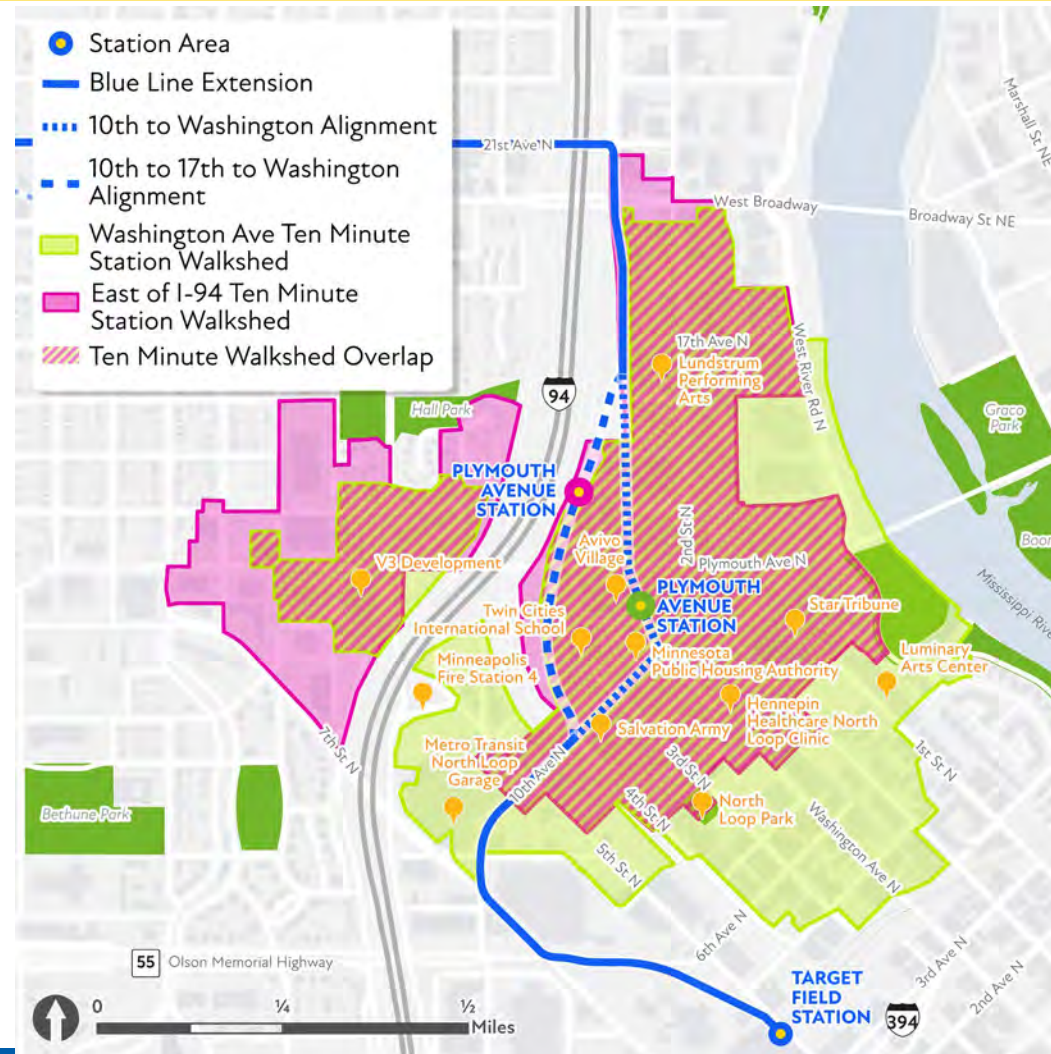
East of I-94 Station Area Map



Washington Ave Station Area Map



10-Min Walkshed at Plymouth Station

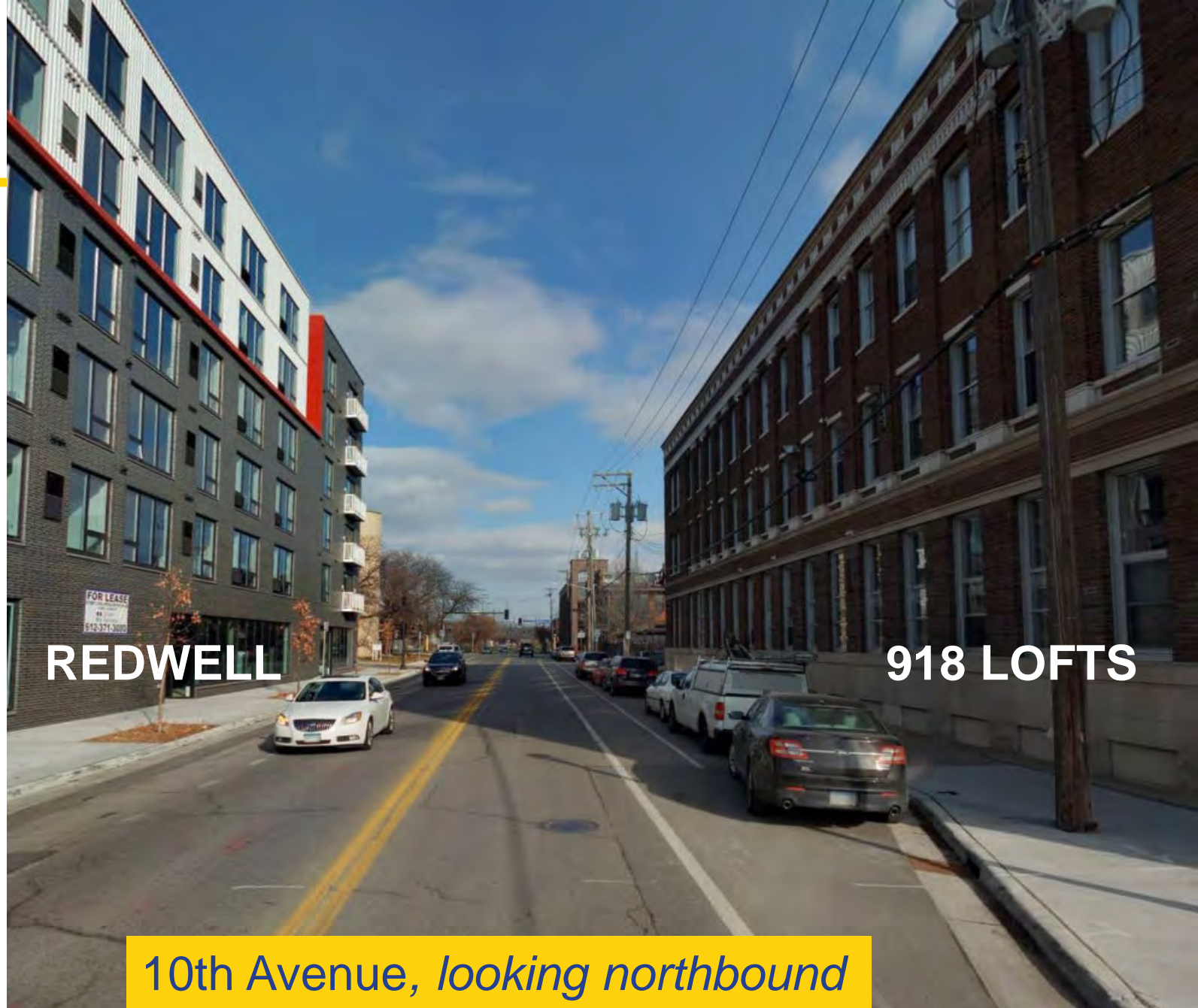


Changes to 10th Ave

Existing conditions

Roadway includes:

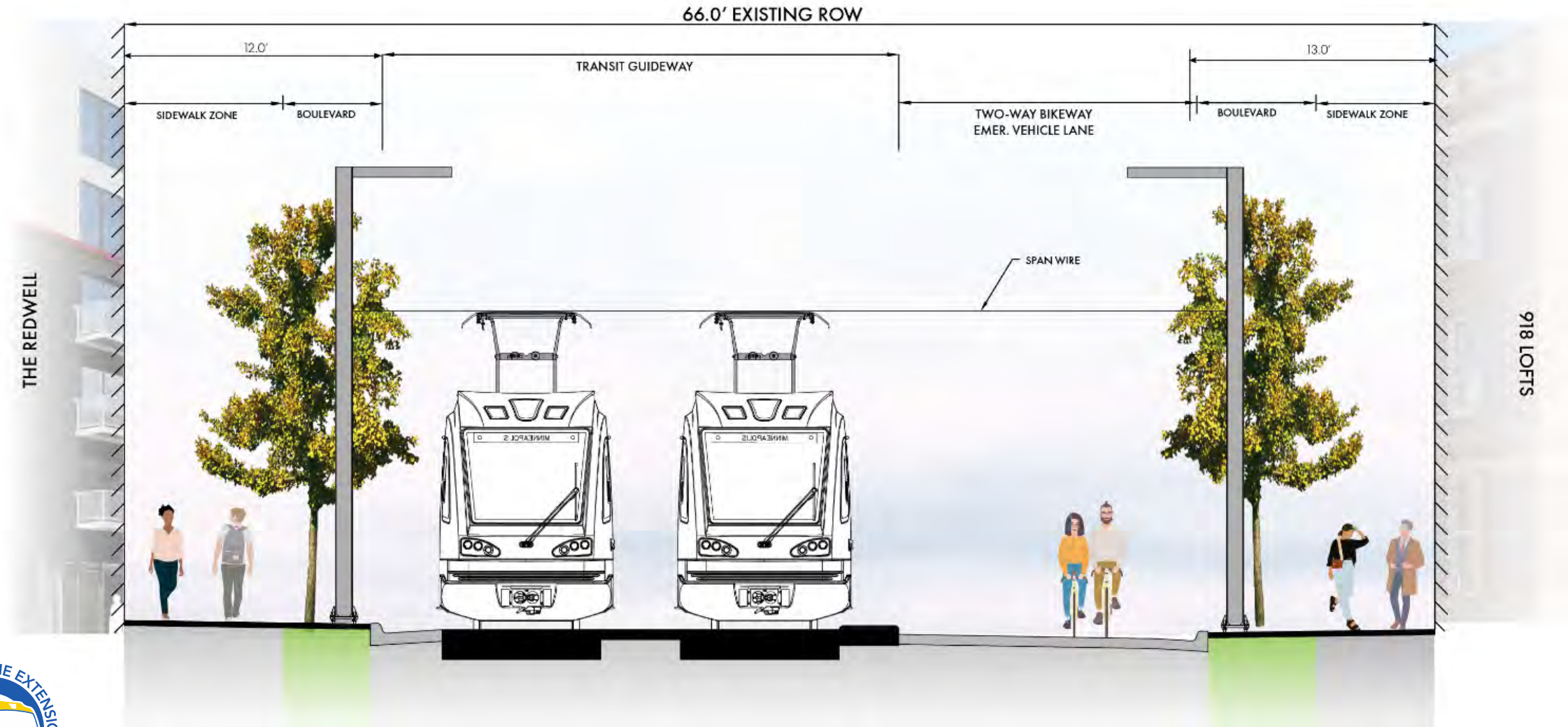
- Sidewalks
- Bike lanes
- Two-way car traffic
- Some on-street parking
- Some street trees



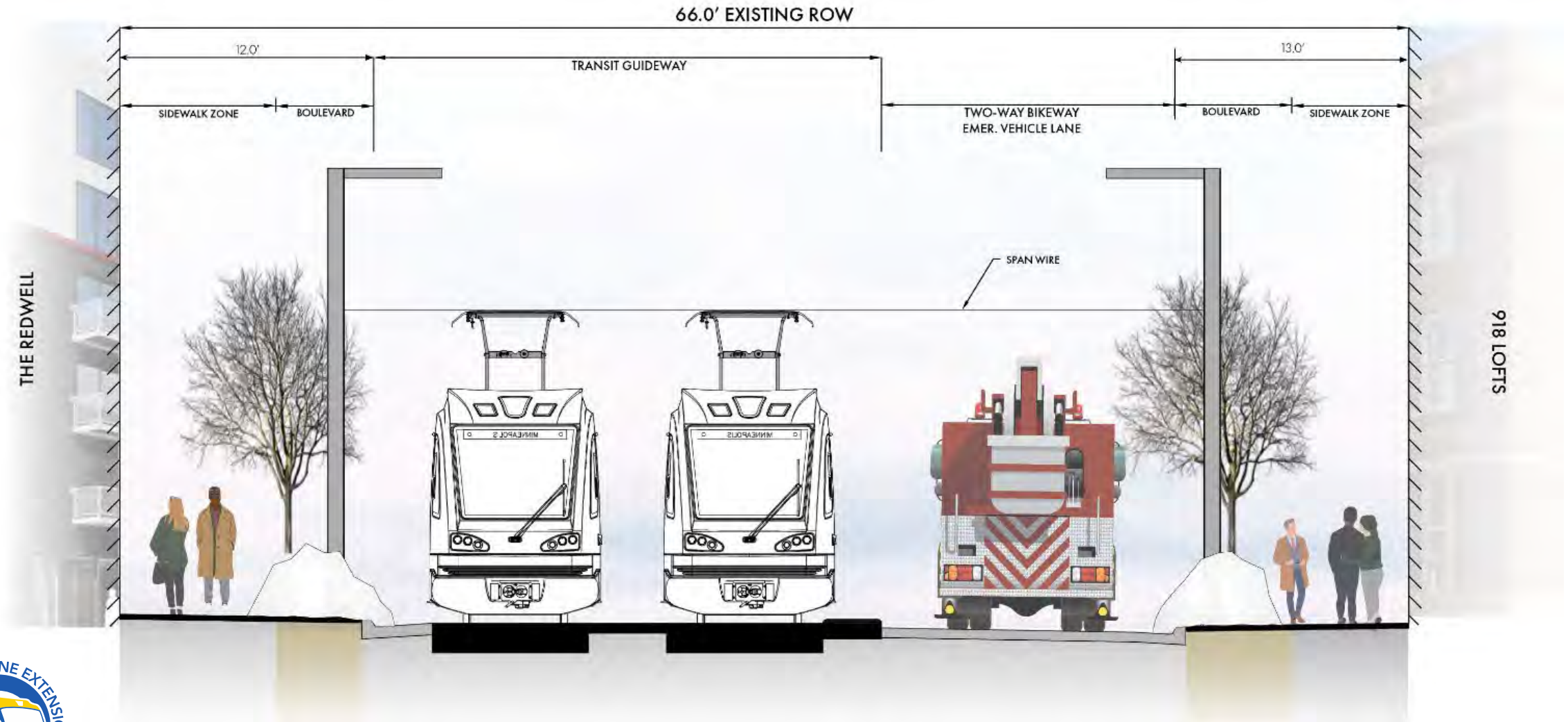
10th Avenue, *looking northbound*



10th Ave: Transit Mall Option



10th Ave: Transit Mall Option



Transit Mall Examples

- Washington Ave – U of M

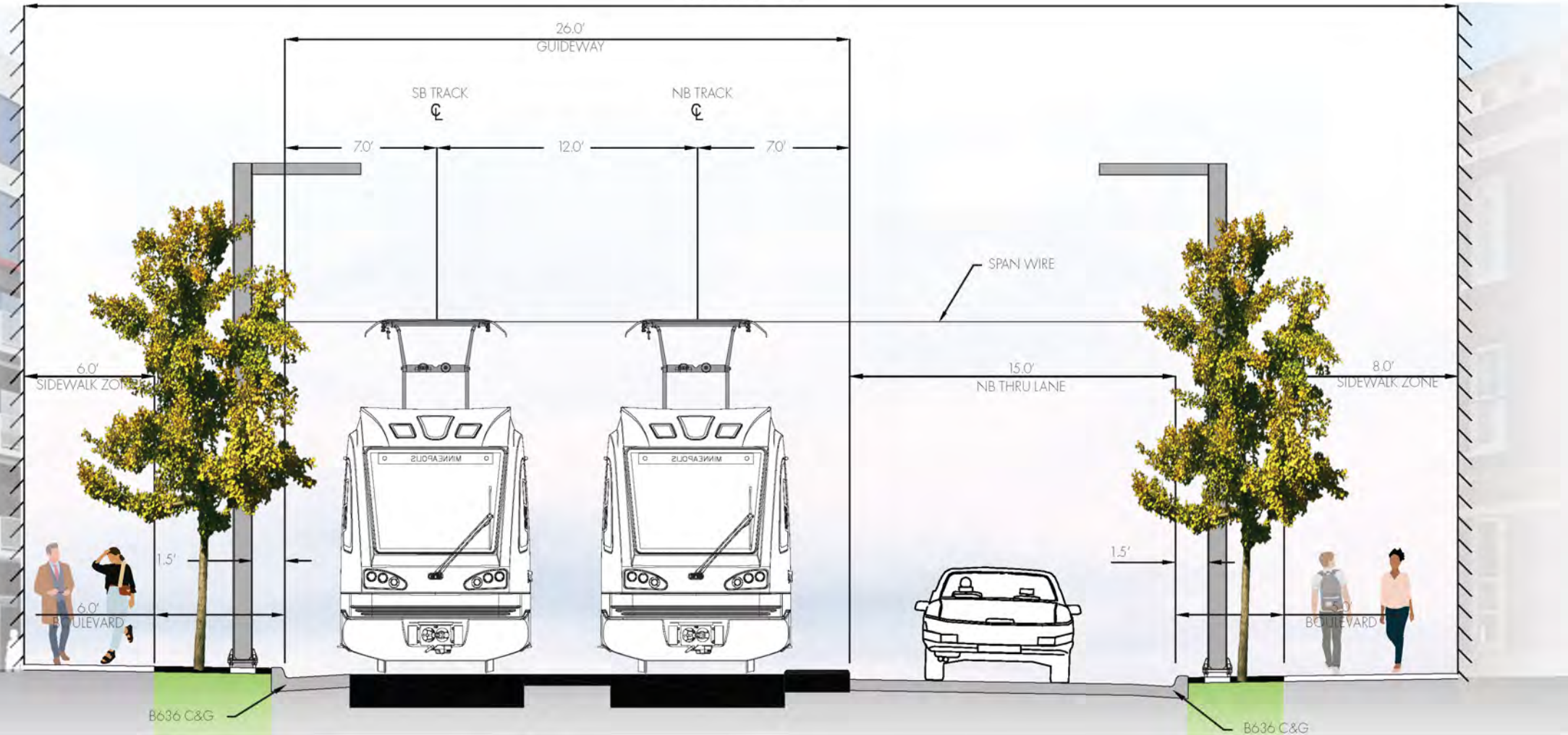


- Dallas LRT along Pacific Ave



10th Ave: One-way Northbound

66.0' EXISTING ROW



Plymouth Station on Washington Avenue, *looking South*



DRAFT CONCEPT

Engagement Feedback



Engagement Feedback Themes

- Accessibility and Connectivity
 - Desire for transit mall on 10th Ave
 - Preference for recommended route as it will serve transit-dependent communities
 - Connectivity between the suburbs and Minneapolis will benefit many
 - Connections to Fremont/Emerson, METRO D Line, and North Memorial Hospital
- Traffic
 - Light rail will improve traffic issues because it will remove cars from the road
 - Eliminating vehicle lanes on 10th Ave will contribute to traffic issues in the North Loop
- Safety and Crime
 - Pedestrian/bike safety issues exist on busy roads and light rail will contribute to the problem
 - Crime on light rail needs to be addressed before advancing routes
 - Desire for more security staff on trains and at stations and enforced fare collection
 - Light rail will bring crime to the area and negatively impact the surrounding neighborhood



Engagement Feedback Themes (cont.)

- Property Impacts
 - Train proximity and noise will disrupt residents
 - Property values will decrease
 - Loss of on-street parking near Penn Ave.
- Community Development
 - Light rail will bring more resources to the city
 - Minneapolis' transportation infrastructure is behind compared to other cities so light rail is necessary
 - Advancing anti-displacement strategies to prevent gentrification
- Other transit options
 - Preference for BRT



10/18 North Loop Community Meeting at the Neu Neu



10/30 21st Avenue Community Meeting at JXTA



Business Canvassing: Sep. 21 – Early Nov.

- Throughout the month of October, project staff have been speaking to businesses along the route to better understand business needs and operations.
- 117 completed surveys

5. Where do you currently have access to your business from? (select one for each row)

	Yes	No	N/A
Main street	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Side street (s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rear street	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. What are your typical staff hours?

7. What are your typical hours of operation, and when are you most busy?

8. How do your customers/clients get to and from your business (if known)?

9. Currently, are there barriers for your customers to access your business? Select all that apply.

- Poor lighting
- Safety
- Bad sidewalk conditions
- Public safety concerns
- Restricted parking rules
- Other (please specify)



Business Feedback

- Benefits of Blue Line Extension

- Reliable means of transportation for customers and employees, especially those that are zero/one car households
- Bring in more and/or new customers to businesses
- Redevelopment of the area
- Reduce traffic in the area
- Improve accessibility

- Concerns of Blue Line Extension

- Inconvenience during construction, what impacts will construction have on business
- Noise disruption to businesses
- Safety concerns
 - At stations and on trains
 - Traffic – pedestrians and drivers
- Loss of street parking
- Property value decreasing, property taxes increasing



Upcoming Engagement Activities

Date	Group/Event Name	Location
11/14/2023	Minneapolis Community Meeting	Virtual
11/16/2023	Elevate Hennepin Workshop	Brooklyn Park Small Business Center 7970 Brooklyn Boulevard
12/7/2023	Elevate Hennepin Workshop	Virtual



Engagement Through Partnerships

Anti-displacement
Work Group



Elevate
Hennepin



Community
Cohorts



Cultivate Arts



Elevate Hennepin

- Hennepin County's business support program Elevate Hennepin is reaching out to businesses in the corridor to help them navigate change and prepare for opportunities of light rail.
- Workshop topics:
 - Marketing: October 5
 - Business technology: October 26
 - Business finance: November 16 - *upcoming*
 - Legal services for business: December 7 - *upcoming*



Cultivate Arts

- 10 artists have been selected for Aug-Dec events in 2023
- 16 events to date and more being added in Nov/Dec

2023 goals:

- ☑ Inform and consult community on Metro Blue Line Extension current planning efforts.
- ☑ Connect cities, stakeholders, and artists to opportunities to accelerate a corridor-wide creative economy recognizing arts and cultural assets as critical economic drivers.
- ☑ Build local artist capacity for ongoing participation in arts engagement, public planning, and the creative economy.



Past Events

VIDEO: Rammy Mohamed –
9/17 Evolve Fashion Show

Geno Okok – 9/16 Open Streets
West Broadway



Jerrelle Barton – 9/16 Open
Streets West Broadway



Upcoming Cultivate Events

Date	Location	City
November 11	Sofia: Archives for Me and You – Oral History Workshop	Minneapolis
November 13	Jarrelle: North Hennepin Community College	Brooklyn Park
December 2	Sofia: Archives for Me and You – Zine Making Workshop	Minneapolis
December 14	Harper: Drawing in Community	Crystal



Anti-Displacement Work Group Update



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

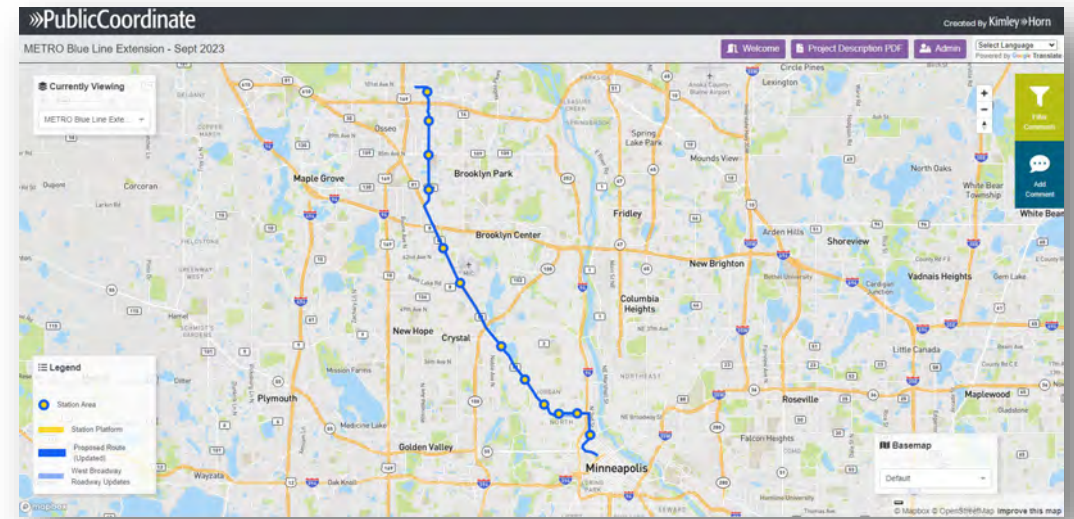


Illustrations by
Cori Nakamura Lin



How to share feedback

- Here tonight!
- Interactive map: bluelineext.org
- Survey: yourblueline.org



Your Blue Line Extension

This is your Blue Line

What's your vision for light rail in your community? How will you use it? What sort of investments do you want to see near stations? Explore the site and lend your voice.

Help Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council and community partners as we all work to extend Blue Line Light Rail Transit to North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park.

Sign up + Speak up!



Stay Connected

- **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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