ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS PHASE
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Agenda

• Welcome.
• Introductions.
• Role of the Community Advisory Committee.
• Rush Line BRT Project overview.
  – Purpose, need and goals.
  – Project tasks schedule.
  – BRT characteristics (video).
  – Small-group discussion: overall corridor, station locations, community engagement to-date.
• Next Community Advisory Committee meeting.
Introductions

• Why did you want to be on the Community Advisory Committee?
• What about the Rush Line BRT project is most interesting to you/your neighborhood/community?
Role of Community Advisory Committee
Role of the Community Advisory Committee

- Advise Rush Line BRT Project team and decision-makers on key project design, station area planning, environmental analysis and operational plan decisions from a community and business perspective.
- Advise on public engagement techniques and assist with ensuring that information regarding public engagement opportunities is effectively communicated to the public.
Environmental Analysis Phase Advisory Committees and Working Groups

Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

- Policy Advisory Committee
  - Community Advisory Committee
  - Station Area Planning Working Groups
  - Technical Advisory Committee
Role of Chair and Vice Chair

• Role of chair:
  – Serve for the duration of the environmental analysis phase.
  – Lead and facilitate meetings.
  – Report the input of the Community Advisory Committee at Policy Advisory Committee meetings and Technical Advisory Committee meetings as appropriate.

• Role of vice chair:
  – Perform the duties of the chair in their absence.

• Chair and vice chair will be selected at the next meeting. Please email a brief statement of interest to Frank if you would like to serve in either role.

- Examined 55 route segments and 7 types of bus and rail transit vehicles.

- 5,200 conversations at over 150 engagement events.
Purpose and Need

• Purpose:
  – Provide transit service that satisfies the long-term regional mobility needs for businesses and the traveling public and supports sustainable development within the study area.

• Needs:
  – Planning for sustainable growth and development.
  – Serving the needs of people who rely on transit.
  – Limited sustainable travel options.
  – Increasing demand for reliable, high-frequency transit.
Project Goals

- Increase transit use.
- Develop an implementable project.
- Improve quality of life.
- Improve sustainable transportation options.
- Enhance regional connectivity.
- Support the local vision for sustainable development.
Locally Preferred Alternative

- Dedicated guideway BRT.
- Phalen Boulevard and Robert Street into downtown Saint Paul.
- Ramsey County Regional Railroad right-of-way (shared with Bruce Vento Trail).
- Highway 61 north of I-694 into White Bear Lake.
- Explore future connections to the north and other system improvements.
Locally Preferred Alternative

- Run seven days a week from early in the morning to late at night.
- Arrive every 10 minutes during rush hours and every 15 minutes other times.
- Travel time of approximately 30 minutes from Saint Paul Central Business District to Maplewood Mall, 14 minutes from Maplewood Mall to downtown White Bear Lake.
- Serves 14 healthcare institutions.
- Connect to 106,000 jobs within a 10-minute walk of the 20 planned stations.
- Transfer to/from the METRO Green Line at Regions/Green Line station.
Why Dedicated BRT

- High quality service similar to light rail transit.
  - Operates in own lane.
  - Frequent and reliable.
  - Upgraded stations and vehicles.
- Right-sized solution.
  - BRT vehicles can handle peak ridership demand.
  - Less costly to build and operate than light rail transit.
Dedicated BRT Example

Video: Los Angeles Orange Line BRT Tour
Transitway Development Process

Federal Transit Administration Process

- Pre-Project Development (3 Years)
- Environmental Analysis Phase (2 Years)
- Project Development (2 Years)
- Final Engineering (2 Years)
- Construction (3 Years)
- Operations

Local Decision Making

- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
- Metropolitan Council

- Selection of Locally Preferred Alternative
- WE ARE HERE
- Environmental Decision
- Public Hearings

Ongoing Public Engagement
Environmental Analysis Phase

• 2018 to 2020.
• Four key tasks.
  ─ Environmental analysis.
  ─ Preliminary engineering.
  ─ Station area planning.
  ─ Public engagement.
Environmental Analysis

• Federal and state environmental review.
  – Federal class of action is an Environmental Assessment.
  – Environmental Assessment Worksheet under state review requirements.

• Based on preliminary engineering.

• Evaluate impacts to transportation, community and social, and physical and environmental resources.
Station Area Planning

- Station placement.
- Station area visioning and station-specific strategies.
- Market assessment.
- Circulation and infrastructure plans.
- Conceptual station area plans.

Throughout process work closely with Rush Line BRT Project communities.
Station Area Planning Working Groups

• Based on geography:
  – Saint Paul.
  – Maplewood.
  – Vadnais Heights and Gem Lake.
  – White Bear Lake.

• 10 to 15 participants including city staff, elected officials, residents, advisory committee members and other key stakeholders as determined through coordination with cities.

• Three meetings over six months:
  – Issue identification.
  – Review draft concepts.
  – Review final concept.
Cities and Station Locations

Downtown White Bear Lake
Marina Triangle
Cedar Avenue

County Road E

Maplewood Mall
St. John’s Hospital
Highway 36/English Street
Frost Avenue
Larpenteur Avenue

Phalen Village
Arcade Street
Payne Avenue
Cayuga Street
Olive Street
Mt. Airy
Regions/Green Line
9th/10th Street
5th/6th Street
Kellogg Boulevard
Union Depot
Communications and Public Engagement

• Diverse corridor with regard to race, ethnicity, income and languages spoken.
  – Latino, Hmong, Karen and Somali communities in the corridor.
• Provide project information to communities and use their input to inform project decisions.
  – Station locations.
  – Guideway alignment.
  – Environmental impacts.
  – Trail alignment and features.
  – Pedestrian safety.
Communications and Public Engagement

- In-person methods:
  - Pop-up meetings.
  - Event participation.
  - Targeted events.
    - Trail rides/walks.
    - Site visits/tours.
  - Updates/briefings.
  - Public forums.
- Online methods:
  - Email.
  - Web.
  - Social media.
  - Surveys.
  - Interactive mapping.

Ride and Walk event in Maplewood.
Communications and Public Engagement Plan

- Plan describes goals, strategies, decision-making process and schedule.
- Plan will be updated periodically to include schedules, strategies and outreach audiences for supporting key decisions and sharing milestones.

Mt. Airy Homes Spring Event.
Recent Public Engagement Activities

- June 7: Mt. Airy Hi-Rise pop-up.
- June 16: Fun Ride & Walk on the Bruce Vento Trail.
- June 20: East Side Employment Center Xchange Career Fair at Merrick Community Center.
- June 20: District Council 2 monthly meeting.
- June 26: Payne-Phalen Neighborhood Association monthly meeting.
- June 28: Maplewood Business Council quarterly meeting.
Public Engagement Input Themes

• Corridor-wide:
  – Winter maintenance.
  – Importance of connecting bus service.
  – Rush Line BRT represents an opportunity to explore different destinations.

• Neighborhood-specific:
  – Maplewood Mall is a popular destination for youth.
  – Hmong Village is a regional destination; locals use the bus to get there.
  – Walking conditions and safety around Mt. Airy present challenges to using local bus service or Rush Line BRT.

Cinco de Mayo festival in Saint Paul.
Upcoming Public Engagement Activities

- July 11-15: Ramsey County Fair.
- July 14: Dragon Festival at Lake Phalen.
- July 17: Gold Line Open House at Grace Lutheran Church.
- July 19, 5:00-7:00 p.m.: Bruce Vento Trail Pop-Up, weather permitting; backup date: July 25.
- July 26: Marketfest in White Bear Lake.
- Mid-August: Vadnais Heights Heritage Days.
Small Group Discussion Questions

• Do you have additional ideas of where Rush Line public engagement could take place in your community?
• What destinations are near the stations in your community?
• How would you reach the station nearest you? Is there infrastructure in place to reach it safely and conveniently? If yes, what works? If no, what can be improved?
• What qualities of the BRT service do you find most valuable?
Possible Dates for Next Meeting

- Tuesday, September 18
- Wednesday, September 19
- Thursday, September 20
- Tuesday, September 25

*Time will be 6-8 p.m.*
Thank you!

Frank Alarcon
frank.alarcon@ramseycounty.us
651-266-2795