



Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit OPEN HOUSE

June 2021



At today's open house you can review, ask questions about and provide input on the Environmental Assessment.

Open house format:

- View boards and map.
- Review Environmental Assessment.
- No formal presentation.
- Talk with project staff.
- Provide comments.

Provide your comments May 11 – June 25, 2021:

Today's Meeting:

- Verbally to court reporter (comments to staff will *not* be part of the record).
- Written comment form.

After Today's Meeting:

- Online via the project website or email.

COVID-19 Safety Guidelines:

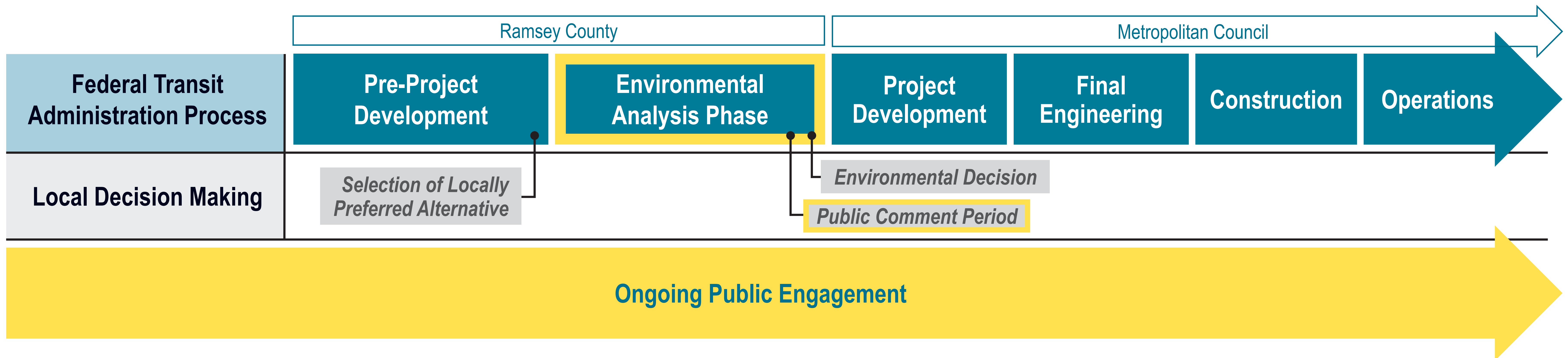
- See registration table for most up-to-date guidance.
- Masks required.
- Free masks available at registration table.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance from other attendees.

Sign up for email updates. Provide comments. Ask questions. Learn more.

Project Background



B R T



2014-2017: Pre-Project Development Study.

- Evaluated 55 route segments and 7 transit modes to identify Locally Preferred Alternative.

Environmental analysis phase key tasks:

- Environmental Assessment.
- Engineering.
- Station area planning.
- Public engagement.

Construction expected 2024-2026.

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Locally Preferred Alternative



B R T

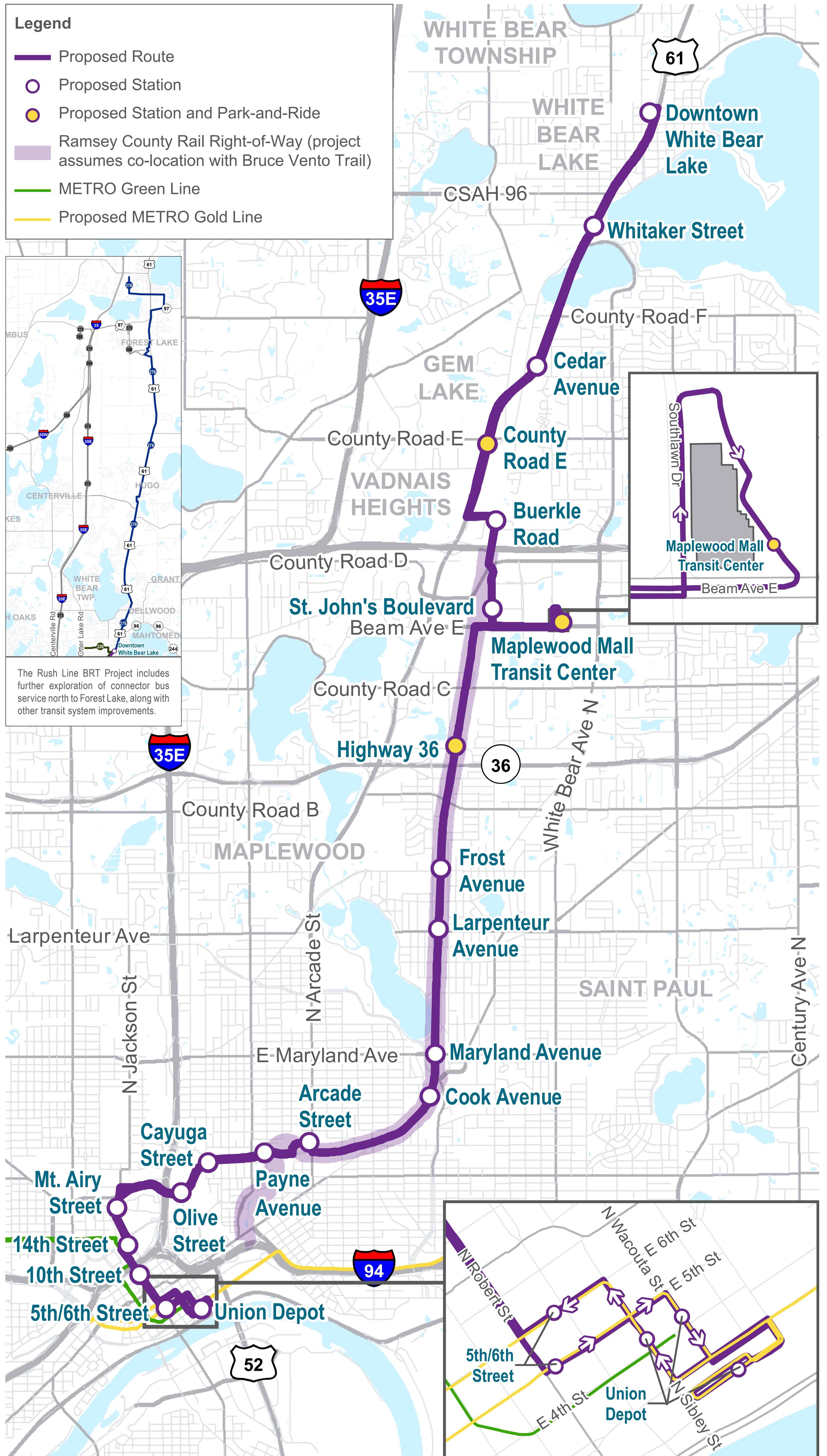
Project Evaluated in the Environmental Assessment

Build Alternative (Locally Preferred Alternative):

- Includes proposed route, stations and park-and-rides (shown to the right).
- An option under the Build Alternative that does not include the Highway 36 park-and-ride is also evaluated.

No Build Alternative:

- Existing transportation system as represented in the Metropolitan Council 2040 Transportation Policy Plan without the project.



21

Stations between Saint Paul and White Bear Lake



Proposed operating schedule

- Early morning to late at night, 7 days a week
- Buses every 10 minutes during rush hour
- Buses every 15 minutes other times

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WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT?

An Environmental Assessment is an analysis required by the National Environmental Policy Act that evaluates impacts and benefits from a proposed project.



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ANALYSIS?

- Ensure compliance with environmental laws.
- Evaluate benefits and impacts to environmental, social, economic and transportation resources.
- Identify solutions to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts.
- Inform the public and agencies on impacts as part of the decision-making process.

Topics in the Environmental Assessment





WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT?

Federal Transit Administration

Serves as the lead federal agency. Funding is being pursued through Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants Program.

Ramsey County

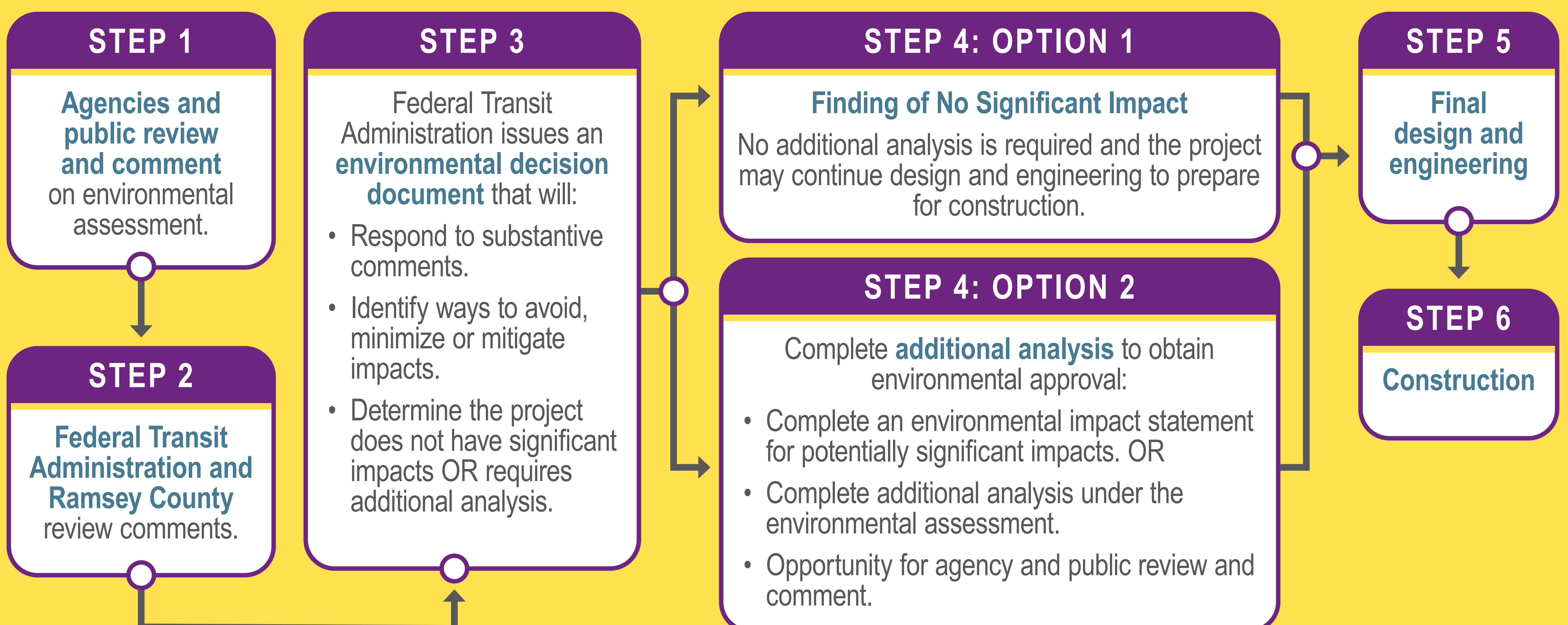
Serves as the project sponsor and Responsible Governmental Unit for the state environmental review process.

Cooperating agencies

Government agencies that have jurisdiction or special expertise on issues to be addressed, and intend to cooperate on the Environmental Assessment. The Federal Highway Administration is a cooperating agency on the Rush Line BRT Project.

Cooperating agencies provide input on the project's purpose and need, impacts and alternatives evaluations and resource analyses' level of detail.

Decision-Making Process



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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE RUSH LINE BRT PROJECT?

To provide transit service that satisfies the long-term regional mobility and accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public and supports sustainable development within the study area.



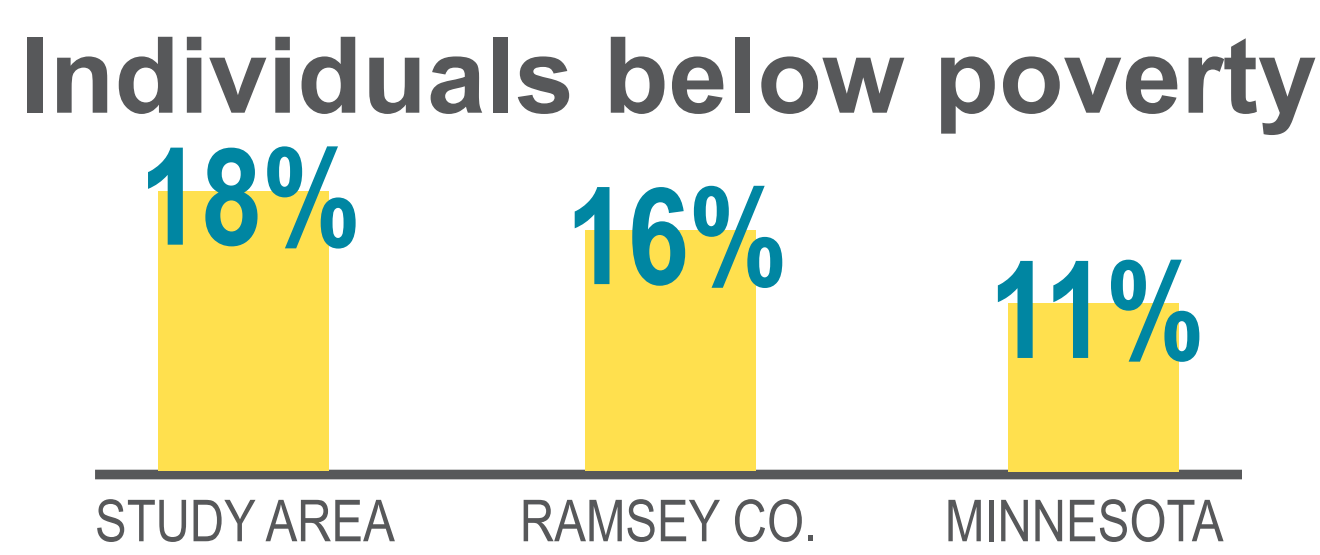
Serving the needs of people who rely on transit.

Transit-dependent populations

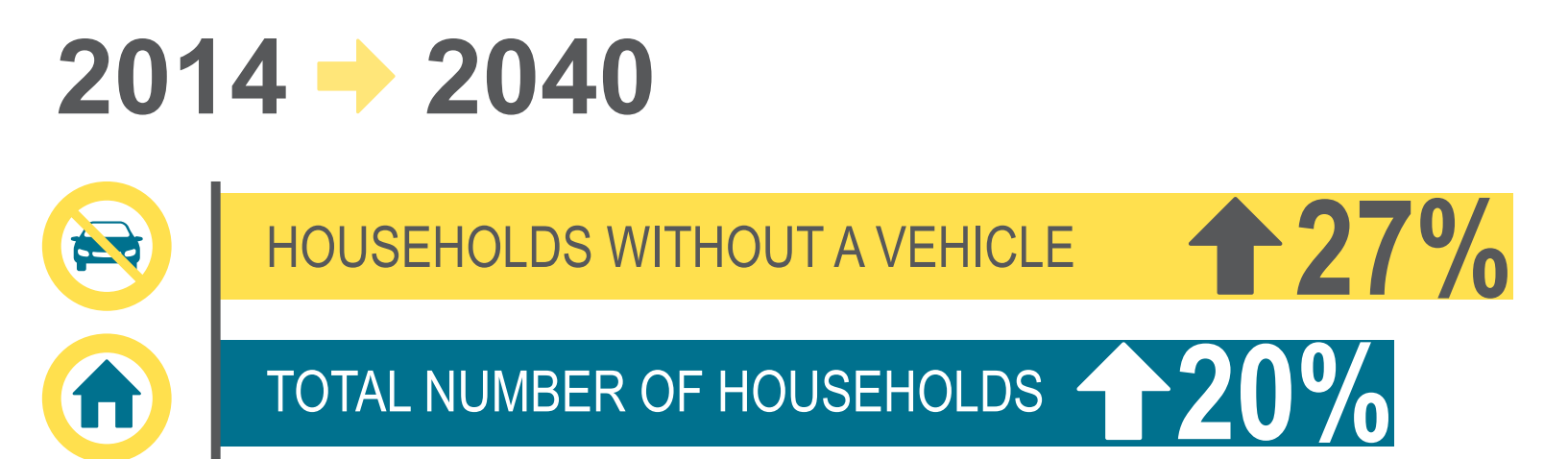
AGE:



INCOME:



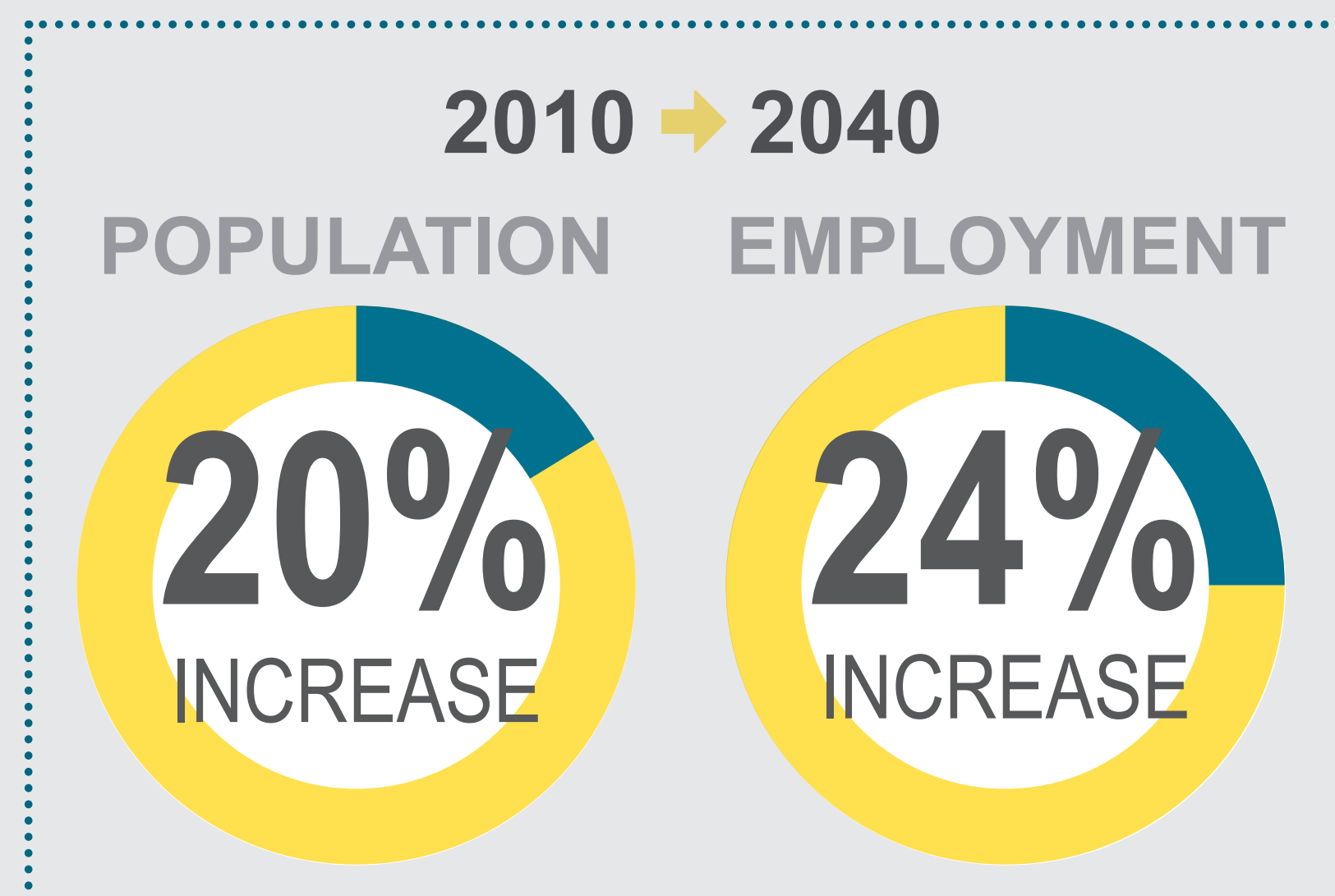
VEHICLE AVAILABILITY:



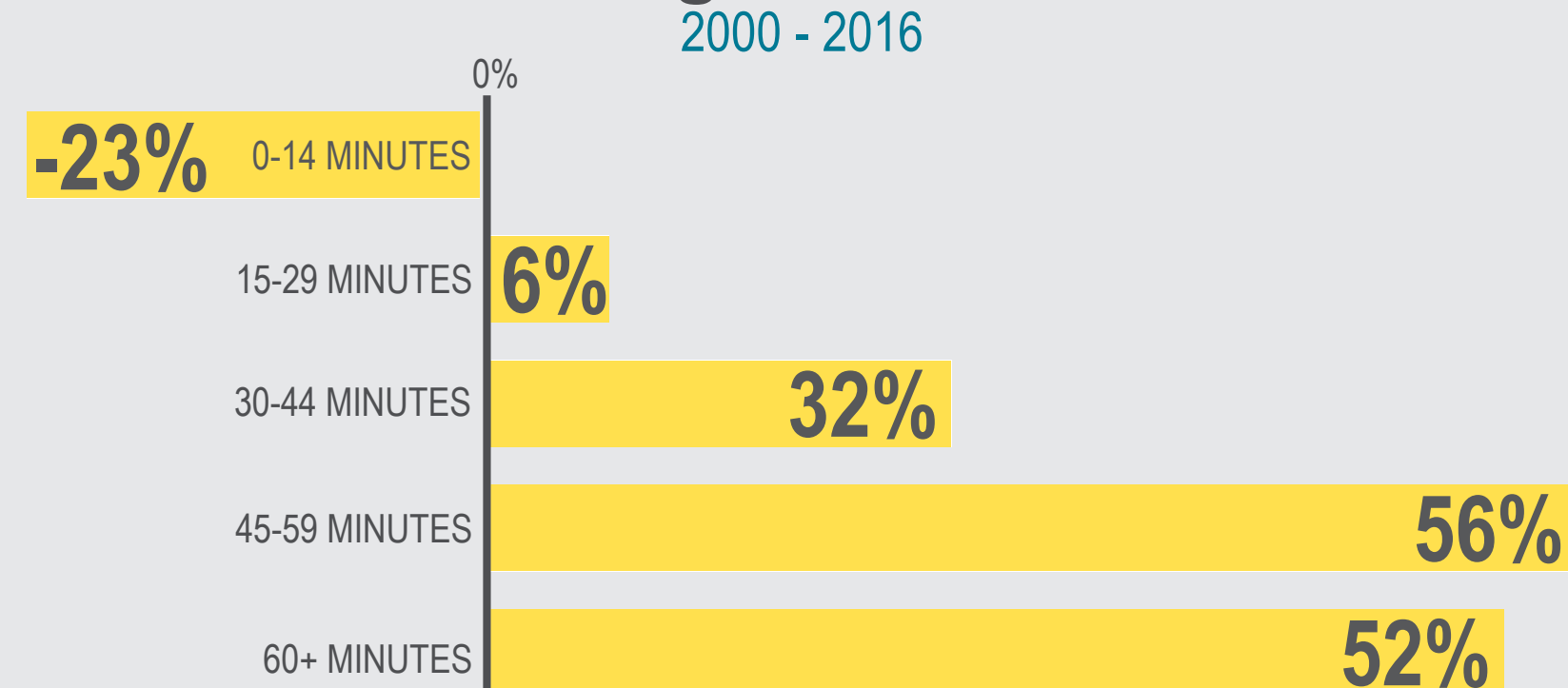
Meeting increasing demand for reliable, high-frequency transit.



Planning for sustainable growth and development.

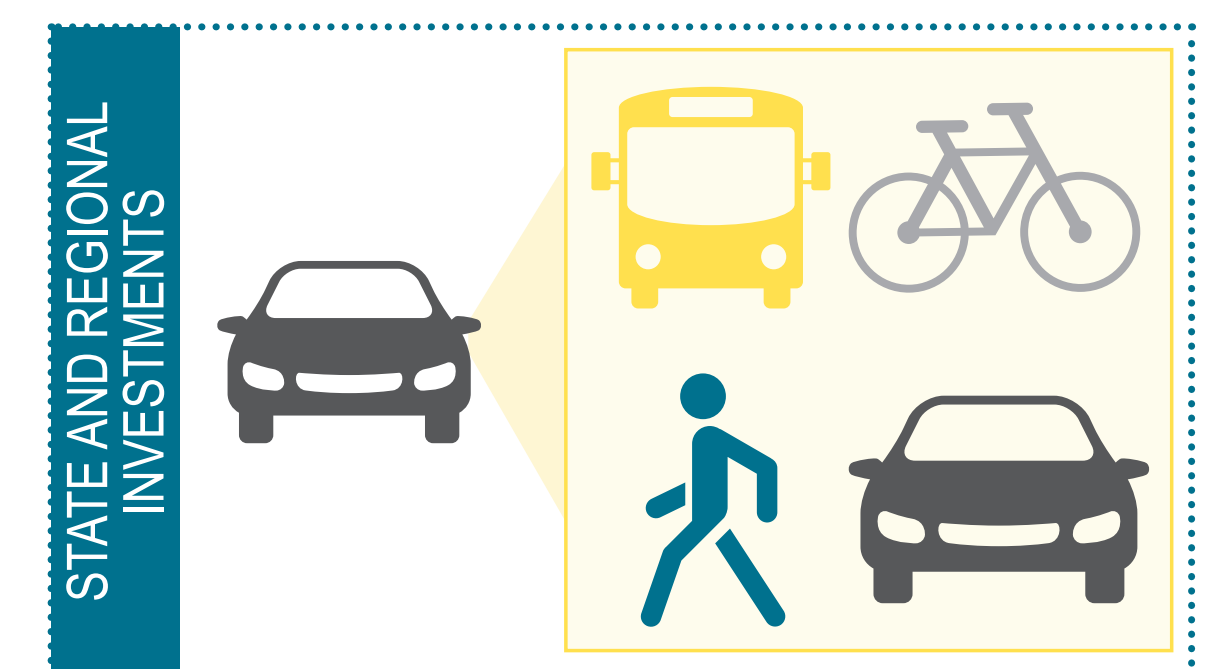


Percent Change in Commute Time 2000 - 2016

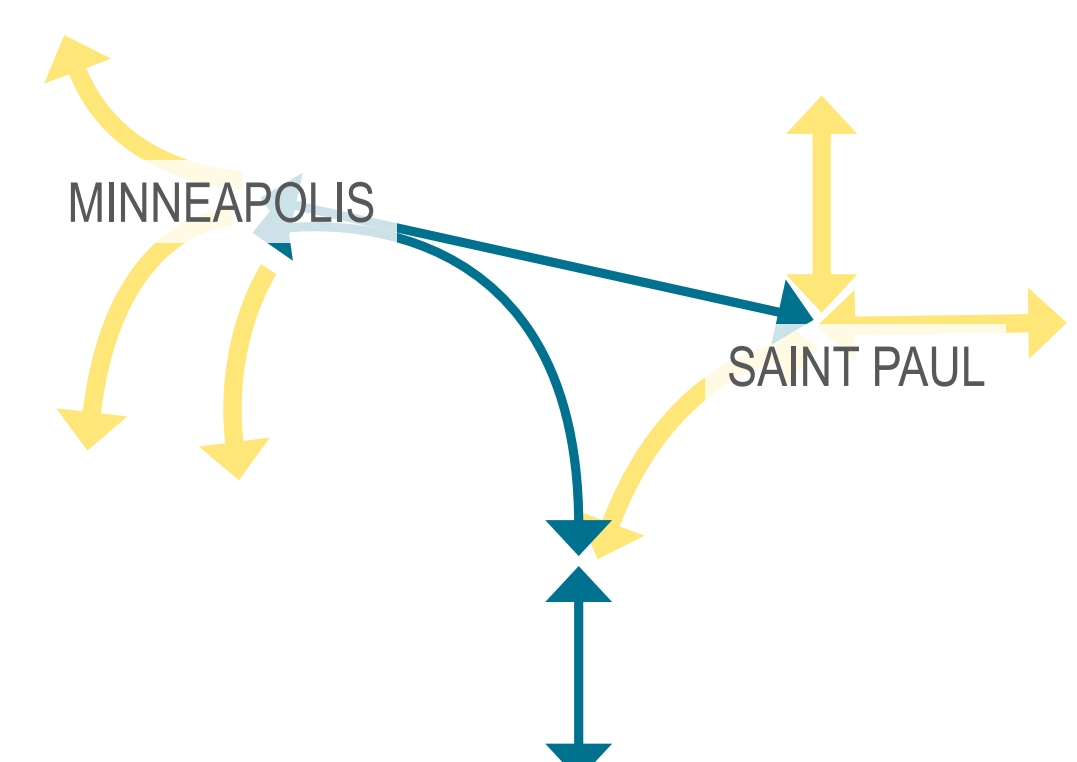


Expanding multimodal travel options.

The State of Minnesota and the Twin Cities region are shifting away from investing in cars only to investing in multiple modes including cars, transit, walking, biking and more.



Regional transportation plans include the Rush Line BRT Project as one of multiple METRO lines to be built in the next decade.



BRT Operating Environment



B R T

The Rush Line BRT would operate in:

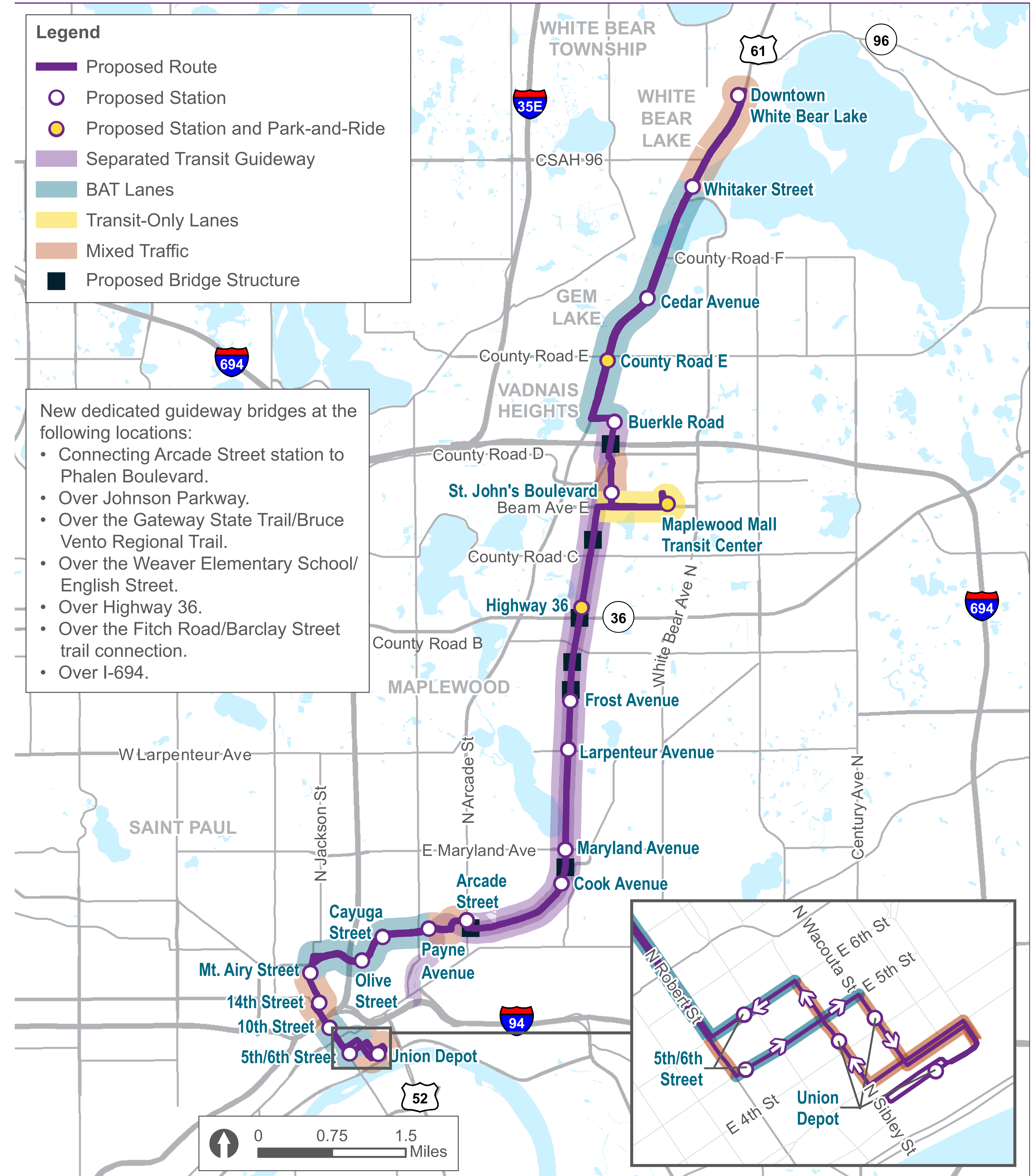
- Dedicated guideway (BRT-only lanes).
- Business access and transit (BAT) lanes (bus lanes that allow private vehicles to make right turns).
- Mixed traffic (regular traffic lanes).



Larpenteur Avenue station concept showing separated transit guideway



County Road E station concept showing BAT lanes






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Resource Areas



B R T

| TOPIC | RESOURCE AREA | POTENTIAL IMPACTS | |
|---|--|-------------------|-----------|
| | | SHORT-TERM | LONG-TERM |
|  Transportation | Traffic | | |
| | Transit | | |
| | Parking, driveways and loading zones | | |
| | Pedestrian and bicycle facilities | | |
| | Freight rail | | |
|  Community and Social | Neighborhoods and community resources | | |
| | Land acquisitions and relocations | | |
| | Visual resources | | |
| | Economics | | |
| | Safety and security | | |
|  Physical and Environmental | Utilities | | |
| | Surface water | | |
| | Water quality and stormwater | | |
| | Geology, groundwater and soils | | |
| | Hazardous materials and contamination | | |
| | Noise and vibration | | |
| | Protected species and wildlife habitat | | |
| | Air quality | | |
| Section 4(f) and Section 106 resources | Section 4(f) - Parks, recreation areas, etc. | | |
| | Section 106 - Historic properties | | |

Short-term impacts would occur during construction of the project and long-term impacts would result from operation of the project.

Aviation, land use plan compatibility, environmental justice, energy, farmlands and Section 6(f) public recreational lands are resources that have no or negligible adverse effects in the short term or long term.

While no disproportionately high or adverse effects to environmental justice communities were identified, the EA includes a discussion of environmental justice to describe the communities near the Rush Line BRT route. The project is expected to benefit environmental justice populations by expanding the availability of safe, reliable and efficient transportation options, thereby providing better access to employment, healthcare, shopping and other destinations.

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SECTION 4(F) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1966

Section 4(f) is federal law that protects publicly owned parks, recreation areas and wildlife and/or waterfowl refuges and publicly or privately owned significant historic sites. An impact to a Section 4(f) property occurs when land is permanently incorporated, temporarily occupied or the proximity of the project would substantially impair protected features. Federal Transit Administration may not approve the use of Section 4(f) property unless a determination is made that:

1) Federal Transit Administration determines the use will have a de minimis impact.

or

2) There is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative, and the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property.

Federal Transit Administration has complied with Section 4(f) by:

- Identifying protected properties within the project area.
- Consulting with owners with jurisdiction of protected properties.
- Assessing potential impacts and examining ways to avoid impacts.
- Identifying potential minimization and mitigation strategies.

De minimis impacts:

- Phalen Park.
- Harvest Park.
- Eastside Heritage Park.
- Weaver Elementary School.

Section 4(f) use of historic sites:

- Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad Corridor Historic District: Saint Paul to White Bear Lake Segment.
- 1868 Alignment of the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad between:
 - Eldridge Avenue and County Road B East.
 - Gervais Avenue and County Road C.
 - Kohlman Avenue and Beam Avenue.

You are invited to review and comment on the project's impacts to these parks, recreation areas and historic sites protected under Section 4(f).





WHAT IS SECTION 106?

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties.



WHAT ARE HISTORIC PROPERTIES?

Any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES?

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of properties recognized for their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture.

A historic property must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- **Criterion A:** Association with events, activities or broad patterns of history.
- **Criterion B:** Association with persons significant in the past.
- **Criterion C:** Characteristic of a type, period or method of construction.
- **Criterion D:** Potential to yield information.

In addition to meeting at least one of the above criteria, a property must generally be at least 50 years of age and retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance.



NP track looking south toward Gloster Junction, 1963 (Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad Historic District)



Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul – Avoidance of adverse effects described in Memorandum of Agreement.

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WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR COMPLETING A SECTION 106 REVIEW?

1

Initiate the process by inviting the State Historic Preservation Office, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and other interested parties into consultation.

2

Identify historic properties within a defined Area of Potential Effects.

3

Assess how those historic properties might be affected by the project.

The project will have:

- No Adverse Effect on 14 historic properties.
- No Adverse Effect, with conditions, on 9 historic properties.
- Adverse Effect on 5 historic properties.

4

Resolve adverse effects, if any, through reaching agreement with consulting parties on measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate the effects.



WHAT IS A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT?

- Outlines the measures identified to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects to historic properties.
- Identifies design development and review processes that will be followed before and during construction.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

- Opportunity for public review and comment on the identification results, the assessment of effects and the Memorandum of Agreement for the Rush Line BRT Project is satisfied in part through this open house and the Environmental Assessment public comment period.
- Public comments will be considered by the Federal Transit Administration in consultation with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and consulting parties prior to the finalization of the Memorandum of Agreement. The final document and associated reporting will be available at rushline.org.

Environmental Assessment Next Steps

WE
ARE
HERE

1

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

May 11 to June 25, 2021

Comment Responses

All substantive comments and formal responses to comments will be included in the Environmental Decision Document. Comments that raise specific issues or concerns regarding the project or the study process, suggest new alternatives, or question or raise concern over new impacts not previously addressed in the Environmental Assessment are considered substantive comments.

2

COMMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The Environmental Decision Document will take into consideration all of the comments received from the public, agencies, tribes and stakeholders.

3

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION DOCUMENT

After public comment, if there are no significant impacts, the Federal Transit Administration will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact. If there are significant impacts, the Federal Transit Administration will direct Ramsey County to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement. Ramsey County will issue the state environmental decision document after the Federal Transit Administration has issued its environmental decision document.

4

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION DOCUMENT

If the Federal Transit Administration issues a Finding of No Significant Impact, the Federal Highway Administration in its role as a cooperating agency will review the Environmental Assessment. If determined to be adequate, it will be adopted and the agency will also issue a Finding of No Significant Impact.

[Sign up for email updates.](#) [Provide comments.](#) [Ask questions.](#) [Learn more.](#)

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The public comment period for the Environmental Assessment is May 11 to June 25, 2021.

Review the Environmental Assessment:

- Electronically:
 - rushline.org
- Hard Copy:
 - Ramsey County Law Library
15 West Kellogg Boulevard, Suite 1815 Courthouse, Saint Paul, MN 55102
 - East Side Enterprise Center
804 Margaret Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106
 - Ramsey County Library – Maplewood
3025 Southlawn Drive, Maplewood, MN 55109
 - Vadnais Heights City Hall
800 East County Road E, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127
 - Gem Lake City Hall
4200 Otter Lake Road, White Bear Lake, MN 55110
 - Ramsey County Library – White Bear Lake
2150 2nd Street, White Bear Lake, MN 55110

COMMENT SUBMITTAL METHODS

All comment submittal methods are considered equal. Verbal comments to staff will not be part of the record.

COMMENT RESPONSES

The Federal Transit Administration and Ramsey County will consider all comments submitted and will provide responses to substantive comments in the Federal Transit Administration's Environmental Decision Document.

SUBMIT COMMENTS

Throughout the public comment period, anyone can submit comments through the following methods:

- **Email:** info@rushline.org
- **Online:** rushline.org
- **Mail:** Andy Gitzlaff, Senior Transportation Planner
Ramsey County
15 West Kellogg Boulevard, Suite 210 Courthouse
Saint Paul, MN 55102
- **Verbally via court reporter at Environmental Assessment open house**
- **Written comment forms at Environmental Assessment open house**



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