



# Blue Line Extension Townhall Meetings: March 25/30, 2021



Brooklyn Park | Crystal | Robbinsdale | Golden Valley | Minneapolis



# Today's Topics

- Timeline
- Route Options
- Discussion

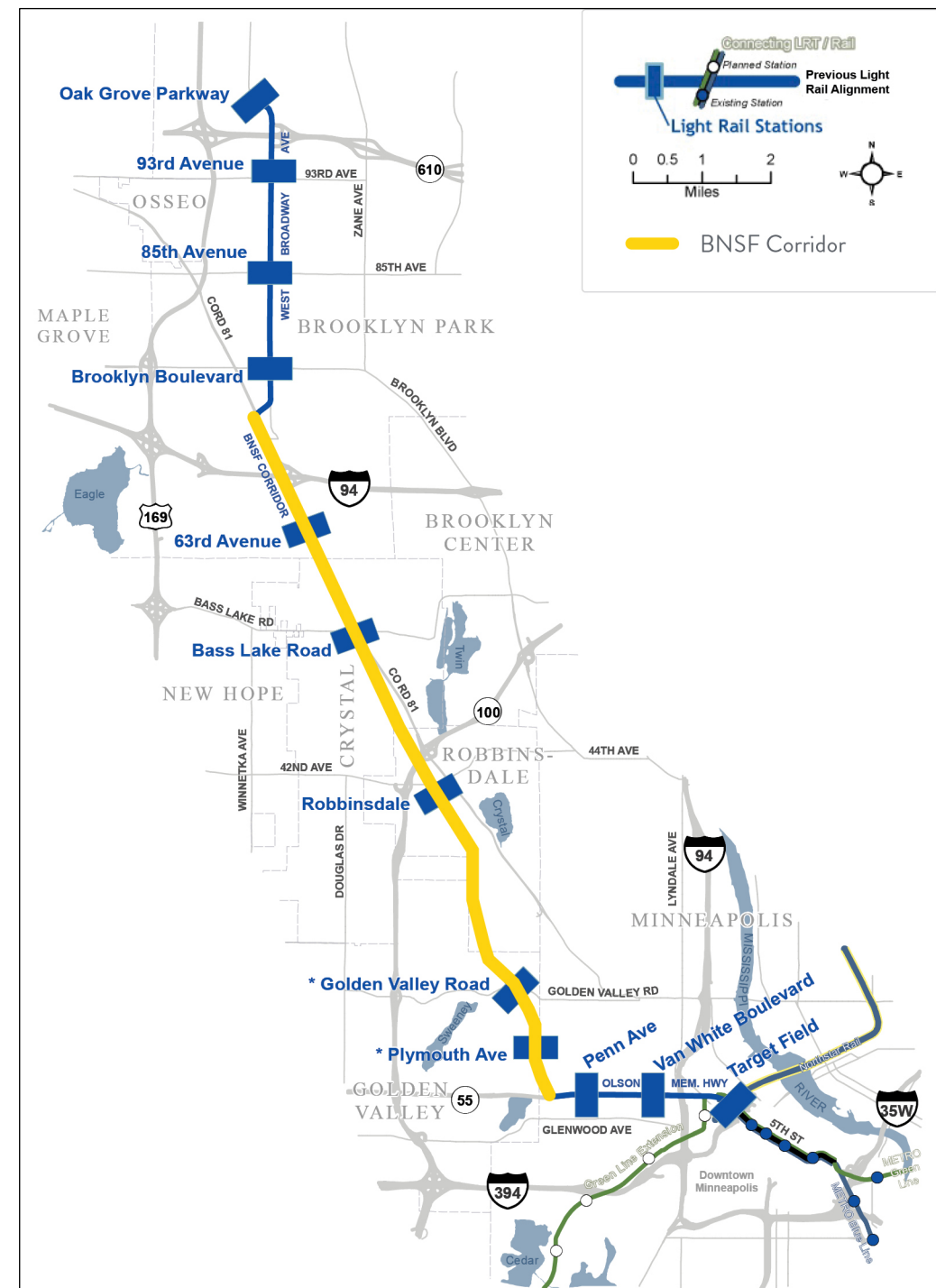


# 2021 Timeline



# Project Transition

- August 2020: After a multi-year effort to negotiate with BNSF that included many levels of government and offers including buying the corridor, it was time to move the project forward



# Alignment Principles

- Meet Federal Transit Administration New Starts criteria
  - Maintain BLRT Purpose and Need
  - Maintain mode
  - Minimize travel time
  - Maximize ridership
  - Maximize community and economic development
  - Maximize project rating
  - When appropriate, pursue opportunities to serve even more people and destinations, especially areas with lower rates of car ownership/vehicular access and those with mobility challenges

# Alignment Principles

- Maintain existing alignment as much as possible
  - Maintain existing termini: Target Field Station in Minneapolis and Oak Grove Station in Brooklyn Park
  - Serve the existing corridor cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, Minneapolis, and their major destinations
- Mitigate negative impacts
  - 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

# Engagement Principles

- Meaningfully engage stakeholders
  - Honor and build on previous robust community engagement
  - Tailor engagement practices to meet the needs of the individual communities in the corridor

# Engagement Principles

- Engage, inform, and consult diverse communities to co-create project solutions that reduce disparities
  - Ensure corridor communities of all races, ethnicities, incomes and abilities are engaged so all communities and corridor cities share in growth opportunities, with an emphasis on low-income and cultural communities
  - Use community goals, priorities, and criteria for growth to inform decision-making
  - Adjust strategies and approach as needed to ensure corridor communities are fully represented in engagement efforts



# Project Goals

- Select & adopt a community supported alignment by the end of 2021
  - Evaluate route options for benefits and impacts
  - Advance conceptual engineering

# Approach & Timeline

December 2020 – March 2021

BLRT  
Project  
Principles



Develop  
Initial Route  
Modifications



We are  
Here

Evaluation  
Based  
on Initial  
Screening  
Criteria and  
Community  
Feedback



Late Spring – Summer 2021

Refine Route  
Modifications



Evaluate  
Based on  
Project Goals,  
Objectives,  
and Evaluation  
Criteria



Winter 2021

Route  
Modifications  
Recommended  
for Evaluation  
in EIS



**TIER 1: Qualitative  
Evaluation Grounded in  
Project Purpose and Need**

**TIER 2: Quantitative  
Evaluation**

# 2021 Milestones

## Tier 1: Initial Screening

- Routes options released for analysis and discussion

## Tier 2: Route Evaluation

- Draft report with routes evaluated against project criteria with additional engineering work, and preliminary station locations released for comments
- Final draft report with recommended route released for comments

## Recommended route

- Route advances for further engineering and environmental work in 2022

# 2021 Activities and Beyond

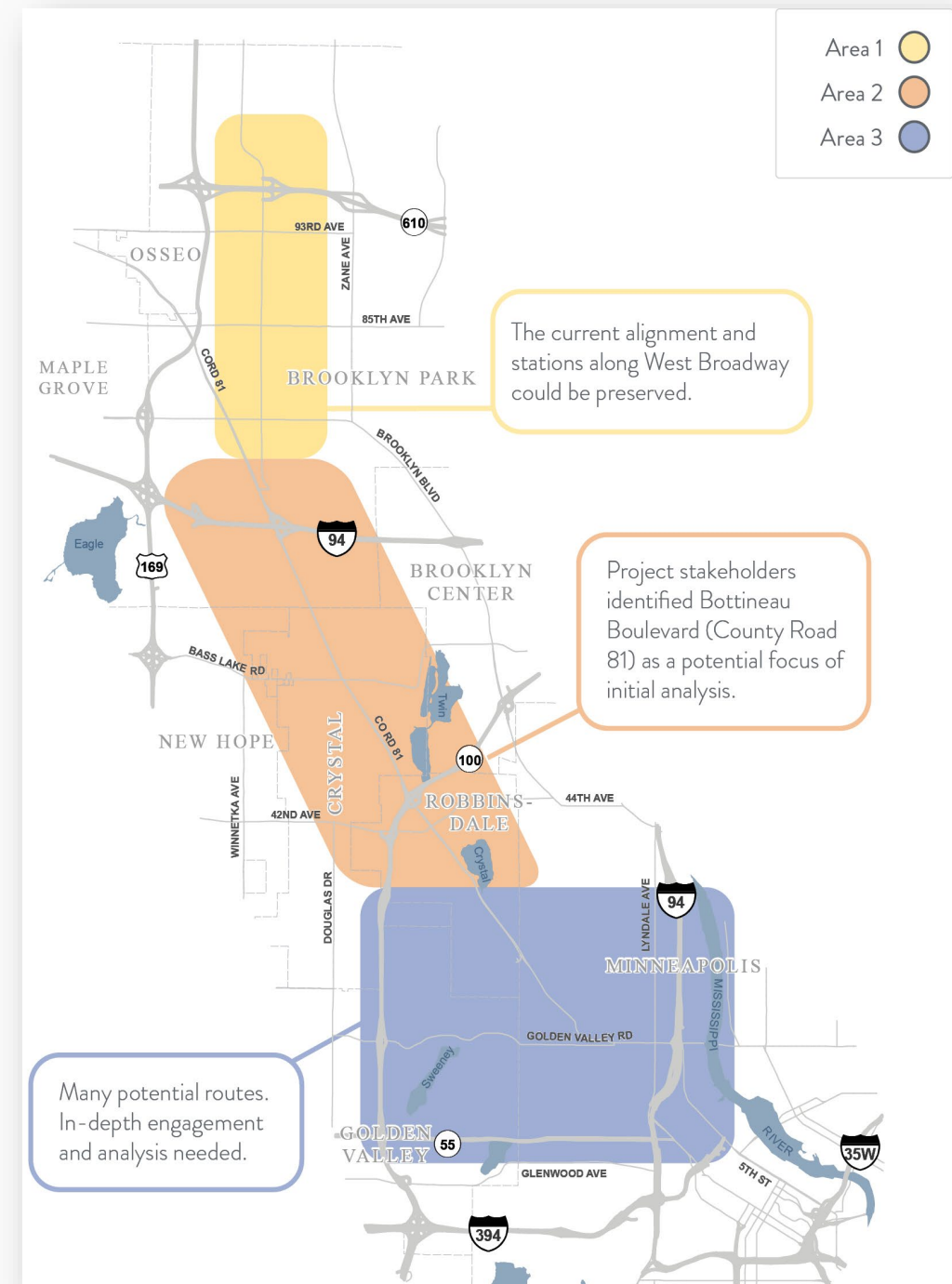
- End of 2021: Adopt a community supported route
  - Conceptual engineering for new route options, including station locations
  - Evaluation of project benefits and impacts
  - Identify a community supported route
  - Identify environmental path moving forward
- Beyond 2021
  - Begin environmental analysis
  - Municipal Consent
  - Develop construction ready engineering plans & design details

# Initial Route Identification

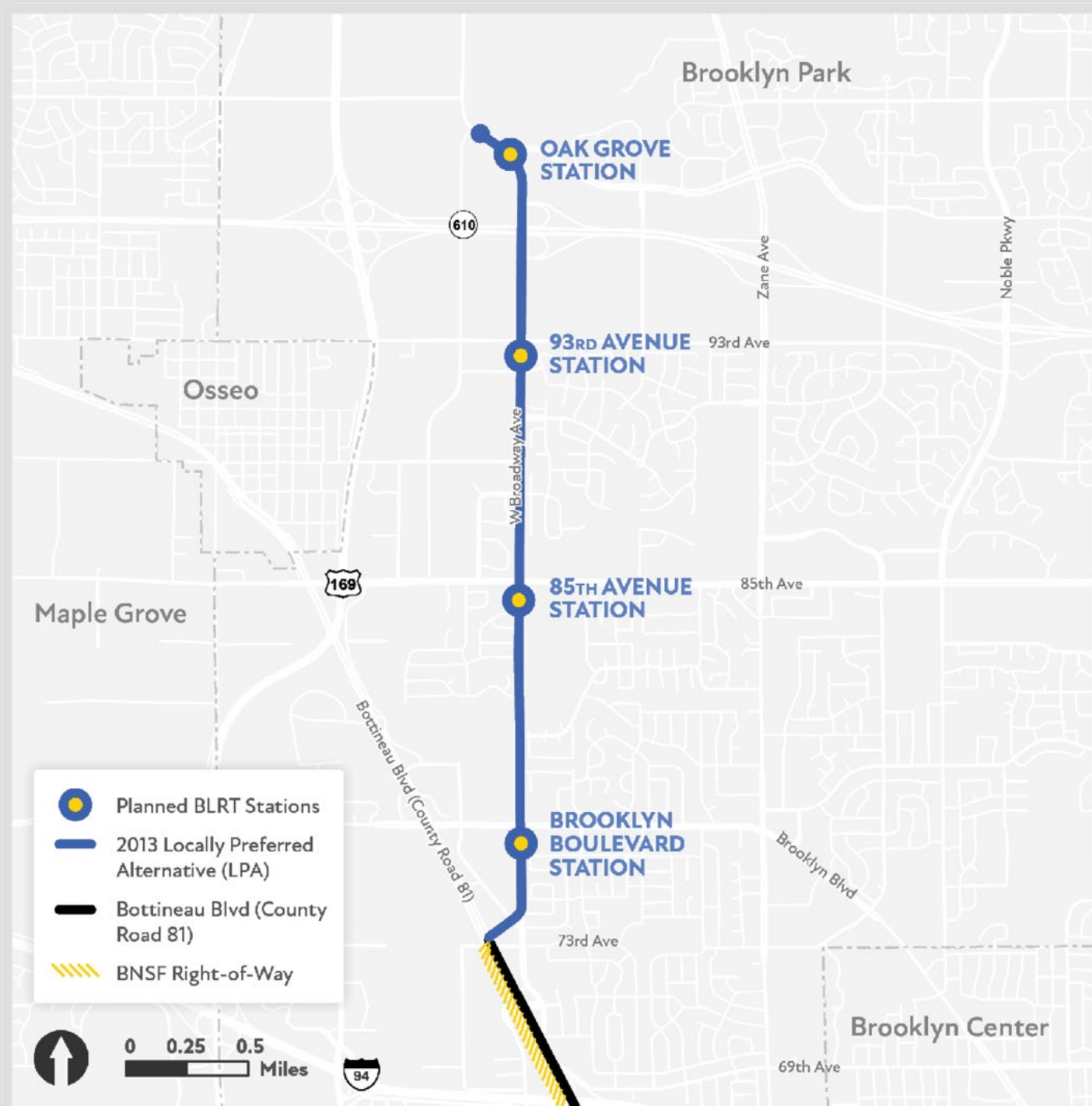


# Project Areas

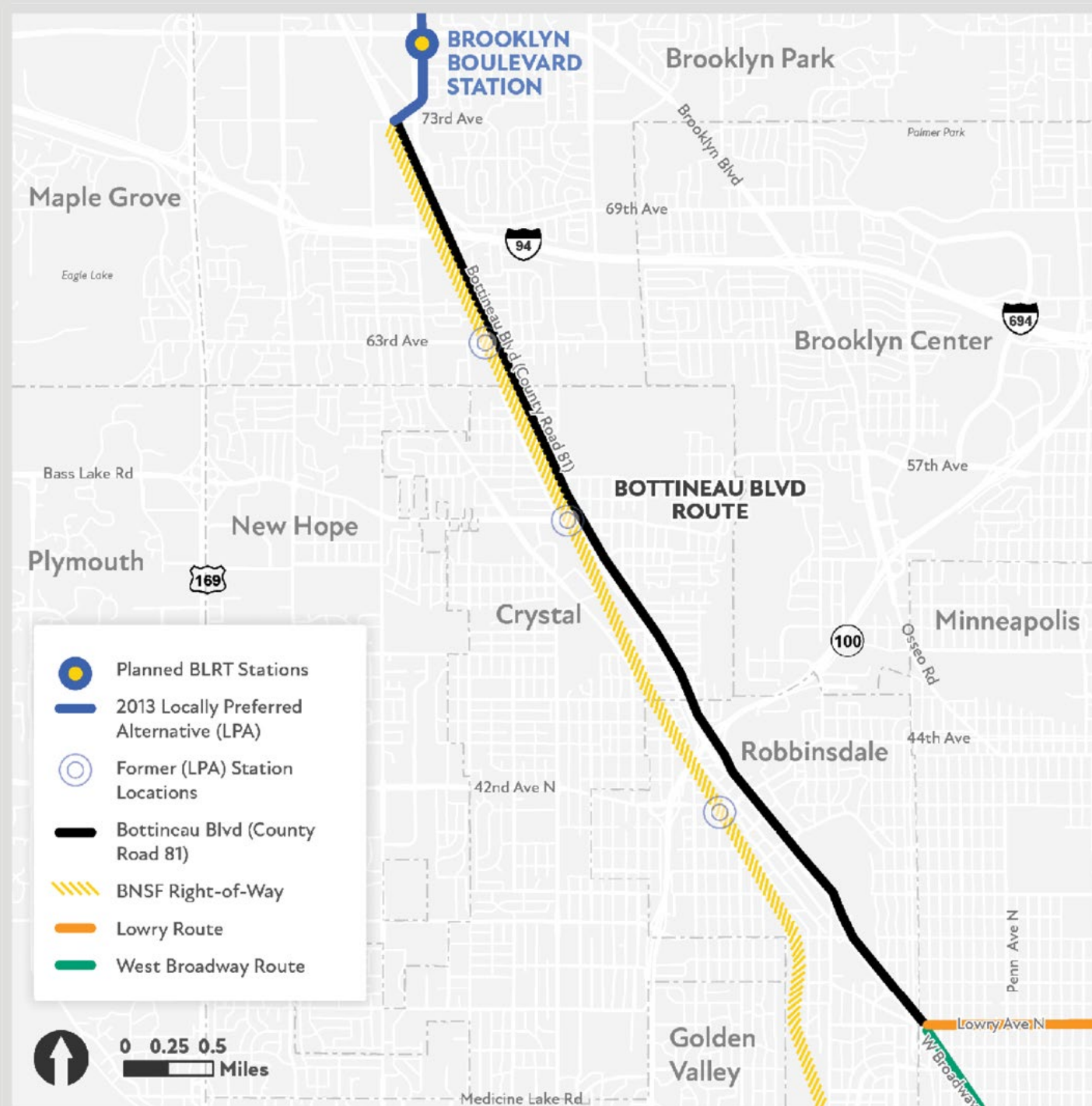
- Project route options
  - Confirmation of route options for Areas 1 & 2
  - Preliminary options for Area 3
- Options based on:
  - Adopted Project Principles
  - Conceptual review of LRT right of way and operational needs
  - Applicable previous work
  - Community feedback on key destinations and connections



# Area 1



# Area 2





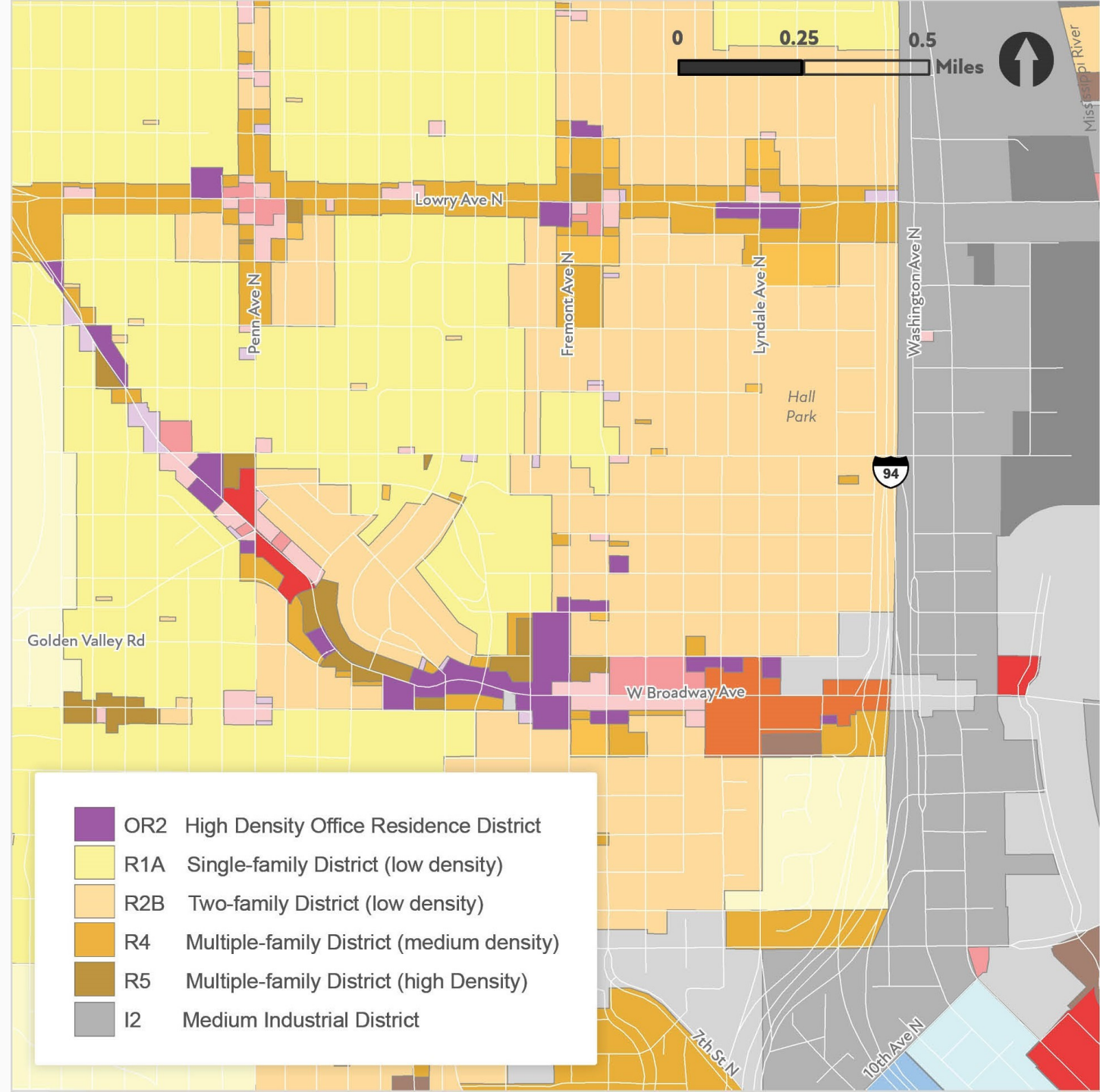
# Area 3 Considerations: Public Right of Way

- To fit the LRT guideway, sidewalks, and two travel lanes about 75 feet of right of way is needed
- When additional right of way is available other elements can be included: boulevards, bikeways or street parking



# Area 3 Considerations: Compatible Land Use

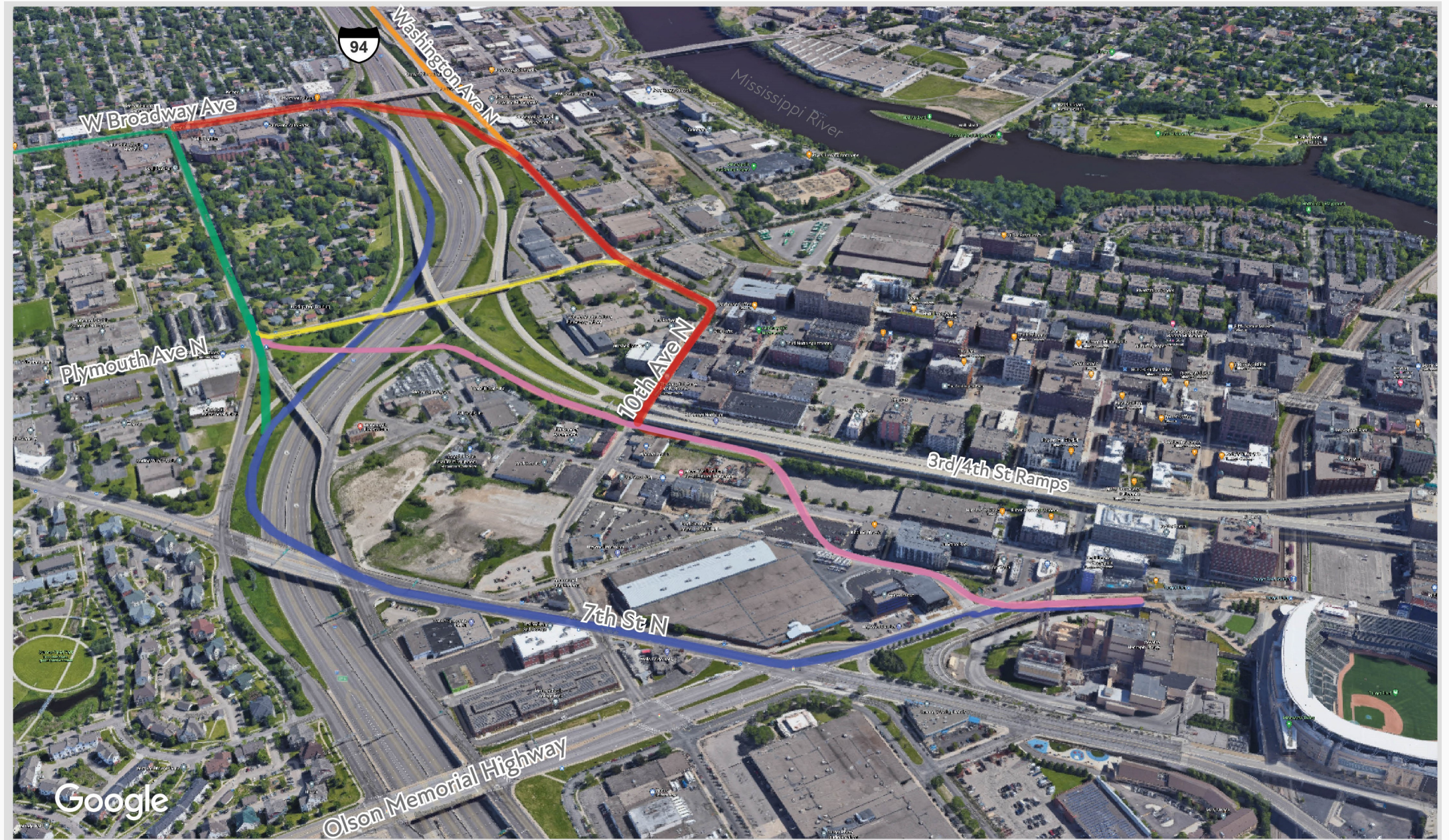
- Light rail is better suited to higher density residential and commercial areas
- Best to place routes where the LRT investment can also leverage related community benefits



# Area 3



# Area 3 Connections

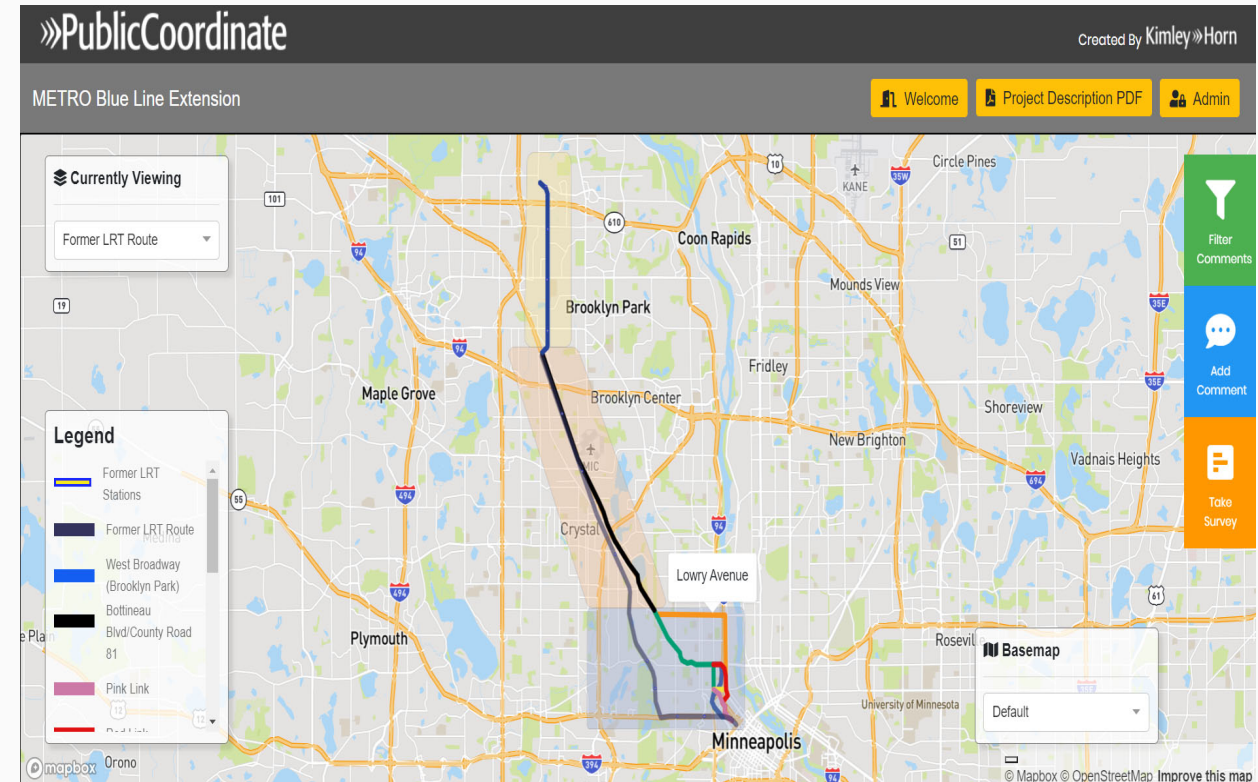


# Feedback Sought

- Begin discussion on the new options to advance
  - Validate if the options presented seem right
  - Understand what options are resonating with residents and businesses
  - Identify if anything is missing
  - What opportunities or issues does the community see right away
  - What other information is needed to support a route option
  - Begin discussion about desired station locations along new portions of the route
- Evaluation goals, which will help refine objectives and evaluation criteria to help analyze the benefits and impacts between options

# Multiple Methods to Share Feedback

- Leave comments on the interactive map
- Take a survey
- Provide general comments online or by emailing [sophia.ginis@metrotransit.org](mailto:sophia.ginis@metrotransit.org)
- Recording of tonight's meeting: [BlueLineExt.org](http://BlueLineExt.org)
- We will come to you: invite us to an event or gathering



# Next Steps: Evaluation Criteria Goals

- Improve transit access and connections to jobs and regional destinations.
- Improve frequency and reliability of transit service to communities in the corridor.
- Provide transit improvements that maximize transit benefits, while being cost competitive and economically viable.
- Support communities' development goals.
- Promote healthy communities and sound environmental practices including efforts to address climate change.
- Advance local and regional equity and work towards reducing regional racial disparities.

# Next Steps: Continue to Seek Solutions

## Project Goals, Objectives and Criteria

## Conceptual Engineering and Design

Engineering Analysis to Understand LRT &  
Roadway Configurations

Potential Station Locations

Right of Way Impacts

## Community Benefits

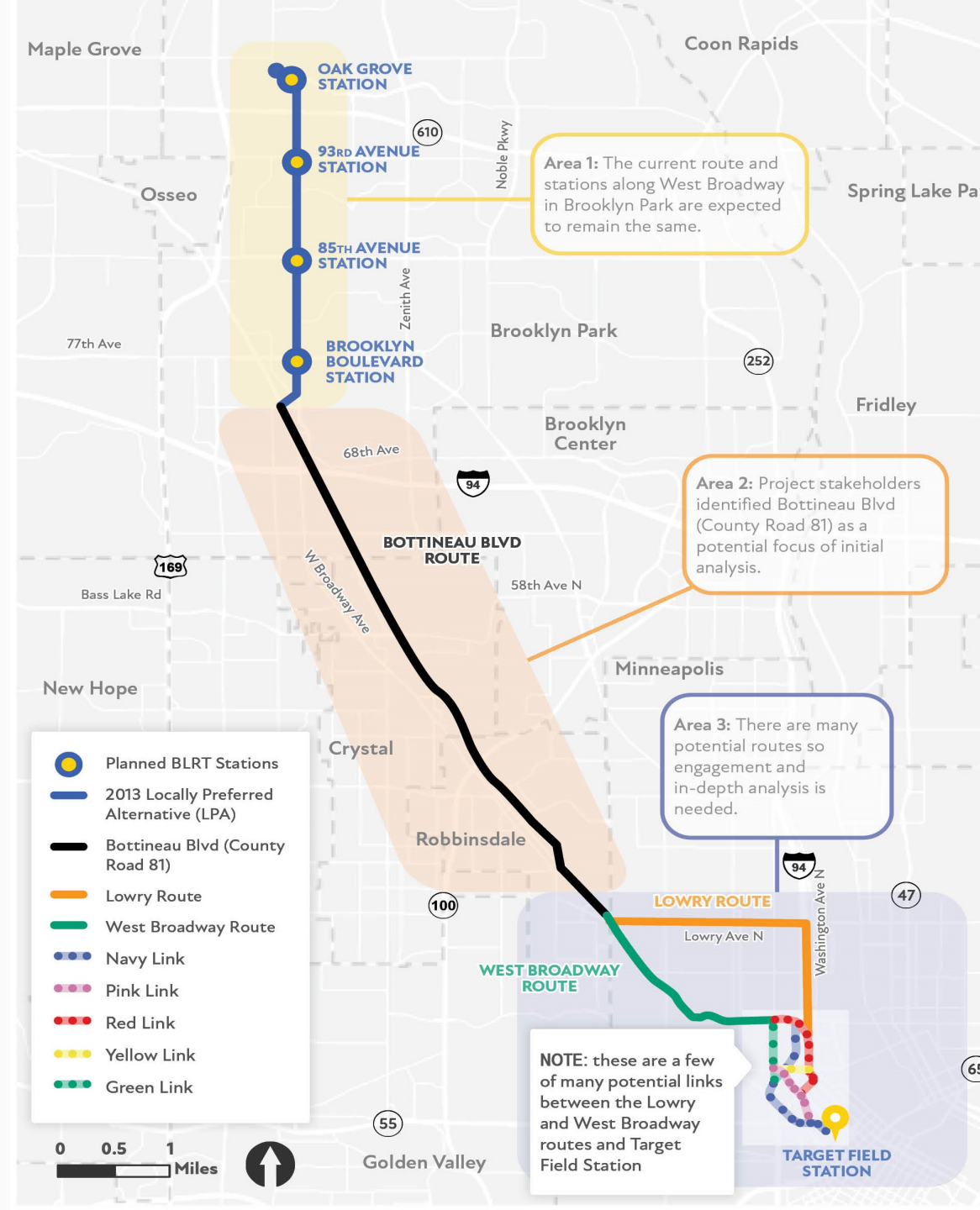
Further efforts to address anti-  
displacement, equitable development and  
community wealth building

## Previous Project Commitments

Address investments related to the  
previous alignment



# Discussion



# Stay Connected!

- Project website: [BlueLineExt.org](http://BlueLineExt.org)
  - Project news, maps, surveys, what we're hearing
  - Committee meeting materials: agenda, handouts, presentations, meeting minutes
  - Sign-up for GovDelivery project updates
  - Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation
- Follow us:
  - Twitter: [@BlueLineExt](https://twitter.com/BlueLineExt)
  - Facebook: [MetroBlueLineExtension](https://www.facebook.com/MetroBlueLineExtension)

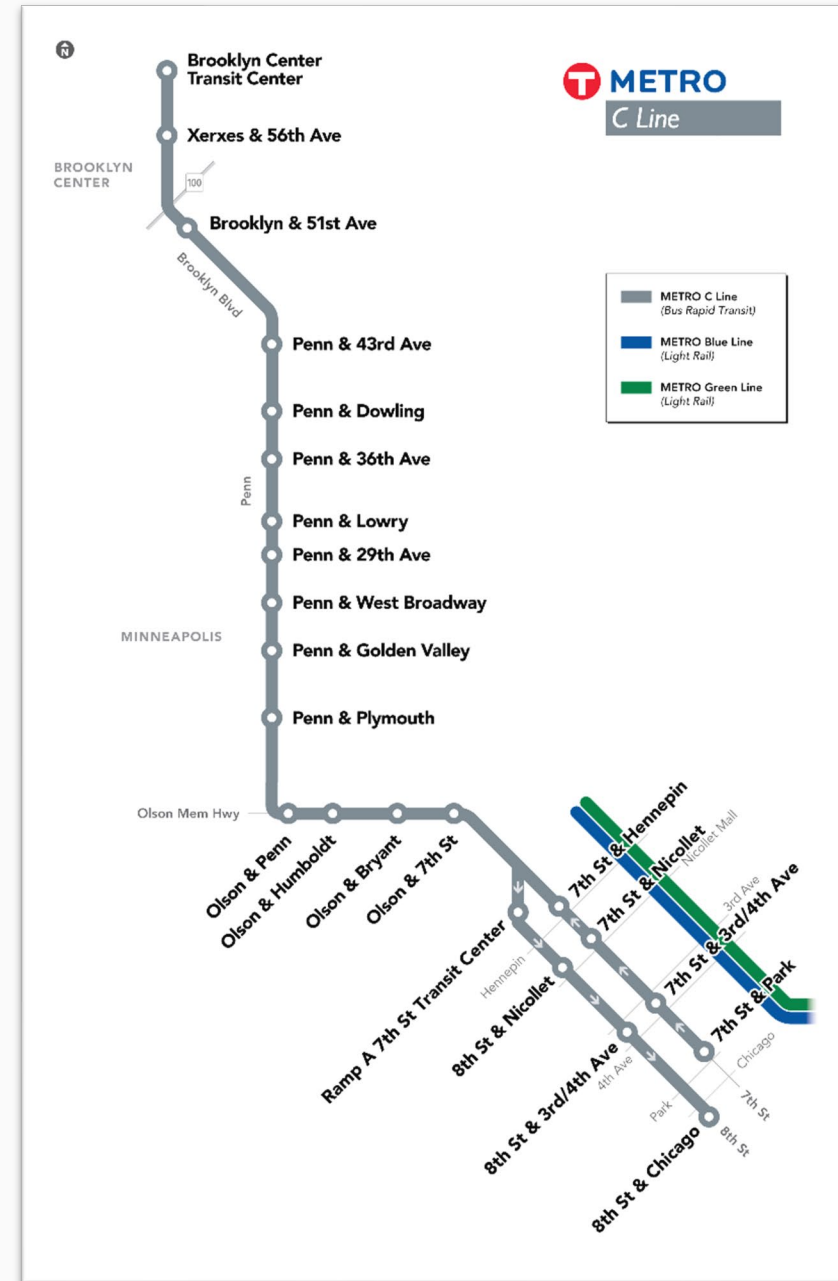


# Question Reference Slides



# Route Options: Not Recommended

- Penn & Emerson/Fremont were not recommended as they did not meet the multiple Project Principles:
  - Complement existing and planned METRO transitways
  - Minimize residential, commercial and environmental impacts
- Both roadways have narrow Right of Way
- METRO C & D Lines are a valuable part of transit network



# Route Options: Not Recommended

- Lyndale between West Broadway & Lowry
  - Narrower right of way
  - Significant residential impacts
  - Houses are closer to the sidewalk/street



# Route Options: Not Recommended

- Highway 55 to Highway 100
  - Does not serve as many riders and destinations
  - Longer route could result in increased travel time
  - Greater diversion from previous alignment
  - Very little initial support for this corridor

