

# WELCOME

Welcome to the  
**METRO Blue**  
**Line Extension**  
**Open House**



METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION



# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

**There are many steps and decisions yet to be made before this project is built. Project staff are committed to building on the feedback received to date and will continue to engage the community in meaningful ways to help inform all phases of this project.**

To inform project decision-making, public engagement was integrated throughout activities from 2020 to 2022 through the following activities:

- Online and in-person surveys
- Online interactive maps
- Online and in-person comment forms
- Phone calls and emails
- Door-knocking
- In-person and virtual project-hosted community meetings such as listening sessions, open houses, and workshops
- Stakeholder check-ins with community and business groups
- Community events attendance
- Pop-ups at bus stops, food shelves, community centers, and grocery stores
- Information at libraries
- Corridor tours

## Engagement Highlights

Since 2020, engagement has resulted in:

- Approximately **4,000 survey response**
- **1,500 comments** on the interactive map
- **300 events** resulting in nearly 11,000 points of contact with the public
- **Reached +1 million** through paid community and cultural advertisements
- Corridor postcards - mailed to **26,000 households/businesses**
- Over **500 emails and phone calls**
- **217 comments** from comment forms
- Majority of activities with environmental justice communities

## Community Cohort Members

Twelve cohort members were selected to assist the project from March 2021 to January 2022 and six cohort members are contracted through summer 2022 to ensure ongoing engagement support through the route selection process.

The community consultant organizations were selected to reflect constituencies identified in project stakeholder analysis along with their geographic focus within designated project areas, prioritizing low-income communities and communities of color.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COHORT	AREAS SERVED
Asian Media Access Inc ↻	Area 1, 2, 3
CAPI USA	Area 1, 3
Encouraging Leaders ↻	Area 3
Harrison Neighborhood Association	Area 3
Juxtaposition Arts	Area 3
Lao Center of MN ↻	Area 1, 3
Liberian Business Association ↻	Area 1, 2
Northside Economic Opportunity Network ↻	Area 2, 3
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council	Area 3
West Broadway Business Coalition	Area 3
Jordan Area Community Council	Area 3
Hawthorne Neighborhood Council	Area 3
Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza ⚡	Area 1, 2, 3

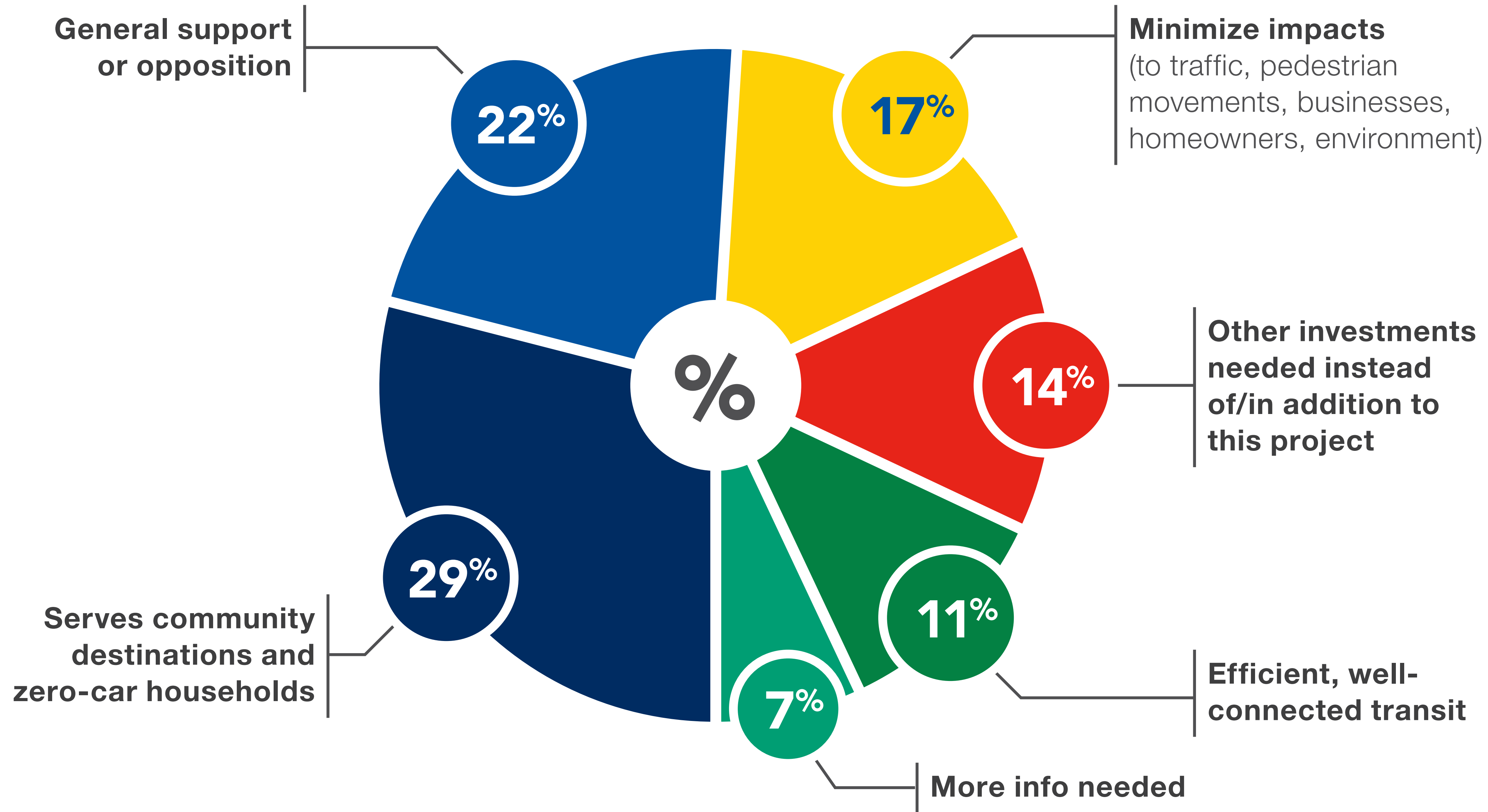
↻ Continuing cohort engagement in 2022

⚡ Began in February 2022



# SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Below are the common themes that emerged from feedback received during the Draft Report comment period (December 2021 – January 2022). Based on comments received, project staff provided additional analysis and figures in the Route Modification Report to support the route recommendation.



October 9, 2021 Bike, Walk, Bus tour of Minneapolis route options and station study areas



Community meeting in Robbinsdale



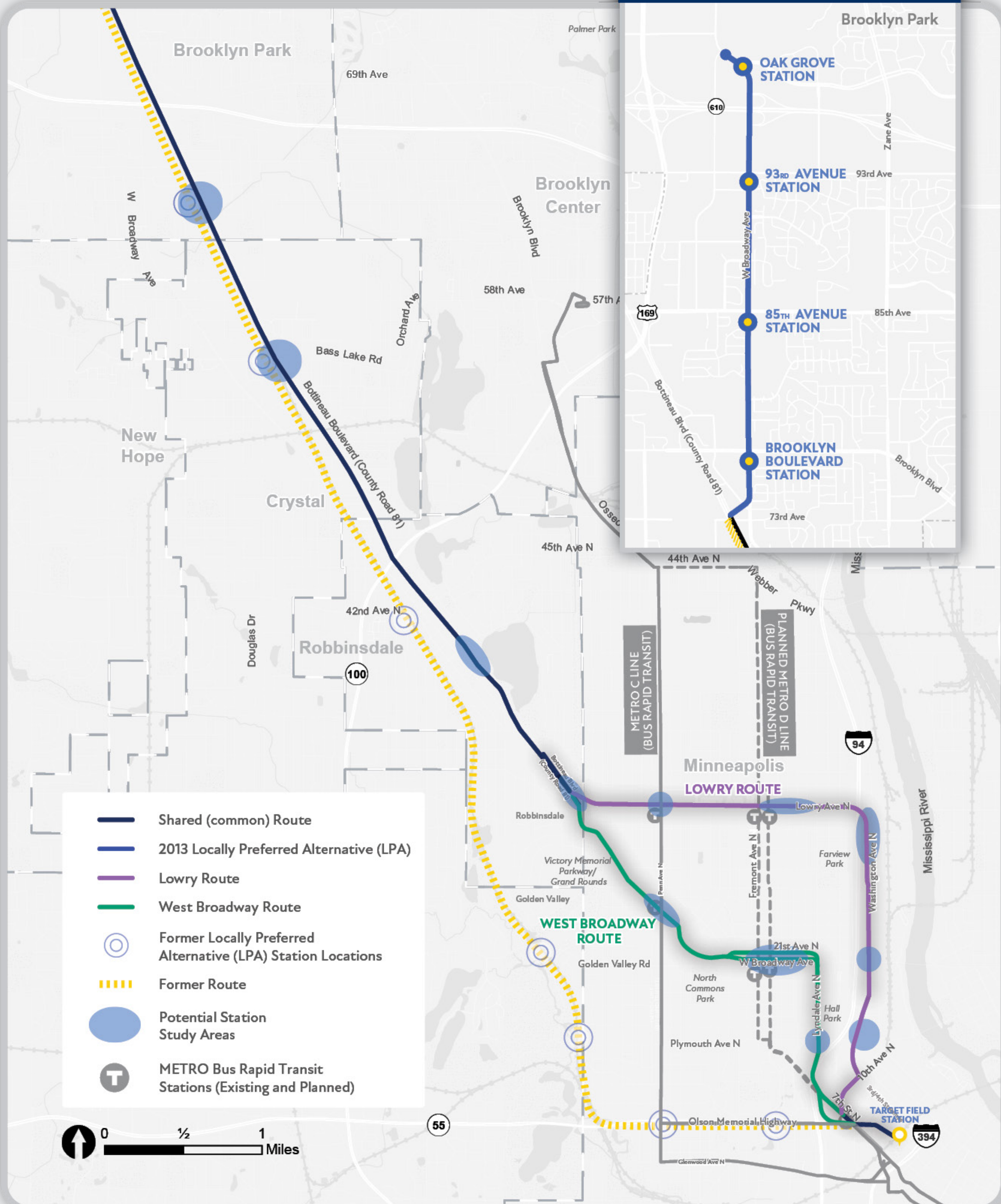
Talk Out Lao'd Facebook live event hosted by Lao Center of MN on May 26, 2021



# ROUTES FOR CONSIDERATION

Since March 2021, the project team has been evaluating and collecting public feedback on two routes in Minneapolis: one along West Broadway (shown in green) and one along Lowry Avenue (shown in purple) to connect to the cities of Robbinsdale and Crystal along County Road 81 and then into Brooklyn Park. The routes evaluated represent the best options to extend the METRO Blue Line Extension based on community input, technical considerations and past project work.

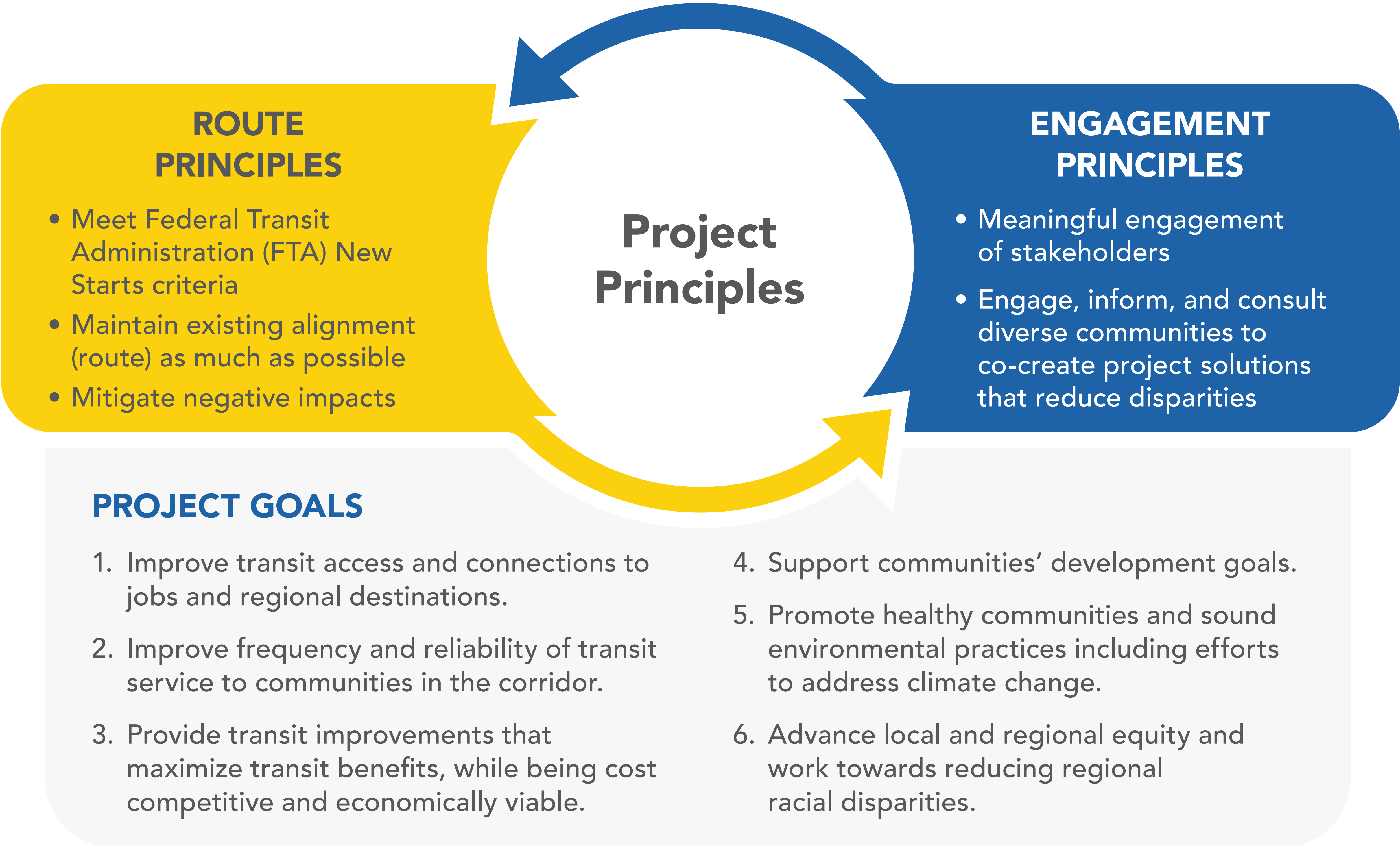
## PLANNED STATIONS IN BROOKLYN PARK



# HOW ROUTE OPTIONS WERE EVALUATED

## Project Principles and Goals

The route evaluation principles and goals were updated through community engagement. Project goals express overall project priorities, while evaluation criteria provide specific, measurable ways to assess how well route options meet and inform these goals.



# SUMMARY OF THE ROUTE EVALUATION

Each route has been evaluated based on its ability to meet project goals.

## EXCELLENT

Unique and/or high potential to provide exemplary positive benefits

## GOOD







Meets project goal

## POOR

Does not meet project goal

All the routes have received an overall assessment of “good” in their ability to serve the community. In some cases, these routes achieve an excellent rating based on unique features and the potential to deliver exemplary positive benefits. None of the routes have been assessed as “poor,” which would mean they did not meet the project goals.

### ASSESSMENT OF ROUTE OPTIONS TO DEFINED GOALS

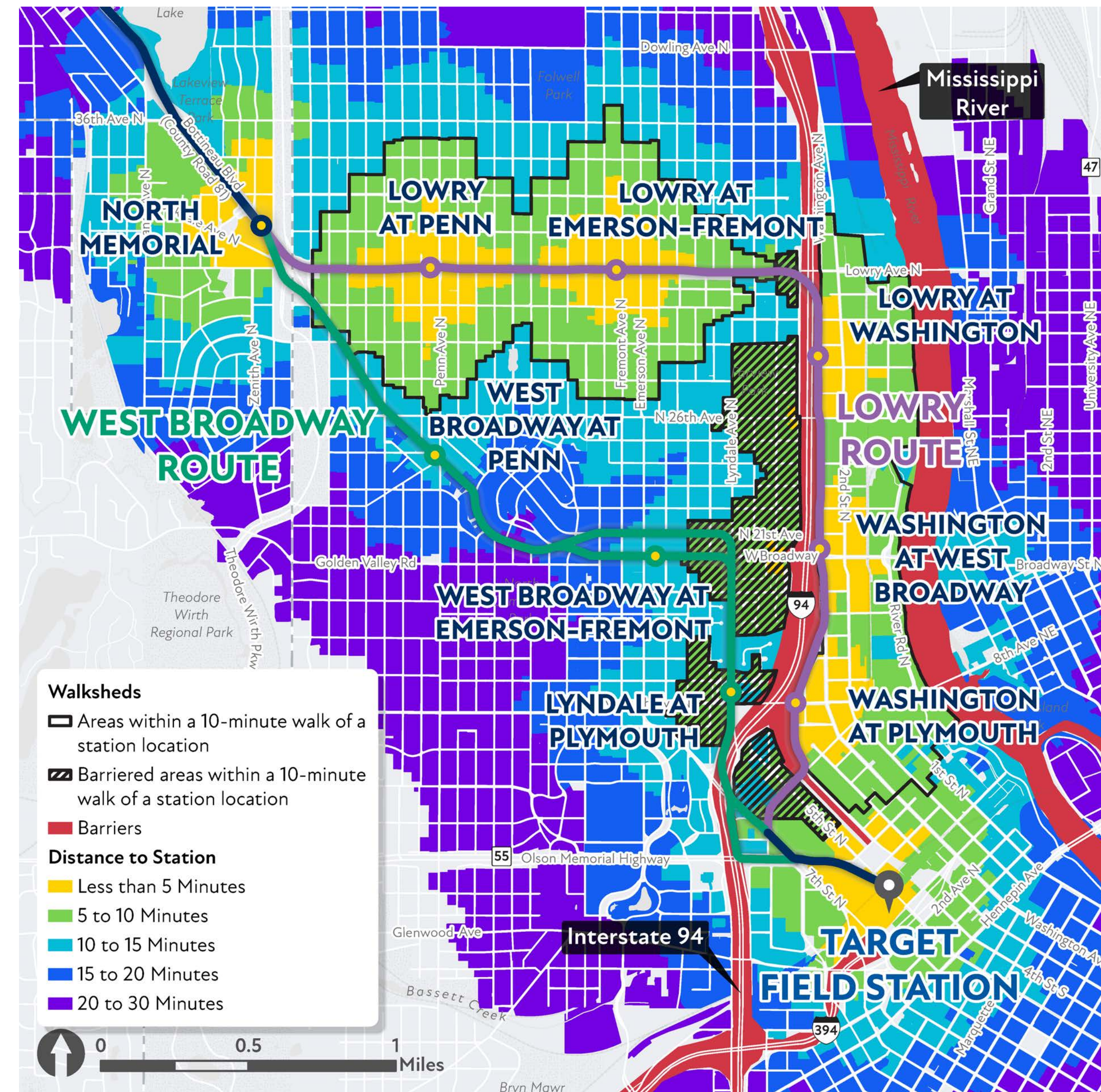
PROJECT GOAL	BOTTINEAU BOULEVARD (COUNTY ROAD 81) IN BROOKLYN PARK AND CRYSTAL	BOTTINEAU BOULEVARD (COUNTY ROAD 81) IN ROBBINSDALE	LOWRY ROUTE	WEST BROADWAY ROUTE
 <b>Goal 1:</b> Improve transit access and connections to jobs and regional destinations	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT
 <b>Goal 2:</b> Improve frequency and reliability of transit service to communities in the corridor	EXCELLENT	EXCELLENT	GOOD	GOOD
 <b>Goal 3:</b> Provide transit improvements that maximize transit benefits, while being cost competitive and economically viable	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
 <b>Goal 4:</b> Support communities’ development goals	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	EXCELLENT
 <b>Goal 5:</b> Promote healthy communities and sound environmental practices including efforts to address climate change	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
 <b>Goal 6:</b> Advance local and regional equity and work towards reducing regional racial disparities	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	EXCELLENT



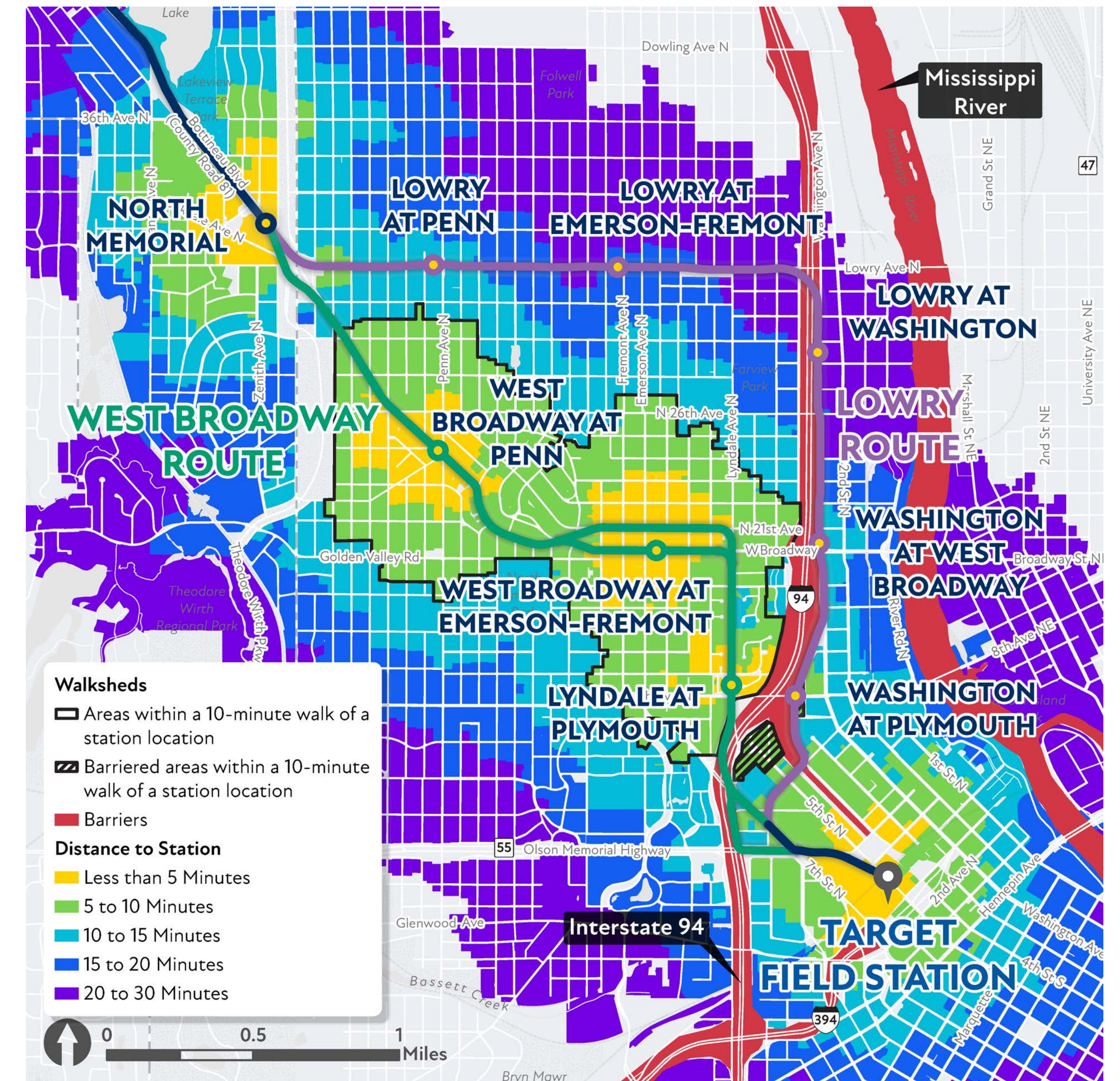
# WALKSHEDS AND BARRIERS TO STATIONS

- A significant portion of the community would be barred from accessing stations along Washington Avenue on the Lowry route due to limited pedestrian crossings across I-94.
- Only a small portion of the Lyndale at Plymouth walkshed is barred along the West Broadway route.
- Although the Lowry route serves a higher total population through its five stations, when accounting for barred populations, the West Broadway route serves a higher percentage of low-income populations, residents of color, and zero vehicle households through three stations on a shorter route.

**10-Minute Route Walksheds and Barriers (Lowry Route)**



**10-Minute Route Walksheds and Barriers (West Broadway Route)**



**Data Source:** Urban Footprint

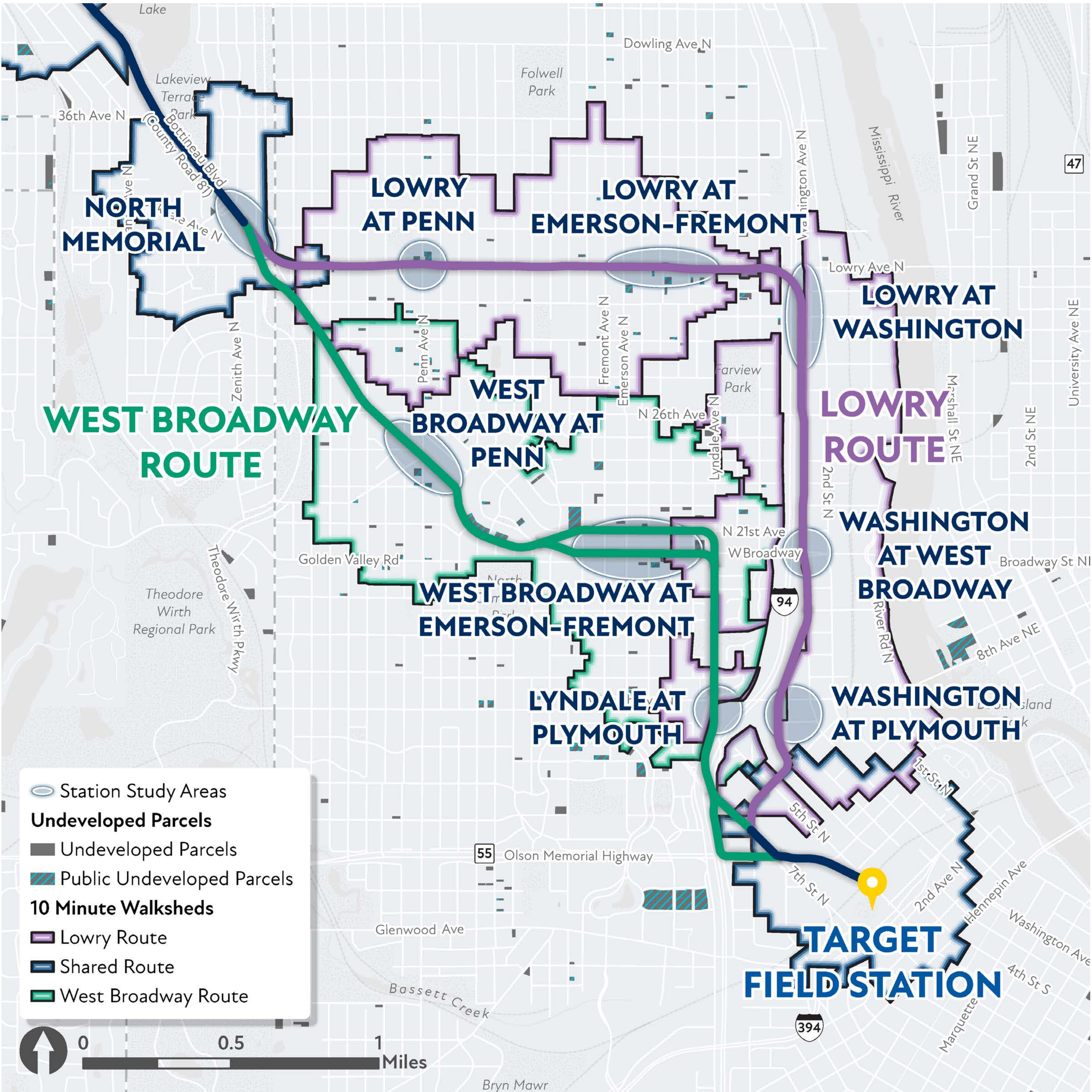
Urban Footprint is an analysis software that generates travel time in minutes walking from a parcel to the nearest point of interest based on the shortest distance within the existing pedestrian network.



# UNDEVELOPED PARCELS

- Based on experience with both the Blue Line and the Green Line in the Twin Cities, it is anticipated that public and private investment would be made during design, construction, and after the BLRT is open.
- Through the programs and policies that come out of the Anti-Displacement Workgroup, the intent would be to focus the investments on housing and business development and redevelopment that benefits the community.
- One indication of redevelopment potential is the presence of undeveloped parcels in vicinity of station areas. This map shows undeveloped parcels within a 10-minute walking distance of proposed station areas.
- There are more undeveloped properties along the West Broadway route, which accounts for the higher acreage of vacant land.

Undeveloped Parcels (West Broadway and Lowry Routes)



Data Source: Metropolitan Council - 2020 Land Use

\*Undeveloped: Land not currently used for any defined purpose that may or may not contain buildings or other structures or has no discernable use based upon the aerial photos or available data. Undeveloped may include non-protected wetlands or lands currently under development.





# DESTINATIONS AND COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED IMPORTANT PLACES

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.

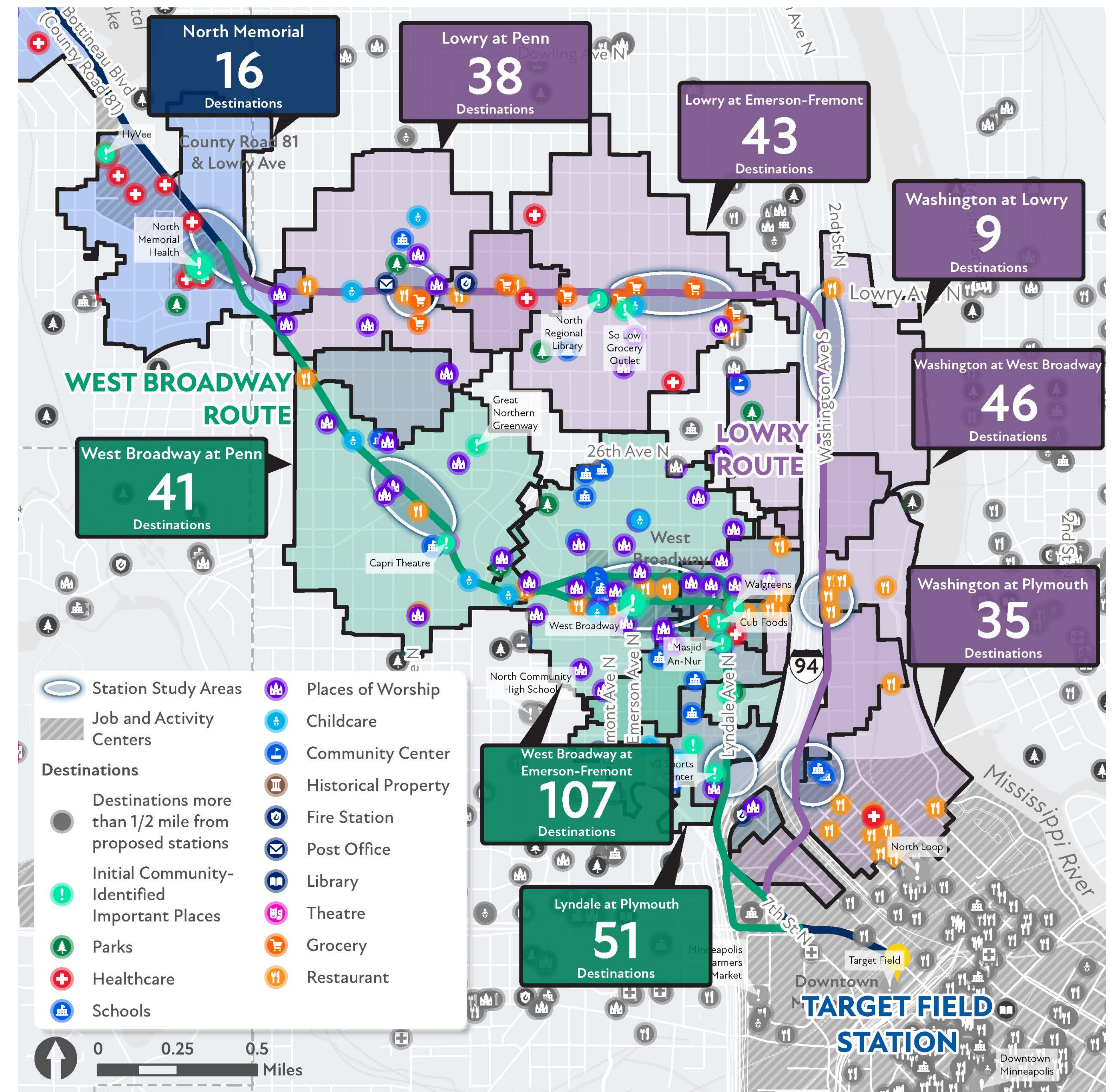
## Lowry Route:

- The Washington Avenue section of the Lowry route and its proposed stations serve a limited type and number of existing destinations.
- While the south end of Upper Harbor Terminal is within a 15-minute walk from the Washington at Lowry station area, the proposed land uses within this area are mostly manufacturing or industrial.
- The Lowry Avenue section would serve some community destinations, including the North Regional Library.

## West Broadway Route:

- The West Broadway route and proposed stations would serve the existing vibrant cultural and economic corridor with connections to regional destinations and services (i.e., Capri Theater, Masjid An-Nur, Shiloh Temple)
- Minneapolis Public Schools district offices and the West Broadway business district contribute to making West Broadway an important Job and Activity Center.

**Destinations and Community-Identified Important Places (West Broadway and Lowry Routes)**



Data Source: Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Council, and Community Input



# PEDESTRIAN ACCESS CLOSURES

- Based on feedback we heard from the community, how light rail would impact pedestrian access across West Broadway or Lowry Avenue was an important issue to evaluate.
- There are more opportunities for pedestrians to cross at the existing and proposed signalized intersections along the West Broadway route.
- The project team will evaluate where pedestrian crossings need to be added as part of the next phase of the project.

## Pedestrian Access Closures (West Broadway and Lowry Routes)



\*Closures are the permanent removals of pedestrian access at an intersection because of light rail tracks preventing crossings where crossing is currently permitted.

\*Bikeways include designated bike trails, shared use trails, and on-street bike lanes.

Data source: City of Minneapolis



# ROUTE RECOMMENDATION

The route recommendation is to extend the existing Blue Line from Target Field station along West Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis to County Road 81 in Crystal and Robbinsdale, and along West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park.

This route will:

- Connect people to new opportunities and destinations.
- Link people more efficiently to educational and employment opportunities, reduce transit commute times, and increase access to goods and services in an area where building community wealth is a priority.
- Improve public health and reduce pollution by connecting people to quality health care and providing clean active transportation options.
- Make a generational and unprecedented transit investment in a corridor that has experienced a history of systemic racism and high percentage of zero car households.



**METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION**



# ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

## 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

- In March 2022, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) brought together a diverse Anti-Displacement Workgroup with seats for agency and community partners to begin developing Anti-Displacement initiatives.
- The Anti-Displacement Workgroup will center its work around four day-long workshops between May 2022 and February 2023 on the following topics: lessons from the existing Blue and Green lines (including Blue Line Extension planning), housing and cultural displacement, business displacement, and finalizing recommendations.
- CURA will provide recommendations that address potential displacement of residents and commercial businesses that may occur during planning, construction and after the line is completed, as well as provide a report and new research on the topic.

## Anti-Displacement Work Group

Work group consist of approximately 21 members:

- 6 government representatives
- 6 community members affiliated with organizations businesses
- 6 non-affiliated community members
- 3 philanthropic organization representatives

For more information about this work, including meetings and other resources, visit: [mybluelineext.org/anti-displacement](https://mybluelineext.org/anti-displacement).



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# NEXT STEPS



## Environmental Review

- The new route requires additional environmental documentation. New analyses will be conducted to understand the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts that may occur because of the design, construction, and operation of light rail.
- This process will determine how to avoid or reduce those impacts. If impacts cannot be avoided, then mitigation will be considered.



## Station Area Planning

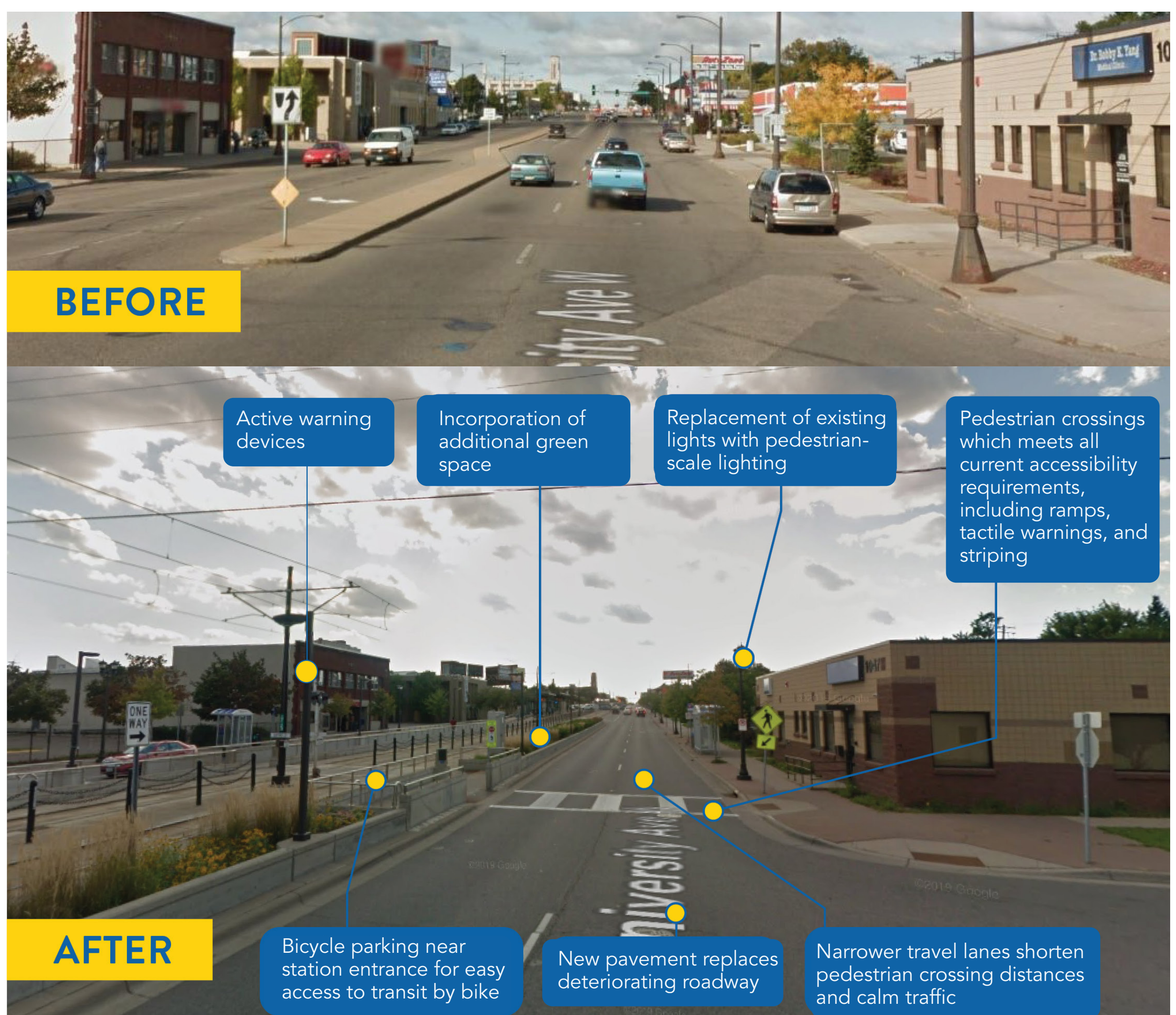
- The area within a half-mile radius (or a ten-minute walk) of planned light rail transit stations is commonly referred to as the “station area.” Typically, this is where investments in transit infrastructure are expected to generate the greatest community opportunities and impacts.
- Station area planning typically happens once engineering and design are underway and could include walking, biking, and rolling connections between stations and station area neighborhoods, landscaping, lighting and other infrastructure improvements.



## Engineering and Design

The following are key engineering and design next steps:

- **Light Rail Design and Station Locations:** The final locations of the light rail tracks and station locations will be determined through engineering, community engagement, coordination with cities and environmental study.
- **Pedestrian access:** Safe and efficient pedestrian connections between stations and station area neighborhoods are critical in station area planning, and a key criterion to achieve federal funding. Pedestrian facilities support connections to nearby destinations and provide access for people of all ages and abilities to light rail. This part of design and engineering will take place between summer 2022 and winter 2024.



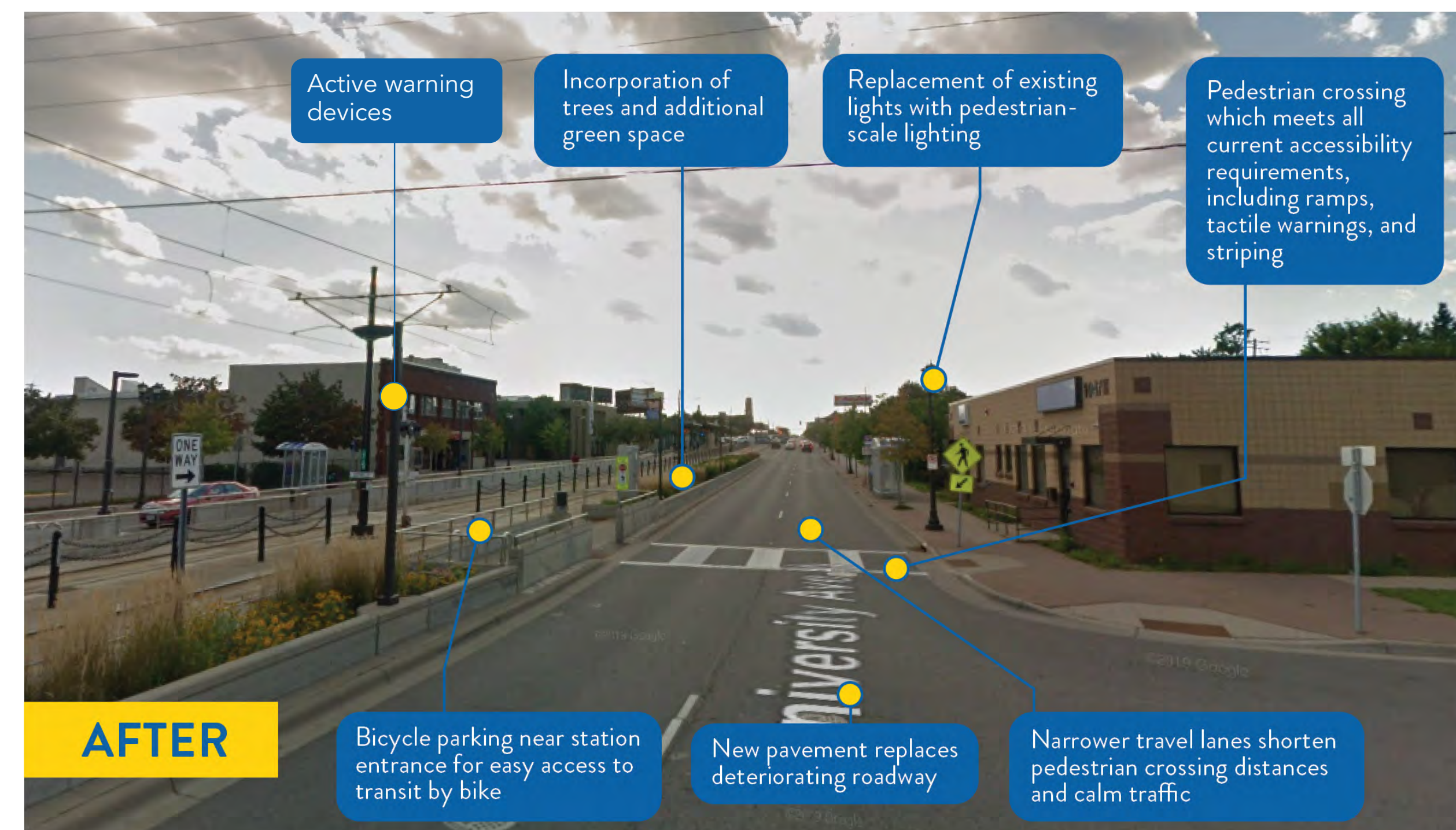
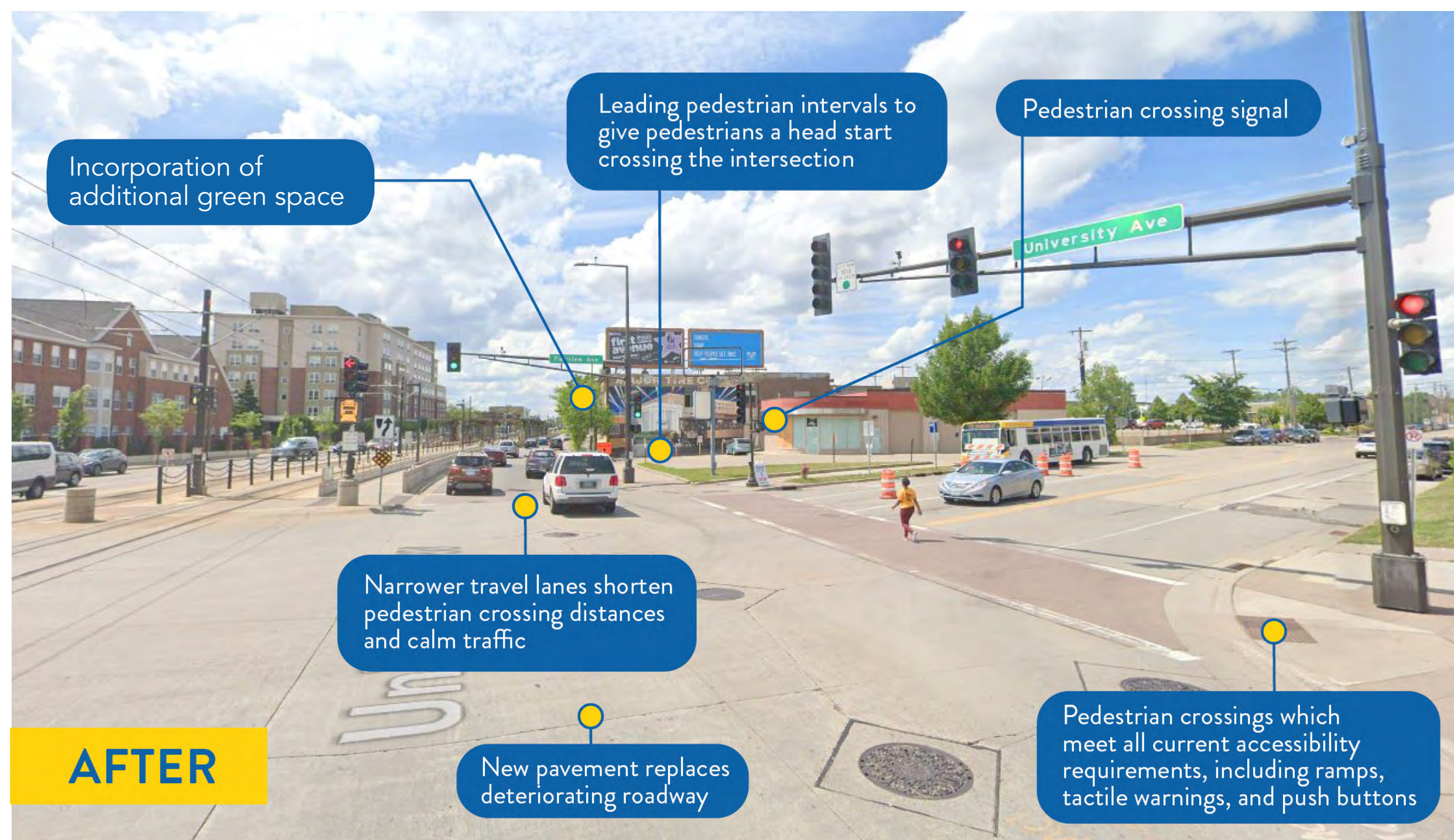
Example of pedestrian and station area improvements along the METRO Green Line

- **Bicycle access:** Safe and efficient bicycle connections between stations and station area neighborhoods help expand access to a broader area. Bicycle facilities includes both designated infrastructure improvements and stations features such as bicycle parking. This part of design and engineering will take place between summer 2022 and winter 2024.
- **Parking and Park and Rides:** At this time the following locations are being considered for some form of park and ride: Oak Grove Parkway Station, 63rd Avenue Station, Bass Lake Road Station, and the Downtown Robbinsdale Station. Where current on-street parking is impacted by the project, further study will be completed as part of the environmental phase to determine what options may be needed to address lost parking.



# 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.



# COMMUNITY BENEFITS

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

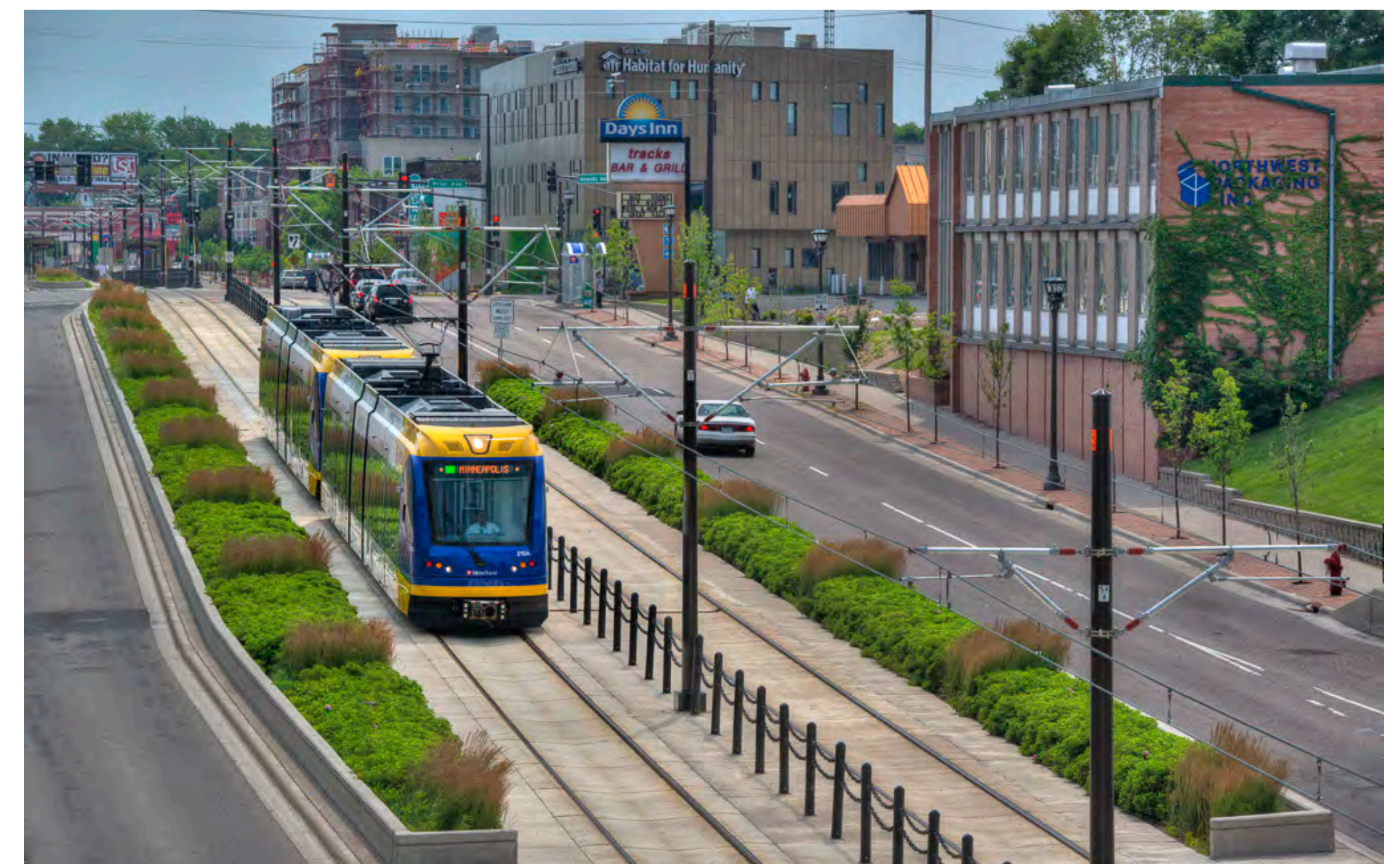
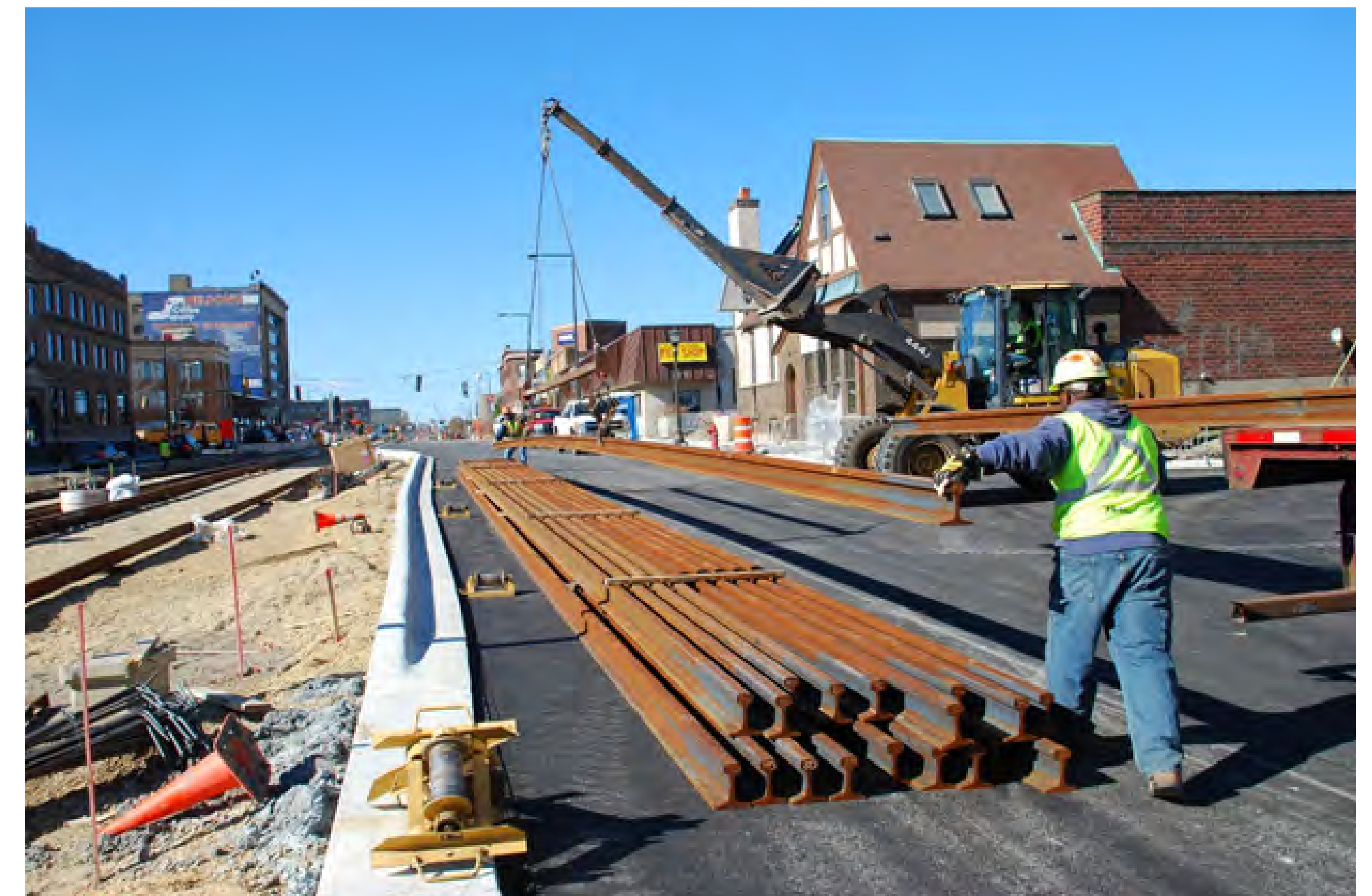
- Light rail offers a more environmentally friendly transportation option with electric-powered trains rather than single-occupancy, gas-dependent vehicles, which reduces pollution and the community's carbon footprint
- Land vacated for light rail can be used to increase green space and community-supported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

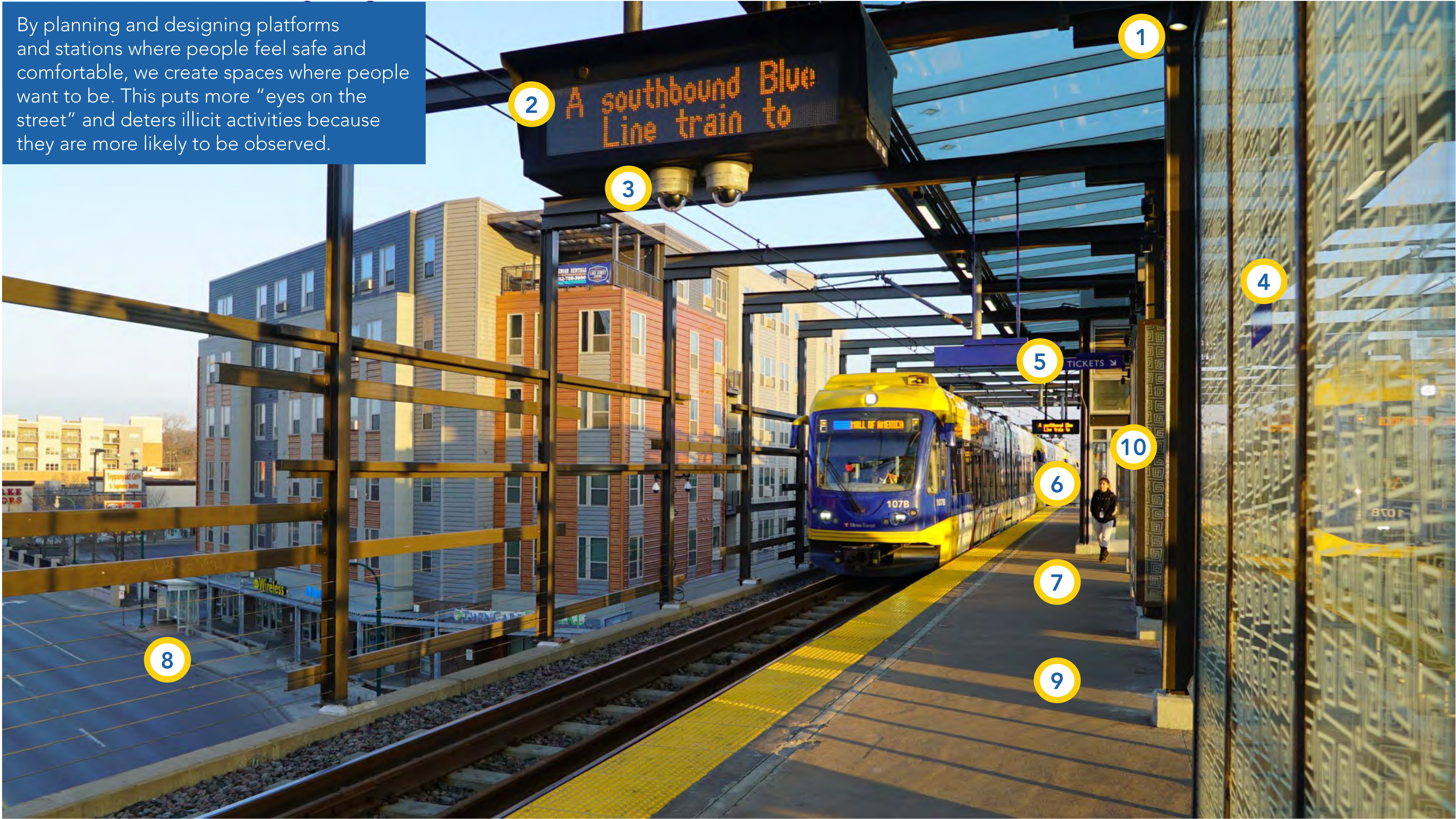


# SAFETY AND SECURITY

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:

By planning and designing platforms and stations where people feel safe and comfortable, we create spaces where people want to be. This puts more “eyes on the street” and deters illicit activities because they are more likely to be observed.



- 1 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.
- 5 Consistent wayfinding and signage
- 6 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.
- 8 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





# SCHEDULE



*LRT projects are complex and unforeseen challenges arise. Schedules and timelines are subject to change.*

## 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



# STAY CONNECTED!

Visit [BlueLineExt.org](https://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:**

**Brooklyn Park/Minneapolis:**

Pa Nhue Vue – [PaNhue.Vue@metrotransit.org](mailto:PaNhue.Vue@metrotransit.org)

**Robbinsdale/Crystal:**

Kjerstin Yager – [Kjerstin.Yager@metrotransit.org](mailto:Kjerstin.Yager@metrotransit.org)

Share your Blue Line Extension story at: [mybluelineext.org](https://mybluelineext.org)



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