



January 17, 2019

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING #3

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Project updates.
3. Health Impact Assessment.
4. Ramsey County rail right-of-way master plan.
5. Open discussion.

Advisory Committee Membership Changes

- Political Advisory Committee.
 - Nora Slawik stepped down to lead the Metropolitan Council; Mayor Jo Emerson is Acting Chair.
 - Chair election at next Policy Advisory Committee meeting.
 - New member: Ruby Azurdia-Lee, President of CLUES.
 - Fills seat held by Jose Gonzalez.
- Community Advisory Committee.
 - New members: Curt Cooper of Vadnais Heights and John O’Phelan of Maplewood.
 - Fill seats held by Raquel Byers and Fred Dahm.



Ruby Azurdia-Lee (source: clues.org)

Field Activities

- Completed:
 - Archaeological investigation and testing in Ramsey County right-of-way.
 - Archaeological testing north of Frost Avenue on Ramsey County and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources property.
- Ongoing:
 - Architecture/history evaluation throughout corridor (specific property owners are being notified by Ramsey County).
- Upcoming:
 - Architecture and archaeology surveys in downtown White Bear Lake (spring 2019).



Recent Public Engagement Activities



Santa Dinner, December 6

- November 7: Pop-up at Century College.
- December 4: Meeting at Hmong Village.
- December 6: Pop-up at Duluth and Case Rec Center Santa Dinner.
- December 12: Meeting at White Bear Area Emergency Food Shelf.
- December 13: Business engagement meeting in White Bear Lake.

Recent Public Engagement Activities

- January 4: Pop-up at Ramsey County Library – White Bear Lake.
- January 8: Pop-up at White Bear Area YMCA.
- January 10: Rush Line BRT Project Open House, White Bear Lake.
- January 12: Hmong Village tabling.
- January 16: Update to Greater East Side Community Council.



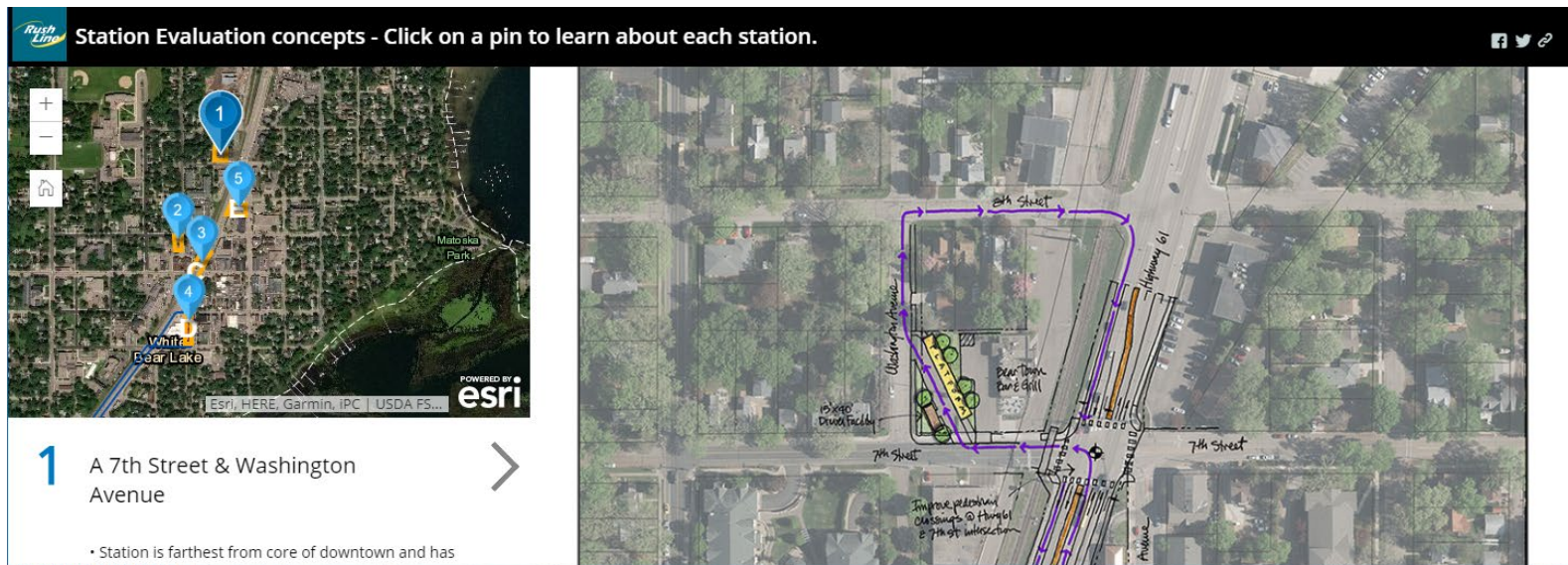
White Bear Area YMCA Pop-up, January 8

Public Engagement (November 2018 – January 2019)

- Main themes:
 - White Bear Lake:
 - Desire for pedestrian safety and traffic management around Highway 61.
 - Support for increased transportation options in the northeast metro.
 - Input regarding station location in downtown White Bear Lake.
 - Saint Paul:
 - General support for the project and enthusiasm for added Cook Avenue station.
- Notable topics of interest:
 - Downtown White Bear Lake station.
 - Selection of White Bear Lake for terminus rather than Hugo or Forest Lake.
 - Purpose and need of the Rush Line BRT Project.

Ongoing Public Engagement

- Updates to Saint Paul District Councils.
- Interactive map available for online input.
- Online survey for Downtown White Bear Lake station.



ArcStory Survey for Downtown White Bear Lake station

Purpose and Need

- Purpose and need chapter updated based on comments from the Policy Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and Federal Transit Administration.

Purpose and Need Summary



B R T



SERVING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WHO RELY ON TRANSIT

The number of people in the study area who rely on transit to meet their transportation needs is increasing.

Transit-dependent populations

AGE:

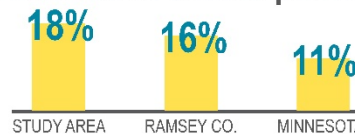
65+ fastest growing
AGE GROUP



Growth in the 65+ age group is increasing the need for access to medical services and ability to maintain an active and mobile lifestyle without having to rely on a personal automobile.

INCOME:

Individuals below poverty

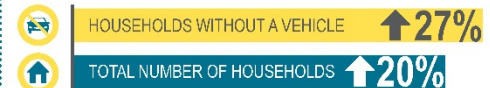


The percentage of residents below the poverty level is higher in the study area than in Ramsey County or in Minnesota, meaning there are more people who rely on transit to access jobs, education and other services.

VEHICLE AVAILABILITY:

From 2014 to 2040, the number of households without a vehicle is forecast to grow at a faster rate than the total number of households in the study area.

2014 → 2040



MEETING INCREASING DEMAND FOR RELIABLE, HIGH-FREQUENCY TRANSIT

Demand for reliable, high-frequency transit service is increasing, and the existing high-frequency network does not currently serve the study area outside of Saint Paul.



Only **3 of 41** existing routes within one mile of the proposed Rush Line BRT route are high-frequency.

Metro Transit A line
RIDERSHIP



Metro Transit has seen an increase in ridership on high-frequency routes, including the highly successful A Line BRT.

Purpose and Need Summary

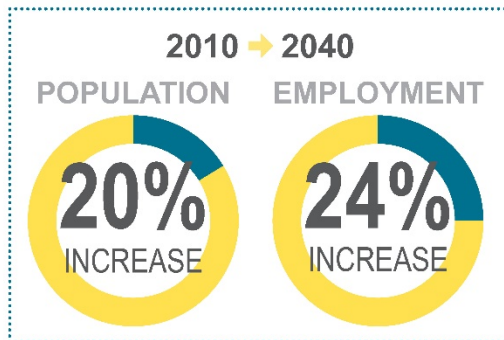


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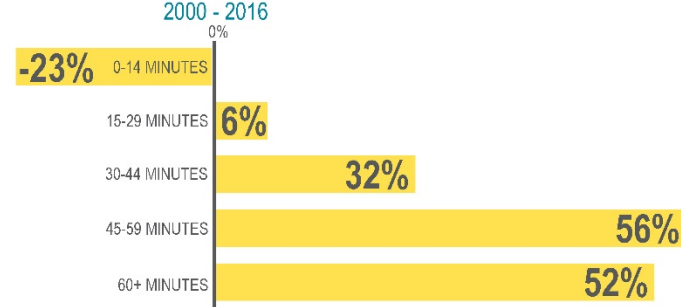


PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Population and employment are forecast to grow in the study area. As concentrations of jobs and residents grow in different communities, the need to travel between these communities will increase.



Percent Change in Commute Time

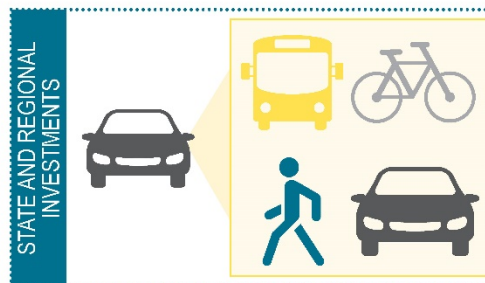


EXPANDING MULTIMODAL TRAVEL OPTIONS

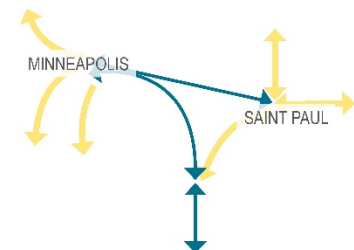
State and regional transportation policies identify the need to provide multimodal transportation options.

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.

This promotes greater travel choice and flexibility and provides opportunities for benefiting health.



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



Station Area Planning Process

- The City of White Bear Lake assembled a working group with residents, business owners, staff and others to evaluate station location options.
- Working group recommended 2nd Street and Clark Avenue station location.
- This option generated more discussion in the community and revealed desire for more options.

What We Heard: Community Preferences for Downtown Station Qualities



B R T

- The station should be an attractive facility that fits into and contributes to the character of downtown White Bear Lake.
- The station should be located near places people want to go.
- The station should promote additional economic investment nearby.
- The station design should minimize or avoid impacts to private property.
- The station should be located in a place that minimizes lengthy bus routing on local streets and avoids congestion.
- The station design should prioritize people safely walking, biking and connecting via transit, rather than reserving large areas for parking.
- Pedestrian access across Highway 61 should be improved near the station.
- The benefits of adding a station should outweigh any potential negative impacts.



White Bear Lake Listening Session, October 11

Downtown Station Options Under Evaluation



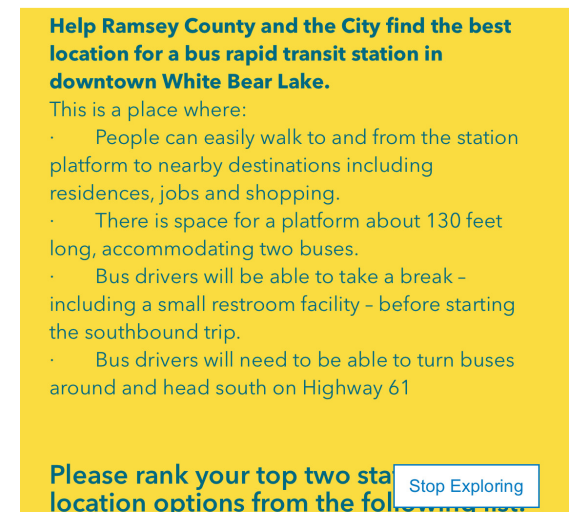
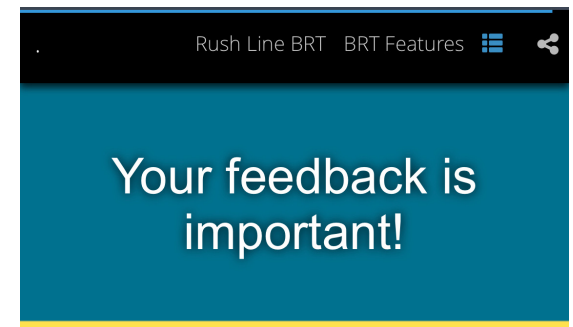
B R T



- A. 7th Street and Washington Avenue.
- B. 4th Street and Division Avenue – 4th Street or 7th Street routing.
- C. 4th Street and Highway 61 – In line platform.
- D. 2nd Street and Clark Avenue.
- E. Banning Avenue and Highway 61.
- F. Arrive at 4th Street and Highway 61; depart from 7th Street and Washington Avenue.

Online Survey for Downtown White Bear Lake Station

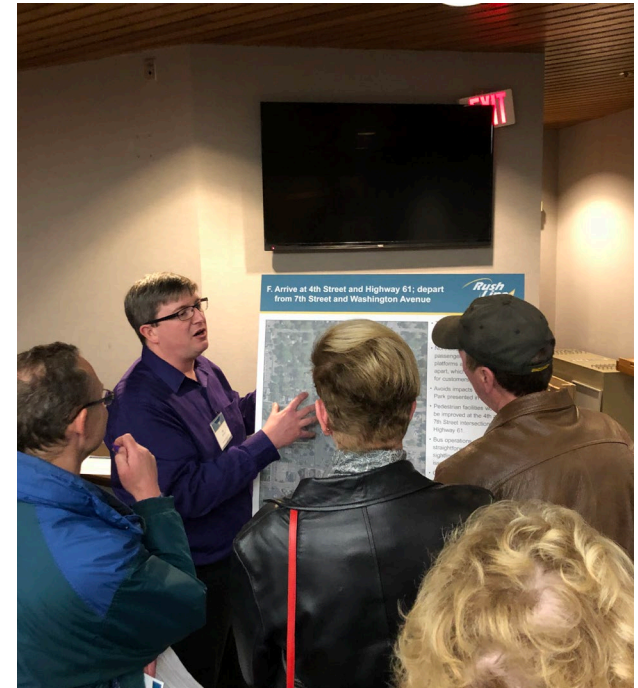
- ArcStory survey for Downtown White Bear Lake station location.
 - Launched January 9 and will be open until January 31.
 - Questions include:
 - Key elements to consider, such as routing of buses and safety.
 - Potential benefits of Rush Line BRT for White Bear Lake.
 - Preferred station location options.
 - 215 responses as of January 16.



Use the scroll bar to go through the survey.

White Bear Lake Open House

- More than 120 attendees with 77 comment sheets submitted.
- Reasons for support for Rush Line BRT included:
 - Economic development and job access.
 - Need for increased transit options.
 - Aging population.
- General concerns included:
 - Potential effects of BRT on traffic, safety and the character of downtown White Bear Lake.
 - Perceived lack of need for better transit service.



Rush Line BRT Project Open House, January 10

White Bear Lake Open House

- General observations:
 - Option A: perceived as least disruptive to traffic and downtown.
 - Options B and D: closest to center of downtown; would bring shoppers and other visitors.
 - Options C and F: still close to downtown but perceived as less disruptive to traffic and downtown character; less safe for pedestrians.
 - Option E: perceived as less disruptive to downtown; presents traffic concerns.



Downtown White Bear Lake Next Steps



B R T

DOWNTOWN WHITE BEAR LAKE STATION LOCATION SELECTION PROCESS

Project staff will gather input from the public and review technical information from project partners on the downtown station location options.



The Rush Line Policy Advisory Committee will receive input from the White Bear Lake City Council on the preferred downtown station location.



The preferred station location will be studied in the Environmental Assessment to better understand the potential benefits and impacts.



Health Impact Assessment Goals

- Create a tool to help educate policymakers and community members on the project's ability to achieve social equity, environmental and economic development goals.
- Build capacity among planners, engineers and public health officials in achieving positive health outcomes throughout the corridor.

Health Impact Assessment Workshop

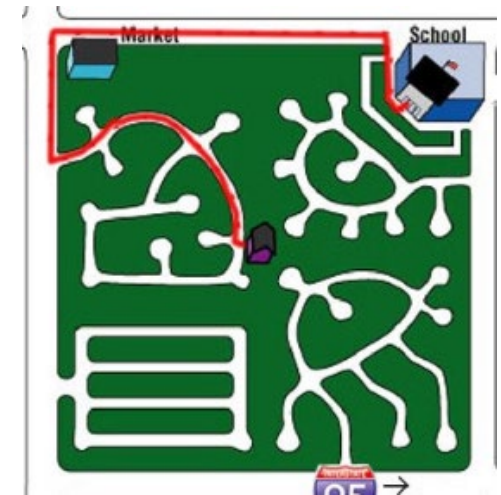
- Held on October 30, 2018 to determine the scope of the Health Impact Assessment.
- Selected four topic areas for assessment:
 - Connectivity.
 - Access/accessibility.
 - Employment/jobs.
 - Affordable housing.
- Project staff have developed draft recommendations for different audiences including cities along the route, Ramsey County and Metro Transit.



Health Impact Assessment Workshop, October 30

Connectivity

- Definition.
 - A broad topic area and may include physical connections and neighborhood cohesion, influencing ability to use active transportation.
- Draft recommendations.
 - Connect streets where possible to create a more complete street grid.
 - Explore transit priority treatments for routes connecting to Rush Line BRT.



Source: Ben Kaplan

Access/Accessibility

- Definition.
 - Includes the ability to reach desired goods and destinations such as healthcare and parks.
- Draft recommendations.
 - Add wayfinding signage in common languages to help people navigate between stations and key neighborhood destinations.



Access/Accessibility

- Draft recommendations.
 - Prioritize improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure during street reconstruction projects near planned stations.
 - Expand language assistance to increase accessibility for riders with limited English proficiency.
 - Explore increasing frequency and service span of routes connecting to Rush Line BRT.



Source: Smart Growth America

Jobs and Employment

- Definition.
 - Unemployment as a barrier to improved health.
- Draft recommendation.
 - Workforce programs should take into consideration residents and employers along transit corridors to better match workers with opportunities along the corridor.



Source: IndustryWeek

Affordable Housing

- Definition.
 - Housing as a factor affecting stress and health.
- Draft recommendation.
 - Increase support for affordable housing development and preservation near stations.



Source: Enterprise Homes

Discussion

- What recommendations would you add to bolster health benefits of the project?
- Where along the Rush Line route are the following most needed?
 - Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
 - Wayfinding treatments to improve access to important amenities.
 - Affordable housing.

Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Master Plan



- Goal:
 - Develop a safe and context-sensitive BRT guideway and shared use trail plan incorporating relevant user, stakeholder and public guidance along the Ramsey County rail right-of-way.

Input Through Previous Public Engagement

- Trail users generally positive about transit.
- Top amenities desired:
 - Seating.
 - Wayfinding.
 - Fix-it stations.
 - Lighting.
 - Bike racks.
- Some concern about private property impacts, visibility, safety, noise and the natural habitat.



Bruce Vento Trail Pop-Up, July 25

Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Master Plan Guiding Principles



B R T

- Environmental stewardship.
- Safety.
- Stormwater best practices.
- Cultural and historical conservation.
- Tree preservation (where applicable).
- Trail operations.
- Education.
- Land use integration.



Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Master Plan Guiding Principles

- Will be developed to help guide and support decision-making.
- Collaboratively developed through technical expertise and community input.
- Begins with information from previous outreach activities:
 - June 16 Ride and Walk.
 - July 25 Bruce Vento Trail pop-up.
 - August 28 Move Minnesota Women on Bikes ride.
 - Pre-Project Development Study public engagement.



Bruce Vento Trail Pop-Up, July 25

Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Master Plan Components



B R T

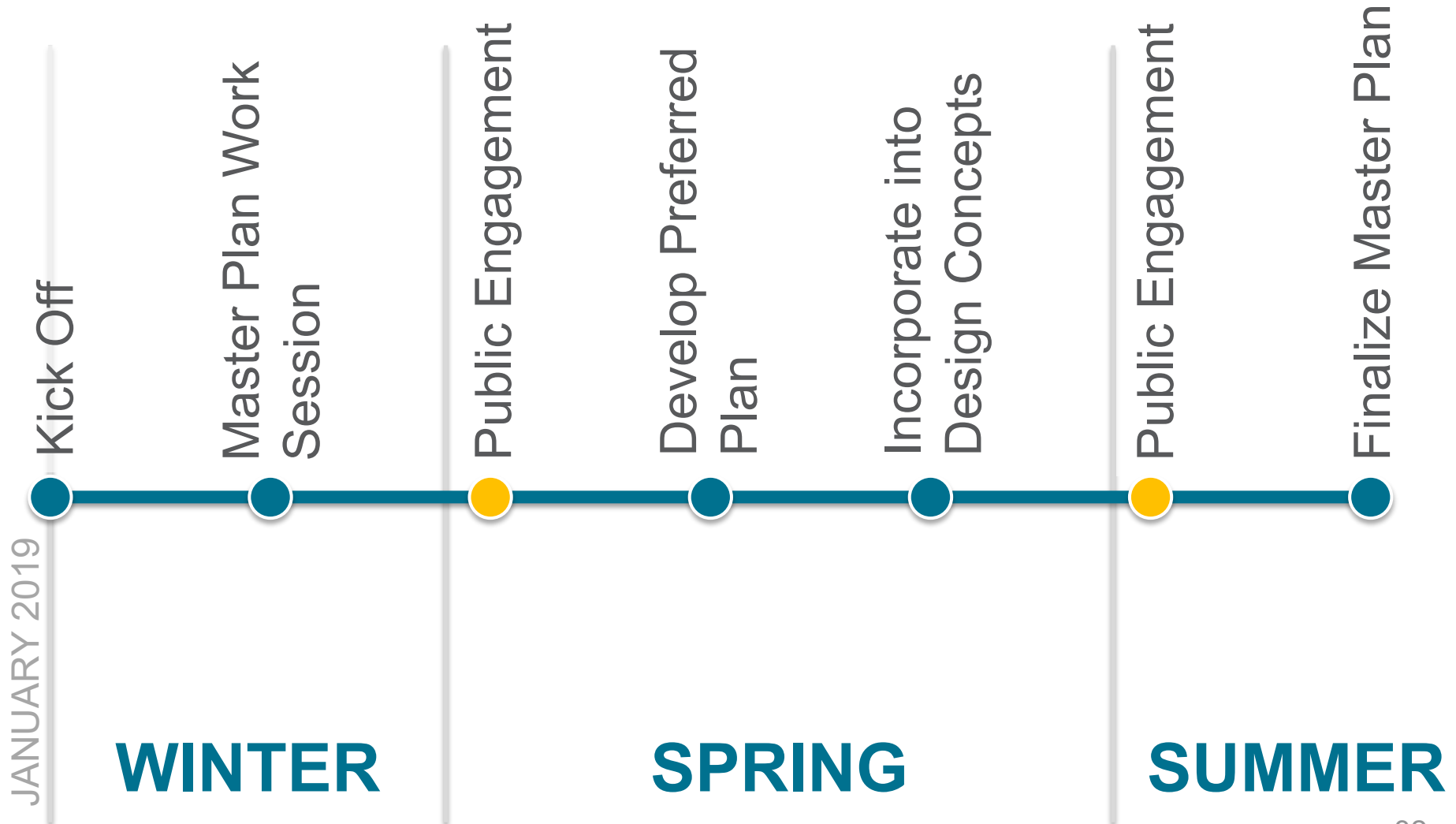
- Landscaping.
- Lighting.
- Stormwater best management practices.
- Wayfinding/signage.
- Bridges and structures.
- Intersection design.
- Trailhead amenities.
- Buffers and edges.
- Operations and maintenance.
- Education opportunities.



Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Master Plan Schedule



B R T



Discussion Questions

- What do you like most about the Bruce Vento Trail today?
- What are your hopes for the Bruce Vento Trail when it is co-located with the Rush Line BRT?



Open Discussion

- Questions or comments?
- Suggest potential future agenda items.

Next Meeting

- A Doodle poll will be distributed for the next Community Advisory Committee in the spring.



Thank you!



rushline.org



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