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S.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

S.1 Introduction

The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project (See Figure S-1) is an approximately 11-mile line that would serve the Minneapolis and St. Paul downtown areas. It will provide service to major destinations along the corridor, such as the University of Minnesota (U of M) and the Midway and Capitol areas, as well as providing connections to the local bus network, the Hiawatha LRT line, and the Northstar Commuter Rail line establishing the core of a seamless regional transit system.



Downtown Minneapolis (left) and Downtown St. Paul (right) – The Central Corridor LRT will enhance connectivity and support economic development in the Twin Cities.

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is the latest step in providing a framework for local decision-making as the Central Corridor LRT project is advanced. Its purpose is to document the purpose and need for the project, present a discussion of the alternatives considered, and address the anticipated social, economic, and environmental effects that might result from implementing the No-Build, Baseline, and Locally Preferred alternatives within the Central Corridor. The FEIS also serves as the primary document to facilitate review of the project by federal, state, regional, and local agencies, decision-makers, and the public.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the lead federal agency, the Metropolitan Council, the local lead agency, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as a cooperating agency, have prepared this FEIS to disclose how changes to the proposed Central Corridor LRT Project might affect the human and natural environments and how unavoidable impacts can be mitigated. This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been prepared in accordance with regulations developed by the Council on Environmental Quality for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the United States (U.S.) Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA).



S.2 Overview

This executive summary provides an overview of the following topics analyzed in the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project FEIS:

- Project history
- Elements of the Preferred Alternative
- Social, environmental and transportation issues
- Agency coordination and community outreach
- Next steps and actions

S.2.1 Project History and Context

The Twin Cities metropolitan area is unique among major metropolitan areas in that it has two contiguous central cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, and two downtown central business districts. The cities and business districts are linked by the Central Corridor. For the past 20 years, the Central Corridor has consistently been identified as a location where mobility and capacity should be improved. It has been the focus of several studies to determine the feasibility of various mass transit technologies and their potential alignments. Each of these studies identified the Central Corridor as the region's priority corridor for mass transit investment. Because the Central Corridor is the physical spine of the overall regional transportation network, its high transit ridership potential represents one of the region's best opportunities for a significant capital investment—an investment that can be leveraged to increase ridership and have a positive impact on the region's transit system.

Rapid transit in the Central Corridor was initially explored in the *Midway Corridor Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, 1991. Transit options were explored as alternatives to traditional roadway improvements in the Central Corridor because physical and funding constraints in this developed area would make expansion of the existing roadway system costly, as well as socially and environmentally disruptive.

The Central Corridor Transit Study (Transit Study) was initiated in 1999. The Transit Study process was done in two parts, 1) a feasibility study for commuter rail, which was completed in 2001, and 2) an Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) for baseline, LRT and BRT in the corridor, which was completed in 2006. The Transit Study identified a multi-modal package of transportation improvements. These improvements would address future travel demand and meet the goals of the community including economic opportunity, community and environmental benefits, transportation, and mobility improvements.

The Transit Study evaluated potential transit technologies, alignments, and station locations in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. Evaluation criteria included cost effectiveness, mobility and accessibility, and community and environmental benefits.

The Central Corridor LRT Project development process was recorded in the following documents: Universe of Alternatives Memorandum (July 2000), Technical Memorandum 2: Screen I Evaluation (September 2000), and Technical Memorandum 3: Screen II Evaluation (January 2002).

S.2.2 Alternatives Evaluated in the AA/DEIS

- Based on the Screen II Evaluation results, three build options were retained for advancement in the project development process. The initiation of the AA/DEIS for the Central Corridor began with a formal scoping process, which provided an opportunity for regulatory agencies and the public to respond to the concept of proposed transit in the Central Corridor LRT Study Area and to identify issues of concern. The alternatives presented during scoping included LRT and bus rapid transit (BRT) on University Avenue, LRT on Interstate 94 (I-94), a No-Build Alternative, and a Baseline Alternative.
- The University Avenue LRT Alternative** provided LRT service between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis and to the U of M, primarily in exclusive lanes in the center of University Avenue.
- The University Avenue BRT Alternative** provided BRT service between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis and to the U of M, primarily in an exclusive guideway in the center of University Avenue.
- The I-94 LRT Alternative** provided LRT service between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis and to the U of M, primarily in barrier-separated exclusive lanes in the median of I-94.



This computer generated photo shows what a light rail train might look like as it passes through the Capitol area in downtown St. Paul.

Through the scoping process, two build alternatives were selected for evaluation in the AA/DEIS in addition to a No-Build and Baseline Alternative. The build alternatives included: University Avenue LRT and University Avenue BRT.

After publication of the AA/DEIS and completion of the public hearings, the Metropolitan Council adopted the AA/DEIS locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Central Corridor (June 28, 2006, Metropolitan Council Resolution No. 2006-15). The AA/DEIS LPA is 11 miles in length of which 9.8 miles consists of new alignment and 1.2 miles use the existing Hiawatha LRT alignment in downtown Minneapolis. The elements of the AA/DEIS LPA include the following elements listed by planning segment:

Downtown Minneapolis

The Central Corridor LRT was proposed to connect with the Hiawatha LRT at-grade just east of the Downtown East/Metrodome Station.

University of Minnesota and Prospect Park

The LRT was proposed to run in the median of 3rd Street and 4th Street. It would have connected to Washington Avenue and then run in a tunnel under Washington Avenue through the East Bank campus of the U of M. It would then connect with the U of M

Transitway at-grade, and proceed to University Avenue along 29th Avenue SE in Prospect Park.

University Avenue

The LRT was proposed to run at-grade in the median between 29th Avenue SE and Robert Street near the State Capitol.

State Capitol Area and Downtown St. Paul

The LRT was proposed to run at-grade on Robert Street, Columbus Street, Cedar Street, and 4th Street, and terminate in front of the Union Depot.

Stations

The AA/DEIS LPA proposed 16 new stations and would have shared 5 stations with the Hiawatha LRT line for a total of 21 stations. Boarding platforms would be approximately 200 feet long to accommodate two-car trains. Generally, each platform would be furnished with a canopy and windscreen for weather protection, signs, seating, trash receptacles, and self-service fare equipment. Station platforms were proposed to be expanded to 300 feet to accommodate three-car trains in the future.

As noted above, the Central Corridor LRT was proposed to share stations with the Hiawatha LRT in downtown Minneapolis. The Hiawatha LRT runs on 5th Street South with stations at the following locations: Downtown Minneapolis Ballpark Station (5th Street South/5th Avenue North), Warehouse District Station (Hennepin Avenue at 1st Avenue North), Nicollet Mall Station, Government Center Station (between 3rd and 4th Avenue South), and Downtown East/Metrodome Station.

In the University of Minnesota and Prospect Park area, the Central Corridor LRT would have had the following stations: West Bank Station with a depressed center platform near existing bus stop on Washington Avenue, East Bank Station with a depressed center platform in front of Coffman Union on Washington Avenue, Stadium Village Station with a depressed center platform, 29th Avenue SE Station with two side platforms on northwest quadrant of 29th Avenue SE, and University Avenue.

Along University Avenue, the Central Corridor LRT would have had the following Stations: Westgate Station with split side platforms, Raymond Avenue Station with a center platform between Carleton and LaSalle Streets, Fairview Avenue Station with two side platforms on west side of intersection, Snelling Avenue Station with split side platforms, Lexington Parkway Station with split side platforms, Dale Street Station with split side platforms, and Rice Street Station with a center platform on west side of intersection

In the Capitol Area and Downtown St. Paul, the Central Corridor LRT was proposed to have the following stations: Capitol East Station with two side platforms on Columbus Street, west of Robert Street, 10th Street Station with two side platforms in median between 11th and



This walkway crosses I-94 between downtown St. Paul and the Capitol Area. The Central Corridor LRT would include and encourage more pedestrian-friendly facilities near LRT stations.

10th Streets at Cedar Street, 6th Street Station with two side platforms between 7th and 6th Streets at Cedar Street, 4th Street Station with two side platforms between Robert and Minnesota Streets, and Union Depot Station with a center platform with expansion capability in front of the Union Depot.

Yard and Shop

Under the AA/DEIS LPA, the Hiawatha LRT Operations and Maintenance facility was slated for expansion to accommodate additional trains from the Central Corridor LRT. It would also be where LRT administrative staff would report for work and where trains would enter and leave revenue service. An additional maintenance/storage facility near the eastern terminus of the proposed LRT line was also proposed as part of the AA/DEIS LPA. The facility was proposed to include storage for 10 to 12 cars and vehicle washing and cleaning equipment.

S.2.3 Revisions to the AA/DEIS LPA evaluated in the Central Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Subsequent to the completion of the AA/DEIS for the Central Corridor LRT Project, several unresolved policy questions and design element options surfaced, which required additional study. These design considerations responded to changed conditions within the corridor, technical, operational, and financial constraints, and major infrastructure requirements that were not fully documented in the AA/DEIS.

To document and disclose the potential impacts of these elements and changed conditions, a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was required. The SDEIS assisted the Metropolitan Council, FTA, resource agencies, key project partners, and the general public in understanding and resolving key project elements within the context of NEPA. The purpose of the SDEIS process was to explore in a public setting potentially significant effects of implementing proposed changes to the LPA on the physical, human, and natural environment.

Areas of investigation included, but were not limited to, land use, historic and archaeological resources, visual and aesthetic qualities, traffic and parking, modification to existing bridges, noise and vibration, environmental justice, regulatory floodway/floodplain encroachments, coordination with transportation and economic development projects, and construction impacts. Other issues addressed in the SDEIS included: natural areas; ecosystems; rare, threatened, and endangered species; water resources; air/surface water and groundwater quality; energy; potentially contaminated sites; displacements and relocations; Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act; and secondary and cumulative effects. The SDEIS was not intended to repeat all the analyses contained in the project's AA/DEIS. Most analyses were limited to the study area corresponding to key project elements, as well as other project elements that were identified during the SDEIS decision-making process. Potential impacts were evaluated for both the short-term construction period and the long-term effects of operations. Measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any significant adverse impacts were also identified.

S.2.3.1 Key Issue Development and Coordination

Key issues affecting implementation of the AA/DEIS LPA were identified by the Metropolitan Council and other key project stakeholders. These key issues represented engineering constraints, operational issues, concerns of project stakeholders, and FTA comments.

To address the key project issues, the Metropolitan Council and project partners formed issue resolution teams composed of representatives from the cities of St. Paul and

Minneapolis, Ramsey and Hennepin counties, Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB), the State Department of Administration, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and the U of M, as well as other interested stakeholders. The issue resolution teams provided opportunities for key stakeholder participation in refining and resolving each issue, developing design options, and assessing the level of complexity and need for additional environmental review and disclosure during the SDEIS process. Public Outreach and Agency Coordination activities—critical components of the key issues resolution process—were also undertaken during the early stages of preliminary engineering (PE).

A Notice of Intent to prepare an SDEIS for the Central Corridor LRT Project was published in the Federal Register and the Minnesota EQB Monitor on February 25, 2008. According to Minnesota Environmental Review Rules, interested parties had 20 days after the notice to comment on the scope of the SDEIS. Appendix E of the FEIS includes the comments received on the scope of the SDEIS and the corresponding responses.

S.2.3.2 Alternatives in the SDEIS

Due to key changes and design options to the LPA in response to comments received on the AA/DEIS and the Project subsequent to the selection of the LPA, technical and operational constraints, major infrastructure requirements that were not fully documented in the AA/DEIS, physical conditions that changed within the corridor since publication of the AA/DEIS, and substantive comments received during the AA/DEIS public comment period, nine project elements were identified as having the potential to result in significant social, economic, and environmental impacts (Key Project Elements). The following alternatives were considered in the SDEIS: SDEIS No-Build Alternative, SDEIS Baseline Alternative, and the Key Project Elements, which are described in the following section.

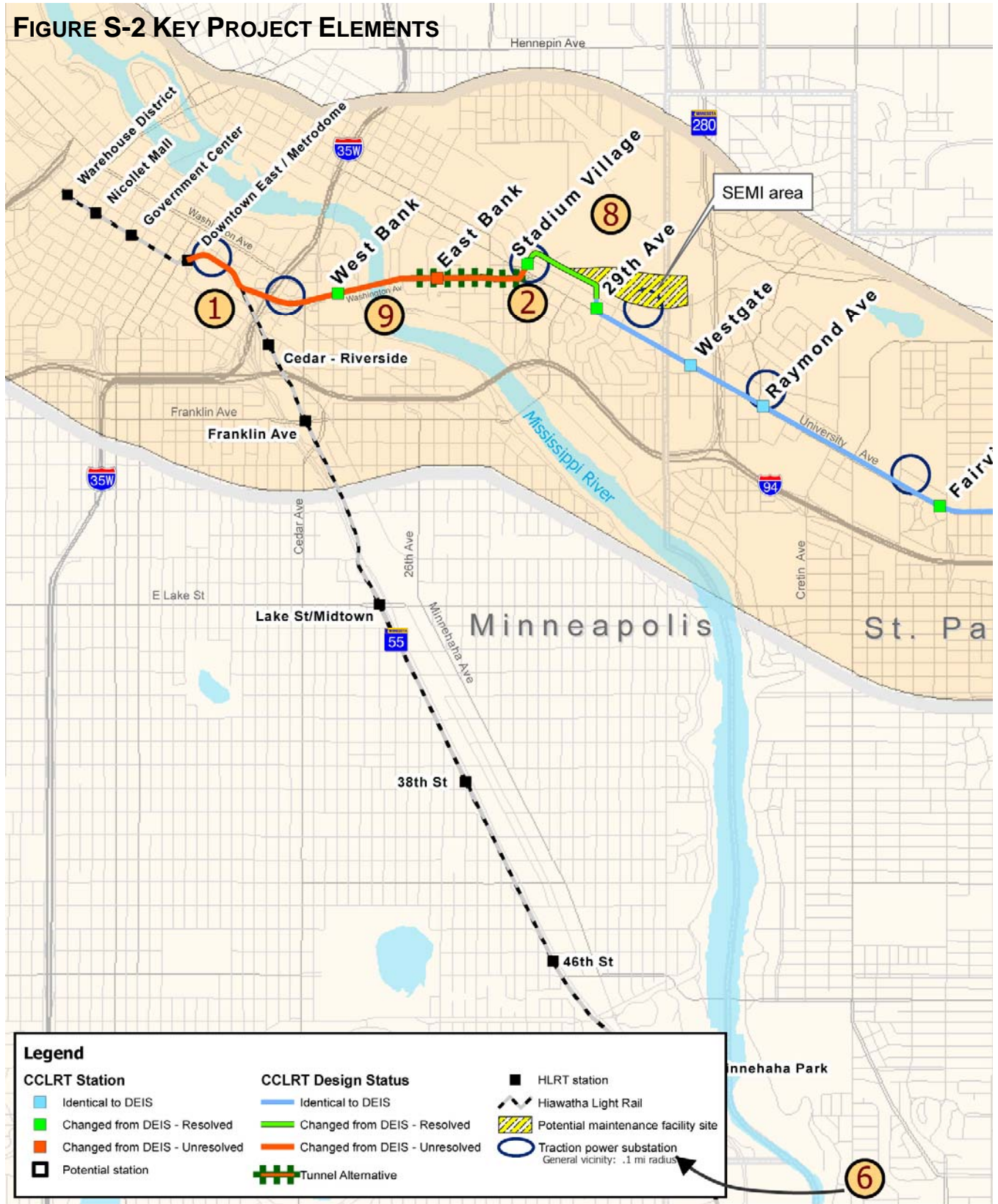
S.2.3.3 Key Project Elements Evaluated in the SDEIS

A brief description of each Key Project Element follows. **Error! Reference source not found.** depicts their general location along the Central Corridor.

Hiawatha/Central Corridor LRT Connection

The SDEIS evaluated an LRT alignment modification that was needed to optimize the connection of the Central Corridor LRT to the existing Hiawatha LRT in downtown Minneapolis, west of the proposed West Bank Station. The modified alignment crossed eastbound Washington Avenue with a new signal, then rose to cross I-35W on an aerial structure and connected to Hiawatha on the existing bridge structure with cross-overs to provide full bi-directional movements. This modification provided a storage track for special event operations.

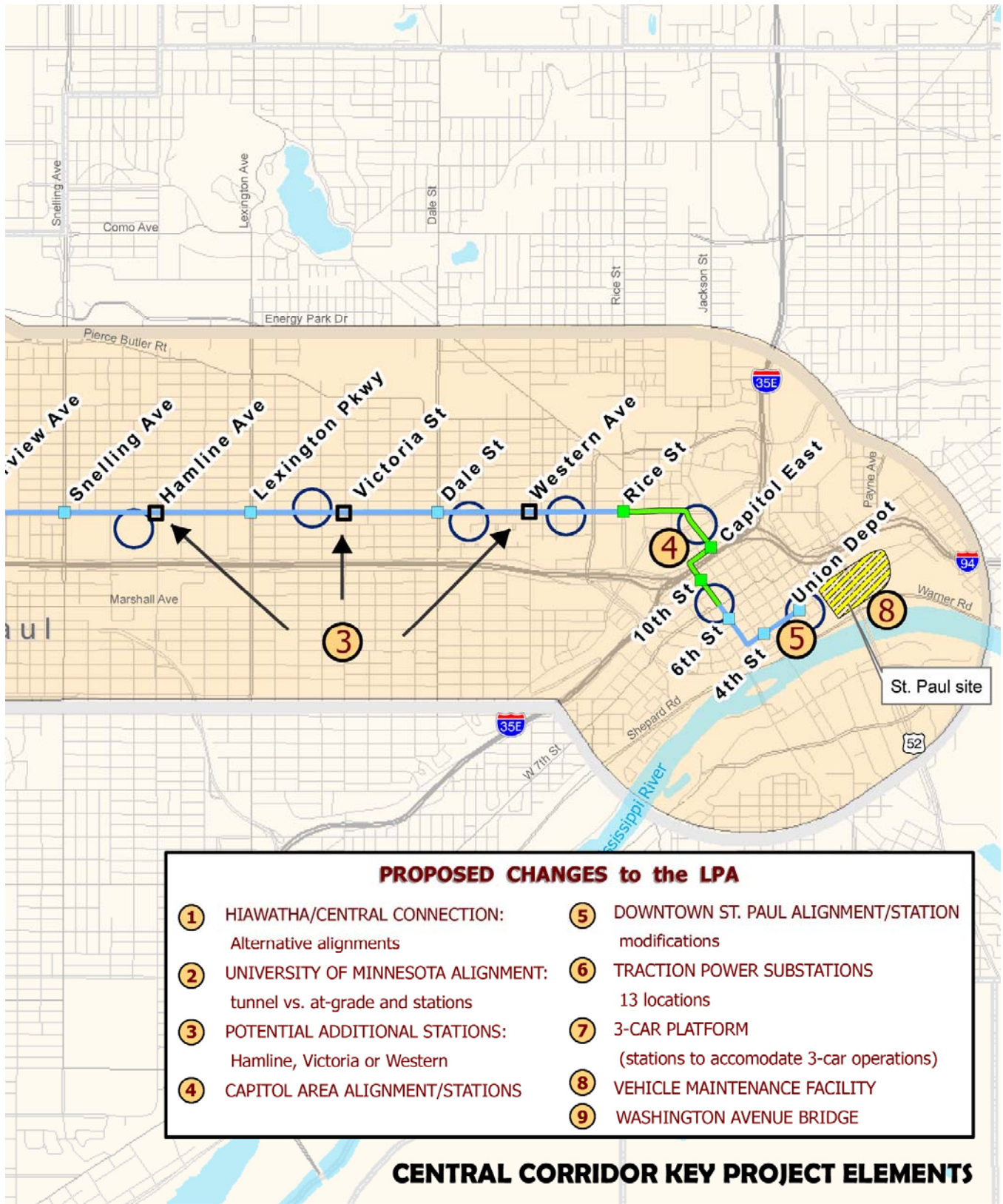
FIGURE S-2 KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS



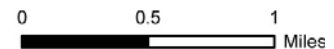
Central Corridor
Light Rail Transit



Supplemental Draft Environ



Environmental Impact Statement



Source: Supplemental Draft EIS

University of Minnesota Alignment

The SDEIS evaluated an at-grade LRT alignment on Washington Avenue running from approximately the Washington Avenue Bridge to Oak Street, which would function as an At-Grade Transit/Pedestrian Mall. Enhancements would be made to pedestrian and other transit facilities operating in this segment. Emergency vehicle access would be maintained. The Stadium Village Station would be located at the proposed U of M multi-modal center. The East Bank Station would be located on Washington Avenue at Union Street.



The SDEIS evaluated an at-grade alignment through the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities Campus shown here.

Future Infill Stations

The SDEIS evaluated three future infill stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, and Western Avenue, which respond to concerns of residents and stakeholders to increase access to adjacent neighborhood residents and businesses. The SDEIS evaluated implementation of each of these stations; however, the project as proposed would only include below-grade infrastructure to allow for station construction at a future date.

Capitol Area Alignment and Stations

The SDEIS evaluated engineering modifications to the alignment along University Avenue and Robert Street adjacent to the Capitol Area, which were necessary to accommodate several new Capitol Area structures and grade constraints along University Avenue. The station at Rice Street was modified to respond to existing roadway geometry and concerns about access and optimized bus connections.



The SDEIS evaluates changes to the AA/DEIS LPA, such as the change in location of the Capitol East Station to Robert Street, where the Central Corridor LRT would serve people working in these state office buildings.

Downtown St. Paul Alignment/Station Modifications

The SDEIS evaluated and disclosed two alignment alternatives that would extend the alignment disclosed in the AA/DEIS beyond the St. Paul Union Depot Headhouse: the Wacouta Mid-Block and Broadway extensions. Either of these alternatives would be constructed to include a new connection to the maintenance and storage facility. Both alignments included a potential extension to the concourse level of the Union Depot in the future.

The SDEIS also evaluated an alternative alignment and station option that would travel south on Cedar Street to a point south of 5th Street, where it then would turn southeast onto the 4th/Cedar Street block. The alignment would continue diagonally across the block, emerging onto 4th Street at Minnesota Street. This alignment consolidated two AA/DEIS stations (6th Street and 4th Street) into one station on the diagonal through the block.

Traction Power Substations

The SDEIS evaluated and disclosed the number and general location of substations required for operation of the Central Corridor LRT.

Three-Car Platforms (Train Requirement)

The SDEIS evaluated and disclosed the characteristics of three-car train operations and the physical impacts of constructing three-car platforms. The AA/DEIS disclosed an operating plan that included two-car train consists and platforms. This change responded to identified capacity and demand issues.

Vehicle Maintenance and Storage Facility

The SDEIS evaluated and disclosed a proposed location of a vehicle maintenance and storage facility in downtown St. Paul.

Washington Avenue Bridge

The SDEIS evaluated and disclosed the proposed modifications to the Washington Avenue Bridge to accommodate operation of the Central Corridor LRT on the existing structure.

After the SDEIS was completed, a notice of availability (NOA) was published in the *Federal Register* on July 11, 2008, and the Minnesota EQB Monitor on July 14, 2008, signaling the start of a 45-day public comment period. Project staff collected comments by phone, mail, e-mail, and in person at three public hearings held at various sites along the Central Corridor LRT Study Area. The comment period concluded on August 25, 2008. Responses to these comments and any resulting changes to the project are documented in this FEIS (see Chapter 11 and Appendix K).

After the closing of the formal comment period, the Metropolitan Council adopted the Preferred Alternative for Central Corridor LRT based upon the analysis undertaken during preliminary engineering and the comments received on the SDEIS. LRT was selected as the preferred technology for the Central Corridor operating at-grade on Washington and University Avenues, passing north of the Capitol and turning south on Robert Street, turning west at 12th Street to Cedar Street, and then continuing south on Cedar Street into downtown St. Paul turning diagonally at 4th Street, and continuing east to end at St. Paul's Union Depot with tail track leading to an operations and maintenance facility farther east (Metropolitan Council Resolution No. 2008-26). The Preferred Alternative would include 20 stations. This decision, revising the AA/DEIS LPA, forms the basis of the evaluation undertaken and documented in this FEIS.

Table S.2-1 provides a description of the physical and operating characteristics of the AA/DEIS LPA and the proposed changes to the AA/DEIS LPA, and the Preferred Alternative as evaluated in the FEIS. As discussed below, the primary changes included in the Preferred Alternative revolve around the locations of traction power substations, the operations and maintenance facility, and other design details that have been identified since completion of the AA/DEIS.

Table S.2-1 Summary and Comparison of the Physical and Operating Characteristics of the Preferred Alternative and the AA/DEIS LPA

Characteristics	AA/DEIS LPA	Preferred Alternative
Alignment Length	11 miles (9.8 miles of new alignment, 1.2 miles on shared alignment) At-grade alignment along entire corridor with the exception of a tunnel through the U of M's East Bank.	10.9 miles (9.7 miles of new alignments, 1.2 miles on shared alignment)
Stations	16 new, 5 shared	15 new, 5 shared
Downtown St. Paul	- Union Depot - 4th Street - 6th Street	- Union Depot (between Sibley St. and Wacouta St.) - 4th and Cedar Streets (between 5th St. and Minnesota St.)
Capitol Area	- 10th Street - Capitol East - Rice Street	- 10th Street (between 11th St. and 10th St.) - Capitol East (between 14th St. and Columbus Ave.) - Rice Street (East side of Rice St.)
Midway East	- Dale Street - Lexington Parkway - Snelling Avenue	- Dale Street (at intersection) - Lexington Parkway (at intersection) - Snelling Avenue (at Intersection) - Infrastructure for proposed future stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, Western Avenue
Midway West	- Fairview Avenue - Raymond Avenue - Westgate	- Fairview Avenue (East of Lynnhurst Ave.) - Raymond Avenue (Between Carleton St. and LaSalle St.) - Westgate (Far-side Berry St.)
University/Prospect Park	- 29th Avenue - Stadium Village - East Bank - West Bank	- 29th Avenue (Between 4th St. and University Ave.) - Stadium Village (North side of University Ave.) - East Bank (Near side Union St.) - West Bank (East of Cedar Ave. Overpass)
Downtown Minneapolis (Shared Hiawatha Line Stations)	- Downtown/East-Metrodome - Government Center - Nicollet Mall - Warehouse District - Downtown Minneapolis Ballpark Station	- Downtown/East-Metrodome - Government Center - Nicollet Mall - Warehouse District - Downtown Minneapolis Ballpark Station
Maintenance and Storage Facilities	Existing Franklin Avenue Yard and Maintenance Facility	New operations and maintenance facility (OMF) in Downtown St. Paul
Ancillary Facilities	Total number and locations not disclosed	13 traction power substations/system components (1 located at OMF)
Operating	7.5-minute peak	7.5-minute peak

Characteristics	AA/DEIS LPA	Preferred Alternative
Characteristics	10-minute off-peak	10-minute off-peak
Capacity Improvements	2-car trains 2-car train station platforms	3-car trains (2030) 3-car train station platforms

Table S.2-2 provides a summary of the anticipated effects and a comparison between the AA/DEIS LPA and the Preferred Alternative and their ability to meet the project’s goals. Results are summarized for the No-Build Alternative, the AA/DEIS LPA, and the Preferred Alternative evaluated in the FEIS.

Table S.2-2 Summary and Comparative Evaluation of the AA/DEIS LPA and the Preferred Alternative

	No-Build Alternative	AA/DEIS LPA	Preferred Alternative
Capital Costs	N/A	\$990 Million (escalated to 2007 dollars)	\$914.9 Million (escalated to year of expenditure)
Goal 1: Support Economic Opportunity and Investment			
Compatible with Existing Land Use	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consistent with Comprehensive Plans	No	Yes	Yes
Compatible with Planned Development	No	Yes	Yes
Economic Effects	No beneficial economic effects	Expansion in payroll and employment is anticipated with construction spending and recurring O&M costs	Construction Spending will produce 7,075 person-year jobs and \$285 Million in payroll expansion Long-term effects will include \$11.7 Million in local wages
Development Effects	Existing development trends should continue	Increases in commercial and residential development densities is expected	Same as AA/DEIS
Goal 2: Preserve and Enhance Communities and Support Healthier Environment			
Community Facility Impacts	No Impact	Access impacts and on-street parking impacts including at community facilities.	Similar impacts to AA/DEIS LPA.

	No-Build Alternative	AA/DEIS LPA	Preferred Alternative
Community Cohesion	No Impact	No impacts identified.	No significant impacts to community cohesion are anticipated. The project includes alterations to the streetscape that may enhance community cohesion.
Number of Property Acquisitions	None	114 partial, 11 total and 12 non-residential buildings	Private – 63 partial takes and 3 full takes, 7.65 acres, 4 non-residential buildings; Public – 42 partial takes, 26.67 acres
Potential Adverse Effects-Archeological	None	Undetermined; Phase II recommended	None anticipated
Potential Adverse Effects-Historic Properties	None	Undetermined; Phase II required	<p>Generally, the Central Corridor LRT project will have few adverse effects because the alignment, with few exceptions, follows existing streets. In addition, the project will not include substantive street widening or the demolition of numerous buildings.</p> <p>Some visual effects are anticipated, which include overhead catenary systems and the stations.</p> <p>Specific resources with potential direct impacts due to right-of-way changes include the Union Depot (National Register listed [NRL] and within the NRL Lowertown Historic District) and Leif Erikson lawn and Cedar Street lawn panels (within the NR eligible [NRE] State Capitol Mall Historic District). One building that falls within the period of significance for the St. Paul Urban Renewal Historic District [NRE] will be removed.</p> <p>Changes in traffic patterns and routes will affect the NRL University of Minnesota Old Campus Historic District and the NRE Prospect Park Residential Historic District. Modifications to the East River Parkway (NRE) will include turn lanes and signals.</p>

	No-Build Alternative	AA/DEIS LPA	Preferred Alternative
Section 4(f) Impacts	No impact	None identified	Potential permanent use of St. Paul Urban Renewal Historic District, Lowertown Historic District, Capitol Mall Historic District, and the St. Paul Union Depot. Potential <i>de minimis</i> use of Leif Erikson Lawn.
Potential Visual Effects	No impact	Temporary construction impacts; introduction of overhead contact system (OCS) and new station facilities	Same as AA/DEIS LPA with the addition of visual changes due to at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Mall at the U of M
Disproportionate Impacts to EJ Communities	Minority, low-income and transit dependent populations would not be served	None identified	Three Census blocks near Western Avenue would experience a decrease in overall transit service; mitigation is committed
Groundwater Effects	No impact	Potential construction impacts	Same as AA/DEIS LPA
Wetlands (Acres)	No impact	No impact	Same as AA/DEIS LPA
Floodplains (# of 100-year floodplain crossings)	No impact	No impact; permit required	Same as AA/DEIS LPA
Effects to Habitat and Biota	N/A	Minor impact	Same as AA/DEIS LPA
Effects to Threatened and Endangered Species	N/A	No impact	No impact
Contribution to Regional Air Quality Goals	Higher emissions due to increased traffic congestion	No estimated concentrations of CO would exceed the current 1-hour or 8-hour NAAQS.	Same as AA/DEIS LPA
Noise Impacts	N/A	11 severe Category 2 impacts, One severe Category 3 impact	16 severe Category 2 impacts; with committed mitigation, 1 severe impact*
Vibration Impacts	No impact	None anticipated	14 structures, and 7 U of M buildings have adverse impacts; mitigation is committed

	No-Build Alternative	AA/DEIS LPA	Preferred Alternative
Hazardous/Regulated Materials	No impact	Potential impact to 10 sites (High/Medium rating)	37 hazardous/regulated material sites will be investigated in a Phase II Site Assessment
Goal 3: Improve and Increase Transportation and Mobility			
Peak Period Headways (minutes)	N/A	7.5	7.5
Off-Peak (midday) Period Headways (minutes)	N/A	10	10
Forecast Year Total LRT Ridership	N/A	38,100	41,690
Capacity Improvements	N/A	2-car trains 2-car train platforms	3-car trains (2030) 3-car train platforms
Travel Times (minutes)	N/A	43	39.6
Annual O&M Costs (2007 dollars)	N/A	\$60.7 Million	\$53.9 Million
Number of Intersections at LOS E-F (PM)	11 (2030 - horizon)	12 (2020 - horizon)	14 (2030 - horizon)
Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility Effects	N/A	Short-term construction effects	Short-term construction effects

* The "severe" impact remaining after mitigation is located at a City of St. Paul fire station in which firefighters sleep during their shift. Because it is used for sleeping, the fire station is categorized as a "residential" land use.

S.2.4 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

Based on comments received on the SDEIS, continued coordination with project partners, and refinements during preliminary engineering, several modifications were proposed to the AA/DEIS LPA and the subsequent changes described in the SDEIS. These proposed refinements were necessary to remedy several design issues, reduce cost, and to minimize specific environmental and community impacts along the corridor. The refinements are described below and are documented in the FEIS:

S.2.4.1 TPSS

The SDEIS disclosed the number and location of proposed TPSS locations along the alignment. During more detailed preliminary engineering, exact location and systems requirements were refined, thus reducing the number of TPSS required to operate LRT to 13 (12 along the corridor and one at the OMF) and minimizing project impacts. The TPSS located near Union Depot was consolidated with the TPSS located near the 4th and Cedar Station.

S.2.4.2 Operations and Maintenance Facility

The need to explore siting and construction of a maintenance and storage facility for the Central Corridor LRT was identified in early phases of PE. An Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) location and approaches were described in the SDEIS and were approved through local municipal consent. After publication of the SDEIS, several significant issues for the OMF were expressed by project partners and stakeholders.

The Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) and approaches described in the SDEIS and approved through the local municipal consent process included a mid-block Wacouta crossing of Kellogg Boulevard to the Union Depot elevated railyard, and a new OMF located on Ramsey County-owned land east of Union Depot. Since publication of the SDEIS, several significant issues were expressed by project partners and stakeholders. The concerns were associated with impacts to historic resources, specifically the Union Depot and its associated facilities, potential constraints on Ramsey County plans for a multimodal transit hub re-using the Union Depot concourse, and additional project costs due to poor soil conditions identified on the site for the OMF.

With the identification of substantial challenges on the Ramsey County-owned site east of Union Depot, an alternative site for the OMF was identified in downtown St. Paul—the Diamond Product site—which was proposed as an alternate OMF for inclusion and evaluation in the FEIS. The site, just north of the site disclosed in the SDEIS, would minimize numerous project impacts, including potentially significant impacts to historic resources, and would not incur additional project costs. Refining the Preferred Alternative to include this site has numerous project advantages:

- It avoids almost all Section 4(f) historic resource issues identified by SHPO and other consulting and interested parties
- Connecting to this site using public right-of-way is possible with minimal to no access disruptions to adjacent buildings and sites on 4th Street
- The Diamond Products building can be re-used for the OMF and provides added functionality
- Alternative use of the Ramsey County site is possible

After meetings with City and neighborhood representatives, the City of St. Paul accepted the revised location of the OMF as part of the municipal consent process on March 18, 2009. The original OMF site is shown in Figure S-2; revised OMF site is shown in Figure S-1. Preliminary engineering drawings included in Appendix L of the FEIS show this modification.

S.2.4.3 West Bank Alignment and Station Location

The design of Central Corridor LRT elements in the West Bank area was refined to meet several needs as expressed through the SDEIS public comment period. Refinements were made to the design to ensure the Preferred Alternative would not preclude MnDOT and the City of Minneapolis from reconfiguring access to and from I-35W in the future. The refined alignment shifts the West Bank Station further to the west, while still maintaining access to Cedar and 19th Avenues. The refined alignment of access ramps in the area of the West Bank Station allows the U of M and the City of Minneapolis the ability to redevelop parcels of land which would have been impacted by the previous design. Finally, a refinement to the I-35W off-ramp provides for better and safer traffic operations in this area. These new refinements also eliminate temporary constructions impacts to Currie Park. Additionally, the

refinement improves LRT operations due to improved track geometry. Preliminary Engineering drawings included in Appendix L of the FEIS show this modification.

S.2.4.4 Washington Avenue Transit/Pedestrian Mall

Refinements to the design of the Washington Avenue Transit/Pedestrian Mall have been made since publication of the SDEIS. These refinements focused on creating zones for pedestrian amenities, and concepts for how the transit mall would operate and appear. These concepts were developed in partnership with representatives of the U of M, Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, and other stakeholders in this process.

S.2.4.5 Washington Avenue Bridge Rehabilitation

During the AA/DEIS phase, preliminary evaluation of the bridge indicated that minimal changes to the structure would be required to accommodate LRT operations. However, during PE, a more rigorous and detailed analysis of the bridge uncovered some existing conditions that do not meet current design requirements. These conditions are not related to light rail, but to design codes that have been changed since the bridge was originally constructed. To correct the design code conditions and to furnish a bridge that would be structurally redundant and provide years of remaining service life for both LRT and the vehicular and pedestrian traffic that would remain on the bridge, the Preferred Alternative includes a major rehabilitation of the bridge that would take place within the envelope of the existing structure. No changes would be visible or apparent to the bridge's appearance from motorists or observers at the roadway or pedestrian levels. Elements of this rehabilitation include the following:

- Strengthening of existing bridge
- Adding new longitudinal structural elements to the structure to provide additional load-carrying capacity and a redundant structure
- Replacing the existing bridge deck to provide additional load carrying
- Modifying and strengthening the bridge substructures to carry the additional structural elements

While NEPA sets a broad policy of disclosure, a more explicit statutory mandate for *mitigating adverse impacts* is set for the Federal Transit Laws (49 USC 5301 et seq.). Specifically, before approving a construction grant, FTA must make a finding that

...the preservation and enhancement of the environment, and the interest of the community in which the project is located, were considered; and (iii) no adverse environmental effect is likely to result from the project, or no feasible and prudent alternative to the effect exists and all reasonable steps have been taken to minimize the effect. (49 U.S.C.5324(b)(3)(A)).

Table S.2-2 provides a summary of the anticipated effects and proposed mitigation as evaluated and presented for the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS.

Table S.2-3 Summary of Anticipated Impacts and Proposed Mitigation for the Preferred Alternative

	Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative	Proposed Mitigation for Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative
Development Effects	Existing development trends should continue	In recognition of the stress new development may place on housing costs and opportunities for low income populations, the Metropolitan Council has partnered with Minnesota Housing and the Family Housing Fund to establish a new Land Acquisition for Affordable New Development (LAAND) Initiative. Of the \$3.6 million available, \$1.0 million will go to help with land acquisition for affordable housing near the Central Corridor LRT alignment along University Avenue. In addition, Metropolitan Council has awarded \$2.7 million in Livable Communities Demonstration Account (LCDA) grants for affordable housing in the Central Corridor.
Community Facility Impacts	Access impacts, on-street parking impacts including at community facilities.	Metropolitan Council has mitigated access impacts to the fullest possible extent. For example, Metropolitan Council is working with the Central Presbyterian Church, St. Louis King of France Church, U of M (particularly at the Transit/Pedestrian Mall), and all fire stations with access impacts to install surmountable curbs and other access mitigation as required.
Community Cohesion	No significant impacts to community cohesion are anticipated. The project includes alterations to the streetscape that may enhance community cohesion.	In addition to keeping all existing pedestrian crossings open and enhancing them to ensure community cohesion, Metropolitan Council is making other mitigation commitments such as providing 5,000 sq ft of the OMF building for retail uses on Broadway Street.
Number of Property Acquisitions	Private – 63 partial takes and 3 full takes, 7.65 acres, 4 non-residential buildings; Public – 42 partial takes, 26.67 acres	Where private property is to be acquired, the Metropolitan Council, with the assistance of MnDOT, will acquire that property in full compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended (42 USC 4601 et. seq.), and 49 CFR, Part 24. FTA Circular 5010.1C dated October 1, 1998, as amended, will apply to Central Corridor LRT real estate acquisitions.

	Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative	Proposed Mitigation for Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative
Potential Adverse Effects-Archeological	None anticipated	No mitigation necessary.
Potential Adverse Effects-Historic Properties	<p>Generally, the Central Corridor LRT project will have few adverse effects because the alignment, with few exceptions, follows existing streets. In addition, the project will not include substantive street widening or the demolition of numerous buildings.</p> <p>Some visual effects are anticipated, which include overhead catenary systems and the stations.</p> <p>Specific resources with potential direct impacts due to right-of-way changes include the Union Depot (National Register listed [NRL] and within the NRL Lowertown Historic District) and Leif Erikson lawn and Cedar Street lawn panels (within the NR eligible [NRE] State Capitol Mall Historic District). One building that falls within the period of significance for the St. Paul Urban Renewal Historic District [NRE] will be removed.</p> <p>Changes in traffic patterns and routes will affect the NRL University of Minnesota Old Campus Historic District and the NRE Prospect Park Residential Historic District. Modifications to the East River Parkway (NRE) will include turn lanes and signals.</p>	Metropolitan Council will comply with stipulations contained in the Central Corridor LRT Programmatic Agreement (PA). See Appendix G.
Section 4(f) Impacts	Potential permanent use of St. Paul Urban Renewal Historic District, Lowertown Historic District, Capitol Mall Historic District, and the St. Paul Union Depot. Potential de minimis use of Leif Erikson Lawn.	<p>Long-term impacts have been evaluated in accordance with Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Details on Section 4(f) impacts are provided in Chapter 7.</p> <p>Metropolitan Council will comply with stipulations contained in the Central Corridor Programmatic Agreement. See Appendix G.</p>

	Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative	Proposed Mitigation for Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative
Potential Visual Effects	<p>Overhead Contact System (OCS), track, TPSS, stations, and other system elements will add new elements to the streetscape.</p> <p>A new bridge will be constructed over I-35W to provide a connection of Central Corridor LRT to the Hiawatha LRT.</p> <p>Existing landscaping will be redesigned and replaced during construction.</p> <p>Vehicle Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) will reuse a portion of the existing Diamond Products Building.</p>	<p>Every measure will be taken to ensure that the station design is appropriate to its setting.</p> <p>Where TPSS placement will alter visual quality, the Metropolitan Council will work with the respective neighborhoods and business districts to develop appropriate screening.</p> <p>Measures for façade improvements on the southern and western edges of the Diamond Products building (OMF site) with treatments that fit into the character of the surrounding neighborhood.</p> <p>Existing boulevard trees that are removed due to the construction of the Central Corridor LRT will be replaced consistent with city policies.</p>
Disproportionate Impacts to EJ Communities	<p>Three Census blocks near Western Avenue would experience a decrease in overall transit service; mitigation is committed</p>	<p>Metropolitan Council has committed to preparing a targeted transit service plan for the affected environmental justice community identified in the Title VI analysis of proposed service changes for the Central Corridor LRT that will also provide for community input into the process and measures of need as expressed by and as tailored for this transit-dependent community. This plan will be completed at least six months prior to Central Corridor LRT beginning revenue service operations and will be implemented concurrent with the start of LRT service.</p>

	Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative	Proposed Mitigation for Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative
Groundwater Effects	Potential construction impacts	<p>During construction, Metropolitan Council will establish engineering controls and safety measures as described in Section 4.8 that will limit spills of hazardous substances that could potentially impact groundwater, particularly in areas identified as having high sensitivity to pollution. As part of the final design and permitting, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and spill prevention plan for the project to comply with local, state and federal regulations.</p> <p>Although this project is not anticipated to have any adverse long term impacts to water resources or to significantly increase the quantity of surface runoff, sustainable and context sensitive best management practices will be used when practicable to improve surface water management and to help improve the receiving water resources.</p>
Wetlands (Acres)	No impact	No mitigation required
Floodplains (# of 100-year crossings)	No impact; permit required	No mitigation required.
Effects to Habitat and Biota	Minor impact	The Metropolitan Council will require the installation of construction BMPs to protect aquatic and terrestrial habitats.
Effects to Threatened and Endangered Species	No impact	No mitigation required.
Contribution to Regional Air Quality Goals	The project will have no adverse impact on air quality as a result of CO emissions	No mitigation required.
Noise Impacts	16 severe Category 2 impacts; with committed mitigation, 1 severe impact*	Metropolitan Council commits to mitigation of severe noise impacts due to crossovers by moving the crossovers to less noise sensitive locations, and through receiver-based mitigation.
Vibration Impacts	14 structures, and 7 U of M buildings have adverse impacts; mitigation is committed	Metropolitan Council will relocate crossovers to mitigate vibrations impacts.

	Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative	Proposed Mitigation for Anticipated Impacts of the Preferred Alternative
Hazardous/Regulated Materials	37 hazardous/ regulated material sites will be investigated in a Phase II Site Assessment	Phase II ESAs will be conducted for specific areas along the alignment that have the potential for impact from contaminated sites, including but not necessarily limited to all of the sites identified in the FEIS.
Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility Effects	No impact	No mitigation required

* The "severe" impact remaining after mitigation is located at a City of St. Paul fire station in which firefighters sleep during their shift. Because it is used for sleeping, the fire station is categorized as a "residential" land use.

S.2.5 Public Involvement

Upon completion of the AA/DEIS, the Metropolitan Council became the lead agency responsible for the Central Corridor LRT's oversight and implementation. In February 2007, the Metropolitan Council drafted the Central Corridor LRT Communication and Public Involvement Strategic Plan, which is fully described in Chapter 11. After considering comments received during circulation of the AA/DEIS and the public hearings, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Business Advisory Council (BAC) were established by the Council in partnership with local stakeholders to consider the resolution of outstanding issues.

The Metropolitan Council also established a Central Corridor Communications Office, which consists of a manager of public involvement, a communications manager, six community outreach coordinators, one associate outreach coordinator, and a public involvement intern. Each community outreach coordinator is assigned to one of six Central Corridor LRT segments approximately 1 to 2 miles in length. The coordinator is familiar with the segment's technical issues and community characteristics. It is his or her responsibility to share information with the community about the Central Corridor LRT's progress and collect feedback and information on critical aspects of the Central Corridor LRT. Outreach activities and stakeholder coordination have continued—since November 15, 2006, the outreach team has communicated with more than 30,000 people through more than 1,300 meetings, community events, and informal contacts. The Web site is continuously updated, project publications are continuously distributed, and project news is released to the media.

In accordance with federal regulations, full consideration of environmental effects, as disclosed during the NEPA process, is required before the project can be advanced to the funding stage for final design, right-of-way acquisition, equipment and facilities, and system construction.

The EIS milestones for the proposed Central Corridor LRT are outlined in Table S.3-1, along with the overall environmental review process and a proposed schedule.

State law requires cities, counties, and regional rail authorities to hold public hearings on preliminary engineering plans for the Central Corridor LRT Project. This is known as the municipal consent process. The first series of municipal consent public hearings were held by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority in May 2008. In June 2008, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Hennepin and Ramsey counties held public hearings prior to their city councils and county boards approving the plans in July 2008.

Since adoption of the Preferred Alternative, over twenty meetings have been held to discuss solutions to public concerns about the Central Corridor LRT Project. These included four meetings of the BAC, three meetings of the CAC, and five open house meetings on the FEIS in December 2008 (December 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6) where the public was invited to speak to technical staff. Notable topics covered in these meetings included the Washington Avenue Bridge, traffic modeling, the Transit/Pedestrian Mall, TPSS locations, the OMF, and parking. In addition, the Metropolitan Council held many other meetings with Downtown St. Paul neighborhoods and City representatives to resolve issues related to the OMF; representatives from U of M to resolve issues related to the LRT alignment through the campus; and MPR, St. Louis King of France Church, and Central Presbyterian Church to resolve issues related to the Cedar Street LRT alignment. See Table S-3, above, which presents the effects of the Preferred Alternative and mitigation commitments made by Metropolitan Council.

S.2.6 Agency Coordination

In the planning, design, and construction of the Central Corridor LRT, the Metropolitan Council is working closely with the FTA, MnDOT, Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and the U of M. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)



Churches in downtown St. Paul are a significant part of the visual character of Cedar Street, and are important historic landmarks. The SDEIS assesses the potential impact of the changes to the AA/DEIS LPA on these resources.

also agreed to be a Cooperating Agency for the Central Corridor LRT project. The project draws on several advisory committees that provide input from policy makers, government entities and community groups, businesses, and residents. These committees are the Central Corridor Management Committee (CCMC), Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Business Advisory Council (BAC), Central Corridor Project Office (CCPO), Project Advisory Committee (PAC), Communication Steering Committee (CSC), Land Use Coordinating Committee (LUCC), the Artist Selection Committee (ASC) and four Station Art Committees (SAC).

In addition to the ongoing coordination with stakeholders and the public, the CCPO has coordinated and consulted with other federal, state, and local agencies and interested parties, including the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB), the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Health, the Department of Interior, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Minnesota Pollution Control

Agency (MPCA), the State Archaeologist, the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit (MnDOT-CRU) is the FTA designee for the Section 106 process. The three coordinating agencies are FTA, MnDOT-CRU, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Methods for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of impacts to historic property (any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP) will be developed in coordination under the Section 106 consultation process. Opportunities for public input on historic and

archaeological resources will continue throughout the remainder of the project development process.

S.3 Environmental Milestones and Actions

The Central Corridor LRT project has received widespread local support, including public comment on the AA/DEIS and SDEIS. It has also been supported by the cities and counties on the corridor, the U of M, and the business community. It will build on the success of the Hiawatha LRT project and, with the Northstar commuter rail and various BRT projects, connect an integrated, seamless network of high quality transit service to the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

This FEIS has been developed to comply with applicable federal regulations and acts as the public document that discloses the environmental effects of Preferred Alternative with possible reasonable and feasible mitigation measures. This document also reflects the comments received during the circulation of the DEIS.

Upon approval of the FEIS by the FTA, the Metropolitan Council will publish a Notice of Availability and allow for a 30-day review period after which FTA will issue a Record of Decision (ROD), which concludes the formal environmental review process.

Table S.3-1 Project Milestones

Activity	Date
Notice of Intent (NOI) to Prepare EIS	June 5, 2001
Notice of Availability (NOA) of Scoping Booklet and Scoping Meetings in <i>EQB Monitor</i>	June 11, 2001
Interagency Scoping Meeting	June 26, 2001
Public Scoping Meetings (3)	June 26, 2001 8:00 AM June 26, 2001 5:00 PM June 27, 2001 5:00 PM
Close of Scoping Comment Period	July 20, 2001
Scoping Decision	October 11, 2001
AA/DEIS NOA	April 2006
Public Hearings on AA/DEIS	May 2006
AA/DEIS Comment Period Ends	May 2006
Adoption of AA/DEIS LPA	June 2006
NOI to Prepare SDEIS	<i>Federal Register</i> Vol. 73, No. 37, publication date February 25, 2008, and <i>Minnesota EQB</i> . Vol. 32, No. 4 Publication Date: February 25, 2008
SDEIS NOA	July 2008
Public hearings	August 2008
Public and agency comment period	July 14 to August 25, 2008
FEIS NOA published in the <i>Federal Register</i>	May 2009*
FTA Record of Decision (ROD)	July 2009**
Minnesota Adequacy Determination	July 2009**

* Date to be determined.

The following table provides a list of the permits that are expected to be required for project construction.

Table S.3-2 Permit Table

Government Agency	Type of Review, Approval or permit	Action Required
Federal		
Federal Transit Administration	Section 106 Programmatic Agreement	Approval
	Record of Decision	Approval
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	Section 106 Programmatic Agreement	Approval
Federal Transit Administration	Section 4(f)	Approval
Department of Interior	Section 4(f)	Approval
U.S. Coast Guard	Section 9 Bridge Permit	Permit
Federal Highway Administration	Interstate Access Request	Approval
National Park Service	Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA)	Review
State		
MN Department of Natural Resources	Work in Protected Waters Permit	Permit
MN Department of Transportation – Bridge Office	Bridge plan review	Approval
MN Department of Transportation – State Aid Office	Plan review and approval	Approval
MN Pollution Control Agency	Air Quality Permit (for the Operations and Maintenance Facility)	Permit
MN Pollution Control Agency	Application for Voluntary Investigation and Clean-up (VIC) or Voluntary Petroleum Investigation and Clean-up (VPIC)	Enroll in program
MN Pollution Control Agency	Phase II Final Remedial Action Plan	Approval
MN Pollution Control Agency	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination system Permit (NPDES)	Permit
State Historic Preservation Office	Section 106 Programmatic Agreement	Approval
Metropolitan Council	EIS Adequacy Determination (state process)	Approval
Metropolitan Council	Section 106 Programmatic Agreement	Approval

Government Agency	Type of Review, Approval or permit	Action Required
MN Department of Transportation	Utility Permits: a) permanent overhead and underground installations b) temporary relocations and minor installations	Permit
MN Department of Health	Abandonment of Water Wells Documentation	If wells are located
City/Local		
City of Minneapolis	Utility Permits (Water, sewer, electric, and storm drain)	Permit
	Building Permits (Traction Power Substations and Signal bungalows)	Permit
	Driveway Access Permits	Permit
	Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan Approval and Grading Permit Approval and Permit	Permit
Minneapolis Park Board	Use of East River Parkway	Approval
City of St. Paul	Utility Permits (Water, sewer, electrical, and storm drain)	Permit
	Building Permits (Traction Power Substation, Signal bungalow, and Operations and Maintenance Facility)	Approval
	Zoning Change: from B-5 to I-1	Approval
	Driveway Access Permits	Permit
	Plumbing Permits	Permit
St. Paul Heritage Preservation Committee	Raymond Avenue Station design Union Depot Station design	Approval
St. Paul Regional Water	Water extension and hydrant modifications approvals	Review and Approval
Capitol Region Watershed District	Sediment and Erosion Control Permits	Review and Approval
Capitol Area Architecture Planning Board	Leif Erikson Lawn impacts	Review and Approval

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