



PURPOSE AND NEED TECHNICAL REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ramsey County is proposing a 12-mile streetcar service, called the Riverview Corridor Project, that would provide connections along the route to neighborhoods and businesses as well as to anchor destinations and employers in downtown Saint Paul, at the Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) International Airport and the Mall of America (see Figure 1). The project area is on the ancestral lands of the Dakota people, and the proposed route is near the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. The confluence is a historically significant landscape known to many Dakota people as Bdote.¹

Ramsey County established the purpose and need for the project as part of the Riverview Corridor Pre-Project Development Study, which began in 2014 and ended in 2017 with the selection of the locally preferred alternative. The supporting data and analysis were documented in the Purpose and Need Statement Technical Memorandum dated August 13, 2015. This report updates the purpose and need statement, including project goals and objectives, to align with the National Environmental Policy Act process and to reflect current data.

The project's purpose is the fundamental reason why the project is being proposed. The project's needs are the issues that the project is intended to address. Project goals and objectives are used to further evaluate alternatives that would address the project purpose and need.

2. PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Riverview Corridor Project is to provide transit service that enhances mobility and accessibility for residents, businesses and workers and supports economic opportunities within the project area, particularly in low-income neighborhoods.

3. PROJECT NEEDS

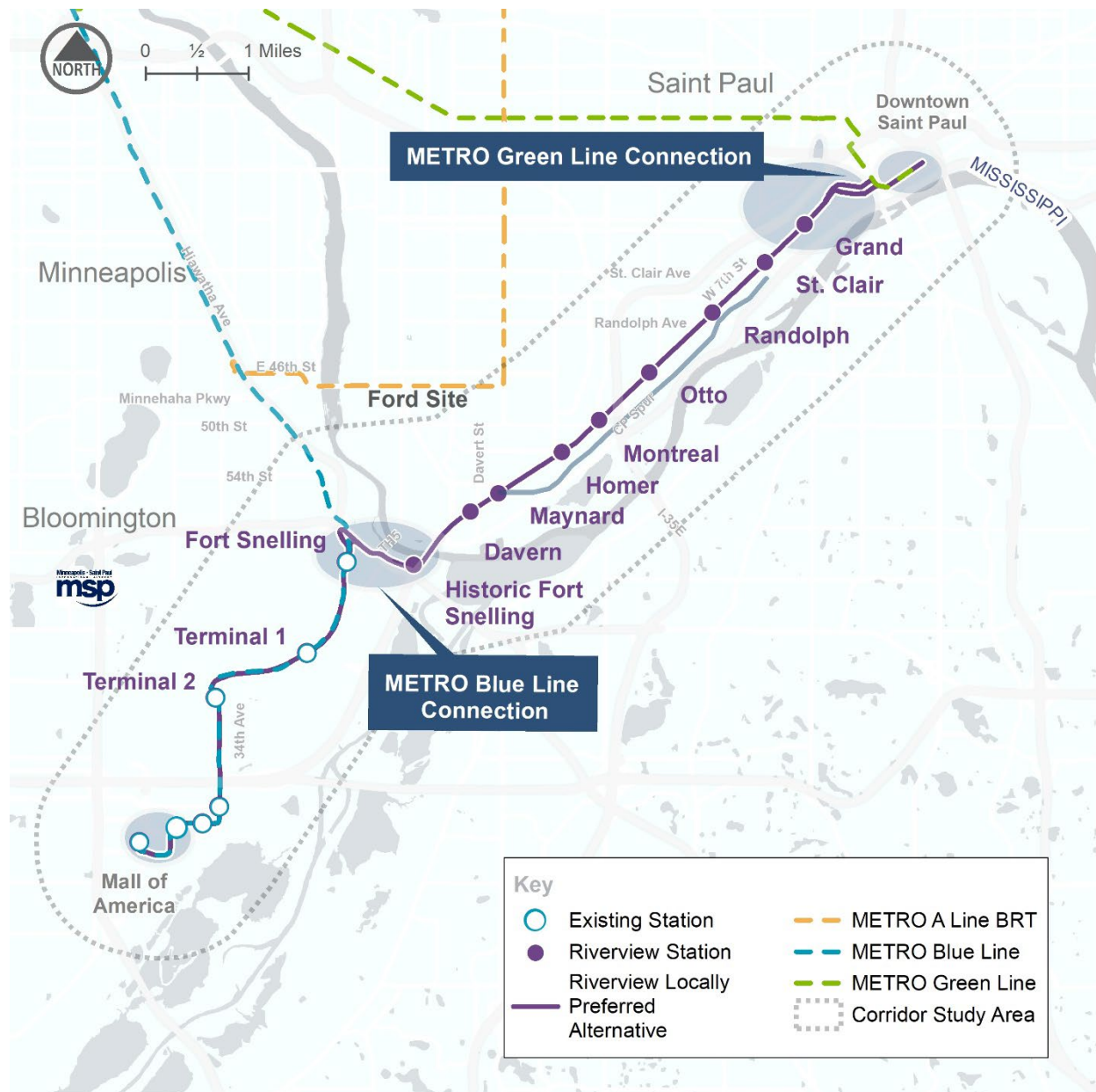
There are three needs for the Riverview Corridor Project:

- Meeting transit demand and the needs of people who rely on transit.
- Improving connectivity and transit reliability.
- Supporting community growth and development.

The data and analysis that supports these needs are presented in the following sections. The study area for the analysis was defined as the area within 1 mile of the locally preferred alternative (see Figure 1).

¹ More information on the history and significance of Bdote is available at <https://www.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn/bdote>.

Figure 1: Riverview Corridor Project and Study Area²



² The corridor study area illustrated is a graphic representation of the area within 1 mile of the locally preferred alternative and is not exact.

3.1. MEETING TRANSIT DEMAND AND THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WHO RELY ON TRANSIT

3.1.1. POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT AND RIDERSHIP GROWTH

According to Metropolitan Council forecasts and city allocations of forecasted growth to planned land uses, the study area is expected to add over 15,000 residents between 2020 and 2040 (a 12 percent increase). The rate of population growth in the study area is higher than that forecast for Ramsey County as a whole (see Table 1).

Employment in the study area is expected to grow by over 22,000 jobs (a 13 percent increase). The rate of employment growth in the study area is slightly higher than the forecast for Ramsey and Hennepin Counties and equal to the region³ as a whole (see Table 2).

Table 1: 2020 to 2040 Population Growth⁴

Area	2020 Population	2040 Population	Growth	Percent Growth
Study Area	133,336	149,142	15,806	12%
Saint Paul	121,100	132,713	11,613	10%
Bloomington	396,777	438,821	42,044	11%
Ramsey County	659,337	719,330	59,993	9%
Hennepin County	1,385,944	1,587,822	201,878	15%
Region	3,974,765	4,649,498	674,733	17%

Table 2: 2020 to 2040 Employment Growth⁴

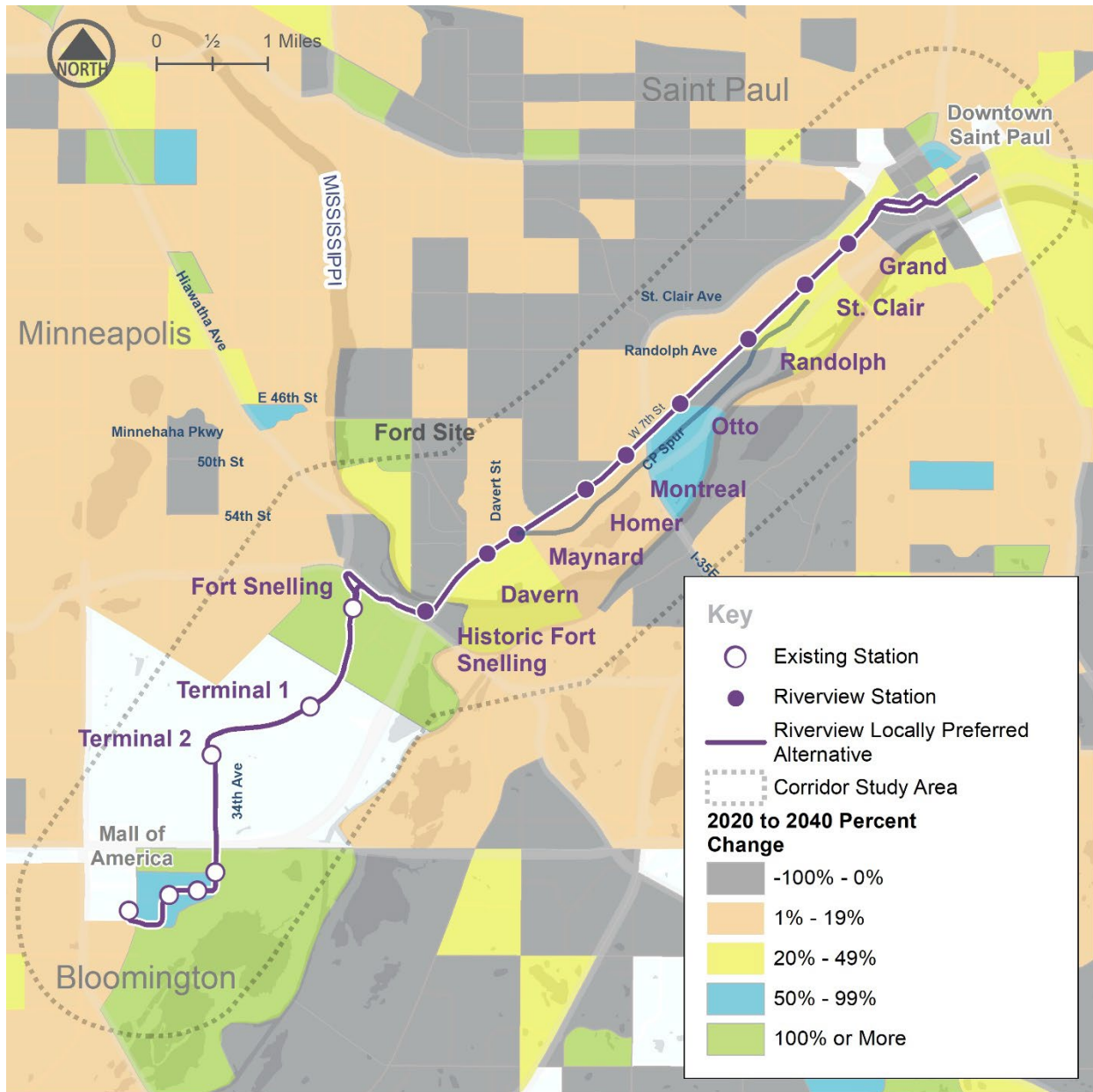
Area	2020 Employment	2040 Employment	Growth	Percent Growth
Study Area	175,891	198,594	22,703	13%
Saint Paul	246,551	269,387	22,836	9%
Bloomington	148,057	171,737	23,680	16%
Ramsey County	401,732	444,740	43,008	11%
Hennepin County	1,007,159	1,124,068	116,909	12%
Region	2,150,287	2,429,999	279,712	13%

Forecast population and employment growth in the study area are illustrated in Figure 2 and Figure 3, respectively.

³ The 7-county region includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington Counties.

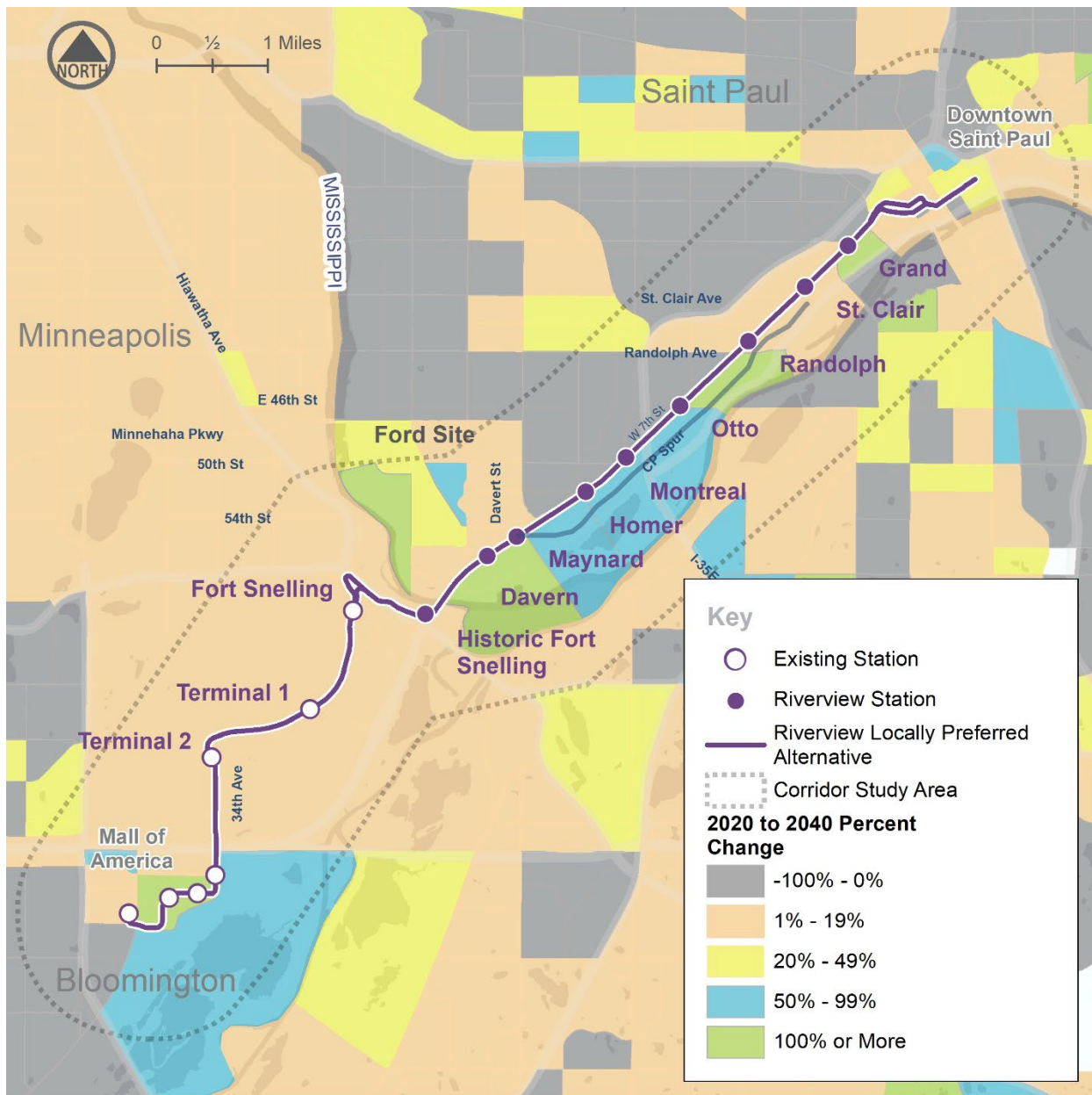
⁴ Metropolitan Council 2019, 2040 Population and Employment Forecasts.

Figure 2: 2020 to 2040 Population Growth⁵



⁵ Metropolitan Council 2019, 2040 Population and Employment Forecasts.

Figure 3: 2020 to 2040 Employment Growth⁶



⁶ Metropolitan Council 2019, 2040 Population and Employment Forecasts.

As population and employment in the study area increase, the demand for transportation will also increase. By 2040, 53,100 additional person trips⁷ within the corridor are anticipated, which is a 56 percent increase from 2010.⁸ Areas with major growth include new developments in Bloomington, Fort Snelling and Saint Paul, where multiple housing and mixed-use developments are planned that will substantially increase the population and number of jobs. In addition, jobs are expected to double along areas of West 7th Street (near the Otto, Randolph and Grand stations), which make areas along the corridor important travel destinations as well. More information on growth and development plans in the study area is included in Section 3.3.3.

3.1.2. PEOPLE WHO RELY ON TRANSIT

Zero-Car and One-Car Households

Access to a vehicle affects how households meet their daily transportation needs. Fourteen percent of study area households do not own a car, higher than the percentage in Ramsey County (9 percent), Hennepin County (10 percent) and the region as a whole (10 percent). The study area also has a higher percentage of households with only one car per household (42 percent), compared to 36 percent for Ramsey County and the region and 35 percent for Hennepin County (see Table 3). The Metropolitan Council’s *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* notes that Millennials (those born between 1981 and 2000) and Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1965) are projected to have the largest impact on transportation plans and trends over the next several decades, in part because of their patterns related to vehicle ownership and use. Millennials have lower rates of vehicle ownership, auto usage and driver licensure than previous generations and use transit, walk and bike more. Baby Boomers will impact travel patterns as they age and are no longer able to drive (see the Older Adults section below for more information).⁹

Table 3: Households with Limited or No Vehicle Access¹⁰

Area	Number of Households	Zero-Car Households	One-Car Households	Total
Study Area	49,427	14%	42%	56%
Saint Paul	129,058	13%	39%	52%
Bloomington	46,225	7%	37%	43%
Ramsey County	222,913	10%	36%	46%
Hennepin County	522,857	9%	35%	45%
Region	745,770	10%	36%	45%

⁷ A person trip is a trip made by a person by any mode of transportation (e.g., car, transit, bike, walk) for any purpose (i.e., work or non-work trips, such as shopping or recreational trips).

⁸ Riverview Corridor Transit Travel Demand Market Analysis. August 13, 2015.

⁹ Metropolitan Council. *2040 Transportation Policy Plan (2020 Update)*. 2020 Update Overview. Available at <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Transportation-Policy-Plan.aspx>.

¹⁰ American Community Survey, 5-Year Summary File 2015-2019.

Between 2010 and 2040, the number of trips made by zero-car households to travel markets within the corridor is forecast to increase 52 percent.¹¹

People Living in Poverty and People With Low Income

According to the American Public Transportation Association’s 2017 report *Who Rides Public Transportation*, transit users are more likely than the general population to live in households with incomes less than \$15,000 (21 percent compared to 13 percent) and between \$15,000 and \$24,999 (12 percent compared to 11 percent).¹² This is also true in the Twin Cities region, where 16 percent of transit riders have household incomes less than \$15,000 and 14 percent have household incomes between \$15,000 and \$24,999,¹³ but only 8 percent of households in the region are in each of those income brackets.¹⁴

The study area has a higher percentage of people living in poverty than Ramsey and Hennepin Counties and the region, with 16 percent of study area residents at or below the federal poverty level. Over 30 percent of the study area has low income (defined as those with incomes at 185 percent of the federal poverty level or below) compared to Hennepin County (21 percent), Ramsey County (28 percent) and the region (23 percent) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Individuals Living in Poverty or with Low Income¹⁵

Area	Individuals at or Below the Federal Poverty Level	Individuals With Low Income (185% of the Federal Poverty Level or Below)
Study Area	16%	31%
Saint Paul	18%	36%
Bloomington	7%	17%
Ramsey County	6%	28%
Hennepin County	10%	21%
Region	11%	23%

Another indicator of economic vulnerability is the amount of household income that is spent on housing and transportation. Around 32 percent of the study area is housing cost-burdened, meaning housing costs exceed 30 percent of household income, which is similar to Bloomington and higher than Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Hennepin County and the region (see Table 5). The study area also has a higher rate of people renting, with only 44 percent of the area

¹¹ Riverview Corridor Transit Travel Demand Market Analysis. August 13, 2015.

¹² American Public Transportation Association. *Who Rides Public Transportation*. January 2017. Available at <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Resources/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA-Who-Rides-Public-Transportation-2017.pdf>.

¹³ Metropolitan Council. 2016 Transit On Board Survey. Percentage is based on respondents that provided income data.

¹⁴ US Census Bureau. 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. (Note: This data set was used rather than the 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates so that the data was contemporaneous with the 2016 Transit On Board Survey.)

¹⁵ American Community Survey, 5-Year Summary File 2015-2019.

households being owner-occupied compared to 50 percent in Saint Paul, 58 percent in Ramsey County and 60 percent or more in Hennepin County, Bloomington and the region.

When transportation (the second largest part of household expenses on average) is included, around 25 percent of the study area has a high transportation and housing cost, which is defined as the total of housing and transportation being more than 45 percent of household income.¹⁶

¹⁶ The Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index 2020.

Table 5: Housing Ownership and Cost (2019)¹⁷

Area	Owner-Occupied Households	Renter-Occupied Households	Vacant Households	Owner-Occupied Households With Housing Costs Greater Than 30 Percent of Household Income	Renter-Occupied Households With Housing Costs Greater Than 30 Percent of Household Income	Total Households With Housing Costs Greater Than 30 Percent of Household Income
Study Area	44%	49%	7%	19%	45%	32%
Saint Paul	50%	45%	5%	20%	49%	29%
Bloomington	62%	34%	4%	20%	44%	33%
Ramsey County	58%	37%	5%	19%	49%	30%
Hennepin County	60%	36%	5%	20%	46%	29%
Region	66%	30%	4%	18%	46%	27%

¹⁷ American Community Survey, 5-Year Summary File 2015-2019.

People With Disabilities

According to the US Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics, people age 18 to 64 with disabilities are less likely to own or have access to vehicles than people without disabilities. People with disabilities are also less likely to drive even if they have vehicles. For both people with disabilities and without, walking and local transit are the second and third most common modes, respectively, after personal vehicles. Workers age 18 to 64 with disabilities walk for a greater share of trips than workers without disabilities, and people age 18 to 64 with disabilities use local transit for a higher share of trips than people without disabilities.¹⁸

In the study area, people with disabilities make up over 12 percent of the population. This is similar to Saint Paul and is higher than Bloomington, Ramsey County, Hennepin County, and the region (see Table 6).

Table 6: People With Disabilities¹⁹

Area	Percentage of People With Disabilities
Study Area	12%
Saint Paul	12%
Bloomington	5%
Ramsey County	11%
Hennepin County	10%
Region	9%

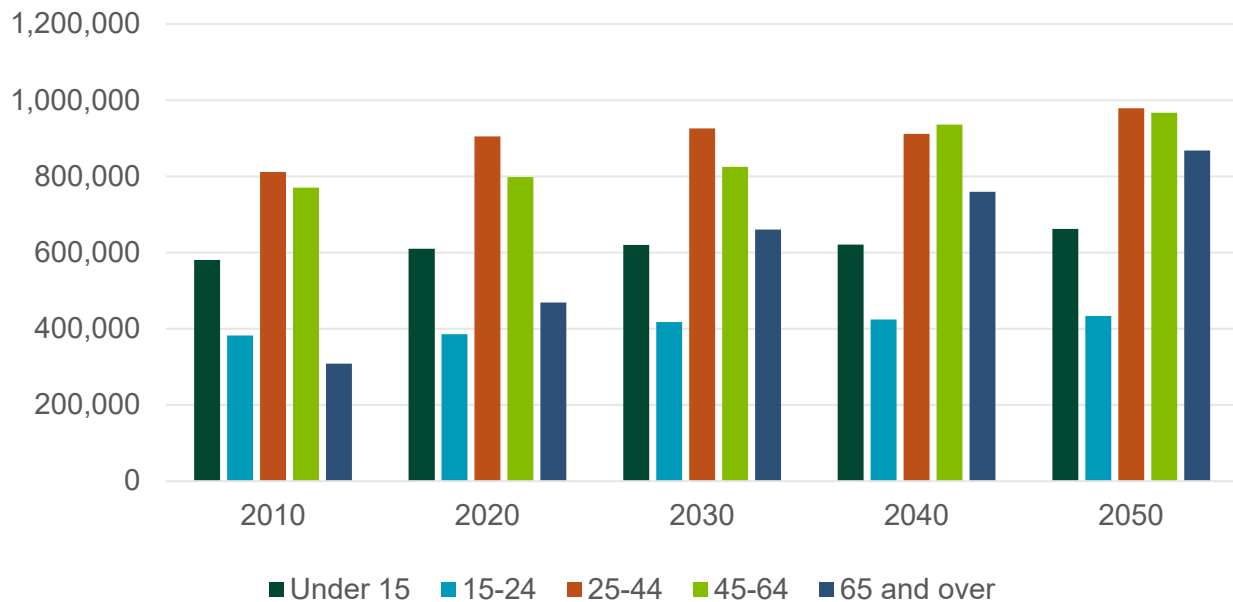
Older Adults

The Metropolitan Council identifies both youth and the elderly as populations looking for an alternative to driving. The study area has a slightly higher percentage of older adults (ages 65 and above) than Ramsey County, Hennepin County and the region, with 14 percent of the study area in that age group. The 65 and above age group is forecast to experience the highest growth in the region, growing by around 85 percent between 2020 and 2050 (see Figure 4).

¹⁸ US Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics. *Travel Patterns of American Adults with Disabilities*. September 2018. Available at <https://www.bts.gov/topics/passenger-travel/travel-patterns-american-adults-disabilities>.

¹⁹ American Community Survey, 5-Year Summary File 2015-2019

Figure 4: Regional Population Forecast by Age Groups (2020 to 2050)²⁰



As people age, their physical, visual and cognitive abilities may decline, making it more difficult for them to drive safely. Public transportation can be an option for the elderly, but access and ease of use can be a challenge.²¹ Housing preferences also tend to change as people age. Some seniors will choose to age in place, while others will choose to move to walkable and transit-served areas with access to services and amenities.²² Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health’s *Healthy Aging: A Public Health Framework*²³ notes that local governments will need to plan and deliver more services to meet the demands of a larger senior population, including increasing demand for housing and transportation that are affordable and easy to use.

²⁰ Metropolitan Council Long-Range Forecasts, Detailed Regional Forecast Tables. October 2019.

²¹ US Government Accountability Office. Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Coordination Efforts are Underway, but Challenges Continue. GAO-14-154T. Published November 6, 2013. Available at <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-154T>.

²² Metropolitan Council. *Thrive MSP 2040*. Adopted on May 28, 2014. Available at <https://metrocouncil.org/planning/projects/thrive-2040.aspx>.

²³ Ramsey County. *Healthy Aging: A Public Health Framework*. August 22, 2017. Available at https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Departments/Public%20Health/Healthy_Aging_A_Public_Health_Framework_SPRCPH.pdf.

3.2. IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AND TRANSIT RELIABILITY

3.2.1. RELIABILITY AND CUSTOMER FACILITIES

The primary transit route currently serving the study area is Route 54, which is a high-frequency route²⁴ that runs from the Mall of America and MSP International Airport to Union Depot along W 7th Street. Route 54 continues north beyond the study area, terminating in Maplewood at Maplewood Mall. Two-thirds of the bus stops serving the Route 54 in the study area currently do not include transit shelters. Of the existing shelters, half have lighting and only one has heat.²⁵ In addition, on-time performance on the Route 54 between the Mall of America and Union Depot declined between 2015 and 2019 from 88.5 percent to 86.3 percent, which is below Metro Transit's on-time performance goal of 88 percent. During this same time period, ridership on Route 54 increased by 12 percent while ridership on other bus routes in the study area stayed the same or declined, demonstrating demand for frequent, all-day service in the corridor.²⁶

Metro Transit's METRO system includes both trains and buses, and customers can expect trips at least every 15 minutes during most of the day. METRO lines provide stations with enhanced amenities, such as heating, added lighting, NexTrip real-time information, pay-at-the-station boarding and improved security features.²⁷ Figure 5 illustrates the existing METRO system. Ridership in other corridors improved after the introduction of METRO service, and these corridors have had consistent ridership increases annually due to the amenities and service improvements that METRO service offers. In the 2018 Metro Transit rider survey, bus reliability, feelings of safety and travel time were rated as the most important priorities for customers.²⁸

²⁴ Routes are considered high frequency if they have service at least every 15 minutes on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. A map of the high-frequency network is available at <https://www.metrotransit.org/high-frequency-network>.

²⁵ Metro Transit. "Transit Stops" and "Transit Shelters" datasets. Accessed May 5, 2021.

²⁶ Metropolitan Council 2020, Historical Automated Passenger Counts (APC) 2015-2019.

²⁷ Metro Transit. "METRO." Available at <https://www.metrotransit.org/metro>.

²⁸ Metro Transit 2018, "Customer Experience & Satisfaction" update to the Met Council Transportation Committee 22 April 2019.

Figure 5: Existing METRO System²⁹



²⁹ Metro Transit. METRO system map effective December 5, 2020. Available at <https://www.metrotransit.org/metro>.

3.2.2. MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS

Transit is accessed by a variety of modes, so enhancing multimodal connections to transit is an important consideration when planning for transit investments. The vast majority of transit trips in the region (86 percent) are accessed by walking. The second most common way of accessing transit is driving and parking (8 percent), followed by being dropped off by someone (3 percent) and biking (2 percent).³⁰ A number of factors influence the ability of pedestrians and bicyclists to travel safely and comfortably, including:

- Direct, convenient routes to facilities such as schools, businesses, healthcare facilities and transit.
- A smooth, unobstructed walkway or path that is separate from traffic or a bike lane, shared lane or separated bicycle facility.
- The ability to see and be seen by oncoming vehicles, both day and night.
- Access to sidewalks and crossings.
- Enough time to cross streets with or without pedestrian signals.
- Continuous facilities free from gaps, obstructions and abrupt changes in direction or width.
- Signs and markings designating the route.³¹

The city of Saint Paul has identified areas for improvement in walking and bicycling infrastructure in the city. The *Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan* identifies portions of the study area as high priority areas for walking investments, including downtown Saint Paul between Highway 52 and Kellogg Boulevard and in the South Highland area from Homer Street to Shephard Road. These are areas where walking investments are most needed to help more people be safe while walking in Saint Paul.³² The plan also identifies a cluster of sidewalk gaps in this area of South Highland, including a 0.7-mile sidewalk gap on W 7th Street between Homer Street and St. Paul Avenue. There are also no existing off-street or on-street bicycle facilities along W 7th Street in the study area.³³ The city of Saint Paul has identified W 7th Street/E 7th Street from Munster Avenue to Johnson Parkway as a high crash corridor for bicyclists and pedestrians.³⁴

Within the study area in Bloomington, there are existing sidewalks and off-street trails proximate to the existing METRO Blue Line stations. As the city notes in its comprehensive plan, the existing pedestrian and bicycle network in the South Loop District is not well developed;

³⁰ Metropolitan Council. 2016 Transit On Board Survey.

³¹ Federal Highway Administration. "A Resident's Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Biking." January 2015. Available at https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_cmunity/ped_walkguide/sec1.cfm.

³² City of Saint Paul. *Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan*. Adopted June 2019. Available at

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/transportation-and-transit/walking-saint-paul>.

³³ City of Saint Paul. *Saint Paul Interactive Bike Map*. Accessed February 23, 2020. Available at

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/transportation-and-transit/bike-saint-paul/bicycle-maps>.

³⁴ City of Saint Paul. *Saint Paul Speed Limit Evaluation*. March 12, 2020. Available at

<https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Public%20Works/20200312-Final%20-%20Saint%20Paul%20Speed%20Limit%20Evaluation.pdf>.

however, adopted plans have identified specific improvements to be made as opportunities and funding allow.³⁵

3.2.3. SERVICE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

The corridor connects major job centers, including the Mall of America, MSP International Airport and downtown Saint Paul; residential areas; businesses; health care centers; cultural resources; special event facilities and recreational opportunities along the Mississippi River. The Mall of America at the southern end of the corridor and the Xcel Energy Center in downtown Saint Paul are two of the top 10 attractions in the metro region.³⁶ The corridor also provides access to and from the regional transit system and three major transportation hubs (MSP International Airport, Mall of America and Union Depot). Some of the many community and regional destinations in the corridor are shown on Figure 6 and Figure 7, respectively.

According to the American Public Transportation Association's 2017 report *Who Rides Public Transportation*, the purpose of 49 percent of transit trips is to get to or from work. The other 51 percent of trips are for everyday activities such as shopping, eating out, recreation, social activities, school and medical appointments.³⁷ Similarly, a 2018 rider survey from Metro Transit found that 54 percent of transit trips in the region were work related while 49 percent were for shopping, appointments, errands, airport use, social trips or school.³⁸ According to the 2016 Transit On Board Survey, riders of the Route 54 were less likely to be traveling to work with only 28 percent of riders citing work as the purpose of their trip and the rest citing everyday activities such as shopping, eating out, social activities, school and other errands.³⁹

Between 2003 and 2018 the number of jobs in the corridor filled by workers living in the corridor increased by over 7 percent. The share of workers who live in the corridor who travel less than 10 miles to work is around 51 percent as compared to 49 percent for the region as a whole.⁴⁰ The share of commuters who live in the corridor and use transit increased by 12.5 percent between 2015 and 2019, or a 3 percent growth per year.⁴¹

³⁵ City of Bloomington. *Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Section 4: Transportation Element. Adopted August 5, 2019. Available at <https://www.bloomingtonmn.gov/plan/forward-2040-documents>.

³⁶ Explore Minnesota. *Top 10 Minnesota Attractions by Tourism Region*. Available at https://mn.gov/tourism-industry/assets/TopAttractions_Region_11x8.5%20%281%29_tcm1135-369763.pdf.

³⁷ American Public Transportation Association. *Who Rides Public Transportation*. January 2017. Available at <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA-Who-Rides-Public-Transportation-2017.pdf>.

³⁸ Note that some respondents shared more than one trip purpose, so the total is greater than 100 percent. Metro Transit. *Customer Experience & Satisfaction: Lessons from the 2018 Rider Survey*. April 2019. Available at <https://metro council.org/Council-Meetings/Committees/Transportation-Committee/2019/April-22,-2019/Info-3--Customer-Survey.aspx>

³⁹ Metropolitan Council. 2016 Transit On Board Survey.

⁴⁰ LEHD, *On the Map 2003-2018*

⁴¹ American Community Survey, 5-Year Summary File 2015-2019.

Figure 6: Community Destinations

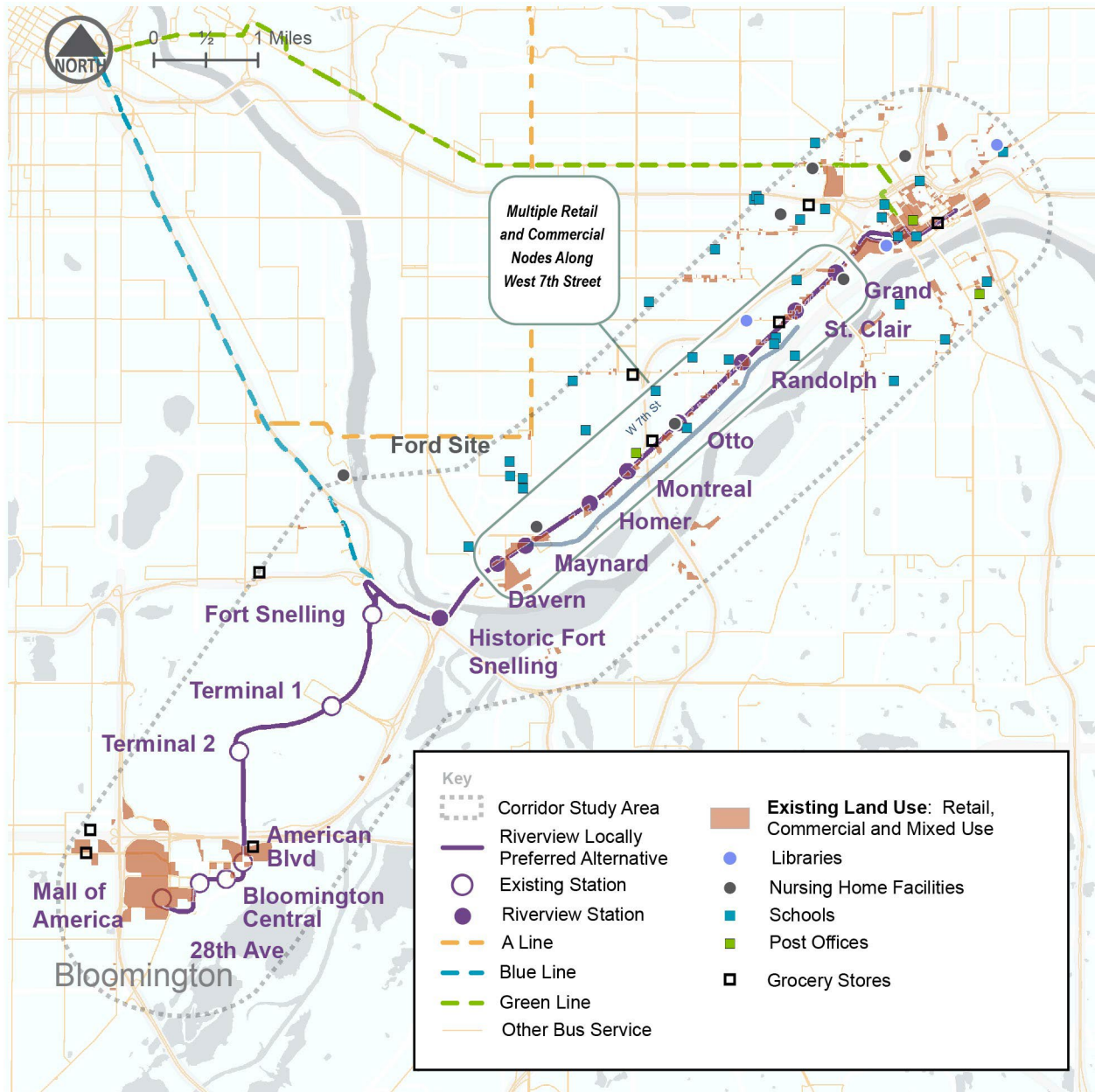


Figure 7: Regional Destinations



3.3. SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1. EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

The events surrounding the death of George Floyd in the summer of 2020 were centered in the Twin Cities and sparked a renewed nationwide conversation on many aspects of equity. The following information reflects what is included in currently adopted plans. Ramsey County is committed to reflecting any changes in the plans and policies of its agency partners as the Riverview Corridor Project evolves.

Thrive MSP 2040, the region’s long-term vision, identifies five desired outcomes: stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability and sustainability. As stated in *Thrive MSP 2040*:

Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. For our region to reach its full economic potential, all of our residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is stronger when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life.

Promoting equity means:

- Using our influence and investments to build a more equitable region.
- Creating real choices in where we live, how we travel, and where we recreate for all residents, across race, ethnicity, economic means, and ability.
- Investing in a mix of housing affordability along the region’s transit corridors.
- Engaging a full cross-section of the community in decision-making.⁴²

Saint Paul for All: 2040 Comprehensive Plan states that racial and social equity are integrated into the city’s policies in every chapter of the plan. Specific to transportation, the plan includes Policy T-1: “Prioritize safety and racial and social equity benefits in project selection, followed by support of quality full-time, living wage jobs – both through business support and connection of residents to job centers.”⁴³

Bloomington’s *Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan* includes value statements that reflect the city’s aspirations, stating, “We place a high value on equity and strive to understand and

⁴² Metropolitan Council. *Thrive MSP 2040*. Adopted May 28, 2014. Available at <https://metrocouncil.org/planning/projects/thrive-2040.aspx>.

⁴³ City of Saint Paul. *Saint Paul for All: 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted November 18, 2020. Available at <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/citywide-plans/2040-comprehensive-plan>.

accommodate diverse perspectives and needs so all people feel welcomed, safe, and supported.”⁴⁴

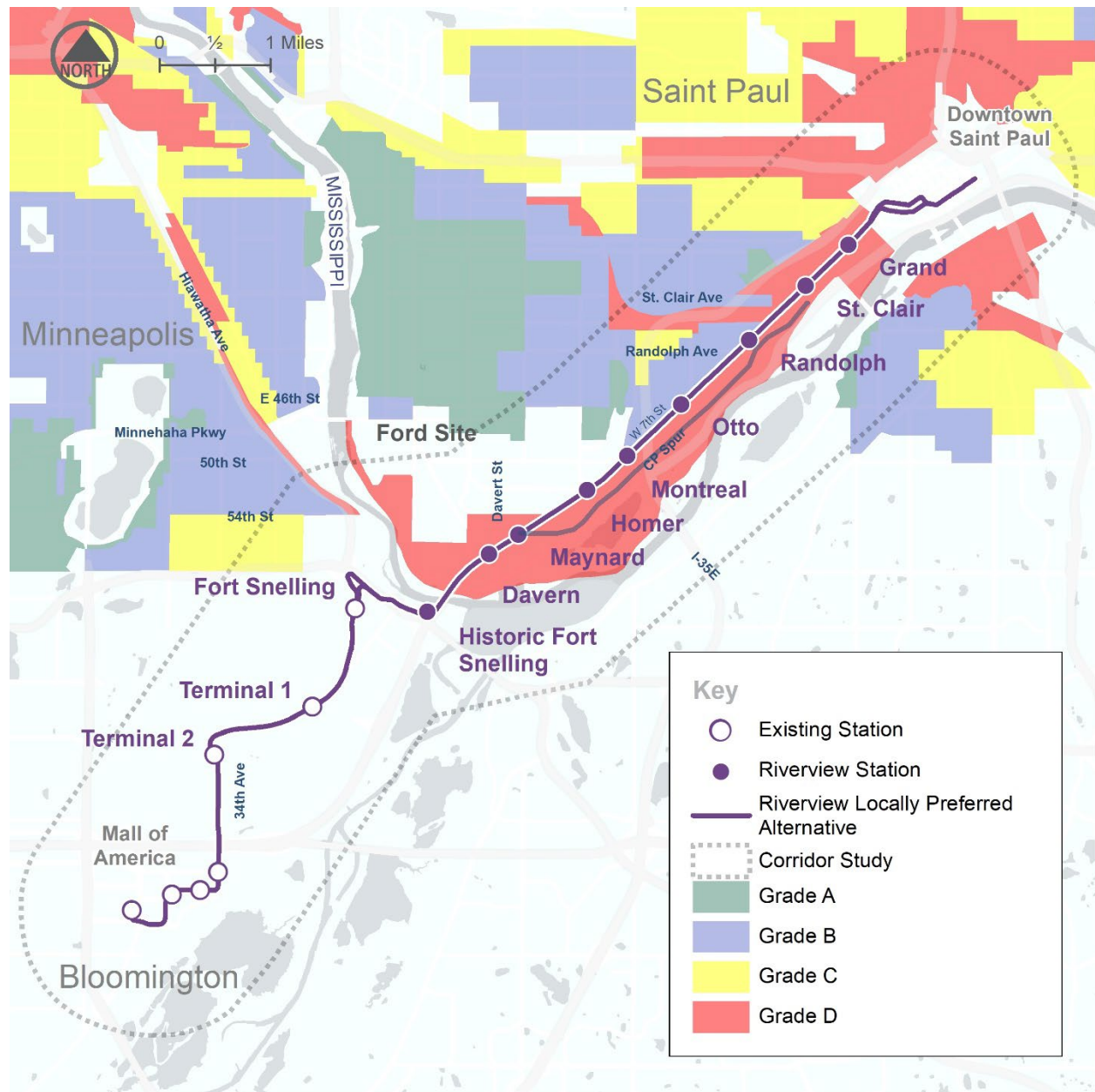
The following provides context for the equity considerations in the study area.

In 1935, much of the study area was rated as Grade D housing, or redlined, in Homeowners’ Loan Corporation mapping (see Figure 8). This was part of a federal program to create “residential security” maps to indicate the level of real-estate investment security. Communities of color were more likely to be rated as Grade D (“hazardous” and “risky for investment”) and experienced underinvestment in federal and private loan programs in the 1930s and 1940s. This is nationally recognized as a form of institutional racism and a cause of discrimination and ongoing underinvestment in communities.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ City of Bloomington. *Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted August 5, 2019. Available at <https://www.bloomingtonmn.gov/plan/forward-2040-documents>.

⁴⁵ National Community Reinvestment Coalition. “HOLC “Redlining” Maps: The Persistent Structure of Segregation and Economic Inequality.” March 20, 2018. Available at <https://ncrc.org/holc/>.

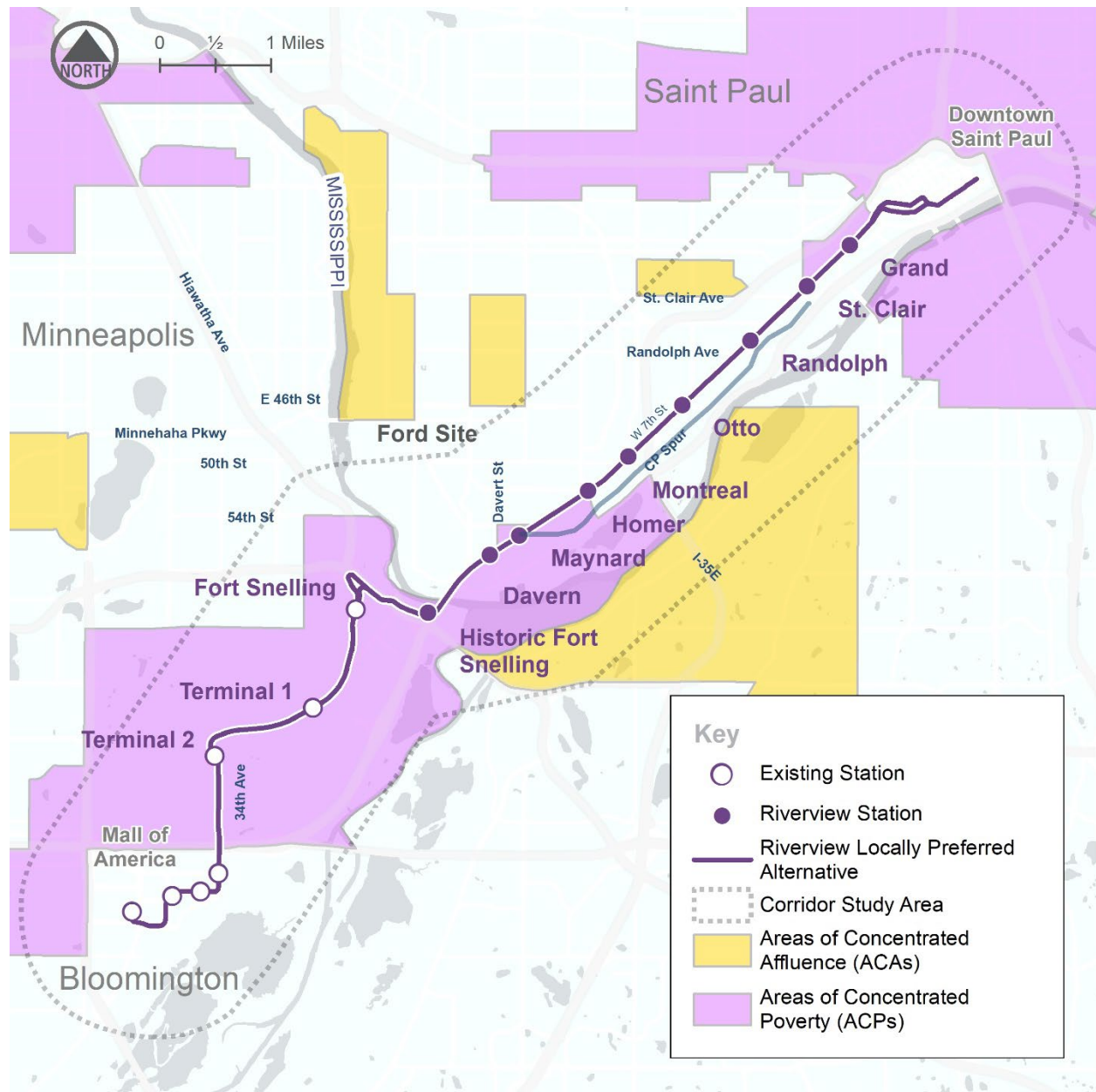
Figure 8: Homeowners' Loan Corporation Grade (Historic Redlining)



Today, nearly 50 percent of the land area in the study area is considered an Area of Concentrated Poverty (defined as census tracts where at least 40 percent of residents have incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty threshold) compared to 2 percent of the region as a whole.⁴⁶ Only 5 percent of the land area in the study area is an Area of Concentrated Affluence (defined as census tracts where two-thirds of residents have incomes at least five times the federal poverty threshold) compared to 12 percent of the region (see Figure 9).

⁴⁶ Metropolitan Council, Equity Considerations 2020, based on American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2014-2018.

Figure 9: Equity Considerations



The study area (62 percent White) is more diverse than Bloomington (70 percent White), Ramsey County (64 percent White), Hennepin County (70 percent White) and the region (73 percent White). The Black population is the largest community of color in the study area, representing 16 percent of the population (similar to Saint Paul and a higher percentage than Bloomington, Ramsey County, Hennepin County and the region). The study area also has the higher percentage (10 percent) of people identifying as Hispanic compared to Saint Paul, Bloomington, Ramsey County, Hennepin County and the region (see Table 7).

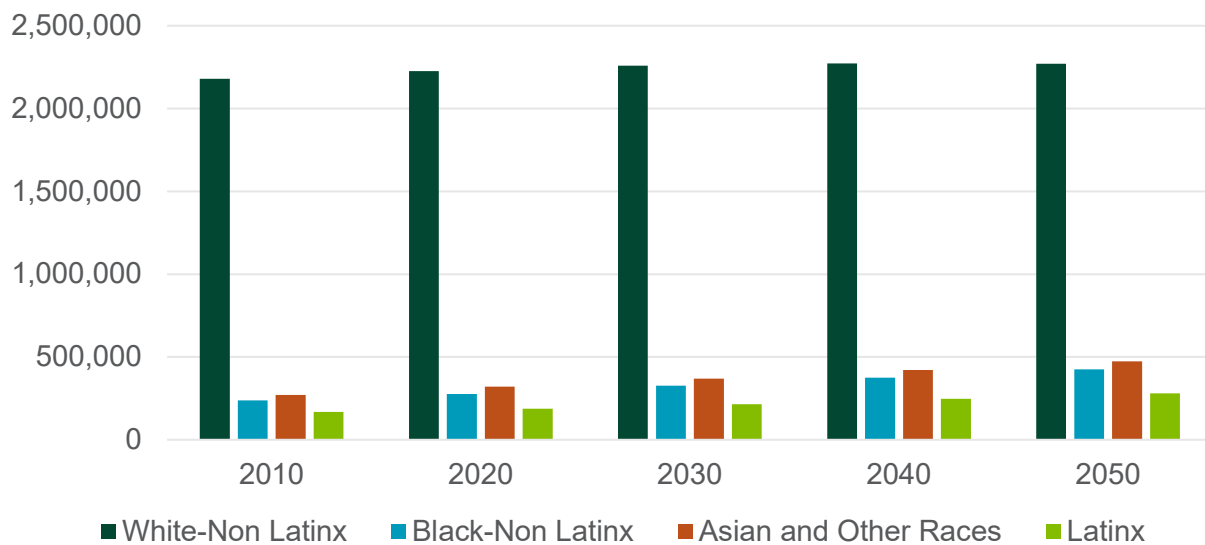
Regionally, the growth in communities of color and Latinx communities is expected to outpace non-white, non-Latinx communities (see Figure 10), with the highest growth in population in the Black-Non Latinx community. Between 2010 and 2050, overall population is expected to grow in

the region by 21 percent. The White-Non Latinx population will grow by 4 percent, the Latinx population will grow by 67 percent, the Asian and other races population will grow by 75 percent, and the Black-Non Latinx population will grow by 79 percent (see Figure 11).

Table 7: Regional Demographics⁴⁷

Area	White Alone, Non-Hispanic	Black Alone, Non-Hispanic	American Indian, Non-Hispanic	Asian American, Non-Hispanic	Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	Other, Non-Hispanic	Multiple Races, Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
Study Area	62%	16%	0%	8%	0%	0%	3%	10%
Saint Paul	54%	15%	1%	18%	0%	0%	4%	9%
Bloomington	70%	11%	0%	6%	0%	1%	3%	9%
Ramsey County	64%	11%	1%	13%	0%	0%	4%	7%
Hennepin County	70%	13%	1%	7%	0%	0%	3%	7%
Region	73%	9%	0%	7%	0%	0%	3%	6%

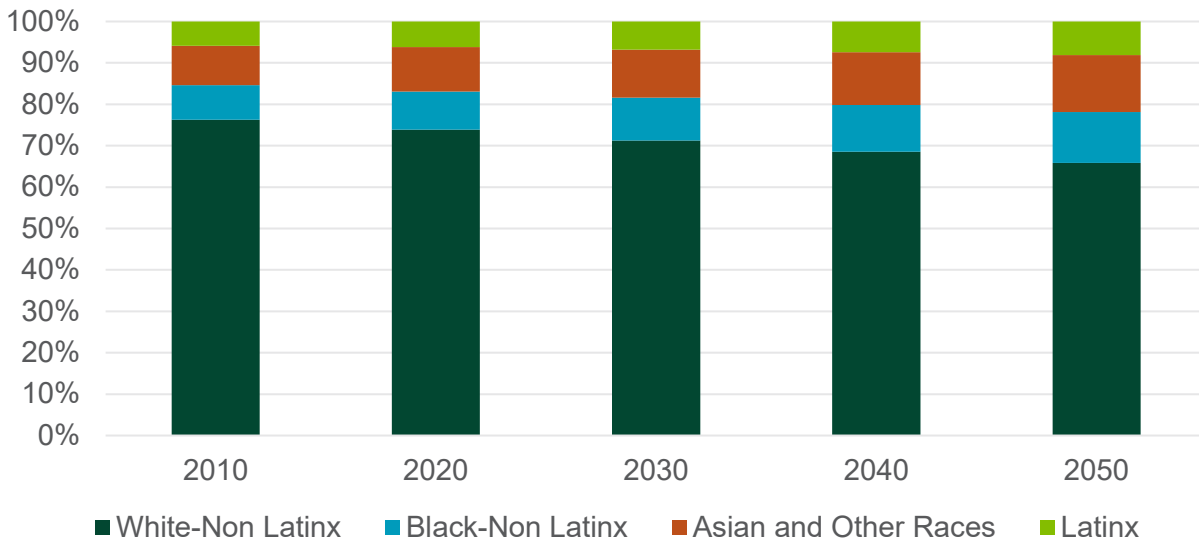
Figure 10: Regional Demographic Change in Population (2010-2050)⁴⁸



⁴⁷ American Community Survey, 5-Year Summary File 2015-2019.

⁴⁸ Metropolitan Council Long-Range Forecasts, Detailed Regional Forecast Tables. October 2019.

Figure 11: Regional Demographic Composition 2010-2050⁴⁹



As the region works to right historical disinvestment in communities of people with low income and in communities of color, transit access for these areas is particularly important.

3.3.2. TRANSIT PRIORITIES

The Metropolitan Council’s *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* helps fulfill the vision of the region’s long-term plan, *Thrive MSP 2040*. The *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* identifies six broad goals for the regional transportation system and provides a framework for how to achieve them. Table 8 summarizes the plan’s goals and the associated objectives guiding regional transit investments. The Riverview Corridor Project is included in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* as one of seven expansion transitways that are funded under the current revenue scenario.⁵⁰

Table 8: *2040 Transportation Policy Plan Goals and Objectives Guiding Transit Investments*⁵¹

Goal	Objectives Guiding Transit Investments
Transportation system stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiently preserve and maintain the regional transportation system in a state of good repair. Operate the regional transportation system to efficiently and cost-effectively move people and freight.

⁴⁹ Metropolitan Council Long-Range Forecasts, Detailed Regional Forecast Tables. October 2019.

⁵⁰ See Figure 6-8 in the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* for a map of existing transitways and current revenue scenario expansion transitways. Available at <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Transportation-Policy-Plan.aspx>.

⁵¹ Metropolitan Council. *2040 Transportation Policy Plan (2020 Update)*. Table 6-1: Linking Transit Investment Direction and Plan to Goals and Objectives. Available at <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Key-Transportation-Planning-Documents/Transportation-Policy-Plan.aspx>.

Goal	Objectives Guiding Transit Investments
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes and improve safety and security for all modes of passenger travel and freight transport. • Reduce the transportation system’s vulnerability to natural and man-made incidents and threats.
Access to destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability of multimodal travel options, especially in congested highway corridors. • Increase travel time reliability and predictability for travel on highway and transit systems. • Increase transit ridership and the share of trips taken using transit, bicycling and walking. • Improve multimodal travel options for people of all ages and abilities to connect to jobs and other opportunities, particularly for historically under-represented populations.
Competitive economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in a multimodal transportation system to attract and retain businesses and residents. • Improve multimodal access to regional job and activity centers identified in <i>Thrive MSP 2040</i>.
Healthy and equitable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce transportation-related air emissions. • Increase the availability and attractiveness of transit, bicycling and walking to encourage healthy communities and active car-free lifestyles.
Leveraging transportation investments to guide land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus regional growth in areas that support the full range of multimodal travel. • Encourage local land use design that integrates highways, streets, transit, walking and bicycling.

The goals and objectives of the Riverview Corridor Project, included in Section 4, are consistent with the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* goals listed in Table 8, particularly “Access to destinations,” “Competitive economy” and “Healthy and equitable communities.”

The city of Saint Paul’s *Saint Paul for All: 2040 Comprehensive Plan* identifies the Riverview Corridor Project as a new transitway project that would support the city’s goal of “true transportation choice throughout the city, with a shift from single-occupant vehicles toward other modes.”⁵²

⁵² City of Saint Paul. *Saint Paul for All: 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted November 18, 2020. Available at <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/planning/citywide-plans/2040-comprehensive-plan>.

The city of Bloomington’s *Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan* identifies the Riverview Corridor Project as a planned transit improvement within the city. The project supports the city’s goal to “support an accessible, inter-connected transit system.”⁵³

3.3.3. DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

As noted in Table 8, one the goals of the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* is leveraging transportation investments to guide land use by focusing regional growth in areas that support multimodal travel and encouraging local land use design that integrates highways, streets, transit, walking and biking. Consistent with that goal, local and regional planning studies envision and plan for growth and development along the corridor. The city of Saint Paul and the city of Bloomington have prepared small area studies for redevelopment, providing the foundation for mixed-use development supported by high-quality transit.

Since 2005, over 2,500 new housing units have been built in Bloomington. Currently, about 3,500 housing units, six new hotels, and six mixed-use developments are planned or slated for construction in the city. The study area continues to attract new development and features large redevelopment opportunities at the Upper Post at Fort Snelling and in Bloomington’s South Loop district. The South Loop will include 2,660 affordable, at-market and senior housing units between 2021 and 2023. Additionally, there will be over 1,440,000 square feet of corporate, office and industrial development added during the same time period and over 250 hotel rooms.

In Saint Paul, developments completed in 2019 and 2020 totaled over \$60 million and added 400 new housing units. Currently, nearly \$200 million worth of development is permitted within the Saint Paul portion of the corridor study area. Updates include multi-million-dollar expansions and upgrades to three area hospitals, renovations to historic buildings and the addition of nearly 900 new premium housing units. Over a dozen other projects have begun the planning process in the corridor. These developments include new recreation areas such as Victoria Park Field and live-work destinations. The planned multi-phase Riversedge waterfront development features a 168-room hotel, 56 condos and 4,000 square feet of retail in one building plus three additional towers that will include 960,000 square feet of office and retail and 350 apartment units.

Thrive MSP 2040 designates Saint Paul as an Urban Center community and Bloomington as an Urban community. Both Urban Center and Urban communities are directed to develop comprehensive plans that target growth in and around regional transit stations and near high-frequency transit services. Given that the project corridor is currently served by a high-frequency route (Route 54 in Saint Paul and Route 54 and the METRO Blue Line in Bloomington), planning for growth and transit improvements in the corridor is consistent with *Thrive MSP 2040*.

Investing in transit improvements is an important component of supporting this planned growth and development. While each end of the corridor is currently served by light rail (see Figure 1), the end-to-end connection is provided by the Route 54, a high-frequency local bus. A 2016 study by the Center for Transportation Studies compared job growth near light rail, dedicated

⁵³ City of Bloomington. *Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan*. Adopted August 5, 2019. Available at <https://www.bloomingtonmn.gov/plan/forward-2040-documents>.

bus rapid transit and arterial bus rapid transit lines and found that transitway modes matter when determining economic impacts. The greatest difference in job growth was between some type of fixed infrastructure and no continuous fixed infrastructure at all. Arterial bus rapid transit stations had significantly less job growth than otherwise similar light rail transit stations.⁵⁴

Metro Transit found that between 2003 and 2019, 36 percent of the development permitted in the region as a whole occurred along high-frequency transit corridors, on just 3 percent of the region's land area. Of the development permitted along high-frequency transit, more is located along light rail and bus rapid transit than high-frequency local bus, with \$9.2 billion in development located within one-half mile of a light rail transit station, \$4.1 billion located within one-half mile of a bus rapid transit station, and \$3.6 billion served by high frequency local bus routes outside areas with direct light rail or bus rapid transit service.⁵⁵

In addition to job growth and development, fixed guideway transit investments also attract travelers. A study by the American Public Transportation Association and US Travel Association found that cities that provide a direct rail transit connection from airports to hotels realize increased economic vitality and competitiveness to attract large meetings and events compared to similar cities that do not. The study concluded that rail access to airport terminals can strengthen the attractiveness of destinations and emphasized the importance of making transportation investments that connect high-demand airports to amenities.⁵⁶ As discussed in Section 3.2.3 and illustrated on Figure 7, downtown Saint Paul includes numerous regional destinations and a direct rail connection from MSP International Airport could provide additional opportunities to attract meetings, conventions and other travelers.

⁵⁴ University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies. *Economic Development Impacts of Bus Rapid Transit*. CTS Report 16-02. January 2016. Available at <https://www.cts.umn.edu/publications/report/economic-development-impacts-of-bus-rapid-transit>.

⁵⁵ Metro Transit. *Development Trends Along Transit: Regional growth near high frequency transit in the Twin Cities*. 2020 Report. Available at <https://www.metrotransit.org/Data/Sites/1/media/tod/devtrendsalongtransit2020.pdf>.

⁵⁶ American Public Transportation Association and US Travel Association. *A New Partnership: Rail Transit and Convention Growth*. November 2013. Available at <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/Resources/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/APTA-UST-New-Partnership.pdf>.

4. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives are based on the project needs and will be used to evaluate alternatives under consideration as the Riverview Corridor Project advances.

Table 9: Project Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives
Improve transit connections to jobs, education, health care, recreational areas, activity centers, and the regional and national transportation network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide transit service with enhanced amenities in the corridor. ● Maximize total transit riders. ● Maximize efficient connections to the regional and national transportation network.
Support sustainable development and employment that advances applicable plans and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximize number of people served. ● Effectively advance applicable plans and policies.
Support, protect and enhance corridor resources, neighborhoods, businesses and the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoid, minimize or mitigate negative impacts to natural, cultural and historic resources. ● Respect the history and relevance of Bdote to native people. ● Collaborate with tribes to achieve consent on project options and the relationship to tribal land and sacred sites. ● Minimize negative impacts to existing businesses and neighborhoods. ● Contribute to improving local and regional equity, sustainability and quality of life.
Improve multimodal transportation facilities in the corridor to support community health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase opportunities for safe bicycling and walking to improve public health and the environment. ● Increase the comfort, connectivity and attractiveness of bicycle and pedestrian networks to and along the corridor. ● Provide accessible pathways to and from transit service and local destinations.
Develop a cost-competitive project with local and regional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify transit improvements that are financially feasible and competitive for federal funding. ● Define transit improvements with public, stakeholder and agency support. ● Effectively engage with tribal communities so that their voices are heard and their perspectives are considered as project options are developed.