



# Community & Business Advisory Committee

Meeting #14 | October 25, 2024

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# Welcome & Introductions

Liz Jones | Senior Community Outreach Coordinator

# Housekeeping

- Virtual meeting etiquette
  - Camera on
  - Microphone (muted when not speaking)
  - Raise hand (if you have a question)
  - Chat (feel free to ask questions in the chat)
- Meeting is being recorded
- Meeting agendas, summaries, and presentation materials are posted on the project website at [metrotransit.org/purple-line-project-committees](https://metrotransit.org/purple-line-project-committees)

# Today's Topics

- Upcoming Notable Project Milestones (5m)
- 9/23 Maplewood City Council Meeting (15m)
- BRT Route Alignment Community Preference/Feedback and Recommendation (45m)
- Next Steps & Stay Connected (15m)

# Upcoming Notable Project Milestones

Craig Lamothe | Project Manager

# Upcoming Notable Project Milestones

- Milestones required to complete Route Modification Study Phase II
  - Recommend a Revised Locally Preferred Alternative (route alignment and northern endpoint)
  - Recommend a Preferred Design Concept (center or side running bus lanes), if White Bear Ave is the preferred route alignment
- Project Development (PD) Phase Extension expires on December 9<sup>th</sup>
  - With completion of PD Phase requirements outstanding, **temporary** withdrawal from the federal program needed; Will seek re-entry after requirements completed
- Project Schedule nearing point of incurring another 1-year delay
  - Completion of RMS Phase II by February 2025 is necessary to maintain the current path to a federal fiscal year 2028 Presidential budget request to Congress and spring 2028 construction start

# 9/23 Maplewood City Council Meeting

Craig Lamothe | Project Manager

# Purple Line Related Actions

## Collocating with Bruce Vento Regional Trail Resolution

- “...withdraws its municipal support for the Purple Line Transit System project through the Bruce Vento Trail...”
- “...rescinds Resolution 17-06-1473...” and “...rescinds Resolution 20-05-185...”
- Approved on a 5-0 vote.

## White Bear Avenue Roadway Reconfiguration Resolution

- “...withdraws its municipal support for the Purple Line Transit System – White Bear Avenue Alignment project through the City of Maplewood.”
- “...rescinds Resolution 22-10-2135...”
- Approved on 3-2 vote. Councilmembers Lee and Villavicencio voted against.



# Other Action

## Flexible Public Transportation & Transportation Alternatives Resolution

- “...use of public transportation and alternative transportation options, such as micro-transit, letter-line bus options, emerging technology transportation options.”
- Approved on a 4-1 vote. Councilmember Villavicencio voted against.

## Clarifications on Flexible Public Transportation & Transportation Alternatives

- Arterial BRT lines replace high ridership local routes plagued by speed and reliability issues operating in congested corridors.
- Metro micro zones are not free-standing transit service areas and are anchored on METRO rail or bus lines and transit centers with frequent service.
- To date, autonomous transit shuttle vehicle pilots are not fully automated, cover a limited geographic area, have slow operating speeds, and have experienced weather related and other challenges.

# Purple Line Letters of Support Pre-City Council Action

- HealthPartners
- East Side Area Business Association
- Hmong American Partnership
- Century College
- Tubman
- Community Dental Care
- Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative
- J. Kou Vang, President – JB Vang
- St. Paul Councilmember Nelsie Yang
- State Representative Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger
- State Representative Peter Fischer

# RMS Phase II Coordination with Maplewood

- Since June 2023, **six** workshops/meetings with the City Council
  - Provided a 56-page memo responding to numerous questions received during July 2024 workshop
  - Provided a project development process presentation with a focus on municipal formal review points and approval actions during August 2024 meeting
- Since April 2023, **additional** touchpoints beyond weekly Issue Resolution Team and monthly Technical Advisory Committee meetings implemented
  - Written Monthly Project Updates to the City Manager
  - Biweekly coordination meeting with City Staff
  - Special topic meetings: New City Manager Project Briefing (4/2); Public Safety (6/10 & 7/16)

# Project Cost in Proper Context

COST ELEMENT	COST ESTIMATE (in million of dollars)
BRT Stations	\$20.6
Other Construction	\$189.3
Real Estate Acquisition	\$13.7
Electric BRT Buses *	\$20.2
Agency & Consultant Staff Labor & Expenses	\$75.1
Contingency **	\$119.3
Finance Charges	\$7.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$445.2</b>



**~\$210M construction project**

Federal and county funding for Purple Line is not able to be re-allocated to other uses such as Arterial BRT or Metro micro.

\* An all-electric bus fleet has always been and continues to be part of the project scope.

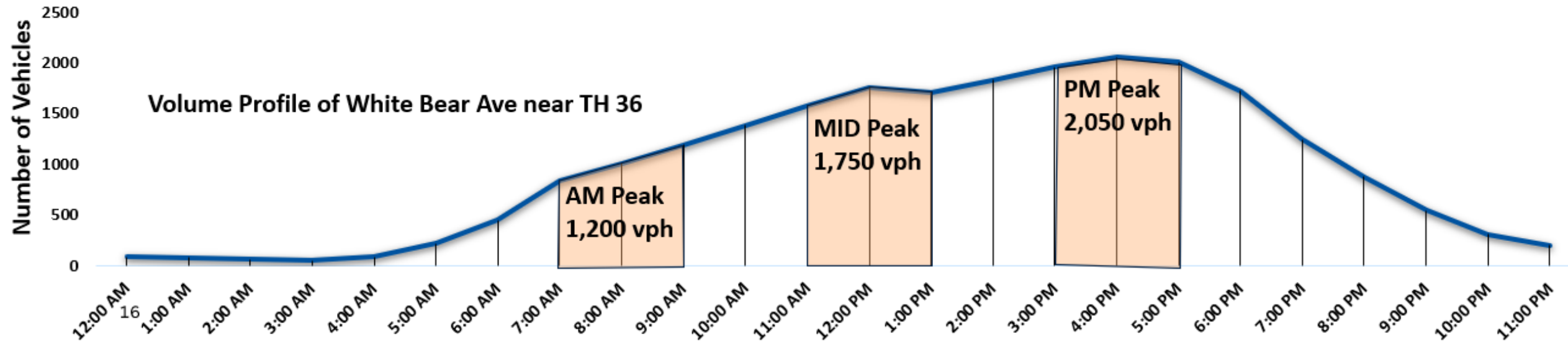
\*\* The federal government requires the project to carry a higher level of contingency than would an equivalent locally funded public works roadway project.

# Project Ridership in Proper Context

- Good Ridership: 1,350 avg. daily riders (2023 actual) on Route 54 (downtown to Maplewood Mall)
- Better Ridership: 2,750 avg. daily riders (2023 forecast) on a Purple Line with service improvements only
- Great Ridership: 4,700 avg. daily riders (2023 forecast) on a Purple Line with service improvements plus speed, reliability and facility improvements
  - People and job projections (existing comprehensive plans) = growth of approx. 400 avg. daily riders by 2045
  - Station area planning → Municipal comprehensive plan updates
    - Future: more people and jobs in station areas = more ridership than forecasted

# Corridor Vehicle Volumes in Proper Context

- **Lane reductions in each direction** offer significant safety benefits, including reduced vehicle speeds, fewer crashes, and enhanced safety for pedestrians.
- Daily traffic volumes on White Bear Avenue range from **17,000 vehicles per day near Larpenteur Avenue** to **23,000 vehicles per day just north of Highway 36**. Not too dissimilar to Maryland Ave, which underwent a 4-to-3 lane conversion, near I-35E.
- During the **PM peak hour** (the worst hour of the day), all intersections are expected to operate within **acceptable levels** for urban or suburban areas. White Bear Avenue motorists may experience added travel time between **1 to 4 minutes**, depending on the roadway design option selected.



# BRT Route Alignment – Community Preference & Feedback

Liz Jones | Community Outreach & Engagement Lead

Stephen Smith | Deputy Project Manager

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# Recap of Technical Evaluation Shared with Public

Stephen Smith | Deputy Project Manager



# Corridor Comparison



## Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor

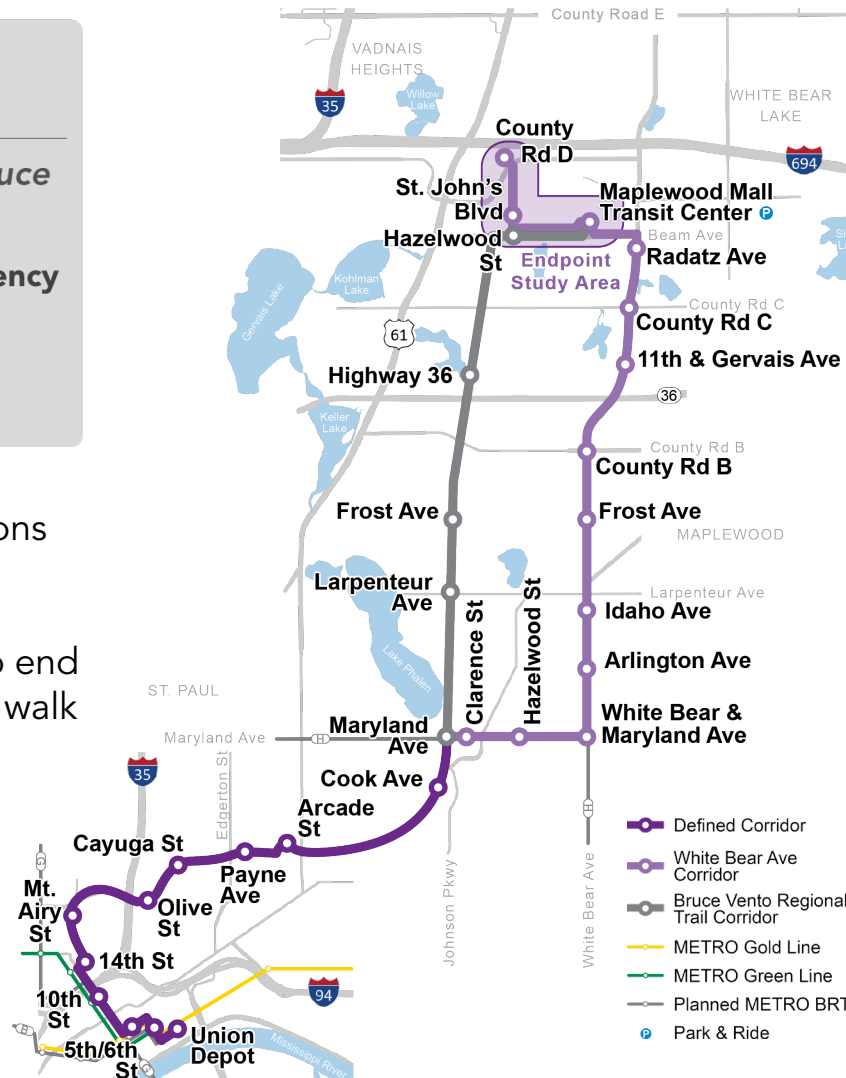
Maryland Ave to Maplewood Mall via Bruce Vento Regional Trail and Beam Ave

9.5 miles | 17 stations | 15 minute frequency

3,800 projected riders per weekday

\$370 million estimated cost

- ✔ Eligible for federal funding
- ✔ Fewer impacts to future traffic operations
- ✔ Fewer property impacts and quicker construction
- ✔ Shorter transit travel times from end to end
- ✔ Fewer destinations within a 10-minute walk or roll of stations
- ✔ Less transit-supportive development
- ✔ Change of trail character that includes some pedestrian improvements at trail crossings and roadway intersections



## White Bear Ave Corridor

Johnson Pkwy to the Maplewood Mall area via Maryland Ave, White Bear Ave, and Beam Ave

11 miles | 24 stations | 15 minute frequency

3,900–4,900 projected riders per weekday

\$420–450 million estimated cost

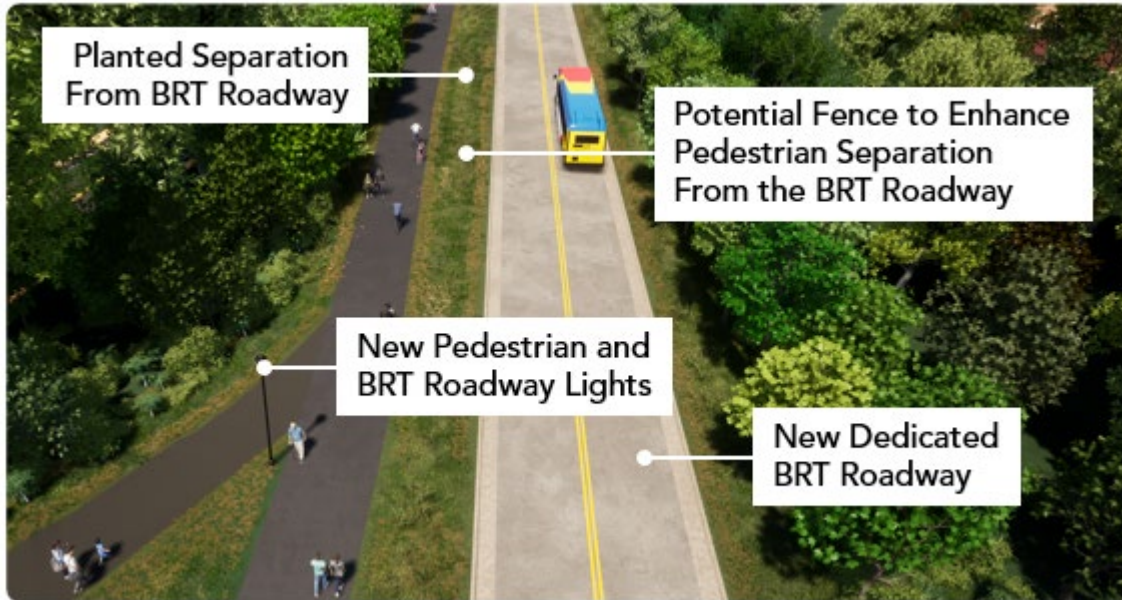
- ✔ Eligible for federal funding
- ✔ More impacts to future traffic operations
- ✔ More property impacts and slower construction
- ✔ Longer transit travel times from end to end
- ✔ More destinations within a 10-minute walk or roll of stations
- ✔ More transit-supportive development
- ✔ Roadway and pedestrian infrastructure improvements with full roadway reconstruction

If the Purple Line co-locates with the Bruce Vento Regional Trail, the trail will be reconstructed only through the portion of the Purple Line route that uses the Ramsey County rail right-of-way (Arcade St to Beam Ave).

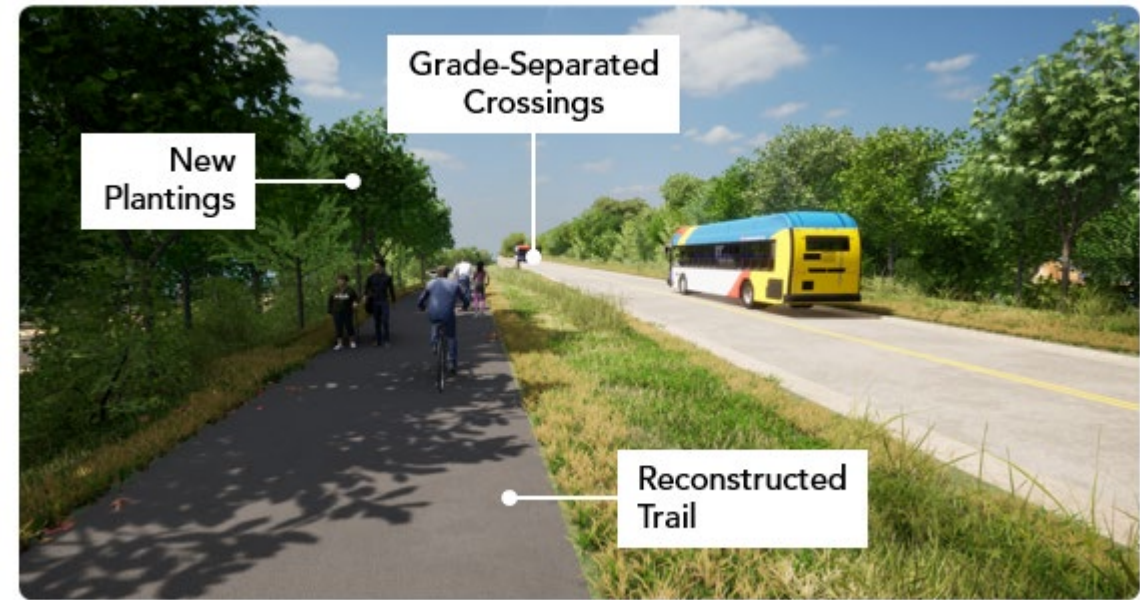


# Trail Co-location

*with Bruce Vento Regional Trail*



**Adjacent to Hagen Drive**



**Adjacent to Lake Phalen**

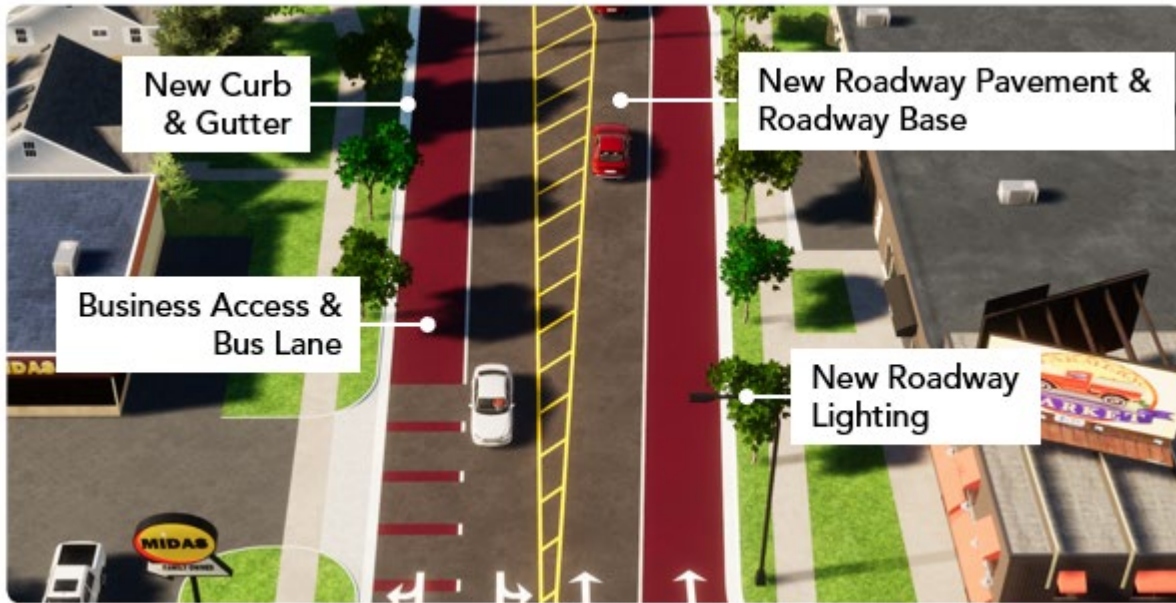


The Purple Line project is currently planned to be a full roadway reconstruction to deliver several pedestrian, traffic, and transit improvements.

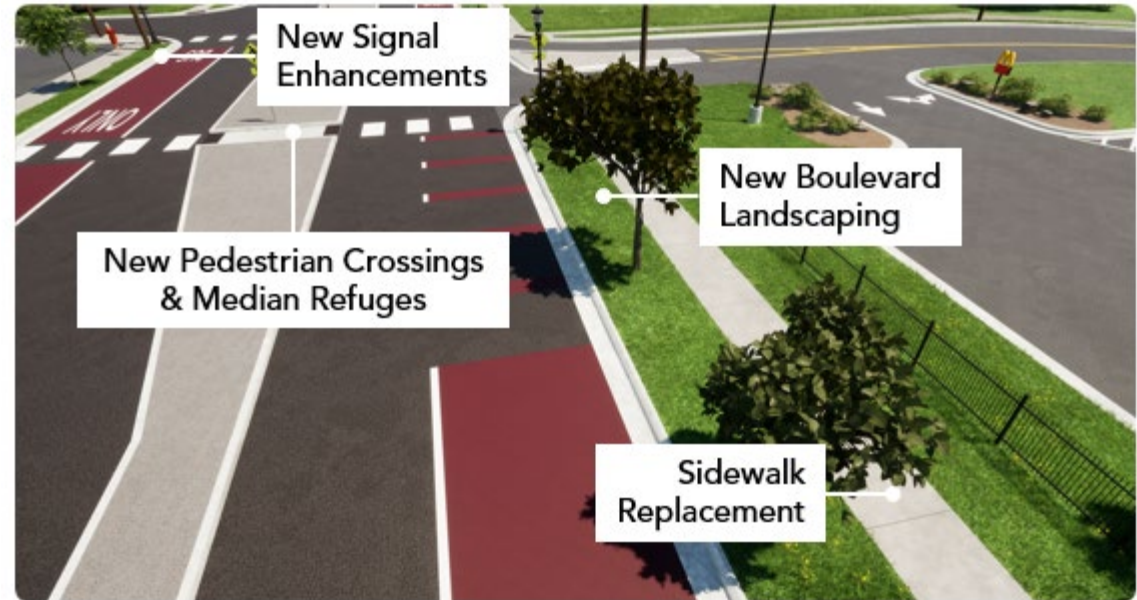


# Roadway Reconstruction

## *on White Bear Ave*

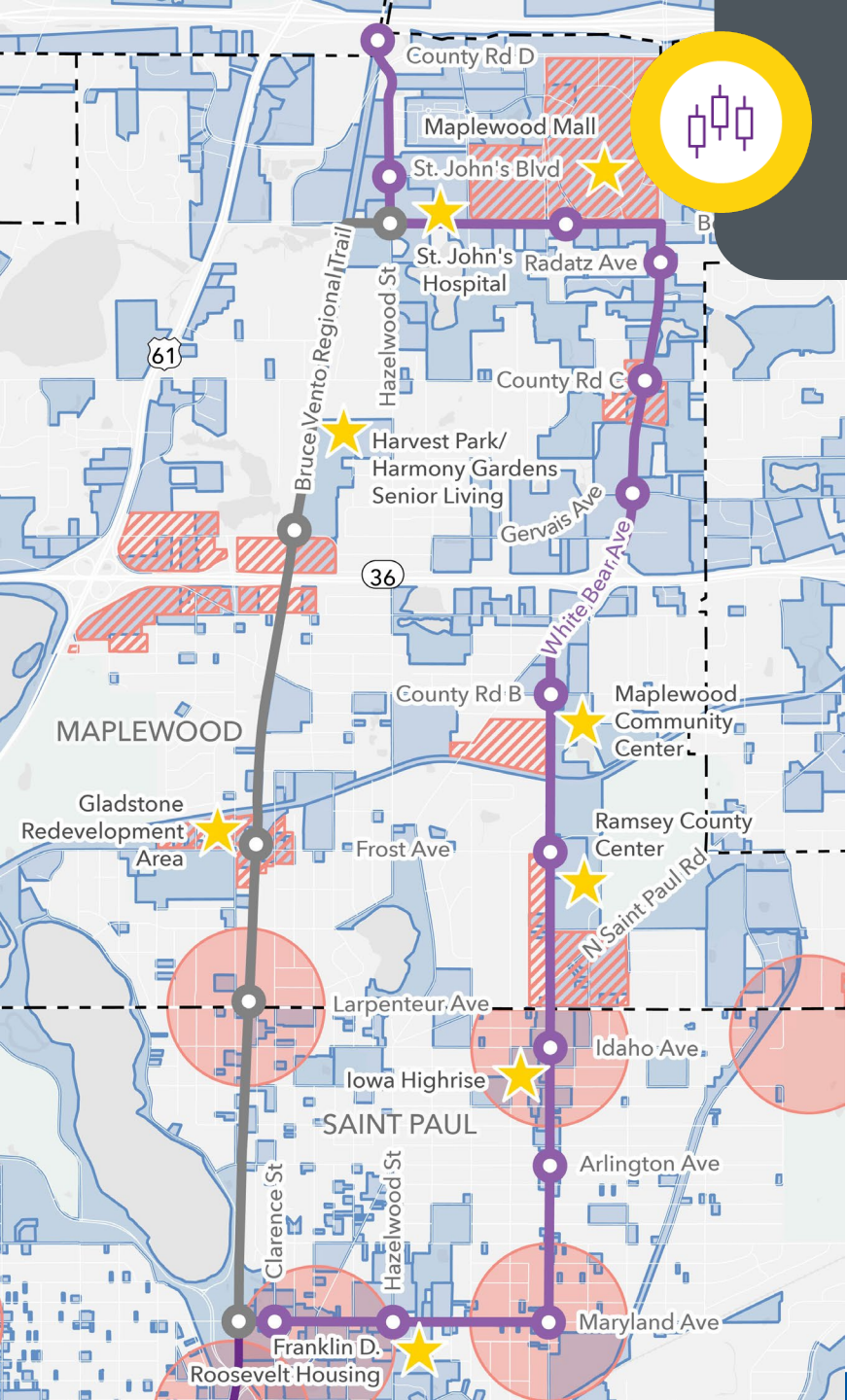


**White Bear Ave**  
*North of Sherwood Ave*






**Maryland Ave & Prosperity Ave**

# Land Use, Economic Development, *and* Destinations






WITHIN A 10-MINUTE WALK OR ROLL OF STATIONS ON THE



**Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor, there are:**

-  Fewer existing and future transit-supportive land uses
-  Approximately 540 affordable housing units\*
-  Approximately 200 community destinations\*\*

WITHIN A 10-MINUTE WALK OR ROLL OF STATIONS ON THE

**White Bear Ave Corridor, there are:**

-  More existing and future transit-supportive land uses
-  Approximately 1,800 affordable housing units\*
-  Over 375 community destinations\*\*

-  Key Destinations
-  Saint Paul Neighborhood Nodes
-  Maplewood Mixed-Use Areas
-  Transit-Supportive Land Use

# Socioeconomic Demographics and Ridership



	Bruce Vento Trail	White Bear Avenue
Total Population	19,983	35,429
Total Households	7,093	12,296
Age Under 18	6,560	11,558
Age 65 and Up	2,621	4,628
People of Color Non-Hispanic	9,565	15,753
White Non-Hispanic	8,319	16,107
Hispanic	2,099	3,569
High School or Less	5,477	9,931
Limited English Proficiency	3,681	5,078
Households with No Vehicle	905	1,577
Households with 1 Vehicle	2,523	4,078
Average Median Household Income	\$65,921	\$59,964
Employed Population	9,744	17,160
Number of Jobs*	6,615	10,333
Population with Disability**	4,252	5,582
Units in Single Family Buildings	4,785	8,619
Units in Multi-Family Buildings	2,609	4,116
Units in Other Building Types	50	117

■ Demographics   
 ■ Educational Attainment   
 ■ Language   
 ■ Transit Dependence  
■ Household Income and Employment   
 ■ Disability   
 ■ Housing Units Demographic Type

- ✔ Within the **White Bear Ave Corridor**, there are more:
  - » Low-income households
  - » Zero-vehicle households
  - » Residents of color
  - » Affordable housing units
- ✔ Purple Line, with the **White Bear Ave Corridor**, is estimated to generate 3,900 to 4,900 riders per weekday
  - » 2,600 of these riders are from zero-vehicle households
- ✔ Purple Line, with the **Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor**, is estimated to generate 3,800 riders per weekday
  - » 1,900 of these riders are from zero-vehicle households
- ✔ Factors that increase potential ridership on White Bear Ave include:
  - » Longer corridor with more stations
  - » More destinations
  - » Stronger transit market

Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2017 to 2021, Block Groups  
 \* Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics 2020 Workplace Area Characteristics  
 \*\* Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2017 to 2021, Tracts





# Transit *and* Traffic Operations

## Transit Operations

Bruce Vento Regional Trail will take **25 to 35** minutes from Union Depot

- ✓ Shorter transit travel times
  - » Shorter corridor
  - » Fewer stations
  - » Dedicated BRT roadway
  - » Fewer intersections
- ✓ More reliable transit service
  - » Fewer potential conflicts with traffic
- ✓ Fewer potential transit maintenance challenges

White Bear Ave will take **35 to 40** minutes from Union Depot

- ✓ Longer transit travel times
  - » Longer corridor
  - » More stations
  - » Less dedicated BRT roadway
  - » More intersections
- ✓ Less reliable transit service
  - » More potential conflicts with traffic
- ✓ More potential transit maintenance challenges

## Traffic Operations

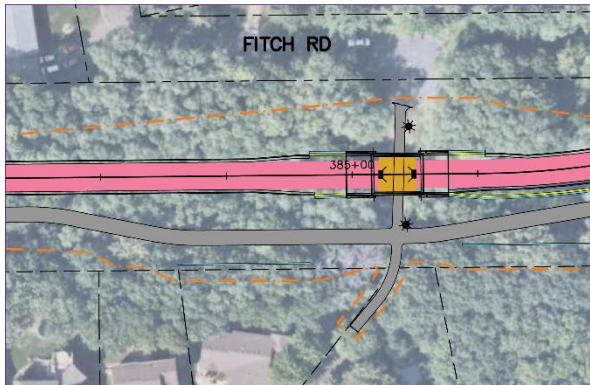
With Purple Line on Bruce Vento Regional Trail, future traffic travel time on Maryland and White Bear avenues will be **10 to 11** minutes during peak periods.

With Purple Line on White Bear Ave, future traffic travel time on Maryland and White Bear avenues will be **12 to 13** minutes during peak periods.

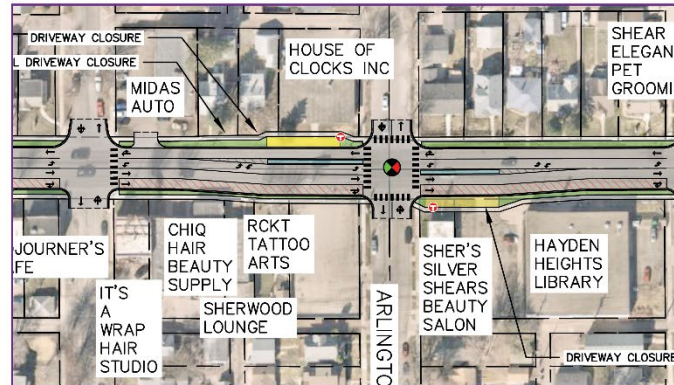
# Property Impacts



- There are fewer property impacts along the **Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor**. Impacts are largely minor and at the rear of properties.
- The **White Bear Ave Corridor** design options result in property impacts throughout the corridor. There are many minor, temporary impacts and some larger impacts to front yards and property access.
- The **White Bear Ave Corridor** design options could result in some relocations of residential and commercial properties.



Some minor property impacts are expected at the rear of properties on the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor.



Several driveways may be closed near stations on the White Bear Ave Corridor.

## Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor

	Impacted Properties
<b>Residential</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Businesses</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Publicly-owned</b>	<b>1-4</b>

*These impacts are not total property takings. Minor impacts to the rear of properties along the corridor are expected.*

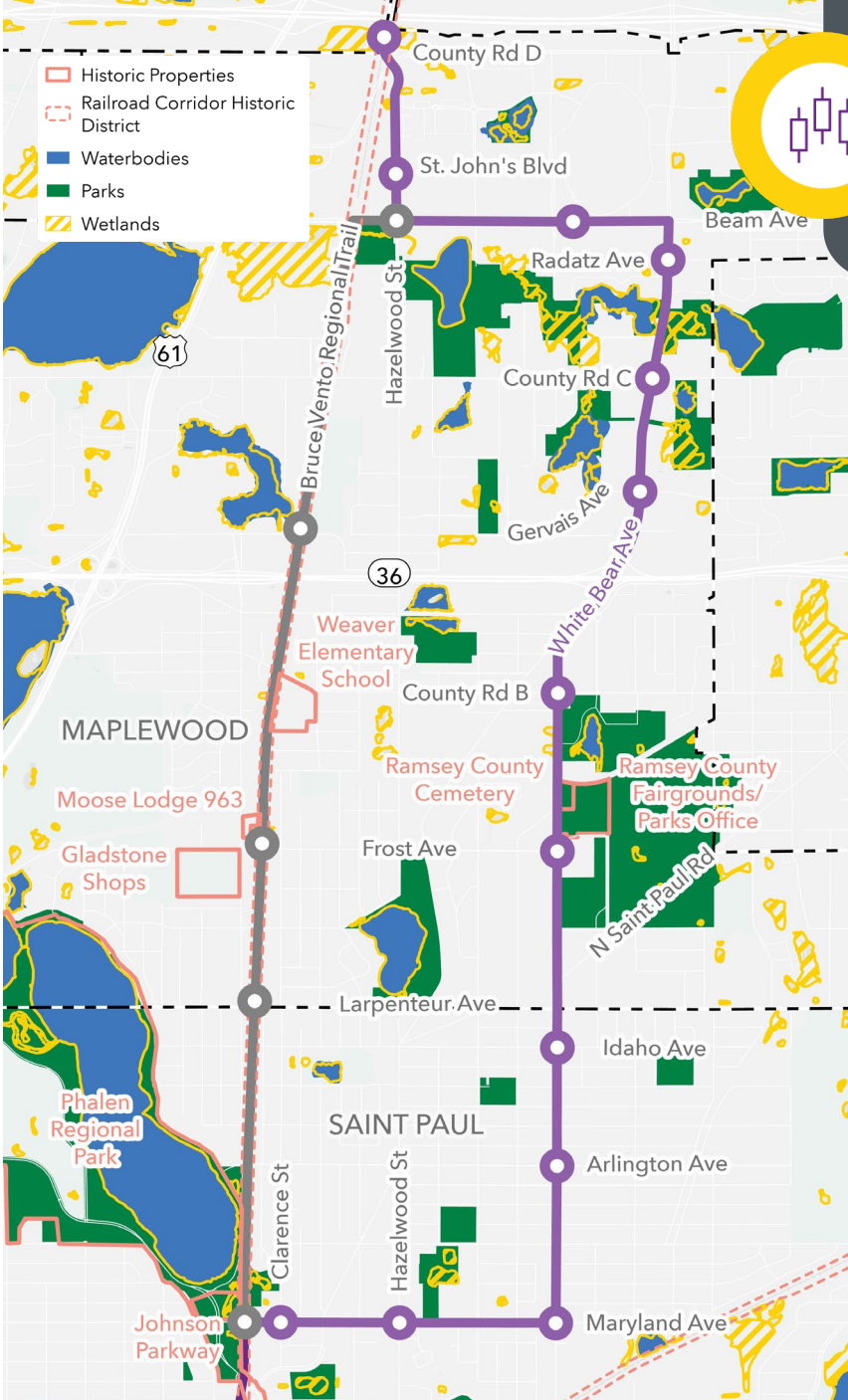
## White Bear Ave Corridor (Side-Running)

	Impacted Properties
<b>Residential</b>	<b>10-19</b>
<b>Businesses</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Publicly-owned</b>	<b>1-2</b>

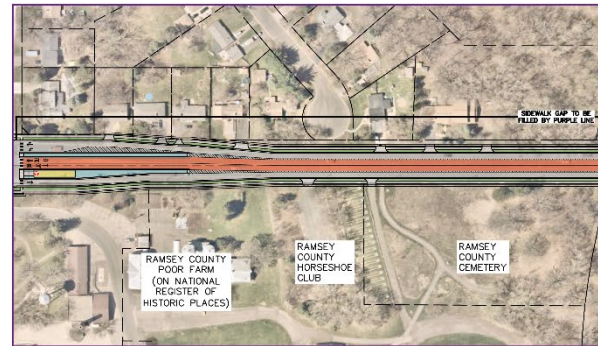
## White Bear Ave Corridor (Center-Running)

	Impacted Properties
<b>Residential</b>	<b>56-57</b>
<b>Businesses</b>	<b>35-38</b>
<b>Publicly-owned</b>	<b>5</b>

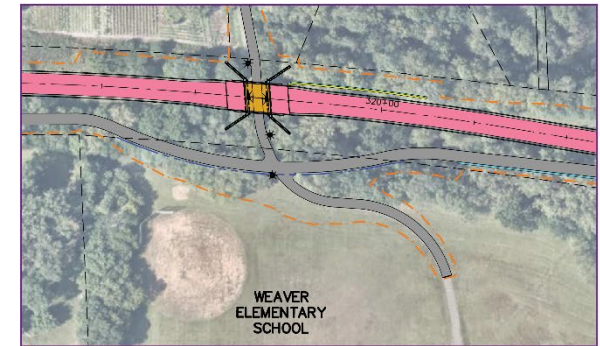
# Environmental Considerations



- Based on information known at this time, the **White Bear Ave Corridor** appears to have fewer natural and cultural resource impacts.
- Purple Line staff determined that potential tree impacts are not an equivalent comparison between corridors. The **Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor** results in impacts to a greater number of trees in a “natural” environment; **White Bear Ave Corridor** design options result in loss of boulevard trees in an urban environment.



Minor impacts to two historic properties are expected during construction on the White Bear Ave Corridor.



Some impacts are expected at multiple historic properties along the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor, including Weaver Elementary School.



# Cost *and* Federal Funding Eligibility



## Cost

The Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor is expected to cost \$370 million. The White Bear Ave Corridor is expected to cost between \$420–450 million.

**The White Bear Ave Corridor is expected to cost more than the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor.**

Factors that increase the cost of the White Bear Ave Corridor include:

- ✓ Longer route and larger roadway
- ✓ Driveways, sidewalks, and additional street reconstruction at intersections
- ✓ Increase utility impacts
- ✓ Increased red paint for bus lanes
- ✓ More stations
- ✓ More traffic signals and pedestrian crossing signals
- ✓ More electric buses
- ✓ More permanent property acquisitions

## Expected Federal Viability

Currently, both corridors are likely to be eligible for federal funding through the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants program.

✓ Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor

✓ White Bear Ave Corridor

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# Engagement Methods

Liz Jones | Community Outreach & Engagement Lead

# Corridor Engagement (July-August)

- **Purpose:** Focused engagement on narrowed center running option in St. Paul and corridor wide engagement of Bruce Vento Regional Trail Co-location and the White Bear Avenue Corridor Route Alternatives.

- **Events:**

- 3 project-hosted community meetings
- 12 pop-ups/tabling at community events
- Canvassed/spoke with over 500 people
- Stakeholder presentations
- Property impact meetings with businesses

- **Collected feedback via:**

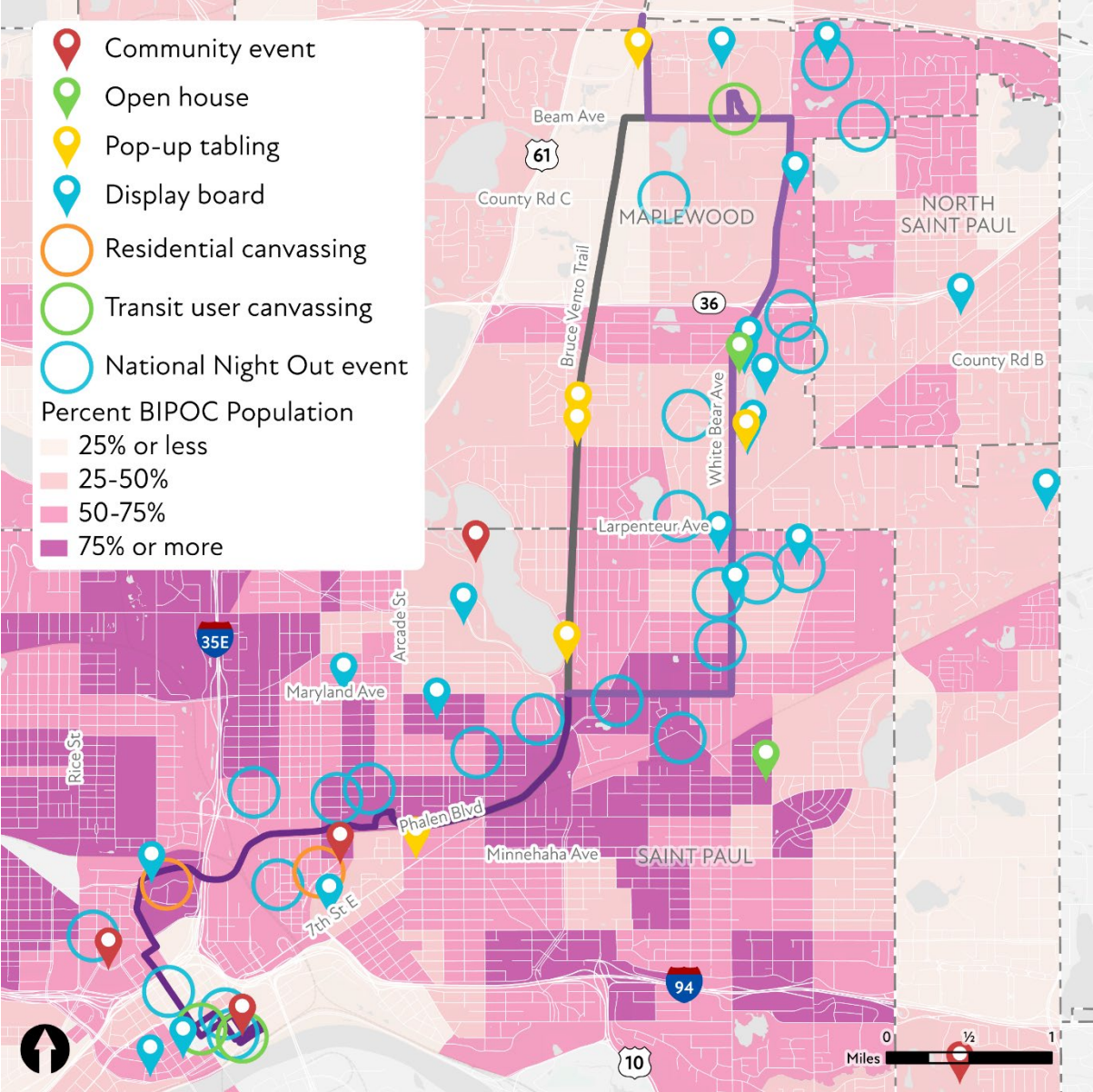
- Comment forms/surveys & Phone/email
- Display boards and surveys at libraries and community centers
- Hello Lamp Post: a two-way communication platform via signage and user’s cell phone on signs and sidewalk decals posted along the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and White Bear Ave corridors



*Hello Lamp Post sign at a bus stop near Payne Ave/Phalen Blvd*

# Overview

- Reached nearly **3,000 people** during this engagement period
- Staff attended close to 30 community meetings, events, and pop-ups
- Focus on reaching **diverse populations** through community events, canvassing, interpreters, translated documents, display boards, multi-cultural media

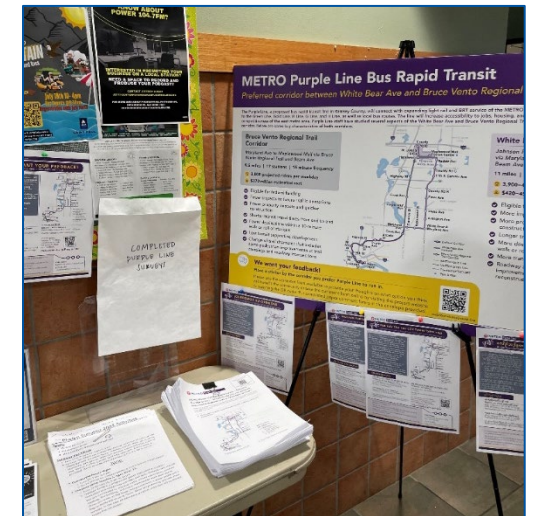




# Display Board Locations Throughout Both Corridors

- Salvation Army Lakewood
- Theresa Living Center
- Harriet Tubman Center East
- Maplewood YMCA Community Center
- Mount Airy Community Center
- Phalen Recreation Center
- Hayden Heights Recreation Center
- Arlington Hills Community Center
- CLUES Teen Tech Center
- Ramsey County Library – Maplewood and North St. Paul
- Maplewood City Hall
- St. Paul Public Library – Hayden Heights, Dayton’s Bluff, and George Latimer Central
- Cochran Recovery Services
- Catholic Charities Family Service Center
- Harmony Learning Center
- Iowa Hi-Rise
- Emma’s Place

*Library and Community Center Display Board*

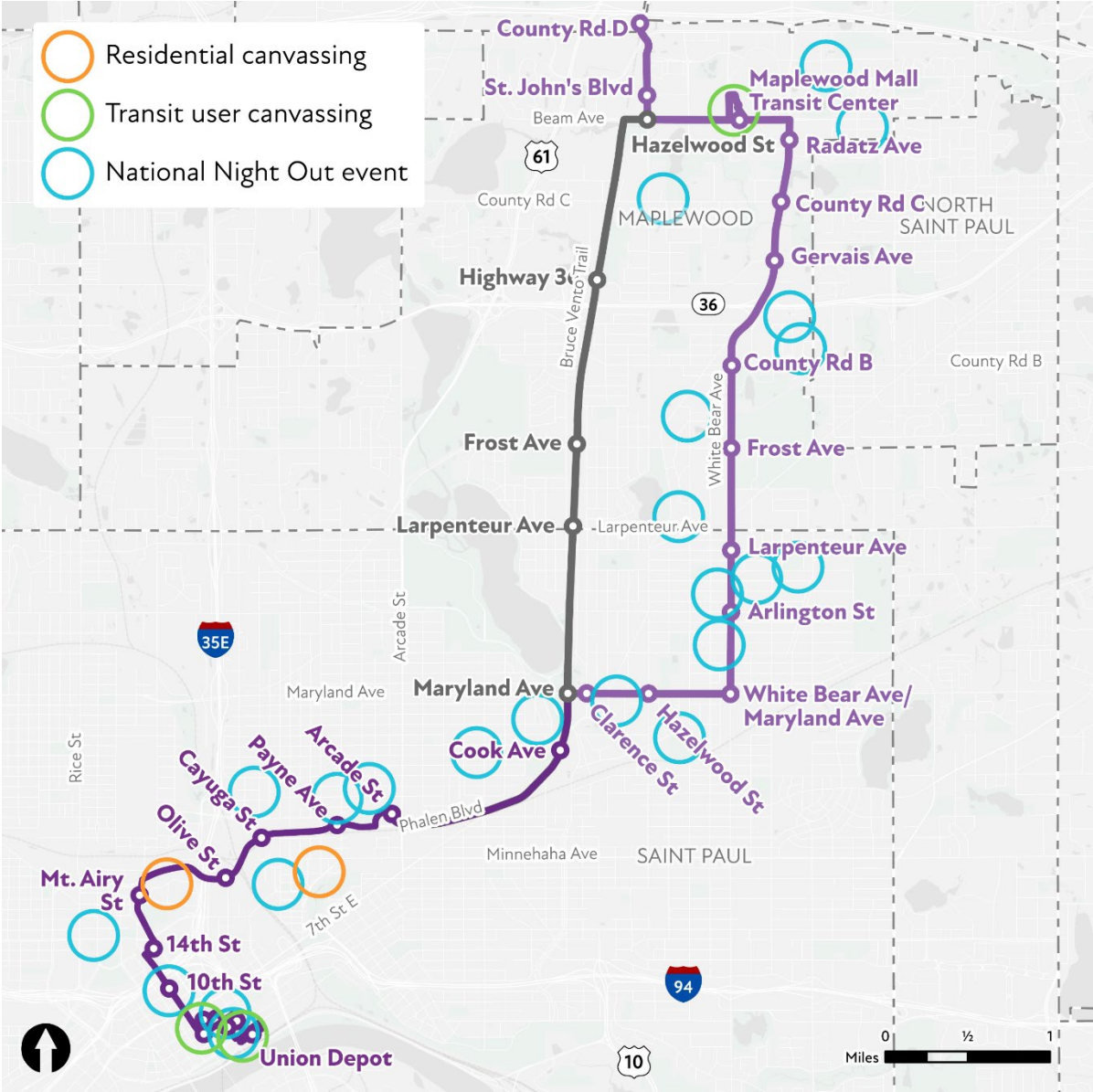


# Diverse Engagement Media Outlets

Media Outlet	Media	Audience	Timeframe
Minnesota de Hoy	Digital	Spanish Communities in Minnesota	Jul. 22 to Aug 19
Sahan Journal	Digital	Diverse Communities in Minnesota	Jul. 22 to Aug 19
3 Hmong T.V.	Digital T.V.	Hmong	Jul. 22 to Aug 19
Somali T.V.	Digital T.V.	Somali	Jul. 22 to Aug 19
La Voz Latina	Digital & Print	Latino Communities of the Twin Cities	Jul. 22 to Aug 19
MN Spokesman Recorder	Digital	African American	Jul. 22 to Aug 19
Access Press	Digital & Print	Minnesota's Disability Community	Aug. 1 to Aug. 13

# Canvassing Efforts

- Visited 23 National Night Out events along the corridor on August 6
  - Dropped off flyers and paper surveys for organizers to distribute to attendees
- Spoke with residents at apartment complexes along the corridor
- Spoke with people at bus stops in Downtown Saint Paul and Maplewood Mall Transit Center





# Hello Lamp Post

- New feedback option
  - Two-way communication platform via signage and user's cell phone on signs and sidewalk decals posted along the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and White Bear Ave corridors
- 205 conversations, 968 messages from “players” (respondents)
  - As of 9/23/24



Hello Lamp Post signs at a stop near Payne Ave/Phalen Blvd (left) and Bruce Vento Regional Trail (right).



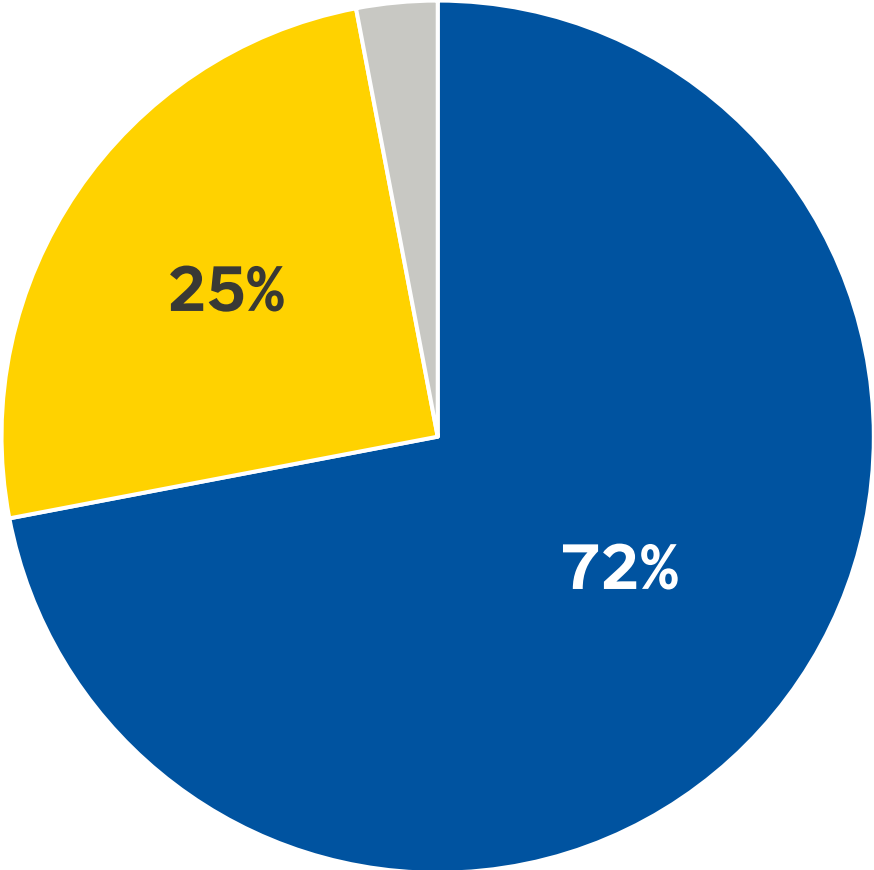
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# Feedback Results and Themes

Liz Jones | Community Outreach & Engagement Lead

# Corridor Comparison Survey (as of 9/12/24)

Corridor Preference

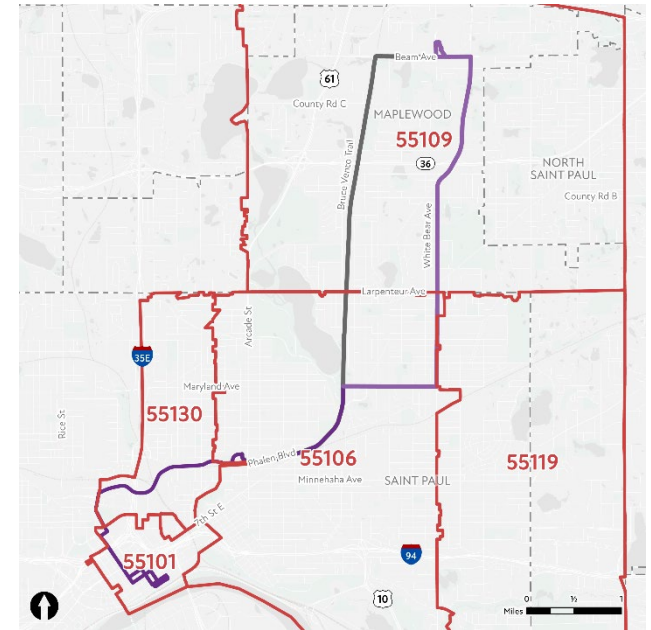


- White Bear Avenue Corridor
- Bruce Vento Regional Trail
- Blank

- 1,388 total responses
  - 351 for BVT
  - 993 for WBA

# Survey Demographics

- Good spread of age ranges
  - 10-year age categories between 25 and 74 each between 10 – 20%
- Even spread between men and women
- About 60% of respondents have used transit
- 60% White and 15% BIPOC
  - Corridor area is about 40% White and 60% BIPOC
  - 25% skipped the question
- 80% of respondents live in the project corridor
  - Defined by zip codes 55101, 55106, 55109, 55119, & 55130
- About 25% of respondents identify as having a disability or impairment
- About 10% don't have access to a vehicle



# Key Takeaways from the Survey

- Strong preference for White Bear Ave Corridor over Bruce Vento Regional Trail Corridor.
- The pattern of overall corridor support (heavily WBA) is consistent across every demographic breakdown.
- In the Project Corridor
  - Saint Paul Zip Codes (55101, 55106, 55130, 55119) prefer WBA over BVT about 56% to 40%.
  - Maplewood Zip Codes (55109, the largest single response group) prefer WBA over BVT about 80% to 20%.
    - Influences overall project corridor support at about 70% for WBA among respondents in the project corridor.

# Qualitative Review of Survey

## Of respondents selecting Bruce Vento Regional Trail:

- Over 70% (250) are doing so in opposition to the project impacts on White Bear Avenue.
- Close to 25% (80) are doing so for the merits of that option, mainly new access to high frequency transit.

## Of respondents selecting White Bear Ave:

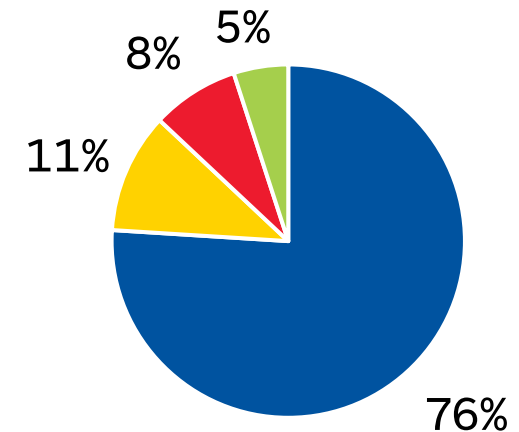
- About 55% (560) are doing so in opposition to the impacts on the BVT.
- Over 30% (330) are doing do for the better access and amenities on WBA.

About 10% of respondents express opposition to both options.

# Hello Lamp Post Demographics

- 30% White & 52% BIPOC
  - 18% did not answer
- 86% identified as transit users
- 43% use public transit daily
- 86% used Hello Lamp Post to learn about Purple Line rather than provide feedback.

What people asked to learn about:



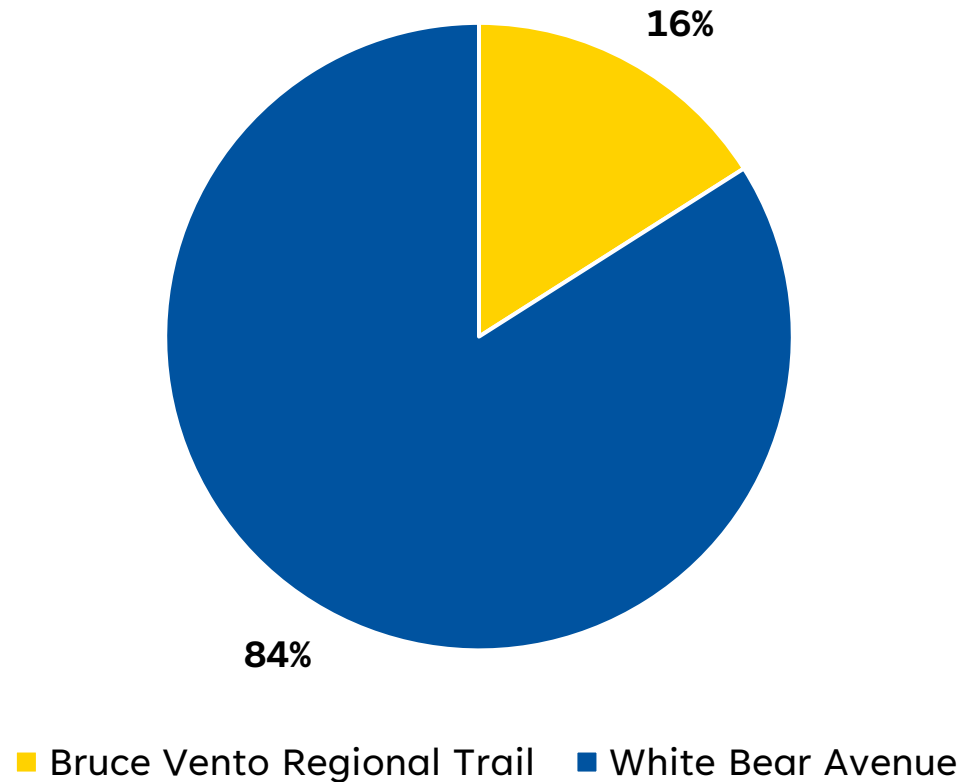
- Project Overview
- Project Benefits
- Accessibility
- Ask a question

# Common Questions from Hello Lamp Post Users

- When will construction for the Purple Line be completed?
- Exactly what route will the Purple Line take?
- Where is the Purple Line going to be located?
- What is the end stop for the Purple Line?
- How far apart would the Purple Line stops be?
- Why is this development necessary?

# Hello Lamp Post Corridor Feedback

Where should the Purple Line route run?



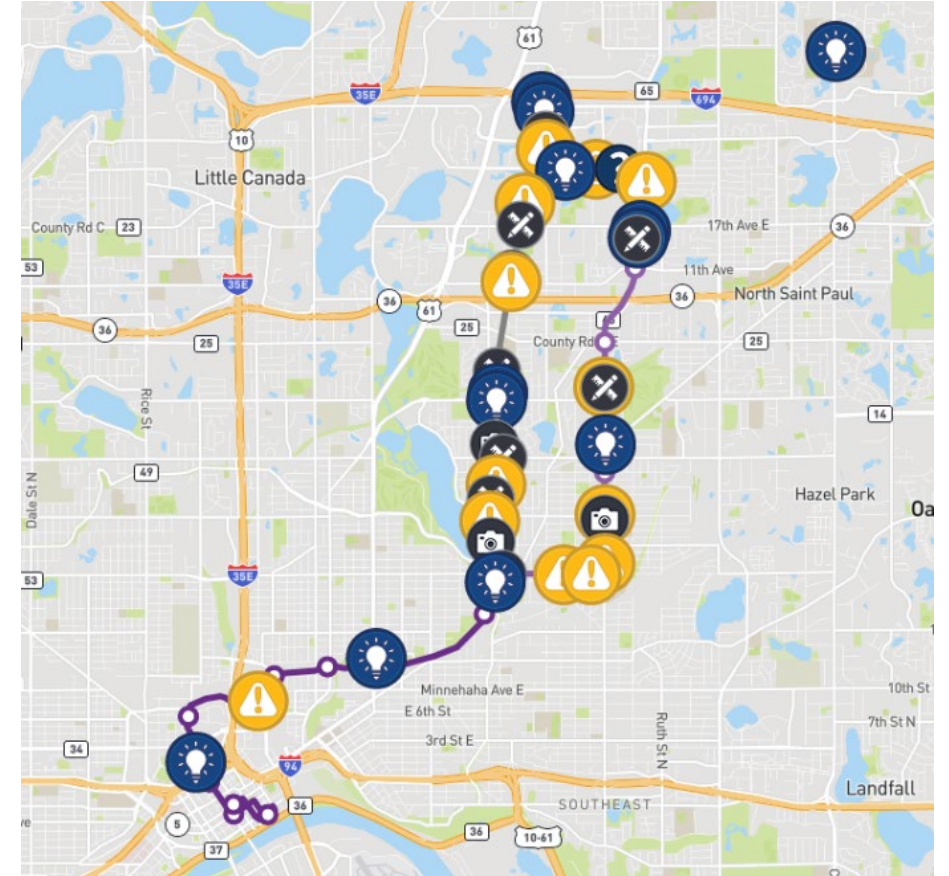
- 19 community members responded to the Hello Lamp Post survey
  - 3 selected Bruce Vento Regional Trail
  - 16 selected White Bear Avenue
- Those who selected White Bear Avenue used Hello Lamp Post at:
  - Downtown St. Paul
  - Bruce Vento Trail
  - White Bear Ave
  - Maplewood Mall Transit Center
- Those who selected Bruce Vento Trail used Hello Lamp Post at:
  - Downtown St. Paul
  - Bruce Vento Trail
  - White Bear Ave



# Interactive Map Feedback

## Corridor Comparison Feedback

- Support for Purple Line on the WBA Corridor because it has more transit-supportive destinations and infrastructure.
- Support for the preservation of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail as a natural greenspace for the community.



*Comment pins on interactive feedback map*

# Community Meetings, Events, and Pop-Ups Feedback

- Concerns about impacts to natural environment and community character of the Bruce Vento Trail
- Support for White Bear Ave Corridor related to existing transit-supportive development, destinations, and infrastructure
- Concerns about traffic impacts if Purple Line is routed on White Bear Avenue



*Community meeting in Saint Paul*

# Canvassing Feedback

- Most people have heard of the Purple Line and expressed support for the project contingent on a particular corridor being selected
- Many respondents at bus stops use public transportation daily or on a regular basis
- General preference for White Bear Ave Corridor

# Engagement Takeaways

- There is larger public support for the White Bear Ave Corridor
  - For its proximity to people, businesses, and other opportunities.
  - For its preservation of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail north of Maryland Ave.
  - Across different demographics
- A lot of engagement with BIPOC folks, although lower survey responses
- Notes for future engagement planning
  - Disparity between folks who speak a language other than English with reading and writing that language as well/ability to take and complete a survey
  - BIPOC folks and folks with lower incomes are more responsive to engagement and taking surveys when an incentive for their time is provided

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## Next Steps & Stay Connected

Liz Jones | Senior Community Outreach Coordinator

# Purple Line Expressions of Support

- Letters to the Corridor Management Committee and the Community & Business Advisory Committee from Maplewood's State Representatives Peter Fischer and Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger
- Email to the Corridor Management Committee and the Community & Business Advisory Committee from an East Side resident
- Letters to Maplewood City Council prior to their September 23 actions from institutions, businesses, individuals, and elected officials

# Staff Recommendation for Consideration

Purple Line project staff recommend for CMC consideration the following action for the following reasons:

## **ACTION**

“The Purple Line Project will no longer advance the route alignment for collocating the Purple Line BRT line with the Bruce Vento Regional Trail north of Maryland Avenue.”

## **RATIONALE**

- Weak public support for the route alignment
- Less people served than the other route alignment
- Strong support for the project

# Upcoming CMC Meetings

- Remaining 2024 meetings on calendars
  - October 14<sup>th</sup>
  - November 7<sup>th</sup>
  - December 13<sup>th</sup>
- 2025 meetings to be scheduled; likely to remain 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 1 p.m.
  - January 2<sup>nd</sup> → likely to postpone to later in the month
  - February 6<sup>th</sup>
  - March 6<sup>th</sup>



# Upcoming CBAC Meetings

- Remaining 2024 meetings on calendars
  - November 1<sup>st</sup>
  - December 6<sup>th</sup>
  - December 27<sup>th</sup> → likely canceled or rescheduled.
- 2025 meetings on calendars through September
  - January 24<sup>th</sup>
  - February 28<sup>th</sup>
  - March 28<sup>th</sup>
- Agenda topics for each meeting will be shared in advance

# Contact Us

For more information:

[www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project](http://www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project)

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