



January 21, 201

# POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS PHASE



## Agenda

1. Virtual meeting procedures.
2. Welcome new members and introductions.
3. Recap of project update distributed to the Policy Advisory Committee in November 2020.
4. Community Advisory Committee update.
5. Project updates.
6. Project management update.
7. Visual Quality Manual overview.
8. Public comment on the Rush Line BRT Project.
9. Next meeting.



## Virtual Meeting Procedures

- Mute your microphone when not speaking.
- All committee members and staff are panelists. Only panelists are able to speak and share video; attendees are only able to view and listen to the meeting.
- Attendees may submit comments by using the “raise hand” feature only during the public comment period. The host will unmute you in order of hands raised.
- Project staff is not recording this meeting. There will be a meeting summary as usual published at [rushline.org](http://rushline.org). As with any in-person Policy Advisory Committee meeting, members of the public may attend and record this meeting.
- Email [avalenti@srfconsulting.com](mailto:avalenti@srfconsulting.com) if you are having issues connecting.



## Recap of Project Update Distributed in November

- Environmental Assessment:
  - Federal Transit Administration review is advancing.
- Development of Visual Quality Manual.
- Project coordination:
  - Focused on issue resolution team meetings.
  - Additional coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metro Transit, Minnesota Department of Natural Resource and the US Army Corps of Engineers.



## Recap of Project Update Distributed in November

- Engineering:
  - Minnesota Department of Transportation coordination:
    - Layout review process.
    - Highway 61 station design.
  - Development of the project ridership forecasts in coordination with the Metropolitan Council.
- Summary of older adult engagement and COVID-19 and ridership trends was provided in response to Policy Advisory Committee member questions at the October meeting.



## Recap of December Community Advisory Committee Meeting

- Topics discussed:
  - Public engagement update.
  - Business access and transit lane design.
  - Highway 61 pedestrian improvements.
  - Environmental Assessment update.
  - Advanced station area planning.
  - Ridership trends.
  - Visual Quality Manual.
  - Station site design.



# Project Updates



## Agency Coordination

- Similar activities as summarized in November summary.
  - Ongoing coordination with Federal Transit Administration, Metro Transit, Minnesota Department of Transportation and cities.



## Environmental Assessment

- The purpose of an Environmental Assessment is to describe:
  - Why the project is needed.
  - Alternatives considered.
  - Impacts to the natural and built environments.
  - Mitigation measures for impacts.



## Alternatives Evaluated

- No Build Alternative:
  - The existing transportation system with planned and programmed improvements as presented in the Metropolitan Council's *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* but without the Rush Line BRT Project.
  - Provides a baseline for comparing the effects of implementing the Build Alternative.

## Alternatives Evaluated

- Build Alternative:
  - 15-mile BRT route.
  - 21 stations.
  - Three park-and-rides.





## Alternatives Evaluated

- Build Alternative park-and-rides include:
  - Existing Maplewood Mall Transit Center.
  - 300-space structure at the Highway 36 station.\*
  - 70-space surface lot at the County Road E station.

*\* A Build Alternative option without the park-and-ride at the Highway 36 station will also be evaluated.*

*As the project advances, there is the potential that the full build out of the Highway 36 park-and-ride would be phased over time, starting with an approximately 170-space surface lot that would be constructed within the same footprint.*



## Summary of Resource Evaluation

- Resources of no concern:
  - Aviation.
  - Farmlands.
  - Land use plan compatibility.
  - Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965.
  - Energy.

## Summary of Resource Evaluation

- Resources with mitigation measures:
  - Freight rail.
  - Transit.
  - Traffic.
  - Pedestrians and bicycles.
  - Parking, driveways and loading zones.
  - Neighborhoods and community resources.
  - Land acquisitions and relocations.
  - Economics.
  - Visual resources.
  - Cultural resources.
  - Safety and security.
  - Utilities.
  - Surface waters.
  - Water quality and stormwater.
  - Geology, groundwater and soils.
  - Hazardous materials.
  - Noise and vibration.
  - Air quality.
  - Protected species and wildlife habitat.
  - Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966.



## Environmental Assessment Review Schedule

- Draft Environmental Assessment reviewed by Ramsey County, Metro Transit and Minnesota Department of Transportation.
- Cities reviewed supporting technical information.

Timeframe	Review
June 2020-April 2021	Federal Transit Administration administrative and legal reviews
May 2021	Publish Environmental Assessment and begin 45-day public comment period
June 2021	Environmental Assessment public hearings
October 2021	Anticipated environmental decision



## Status of Federal Transit Administration Review

- The Federal Transit Administration has completed:
  - First administrative review of the Environmental Assessment.
  - Second administrative review of the Environmental Assessment.
  - First legal review of the Environmental Assessment.
- Reviews remaining:
  - Administrative review of the draft Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement.
  - Second legal review of the Environmental Assessment with the draft Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement.
  - Regional administrator review and signature.



## Other Federal Agency Reviews

- Federal Highway Administration:
  - As a cooperating agency, received a courtesy review of the second administrative draft of the Environmental Assessment.
- US Environmental Protection Agency:
  - Conducted a courtesy review during the Federal Transit Administration's first legal review.



## Section 106 Update

- November 24: Consulting party meeting 2.
  - Review Assessment of Effects report.
- December 18: Consulting party meeting 3.
  - Preliminary discussion on resolution of adverse effects.
- Assessment of Effects report has been reviewed by consulting parties, including the State Historic Preservation Office.



## After the Environmental Process Is Complete

- Advance design, refine and incorporate mitigation measures.
- Permits and approvals will be required from federal, state and local agencies, such as:
  - Right-of-way permits.
  - Drainage permits.
  - Wetland Conservation Act Replacement Plan approval.
  - Grading/building permits.
  - Erosion, sediment control and stormwater permits.



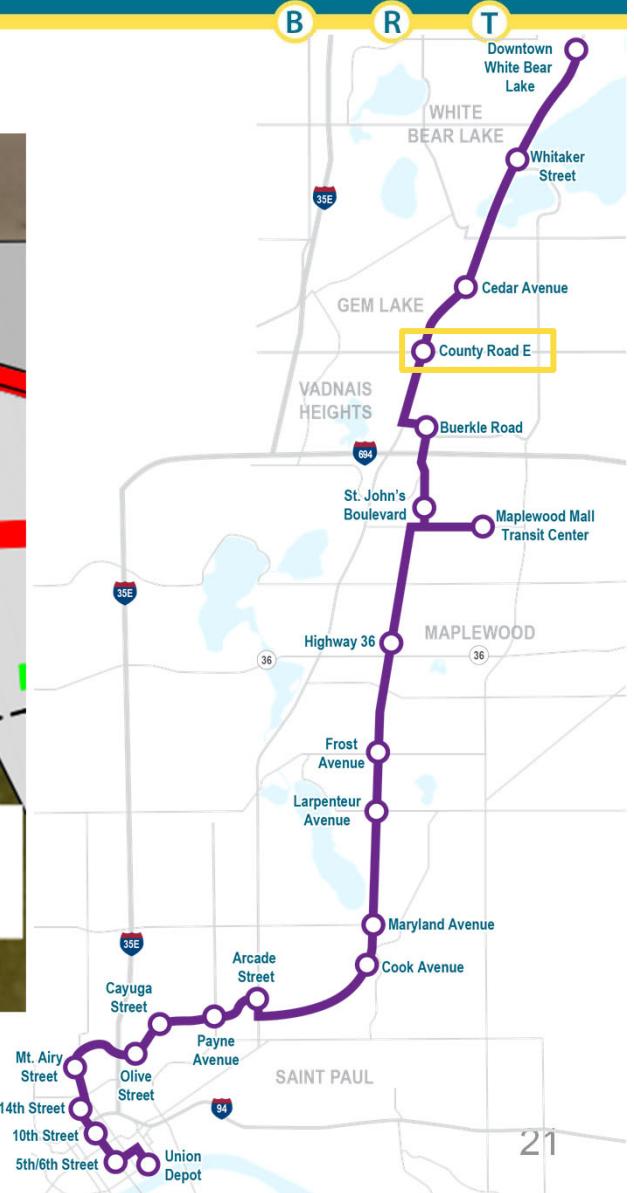
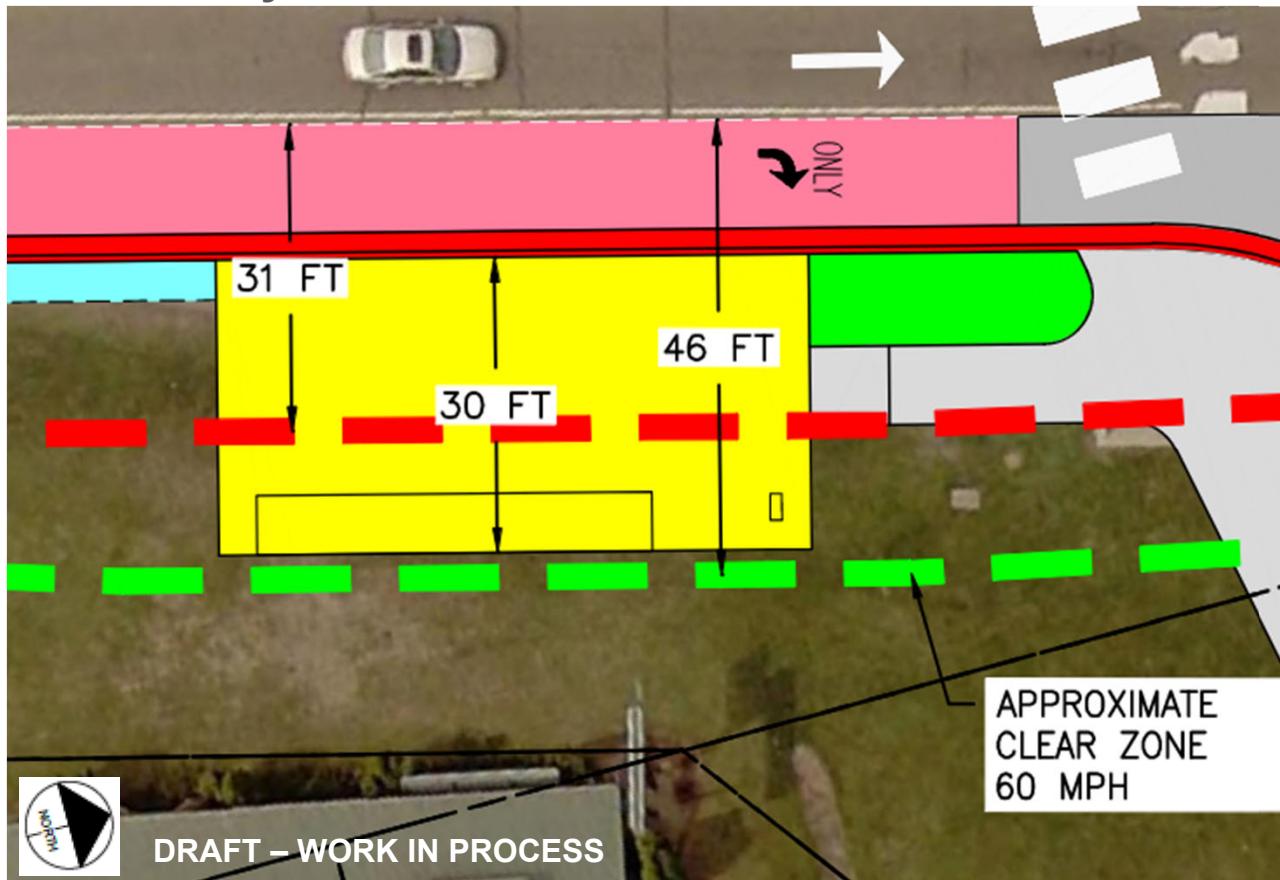
## Platform Height and Clear Zone Process

- Coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation regarding platform height and clear zone at Highway 61 stations.
- Case studies and background information reviewed with functional groups and Metro District leadership.
- Direction to move forward with Highway 61 stations reflecting a wider 10-inch platform design.
- Updated design developed for Whitaker Street station to address Minnesota Department of Transportation concerns regarding bus stopping within the general-purpose travel lane.

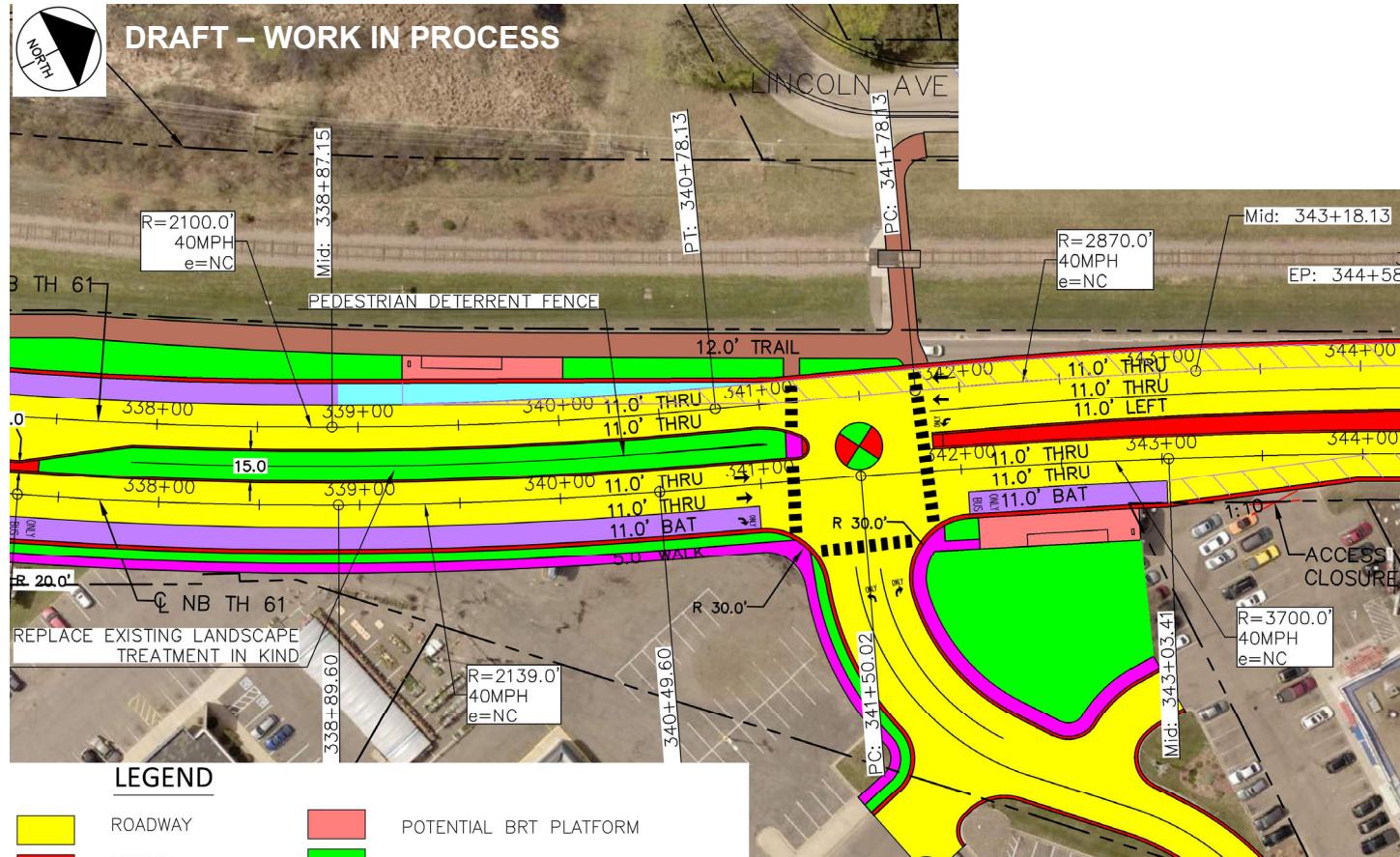


# Highway 61 Station Design

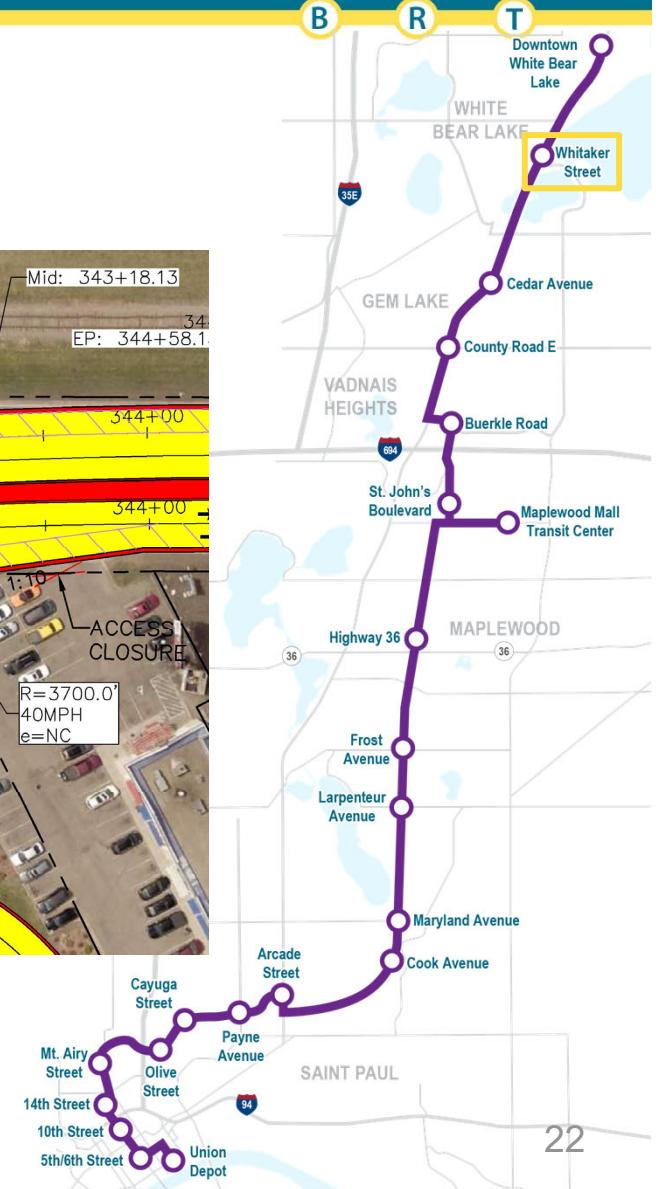
County Road E Station – Northbound Platform



# Whitaker Street Station Area Design



LEGEND	
	POTENTIAL BRT PLATFORM
	PROPOSED LANDSCAPE
	CURB
	FUTURE CONSTRUCTION BY OTHERS
	PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY
	MEDIAN
	SIDEWALKS
	BITUMINOUS TRAIL
	BAT LANE
	MIXED TRAFFIC
	SHOULDER





## Status of Other Engineering Activities

- Minnesota Department of Transportation staff approved layouts.
- Preliminary bridge plan review.
- Station site design.
- Maintenance and ownership document.
- Phalen Creek daylighting feasibility study coordination.



## Project Management Update



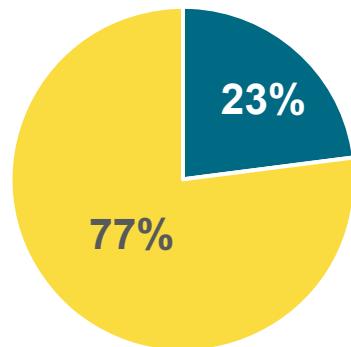
## Ridership Forecast Update

- Used the Federal Transit Administration's STOPS model.
  - Local data-driven.
  - Responds to service, market and mode changes.
  - Responds to growth expectations.
  - Data is pre-COVID and 20-year forecasts assume resilient travel markets.
- Peer-reviewed at optimization workshop and updated.
- 2040 Build Alternative daily ridership forecast:
  - 7,400 rides per day.
  - 6,700 rides per day without the Highway 36 park-and-ride.
  - Generally consistent with the Pre-Project Development Study forecasts.

## 2040 BRT Ridership Characteristics

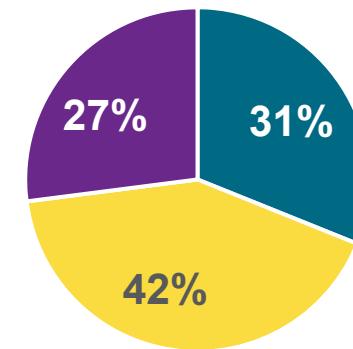
### Serves Transit-Dependent Markets

- Riders from Zero-Car Households ■ Choice Riders



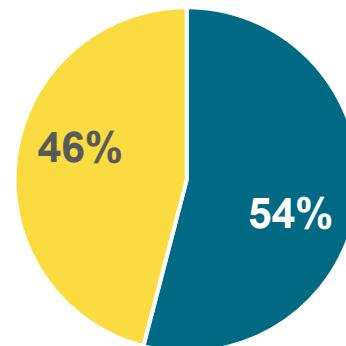
### Access by Variety of Means

- Walk Access ■ Drive/Drop-Off ■ Transfer



### Provides Access to Jobs

- Work Trips ■ Non-Work Trips





## Capital Cost Estimate

- Estimation of the fixed costs needed to build the project and bring it into revenue service.
- Includes:
  - Construction of the dedicated guideway, stations and other project elements.
  - Expenditures such as environmental mitigation, right-of-way acquisition, vehicle acquisition and professional services.
  - 35 percent total contingency.



## Operations and Maintenance Cost Estimate

- Built upon the model developed for the METRO Gold Line BRT Project.
- Based on:
  - Revenue hours.
  - Revenue miles.
  - Peak buses.
  - Number of stations.
  - Miles of dedicated guideway.
  - Miles of red pavement.

## Capital and Operating Cost Estimates

- Estimates are:
  - Based on current design and subject to change as design advances.
  - Included in the Environmental Assessment.
  - Generally consistent with anticipated capital costs documented in the Pre-Project Development Study.

	<b>Capital Cost (Year of Expenditure Dollars)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Annual Operations and Maintenance Cost (2026 Dollars)<sup>2</sup></b>
Build Alternative	\$474,000,000	\$15,370,000
Build Alternative option without the Highway 36 park-and-ride	\$457,000,000	\$15,260,000

<sup>1</sup> Adjusted for 3.5% inflation from 2019 to the expected year of expenditure.

<sup>2</sup> Adjusted for 3.5% inflation from 2019 to 2026.



## What is the Capital Investment Grant Program?

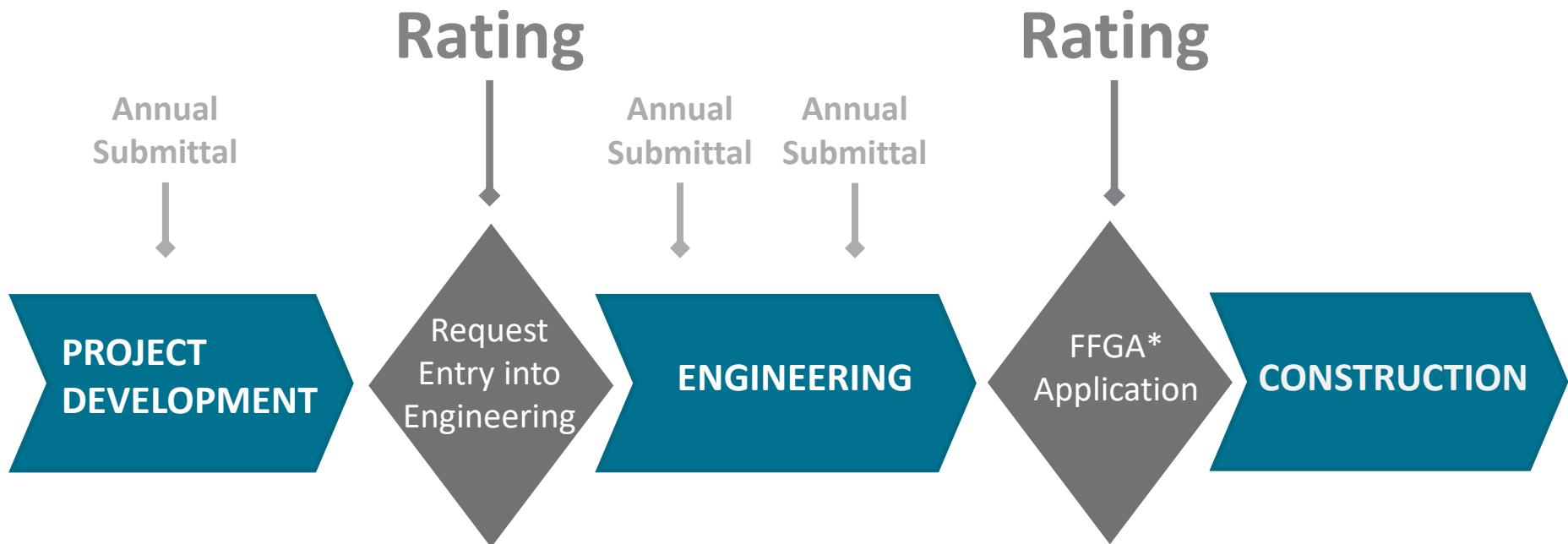
- The Capital Investment Grant program is a discretionary and competitive offering by the Federal Transit Administration to fund major transit capital investments for the following:
  - Bus rapid transit.
  - Light, heavy and commuter rail.
  - Streetcars.
- Includes New Starts, Small Starts and Core Capacity projects.
- New Starts projects must be new fixed guideway projects or extensions to existing fixed guideway systems.
- New Starts projects must meet one of the following:

*At least \$100M  
in federal funding*

**OR**

*\$300M  
in total capital cost*

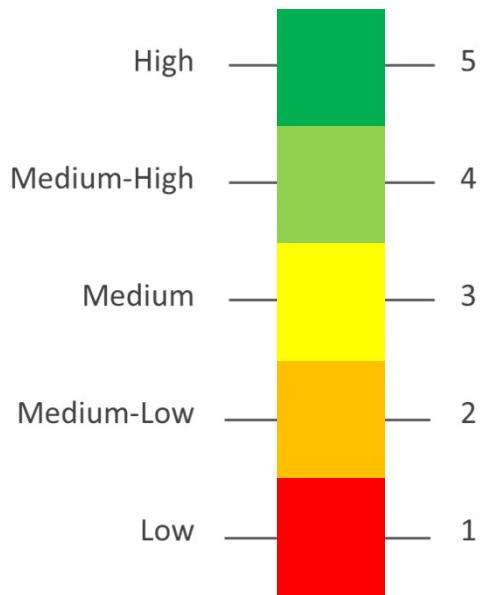
# The Federal Transit Administration Rates the Project at Two Milestones



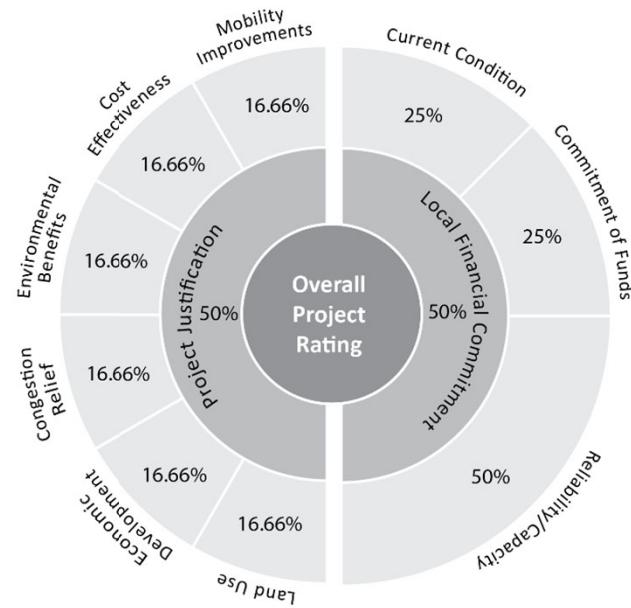
\*Full Funding Grant Agreement

# New Starts Project Rating Criteria

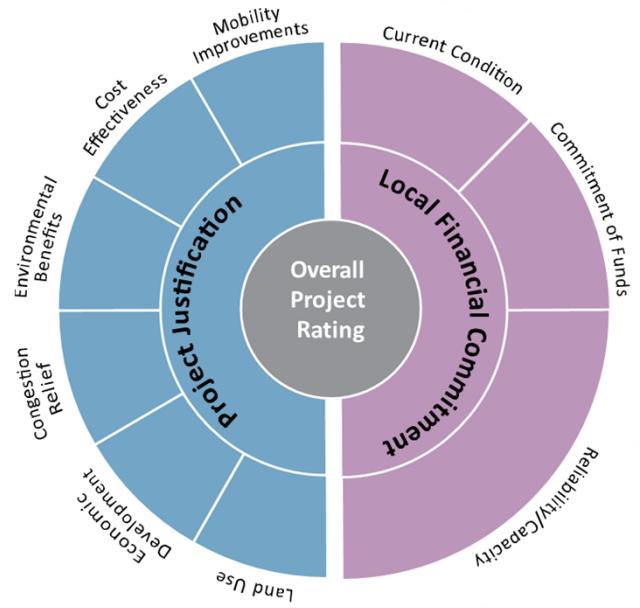
**Point Scale**



**Criteria Weighting**

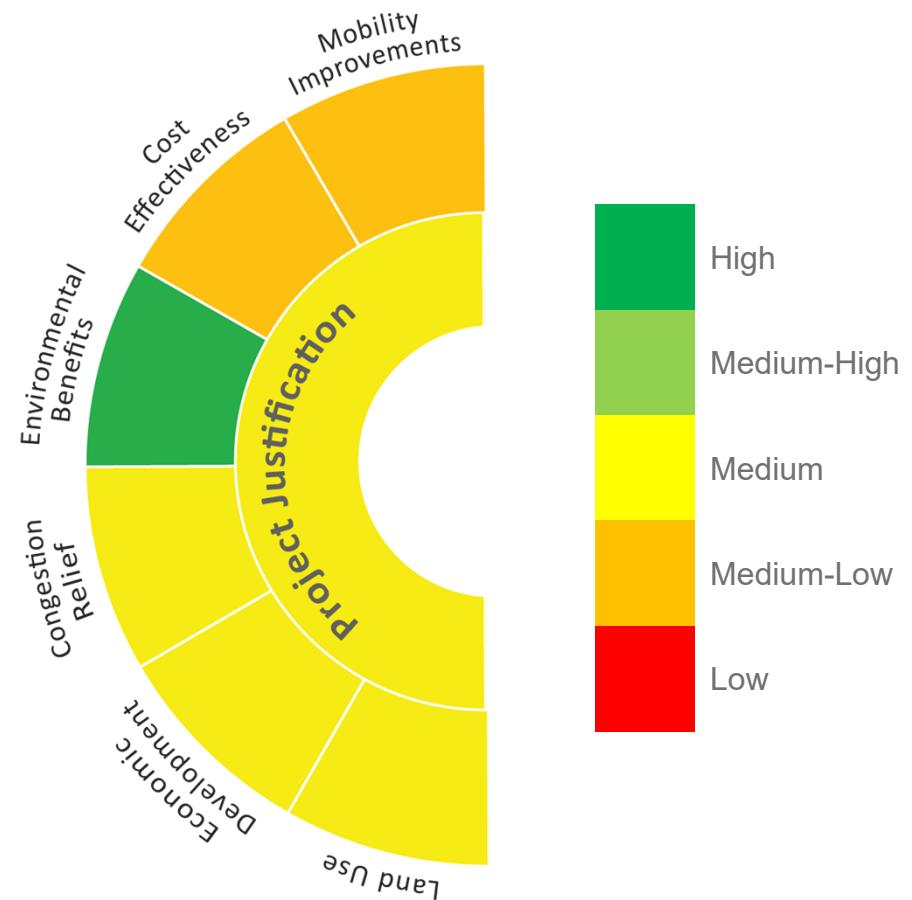


**Summary Project Rating**



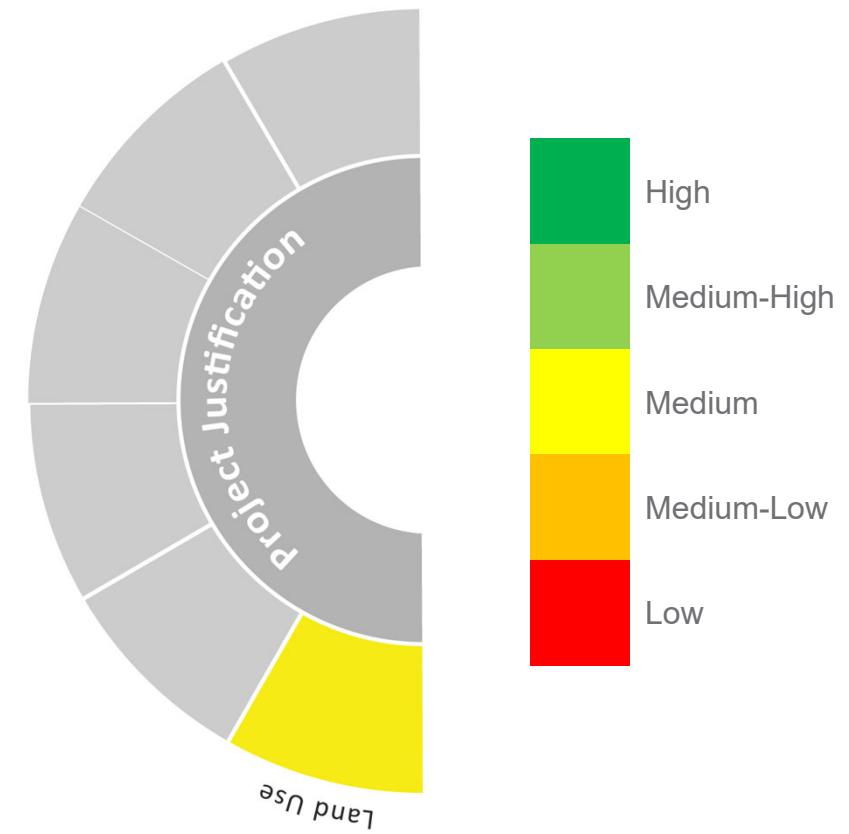
## Anticipated Project Justification Rating

- Project justification summary rating **must be a medium** or greater to qualify for federal funds.
- Ridership and cost (capital and operations and maintenance) drive the first four criteria.
- Local municipalities drive the last two criteria.



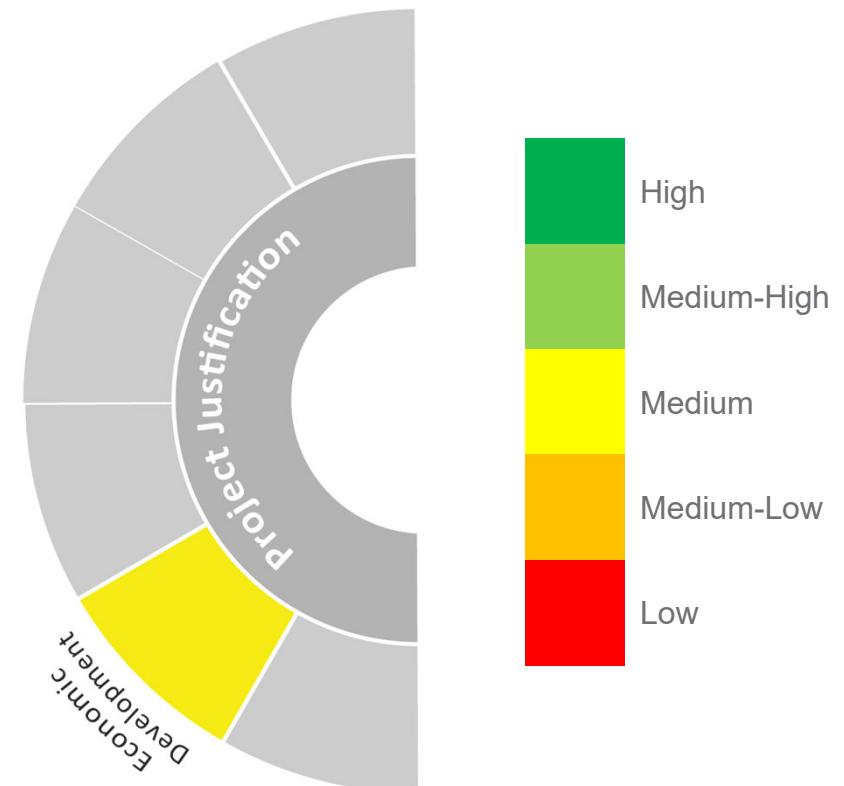
## Land Use Criterion

- Ratings driven by existing land use conditions:
  - Existing corridor and station area development character.
  - Existing station area pedestrian facilities, including access for persons with disabilities.
  - Existing corridor and station area parking supply.
  - Proportion of existing affordable housing within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of station areas compared to the proportion at the county level.



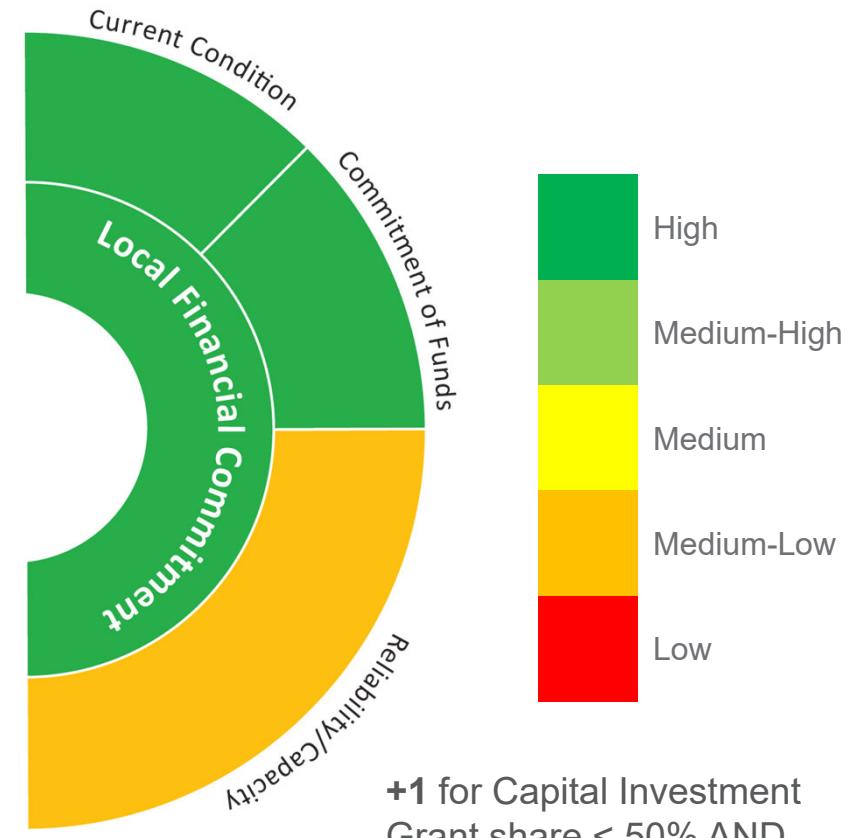
## Economic Development Criterion

- Ratings driven by robustness of local controls:
  - Transit-supportive plans and policies.
  - Implementation tools and performance of transit-supportive plans and policies.
  - Plans and policies to maintain or increase affordable housing in the corridor.
  - Potential impact of the transit project on regional development.
- Anticipate a positive impact from the outcome of the upcoming advanced station area planning process.
- The Federal Transit Administration has a sliding scale for this criterion and expects to see local progress as the project progresses toward construction.

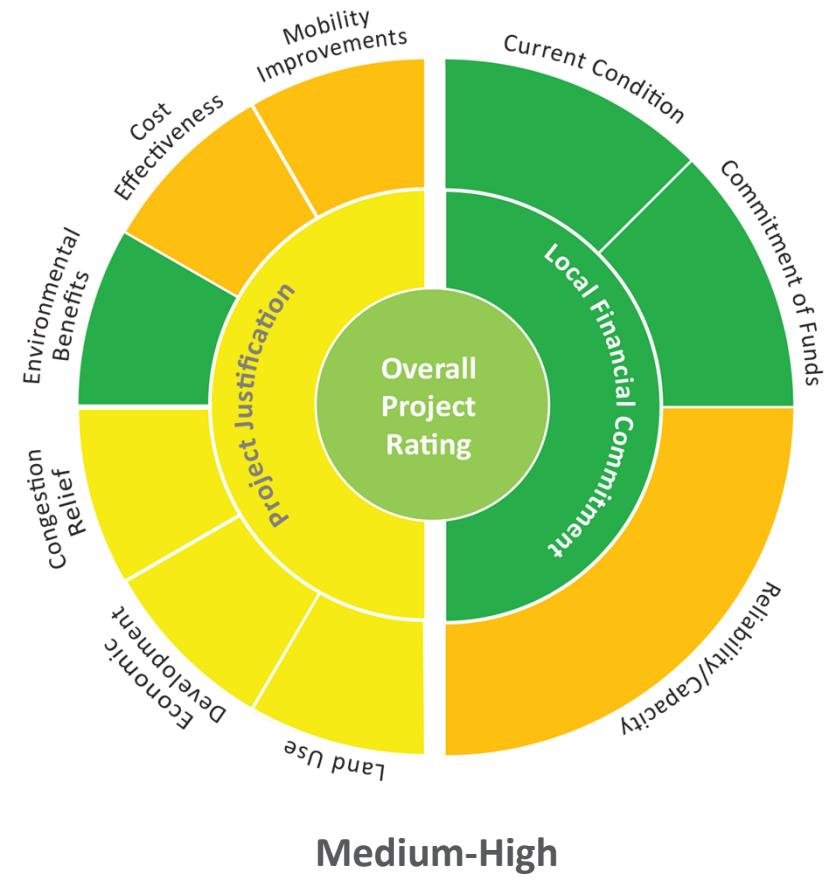
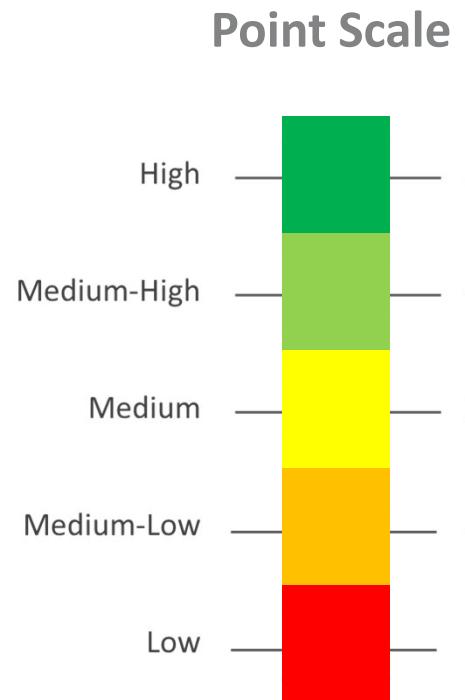


## Anticipated Local Financial Commitment Rating

- Local financial commitment summary rating **must be a medium** or greater to qualify for federal funds.
- The county, as the local funding source, is the major influencer for the second and third criteria.
- The first and third criteria are systemwide assessments (beyond just the project).



# Rush Line BRT Anticipated Project Rating





# Visual Quality Manual Overview



## Purpose and Elements

- Guides design of new project elements.
- Find balance between consistent Rush Line BRT identity while recognizing local context and character.
- Guides size, form, texture and color characteristics.
- Project elements included:
  - Station sites.
  - Lighting.
  - Pavements.
  - Bridges/walls.
  - Landscaping.
  - Fencing.
  - Furnishings.
  - Signage.

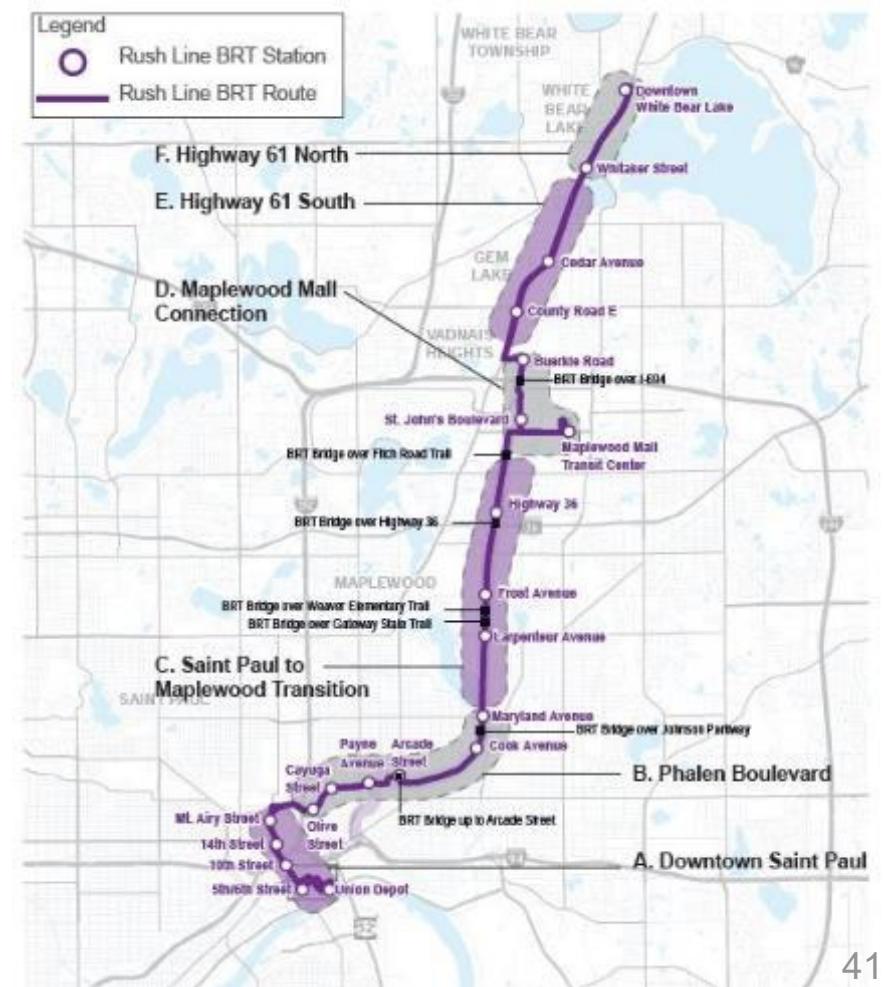


## Limits and Guidance

- Expands the limits of design guidance to the entire project corridor.
- Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Design Guide focused on rail corridor segment.
- Guided by previous engagement and existing context and improvements.

## Context and Character Segments

- Considers distinct and identifiable areas along the project route:
  - Downtown Saint Paul.
  - Phalen Boulevard.
  - Saint Paul to Maplewood transition.
  - Maplewood Mall connection.
  - Highway 61 south.
  - Highway 61 north.





## DRAFT Design Principles

1. Support Rush Line BRT and Metro Transit brand identity.
2. Enhance transit rider experience.
3. Provide opportunities for locally unique aesthetic expression.
4. Highlight existing valued community features.
5. Design corridor edges appropriate to adjacent land uses.

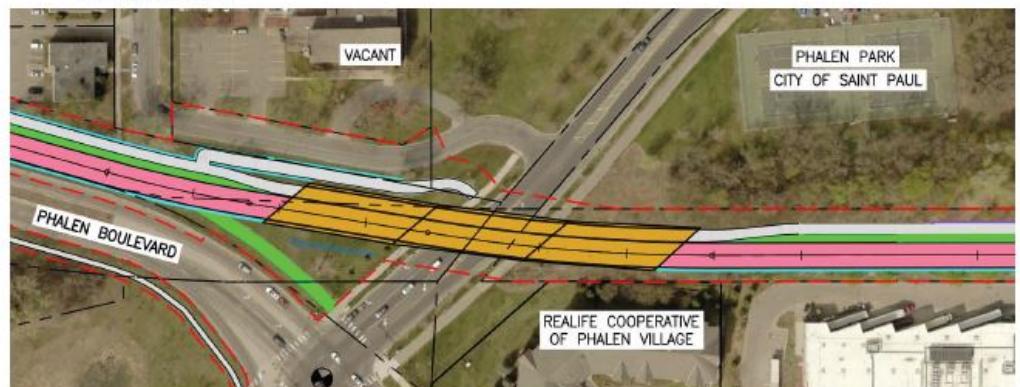
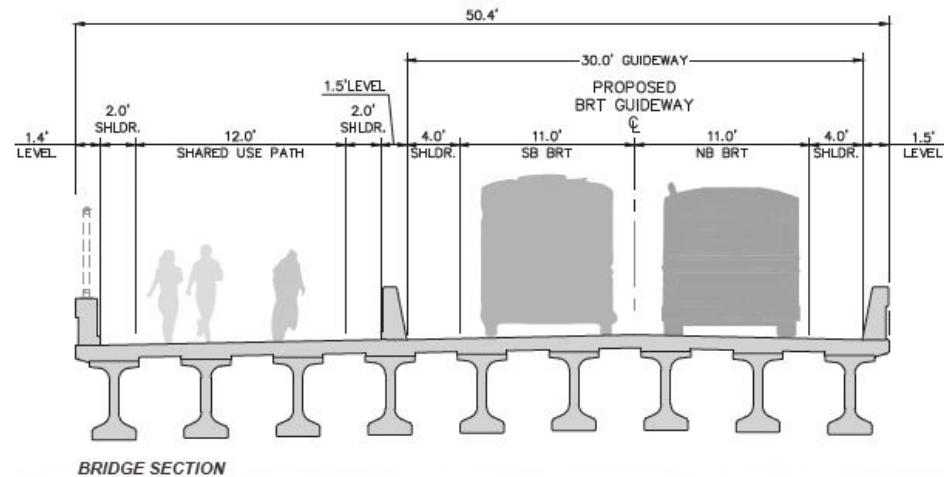


## Bridges – Johnson Parkway



EXISTING EARL STREET BRIDGE

BRT GUIDEWAY AND TRAIL BRIDGE  
JOHNSON PARKWAY BRIDGE



DRAFT – WORK IN PROCESS

# Fencing



EXAMPLE WOOD POST AND CABLE FENCE



EXAMPLE VERTICAL PICKET FENCE



EXAMPLE STATION FENCE WITH CUSTOMIZATIONS



EXAMPLE BLACK VINYL-COATED CHAINLINK FENCE

RIGHT-OF-WAY



EXAMPLE VERTICAL PICKET FENCE ON CURB

STATION SITE

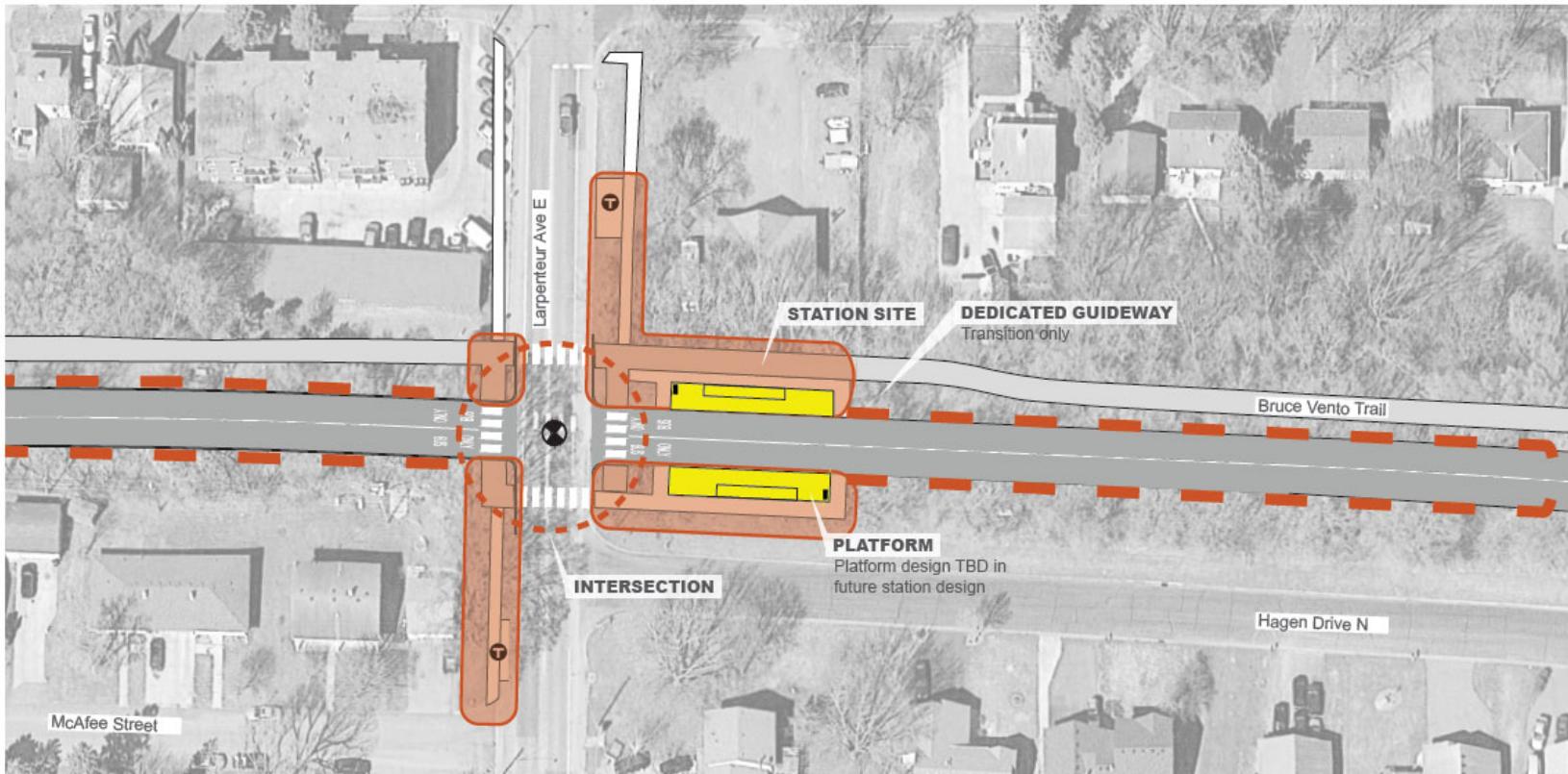


EXAMPLE COMPOSITE VISUAL SCREEN FENCE

VISUAL SCREENING

DRAFT – WORK IN PROCESS

# Lighting



PROTOTYPICAL OPPOSITE SIDE STATION: LIGHTING CONCEPT PLAN  
LARPENLEUR AVENUE STATION

DRAFT – WORK IN PROCESS

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
|  | Signalized Intersection   |
|  | Roadway/Guideway Lighting |
|  | Intersection Lighting     |
|  | Platform Lighting         |



## Next Steps

- Share the Visual Quality Manual with the Community and Policy Advisory Committees after Technical Advisory Committee review – early February 2021.



## Public Comment



## Public Comment

- Attendees may submit comments by using the “raise hand” feature only during the public comment period. The host will unmute you in order of hands raised.
- When commenting, please:
  - Be respectful.
  - Be brief. Limit comments to **3 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.
- Submit additional comments or questions to [info@rushline.org](mailto:info@rushline.org).



## Next Meeting



## Next Meeting

- March 18.
- 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Virtual meeting.



B R T

# Thank you!



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