

What's the latest on the Southwest Light Rail planning process?

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and its partners are continuing to advance the Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) line project. The next step is an 18-month environmental study – called a Draft Environmental Impact Statement - to better understand impacts of the proposed LRT line on the surrounding community before moving forward with engineering, design and construction.

Public input is critical to understanding how LRT may affect the natural environment and communities. There will be many opportunities to review information and provide input as the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is prepared in 2008 and 2009. Check the Southwest LRT website at www.southwesttransitway.org for a meeting schedule and additional information.

What is a Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

The purpose of a DEIS is to provide a full and open evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Southwest LRT line to ensure that decision-makers and the public are aware of the impacts and of reasonable alternatives, to avoid or minimize adverse impacts prior to implementing the transit line. During the DEIS, the public is invited to review and comment on the elements, which include the following:

- Identify and explain the purpose and need for improved transit to serve the area
- Describe agency and public coordination efforts
- Develop and describe the alternatives for the proposed action being considered
- Serve as the basis for a decision to move forward with the Southwest LRT line
- Identify the environmental and community effects of the three LRT alternatives and measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts of their implementation
- Allow opportunities for public and agency input

“Hennepin County and our city, neighborhood and business partners have been working hard on this project since 2002. The next several months are particularly important as we identify the preferred route and consider environmental impacts and mitigation measures. Continued community engagement is critical if we are to successfully transform the Southwest Corridor vision of safe and efficient transit service into a reality for our metro region.”

Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman,
Chair of the Southwest Policy Advisory Committee

Upcoming Meetings Community Meetings:

We are meeting with community members and business groups to provide information about the Southwest LRT project and solicit input.

Timing: Ongoing, please check www.southwesttransitway.org for upcoming meetings

Scoping Meetings:

The “scoping” process is a formal opportunity for the community to comment on what will be evaluated during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS is proposed to include the three light rail routes (see map inside) and environmental issues including, but not limited to noise, vibration, air quality, parks, lakes, rivers, floodplains, historic and cultural properties, and traffic. Check our website for information about upcoming scoping meetings.

www.southwesttransitway.org

Timing: Fall 2008

newsline

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SOUTHWEST transitway

What is the proposed Southwest LRT line?

The proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) line is a high-frequency train serving the rapidly growing southwest metro area - Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Edina, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, as well as Minneapolis neighborhoods and downtown Minneapolis.

The Southwest LRT line will connect to other rail lines (Hiawatha, Central, and Northstar) and high-frequency bus routes in downtown Minneapolis, providing access to the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport, Mall of America, the State Capitol, and downtown St. Paul.

Overall, the Southwest LRT line will improve quality of life by helping metro area residents spend less money on transportation and more time with their families because of less time in traffic, while also benefiting our economy and environment.



Where We've Been, Where We're Going

To date, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) has documented the need for high-quality, high-frequency transit to serve the southwest metro area – light rail will help manage growing congestion and also support economic development.

Reaching out to residents, business leaders, and travelers is a key goal. Since 2002, we've presented information at more than 90 community meetings and held 15 public open houses. Local newspapers and network newscasts have featured numerous stories about plans for a Southwest LRT line, and close to 1,000 comments have been received from the public - the vast majority of which have been supportive of the light rail train.

In 2007, the HCRRA and its partners completed an Alternatives Analysis, which determined that a LRT line is the best mode to serve the transit needs for the growing southwest metro area, and narrowed the LRT route alternatives to three. In 2008 and 2009, the three LRT routes will be evaluated to narrow them to one for implementation by 2015, shortly after the Central Corridor LRT line between the two downtowns has opened.

fast fact

5

In an average week, **vehicle miles** traveled in the metro area total more than **three times the distance to the sun**, 93 million miles away.

(Metropolitan Council)

Southwest LRT Goals

1. Improve Mobility
2. Cost-Effective and Efficient
3. Protect the Environment
4. Preserve Quality of Life
5. Economic Development

fast fact

1

Metro area commuters **waste** an average of **43 hours** a year **stuck in traffic**.

(Metropolitan Council, Texas Transportation Institute)



fast fact

2

Southwest LRT trains will operate **20 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

(Southwest Alternatives Analysis, 2007)

“With more congestion and traffic, businesses would like to be able to help employees get to and from their jobs, and to help move products more quickly through the metro area. (In the southwest suburban area), the public mindset has changed tremendously in the last few years—it’s grown in support for a Southwest Corridor line.”

Dan Duffy, Duffy Architects (Member of the Southwest Policy Advisory Committee)

fast fact

3

Southwest LRT **ridership** is projected at approximately **28,000 trips per day.**

(Southwest Alternatives Analysis, 2007)

fast fact

4

Trains will arrive/depart **every 7.5 minutes** during rush hour.

(Southwest Alternatives Analysis, 2007)

Potential Routes

After a two-year study of transit alternatives, three light rail transit routes were identified for further evaluation to determine which would best serve our communities.

LRT 1A:

Downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie via the Kenilworth Corridor and the HCRRA property.

LRT 3A:

Downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie via the Kenilworth Corridor and Opus/Golden Triangle area.

LRT 3C:

Downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie via Nicollet Avenue, the Midtown Corridor, and the Opus/Golden Triangle area.

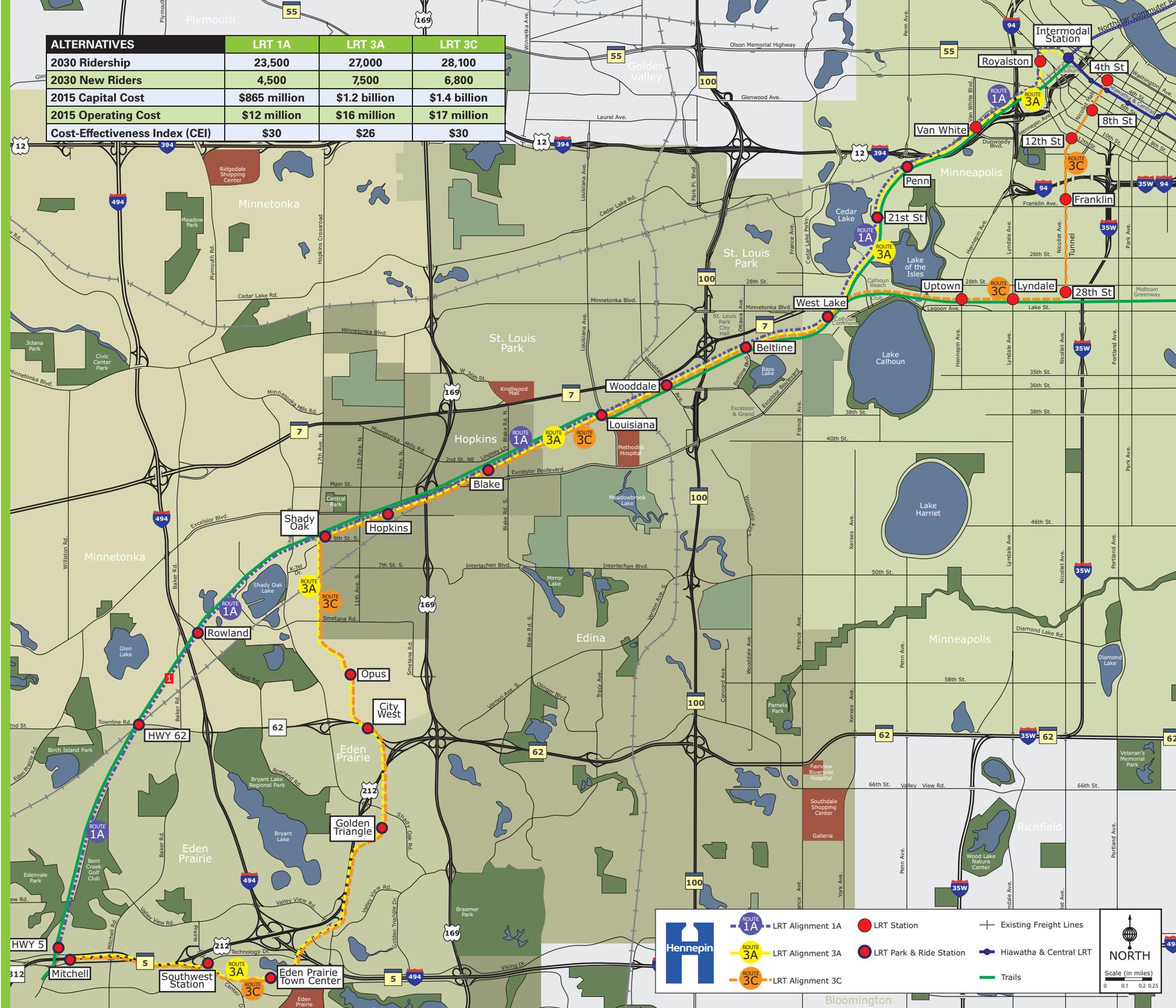
Major Employers

- ADC Telecommunications
- Golden Triangle
- Opus
- SuperValu
- Cargill
- Methodist Hospital
- Calhoun Commons/ Calhoun Village
- Target Corporation
- American Express
- Wells Fargo

Activity Centers

- Eden Prairie Center
- Excelsior/Grand
- Chain of Lakes
- Uptown
- Twins Stadium
- Target Center Arena
- HHH Metrodome
- Walker Art Center
- Guthrie Theater
- Hennepin Ave. Entertainment District
- Eat Street
- Minneapolis Convention Center
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- Minneapolis Community and Technical College
- Minneapolis College of Art and Design

ALTERNATIVES	LRT 1A	LRT 3A	LRT 3C
2030 Ridership	23,500	27,000	28,100
2030 New Riders	4,500	7,500	6,800
2015 Capital Cost	\$865 million	\$1.2 billion	\$1.4 billion
2015 Operating Cost	\$12 million	\$16 million	\$17 million
Cost-Effectiveness Index (CEI)	\$30	\$26	\$30



ROUTE 1A - LRT Alignment 1A

ROUTE 3A - LRT Alignment 3A

ROUTE 3C - LRT Alignment 3C

● LRT Station

● LRT Park & Ride Station

+ Existing Freight Lines

+ Hiawatha & Central LRT

+ Trails

NORTH

Scale (in miles)

0 0.1 0.2 0.25