

DOWNTOWN WHITE BEAR LAKE

STATION LOCATION INPUT SUMMARY – FEBRUARY 21, 2019



DOWNTOWN WHITE BEAR LAKE STATION

In response to community interest in the planned Downtown White Bear Lake station for the Rush Line BRT Project, project staff have facilitated a variety of public engagement efforts to obtain feedback on several station location options. These efforts include:

- Pop-up events at the White Bear Lake library (January 4) and YMCA (January 8).
- An online survey released on January 9.
- An open house held on January 10 at White Bear Lake City Hall.

INPUT RECEIVED

More than 120 people attended the open house. Of these attendees, 79 filled out comment sheets, and 365 responses to the online survey were submitted from January 9 to January 31.

- Comments from residents in favor of the project reflect the following beliefs:
 - Rush Line BRT would bring additional residents and businesses to White Bear Lake.
 - Rush Line BRT would be helpful to families for shopping and other daily errands.
 - A station location close to downtown would yield the best access to jobs and retail.
 - Rush Line BRT would increase access between White Bear Lake and other communities along the route.
- Comments from residents with concern about the Downtown White Bear Lake station reflect the following beliefs:
 - A BRT station would negatively impact the character of downtown.
 - Buses will impact safety (e.g. concern that transit will lead to an increase in crime; buses present a risk to pedestrians).
 - There is generally not a need for better transit in White Bear Lake and Metro Transit should try adding buses to existing routes first.
 - Preference for locations away from downtown White Bear Lake.
- Station option comments:



Station location options under consideration

Survey results are based on input received at the open house and the online survey. While the project received a robust response, the results are reflective of a self-selected group rather than a statistically valid random sample.

- **A – 7th Street and Washington Avenue:** Often selected by residents whose top priority is safety or compatibility with existing downtown character. These residents cite reasons for their selection including the location outside the core of downtown White Bear Lake and minimization of impacts on parking and/or the character of downtown.
- **B – 4th Street and Division Avenue (4th Street or 7th Street routing):** Often selected by residents who value access to activity and employment centers and/or compatibility with existing downtown character. Many residents who selected B note that its location is convenient for walking to downtown, though it requires crossing Highway 61.
- **C – 4th Street and Highway 61 (In line platform):** Often selected for its limited impact on parking, businesses and residences, as well as its close proximity to downtown. The top priority of people who rated Option C as their first choice is access to activity and employment centers. Comments note that Option C could also allow for an extension north to a terminal location in Hugo. A noted drawback is that Highway 61 is not safe for pedestrians and potential impacts to Railroad Park.
- **D – 2nd Street and Clark Avenue:** Often selected by residents whose top priority is access to activity and employment centers or safety. Reasons for selecting this option include its proximity to the center of downtown, the good transit access it would provide to residents who live close to downtown and its proximity to Highway 61. The loss of parking on Clark Avenue is a concern for some.
- **E – Banning Avenue and Highway 61:** Often selected because of its distance from the center of downtown and the perception that it would minimize impacts to the character of downtown. The top priority of people who preferred this option is safety.
- **F – Arrive at 4th Street and Highway 61; depart from 7th Street and Washington Avenue:** Comments note that Option F would require bus riders to cross Highway 61 to head south, which can be unpleasant and unsafe for pedestrians. Very few commenters were in favor of this option.

SURVEY RESPONSES

Among survey respondents and open house attendants, the most popular station location option was Option A with 107 people indicating it as their first-choice preference, as shown in Figure 1. “Other” was a close second with 105 people indicating it as their top preference, though the number of people who chose one of the six defined station location options outnumbered those who chose “Other” by approximately four to one; Options B, C and D were approximately equally popular as a first-choice preference; Options E and F were the least popular first choice, though Option E received the most votes of all options as a second-choice preference. Total votes for each location option are shown in Figure 2. Suggestions for a different location are shown in Figure 3. (Note: While the survey received a robust response at the open house and online, the results are reflective of a self-selected group rather than a statistically valid random sample.)

Figure 1: Station location option first- and second-choice preferences

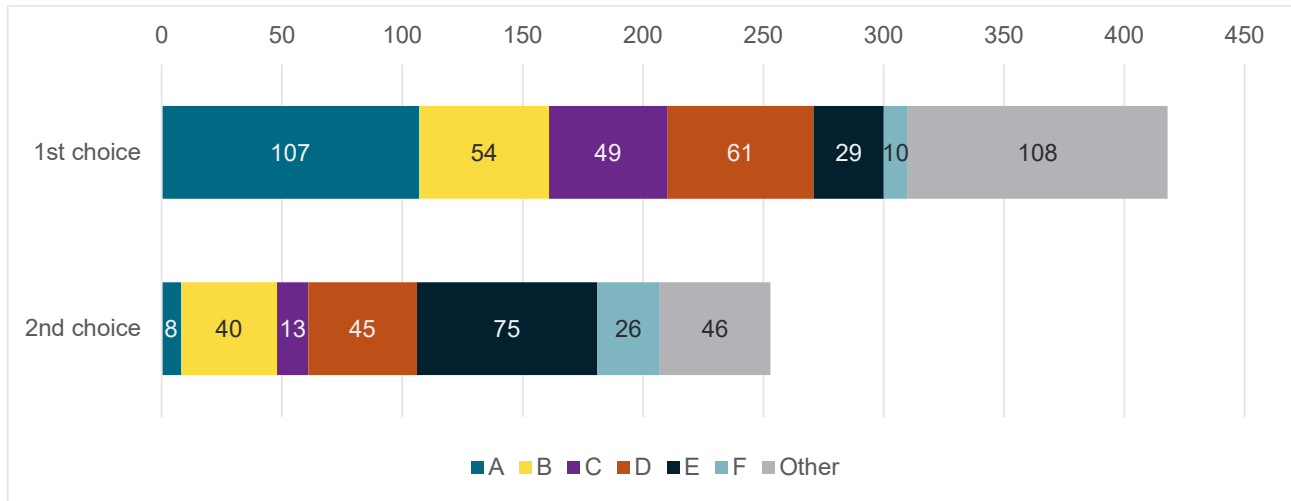


Figure 2: First- and second-choice preferences, combined

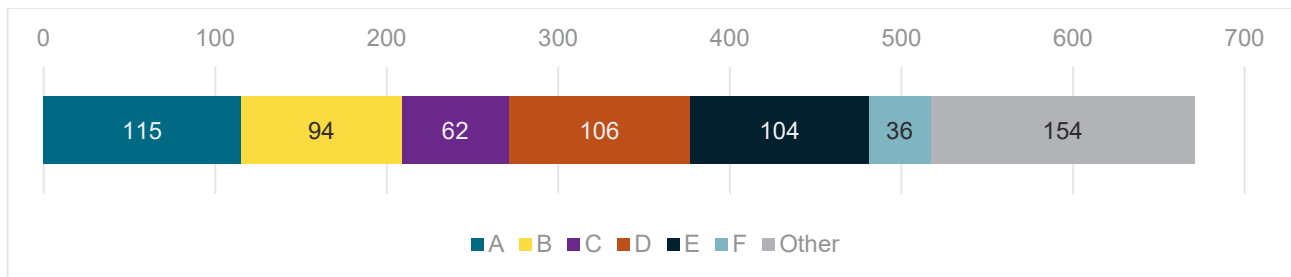
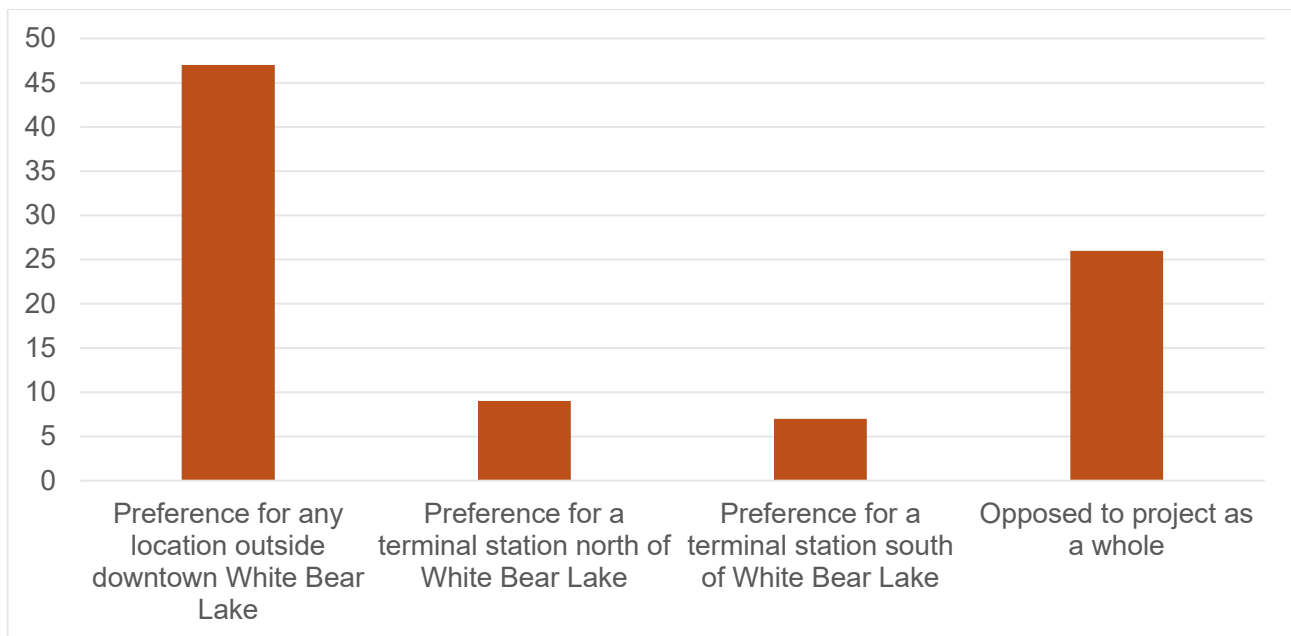


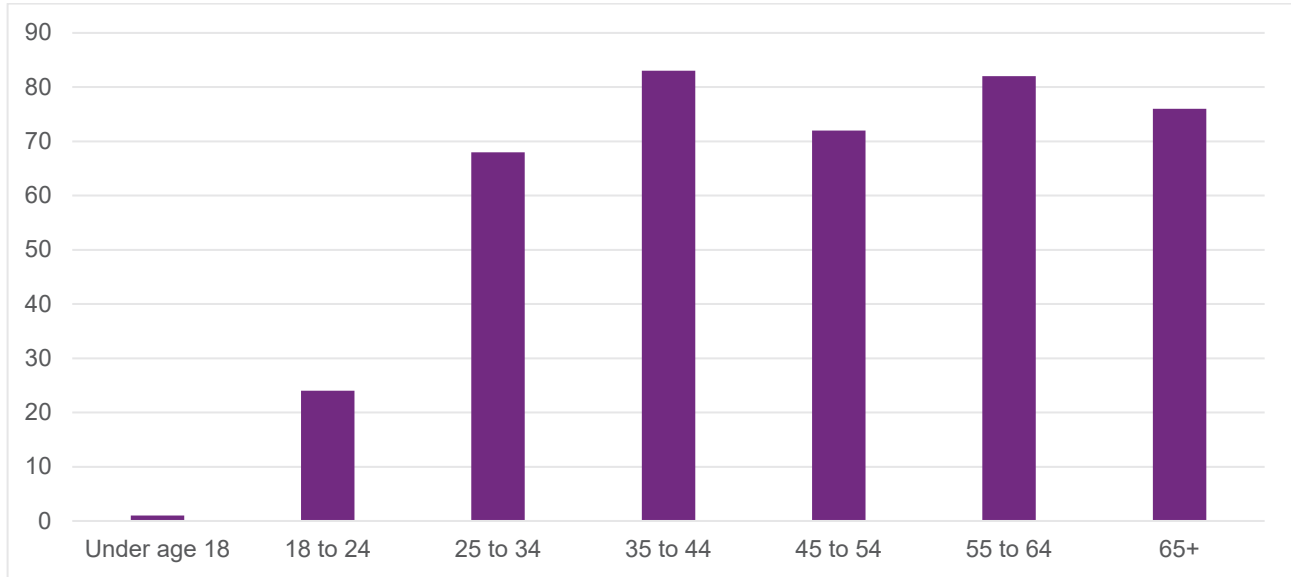
Figure 3: Station location preference - suggestions for "other" location



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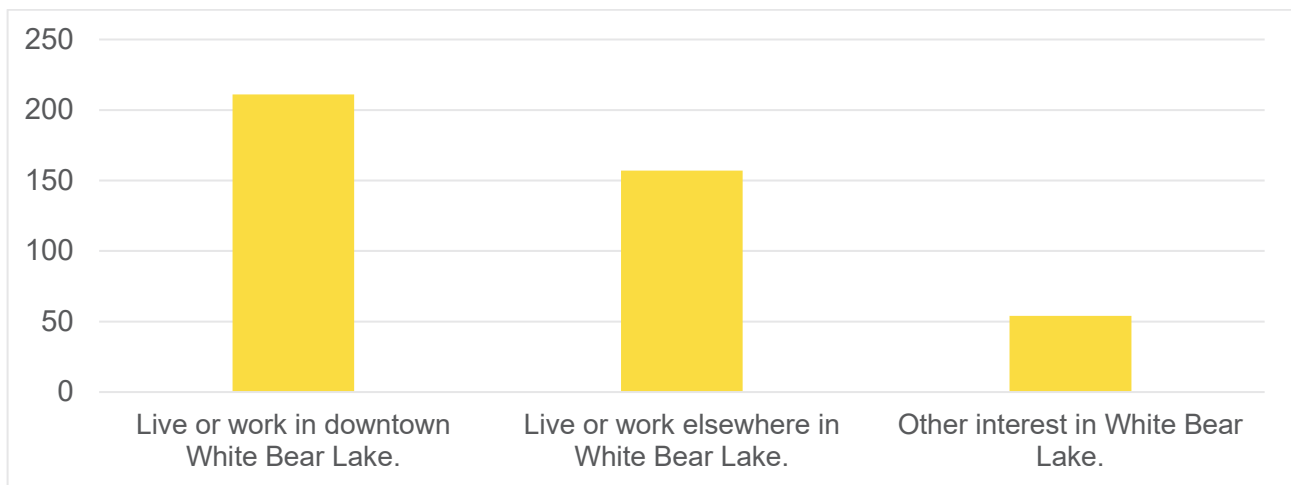
The age of survey respondents and open house attendees was approximately equally distributed among people age 35 to 44 (83 people), age 45 to 54 (72 people), age 55 to 64 (82 people) and age 65 and older (76 people), as seen in Figure 4. There were slightly fewer respondents in the 25 to 34 age range (68 people) and just 25 survey respondents and open house attendees under age 25.

Figure 4: Age of survey respondents and open house attendees



The majority of all survey respondents and open house attendees either work or live in White Bear Lake and approximately half live or work in downtown White Bear Lake specifically, while only about one eighth of respondents and attendees have an interest in White Bear Lake unrelated to home or work, as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Survey respondents' and open house attendees' connection to White Bear Lake

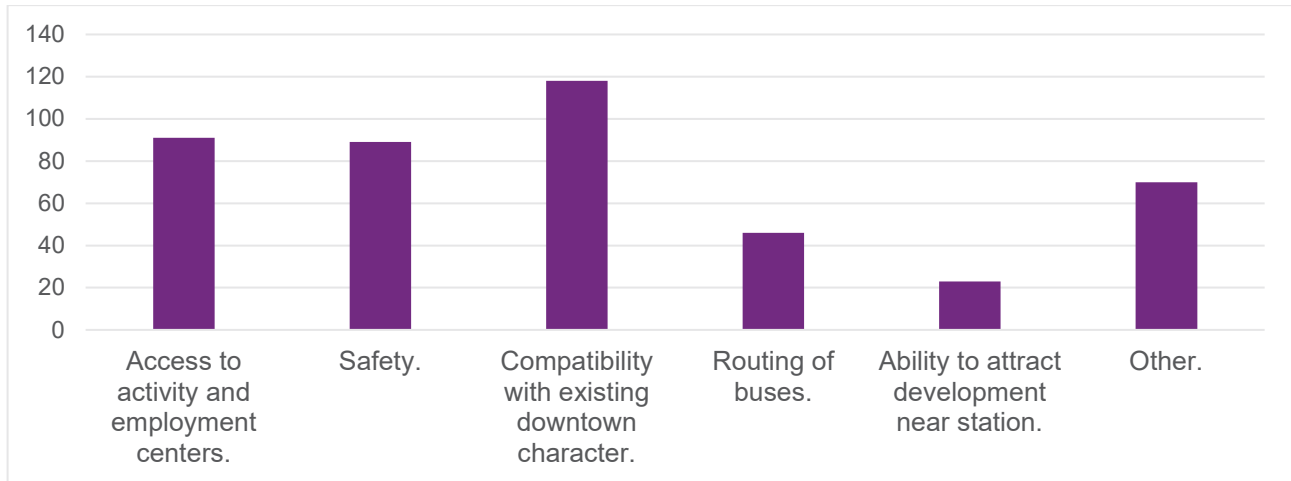


The station location option survey included a question that asked which two elements the project team should weight the most when selecting a station location. The top priority for open house attendees and

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survey respondents was compatibility with existing downtown character, closely followed by safety and access to activity and employment centers, as seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Top elements to consider in selecting a station location

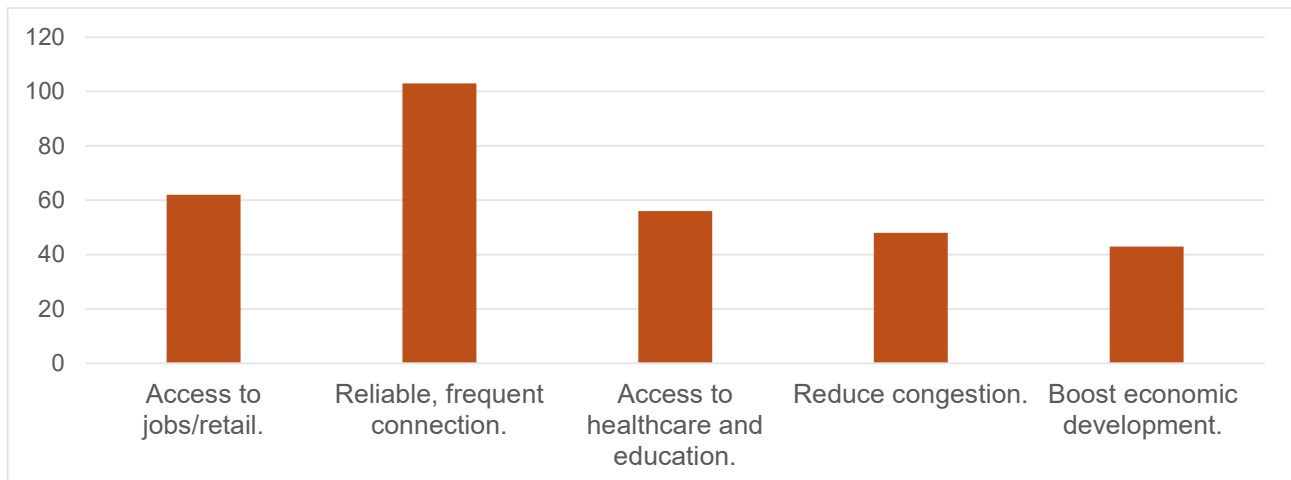


The survey asked how Rush Line BRT could help downtown White Bear Lake, allowing respondents to select all benefits they believed it would bring from the following list:

- Provide access to jobs and retail.
- Provide a reliable and frequent connection to the larger Twin Cities transit network.
- Enable residents to access healthcare and educational services.
- Reduce congestion and parking demand.
- Boost economic development.

The top expected benefit identified was providing a reliable, frequent connection to the larger Twin Cities transit network, followed by access to jobs/retail and to healthcare and education, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Expected benefits of Rush Line BRT



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