



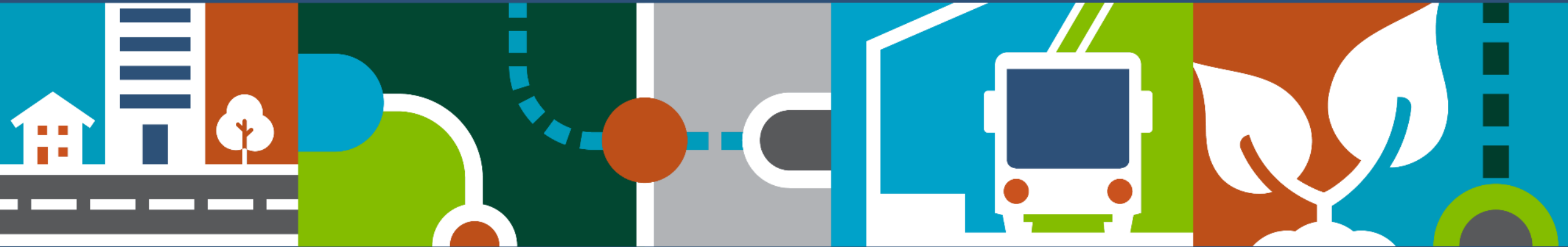
Public engagement summary

Engineering & pre-environmental phase (EPE)
September 2020 – August 2024

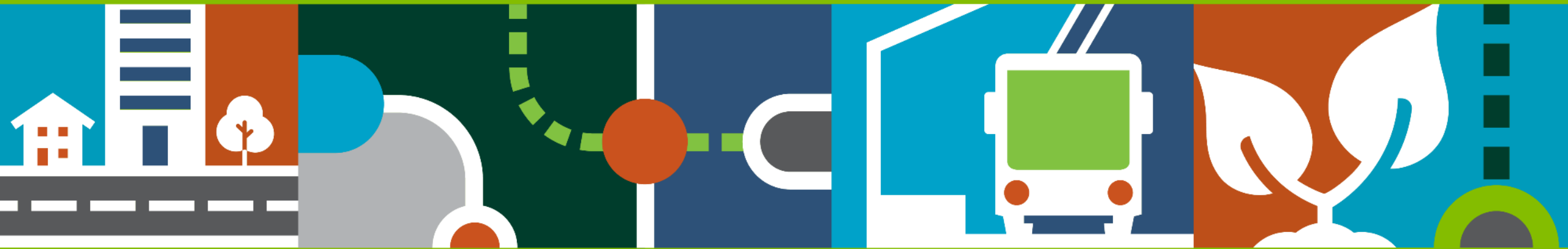


Agenda

- 01 Project overview
- 02 Engagement approach
- 03 What we heard (feedback summary)
- 04 Specific feedback



01 Project overview



Purpose and need

To enhance mobility and access to opportunities for residents, businesses and the region and to cultivate economic prosperity.



Growing **population** and **employment** increase travel demand for different markets.



Transit-reliant population needs improved service.

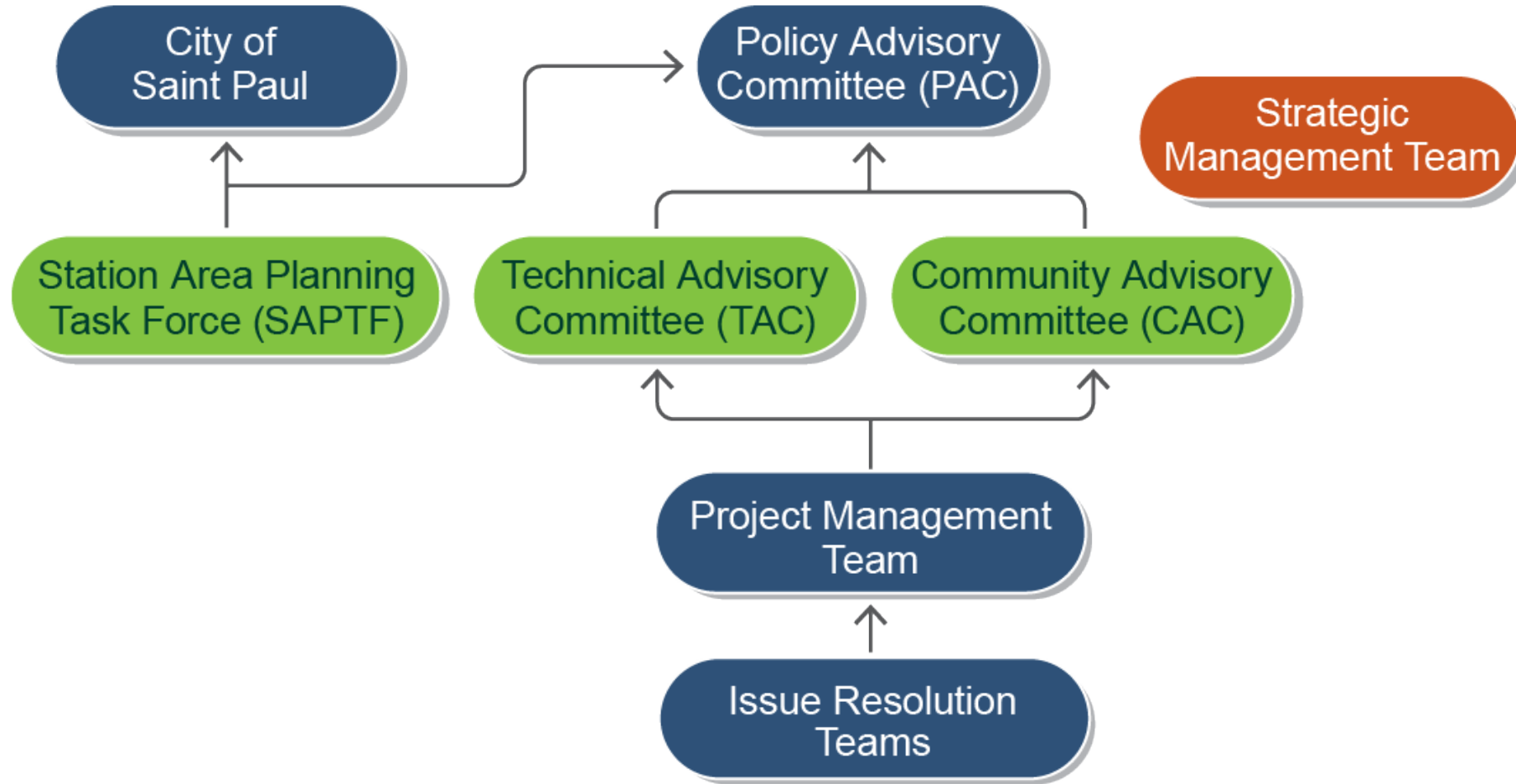


Existing **transportation network** has limited opportunities for **improvement**.

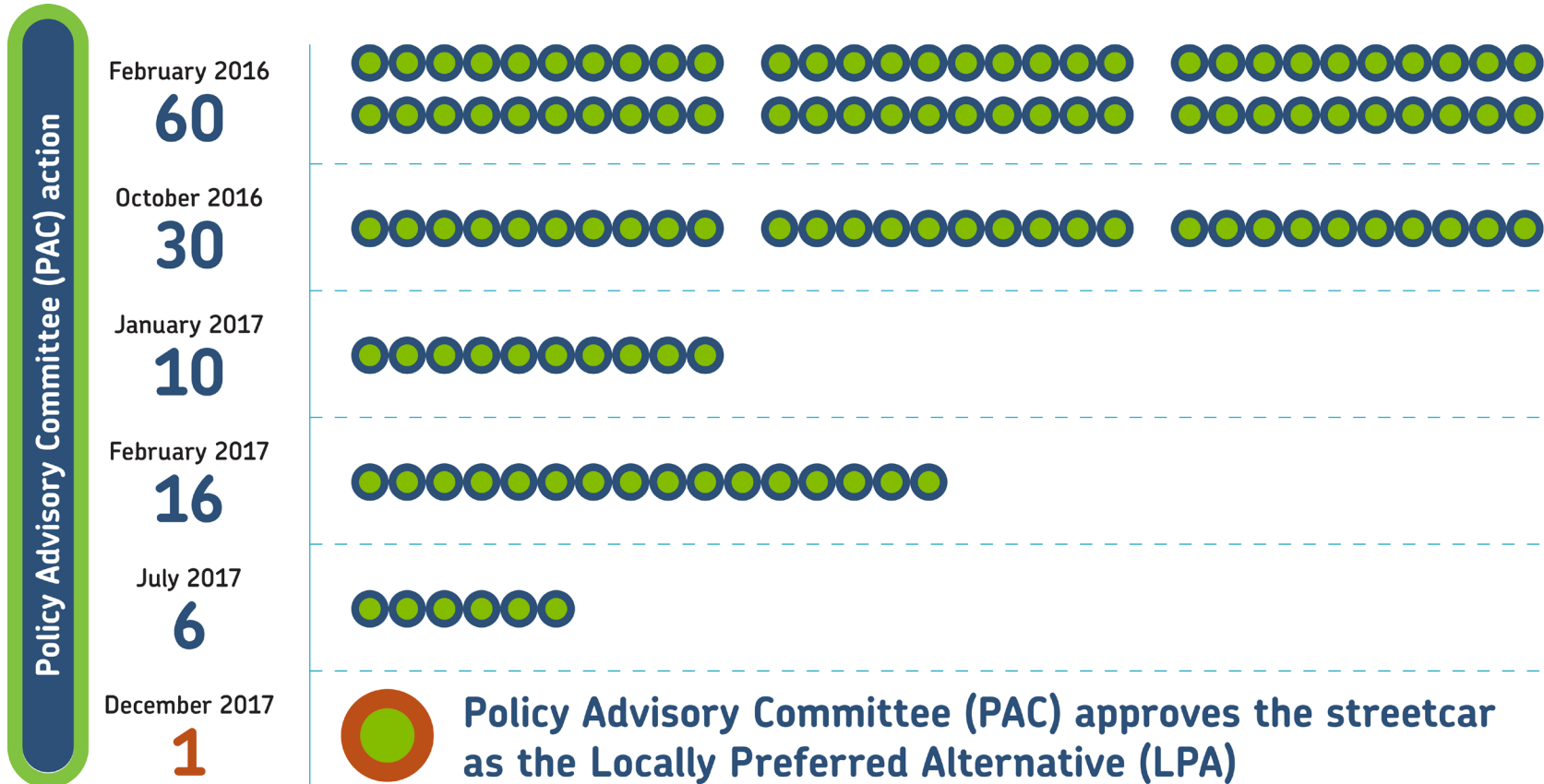


New connections create **reinvestment** and **economic development** opportunities.

Decision-making/project committees



Pre-project development study Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) process



○ Selection of the LPA

In late 2017, the PAC recommended a modern streetcar along West 7th Street as the LPA. In 2019, the LPA was amended into the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, preparing for the next phase of work.



Serves major destinations and neighborhoods

- Downtown Saint Paul.
- Historic Fort Snelling at Bdote.
- Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport.
- Mall of America™ and South Loop.
- Highland Park and West 7th Street neighborhoods.



Downtown Saint Paul.

Where are the modern streetcar stations?

In the EPE phase, the primary objective was to assess the technical viability of the LPA — Modern Streetcar. To perform this assessment, the project team examined the route along key connections and crossings to determine how tracks are aligned, and in which segments the streetcar would run in mixed-traffic. This involved a thorough analysis of various technical aspects to ensure the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed Modern Streetcar improvement.



Where are the modern streetcar stations?

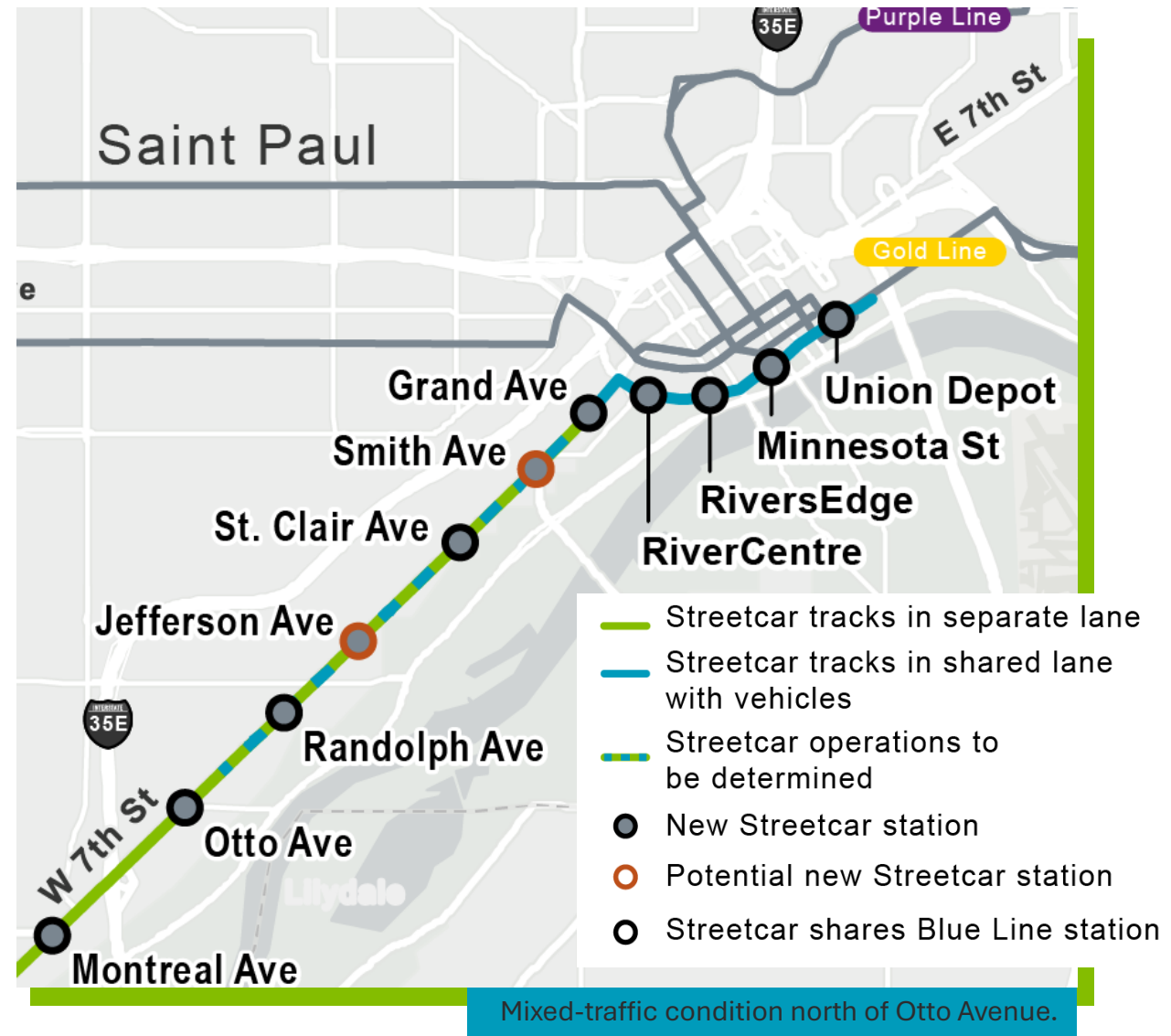
The analysis completed during the EPE phase resulted in the route between Union Depot and Mall of America™ to include 22 stations with some optional variations.



Modern Streetcar route map.

Partner-focused modifications

Midway through the EPE phase, in response to the city of Saint Paul's concerns about impacts to on-street parking for West 7th Street businesses, the project team added a secondary streetcar option (Option 2) with a dedicated guideway terminating closer to Otto Avenue, transitioning to mixed-traffic in a shared lane, preserving nearly 400 parking spaces between Otto and Grand Avenue's.



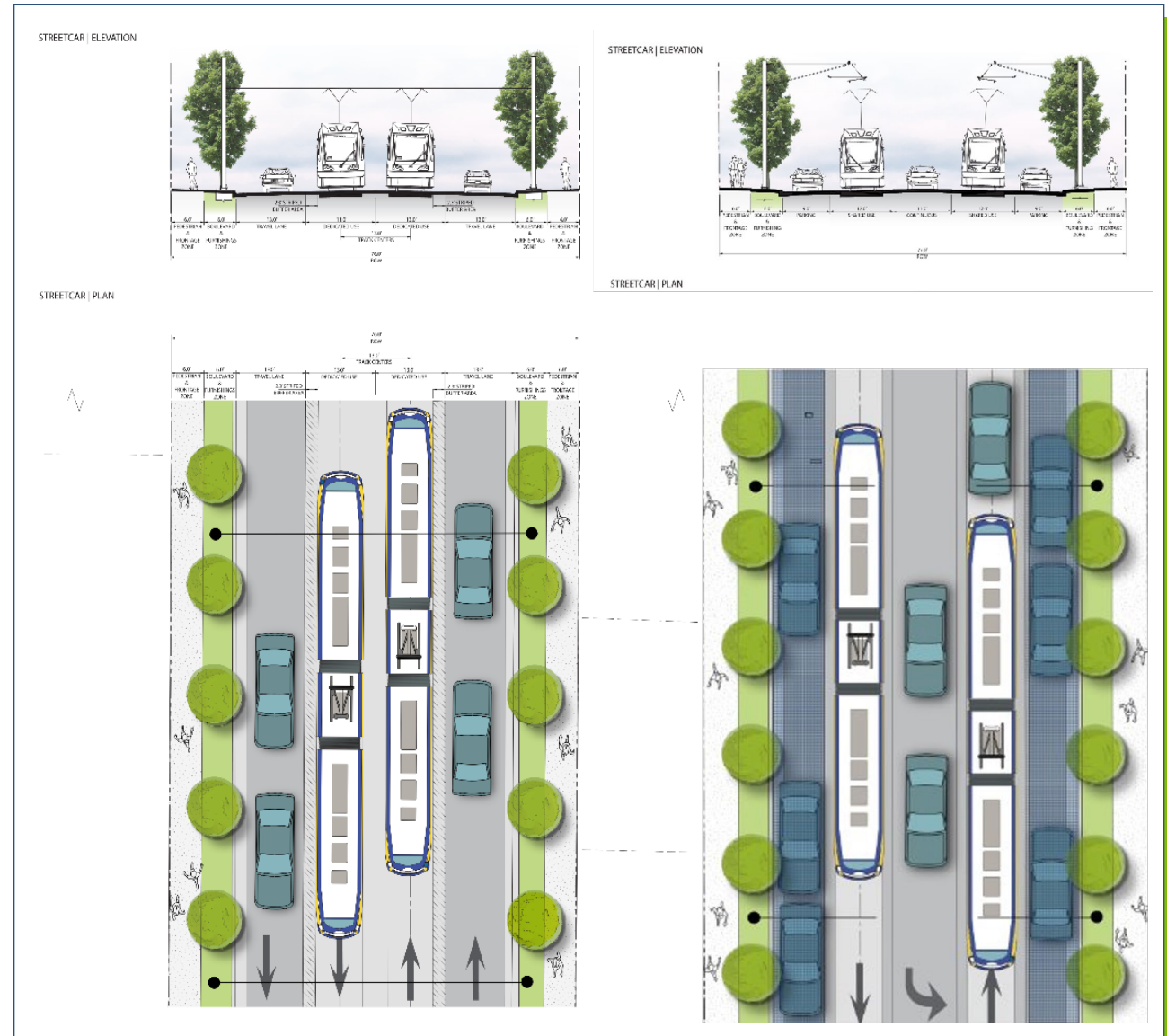
Typical modern streetcar sections: Options 1 vs 2

Option 1:

Dedicated center-running modern streetcar from the Mall of America™ to Grand Avenue; shared to Union Depot.

Option 2:

Dedicated center-running modern streetcar from the Mall of America™ to Otto Avenue; shared side-running alignment from Victoria Street to Union Depot.

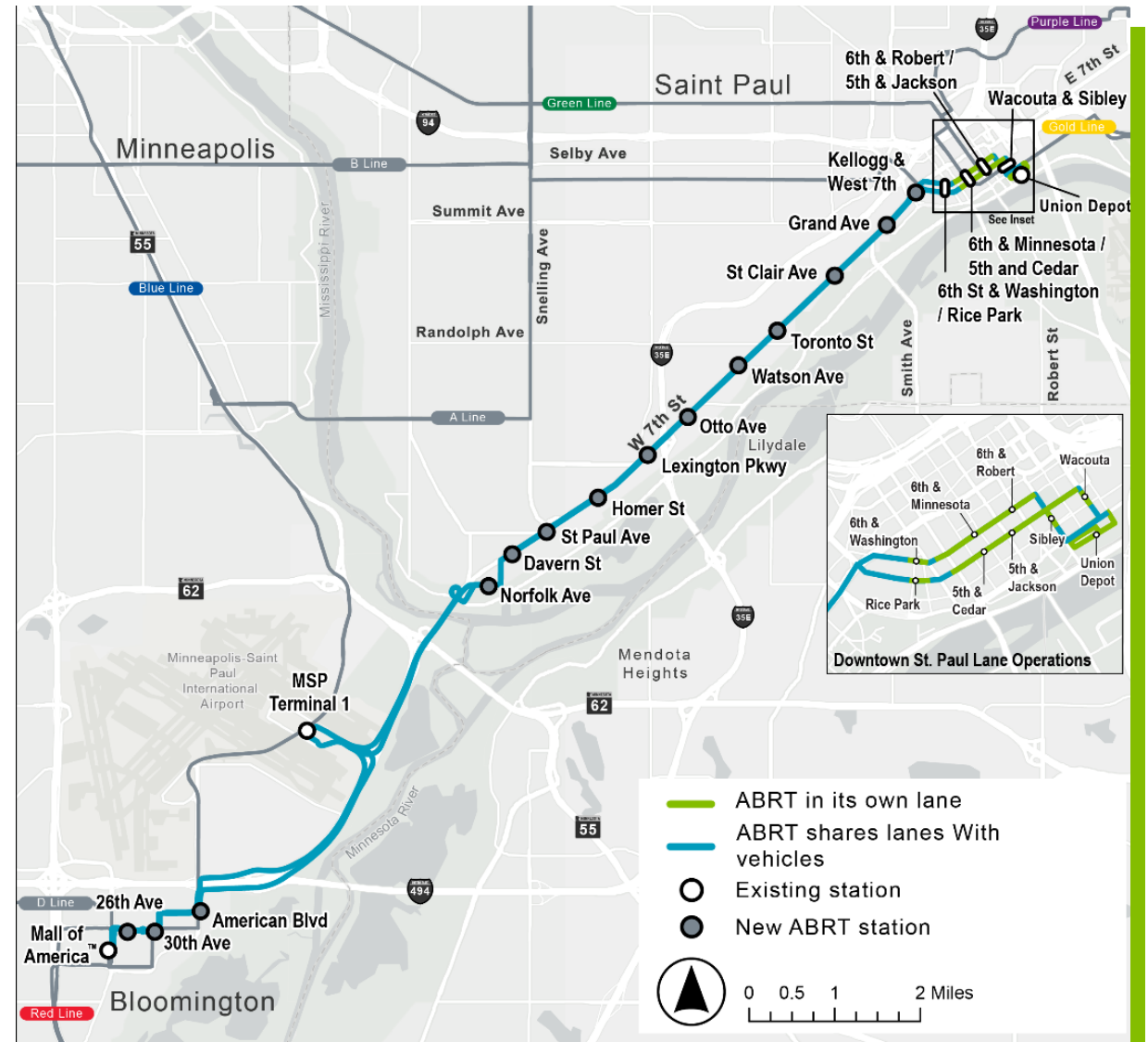


Typical modern streetcar sections: Option 1 (left) and Option 2 (right).

Best bus alternative

The project team also developed a bus alternative for comparison to the LPA streetcar. This resulted in an arterial bus rapid transit (ABRT) design concept running in mixed traffic.

The route between Union Depot and Mall of America™ includes 21 stations with some optional variations.



ABRT route map.

Potential Modern Streetcar project timeline: 2025 and beyond

Federal project development
Estimated

2025–2026

Engineering
Estimated

2027–2030

Construction
Estimated

2030–2033

Line opens
Estimated

Late 2033



Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT):

- The schedule is dependent on Metro Transit’s schedule for new ABRT corridors.
- 2030 opening year is used as a placeholder to estimate costs.

○ Capital and operations/ maintenance costs

	Capital cost (2033)	Operations and maintenance cost (2023)
Streetcar option 1	\$2.10 billion	\$34 million
Streetcar option 2	\$2.12 billion	\$34.5 million

The small difference in operating costs between options is attributed to two additional stations in Option 2.

What is the estimated ridership*?

Modern Streetcar (2040)	ABRT (2040)
11,200-11,600 daily rides*	8,000 daily rides*

Reasons for significantly higher modern streetcar ridership:

- Additional stations.
- Dedicated infrastructure increases reliability.
- More comfortable, quieter, smoother and cleaner riding experience.

*This compares with ridership of 3,480 on the existing Route 54 (Fall 2023). Note that this includes ridership traveling north of downtown Saint Paul to Maplewood Mall.

Advantages of a modern streetcar



Economics

- Grows Saint Paul real estate values by an estimated \$843 million.
- Increases residential and commercial redevelopment.
- Promotes redevelopment of vacant land and underutilized properties.



Connection

- Links downtown directly to the airport and other major destinations.



Accessibility

- Provides level boarding for riders to walk or roll on.
- Addresses mobility barriers while reconnecting communities with a new river crossing.



Capacity

- Carries more passengers than buses.



Comfort

- Provides more comfortable, quieter, cleaner and smoother rides without traffic bumps, with rail embedded in the street.

More than a streetcar: Reinvigorating the corridor

Nearly half of the project cost, **close to \$1 billion**, will result in tangible benefits outside of the Riverview Corridor Modern Streetcar infrastructure.



\$325
million

West 7th Street Reconstruction

Complete reconstruction includes replacing sidewalks and curb ramps and additional signalized intersections, providing additional and safer ways to cross.



\$285
million

Mall of America™ Station

A new elevated MOA station would serve both Riverview and the METRO Blue Line, reducing travel times for Blue Line riders and opening up a new developable parcel of land next to the mall.



\$415
million

New Highway 5 Bridge (Mississippi River Crossing)

Would connect Ramsey and Hennepin County residents with an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant bridge with a proposed upper deck plaza.



\$535
million

Safety Improvements

Expanded sidewalks, greener streetscaping, additional signalized intersections and safer crosswalks enhance bike and pedestrian access.

West 7th Street reconstruction



MnDOT plans to mill and overlay West 7th Street in 2028/2029. But West 7th Street needs more substantial improvements. Transit and roadway improvement could be completed simultaneously with the Modern Streetcar. With ABRT, roadway reconstruction would require separate funding, and likely a separate implementation timeline. Approximate cost: **\$325 million.**

Accessible

- The modern streetcar provides level boarding for riders to walk or roll on. Enhanced sidewalks and boulevards invite locals and visitors to explore and spend more time along the corridors.

Reliable

- Reliability and traffic are improved with advanced signal technology and transit-only lanes.

Livable

- Upgrades provide safer “refuge islands” in the middle of the street with signalized crossings at intersections along West 7th Street.
- Advancements reduce the region’s carbon footprint because the modern streetcar is fully electric, producing less air and noise pollution.
- New tree plantings and wider boulevards enhance the environment.
- Roadway design calms traffic to slow speeds for safer streets.

Why not light rail?

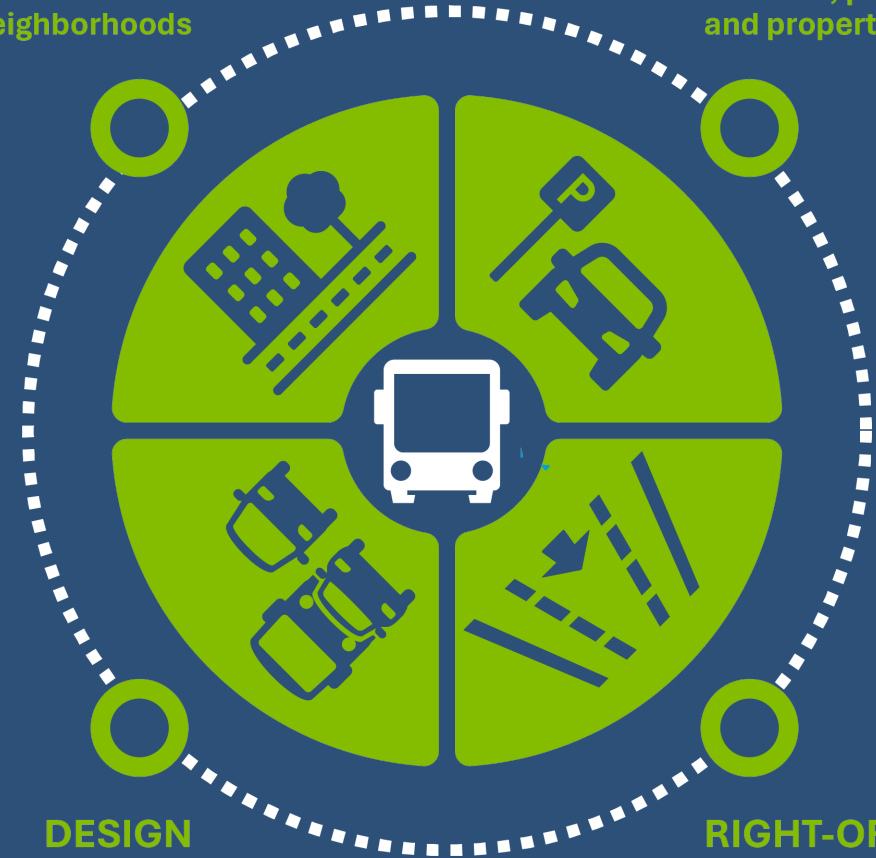
Streetcars offer more flexibility

Typically have a smaller infrastructure footprint than light rail transit :

- Smaller platforms and vehicles have sufficient capacity to meet Riverview Corridor demand and better fit the context of the neighborhoods they serve.
- Smaller station size reduces impacts to traffic, parking and private property.
- Design accommodates single-car streetcars, not the two- to three-car light rail trains on the Green and Blue Lines.
- Run in both dedicated right-of-way and shared lanes of traffic.

CONSTRUCTION
Smaller platforms and vehicles better serve the neighborhoods

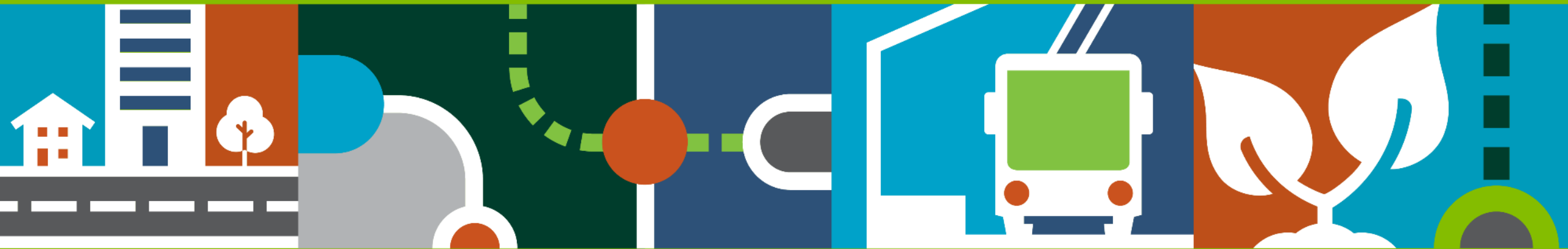
TRAFFIC
Reduces impacts to traffic, parking and property



DESIGN
Functional space to accommodate various users

RIGHT-OF-WAY
Sharing right-of-way with other vehicles is the calling card

02 Engagement approach



○ EPE phase: Stakeholder and public engagement

Throughout the engineering & pre-environmental phase (EPE), which began September 1, 2020, and will conclude in late 2024, project staff conducted technical analysis and engaged the community to identify project ideas, opportunities and impacts. This technical work included considering land uses and opportunities to augment existing destinations, support redevelopment, enhance public spaces and improve community connections.

Ramsey County and project partners continually used technical analysis and community feedback to make decisions about the project.



An attendee and project staff member review the rollplot.

Committee work

Since 2020, multiple committees, comprising community members, policy leaders, and technical experts, have been hard at work. They gather information and provide recommendations to the public.

1. Policy Advisory Committee
2. Community Advisory Committee
3. Technical Advisory Committee
4. Station Area Planning Task Force

This also includes the Strategic Management Team, Issues Resolution Teams and Project Management Team.



Open house attendees leave comments on the rollplots.

Committee overview

Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)



9
MEETINGS



MORE
THAN
300
ATTENDEES

Between November 2020 and August 2024, the PAC met nine times and drew more than 300 members of the public.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)



7
MEETINGS



88
ATTENDEES

Between May 2021 and February 2024, the CAC met seven times and drew 88 members of the public.

Station Area Planning Task Force (SAPTF)



20
MEETINGS



MORE
THAN
290
ATTENDEES

Between May 2021 and April 2024, SAPTF met 20 times and drew more than 290 attendees.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)



31
MEETINGS



MORE
THAN
500
ATTENDEES

Between September 2020 and August 2024, the TAC met 31 times.

Going where the people are

- Identifying key stakeholder groups.
- Communication methods.
- Public engagement begins.



Project staff engaging with attendees, explaining the information on the retractable banner displays.

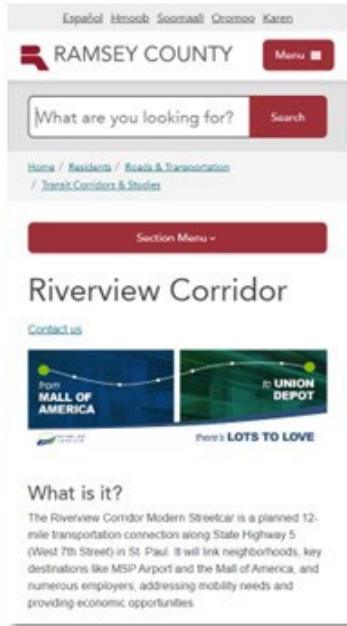
Stakeholders

- Transit riders.
- Downtown large employers and major facilities.
- Residents and community organizations.
- Small business owners, employees, and managers.
- Tribal partners and tribal groups.



An open house attendee reviews the "Extensive benefits" banner.

Communication methods



- Project website.
- Email blasts.
- Promotional video.
- Informational brochures.
- Social media.
- Digital ads.
- Print ads.
- Billboards.
- Bus shelter and transit advertisements.

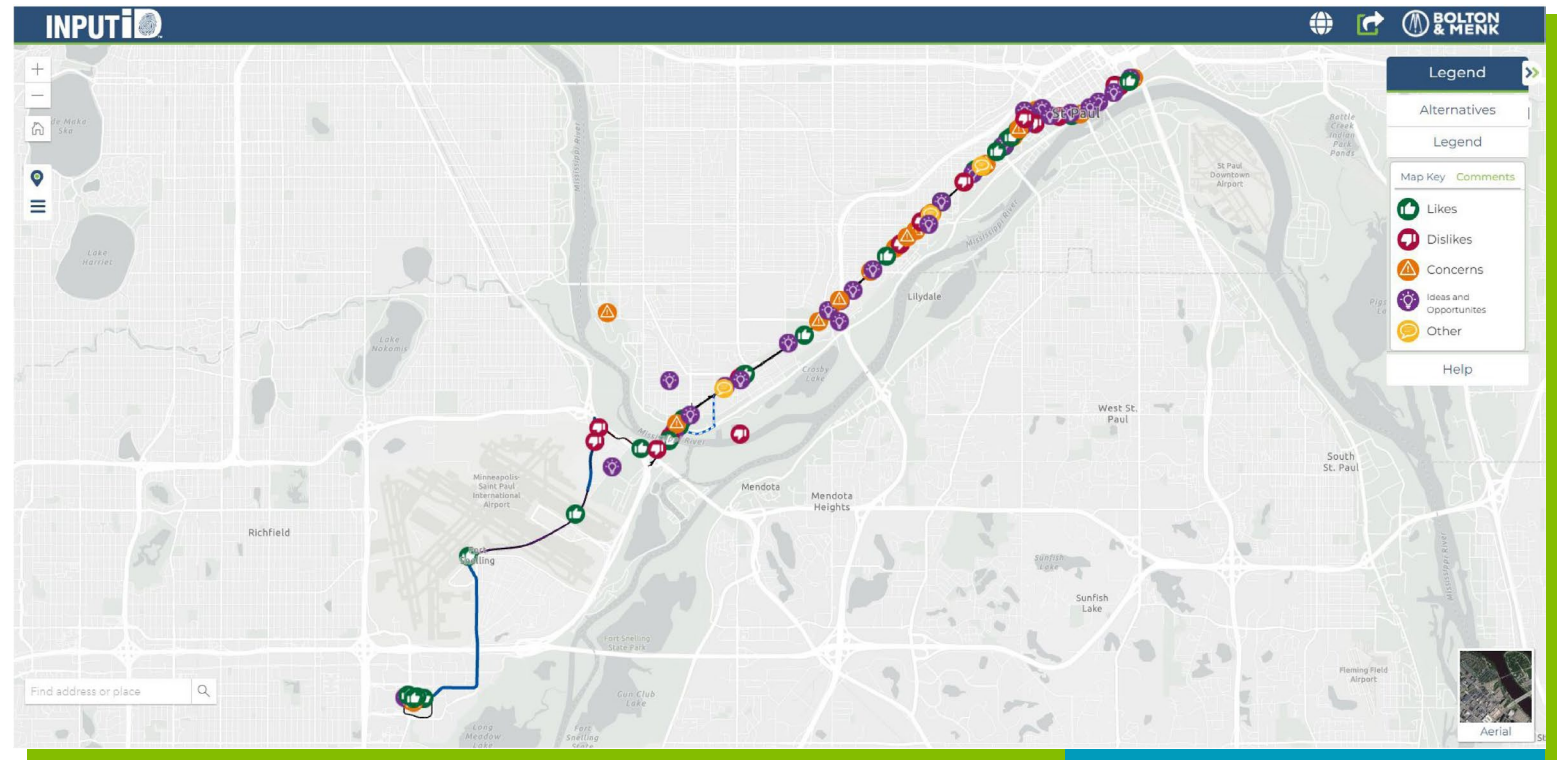
○ Press and media coverage

- The Riverview Corridor project received a significant amount of media coverage about the presentation of options and public meetings.
- There were 25 articles published regarding the project and engagement effort.



Engagement events and activities

- Interactive comment map.
- The project team used an interactive web-based mapping tool in multiple iterations during the EPE phase to inform the design process. The tool gave the public an opportunity to virtually view and provide input on the project through location-specific feedback, add new comments, and reply to existing comments.
- 188 unique comments were received with 171 (likes, dislikes) to each original comment.



Interactive comment map.

Engagement events and activities

- Online and in-person surveys.
- 591 bike and pedestrian survey responses.
- More than 350 online survey responses.



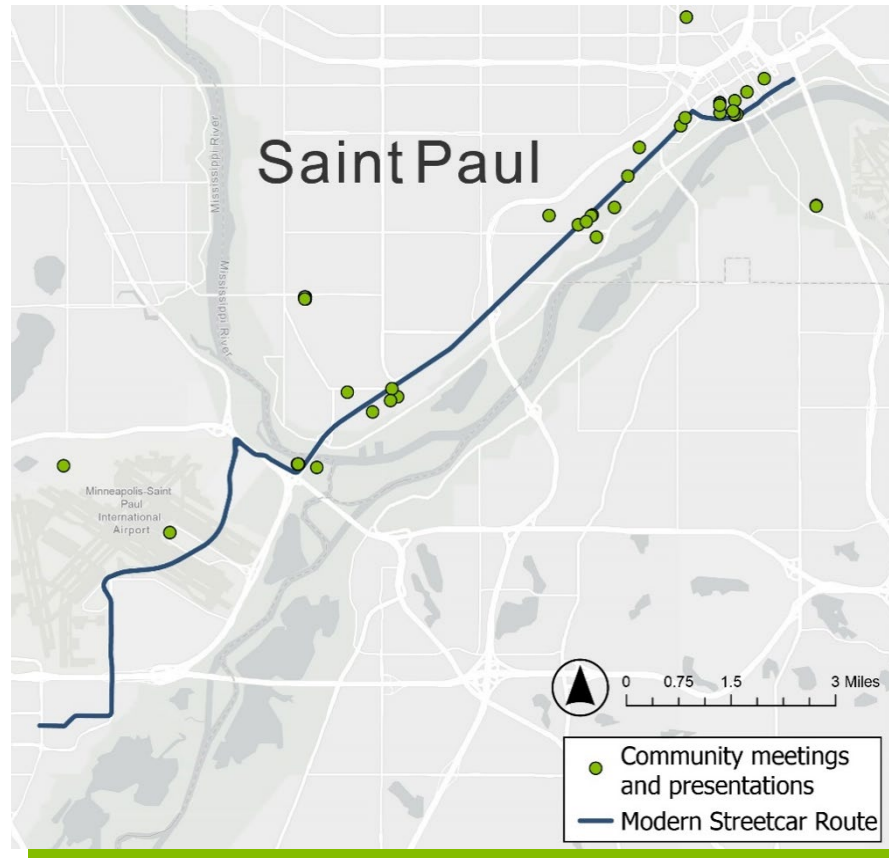
591
BIKE AND
PEDESTRIAN
SURVEY
RESPONSES



**MORE
THAN**
350
ONLINE
SURVEY
RESPONSES

Community meetings and presentations

The team held 53 meetings and presentations between January 2021 and August 2024, which provided connections with more than 1,150 community members. Meeting and presentations spanned the Riverview Corridor to reach diverse audiences.



53
MEETINGS
AND
PRESENTATIONS



MORE
THAN
1,150
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

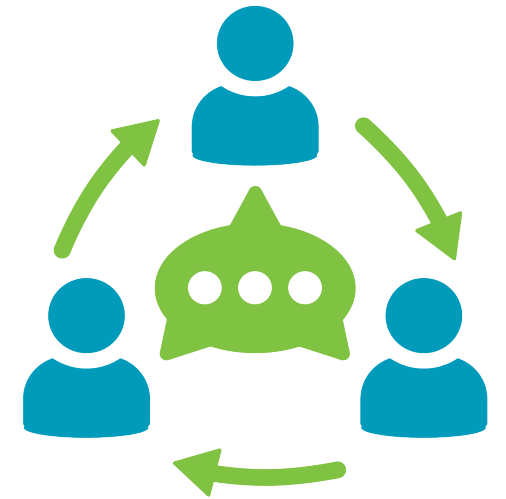
Community meetings and presentations

Meetings were held with the following organizations (full list can be found in the report):



Tribal engagement

- 4 Dakota Tribes (Lower Sioux, Upper Sioux, Prairie Island and Shakopee Mdewakanton) participating through Bdote and Fort Snelling Issue Resolution Team and on Technical Advisory Committee.
 - Tribal input shaped how the project would cross the river and navigate through the Bdote and Fort Snelling area.
 - Focus on limiting rock disturbance wherever possible.
- Small group meetings (six) with tribal staff on technical issues.
- Presentations to Urban Indian Advisory Board and Minnesota Council on Indian Affairs.



Community pop-up events

 **19**
POP-UP
EVENTS

 **MORE THAN**
900
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

There were 19 pop-ups held between June 2022 and August 2024 that engaged more than 900 people. Locations included:

- Lund's & Byerly's supermarket.
- Highland Annual Meeting.
- Train Days at Union Depot.
- MSP, Terminal 1 and 2.
- Summer Nights in Rice.



Summer Nights in Rice pop-up.

Open houses

 **5**
OPEN
HOUSES

 **MORE THAN**
212
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

There was a total of 212 attendees across five public events.

Attendees left public comments and were given QR codes to the online survey.



An open house attendee places her comment card in the comment box.

Business engagement



13
EVENTS



143
BUSINESS
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

There were 10 events in 2022 and three in summer 2024, which drew 143 business community members.

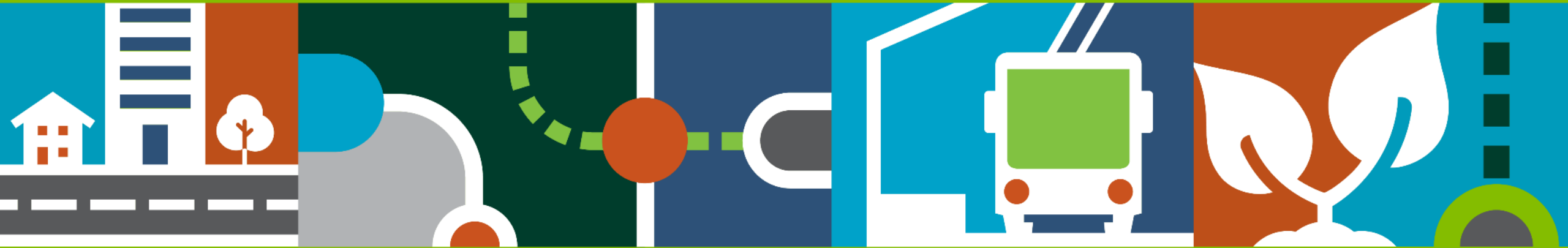
Examples include:

- Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
- West 7th business engagement — Mancini's Char House



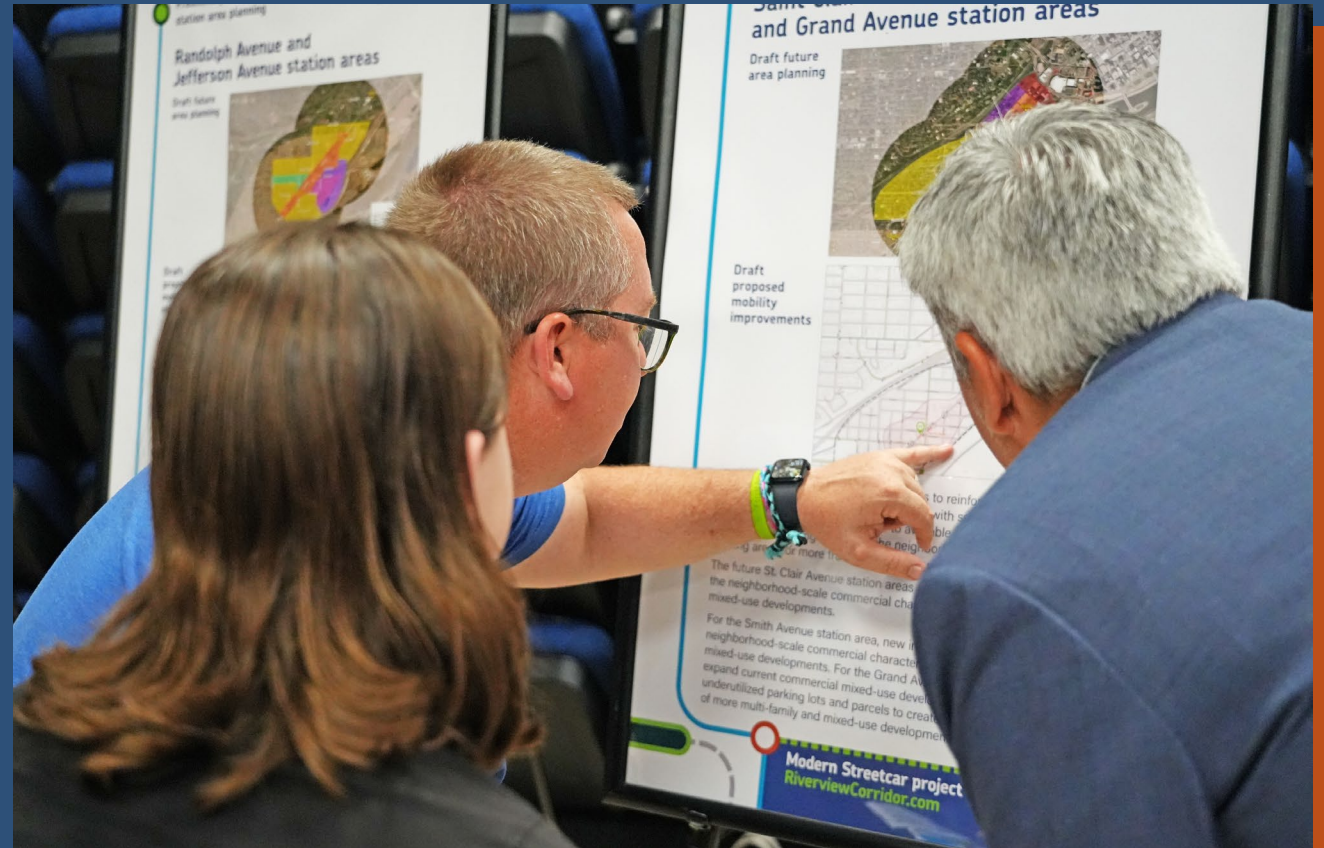
West 7th business engagement presentation.

03 What we heard (feedback summary)



Connecting themes

- The need for reinvestment along the West 7th Street corridor.
- Many envisioned Riverview as a potential catalyst for economic and social activity.
- Transit users in particular favored a, “go all-in” approach, prioritizing dedicated guideway for streetcar.

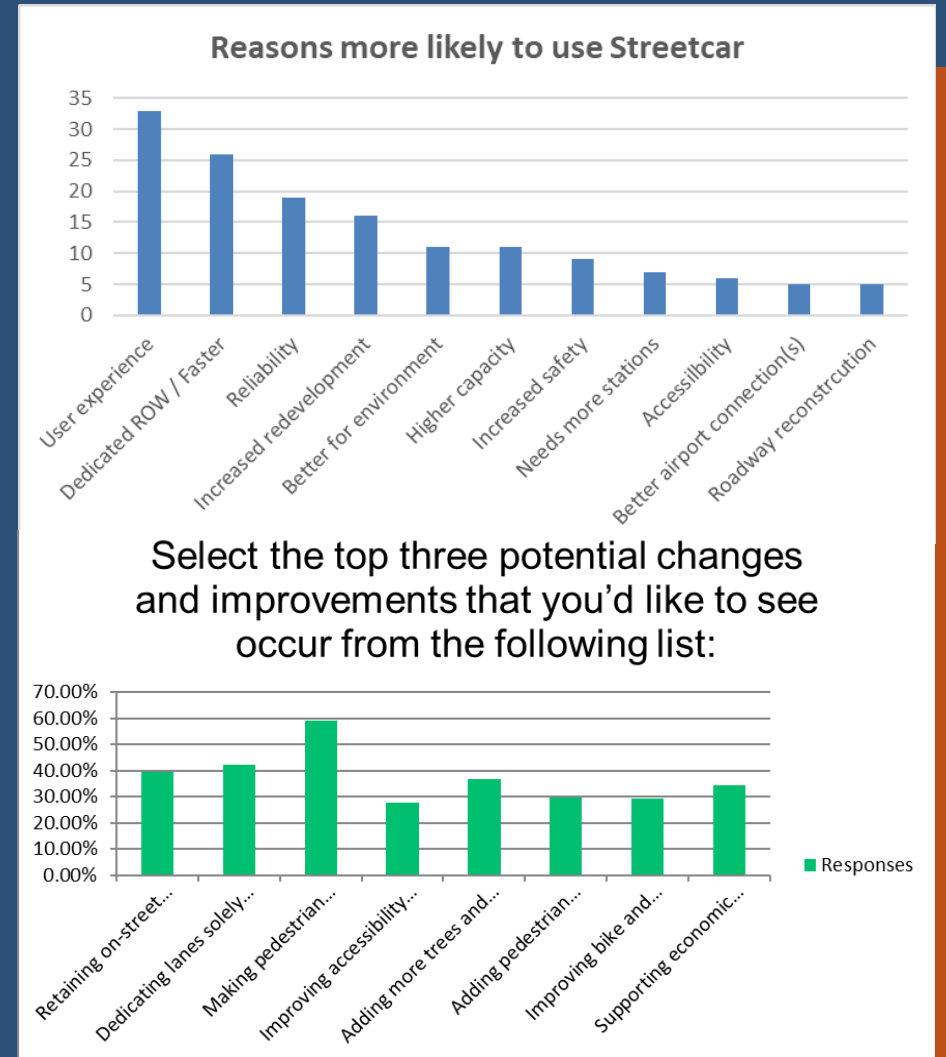


Open house attendees and project staff review station area planning boards.

Support and benefits for Riverview

Many stakeholders expressed that the streetcar would:

- Enhance walkability along West 7th Street.
- Catalyze community development along the corridor.
- Enhance economic opportunities.
- Introduce improvements like faster service, more business development and better.
- Complete the envisioned transit triangle between the downtowns and airport.



Survey results summarizing stakeholder desired Riverview improvements.

Concerns and objections

- Cost-related concerns.
- Implementation and construction impacts.
- Community and business impacts.
- Safety, security, and accessibility concerns.
- Traffic operations and right-of-way impacts.



An open house attendee posts what they love about the Riverview Corridor on a post-it board.

Overall feedback

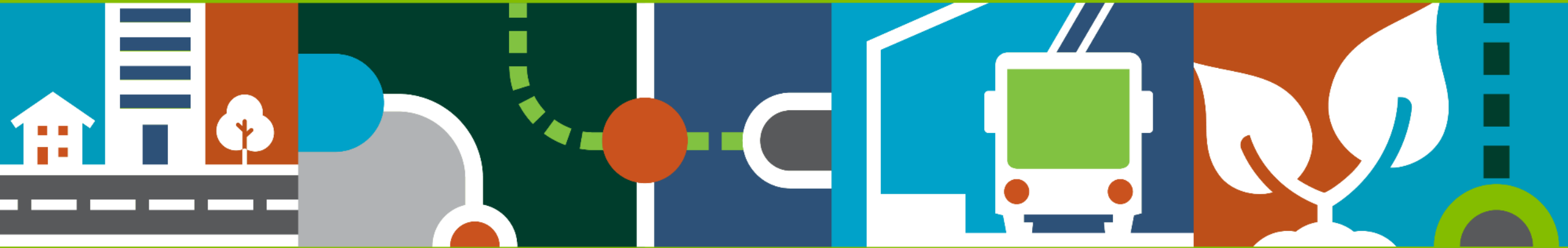
Balancing act between:

- Concerns over cost.
- Recognizing the broader benefits to all users.
- Transit travel time and reliability vs. West 7th Business opposition to parking impacts.
- Desire to improve the corridor and create a more welcoming environment.



An open house attendee reviews the banners outlining project benefits.

04 Specific feedback



○ Drilling deeper: specific stakeholder group summary feedback

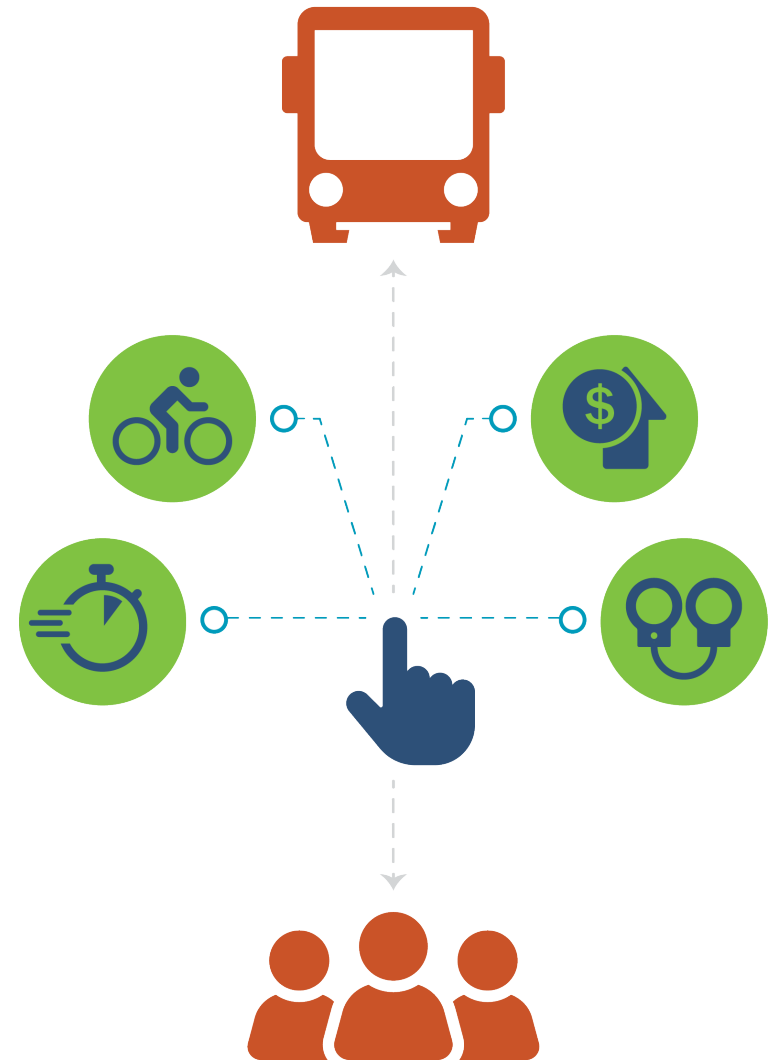
Transit users:

- Concern over how the streetcar would compete for space with traffic/parking.
- Disagreement over streetcar's potential vs lower costs of ABRT.



Digital engagement and community meeting trends

- Early feedback centered on the alignment of the streetcar.
- Supportive of transit and biking updates.
- Many expressed concerns over cost, or sources of funding for the project.
- Distinctions between the streetcar and ABRT options, as well as LRT.
- Streetcar speed limits vs. bus.
- Concerns over crime and concerning behavior on the transit system.



Business engagement

Downtown Stakeholder Groups

- Support for investment in the corridor.
- Supportive of alignment along Kellogg Boulevard downtown.
- Reluctant about early proposals to align streetcar on 5th and 6th streets downtown.
- Streetcar would help alleviate congestion near Xcel Center.
- Concerns over vacancies and crime downtown.

West 7th Street Businesses

- Strong opposition to streetcar.
- Skepticism of Kansas City and Portland's streetcar experiences.
- Very concerned over removal of on-street parking spaces.
- Lengthy construction phase disrupting business access.
- Existing safety and security issues on the transit system spreading to Riverview Corridor.

INPUT ID Tool



Interactive comment map

Users could review or respond to others' comments and mark whether they liked (thumbs up) or disliked (thumbs down) those comments. It is evident from the number of commenters who supported specific comments that enhanced rail with dedicated right-of-way was most popular due to:

- Enhancing transit reliability and speed.
- Providing a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Serving as a catalyst for higher-density redevelopment.

Comment	Option	Likes	Dislikes
"The streetcar will bring more people to businesses than the parking ever did. It's proven that when people are out walking or on bikes they are much more likely to stop at a business than if they are in a car. Trading parking for transit spots is ultimately better for businesses."	Streetcar Option 1	39	2
"...A streetcar is permanent, while a bus can be moved and leave the area abandoned by transit in the future. The streetcar would allow better walking and biking options by reliably expanding the walkshed."	Streetcar Option 1	37	2

Surveys



2024 community input survey

This survey was open to the public from mid-April and closed August 15, 2024, to gather broad community input on priorities and preferences, identify issues and concerns and seek feedback on the planned streetcar and ABRT improvements and operations.

In all, there were an average of more than 380 responses to each of the 18 survey questions.

Question #1 — The top three transit service-related features included: Feeling safe and secure (60%), reliable service (57%), and frequent service (51%).

Question #2 — By far the number one change/improvement survey respondents wanted to see on West 7th Street was pedestrian improvements (60%).

Question #3 — To the question “What do you most like about the streetcar”, respondents overall top preferences are as follows: Support the streetcar proposal in general (147 responses), do NOT support the streetcar (84 responses) and prefer ABRT (38 responses).

Question #4 — To the question “What are your concerns about streetcar” respondents most popular answers were cost (93 responses), sufficient right-of-way/dedication (56 responses), disruption to community/business (53 responses) and Safety / Crime (52 responses).

Question #5 — Survey respondents preferred the center-running streetcar alignment (61%) over the side-running alignment (39%).

Question #10 — The top three purposes that people used transit for were entertainment (76%), work (46%) and social engagements to visit family or friends (45%).

Surveys



2022 bike and pedestrian survey

This survey was open to the public from February 11 to March 25, 2022, to understand the experience of crossing the Mississippi River on the Highway 5 bridge as a bicyclist or pedestrian.

Results from this survey were the following:

- The two main reasons people cross the bridge are for leisure or recreation (88%) and exercise (74%).
- The top three area destinations for bridge users included Fort Snelling/Bdote area (69%), Minneapolis parks (65%) and Saint Paul parks (58%).
- More than half of those surveyed (54%) said they feel safe or mostly safe on the bridge.
- The top three desired safety enhancements included ramps instead of stairs with bike channels (79%), wider pathways (67%) and more separation from vehicles (53%).



Next steps

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) advises Ramsey County Public Works on key elements of the project. The PAC uses technical and community input to address issues relating to the environmental review, preliminary engineering and station area planning. It consists of elected officials and representatives from the business community, the nonprofit sector and higher education.

Ramsey County has made the difficult decision to end our work and cancel any future meetings on the Riverview Corridor project. This decision was based on feedback gained during a comprehensive public engagement process with community, businesses, and partners. While we believe in streetcar and believe it's a viable option, we want to ensure that it is complementary to the transformational investments already underway in the region. Should the time arise to carry this work forward, we would gladly revisit conversations.



Thank you.

RiverviewCorridor.com

