



B R T

October 30, 2019

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING #6



B R T

Project Update

Environmental Assessment

- Technical reports address the following:
 - Purpose and need.
 - Stormwater.
 - Natural resources.
 - Noise and vibration.
 - Land use, economics and community resources.
 - Ridership and operations.
 - Traffic.
 - Environmental justice.
 - Hazardous materials.
 - Cultural resources.
- Draft reports have been reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee.**

Environmental Assessment

- Technical reports inform the Environmental Assessment.
- Other topics to be addressed in the Environmental Assessment include:
 - Geology, groundwater and soils.
 - Bikes and pedestrians.
 - Visual resources.
 - Safety and security.
 - Utilities.
 - Air quality.

Recent Public Engagement Activities

- July 24: Maplewood Touch-a-Truck.
- July 25: Environmental Resource Expo at White Bear Lake MarketFest.
- August 6: National Night Out with Hmong American Partnership and Hayden Heights Recreation Center.
- August 10: CLUES Fiesta Latina.
- August 15: Pop-up at METRO Green Line Robert Street station.
- August 21: Maplewood End of Summer Celebration.
- August 27: Pop-up at Regions Hospital.
- September 17: Gem Lake City Council update.



Marketfest, July 25

Recent Public Engagement Activities

- September 19 and 29: Pop-up at Harvest Park – youth soccer.
- September 28: East Side Community Festival.
- October 8: Pop-up at HealthPartners Phalen Clinic.
- October 15: Pop-up at Minnesota Department of Natural Resources & Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
- October 16: Presentation to Greater East Side Community Council.
- October 22: Presentation to Payne-Phalen Community Council.
- August-October: Meetings with businesses along Phalen Boulevard.



East Side Community Festival, September 28

Public Engagement Themes

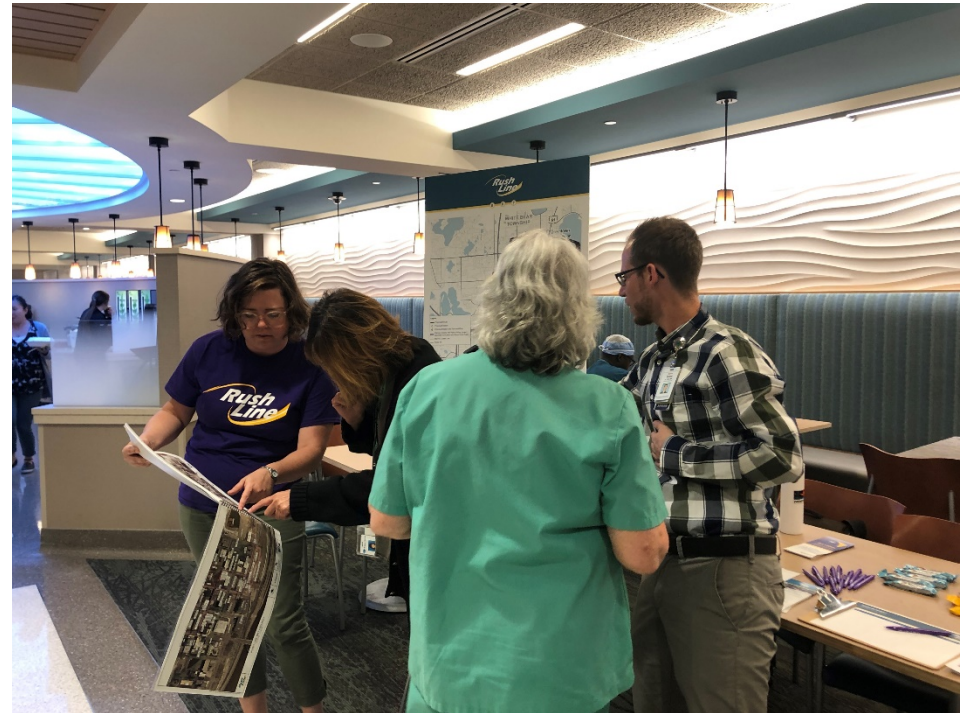


CLUES Fiesta Latina, August 10

- Phalen Boulevard businesses.
 - Expect that increased transit options will boost employee recruitment and retention.
 - Questions about maintaining access during construction period.
- Saint Paul residents and employees.
 - Excitement for increased transit options downtown and on the East Side.
 - Interest in changes to the Bruce Vento Trail.

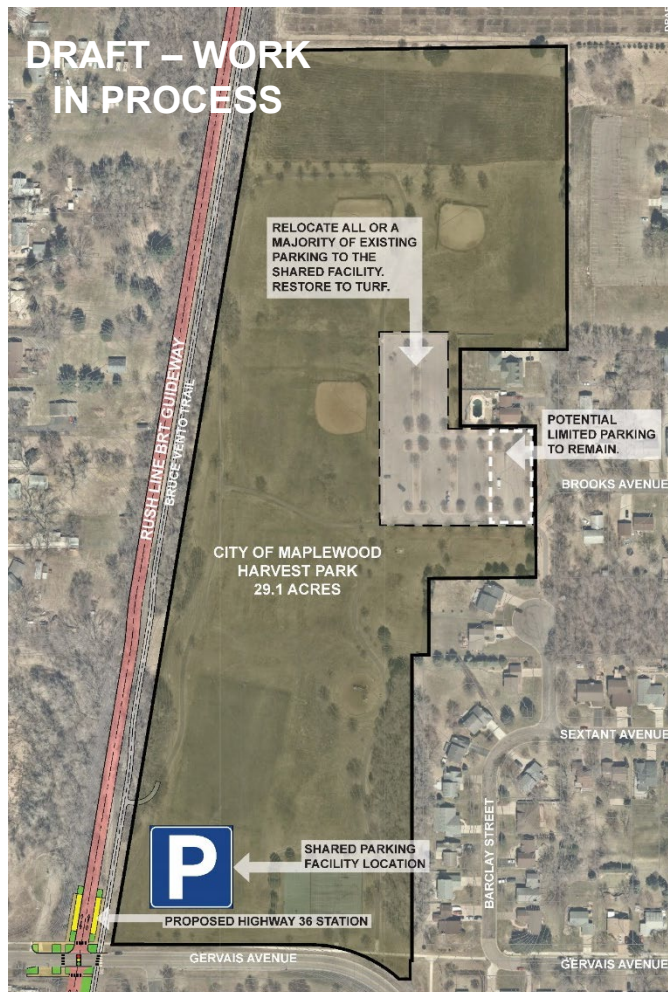
Upcoming Public Engagement

- Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Drop-In Discussions to be scheduled for early December.
- Meetings with public housing resident councils to be scheduled.
- Fall awareness/feedback campaign.
 - Community newspapers.
 - Billboards.
 - Bus shelters.
 - Downtown Green Line stations.



Pop-up at Regions Hospital, August 27

Harvest Park Parking Concept



- Relocate most or all parking to south end of park near Rush Line station.
- No net loss of green space.
- Facility would have capacity to serve both park users and transit riders (exact size to be determined).
- Presented draft concept at final “Tuesdays on the Trail” and two pop-ups at the park.
- City-led park master planning process may accompany parking changes.

Bruce Vento Trail Signage Update



DRAFT – WORK IN PROGRESS

Platform Height



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BRT Platform Elements



Ticket Validator

Pylon

Shelter

Real-Time
Arrival Sign

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



~14" 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.

9-11" Platform

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

Standard Curb (6")

- 8" 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?



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Pulse BRT Peer System Visit Richmond, Virginia

Pulse BRT Peer System Visit

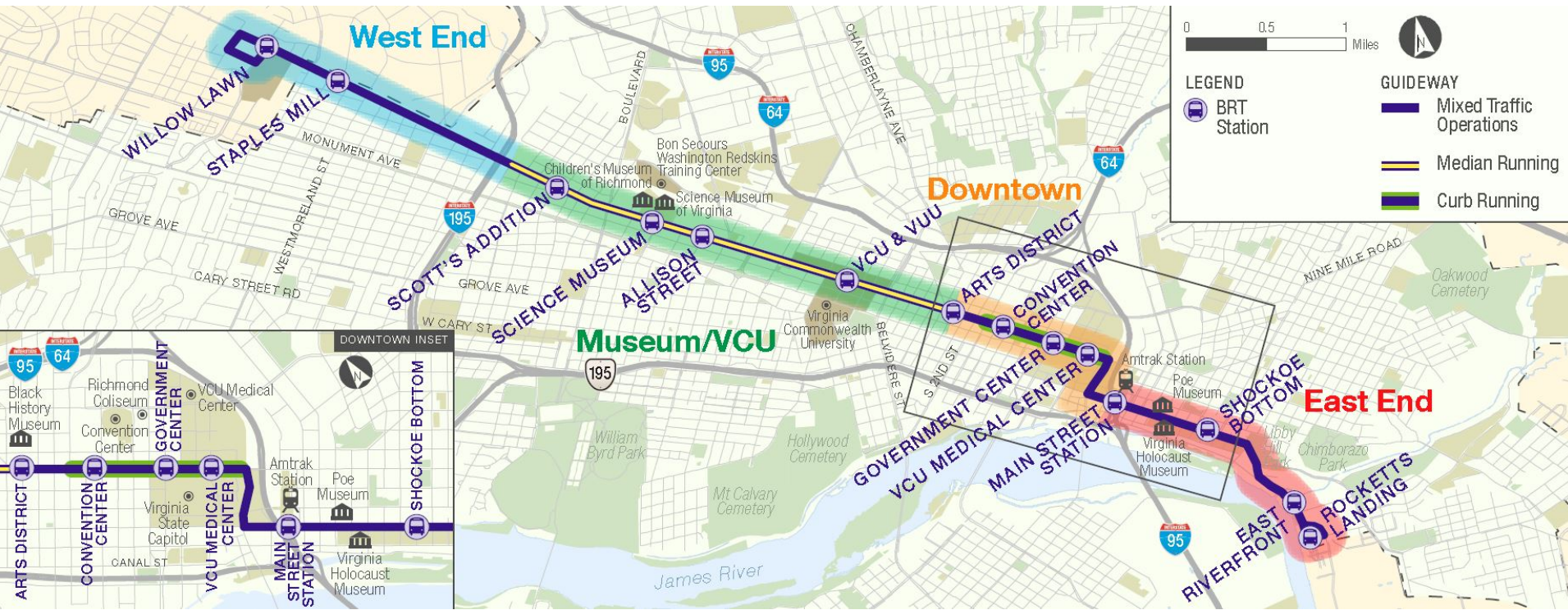
- October 2-4, Richmond, Virginia.
- 7.6 mile route opened in 2018.
- Connects:
 - Residential areas.
 - Healthcare providers.
 - The state capitol.
 - Small business areas.
 - Downtown business district.



Pulse BRT Peer System Visit



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

- Daily boardings more than 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



Pulse BRT bus arriving at station

- 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.
- Other takeaways?



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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 due November 18; decision expected spring 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



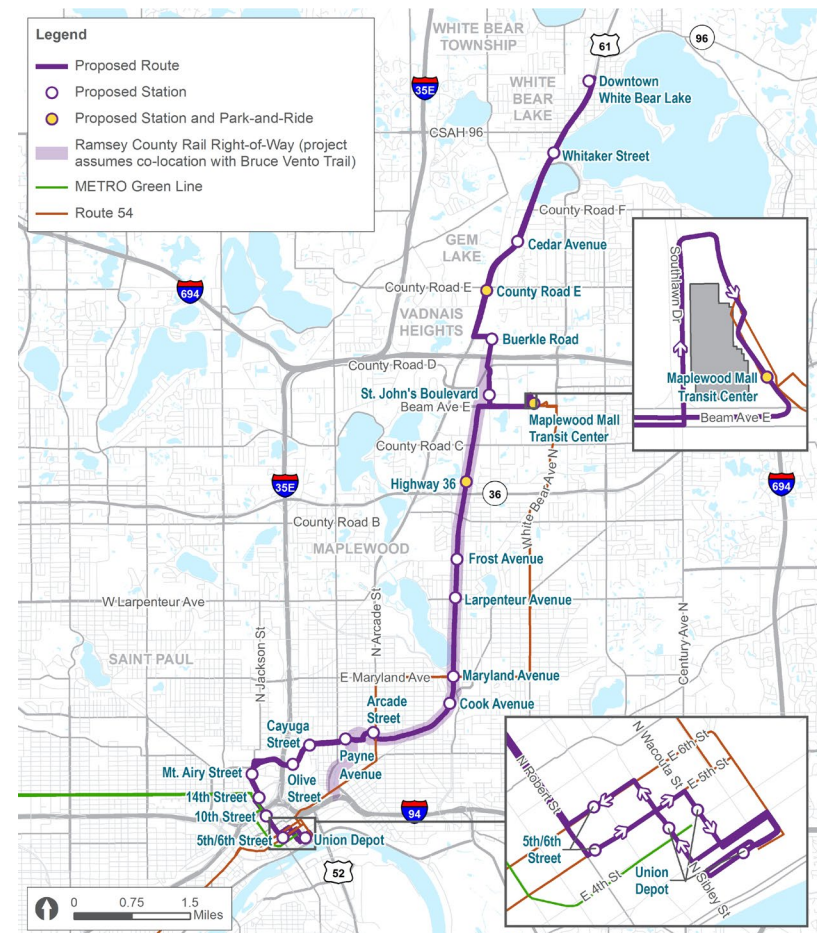
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Ramsey County Rail Right-of-Way Design Guide

Background

- Pre-Project Development Study (2014-2017) identified locally-preferred alternative with route using Ramsey County rail right-of-way between Arcade Street and Buerkle Road.
 - BRT guideway to be co-located with Bruce Vento Trail along this portion of the route.



Background

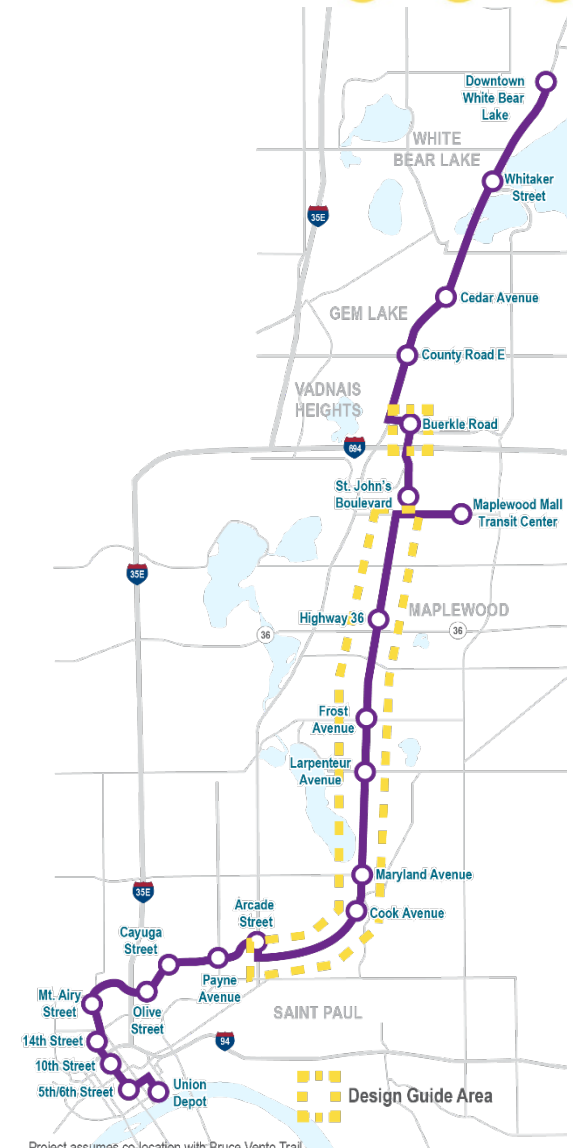
- Ramsey County rail right-of-way was once the Lake Superior & Mississippi Rail corridor, active 1870-1980s.
- First direct rail connection between Saint Paul and Great Lakes Port of Duluth.
- Eligible for National Register of Historic Places.
- Ramsey County purchased the right-of-way in the 1990s to reserve for future transit use.
- Seven-mile southern segment of Bruce Vento Trail completed in 1990s.



Lake Superior & Mississippi Rail Corridor (Maplewood Historic Society)

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.



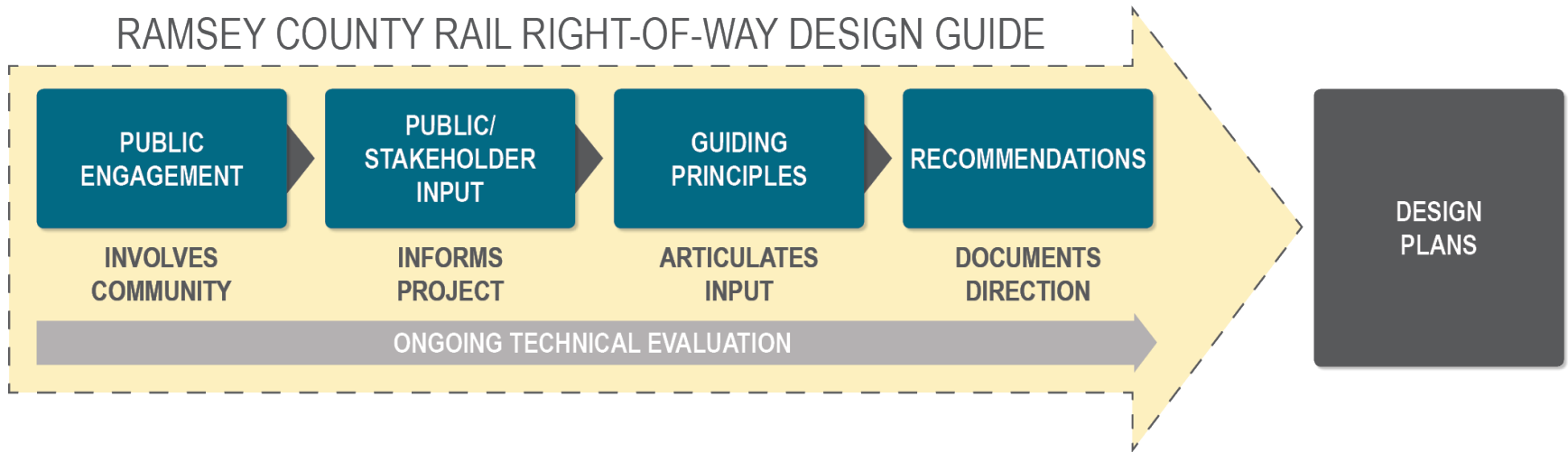
Existing Conditions

- 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, Hmong community gathering, pop-up meetings, online survey.
 - Promoted via social media, newsletter, county website, flyers and targeted mailing.



Tuesdays on the Trail, June 25

Public Engagement



Tuesdays on the Trail, June 13

- Input sought:
 - Top priorities for right-of-way, such as safety and security of users, design and accessibility.
 - How people plan to use the Ramsey County rail right-of-way after Rush Line BRT is constructed.
 - Design of the Bruce Vento Trail and BRT guideway.
 - Trail amenities.

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

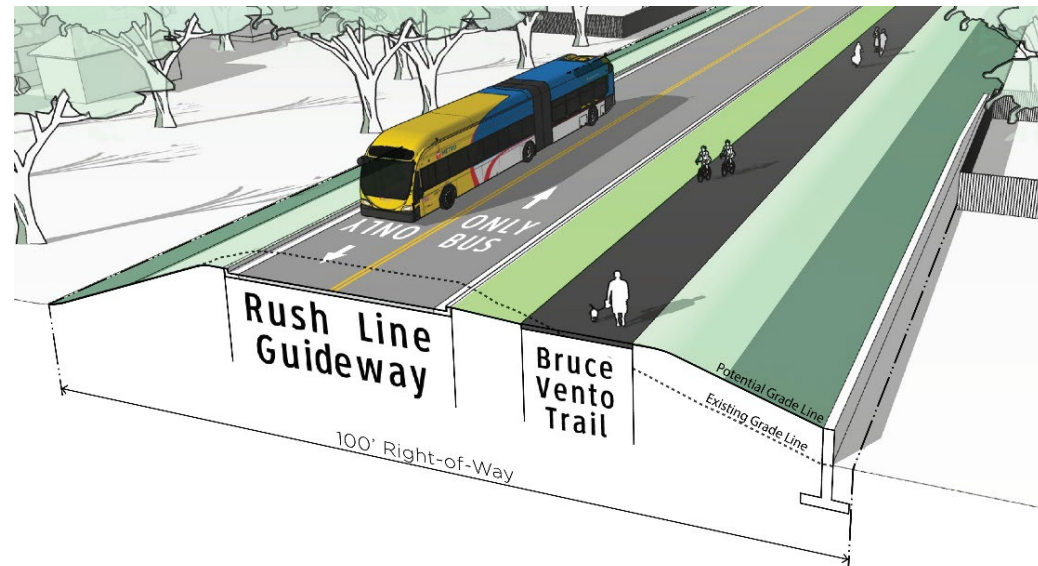
- 1. Landscape impacts and character:** Preserve the existing landscape and enhance the right-of-way with ecologically beneficial, resilient, seasonally diverse and low maintenance vegetation.
- 2. Safety and security:** Address physical safety and personal security concerns by reducing and/or removing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

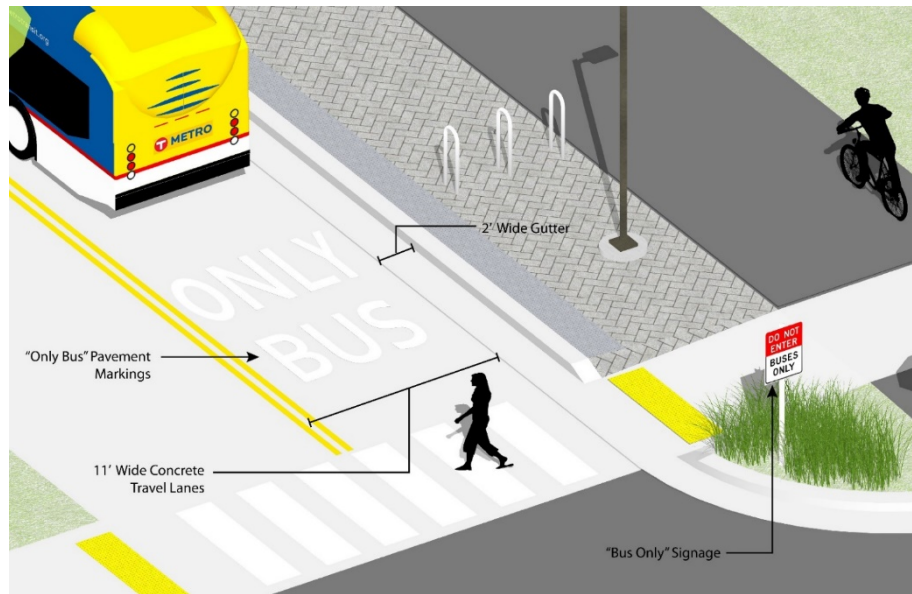
Draft Guiding Principles

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

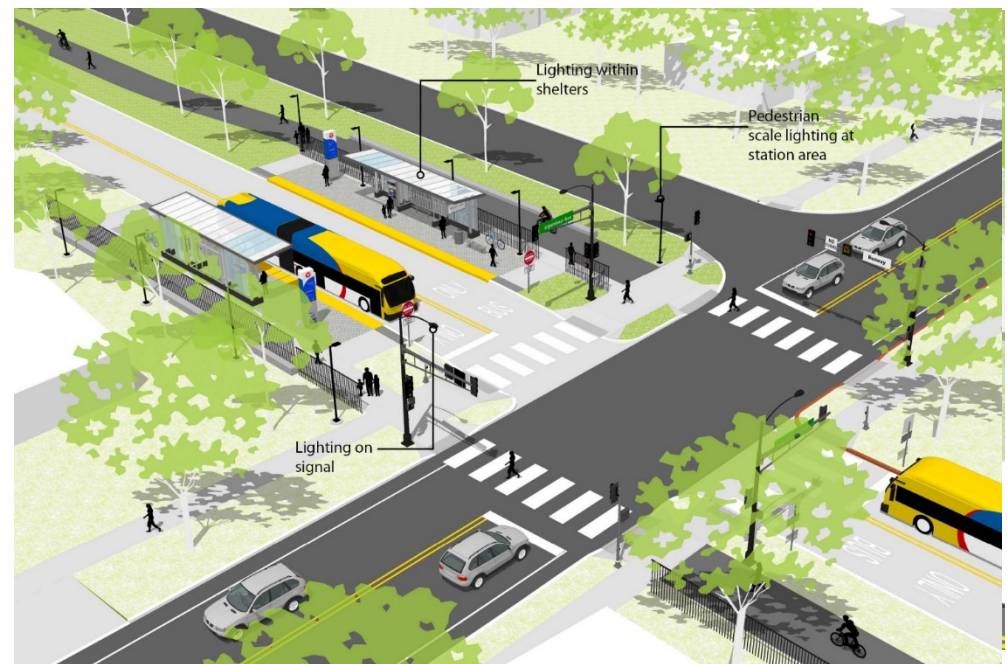


Natural landscape character example

- 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

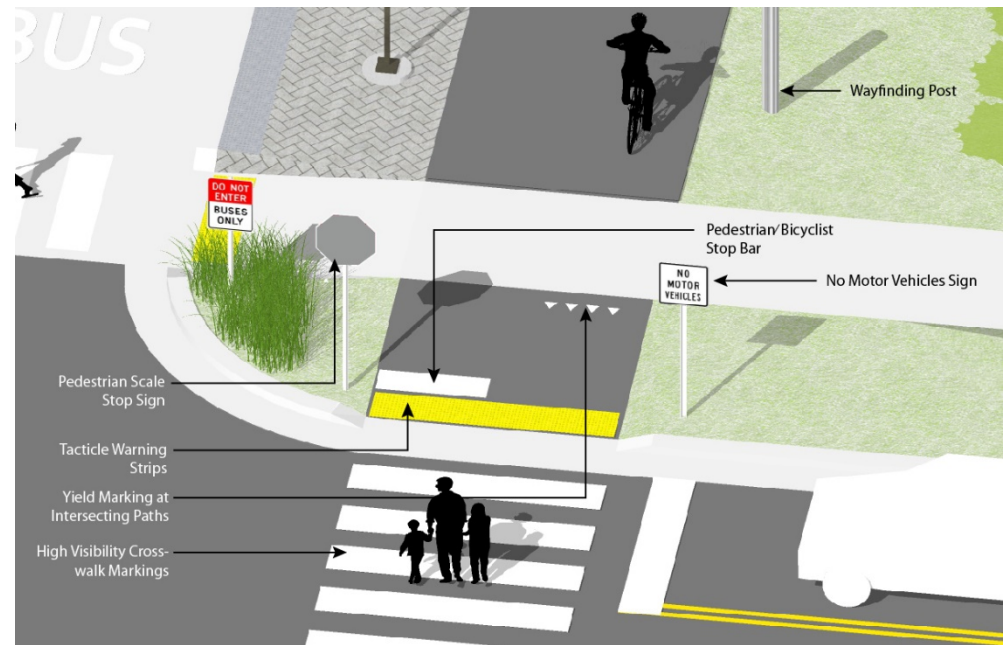
- Select vegetation that preserves visibility at stations and throughout corridor and place amenities in high-activity areas.
- Use pedestrian-scale lighting at stations and lighting for both pedestrians and drivers at intersections; use minimal lighting through corridor to limit light pollution for nearby homes.



Potential intersection lighting strategy at Larpenteur Avenue station

Draft Design Guide Recommendations: Safety

- Avoid obstructing pathway illumination and lines of sight.
- Use signage to promote safety, help navigation and display motor vehicle restrictions.
- Use fencing, bollards and other tools to prevent motor vehicles from accessing the right-of-way at crossings.



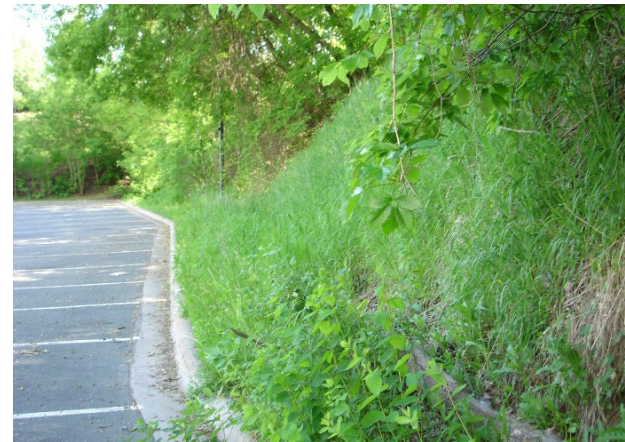
Typical signage and markings at roadway crossings

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.
- Use fencing to promote safety at station areas and in places where a vegetative buffer is not feasible.

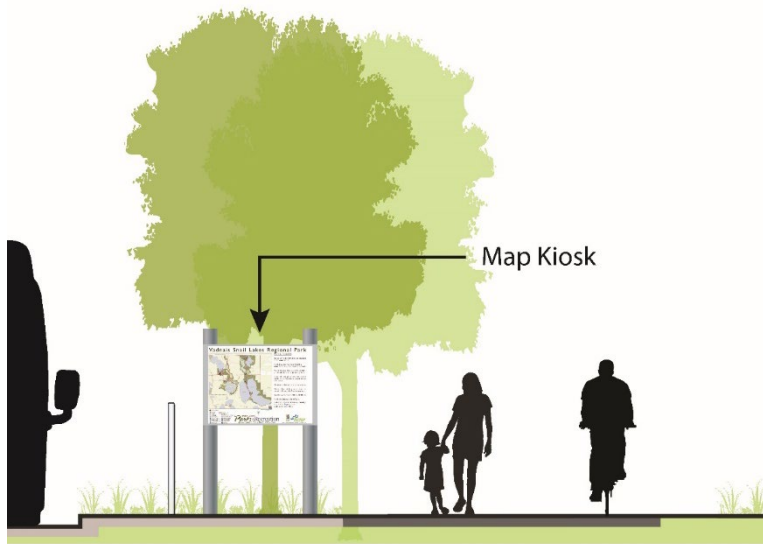


Bioswale



Engineered green slope

Draft Design Guide Recommendations: Environment



Typical map kiosk

- Install amenities and wayfinding in a manner consistent with other Ramsey County parks and trails:
 - Benches.
 - Trash and recycling receptacles.
 - Bicycle repair stations.
 - Dog waste pick-up stations.
 - Trail route maps and directional kiosks.
- Consider additional amenities in higher-activity areas, such as:
 - Drinking fountains.
 - Picnic tables and shelters.
 - Interpretive signage.

Draft Design Guide: Next Steps

- December 2019:
Drop-in discussions
and online survey to
present draft Design
Guide.



10th Street Station Drop-In Discussion, May 9

Discussion

- Do these principles and recommendations reflect your community's priorities for the corridor?
- Are there areas where you would like to see additional refinements to recommendations?
- Other questions or comments?

Next Meeting

- Discussion.
 - Suggest future agenda items.
- A Doodle poll will be distributed for the next Community Advisory Committee in winter 2020.



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Thank you!

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