



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Melvin Carter, Mayor

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Telephone: 651-266-6565

DATE: January 19, 2018
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Transportation Committee
RE: Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative

ISSUE

The City of Saint Paul is requested to take action to support the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

BACKGROUND

The Riverview Corridor is defined by the Mississippi River on the south, Interstate 35E and Ford Parkway on the north, Lowertown and Union Depot on the east, and Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP Airport) and Mall of America on the west.

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has led a transit study to research, analyze and identify opportunities to improve transit within the Riverview Corridor. The formal name for this work is a Pre-Project Development Study. The study assessed the viability of transit modes, transit route location, engineering and environmental issues, identified community needs and preferences, and estimated costs. Selecting and approving the LPA is the final step of the Pre-Project Development Study. The LPA has been approved by resolution by the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Riverview Corridor project.

The PAC also approved two supporting resolutions; one related to continued study related to the improving transit connections between the Riverview Corridor, the Blue Line, and the Ford Site, or the "Ford Corridor," and one recognizing the local business and multimodal priorities identified through public outreach. These issues were all identified as important to the residents, businesses, and policymakers through the Riverview planning process. For clarity, the three PAC resolutions were combined into two for consideration by the Transportation Committee: one for the LPA and one for the Ford Corridor.

Each local government impacted by the project is requested to pass a resolution supporting the LPA. The LPA will then be sent on the Metropolitan Council to be considered for inclusion in the regional 2040 Transportation Policy Plan. The LPA is a preliminary indication of local government preferences. Final municipal consent by each city is required later in the process, closer to the construction stage.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On January 8, 2018 the Transportation Committee unanimously recommended that the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolutions recommending the City Council support the LPA, modern street car along Alignment 4b, as well as further study of the Ford Corridor.

Attachments

1. Draft Planning Commission LPA Resolution
2. Map of LPA
3. Draft Planning Commission Ford Corridor Resolution
4. Map of Ford Corridor
5. Riverview Corridor LPA Flyer from Ramey County Regional Rail Authority

city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

RIVERVIEW CORRIDOR LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE SUPPORT

WHEREAS, the Riverview Corridor is a transitway corridor in the cities of Saint Paul and Bloomington, Minnesota, serving urban and suburban communities; and

WHEREAS, a pre-project development study has been completed to analyze bus and rail alternatives in the Riverview Corridor study area connecting the Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, the Mall of America in Bloomington and the neighborhoods in-between; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Riverview Corridor Pre-Project Development Study is to evaluate and recommend transit service that enhances mobility and access to opportunities for residents, businesses and the region and to cultivate economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, The pre-project development study was a joint local and regional planning effort conducted by Riverview Corridor Policy Advisory Committee and led by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority in collaboration with local and regional partners; and

WHEREAS, the study included thorough technical analysis of alternatives including multiple bus and rail modes and multiple route alignments providing service within the study area; and

WHEREAS, the technical analysis identified two separate travel markets in the Riverview Corridor study area, including:

- The Highway 5 market, consisting of Downtown Saint Paul, the neighborhoods along W. 7th Street, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America.
- the Ford Corridor market, consisting of the area between the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative and the Blue Line in Minneapolis encompassing the Ford Site; and

WHEREAS, the technical analysis and public engagement have led to the identification of a locally preferred alternative for the corridor that includes the definition of the mode, conceptual alignment and general station locations which can be refined through further environmental and engineering efforts; and

WHEREAS, Alternative 4b, serving the Highway 5 market, best meets the project's purpose and need and would likely qualify for Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grant Program funding; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, Alternative 4b is defined as modern streetcar within a dedicated and shared-use guideway for approximately 11.7 miles connecting Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul, the downtown, W. 7th and Highland Park neighborhoods in Saint Paul, the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America in Bloomington generally along Green Line, 5th and 6th Streets, W. 7th Street, Minnesota Trunk Highway 5, crossing under Fort Snelling, crossing over Minnesota Trunk Highway 55 and connecting to Blue Line (see attached figure); and

WHEREAS, the next phase of the Riverview project will include environmental analysis under the federal and state environmental review processes to discuss a set of reasonable alternatives and to determine if the locally preferred alternative can also be the environmentally preferred alternative through avoidance, minimization and mitigation of potential impacts while maximizing mobility, accessibility and surrounding economic development opportunities; and

WHEREAS, extensive public engagement activities were completed throughout the pre-project development study resulting in engaging over 4,500 people to gather public input on the multiple mode and route alternatives; and

WHEREAS, comments submitted by agencies, adjacent communities, the business sector and the public during the locally preferred alternative comment period and throughout the duration of the pre-project development study will be addressed accordingly in the environmental analysis phase of the project; and

WHEREAS, planning for the Riverview Corridor affords an opportunity to reimagine West 7th Street so as to better serve all those who use it today and those who will do so in generations to come; and

WHEREAS, planning and design of the Riverview Corridor must occur on a reasonable but aggressive timeline that reflects a sense of urgency to make the project a reality; and

WHEREAS, a robust transit network for the corridor will result not only from a strong central line but from multiple, convenient and frequent transit connections to that line; and

WHEREAS, the Riverview Corridor study has generated broader questions about the safety, livability and special purpose of West 7th Street in its current design that must be addressed regardless of the final mode and alignment selected; and

WHEREAS, there is serious concern about the safety of West 7th Street as it is currently designed for both pedestrians and bicyclists, especially senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and families with small children; and pedestrian safety must be a prime concern of current and future car, bus or modern streetcar usage on the street; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul is currently revising its Comprehensive Plan and the draft Transportation Chapter of that plan calls for bicycle, pedestrian and transit infrastructure to be prioritized over motor vehicle transportation; and

WHEREAS, the businesses that line West 7th Street are the lifeblood of our community, providing critical services, retail, entertainment, hospitality and more, and planning and scoping for modern streetcar must prioritize the survival and vitality of businesses of all sizes before, during and after construction; and

WHEREAS, the character and layout of West 7th Street varies from segment to segment and the design process for both the street and the modern streetcar should recognize and evaluate these differences; and

WHEREAS, the public will continue to be engaged throughout the environmental review process and subsequent design, engineering and construction phases to ensure that the project is reflective of the needs of the diverse communities within the Riverview Corridor; and

WHEREAS, by selecting Alternative 4b as the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative, the City of Saint Paul recognizes the need to partner with Metro Transit and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to work in consultation with Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the City of Minneapolis to develop and deliver separate transit, livability and economic development investments to the Ford Corridor as soon as possible;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Planning Commission supports the selection of Alternative 4b as the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission recommends that next phase of study for the Riverview Corridor must include:

- Analysis that prioritizes public safety.
- A design that prioritizes pedestrian and bicyclist safety along the entirety of West 7th Street and meets the Saint Paul Complete Streets goals and the priorities of the updated Comprehensive Plan.
- A plan for accommodating or relocating the bicycle infrastructure currently along West 7th Street.
- A community process to evaluate street layout and plan streetscape improvements along West 7th Street (including identifying funding sources and ongoing maintenance responsibilities), co-convened by the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, MnDOT and the City of Saint Paul. These improvements will be implemented concurrently with the Riverview Corridor design and construction process, regardless of the final mode and alignment chosen.
- A detailed plan and budget for construction mitigation based on lessons learned from other transit projects in the region and best practices from around the country and developed in conjunction with small business owners along the corridor.
- A design that evaluates the variations between different segments of West 7th Street in light of the goals described in this resolution.
- Maximizing Riverview's competitiveness for federal funding including analysis of phased construction plans and optimized implementation schedule.
- A plan for improved local bus service to feed the Riverview Corridor at critical connection points downtown and along West 7th Street; and

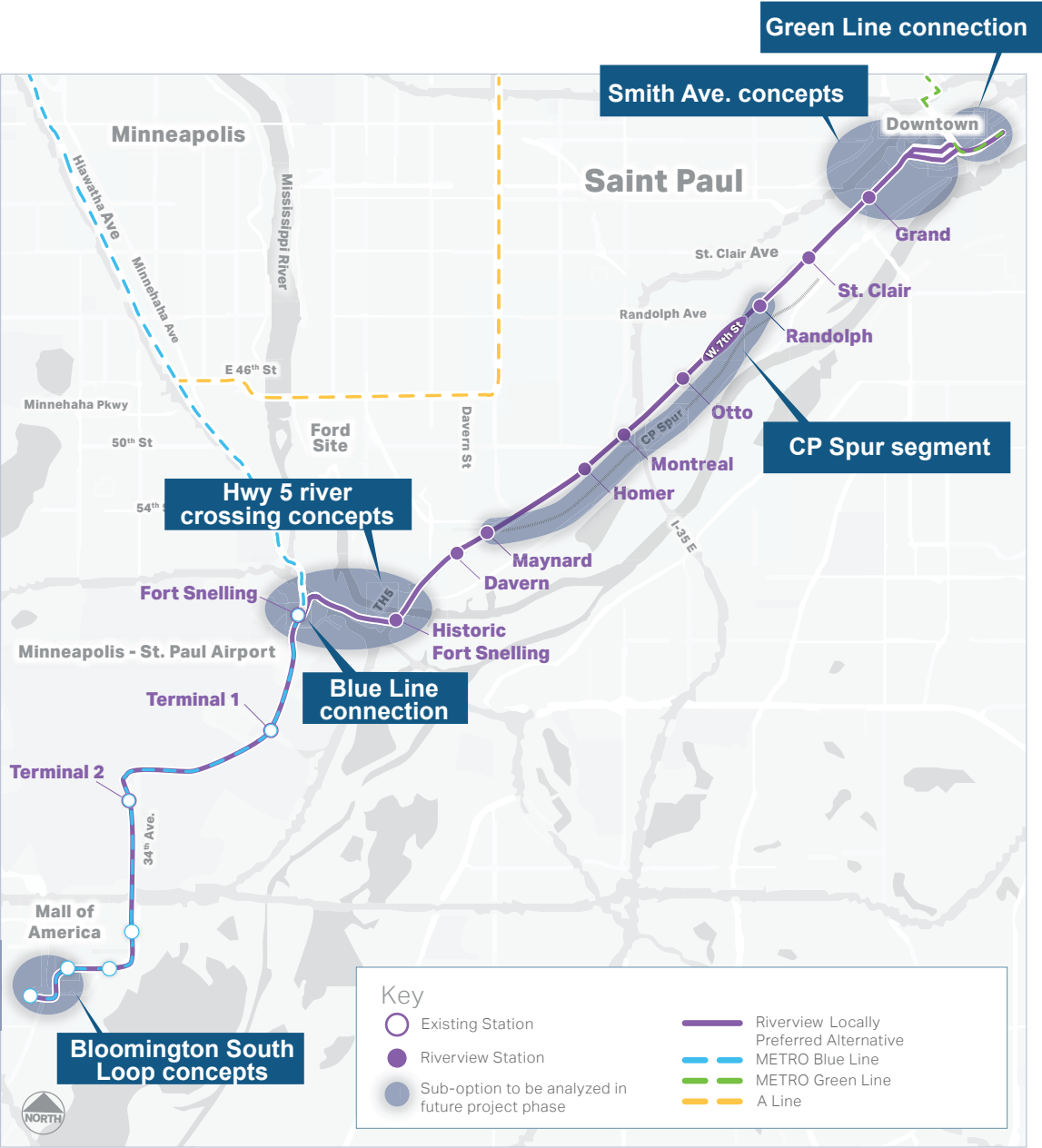
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Planning Commission recommends that the City of Saint Paul work collaboratively with the City of Bloomington, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, the Metropolitan Airports Commission and other stakeholders to undertake and develop station area plans for the proposed modern streetcar station areas based on market conditions, community input, Metropolitan Council guidelines, and expectations for development density, level of activity and design; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Planning Commission recommends that a parallel discussion among MnDOT, Ramsey County and the City of Saint Paul about the relationship and purpose of arterial corridors such as West 7th Street, Shepard Road and I-35E regarding their impacts on traffic patterns, speed limits and more including a subsequent discussion on the best arrangement for ownership and maintenance of West 7th Street; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Planning Commission recommends that at the completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the PAC will reconvene to evaluate the technical and financial outlook for the Riverview Corridor project, to determine whether the chosen LPA is likely be under construction by 2025 and make alternate plans if necessary; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Planning Commission recommends the Saint Paul City Council adopt a resolution supporting Alternative 4b and forward to the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and the Metropolitan Council for their consideration.

Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative



city of saint paul
planning commission resolution
file number _____
date _____

FORD CORRIDOR STUDY SUPPORT AND INITIATION

WHEREAS, the Riverview Corridor is a transitway corridor in the cities of Saint Paul and Bloomington Minnesota, serving urban and suburban communities; and

WHEREAS, a pre-project development study has been completed to analyze bus and rail alternatives in the Riverview Corridor study area connecting the Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, the Mall of America in Bloomington and the neighborhoods in-between; and

WHEREAS, a pre-project development study was completed to evaluate and recommend transit service that enhanced mobility and access to opportunities for residents, businesses and the region and to cultivate economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, The pre-project development study was a joint local and regional planning effort conducted by Riverview Corridor Policy Advisory Committee and led by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority in collaboration with local and regional partners; and

WHEREAS, the study included thorough technical analysis of alternatives including multiple bus and rail modes and multiple route alignments providing service within the study area; and

WHEREAS, the technical analysis identified two separate travel markets in the Riverview Corridor study area; and

WHEREAS, one market, the Highway 5 market, is served by the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative; and

WHEREAS, the other market, the Ford Corridor market, consists of the area between the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative and the Blue Line in Minneapolis encompassing the Ford Site (see attached figure); and

WHEREAS, by selecting Alternative 4b as the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative, the Policy Advisory Committee recognized the need for the City of Saint Paul, Metro Transit and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to work in consultation with Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the City of Minneapolis to develop and deliver separate transit, livability and economic development investments to the Ford Corridor as soon as possible; and

moved by _____
seconded by _____
in favor _____
against _____

WHEREAS, comments submitted by agencies, adjacent communities, the business sector and the public related to the Ford Corridor during the Riverview Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative comment period and throughout the duration of the pre-project development study will be addressed accordingly in the Ford Corridor technical analysis; and

WHEREAS, the public will continue to be engaged throughout the Ford Corridor technical analysis to ensure that any project resulting from the analysis is reflective of the needs of the diverse communities within the Ford Corridor; and

WHEREAS, Metro Transit, working closely with the City of Saint Paul and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, are committed to studying and implementing feasible, near-term transit improvements to better serve the existing Highland Park area; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul, Metro Transit and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority are committed to undertaking an evaluation of how best to serve and connect the Ford Corridor, including a future potential redeveloped Ford site, to a future potential Riverview Corridor, the existing Blue and A Lines, and the existing transit system with new transit options (such as regular route transit, arterial bus rapid transit, and rail transit) or restructured existing regular route bus service that will include the following benchmarks:

- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, working collaboratively with Metro Transit and the City of Saint Paul, to develop a work plan and management structure by April 30, 2018.
- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to secure funding for the analysis by April 30, 2018.
- Establishment of a Policy Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee by August 30, 2018.
- Completion of the study prior to seeking municipal consent for the Riverview Corridor, currently anticipated to be in mid-2020.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Planning Commission recommends that City of Saint Paul request Metro Transit, working closely with the City of Saint Paul and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, to analyze and implement feasible, near-term transit improvements to better serve the existing Highland Park area; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the next phase of study for the Riverview Corridor plans for a seamless connection between the West 7th Street portions of the Riverview Corridor with the Ford Corridor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Planning Commission recommends that City of Saint Paul request a partnership with Metro Transit and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to undertake an evaluation of how best to serve and connect the Ford Corridor, including a future potential redeveloped Ford site, to the Riverview Corridor, the existing Blue and A Lines, and the existing transit system with new transit options (such as regular route transit, arterial bus rapid transit, and rail transit) or restructured existing regular route bus service that includes the following benchmarks:

- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, working collaboratively with Metro Transit and the City of Saint Paul, to develop a work plan and management structure by April 30, 2018.

- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to secure funding for the analysis by April 30, 2018.
- Establishment of a Policy Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee by August 30, 2018.
- Completion of the study prior to seeking municipal consent for the Riverview Corridor, currently anticipated to be in mid-2020.

and;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Planning Commission recommends the Saint Paul City Council adopt a resolution supporting the Ford Corridor study and forward this resolution to the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and the Metropolitan Council for their consideration.

Ford Corridor Potential Study Area





RIVERVIEW CORRIDOR

Draft locally preferred alternative

Alternative
4b

Modern Streetcar: W. 7th - Hwy 5 / Fort Snelling

Modern Streetcar Examples



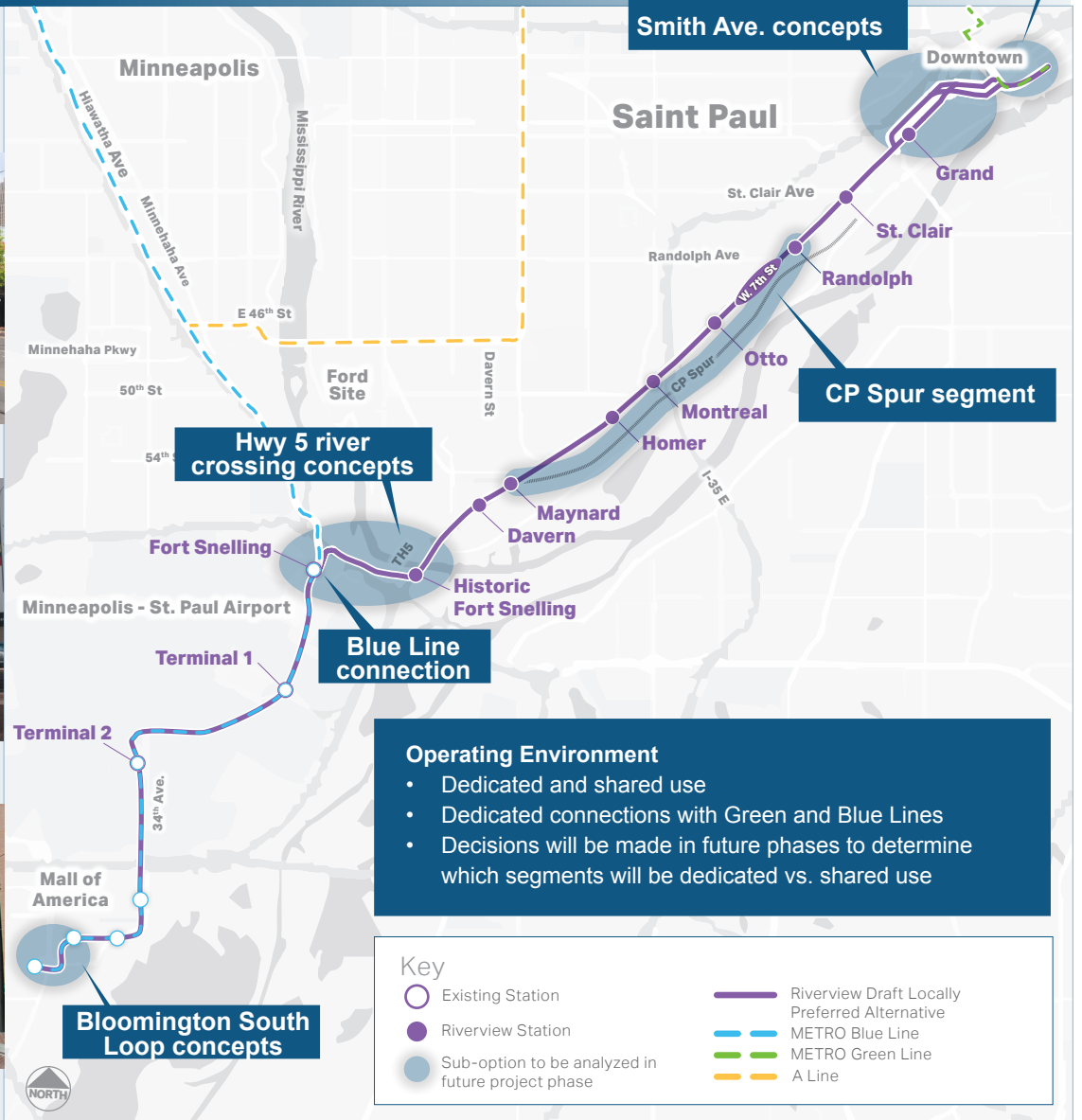
Kansas City



Detroit



Portland



Key characteristics of draft locally preferred alternative



ROUTE
LENGTH

**11.7
miles**



TOTAL
NUMBER OF
STATIONS

20



TRAVEL
TIME

44 min.



2040 DAILY
RIDERSHIP

Total 20,400
Transit-dependent
4,600
New Riders 2,700



CAPITAL
COST
(2025\$)

\$1.4B-\$2.0B



OPERATION &
MAINTENANCE
COST (2027\$)

\$35M
per year



COST PER
RIDER

\$11-14

(Annualized Capital Cost +
Annual Operating Cost) /
Average of Current Year &
2040 Ridership Forecasts

Connecting the Ford Site

A separate transit study to develop and analyze alternatives to connect the Ford Site to the Riverview Corridor and the Blue Line in Minneapolis

Next Steps

1. Identify funding partners
2. Identify study leads/co-leads
3. Develop and execute necessary inter-agency agreements
4. Develop work plan, schedule, and budget
5. Establish distinct advisory committees
6. Identify and adopt locally preferred alternative and develop next steps



STAY INVOLVED