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November 21, 2019

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS PHASE



Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Recap of July Policy Advisory Committee meeting.
3. Public engagement update.
4. Coordination activities.
5. Community Advisory Committee update.
6. Key takeaways from Richmond Pulse BRT tour.
7. Engineering update.
8. Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Design Guide update.
9. Transit-Oriented Development Grant application.
10. Next meeting.
11. Public comment.

Recap of July Policy Advisory Committee Meeting

- Updates on:
 - Public engagement activities.
 - Coordination activities.
 - Engineering.
- Action to affirm the Technical Advisory Committee recommendation to advance the 15 percent plans for evaluation in the Environmental Assessment and staff review by the Rush Line BRT Project cities/township, Minnesota Department of Transportation and Metro Transit.



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Public Engagement Update

Recent Public Engagement Activities

- September 19 and 29: Harvest Park – youth soccer.
- September 28: East Side Community Festival.
- October 8: HealthPartners Phalen Clinic.
- October 15: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources & Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.



Harvest Park, September 19, 2019

Recent Public Engagement Activities

- October 16: Presentation to Greater East Side Community Council (District 2).
- October 22: Presentation to Payne-Phalen Community Council (District 5).
- August-October: Meetings with businesses along Phalen Boulevard.



East Side Community Festival, September 28

Public Engagement Themes

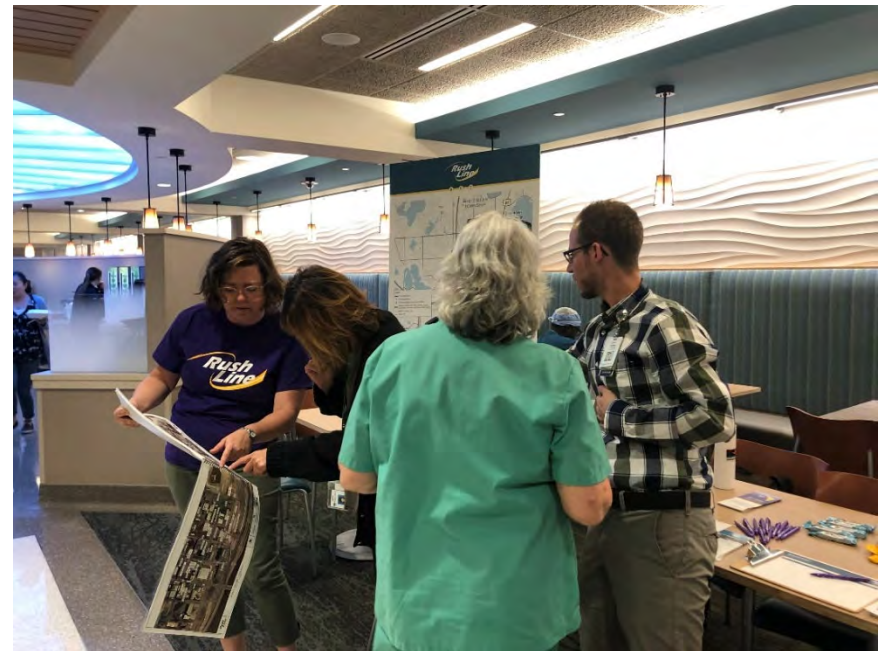


CLUES Fiesta Latina, August 10

- Phalen Boulevard businesses.
 - Expect that increased transit options will boost employee recruitment and retention.
 - Questions about maintaining access during construction period and parking impacts.
- Saint Paul residents and employees.
 - Excitement for increased transit options downtown and on the East Side.
 - Interest in changes to the Bruce Vento Trail.
- Highway 36 Station.
 - Park users and nearby residents interested in potential parking change; reactions mostly neutral.

Upcoming Public Engagement

- Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way drop-in discussions to be scheduled for December.
- Meetings with public housing resident councils.
 - Exchange Hi-Rise November 19.
 - Valley Hi-Rise December 4.
 - Wabasha Hi-Rise TBD.
 - Edgerton Hi-Rise TBD.
- Fall awareness/feedback campaign.
 - Community newspapers.
 - Billboards.
 - Bus shelters.
 - Downtown Green Line stations.



Pop-up at Regions Hospital, August 27



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Project Video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99rZ1A00M1U>



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Visualizations

Visualization: Downtown White Bear Lake Station





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Coordination Update

Coordination Update

- Gem Lake City Council update – September 17.
- White Bear Lake City Council workshop – October 15.
- Issue resolution team meetings:
 - Maplewood – October 15 and November 14.
 - Saint Paul – November 6.
 - Highway 61 – November 8.
 - Ownership and maintenance one-on-one meetings.
- Gold Line BRT Project.



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Community Advisory Committee Update

Recap of October Meeting

- Topics discussed:
 - Environmental assessment update.
 - Public engagement activities.
 - Platform design.
 - Pulse BRT peer system visit.
 - Federal Transit Administration transit-oriented development grant application.
 - Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Design Guide.



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Richmond Pulse BRT Tour

Pulse BRT Peer System Visit

- October 2-4,
Richmond, Virginia.
- Opened in 2018.
- 7.6-mile route.
- 14 stops.



Pulse BRT Peer System Visit

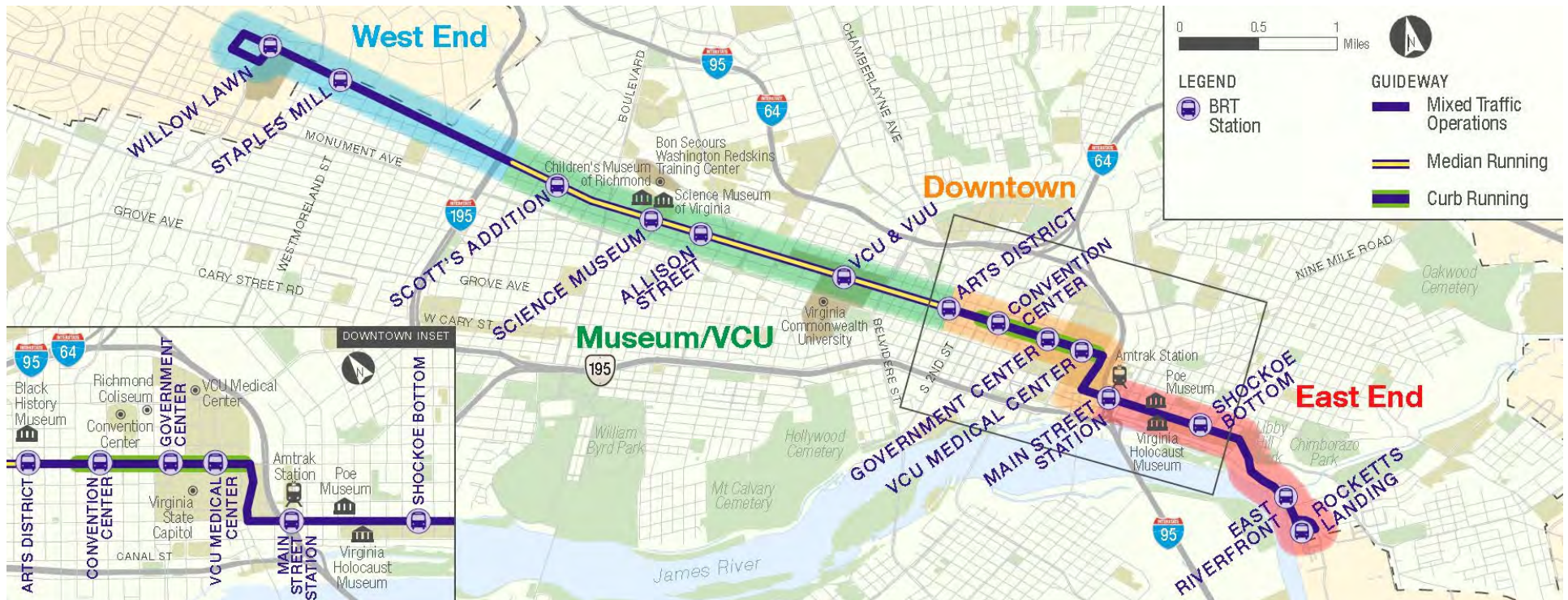
- Connects:
 - Residential areas.
 - Healthcare providers.
 - The state capitol.
 - Small business areas.
 - Downtown business district.



Pulse BRT Peer System Visit



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- Runs in mixed traffic, dedicated lanes and business access and transit (BAT) lanes.

- Daily boardings nearly double weekday ridership goal.

Pulse BRT Peer System Visit

- 35 participants from project advisory committees, partner agencies and project staff.
- Met with representatives from:
 - Greater Richmond Transit Company.
 - Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.
 - Virginia Department of Transportation.
 - City of Richmond.
 - Henrico County.
 - Virginia Commonwealth University.
 - Local businesses and community organizations.



Pulse BRT Peer System Visit – Key Takeaways



- Good use of dedicated lanes.
- Open and inviting station design, but wayfinding could be improved.
- Good connectivity with other bus routes.
- Focus on the pedestrian experience.
- Many destinations along the route.
- Well-trained, friendly bus operators.
- A rapid boarding process that includes level boarding and off-board fare payment.
- Strong partnerships with university and business community.
- Other takeaways?



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Engineering Update

Summary of 15 Percent Plan Comments

- Minnesota Department of Transportation:
 - Typical sections and stations on Highway 61.
 - Robert Street and Whitaker Street design.
 - Traffic signals/operation.
- Metro Transit:
 - Business access and transit lane operations.
 - Platform height, size and compatibility with local service.
 - Pedestrian accessibility and safety improvements.
 - Maplewood Mall Transit Center design.
 - Scaling of proposed park-and-ride facilities based on ridership projections and system integration.
 - Intersection operations and signal requirements.

Summary of 15 Percent Plan Comments

- White Bear Lake:
 - Add additional sidewalk connections.
 - Consider adding a public restroom at the Downtown White Bear Lake station.
- Gem Lake:
 - Traffic and pedestrian safety concerns at the intersection of Highway 61 and County Road E.
- Vadnais Heights:
 - Sidewalk additions at Buerkle Road.
 - County Road E connecting bus service planning.
- Maplewood:
 - Traffic modeling requests for information.
 - Information on city utilities.

Summary of 15 Percent Plan Comments

- Saint Paul:
 - Operations on Robert Street, Jackson Street, Phalen Boulevard and Larpenteur Avenue.
 - Pedestrian/bicycle interaction with proposed typical section.
 - Coordination regarding park impacts.
- Ramsey County Parks & Recreation:
 - Trailhead considerations.
 - Maintenance and operational comments.
 - Trail access and connections.
- Ramsey County Public Works:
 - Coordinate Jackson Street work with Ramsey County bridge work at Pennsylvania Avenue and to the north.
 - Additional traffic analysis of Beam Avenue cross section.

Process to Address Comments

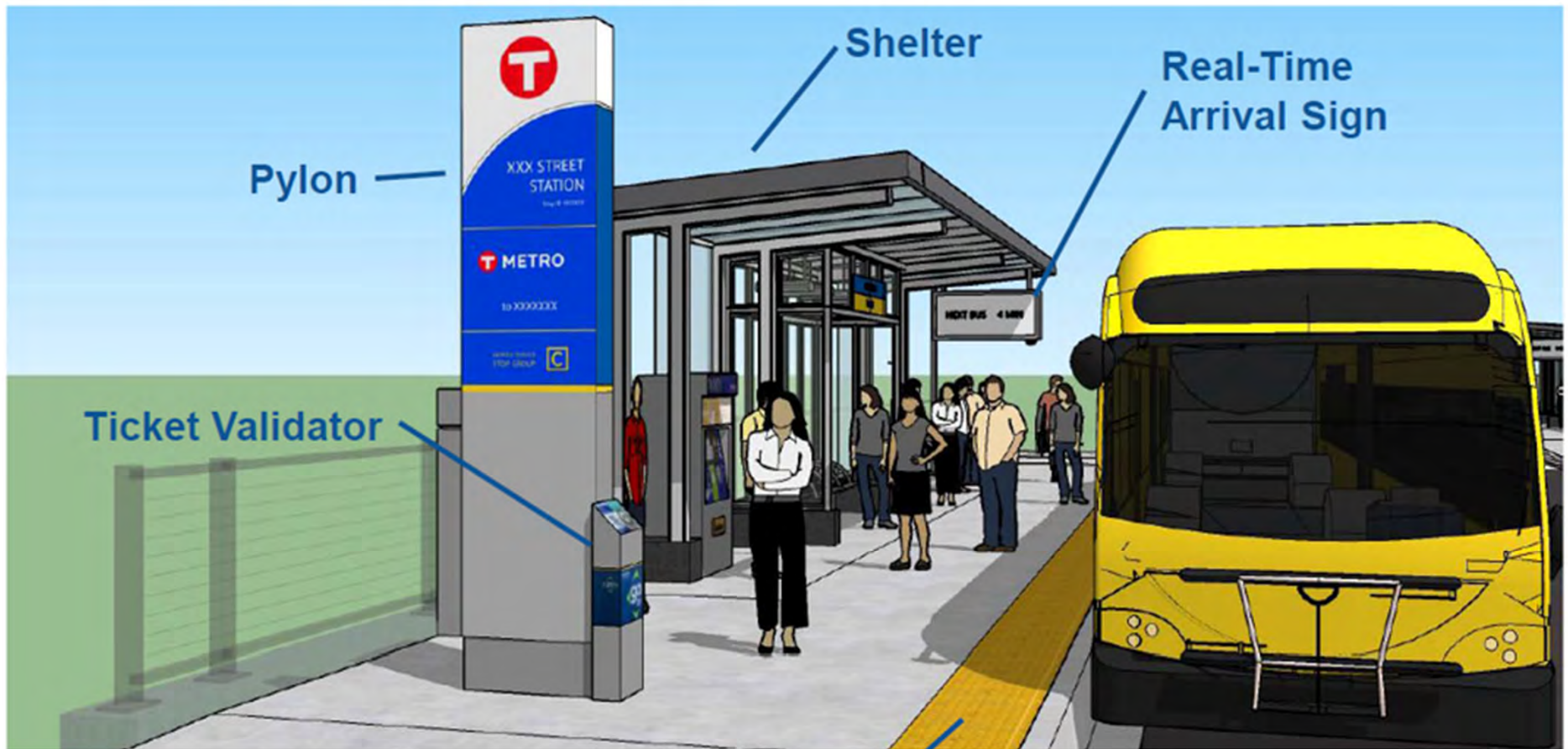
- By the end of 2019:
 - Project staff to address and document in comment response matrix.
 - Anticipate agency specific discussions as needed.
 - Engage issue resolution teams in process.
- Process through the advisory committees.
- Finalize 15 percent plans for evaluation in the Environmental Assessment.

Platform Height



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BRT Platform Elements



Pylon

Shelter

Real-Time Arrival Sign

Ticket Validator

Tactile Warning

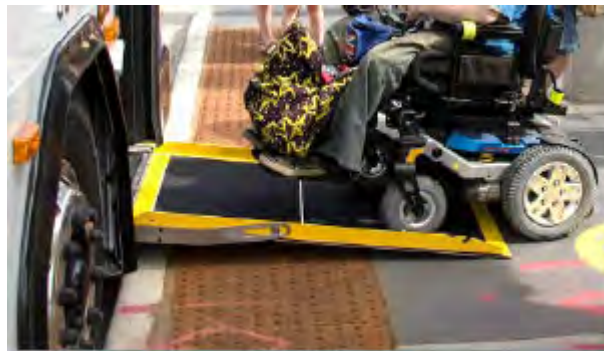
Interest in Raised Platforms/Level Boarding

- Accessibility/equity.
 - Minimize or eliminate barriers for riders with disabilities using the system.
 - Improve rider experience for other riders (e.g., older adults, riders with strollers or rolling shopping bags).
- Visual language/branding.
 - A raised platform is a key design element of a premium BRT service.

Platform Height



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~14-Inch Platform (Level Boarding)

- Minimal vertical gap.
- Horizontal gap varies depending on design, technology and execution of docking.
- Bus ramp may not be needed.
- BRT only; other buses would stop at separate platform.
- Additional maintenance and operational considerations.



9- to 11-Inch Platform

- 3- to 5-inch vertical gap.
- Bus ramp is deployed.
- BRT and other buses can stop at same platform.

Standard Curb (6-Inch)

- 8-inch vertical gap.
- Bus ramp is deployed.
- Not under consideration for Rush Line.

Discussion

What platform design choices can make Rush Line a premium service for all users?

The logo for 'Rush Line' features the words 'Rush' and 'Line' in a white, italicized sans-serif font, stacked vertically. The text is framed by two yellow swooshes that curve around it, suggesting speed and motion.

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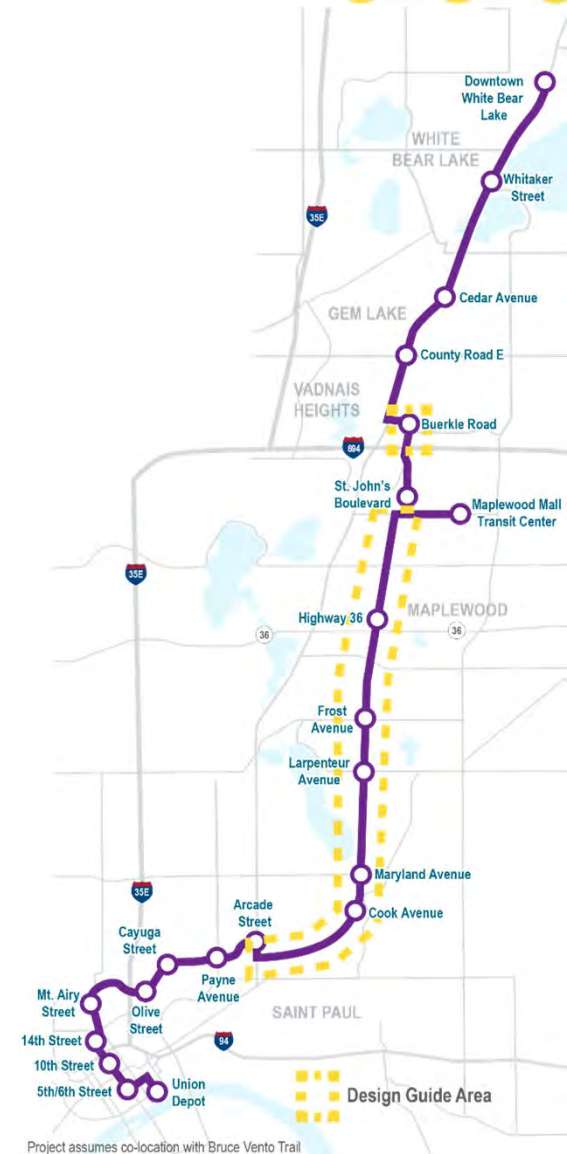
The letters 'B', 'R', and 'T' are each enclosed in a white circle, which is set against a yellow horizontal bar. The circles are spaced evenly along the bar.

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Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Design Guide

Design Guide

- Design Guide area:
 - Arcade Street station to Buerkle Road station; does not include section of Ramsey County rail right-of-way between Beam Avenue and County Road D.
- 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.



Project assumes co-location with Bruce Vento Trail

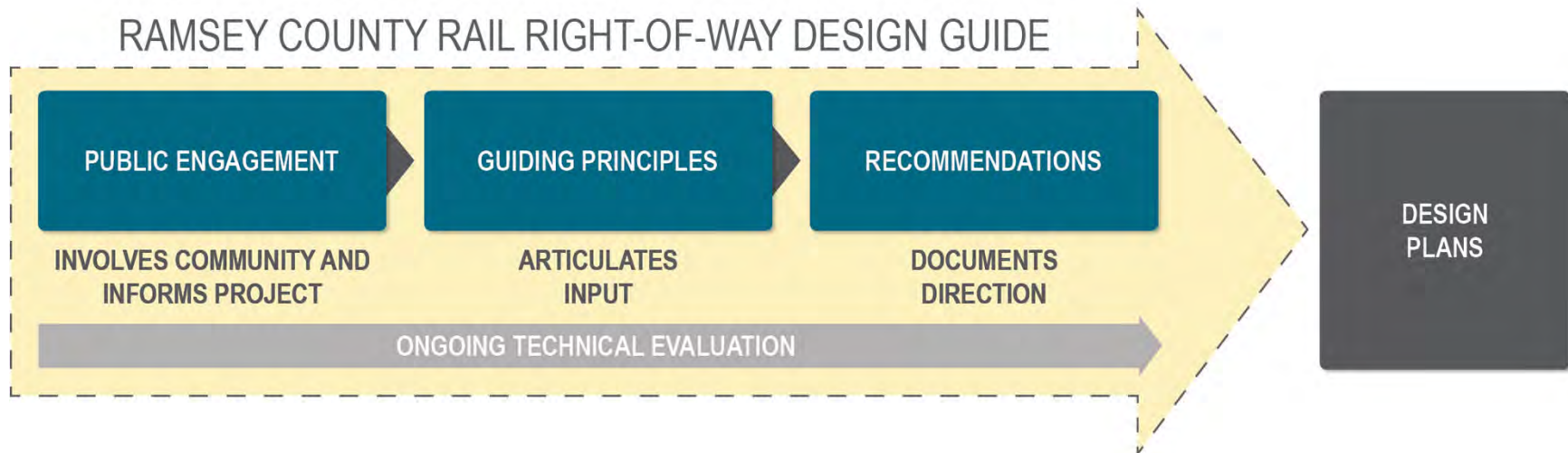
Existing Conditions

- Generally independent of surrounding street network.
- Typical right-of-way is 100 feet wide; expands to 150 feet wide north of County Road C East.
- Bruce Vento Trail:
 - Multiuse trail separated from surrounding areas by vegetation.
 - 12 feet wide in most places and reduced to 10 feet in some places.
 - Currently lacks striping.
- Surrounding uses are primarily parks and open space, residential and commercial/industrial.



Bruce Vento Trail

Design Guide Process



Public Engagement

- Public engagement regarding right-of-way began in 2015 during Pre-Project Development Study.
- March 2019: Design Guide Workshop with city staff and project advisory committee members.
- June 2019: Tuesdays on the Trail, Among community gathering, pop-up meetings, online survey.
 - Promoted via social media, newsletter, county website, flyers and targeted mailing.



Tuesdays on the Trail, June 25

What We Heard: Key Themes

- Maintain natural, shaded atmosphere of the trail.
- Promote safety and security for all users (pedestrians, bikers, transit riders).
- Preferred amenities are trash/recycling receptables, drinking fountains, informational kiosks and benches.



Tuesdays on the Trail, June 18

Draft Guiding Principles

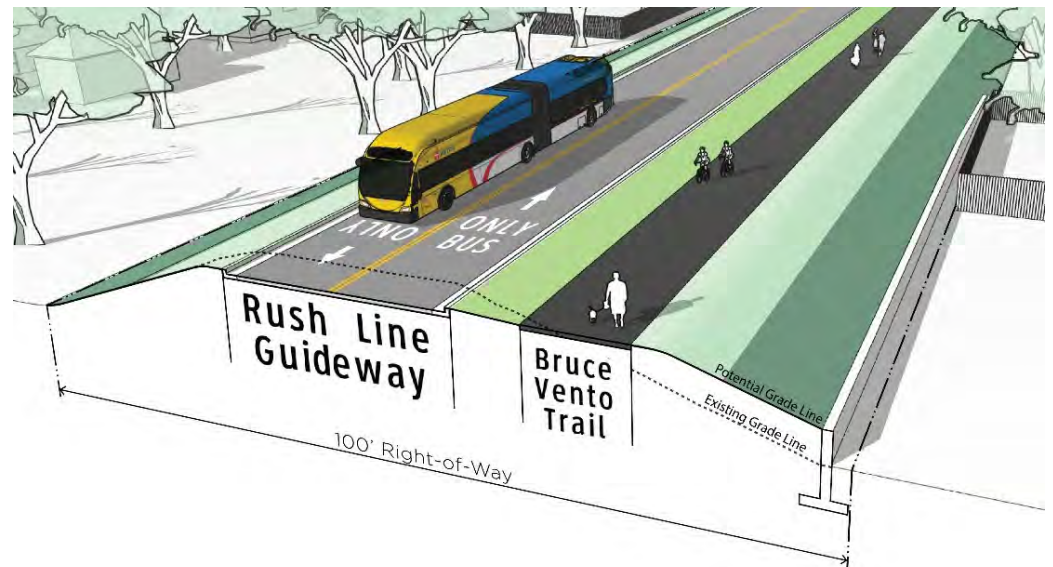
- 1. Landscape impacts and character:** Preserve the existing landscape and enhance the right-of-way with ecologically beneficial, resilient, seasonally diverse and low maintenance vegetation.
- 2. Safety and security:** Address physical safety and personal security concerns by reducing and/or removing perceived security concerns and minimizing physical safety conflicts at crossings and in other areas.



Existing Bruce Vento Trail in Ramsey County rail right-of-way

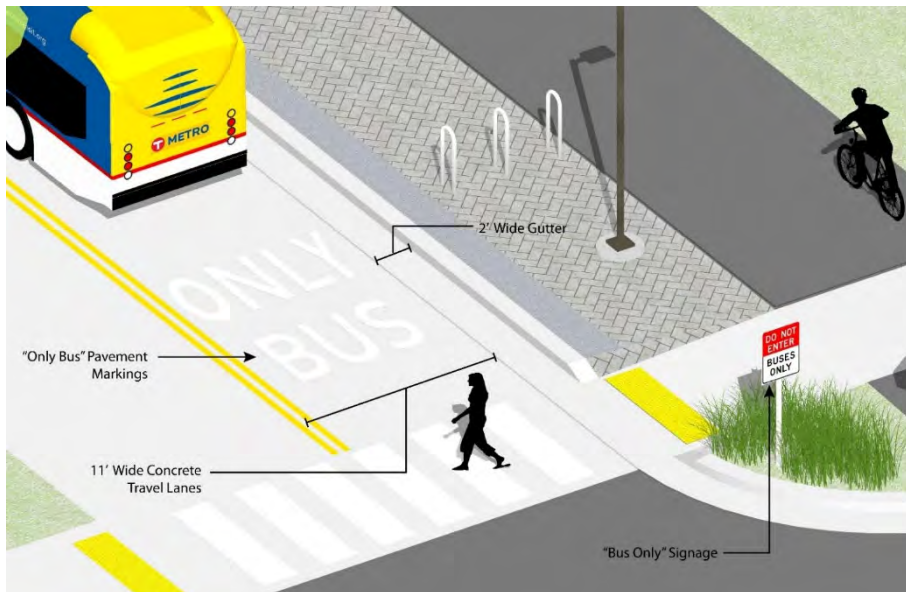
Draft Guiding Principles

3. **Access and borders:** Retain ease of access while promoting safe crossings of the guideway to access the trail and surrounding neighborhoods.
4. **Maintenance:** Use design strategies and materials that are durable, affordable and do not require excessive or unanticipated maintenance practices.
5. **Operations:** Provide a safe, high-quality trail and BRT user experience.



Proposed BRT guideway and Bruce Vento Trail in the Ramsey County rail right-of-way

Draft Design Guide Recommendations: Trail and BRT Guideway

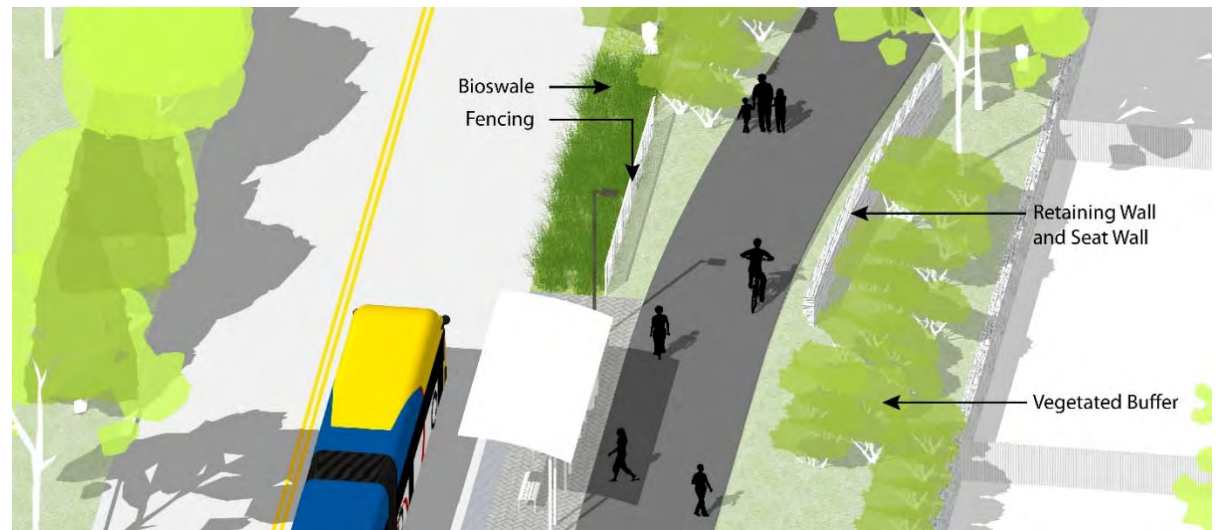


Typical BRT guideway dimensions

- The trail is recommended to remain a 12 foot wide shared-use path with a shoulder at least 2 feet wide on each side; a narrower path may be used near obstructions.
- BRT guideway and separation:
 - 26-foot wide guideway would be used exclusively for buses and, when needed, emergency vehicles.
 - Guideway and trail would be separated by a vegetated buffer of varying widths.
 - Fences may be implemented where needed for safety.

Draft Design Guide Recommendations: Buffers and Screening

- Use vegetated buffers and topography to preserve privacy between right-of-way and surrounding properties.
- Use topography, ditches, fencing and railings to prevent crossing and access in unsafe locations.
- Preserve existing vegetation as much as possible and add native, diverse plants.
- Design elements such as fencing and walls with natural finishes or muted, earth tone shades.
- Avoid use of bollards on the trail because they present a safety hazard to users.



Buffer and screening strategies

Draft Design Guide Recommendations: Landscape Character

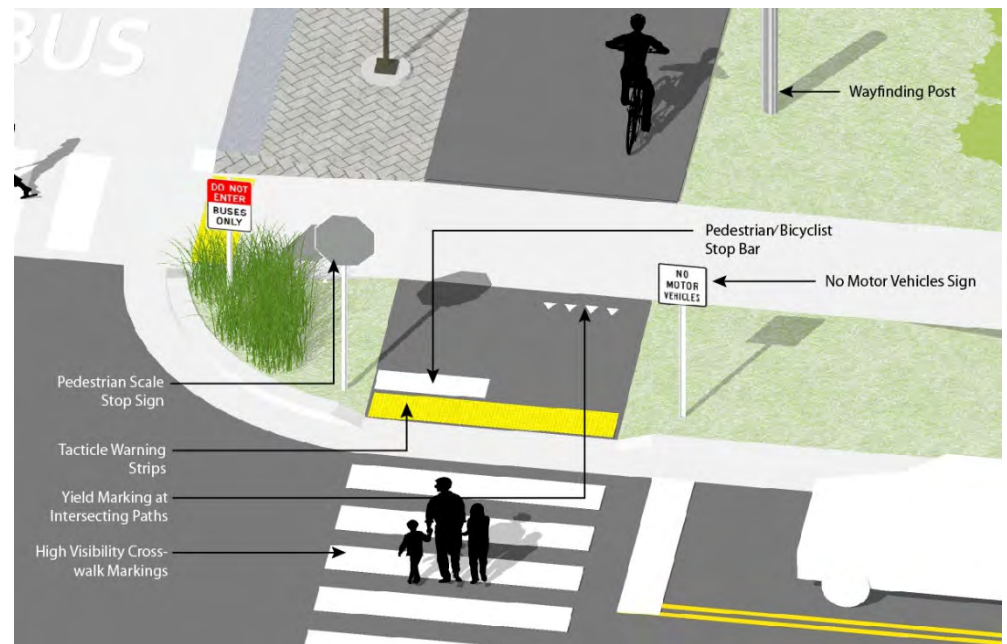


Natural landscape character example

- Use hardy, low-maintenance vegetation and deciduous trees for shade while preserving visibility near intersections.
- Use ornamental, flowering or otherwise interesting plants in station areas.
- Consider using shrubs, multi-stem and single-stem trees for stormwater facilities.
- Minimize density and height of plants in open areas to maintain visibility, especially at crossings and station areas.

Draft Design Guide Recommendations: Safety

- Use signage to promote safety and help navigation.
- Avoid obstructing pathway illumination and lines of sight.
- Select vegetation that allows clean sight lines and visibility.
- Use pedestrian-scale lighting at stations and limit lighting through corridor to maintain existing natural character.
- Use pavements, signage and other tools to prevent motor vehicles from accessing the right-of-way at crossings.



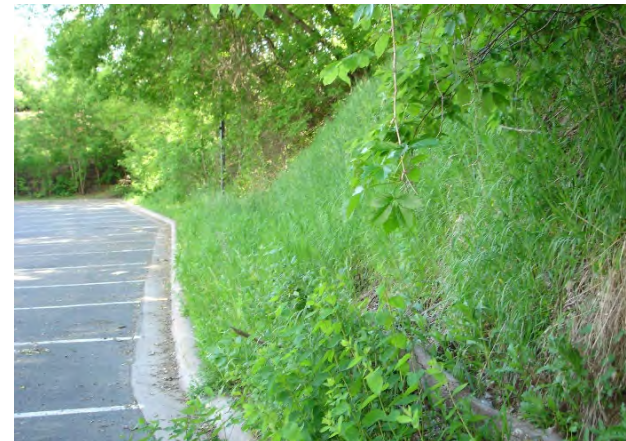
Typical signage and markings at roadway crossings

Draft Design Guide Recommendations: Environment

- Preserve existing vegetation where possible, reestablish habitat and maintain wildlife crossings.
- Manage stormwater using bioswales and other natural management options.
- Use green slopes where possible for mitigating steep slopes.
- Install amenities and wayfinding in a manner consistent with other Ramsey County parks and trails, including benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bicycle repair stations, dog waste pick-up stations, trail route maps and directional kiosks.



Bioswale



Engineered green slope

Draft Design Guide: Next Steps

- Present draft Design Guide recommendations.
 - Drop-in discussions:
 - December 5 at Hmong Village.
 - December 10 at Maplewood Fire Station.
 - December 12 at CLUES.
 - Online survey.



10th Street Station Drop-In Discussion, May 9



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Transit-Oriented Development Planning Pilot Program

About the Program

- Federal Transit Administration competitive grant program.
- Provides funding to integrate land use and transportation planning with transit capital investments.
- Planning funded through the program must:
 - Examine ways to improve economic development and ridership.
 - Foster multimodal connectivity and accessibility.
 - Improve transit access for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
 - Engage the private sector.
 - Identify infrastructure needs.
 - Enable mixed-use development near transit stations.
- Recent local experience: Gold Line BRT.



**Federal Transit
Administration**

TOD Planning Grant Application for Rush Line BRT

- Funding would be used for a station area planning process that includes:
 - Public engagement.
 - Real estate market analysis.
 - Housing gap analysis.
 - Station concepts and development plans.
 - Implementation plan.
- Would build on preliminary station area planning work from 2018.
- Application submitted November 15; decision expected early 2020.
- Planning process.
 - With timely decision, could begin approximately late 2020 and last through late 2022.
 - Led by Ramsey County in partnership with cities and Metro Transit.



TOD planning would build on the preliminary station area planning work from 2018



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Next Meeting

Next Meeting

- January 23, 2020.
- 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Public Comment

- When commenting, please:
 - Be respectful.
 - Be brief. Limit comments to three minutes to give others an opportunity to speak.
- Public comments will be included in the Policy Advisory Committee meeting summary.
- The Chair reserves the right to limit an individual's comments if they become redundant, disrespectful or are not relevant to the Rush Line BRT Project.



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Thank you!

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