WELCOME

Welcome to the

METRO Blue Line Extension

Minneapolis Workshop





PROJECT GOALS



GOAL 1

Improve transit access and connections to jobs and regional destinations



GOAL 2

Improve frequency and reliability of transit service to communities in the corridor



GOAL 3

Provide transit improvements that maximize transit benefits, while being cost competitive and economically viable



GOAL 4

Support communities' development goals



GOAL 5

Promote healthy communities and sound environmental practices including efforts to address climate change



GOAL 6

Advance local and regional equity and work towards reducing regional racial disparities

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF LIGHT RAIL AND MITIGATION OPTIONS

The list below are potential mitigation options based on the type of impact. A formal analysis of light rail impacts will be conducted as part of the environmental review process required by the Federal Transit Administration and will determine specific mitigation measures for the project.



ACCESS/DRIVEWAY CLOSURES

- Identify new driveway locations.
- Access may change to right-in/right-out.



PROPERTY IMPACTS

- The project's intent is to work within existing available public rights of way as much as possible to avoid direct impacts to homes and businesses.
- If property impacts are unavoidable, relocation advisory services and reimbursement for moving and reestablishment will be provided.



LOSS OF PARKING

- Add more parking in another location within the community and coordinate with city partners to identify suitable replacement locations for off-street parking.
- Identify parking alternatives such as shared parking, parking regulations (i.e. time limited, meters), and preferential parking for carpools/alternatively fueled vehicles for nearby streets in the area.



CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

- Work with property and business owners to coordinate access during closures, and identify dates that may reduce impacts to deliveries and operations.
- Provide advance public notice of roadway/driveway/sidewalk closures and utility shutoffs.
- Continued public communications and engagement through construction
- Minimize visual, light, dust, odor, and noise impacts to the extent practical.



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

- Narrow or reduce travel lanes to shorten pedestrian crossing distance and calm traffic.
- Improve or add new pedestrian and bike connections and crossings.
- Install fencing between light rail tracks and trail/sidewalk.
- Flashing light signals with audible warnings at crossings.



TRAFFIC CONGESTION

- Signal timing and turning movements at signalized intersections may be adjusted.
- New traffic signals could be added.
- Road/lane reconfigurations could be made to better accommodate safety and movement for all users.
- Maintain emergency vehicle access.



NOISE

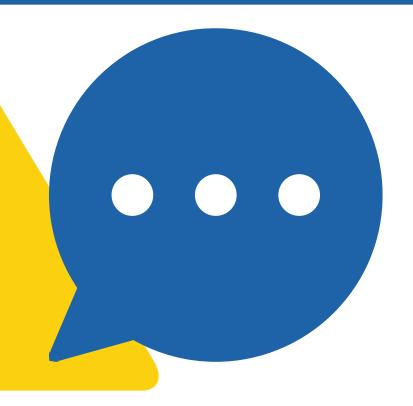
 As a fully electric vehicle the light rail trains are quiet. Most of the noise generated by the light rail system comes from the bells on the trains as they operate through intersections and at stations and from wheels on curve track sections. In most cases noise from the light rail system blends in with background traffic noise.



ANTI-DISPLACEMENT INITIATIVE

What we've heard

From our engagement efforts, the greatest concern we heard is displacement impacts associated with the project.





Our Commitments to the Community

Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, and cities along the corridor are committed to:

- Implementing a comprehensive and innovative set of strategies to prevent multiple forms of displacement
- Maximizing community benefits
- Centering community voices
- Building on, supporting, and protecting existing community assets
- Providing more opportunities for equitable housing, employment, business development, cultural experiences, and other activities of daily life

Our Actions

- The project team is convening a diverse Anti-Displacement Work Group with seats for agency and community partners to research and recommend programs and policies that will support this initiative
- Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) will lead and facilitate the Anti-Displacement Work Group
- CURA will provide recommendations in the next 18 months

What would you most like to see from our anti-displacement efforts?

Place your comments here



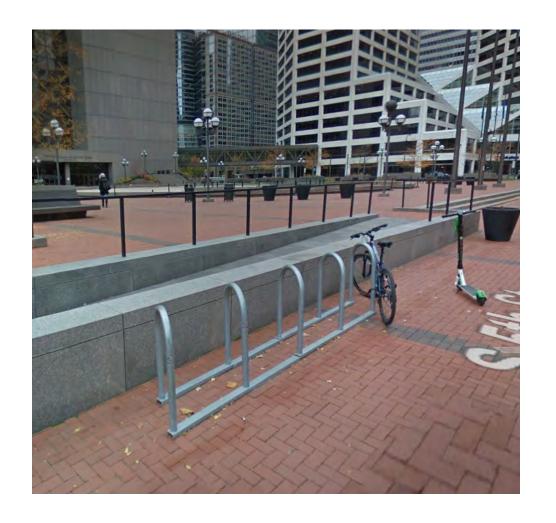




LIGHT RAIL AND STATION AMENITIES

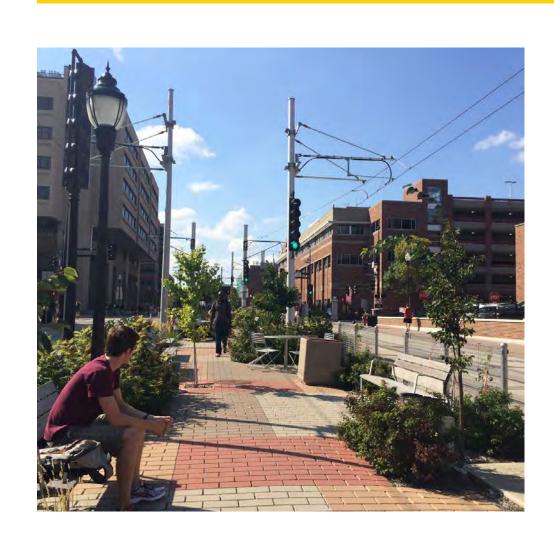
The images below highlight the types of streetscape elements that could be included as part of a light rail project.

Bicycle parking and amenities





Greening and landscaping





Lighting





Public art and placemaking





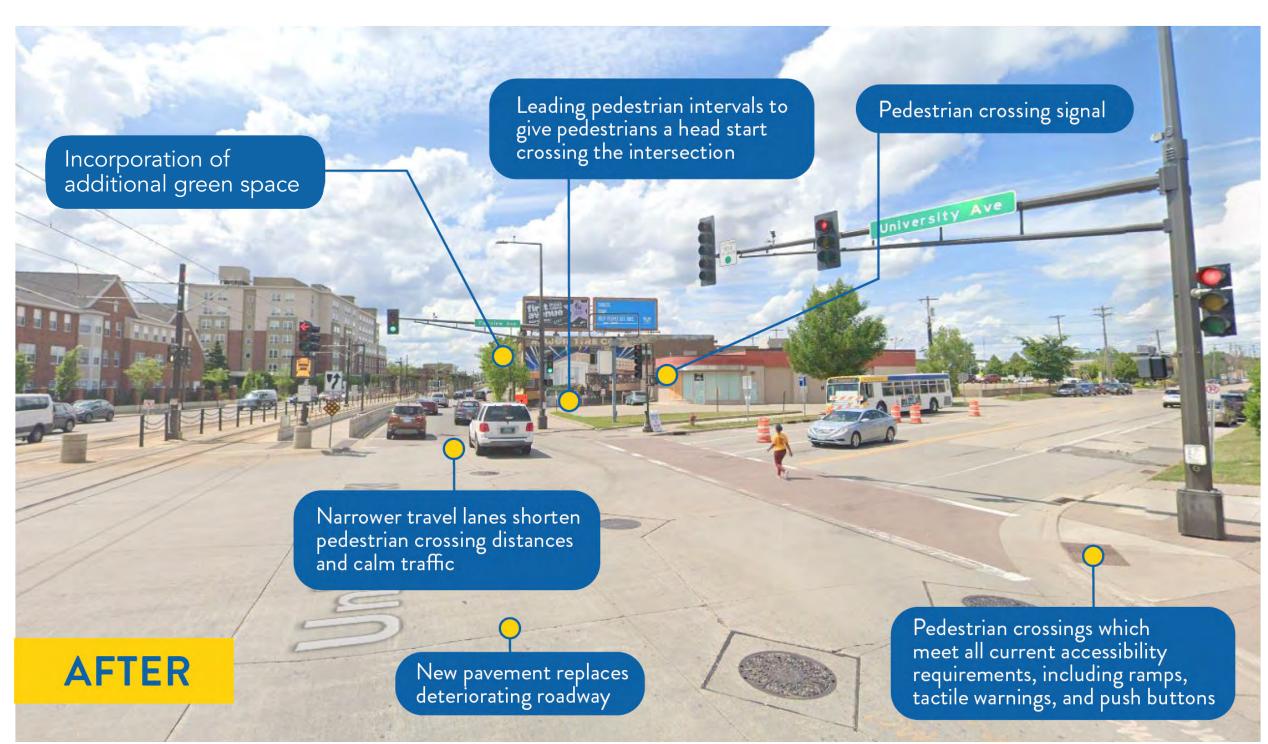
Place your comments here:

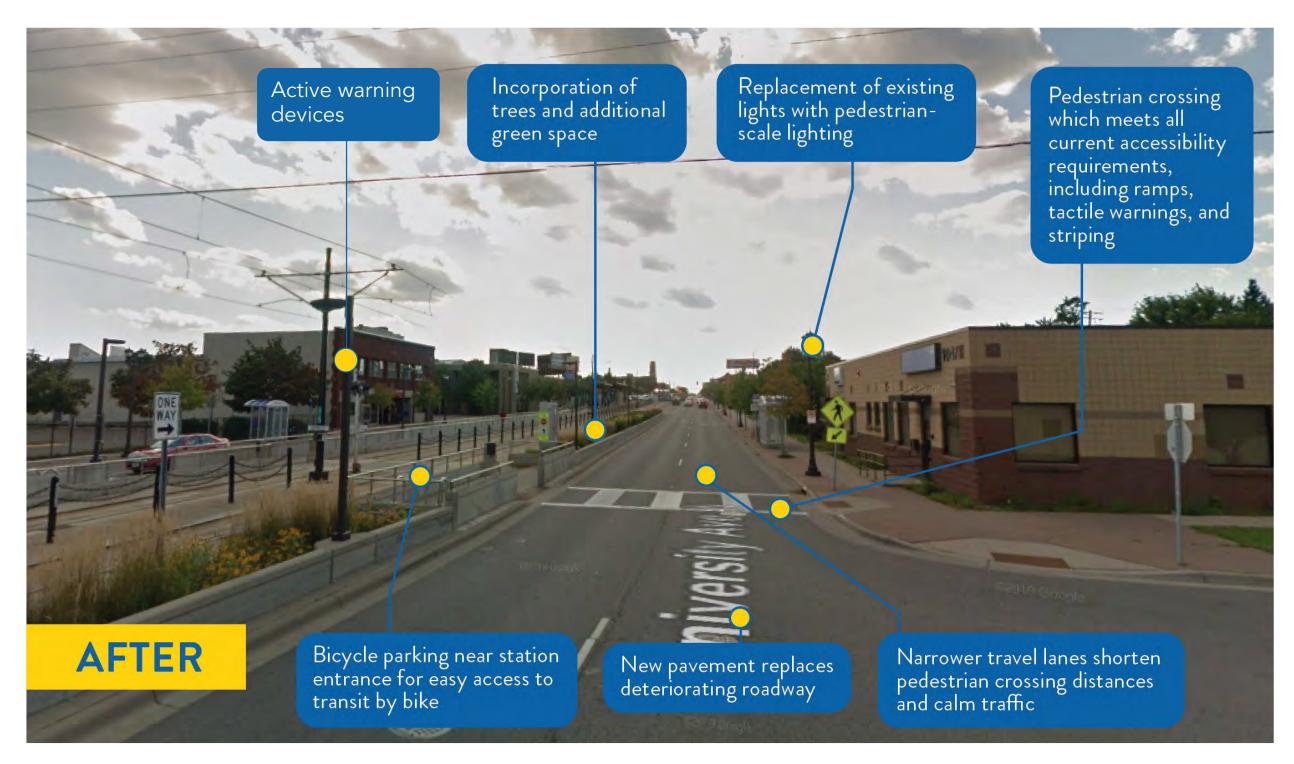
WHAT DO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS LOOK LIKE?

These images show safety improvements using the METRO Green Line on University Avenue in St. Paul as an example.



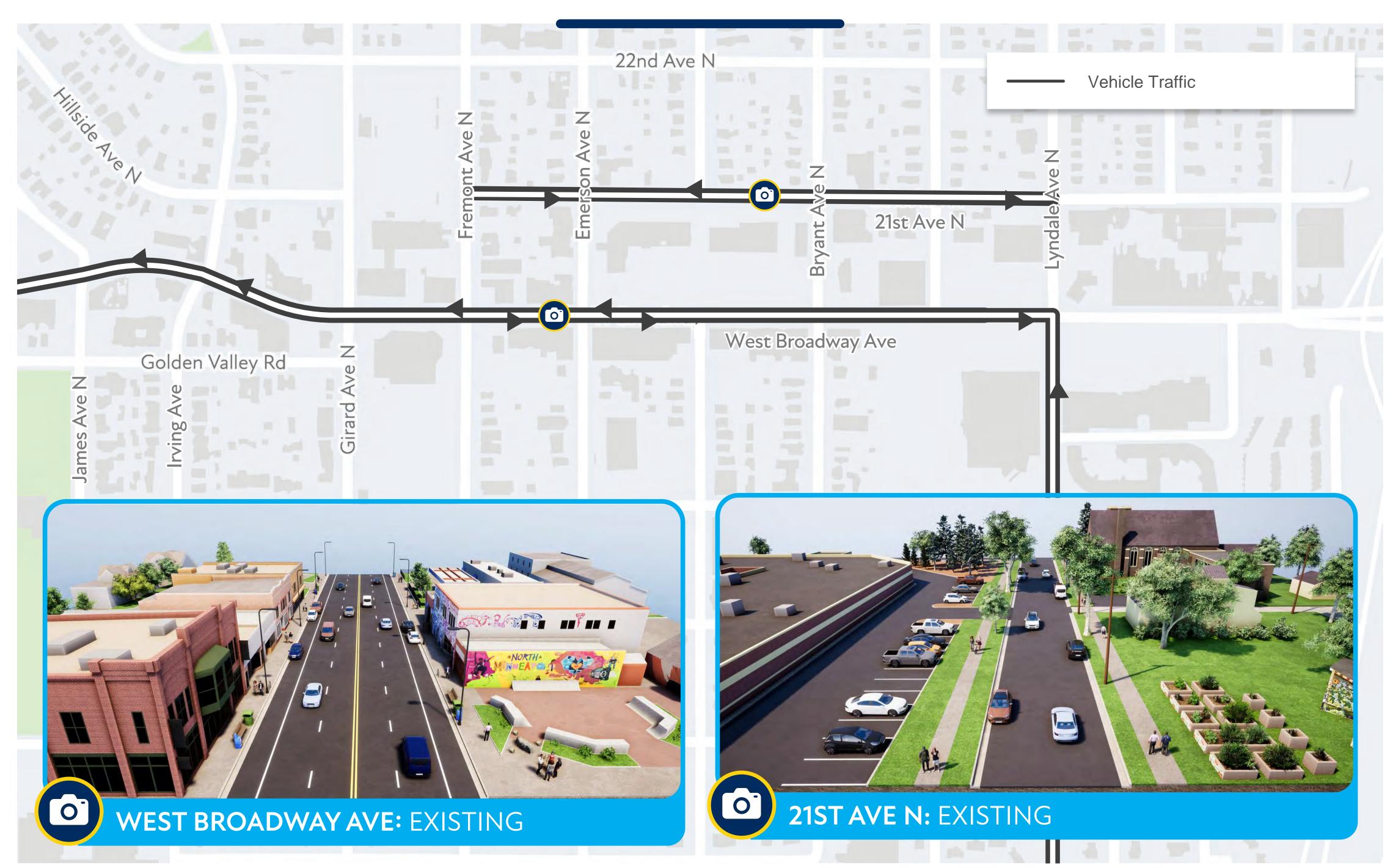






SECTION 3: EXISITING CONDITIONS WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE

This shows the existing conditions on West Broadway and 21st Ave N.



SECTION 3: 3A-a

WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE

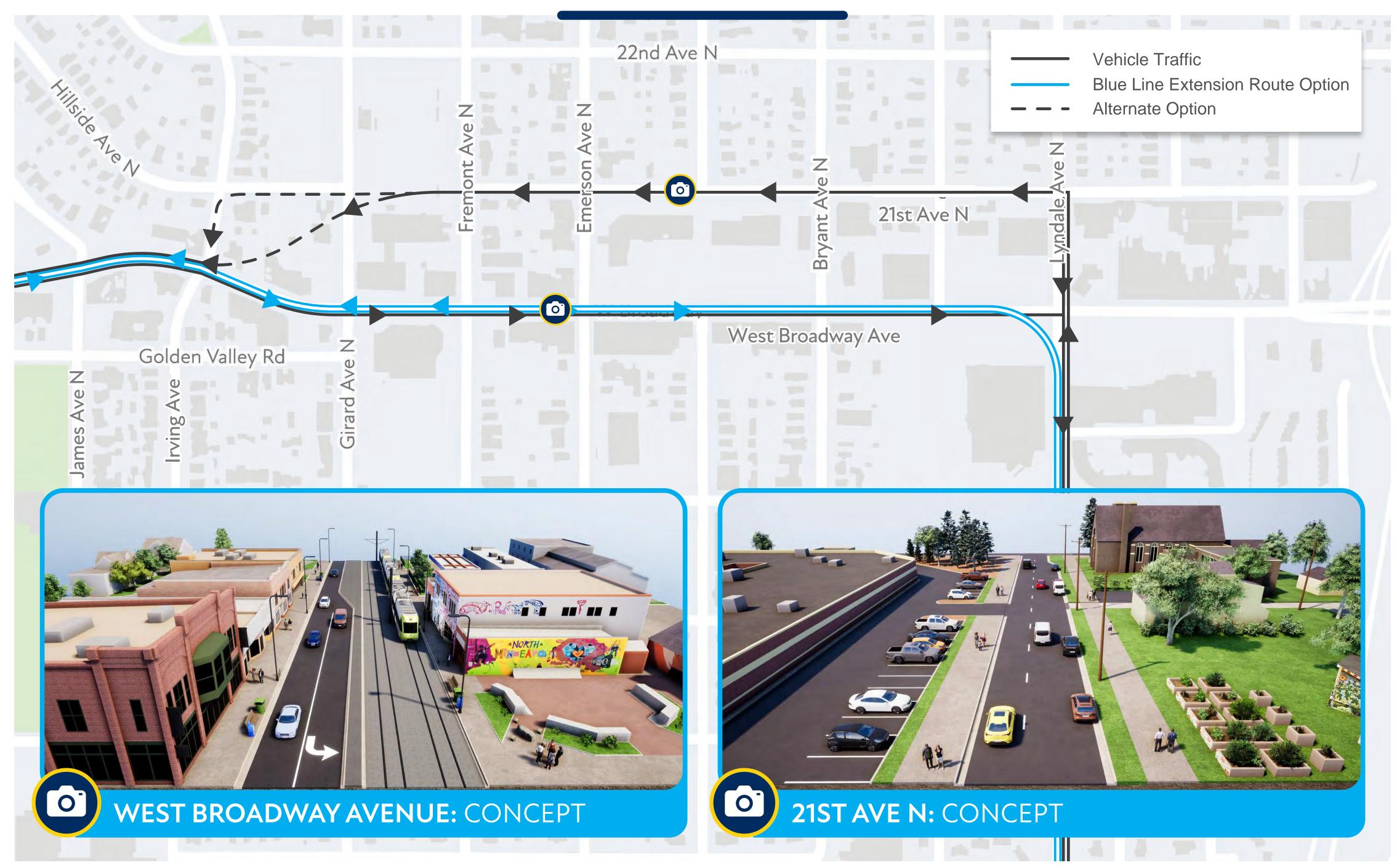
This option shows center-running light rail and two lanes of traffic on West Broadway. The addition of required stations and turn lanes create significant property impacts with this option.



SECTION 3: 3B-a

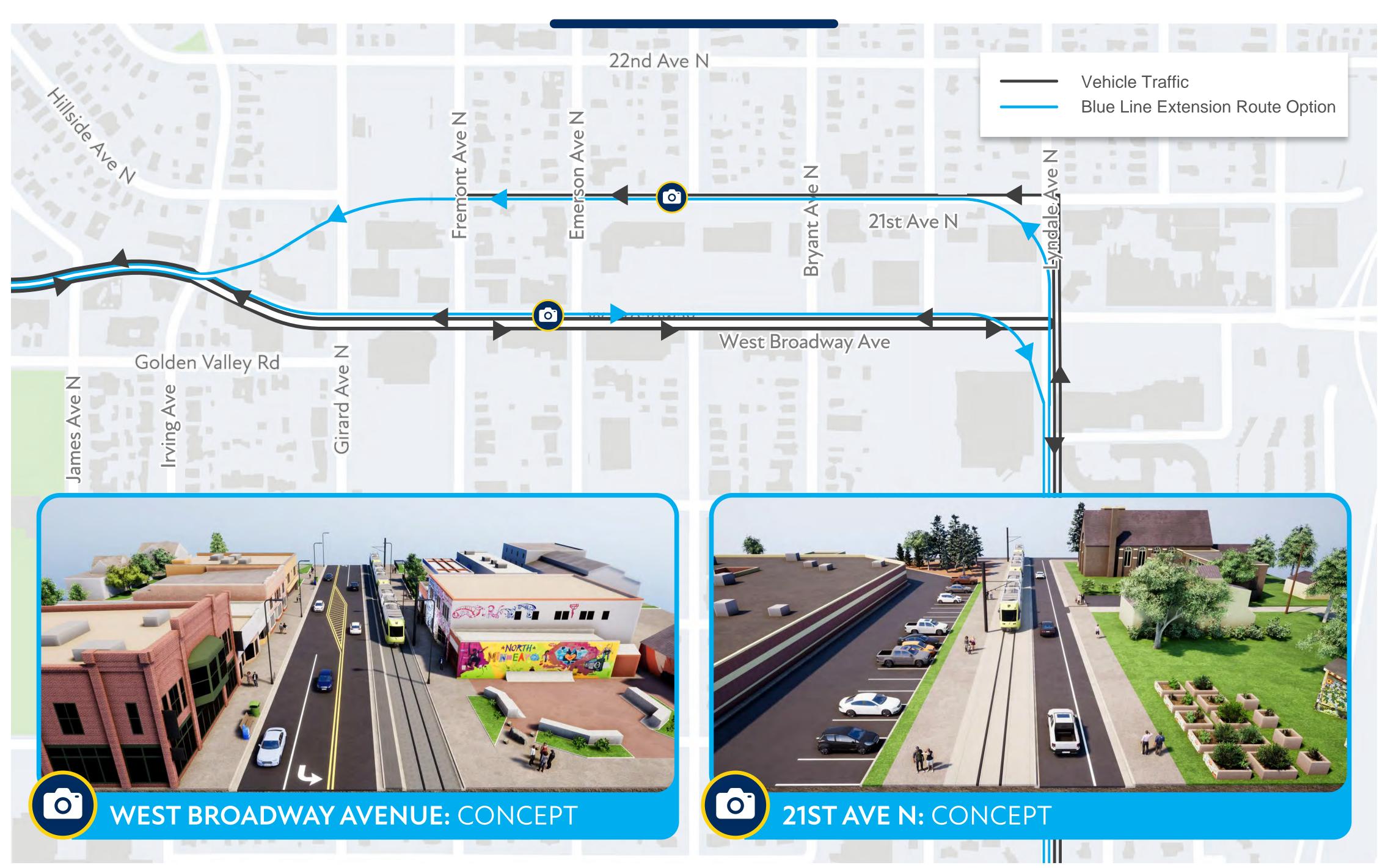
WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE

This option shows side-running light rail on West Broadway. Traffic is split with one lane on West Broadway and two lanes on 21st Ave N.



SECTION 3: 3C-a WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE

This option shows side-running light rail and traffic split between West Broadway and 21st Ave N.



SECTION 3: 3D-a

WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE

This option shows light rail only on 21st Ave N and four lanes of traffic on West Broadway (as it exists today).



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

FEDERAL INVESTMENT

• Typically, nearly 50% of funding for light rail comes from the federal government, bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars to the region.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED INVESTMENT

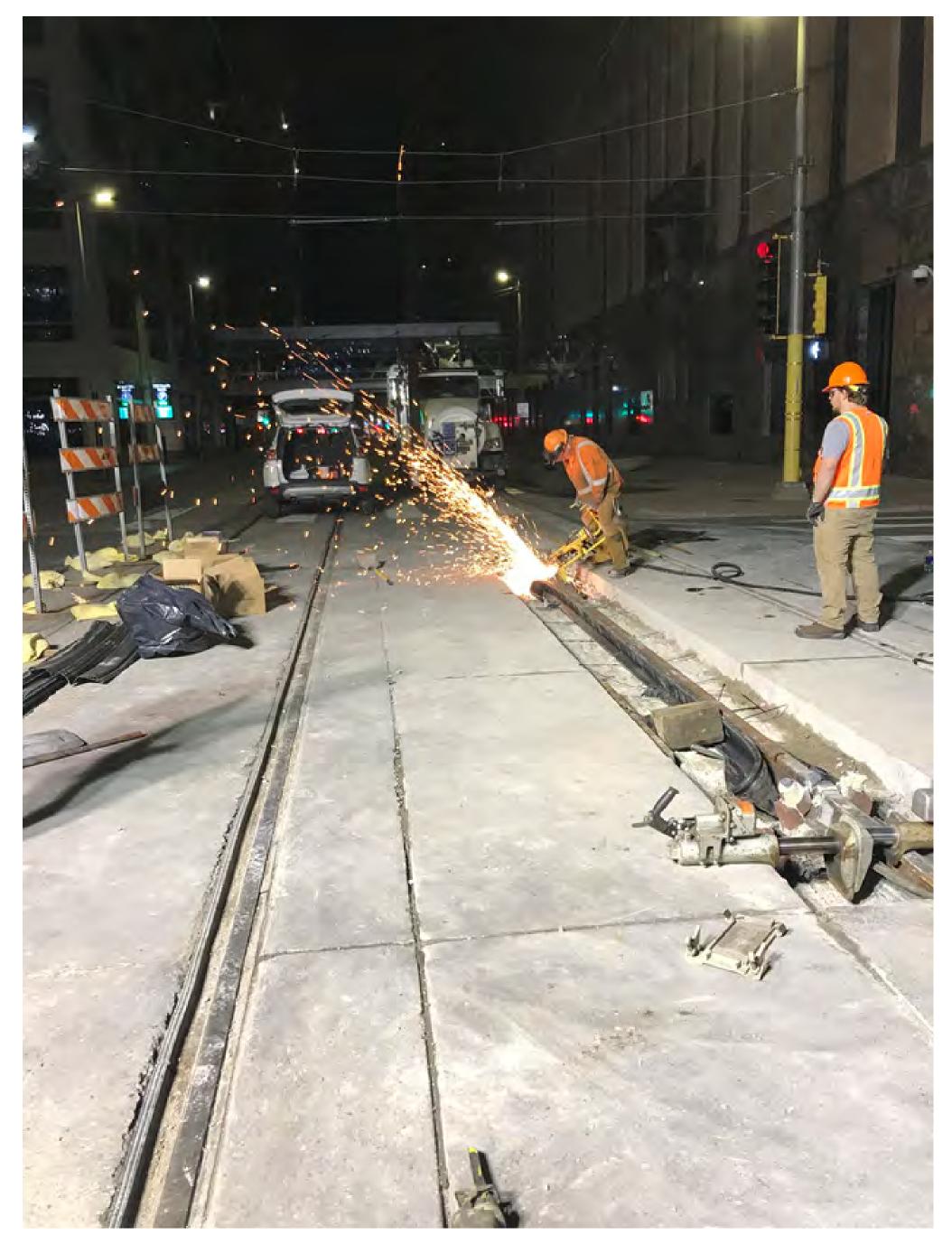
- During the past 17 years in the Twin Cities region:
 - » 35% of regional development has occurred along high frequency transit corridors
 - » \$9.2 billion is located within one-half mile of light rail stations
 - » 20,500 multi-family units were permitted near light rail stations (out of 34,200 units total)

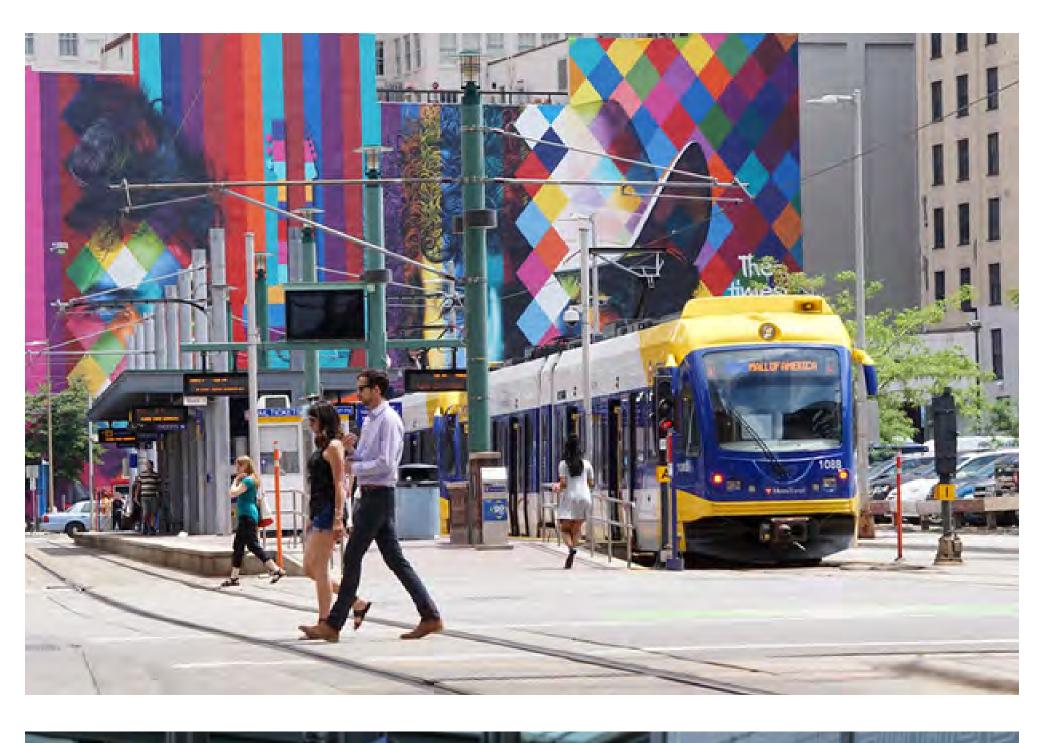
SUPPORTING AND IMPROVING ACCESS TO SMALL BUSINESSES

- During development and construction of the METRO Green Line, the project used tools such forgivable loans, façade grants, training, and technical assistance for corridor businesses.
- Can attract more employees for business growth with increased accessibility via transit.

JOBS AND TRAININGS

- The planning and construction of light rail requires many workers, generating thousands of jobs. The METRO Green Line Extension, the largest infrastructure project in Minnesota's history, with an estimated \$350 million in payroll.
- Metro Transit is committed to hiring women and minorities and contracting disadvantaged business enterprises on its projects.
- Metro Transit offers job training opportunities to help build a diverse work force. The METRO Green Line Extension partnered with 10 Minnesota Building and Construction trade unions and Twin Cities R!SE to create the Building Strong Communities program, an apprenticeship preparatory program that prepares adults and high school graduates for careers in the construction industry.









COMMUNITY BENEFITS

ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

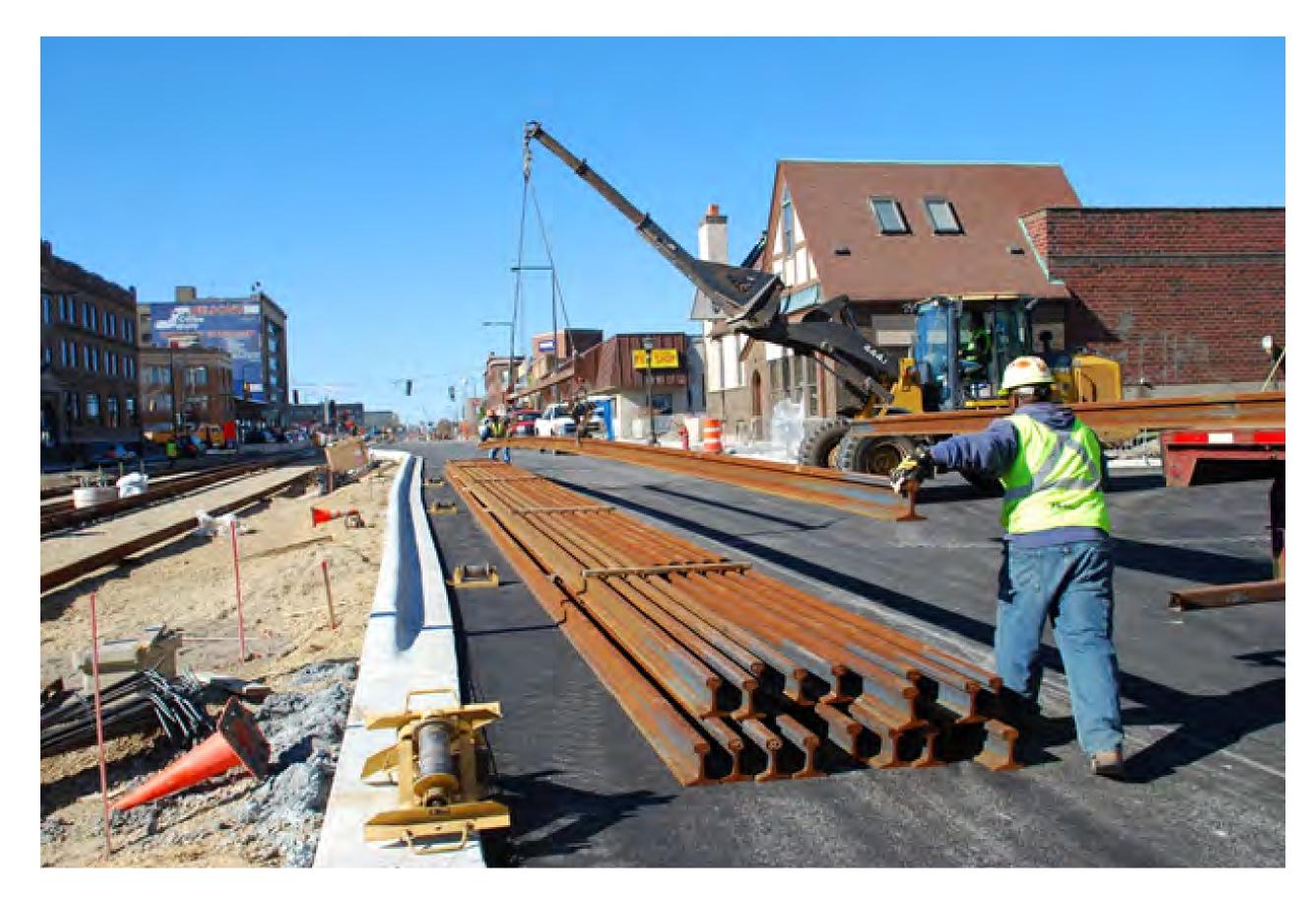
- Light rail offers a more environmentally friendly transportation option with electric-powered trains rather than single-occupancy, gas-dependent vehicles, which reduces pollution and the community's carbon footprint
- Land vacated for light rail can be used to increase green space and community-supported redevelopment
- Provides an affordable transportation option

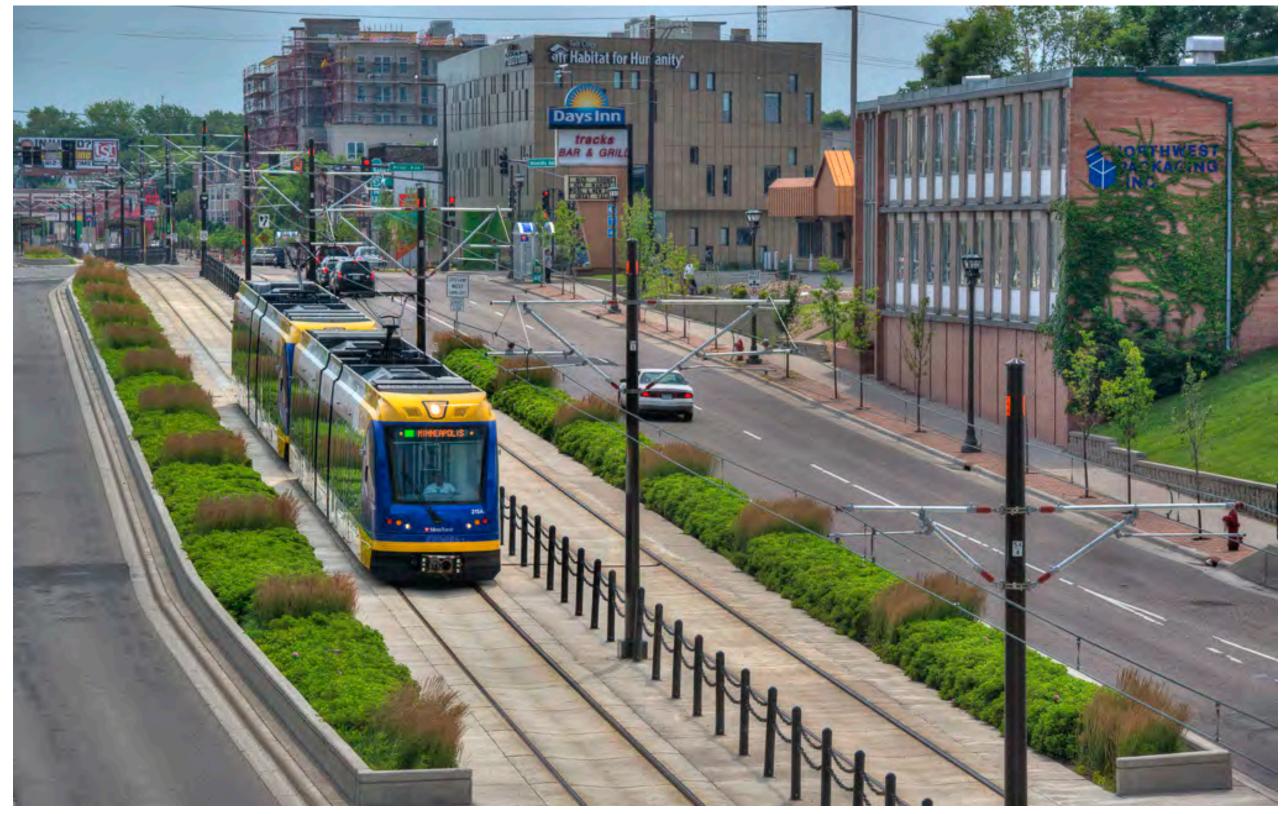
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- Roads are rebuilt from curb-to-curb. This will allow for other community infrastructure improvements such as:
 - » Modernized traffic design to improve the flow of traffic and safety
 - » Provides an opportunity for utility updates to happen concurrently with light rail construction (electrical, fiber optics, etc.)
 - » Stormwater and sewer updates to reduce flooding and manage water better

STREETSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS:

- Lighting:
 - » Pedestrian scale lighting to create a more comfortable environment
 - » Provides safety and an additional buffer between transportation uses
- Street Furniture and Bicycle Parking:
 - » Amenities for users along the corridor that are functional (bicycle parking, trash/recycling)
 - » Contribute to a more comfortable overall experience
- Landscape/Greening:
 - » Provides environmental benefits with increased area for stormwater infiltration, introducing potential pollinator species, diversifying and increasing the amount of green in an urban environment
 - » Enhances the pedestrian experience and lowers the scale of a wide road
- Special Pavement:
 - Opportunity for community expression and function (i.e. could include colored concrete, pavers, different treatments to concrete to differentiate it)





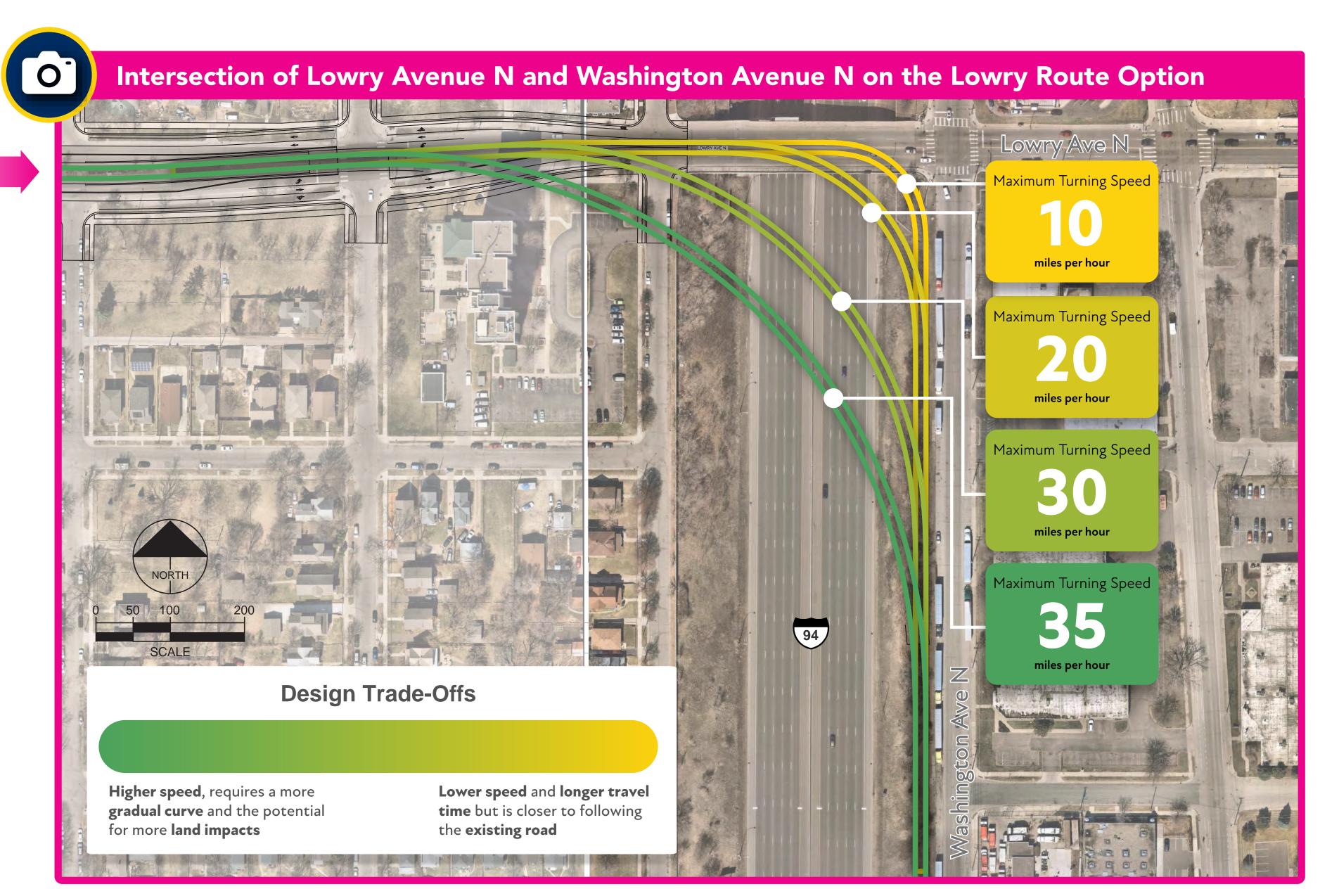


DESIGNING FOR CURVES AND TURNS

There are many curves and turns along the potential METRO Blue Line Extension light rail route. These areas, including the West Broadway Route and Lowry/ Washington Route, require special consideration since curves change the maximum speed a light rail train can safely travel. Higher travel speeds require a longer, more gradual track design. In areas with more intensive land use this can mean more property impacts. Faster travel speeds save time for riders, which helps make transit a better option for users and improves funding possibilities with the federal government. Light rail typically travels 30 to 50 MPH, depending on the location. The corresponding concept layout for the intersection of Lowry Avenue N and Washington Avenue N shows one option with a 35 MPH curve.



Highlighted areas show the curves and turns on the West Broadway and Lowry Routes



Examples of track designs and the potential changes in traveling speed at the intersection of Washington and Lowry Avenues. These are examples and NOT what is being planned for this corner.





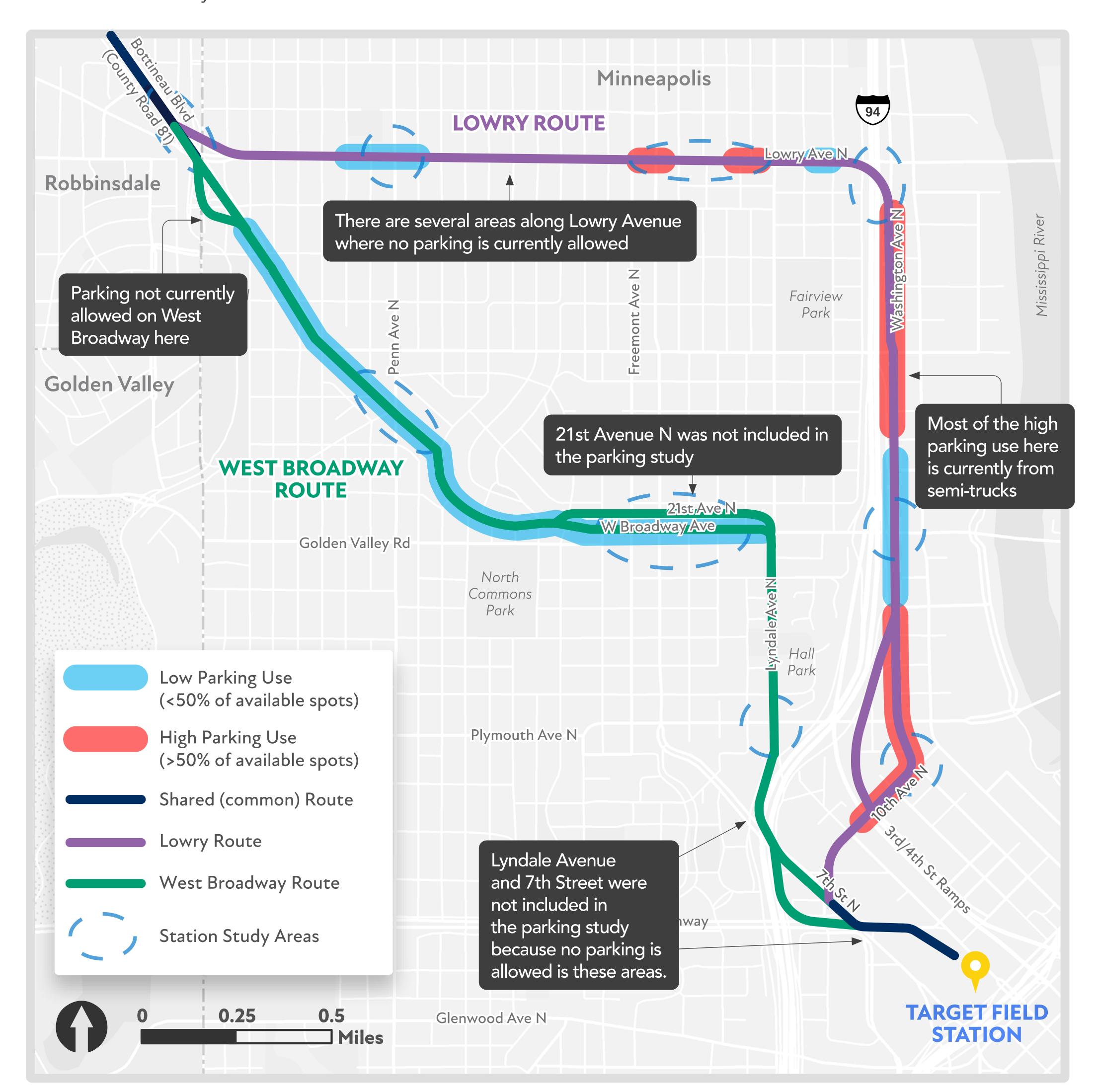


EXISTING PARKING AVAILABILITY

This map shows data from a parking study completed in June/July 2021. This data was averaged from the amount of occupied curb space along each block with available parking to identify areas of high and low parking use. "High Parking Use" indicates areas where on average more than half the available onstreet parking spaces were occupied during the study and "Low Parking Use" indicates areas where less than 50% of available parking spaces were occupied.

Potential Mitigation Options

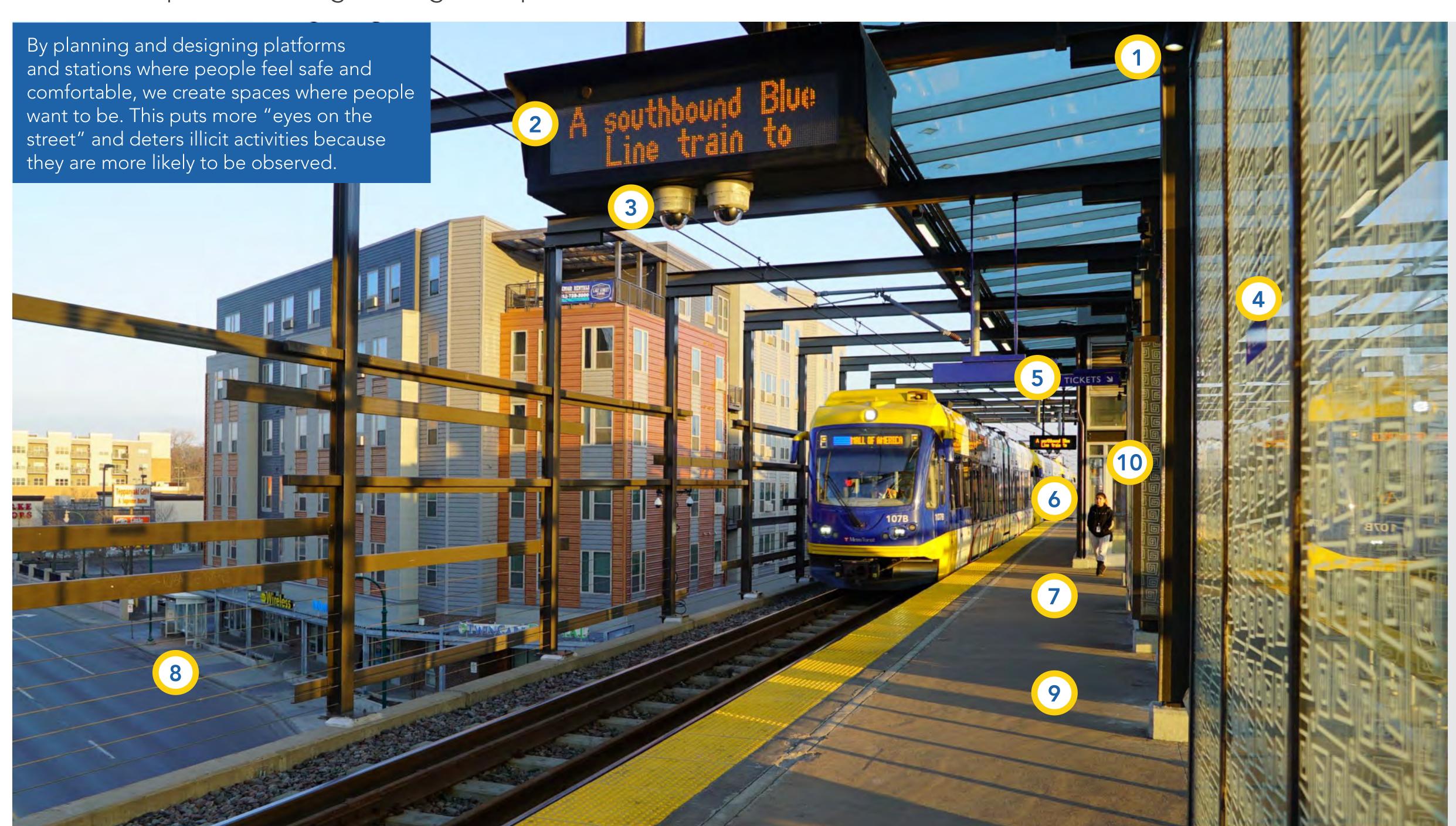
For locations where on-street parking might be removed to accommodate light rail, the project could provide more parking in another location and/or identify parking alternatives such as shared parking, parking regulations (i.e. time limited, meters), and preferential parking for carpools/alternatively fueled vehicles for nearby streets in the area.





SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security are key considerations factored into the planning and design of light rail well before the line is built or in operation. We plan and design the light rail platforms and station areas to be safe and secure with elements such as:



- Appropriate lighting in the station area and on the trains
- 2 Real-time information
- 3 Security cameras
- 4 Open-air and/or transparent shelters and waiting facilities.
- Consistent wayfinding and signage
- A human-scale feel, which means facilities are designed to be comfortable to riders of all abilities.
- 7 Clear sight lines which allow train operators and riders to see each other.
- Visibility from nearby roadways so riders feel safe and drivers are aware of transit stops.
- 9 Intuitive circulation, which allows riders to safely access the trains.
- 10 Emergency telephones





SAFETY AND SECURITY

AGENCY COMMITMENT

Metro Transit is committed to keeping transit safe for all customers. Some of the measures we have implemented to cultivate a safe and secure transit environment include:

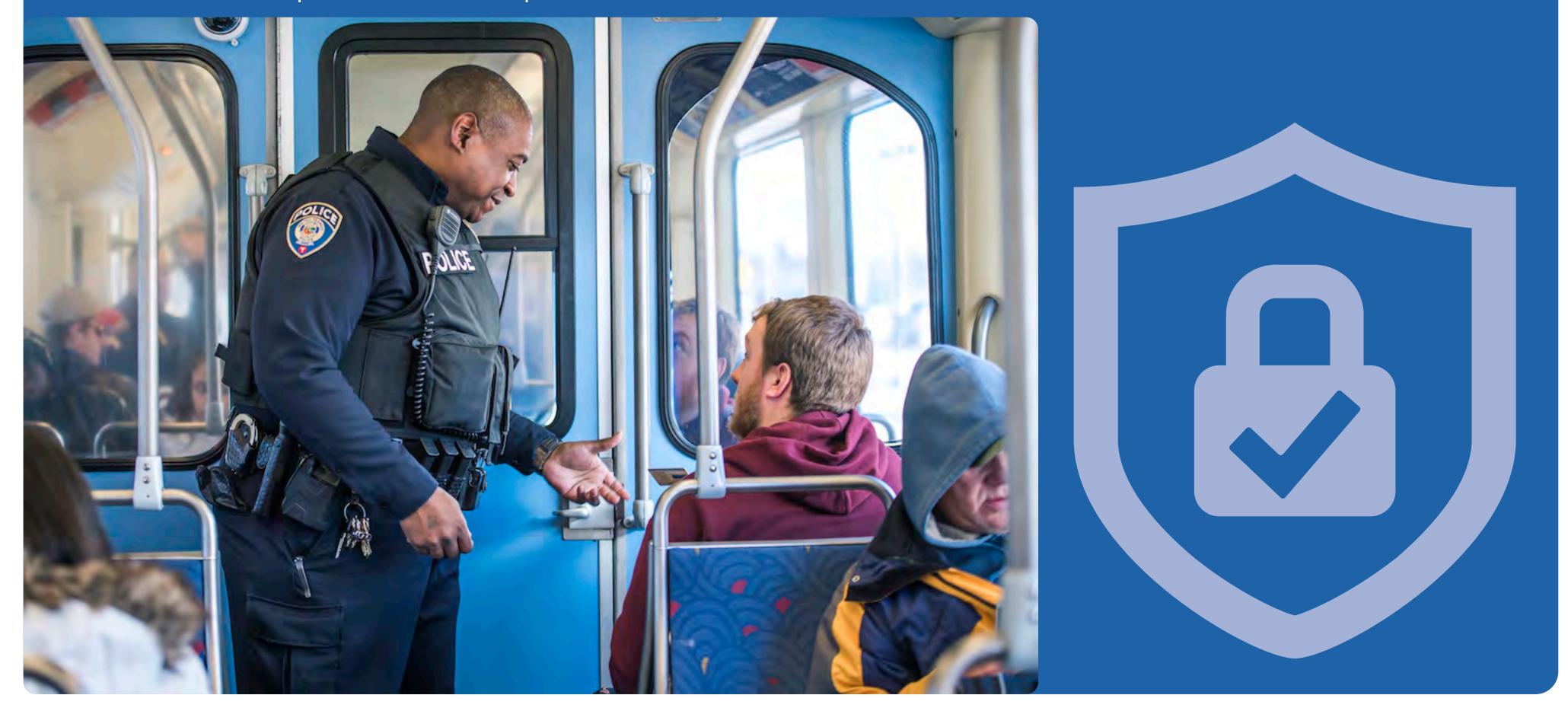
- Light rail vehicle and facility cleaning, maintenance, and repair.
- Our Text for Safety program, which allows Metro Transit riders to report unwanted or suspicious behavior discreetly via text.
- Additional resources to directly handle issues and concerns identified by customers.



OPERATIONS

Metro Transit uses a multi-layered approach to safe and secure operations on vehicles and at light rail stations. Some of the different ways we ensure safe and secure operations include:

- Metro Transit employees are trained to deal with security issues.
- Metro Transit has its own professional police force that watches out for customer safety and responds to emergency situations.
- Light rail platforms and vehicles feature surveillance and communication tools such as monitored security cameras and emergency phones and intercom buttons for customers to contact a dispatcher and report a concern.



ROUTE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS



1) Why was Highway 100 not considered as a possible route?

Although the Highway 100 corridor is relatively wide, it does not travel through areas that serve more people and destinations as compared to other route options. It also deviates rather far from the original alignment along the BNSF rail corridor.

2) Why could an agreement not be reached with BNSF or eminent domain used?

The BNSF Railway is a private company with individual property rights that supersede state right to take private property for public use. Significant effort and resources, including offering to purchase the corridor, were taken at the local, regional, state, and federal level to advance required approvals by BNSF Railway. After several years of unsuccessful discussions, it was time to move the project forward without using freight rail property.

Why were roads like Penn Avenue, Fremont Avenue or Emerson Avenue not represented as possible routes?

These roadway corridors are relatively narrow, which would require significant property impacts. In addition, these corridors already accommodate valuable METRO transit services through the planned D-Line and existing C-line arterial bus rapid transit.

4 Why was Lyndale Avenue not considered as a route to get all the way to the Lowry Route?

North of West Broadway Avenue, Lyndale Avenue transitions to a two-lane roadway without much room to accommodate light rail, and houses that closely front the roadway. This would require significant property impacts.

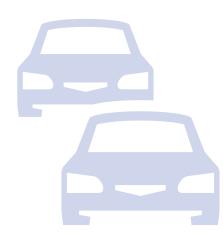


TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS

It is likely that the route chosen will result in lane reductions in order to accommodate light rail. The project team will work to redesign the streets to accommodate vehicle, walking, and biking traffic to ensure light rail can work along with other modes.

TRAFFIC

Different roads are designed to support different levels of traffic. Traffic volume can be measured by Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT). For example:



- I-94 has a high volume of traffic but is designed with several lanes in each direction to accommodate a high number of vehicles per day.
 - I-94 in this area of Minneapolis has an Annual Average Daily Traffic of 75,000 (combined volume in both directions).
- A neighborhood street in North Minneapolis is narrower and has a lower speed limit. Most residential streets in North Minneapolis have an Annual Average Daily Traffic of 1,000 vehicles per day or less. For example, 26th Avenue, west of West Broadway, has an Annual Average Daily Traffic of 1,700 vehicles per day.

The West Broadway Route and Lowry Route and their linking roads have between an Annual Average Daily Traffic between 10,000 and 20,000 vehicles per day.





WASHINGTON AVENUE AT 14TH AVENUE, MINNEAPOLIS

EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of Washington Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along Washington Avenue in North Minneapolis. This picture uses the typical width of the roadway at this location.



WASHINGTON AVE AT 18TH AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

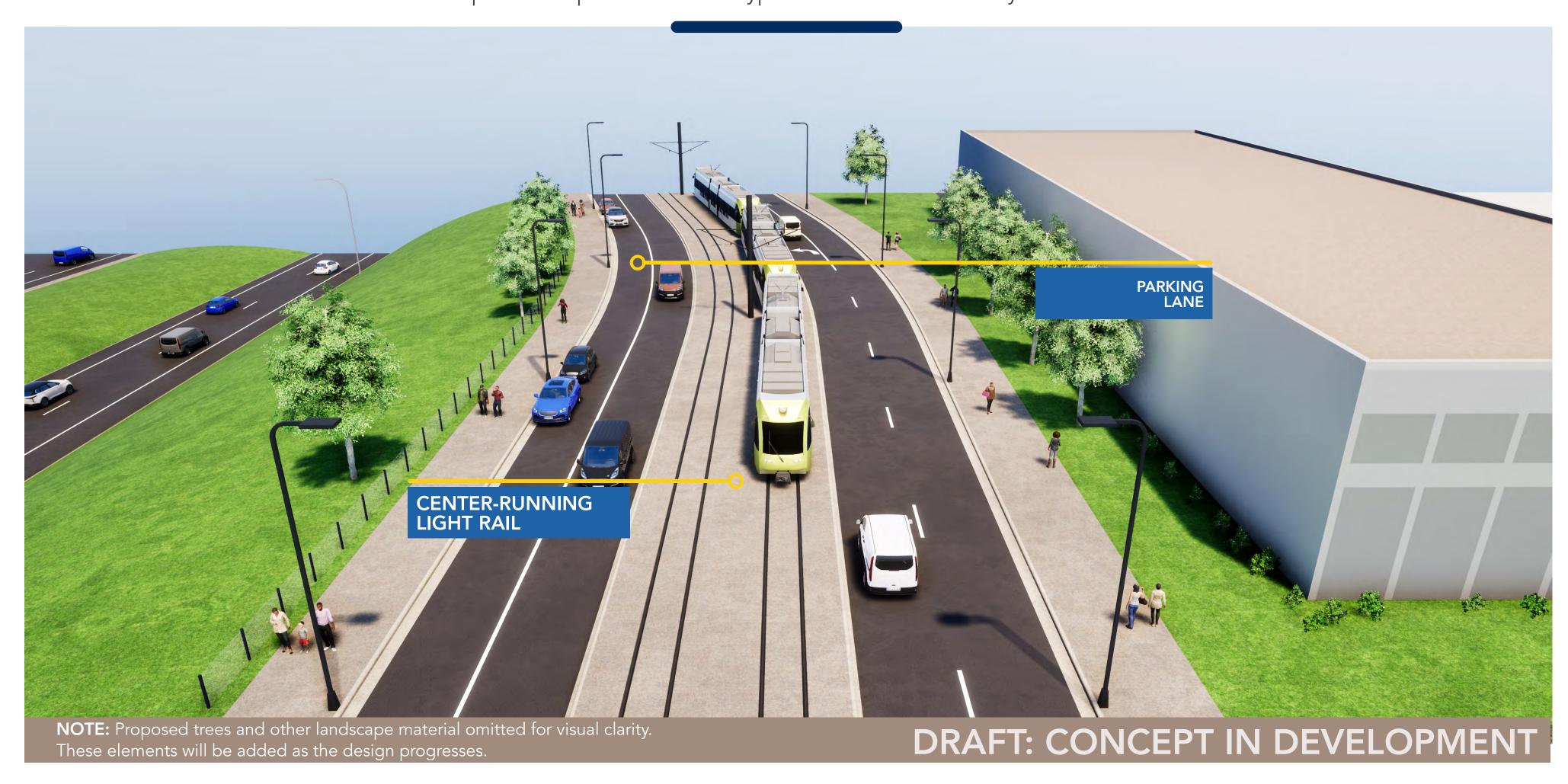
EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of Washington Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along Washington Avenue in North Minneapolis. This picture uses the typical width of the roadway at this location.



WASHINGTON AVE AT 29TH AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of Washington Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along Washington Avenue in North Minneapolis. This picture uses the typical width of the roadway at this location.



COURT AVE AT LYNDALE AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of Lowry Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along Lowry Avenue in North Minneapolis. This picture uses the typical width of the roadway at this location.



COURT AVE AT NEWTON AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

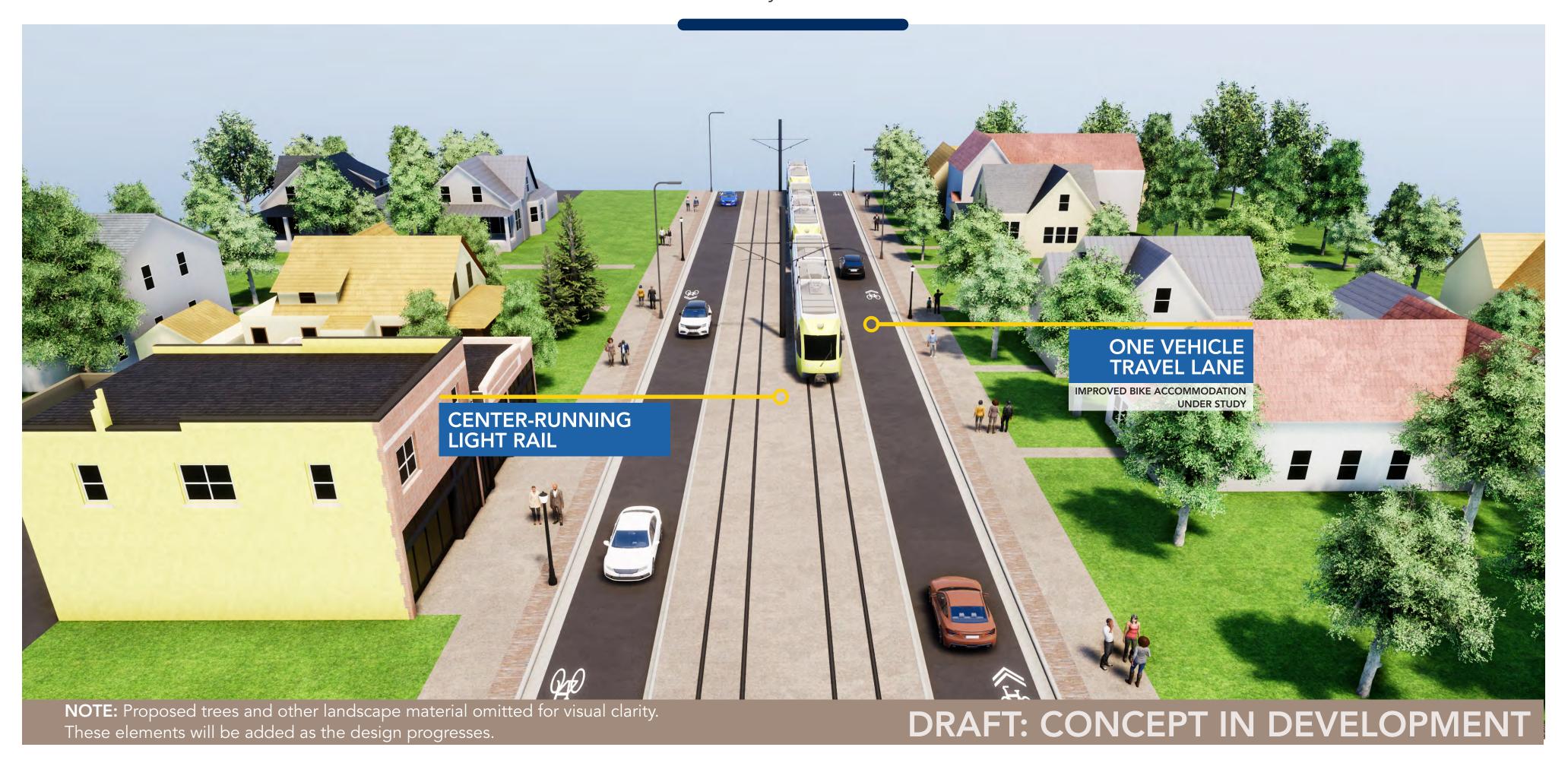
EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of Lowry Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit in North Minneapolis along Lowry Avenue.



WEST BROADWAY AT QUEEN AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis. The picture uses the typical width of West Broadway.



WEST BROADWAY AT NEWTON AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

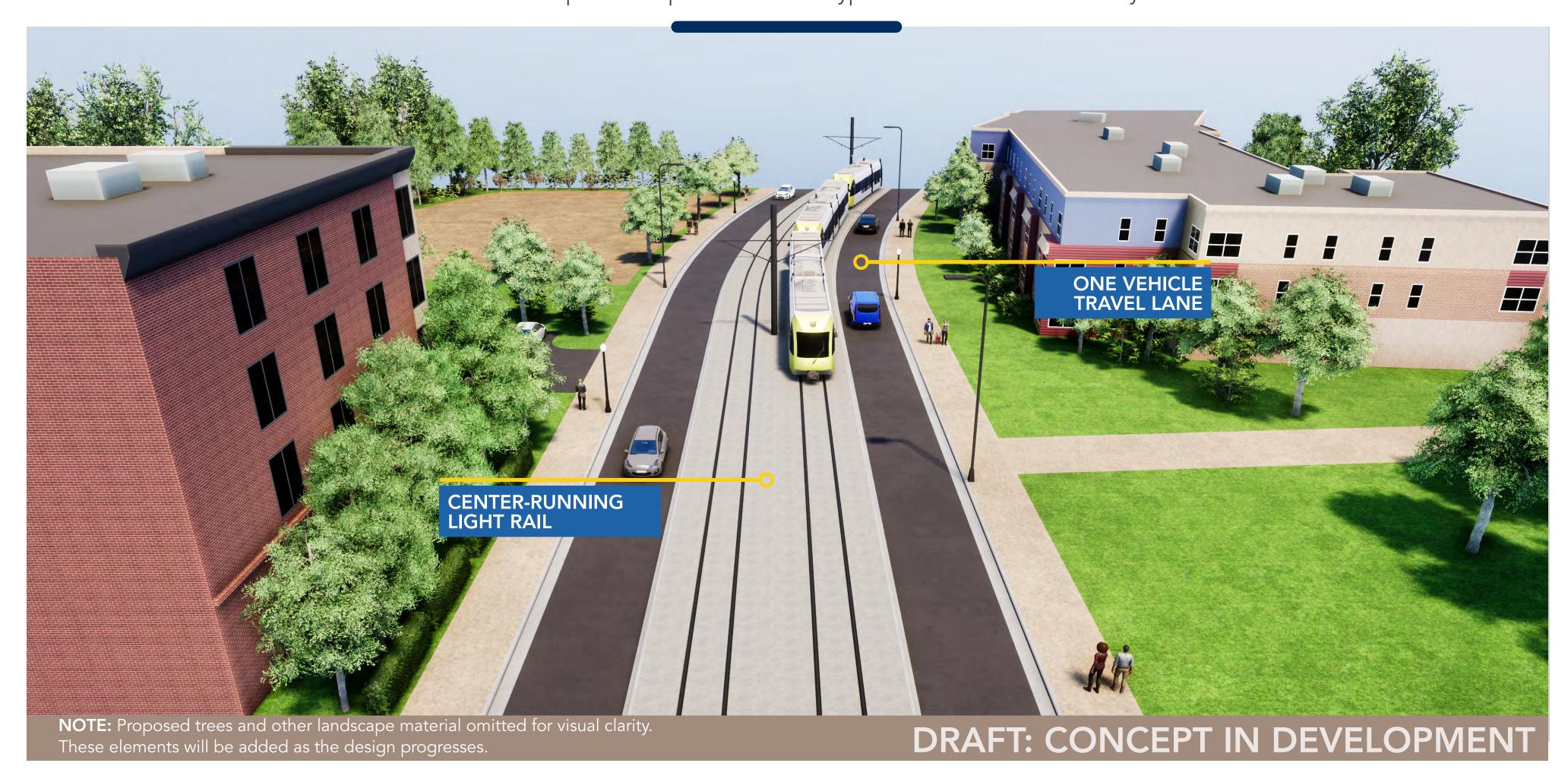
EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis. The picture uses the typical width of West Broadway.



WEST BROADWAY AT EMERSON AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of West Broadway Avenue as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit in North Minneapolis along West Broadway Avenue. The picture uses the typical width of West Broadway.



WEST BROADWAY AT LYNDALE AVE, MINNEAPOLIS

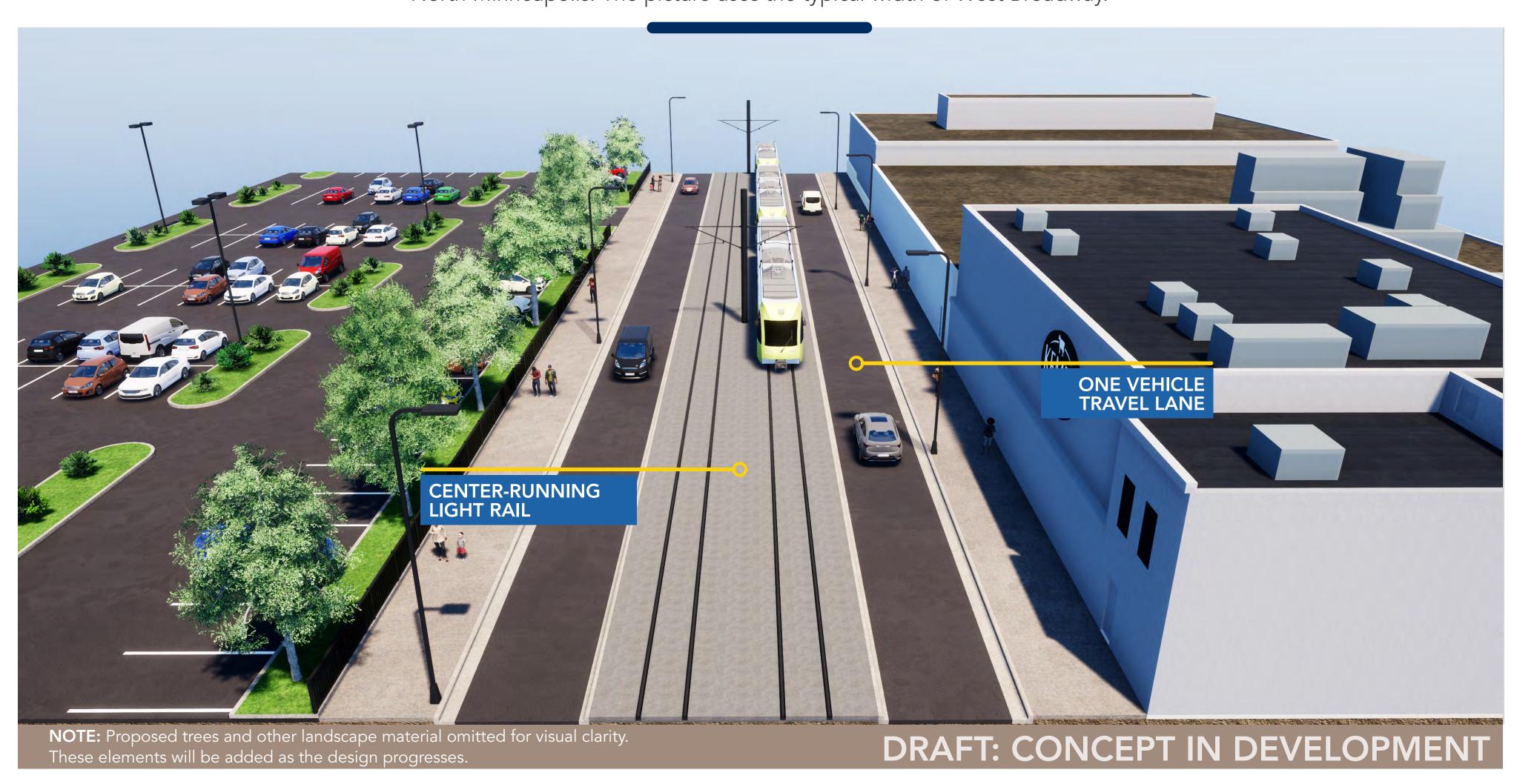
EXISTING

This is a visualization of a section of West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis as it exists today.



CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit along West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis. The picture uses the typical width of West Broadway.



LOWRY ROUTE OPTION & STATION CONCEPT NEAR NORTH MEMORIAL





DRAFT: CONCEPT IN DEVELOPMENT





WEST BROADWAY ROUTE OPTION & STATION CONCEPT 1 NEAR NORTH MEMORIAL











WEST BROADWAY ROUTE OPTION & STATION CONCEPT 2 NEAR NORTH MEMORIAL





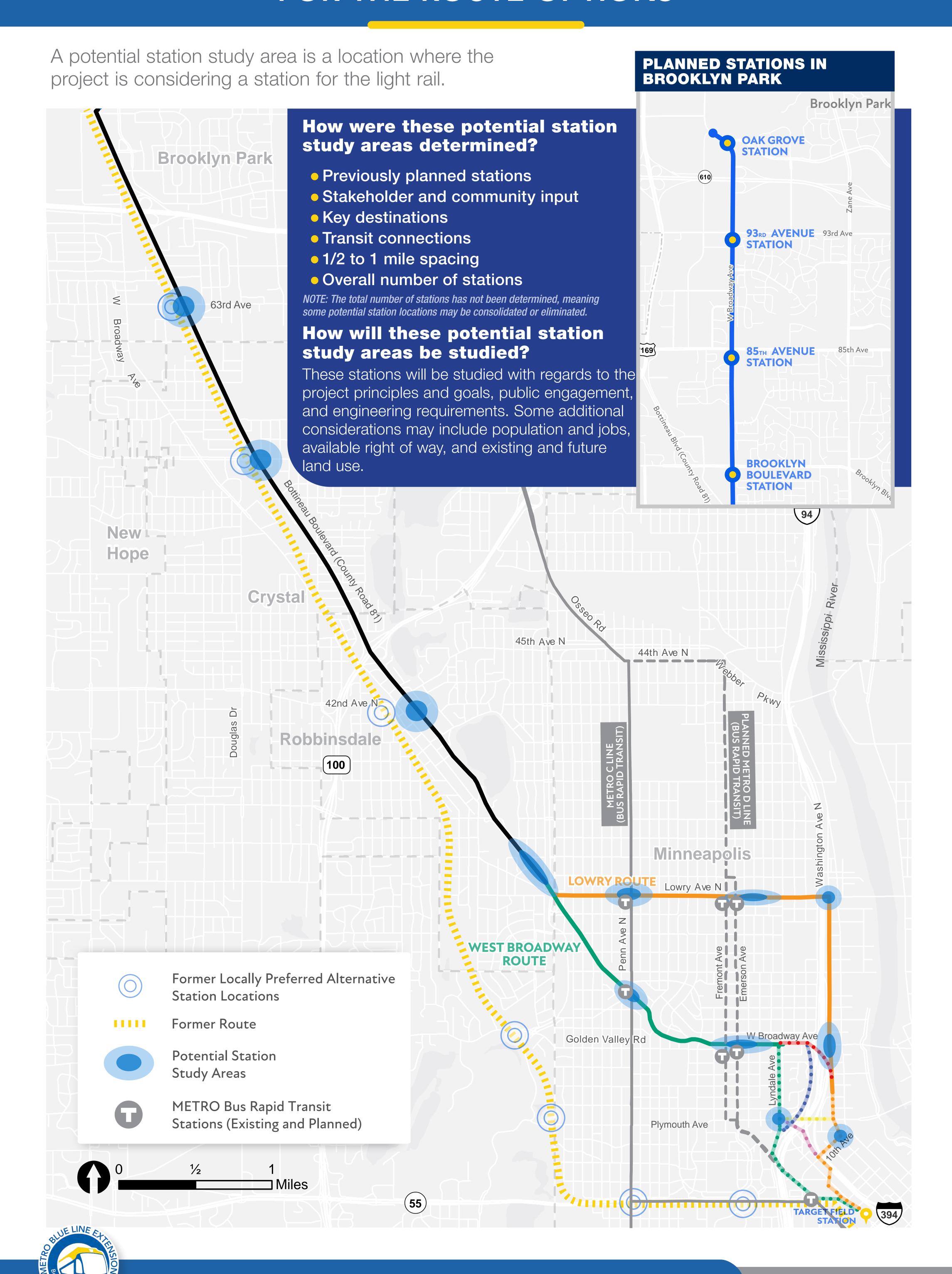
DRAFT: CONCEPT IN DEVELOPMENT







POTENTIAL STATION STUDY AREAS FOR THE ROUTE OPTIONS



REFINED STATION STUDY AREAS AND ROUTE OPTIONS

Since July 2021, the project team has refined the station study areas, route options, and connecting links to Target Field station in Minneapolis. These decisions were guided by the project principles and goals, community and business feedback, engineering requirements, density of population/jobs, available right of way, and existing and future land use.

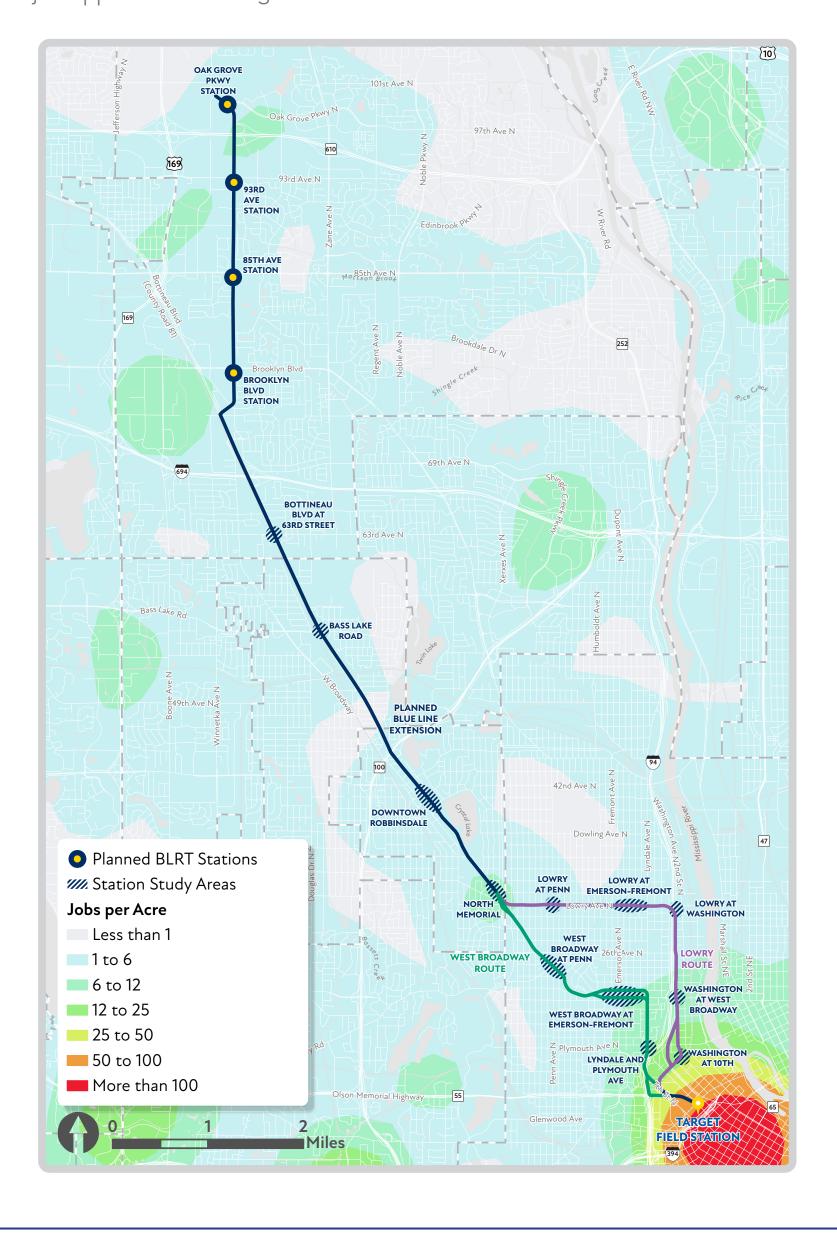




JOB DENSITY

This map shows the average number of jobs per acre. Source: Metropolitan Council.

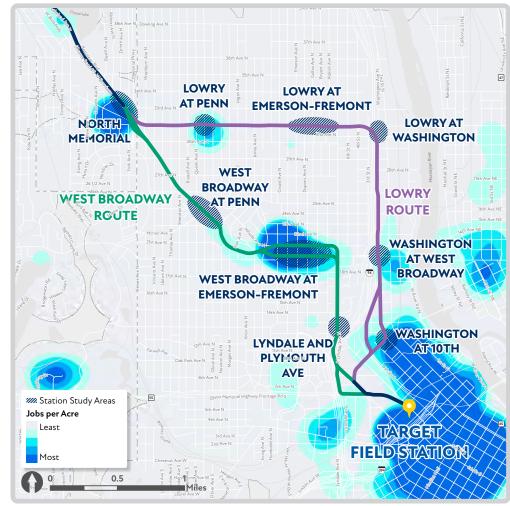
The highest concentration of jobs can be found in downtown Minneapolis, indicating BLRT's ability to connect people from North Minneapolis and the northern suburbs to job opportunities throughout the Twin Cities.



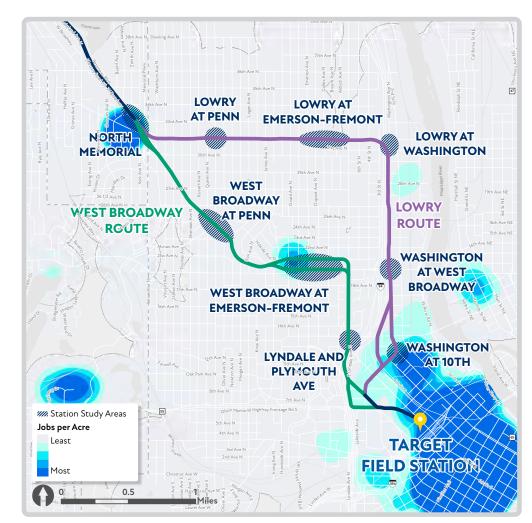
LOWER AND HIGHER INCOME JOBS

The maps below show the density of jobs in the southern area of the corridor using U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics from 2018. Areas in gray indicate a very low concentration of jobs.

Both low- and high-income jobs can be found in the same cluster patterns around North Memorial, West Broadway at Emerson-Fremont, and in downtown Minneapolis.



This map shows jobs earning **less** than \$40,000 annually.

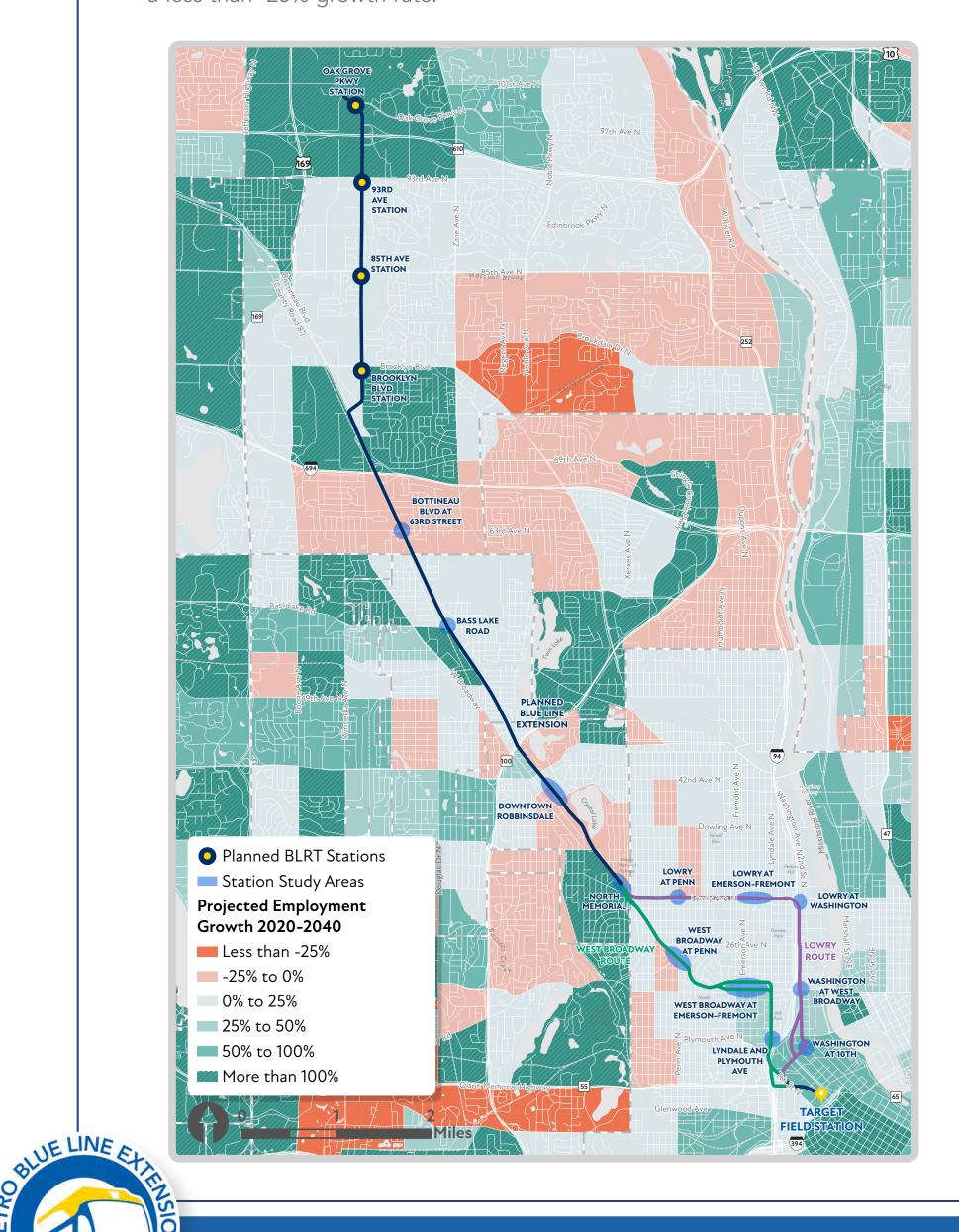


This map shows jobs earning **more** than \$40,000 annually.

JOB GROWTH

This map shows the anticipated employment growth between 2020 and 2040 using Metropolitan Council's Transportation Analysis Zones data.

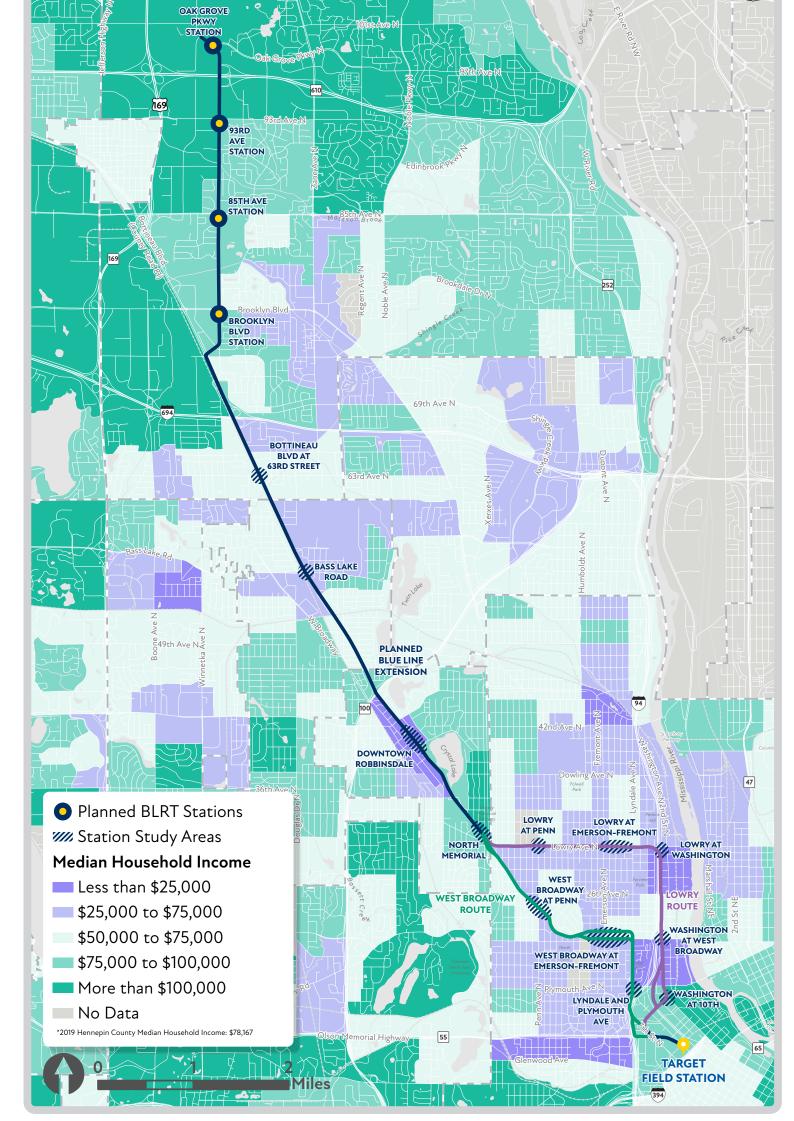
Employment is projected to grow in the areas around North Memorial, Bass Lake Road, and the Brooklyn Boulevard station. Employment in other areas is projected to remain stable or decrease slightly. No areas along the route will see a less than -25% growth rate.



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

This map shows the median household incomes in the cities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park using 2019 U.S. Census American Community Survey data.

Much of the proposed route travels through areas where median household income is under \$75,000, including areas in North Minneapolis and Robbinsdale where median household income is under \$25,000.

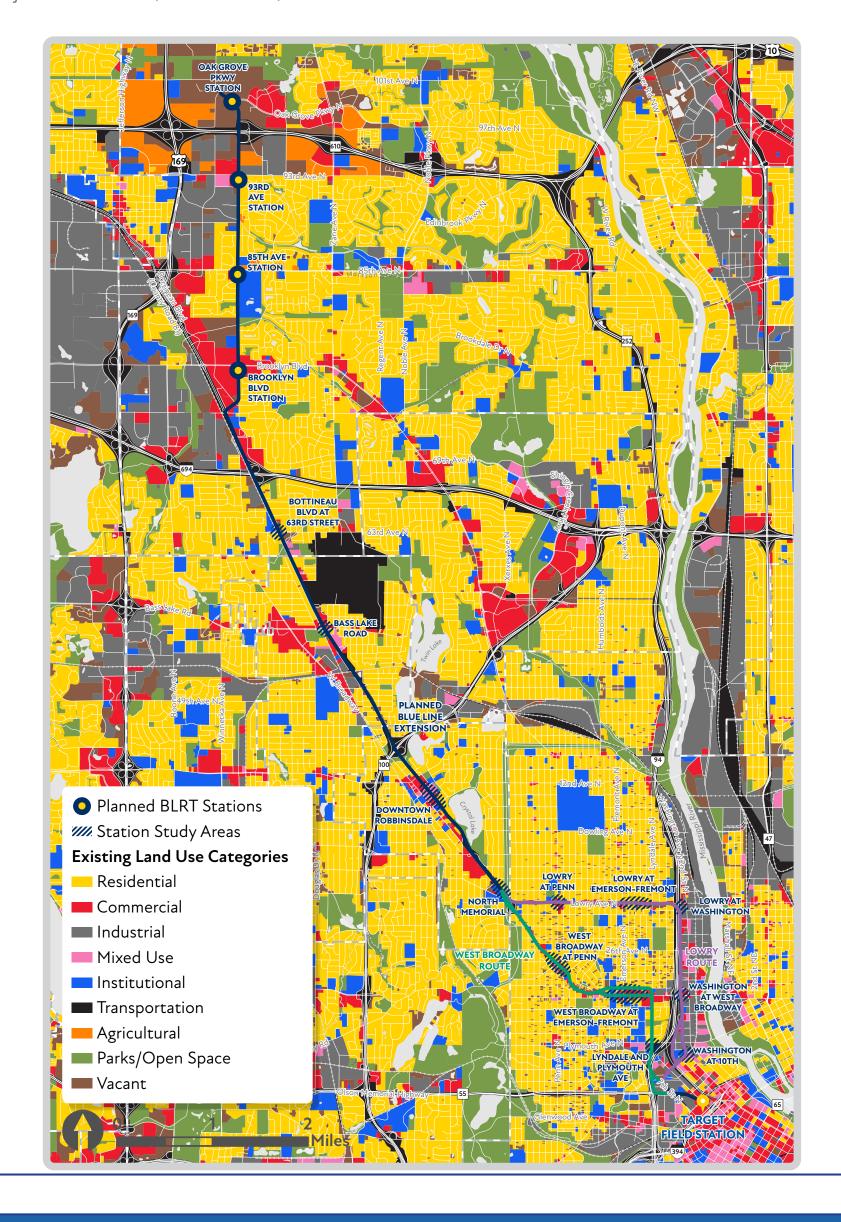


The Metropolitan Council considers families with annual incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level as living in poverty, which in 2019 was below \$47,600 for a family of 4 or below \$23,100 for an individual.

EXISTING LAND USE

This map shows the existing land use categories in the cities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park using Metropolitan Council's 2016 generalized land use.

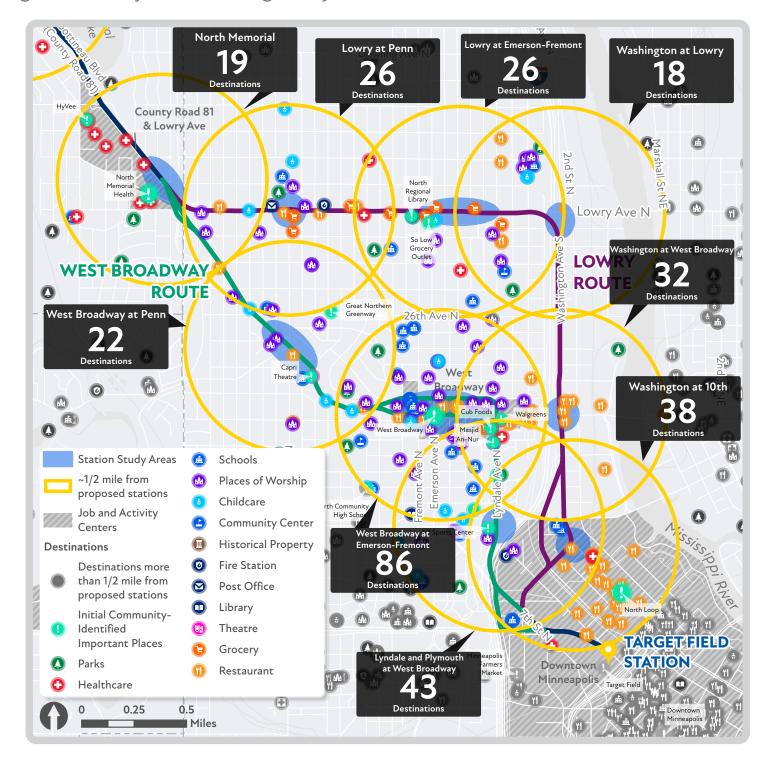
In Minneapolis, the proposed West Broadway route travels through commercial and residential areas, while the Lowry route travels through industrial areas along Washington Avenue and residential areas along Lowry Avenue. Traveling northwest, the route connects major commercial, institutional, and industrial nodes.



DESTINATIONS

This map shows existing destinations within a half mile from the proposed station areas in Minneapolis as well as destinations that were identified as important places through community input. Destinations were summarized from Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis data.

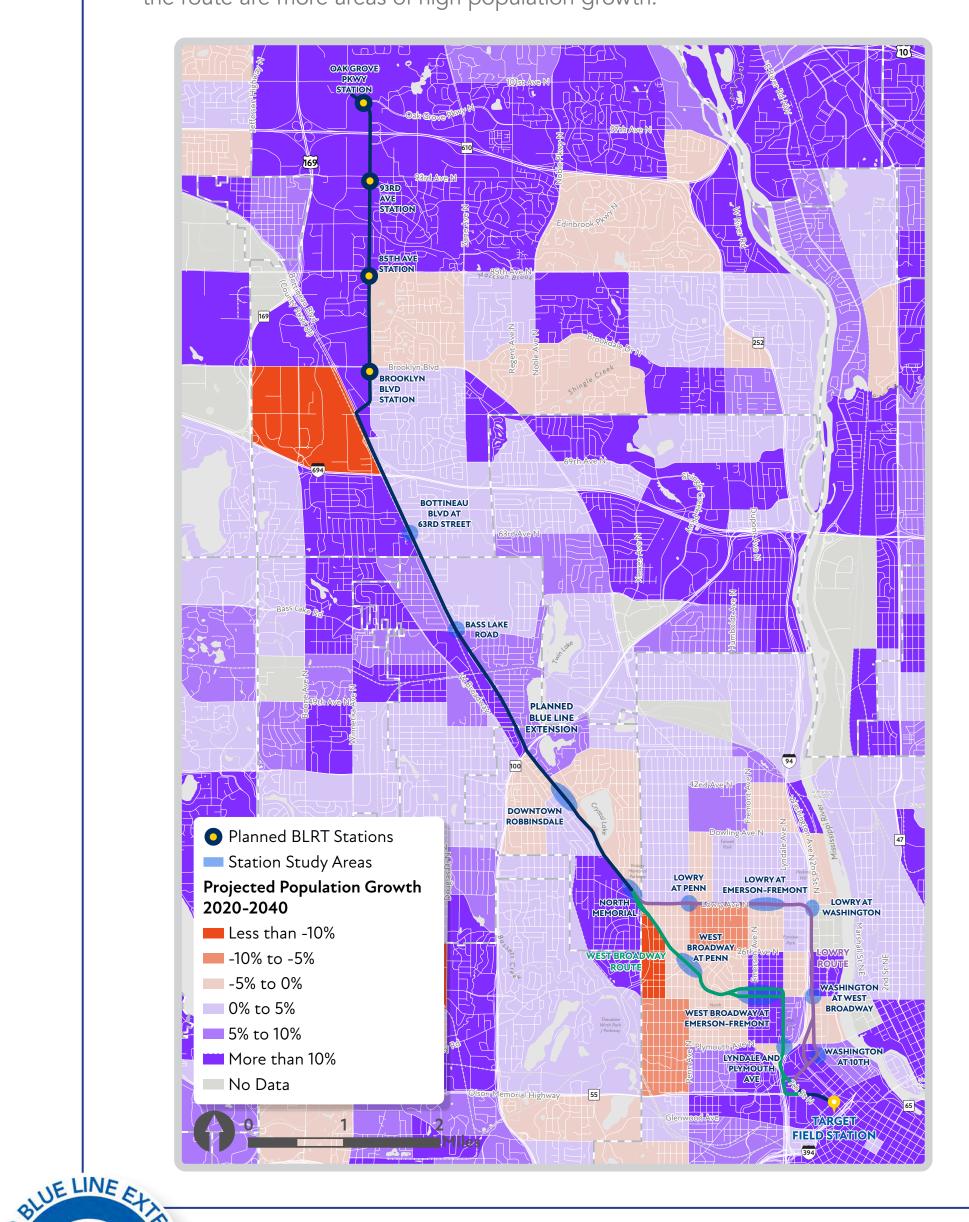
The proposed routes through Minneapolis serve numerous destinations and places important to the community, which are identified by name on the map. There are notable clusters of destinations around West Broadway at Emerson-Fremont, including Cub Foods and places of worship, and Lowry at Penn, including North Regional Library and several grocery stores.



POPULATION GROWTH

This map shows the anticipated population growth between 2020 and 2040 using Metropolitan Council's Transportation Analysis Zones data.

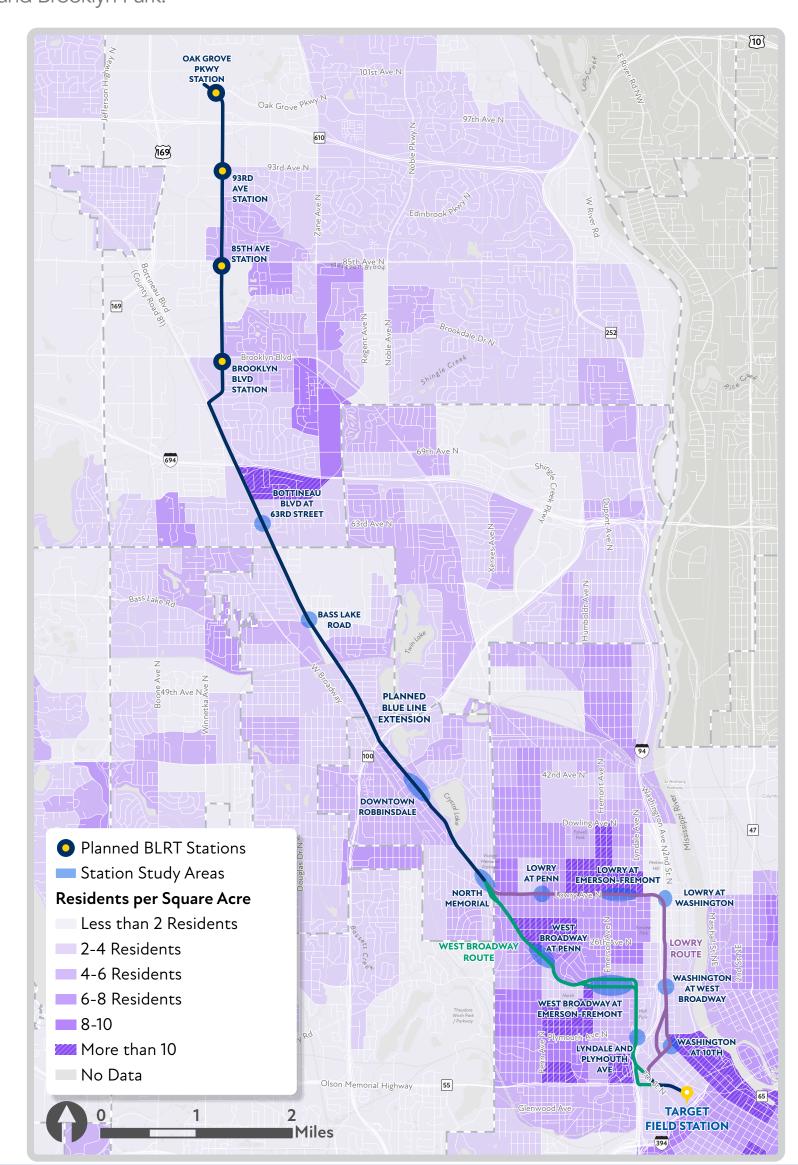
In Minneapolis, the proposed routes travel through areas that will see high population growth as well as low and negative rates of growth. Further north along the route are more areas of high population growth.



POPULATION DENSITY

This map shows the number of residents per acre for census block groups in the cities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park using 2019 U.S. Census American Community Survey data.

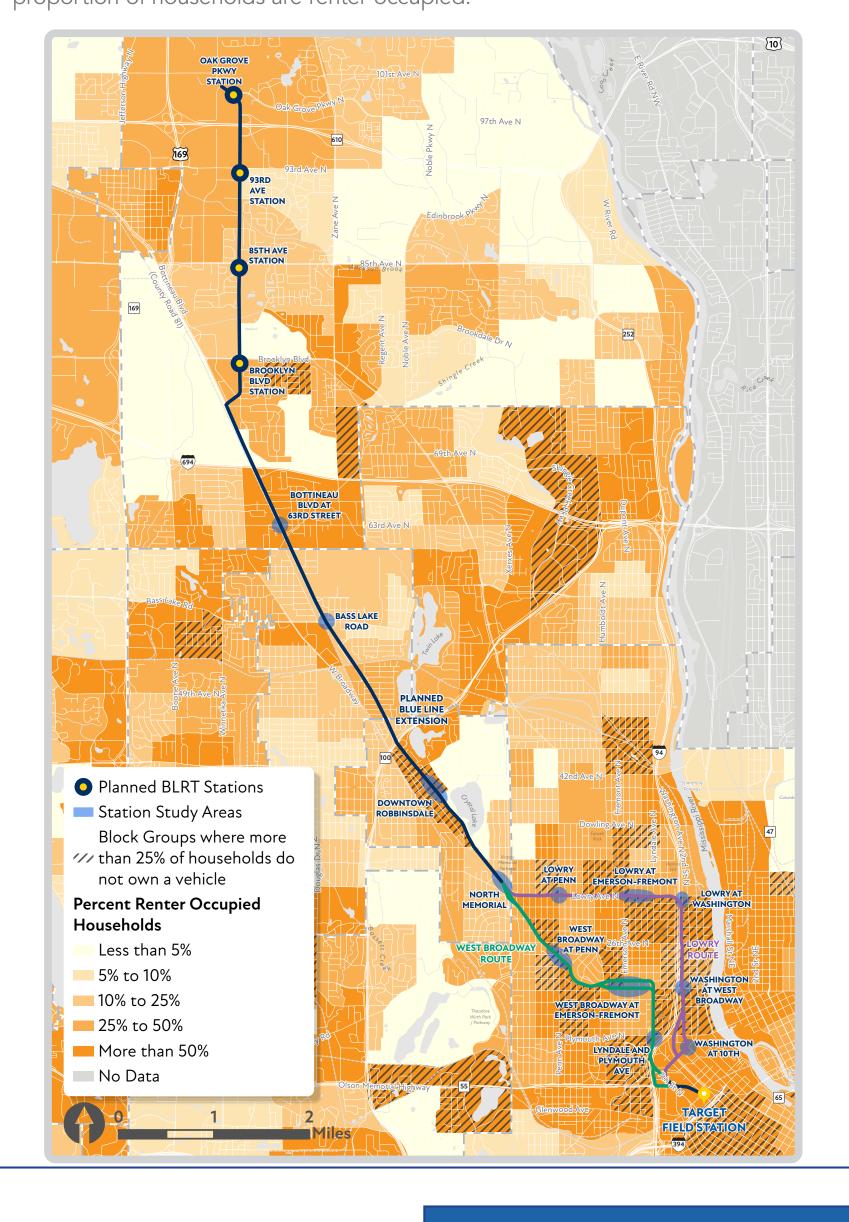
Both proposed Minneapolis routes travel through areas of high population density along West Broadway Avenue and Lowry Avenue. Along Washington Avenue, population density is low. Other areas of relatively high population density are found in Robbinsdale and Brooklyn Park.



RENTER OCCUPIED AND VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

This map shows the percent of renter occupied households and areas where more than 25% of households do not own a vehicle by Census block group using 2019 U.S. Census American Community Survey data.

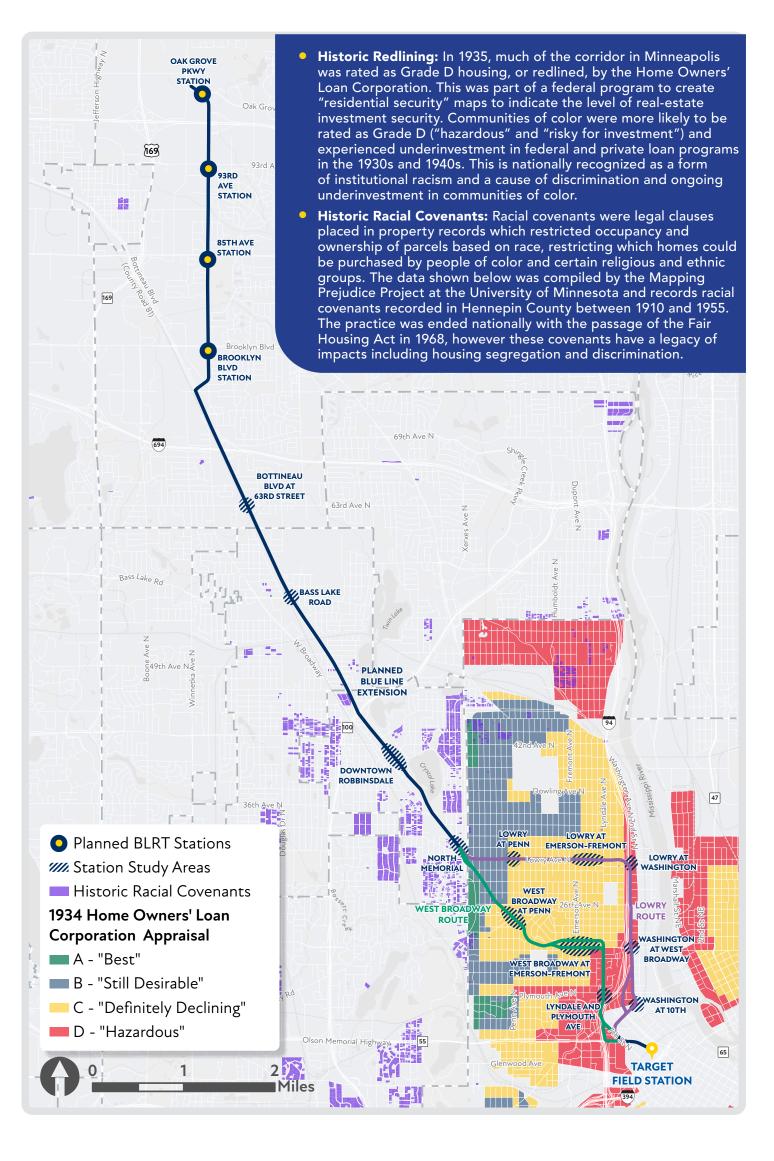
Along both the West Broadway and Lowry routes, there are several block groups where more than 25% of households do not own a vehicle. Similar areas can be found in Robbinsdale and Brooklyn Park. The routes also serve areas where a large proportion of households are renter-occupied.



REDLINING AND RACIAL COVENANTS

This map shows historic redlining and racial covenants in Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. Source: Metropolitan Council

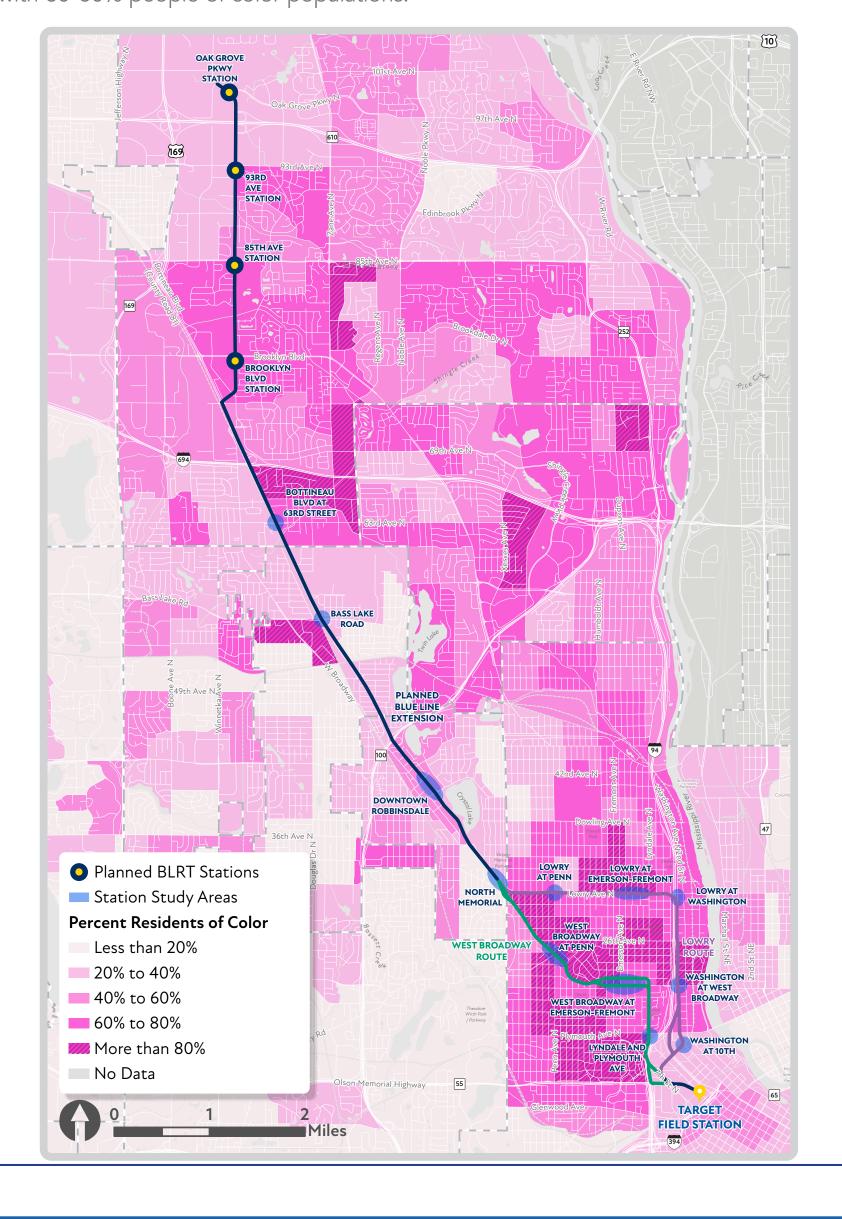
Neighborhoods in Minneapolis were extensively redlined, graded as C - "Definitely Declining" or D - "Hazardous," while areas outside of Minneapolis city limits used racial covenants to exclude residents of color.



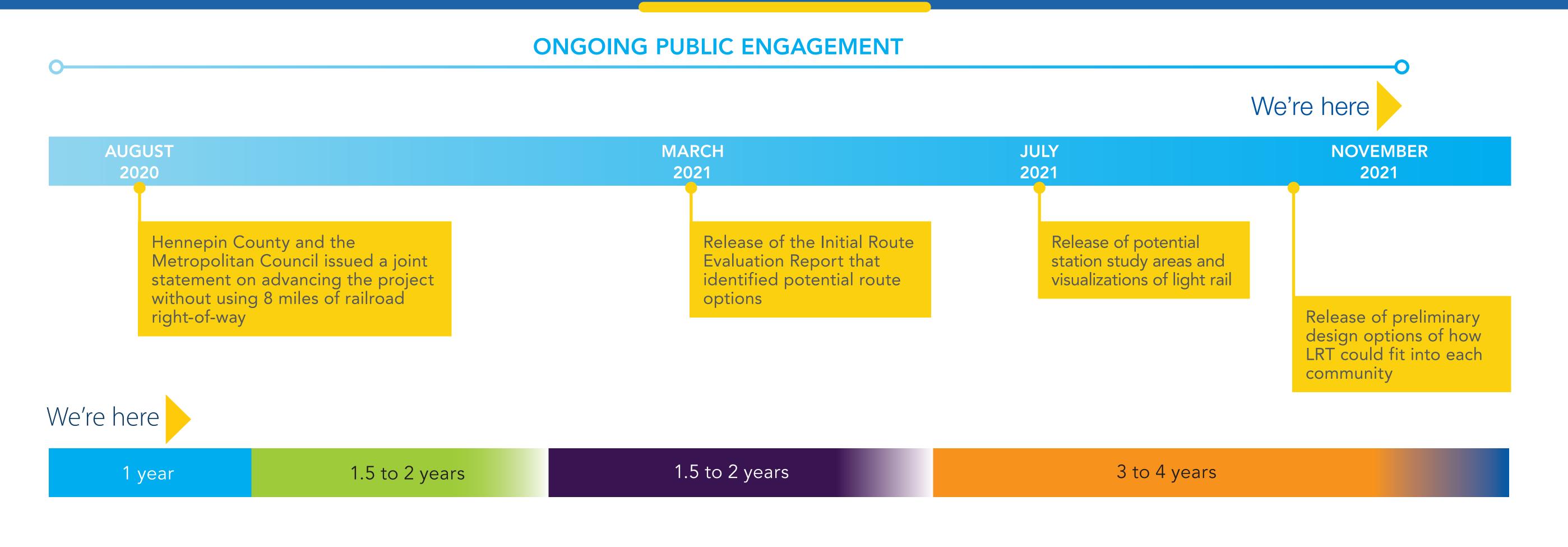
RESIDENTS OF COLOR

This map shows the percentage of residents of color for census block groups in the cities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park using 2019 U.S. Census American Community Survey data.

Both proposed routes through Minneapolis would serve communities with high concentrations of people of color, including areas where more than 80% of the population are people of color. Further north, the route serves areas in Brooklyn Park with 60-80% people of color populations.



SCHEDULE/NEXT STEPS



Identify community supported route

Blue Line Extension Community Supported Route:

- Best meets the Project Principles and Goals
- Grounded in community feedback through collaboration with stakeholders
- Supported by Project corridor communities and decision-makers

Environmental review

Document benefits and impacts of the project

Municipal Consent

Seek city support of the LRT design

Engineering

Develop construction ready design plans

Federal funding

Construction and Full Funding Grant Agreement

Light Rail Transit projects are complex and unforeseen challenges arise. Schedules and timelines are subject to change.

Goal — Line

opens in 2028





STAY CONNECTED!

Visit BlueLineExt.org for more information to sign-up for the project newsletter, and share your comments, questions and concerns on our interactive feedback map.

For project questions or to invite us to an event, contact:

Robbinsdale/Minneapolis/ Brooklyn Park and Overall Project Questions: Sophia Ginis – <u>Sophia.Ginis@metrotransit.org</u>

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