

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

June 15, 2026



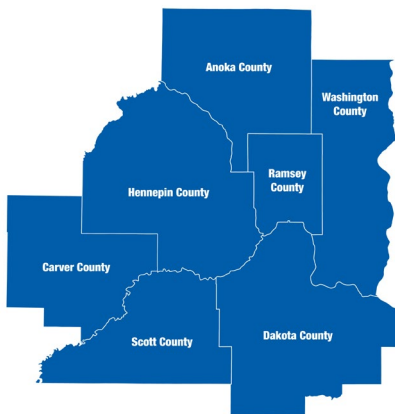
# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

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# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

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## Executive Summary

Pursuant to Minnesota Session Laws – 2025, 1st Special Session, Chapter 8, Article 2, Section 122,<sup>1</sup> the Minnesota Legislature directed the Metropolitan Council to conduct a technical study of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as an alternative mode of service for the Metro Transit METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE), which is currently planned as a Light Rail Transit (LRT) project. The study was required to: (1) evaluate BRT as an alternative transit mode in the corridor; (2) compare LRT and BRT alternatives across life cycle costs, ridership, system impacts, project risks, and other relevant factors; and (3) develop recommendations for a potential BRT project redesign.

This report fulfills that statutory directive. It is strictly a technical analysis and did not include community outreach, business engagement, stakeholder input, or coordination with corridor cities or Hennepin County. Notably, Hennepin County — the primary potential local funder for the project — was not a participant in the study, and its position regarding BRT funding support remains unknown.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2025/1/Session+Law/Chapter/8/>

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## Transit in the Region

### Investing in Transit

Investing in transit is about ensuring the Twin Cities region continues to function, grow, and remain accessible for future generations. As the region adds residents and jobs, transit provides a reliable way to move more people using limited roadway space, connect communities to opportunity, and support economic vitality. High-quality transit investments also help households manage transportation costs, expand access to essential destinations, and provide travel options that are resilient to long-term demographic, economic, and environmental change.

### Metro Transit Today

Metro Transit today operates one of the largest and most comprehensive transit systems in the country. The current network includes METRO light rail lines (Blue and Green) and a growing family of METRO BRT lines (Gold, Orange, Red, and a growing Arterial BRT network) complemented by a robust local and express bus system. Together, these services provide frequent, all-day connections between regional job centers, downtowns, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and neighborhoods, forming the backbone of daily mobility for the region.

### Metro Transit Future

Metro Transit's planned network builds on this foundation by expanding high-capacity transit to corridors with strong existing and future travel demand. Planned and advancing projects, including additional BRT lines (e.g. the METRO Gold Line extension and the METRO Bronze Line), Arterial BRT system expansions, and service enhancements are designed to strengthen regional connectivity, improve travel times, and create a more understandable and reliable transit system. These investments focus on linking communities that have historically lacked high-quality transit access with regional destinations, while supporting long-term growth and land use goals.

## Benefits of Transit

### Community Connectivity and Access

Transit improves access to jobs, education, healthcare, and services, especially for residents who rely on transit or choose not to drive. In the region, the METRO Green Line strengthened connections between downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, and downtown Saint Paul, with frequent, all-day service supporting everyday travel.

### Development and Land Use Outcomes

High-quality transit corridors can support walkable development and reinvestment near stations when paired with supportive land-use policies. Along the Blue Line, the Hiawatha/Lake Street area has seen housing, commercial development, and public-realm improvements, demonstrating how fixed transit infrastructure can provide long-term confidence for investment.

### Long-Term, Generational Infrastructure

Transit is a long-term public investment that shapes growth over decades. Even as a relatively young system, Metro Transit's Blue and Green Lines show how early decisions, such as station locations and service levels, continue to influence where housing, jobs, and public investment concentrate, guiding regional growth across multiple planning cycles.

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## What is Being Evaluated?

This BLE alternatives analysis (AA) report reflects the legislative requirements established in Minnesota Session Laws – 2025, 1st Special Session, Chapter 8, Article 2, Section 122,<sup>2</sup>. The AA uses the current BLE LRT corridor alignment and demographic data to develop and evaluate conceptual BRT alternatives.<sup>3</sup> This includes evaluating design constraints, estimating capital and operating costs, analyzing ridership and travel time performance, assessing potential federal funding ratings, and identifying implementation risks and schedule impacts associated with a potential redesign of the BLE. Importantly, the work does not presume a predetermined outcome, but instead, provides a basis for understanding the opportunities and challenges in shifting from an LRT service to a BRT service in the BLE corridor.

For context, the LRT alternative integrates with existing METRO Blue Line and Green Line service. Under the LRT concept, BLE service would connect directly to the existing Blue Line at Target Field Station, then continue south along the Blue Line alignment to Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America (**Figure 1**). LRT service would also interline with the Green Line LRT and the Green Line Extension between Target Field and Downtown East, allowing through-running service across downtown Minneapolis. This configuration provides a continuous, one-seat ride to multiple regional destinations.

Figure 1. Existing METRO LRT Service



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2025/1/Session+Law/Chapter/8/>

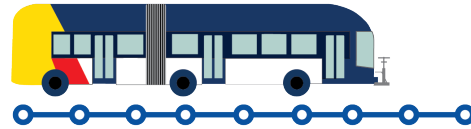
<sup>3</sup> Current BLE LRT alignment has been evaluated and documented in the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), accessible here: <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/About/Project-materials.aspx>

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## BRT Alternatives

Two BRT alternatives were developed for analysis as potential extensions of the METRO Blue Line, each preserving the corridor’s core function as a north–south, high-capacity transit connection while offering flexibility in how downtown service is delivered (**Figure 2**). Both BRT alternatives substantially follow the BLE

### Blue Line Extension BRT Snapshot



**14.5 Miles & 19 Stations**

LRT alignment from Brooklyn Park, to Robbinsdale, through North Minneapolis, and continuing south into downtown Minneapolis. At N Washington Ave and N 10<sup>th</sup> Ave the alternatives diverge to evaluate different downtown access and connectivity options, using existing or planned BRT and Arterial BRT stations south of Target Field Station.<sup>4</sup>

Under both alternatives, BRT service is assumed to operate with characteristics consistent with the METRO Gold Line, Metro Transit’s most recently developed BRT service. These characteristics include frequent, all-day service, with enhanced stations, off-board fare payment and real-time schedule information. BRT service also includes traffic signal priority and a mix of dedicated and managed guideway segments where feasible. Service assumptions, including frequencies, spans, and operating patterns used for ridership and performance analysis, are documented in Running Time Model Technical Memorandum.

**Alternative 1:** Alternative 1 travels through downtown to 8th Street / 9th Avenue. It follows an alignment along 10th Avenue North and North 7th Street, transitioning to a split alignment on the 7th and 8th Avenue couplet within downtown Minneapolis, with a terminus located near Hennepin County Medical Center.

This alternative emphasizes proximity to medical, governmental, and institutional destinations while maintaining strong access to downtown employment and integrating BRT service within existing traffic patterns and surface transit operations.

**Alternative 2:** Alternative 2 terminates at the 5th Street Transit Center. It deviates from the BLE LRT at Washington Avenue North and N 10<sup>th</sup> Ave, serving a dense residential and commercial corridor before terminating at the 5th Street Transit Center adjacent to Target Field and Target Center.

This alternative focuses on maximizing regional connectivity by terminating at a major multimodal hub, optimizing transfers to other transitways and commuter services, and reinforcing downtown Minneapolis as the region’s primary transit convergence point.

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<sup>4</sup> Conceptual plans for the alternatives are included in BRT Conceptual Plans, along with technical memorandums for the Design Guidelines and Design Constraints, which are included in Project Redesign Schedule and Cost Impacts Report.

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Figure 2. Metro Transit BLE BRT Project Map

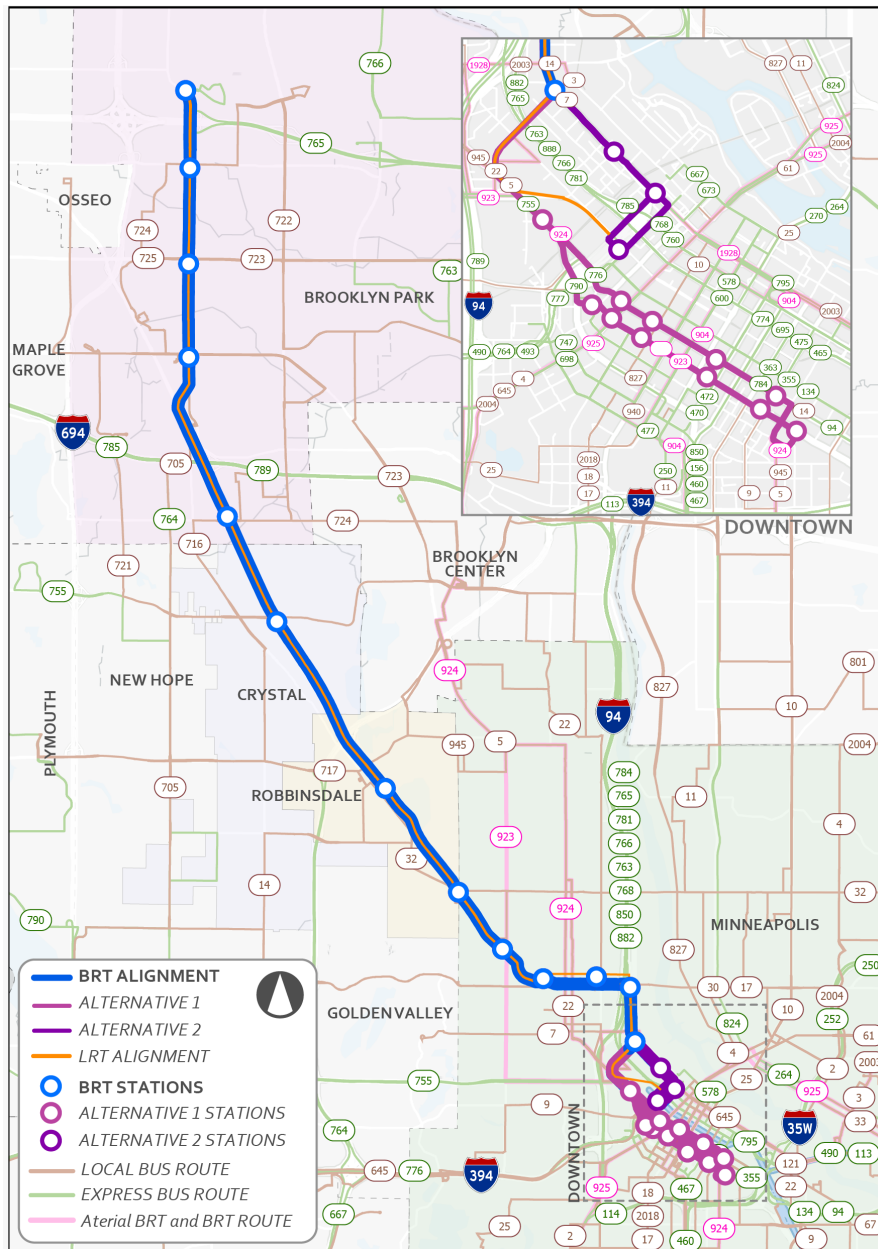


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## Network Connectivity

From a system perspective, the BRT alternatives reflect Metro Transit's growing network of METRO BRT lines, such as the Orange, Gold, and Red Lines, as well as the Arterial BRT routes in operation (A, B, C, D, and E Lines), by offering comparable features, such as frequent, all-day service, enhanced stations, reduced travel times, and strong connections to a multitude of other transportation options. The BRT extension would integrate with these other services, and enable convenient transfers to the existing METRO Blue and Green Lines, as well as the METRO Green Line extension (**Figure 3**). For a detailed review of how Arterial BRT could function in this corridor, please refer to [Appendix H](#).

Figure 3. Metro Transit Service – Network Connections



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## Comparing LRT to BRT

Comparing the Blue Line LRT and BRT options helps show the differences between viable high-capacity transit options in the corridor. Looking at the options side by side makes it easier to see how each mode affects riders, communities, costs, and long-term risks. The comparison focuses on cost, mobility, and rider experience and market, using the same evaluation approach used by the FTA and in prior Blue Line LRT planning.

### Cost and Efficiency

Across the alternatives, BRT generally requires lower annualized capital investment and lower long-term operating costs than LRT, reflecting differences in infrastructure, vehicles, and maintenance needs. At the same time, LRT supports higher overall transit use and a greater number of trips on the project, indicating a stronger ridership response to higher-capacity, one-seat service to the Mall of America and Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP). A comparison of the alternatives in **Table 1** highlights the tradeoff between lower ongoing costs and higher ridership outcomes. For more details on the service plan and running time, refer to [Appendix A](#). For ridership results and operations and maintenance costs, please refer to [Appendix B](#). For details on the Capital Cost please refer to [Appendix C](#).

Table 1. Cost and Efficiency Comparison

Measure	LRT	BRT Alt. 1	BRT Alt. 2
Annualized Capital Cost	\$108,049,954	\$28,054,786	\$28,054,786
Annualized O&M Cost	\$41,399,144	\$17,910,000	\$15,610,000
Annual New Transit Trips	980,545	321,600	327,295
Annual Trips on Project	2,818,020	1,229,115	1,131,965
Cost Per Trip	\$26.51	\$18.70	\$19.29

### Mobility and Travel Outcomes

The Capital Investment Grant (CIG) mobility criteria measures indicate that the LRT option results in larger reductions in vehicle miles traveled and greater shifts of travel to transit compared to the BRT alternatives. This suggests stronger impacts on regional travel behavior and auto dependence under the LRT scenario. The BRT alternatives still produce measurable mobility benefits, but at a lower magnitude, reflecting differences in service design, capacity,

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and rider response. **Table 2** summarizes these differences in travel outcomes across alternatives (see [Appendix C](#) for more information on CIG funding criteria).

Table 2. Mobility and Travel Outcomes Comparison

Measure	LRT	BRT Alt. 1	BRT Alt. 2
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	-23,600	-8,500	-8,500
Passenger Miles Traveled (PMT)	-26,000	-9,300	-9,400
One-Seat Ride to Downtown	Yes	No (transfer)	No (transfer)

## Rider Experience and Land Use Context

Differences between the alternatives are reflected both in how riders experience the service and in the types of communities served along the corridor. As shown in **Table 2**, the LRT option offers a direct, one-seat ride to downtown destinations, MSP Airport and the Mall of America, reducing transfers and travel uncertainties and providing a simpler, more predictable trip for longer journeys. The BRT alternatives generally require a transfer to reach comparable destinations, adding travel time and steps that can affect convenience and perceived reliability.

Station area demographic data indicate that both LRT and BRT can serve areas with significant populations, employment, and affordable housing. Because the BRT alternatives vary in their downtown alignments, station area demographics for the LRT and BRT alternatives in **Table 3** reflect an expanded context that includes the existing downtown Blue Line LRT stations (Warehouse/Hennepin Ave, Nicollet Mall, Government Plaza, and Downtown East Stations). This allows for a clearer comparison of how BRT and LRT alternatives serve population and employment centers. The BRT alternatives, while serving fewer total residents, reach areas with comparable or higher concentrations of affordable housing and, in some cases, higher risk populations. These differences reflect variations in alignment, station placement, and service structure.

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Table 3. Rider Experience and Land Use Context Comparison

Measure*	LRT**	BRT Alt. 1	BRT Alt. 2
Station Area Population (population served within ½ mile radius of each station)	82,839	65,647	55,156
Population Density (persons per sq. mile within ½ mile radius of each station area)	22,775	6,262	5,869
High Risk Population Served (population with three or more risk factors)	12,997	16,710	12,086
Station Area Employment (employment served within ½ mile radius of each station)	37,428	38,427	32,567
Affordable Housing Near Stations (LBAR housing within ½ mile radius of each station)	4,345	5,867	3,167

\*Measures are based on the CIG land use criteria, which assess population density, existing employment, existing legally binding affordability-restricted (LBAR) housing, and population that is considered high-risk per the U.S. Census Bureau's Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) tool within ½ mile of the proposed stations.<sup>5</sup>

\*\*LRT values include the existing downtown LRT Stations for expanded contextual understanding of alternative operation

## Regional Planning Considerations

Critical to any transit investment is considering the broader connection transit has with established state planning goals and supportive planning documents across the region. Future high-capacity BLE is consistent with broader regional and statewide transportation goals established through Minnesota GO, MnDOT's 50-year statewide transportation vision, and the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP). These documents emphasize a multimodal, people-focused transportation system that expands access to opportunity, reduces reliance on single-occupant vehicles, and advances access, sustainability, and long-term system performance. **Table 4** identifies four key goal areas from these planning documents and describes how the BLE supports these goals.

<sup>5</sup>Please refer to [Appendix C](#) for more information on project specific CIG measures

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Table 4. BLE Nexus with Minnesota GO and SMTP Goals

## Goal: Expand non-driving and high-quality transit options

Minnesota GO and the SMTP prioritizes giving people reliable, frequent alternatives to driving, especially in busy corridors. Both the LRT and BRT alternatives advance this goal by extending frequent, all-day, high-capacity transit throughout the corridor, to downtown Minneapolis and major destinations. From a CIG standpoint, LRT tends to perform better on mobility and connectivity measures due to direct, one-seat regional service, while BRT performs comparably by providing high-quality transit at lower cost.

## Goal: Improve access and advance equity

A key statewide goal is making it easier for people who rely on transit to reach jobs, services, and daily needs. Both alternatives support this goal by providing reliable alternatives to driving and encouraging shifts to transit. Both alternatives support access to dense communities, jobs, and affordable housing when evaluating based on CIG measures. In some cases, BRT alternatives can serve more higher-risk populations due to corridor coverage, but LRT provides stronger systemwide connectivity, economic development support, and an improved overall perception.

## Goal: Reduce reliance on driving and support sustainable travel

Minnesota GO and the SMTP emphasize reducing driving and encouraging more sustainable travel. High-quality transit supports this goal by providing a dependable option for people who cannot drive and a practical alternative for those who choose not to, helping more trips shift to transit for work, appointments, school, and daily activities. LRT provides stronger ridership overall and greater ability to support longer regional trips. BRT results in lower ridership but has benefit of greater route flexibility in design and construction.

## Cost and Funding

The majority of the BLE's cost for BRT, regardless of alternative, is concentrated in the core construction elements. FTA systematically organizes and defines project costs into Standard Cost Categories (SCC). These include the Guideway & Track Elements (SCC 10), Stations, Stops, Terminals, Intermodal (SCC 20), Sitework and Special Conditions (SCC 40), and Systems (SCC 50). In today's dollars, these core construction costs total approximately \$420 million, presented in **Table 5**. SCC Totals By far the largest component is Sitework and Special Conditions, such as utility relocation, street reconstruction, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and traffic signal changes, which accounts for roughly \$312 million. Stations represent about \$36 million, Systems (e.g. signals, communications, and fare equipment) represent about \$52 million, and the Guideway & Track Elements are about \$20 million.

Beyond the core construction elements, additional cost categories contribute substantially to the total project cost. SCC 60 (ROW, Land, Existing Improvements) accounts for the acquisition of real property needed for the project and is estimated at approximately \$215.2 million in current dollars. SCC 70 (Vehicles) includes the purchase of 17 articulated BRT vehicles and totals approximately \$33 million. SCC 80 (Professional Services), which includes

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project development, environmental approvals, engineering, design, construction management, testing, and startup, adds approximately \$109 million in base-year costs. SCC 90 (Unallocated Contingency) is included to account for remaining project uncertainty at this conceptual level of design and totals approximately \$78 million, consistent with FTA guidance. SCC 100 (Finance Charges) are not included in the estimate. Capital costs for Alternatives 1 and 2 are the same because, in the downtown segment where the alignments differ, both routes utilize existing BRT stations. As a result, no new capital investment is required in these divergent segments, and overall capital costs are equivalent for both alternatives.

When these same construction costs are expressed in future, year-of-expenditure dollars to reflect the expected construction timeframe, the SCC 10–50 total increases to approximately \$645 million, and the total project cost, including all SCC categories, rises to approximately \$1.14 billion. This increase is driven largely by inflation and construction market conditions over time rather than by changes in the physical scope of the project. Labor, materials, and contractor costs are expected to rise as construction is pushed further into the future.

Looking at costs over time shows that construction delays, even without scope changes, significantly increase total cost and financial risk. For more detail on project cost, see [Appendix E](#). As a comparison, the June 2026 project budget update for the LRT alternative is estimated at \$3.58B, as shown in the right-hand column of **Table 5**. The LRT alternative includes a higher contingency rate applied to the estimated cost than the BRT alternative with \$900M in unallocated contingency for LRT. The June 2026 project update currently estimates the Blue Line Extension LRT ridership to be more than 10,000 riders daily. Completion of the extension would bring daily ridership of the entire Blue Line to more than 30,000 daily riders.

Table 5. SCC Totals for BLE BRT

SCC Category	What It Includes	Current-Year Cost (2026 \$)	Future Cost (YOE \$)	LRT (as of 2024)
<b>SCC 10 – Guideway &amp; Track Elements</b>	Dedicated bus lanes, pavement structure, corridor footprint	~\$19.6 million	~\$23.2 million	Not Available
<b>SCC 20 – Stations, Stops, Terminals, Intermodals</b>	Station platforms, shelters, amenities	~\$36.4 million	~\$43.8 million	
<b>SCC 40 – Sitework &amp; Special Conditions</b>	Utility relocation, street reconstruction, sidewalks, bike facilities, bridges, traffic control	~\$311.9 million	~\$514.9 million	

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<b>SCC 50 – Systems</b>	Traffic signals, communications, fare equipment	~\$52.2 million	~\$63.0 million	Not Available
<b>Total SCC 10–50</b>	<b>Core construction elements</b>	<b>~\$420.0 million</b>	<b>~\$644.8 million</b>	<b>~\$1.4 billion</b>
<b>60 – ROW, Land, Existing Improvements</b>	Property acquisition, easements, and property-related costs	~\$215.2 million	~\$241.1 million	~\$220 million
<b>SCC 70 – Vehicles</b>	Purchase of articulated BRT vehicles	~\$33.2 million	~\$39.7 million	~\$205 million
<b>SCC 80 – Professional Services</b>	Project development, environmental review, design, engineering, construction management, testing	~\$109.2 million	~\$125.0 million	~\$480 million
<b>SCC 90 – Unallocated Contingency</b>	Allowance for remaining uncertainty at conceptual design stage	~\$77.8 million	~\$91.2 million	~\$900 million
<b>SCC 100 – Finance Charges</b>	Interest and financing costs	\$0	\$0	\$50 million
<b>Total Project Cost (10-100)</b>	<b>All project cost categories</b>	<b>~\$855.3 million</b>	<b>~\$1.14 billion</b>	<b>~\$3.2 billion</b>

## Federal Funding Eligibility

The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program is the primary method the federal government uses to fund major transit capital projects like LRT and BRT. Project funding eligibility is based on an evaluation of how well a project performs against specific evaluation measures set by the FTA, including how well they improve mobility, serve existing communities, protect the environment, reduce congestion, and make good use of public dollars. The measures include a combination of quantitative and qualitative criteria and sub-criteria to establish a project rating to support federal funding. To be eligible for funding, a

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project must receive at least a Medium rating overall, showing it provides meaningful public benefits and is ready to move forward.

Both BRT Alternatives were evaluated against FTA's current CIG criteria<sup>6</sup> and are projected to receive an overall rating of Medium (**Figure 4**) making them eligible and competitive candidates for future New Starts<sup>7</sup> CIG funding, subject to refinement of the alternatives, continued local coordination, advancement toward a Locally Preferred Alternative. For more information on the BLE BRT CIG Rating, see [Appendix C](#). The expected rating that was assessed for the BLE LRT alternative is Medium-High as shown in **Figure 5**.

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<sup>6</sup> Current FTA CIG Guidance, beginning on page I-12 was used for BLE BRT evaluation <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2025-11/CIG-Policy-Guidance-November-2025.pdf>. Note, there is an anticipated change to the CIG Guidance by FTA in the coming year, which may adjust future application requirements.

<sup>7</sup> FTA defines New Starts as a Capital Investment Grant program category for major new fixed-guideway transit projects, such as rail or bus rapid transit, that seek federal funding for planning, design, and construction with a total project capital cost of \$400 million or greater, or for which \$150 million or more is requested in federal funding.

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Figure 4. Expected CIG Rating for BLE BRT Alternatives

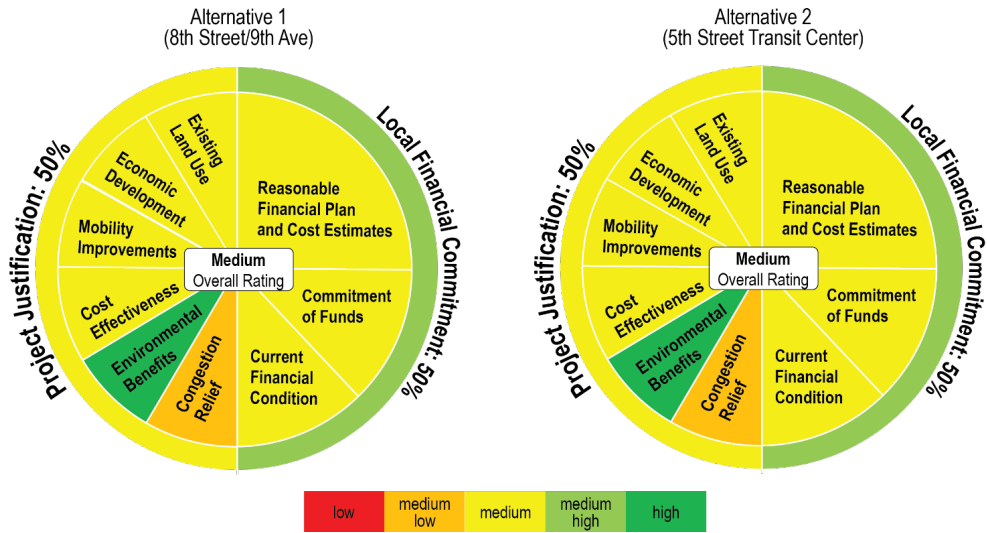
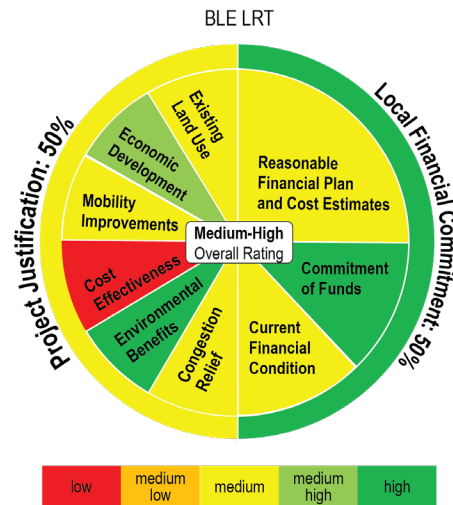


Figure 5. Expected CIG Rating for BLE LRT



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## Impacts of Proceeding with BRT

Shifting the BLE from an LRT service to a BRT service alternative would be a shift from what was originally planned and approved by corridor communities, local funders and the Transportation Policy Plan, and raises questions about project direction, timing, and delivery that warrant careful evaluation. The project has already gone through environmental review and key federal funding steps based on an LRT design, so switching modes would not be a simple update. Instead, Metro Transit would need to redo or restart several major planning, environmental, and federal approval steps, as described in [Appendix E](#).

Even if BRT has similar or fewer environmental impacts, it operates differently and requires different infrastructure, stations, and right-of-way. Because of these differences, the existing environmental documents and prior federal approvals would no longer be valid under FTA regulations, and moving forward without new review would create legal and procedural risk. Previous progress toward federal funding would also not automatically carry over under a new project definition.

## Considerations for BRT

### Additional Planning, Cost and Schedule Impacts

If Metro Transit were to switch the Blue Line Extension from LRT to BRT, it would add years to the project timeline. The change would require new planning, including re-visiting project alignment decisions with local partners, conducting a new environmental review, and receiving new federal approvals, effectively restarting major parts of the federal process. Even under an aggressive schedule, construction would not begin until Fall of 2030, with operation commencing early 2034. This represents further delay to improvements for transit and infrastructure in the corridor and increases exposure to future funding, regulatory, and market uncertainties. For more details about project redesign and cost and schedule impacts, see [Appendix E](#).

### Risk and Uncertainty Considerations

The mode switch for the BLE would increase project risk and uncertainty. Much of the work already completed for LRT would not carry forward, delaying construction and increasing costs. A longer timeline would also mean higher exposure to inflation and a more competitive construction market, where contractor shortages and higher prices are more likely. Together, these factors make final costs harder to predict and the project more difficult to deliver on schedule. For more details about Risk and Uncertainty Considerations, see [Appendix D](#).

### Tradeoffs of BRT vs LRT

The choice between staying with LRT or switching to BRT involves tradeoffs between cost, risk and customer experience. For riders, the key difference is the trip experience. LRT would provide a direct, one-seat ride from the northwest corridor into downtown and beyond, including the Mall of America and the Minneapolis- St. Paul International Airport, making trips simpler and more predictable. A BRT option would generally require a transfer to reach these destinations, adding wait time and potential uncertainty. While Metro Transit can schedule

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smooth transfers, they are often less convenient than a one-seat ride and can affect how attractive the service feels to riders.

Proceeding with LRT service also keeps the project's place in the federal CIG funding process. Switching to BRT would offer more operational flexibility and a lower capital cost. However, it also results in lower ridership and adds time, schedule and cost uncertainty, requiring project redesign and repeating environmental studies, as well as require Metro Transit to withdraw from and re-enter the federal funding process.

The primary local funding for the LRT option is provided by Hennepin County and Hennepin County Regional Rail. The County has not been part of the alternatives study and their support for providing local funding for a BRT alternative has not been discussed as part of this study. Federal funding cannot be pursued without commitments of all necessary local funding partners.

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## Appendices

# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **A. Running Time Model Technical Memorandum**

# Blue Line Extension Alternative Analysis

Running Time Model: Bus Rapid Transit

02/10/2026

## Blue Line Extension BRT Service Running Time Service Model

The purpose of this technical memorandum is to document the running time service model and associated assumptions developed for Metro Transit’s Blue Line Extension (BLE) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative Analysis. Assumptions, unless otherwise noted, were derived from travel time estimates for the METRO Blue Line Extension.

### BRT Service Plan Overview

Forecasted project service levels are displayed in **Table 1**. The BRT service modeled is proposed to operate at 10-minute frequencies, at three key peak service periods each day – AM peak, midday, and PM peak. The service will operate at 15–30-minute frequencies during off-peak periods, such as early morning or late evening. Saturday, Sunday, and holiday service will operate on weekday schedules.

**Table 1: Projected Service Plan**

Day	Time Period	Time Span	Frequency (mins.)
Weekday/Weekend/Holiday	Early Morning	5:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.	30
	AM Peak	6:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	10
	Midday	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	10
	PM Peak	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	10
	Early Evening	7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	15

	Late Evening	8:00p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	30
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## Running Times

Running times were estimated using an Excel-based running time model. Running time estimates were calculated for both directions, northbound (NB) and southbound (SB). These directional estimates are based on distance, posted speed limits, station locations and dwell, signal and intersection assumptions, and vehicle capabilities including acceleration and deceleration rates.

## Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives

Two BRT alternatives were developed to support the running time service model. The alternatives within this technical memorandum are identified based on their respective downtown termini, found in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: BRT Alternatives**

BRT Alternative	Distance
Alternative 1: 8th Street/9th Avenue	Outbound (NB): 14.5 miles
	Inbound (SB): 14.3 miles
Alternative 2: 5 <sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center	Outbound (NB): 13.2 miles
	Inbound (SB): 13.0 miles

Alternatives 1 and 2 share a common alignment from the project corridor through Plymouth Avenue Station and into downtown Minneapolis. South of Plymouth Avenue Station, the alternatives diverge. Details of each alternative are as follows:

- Alternative 1 follows an alignment along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, transitioning to a split alignment on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue couplet within downtown Minneapolis, with a terminus located near Hennepin County Medical Center.
- Alternative 2 continues along North Washington Avenue from the Plymouth Avenue Station, serving a dense residential and commercial corridor, and terminates at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center adjacent to Target Field and Target Center.

# Running Time Assumptions

## Intersection and Transit Signal Priority

Running time estimates were developed, in part, under the assumption that transit signal priority (TSP) would be implemented throughout the corridor to improve operational reliability. This analysis relied on previously established assumptions for average intersection delay, derived from historic traffic conditions and observed TSP performance data on existing Metro transit alignments. There was only one TSP scenario evaluated, reflected in the results of the running time model. For the BLE, for either light rail transit (LRT) or BRT, the evaluated scenario assumed that all signalized intersections would be equipped with TSP.

To account for LRT and BRT design differences, the project team included intersection delay into the running time model. For example, the proposed grade-separated LRT bridge over MN-610 eliminates intersection delay at this location, while the BRT alternatives operate at grade and experience delay at the MN-610 on- and off-ramp intersections.

Intersection delays along these alignments were assigned using predefined intersection-crossing delay categories, consisting of three representative average delay values, informed by average intersection delay from historic traffic and transit signal prioritization data within the transit system.

- Major intersections – 33 seconds of delay
- Medium intersections – 19 seconds of delay
- Minor intersections – 4 seconds of delay<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, within downtown Minneapolis, running times for comparable segments were inferred using data from two existing Metro Transit routes operating along similar alignments. Running time information for these routes was obtained from General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data. The reference routes used for each alternative are as follows:

- Alternative 1: METRO C Line
  - Southbound: 7<sup>th</sup> Street & Olson Station to 8<sup>th</sup> Street & Park Station
  - Northbound: 7<sup>th</sup> Street & Park Station to Olson & 7<sup>th</sup> Street Station
- Alternative 2: Route 14
  - Southbound: Washington Avenue & Plymouth Avenue to Ramp B/5th St Transit Center

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<sup>1</sup> Assuming a minimum 4 second stop for LRT or BRT at all TSP-equipped intersections was determined to be unrealistic and counter to TSP objectives. Therefore, a delay of 0 seconds was assumed at specific minor intersections.

- Northbound: Washington Avenue & 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N to Washington Avenue & Plymouth Avenue

## Dwell Time

Dwell time at stations was estimated based on the following assumptions:

- All stations will have a dwell time of 20 seconds for passenger boarding and alighting.
- A 1 second dwell time was used at the two termini to ensure train operations start from and end at 0 miles per hour (MPH), preventing dwell time at termini being counted towards total travel time

## Layovers

Layover times were calculated as the difference between the scheduled cycle time and the total roundtrip running time. The running time model assumed a layover (recovery) allowance equal to 20 percent of the total roundtrip running time, rounded up to the nearest multiple of the scheduled service frequency (i.e., 10, 15, or 30 minutes, as applicable).

## Operating Speed

BRT operating speeds were based on observed corridor speed limits. A maximum operating speed of 55 mph was assumed for BRT vehicles within the running time model.

## Acceleration and Deceleration

The assumed bus acceleration and deceleration rate is 2.7mph per second.

## Local Route Modifications

It is assumed that only minor modifications will be made to the underlying bus transit network. No local route modifications have been proposed at this time.

# Running Time Model Results

## Running Time Summary

### Alternative 1

**Table 3** presents cumulative running times, average operating speeds, round-trip running times, layover durations, total cycle times, for both inbound (IB) and outbound (OB) directions across the evaluated service frequencies for Alternative 1 - 8<sup>th</sup> Street/9<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Table 3: Alternative 1 – Running Time Summary**

Headway <sup>2</sup>	10 min freq.		15 min freq.		30 min freq.	
Direction	IB	OB	IB	OB	IB	OB
Total Running Time (min)	00:54:58	00:56:43	00:54:58	00:56:43	00:54:58	00:56:43
Total Average Speed (mph)	15.6 MPH	15.3 MPH	15.6 MPH	15.3 MPH	15.6 MPH	15.3 MPH
Total Roundtrip Running Time (min)	112 min		112 min		112 min	
Layover	28 min		23 min		38 min	
Cycle Time	140 min		135 min		150 min	

<sup>2</sup> The route operates at 10-minute frequencies during the AM Peak, Midday, and PM Peak periods, 15-minute frequencies during the Early Evening period, and 30-minute frequencies during the Early Morning and Late Evening periods.

**Table 4** and **Table 5** below present the cumulative run time at each station, and the associated dwell in seconds for both the NB and SB directions for Alternative 1 - 8<sup>th</sup> Street/9<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Table 4: Alternative 1 - Northbound Station-to-Station Travel Time Estimates**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Cumulative Run Time (hh:mm:ss)</b>	<b>Dwell (seconds)</b>
8th Street and 9th Avenue Station	00:00:00	1
7th Street & Park Avenue Station	00:03:28	20
7th Street & 3rd/4th Avenue Station	00:05:28	20
7th Street & Nicollet Station	00:07:28	20
7th Street & Hennepin Station	00:08:28	20
7th Street & Olson Station	00:12:28	20
Plymouth Avenue Station	00:16:02	20
West Broadway Station	00:17:35	20
Lyndale Avenue Station	00:20:58	20
James Avenue Station	00:22:59	20
Penn Avenue Station	00:25:23	20
Lowry Avenue Station	00:27:15	20
Downtown Robbinsdale Station	00:30:02	20
Bass Lake Road Station	00:34:36	20
63rd Avenue Station	00:36:51	20
Brooklyn Boulevard Station	00:40:45	20
85th Avenue Station	00:43:36	20
93rd Avenue Station	00:46:00	20
Oak Grove Parkway Station	00:51:02	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>00:51:02</b>	<b>361</b>

**Table 5: Alternative 1 - Southbound Station-to-Station Travel Time Estimates**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Cumulative Run Time (hh:mm:ss)</b>	<b>Dwell (seconds)</b>
Oak Grove Parkway Station	00:00:00	1
93rd Avenue Station	00:03:58	20
85th Avenue Station	00:06:21	20
Brooklyn Boulevard Station	00:09:14	20
63rd Avenue Station	00:13:07	20
Bass Lake Road Station	00:15:28	20
Downtown Robbinsdale Station	00:20:02	20
Lowry Avenue Station	00:22:49	20
Penn Avenue Station	00:24:42	20
James Avenue Station	00:27:08	20
Lyndale Avenue Station	00:29:08	20
West Broadway Station	00:32:35	20
Plymouth Avenue Station	00:34:10	20
8th Street & Olson Station	00:37:36	20
Ramp A/7th St Transit Center	00:41:36	20
8th Street & Hennepin Station	00:42:36	20
8th Street & Nicollet Station	00:43:36	20
88th Street & 3rd/4th Avenue Station	00:45:36	20
8th Street & Park Avenue Station	00:47:36	20
8th Street and 9th Avenue Station	00:48:57	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>00:48:57</b>	<b>381</b>

## Alternative 2

**Table 6** presents cumulative running times, average operating speeds, round-trip running times, layover durations, total cycle times, for both inbound (IB) and outbound (OB) directions across the evaluated service frequencies for Alternative 2 - 5<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center.

**Table 6: Alternative 2 - Running Time Summary**

<b>Headway<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>10 min freq.</b>		<b>15-30 min freq.</b>	
<b>Direction</b>	<b>IB</b>	<b>OB</b>	<b>IB</b>	<b>OB</b>
Total Running Time (min)	00:49:59	00:48:10	00:49:59	00:48:10
Total Average Speed (mph)	17.4 MPH	16.3 MPH	17.4 MPH	16.3 MPH
Total Roundtrip Running Time (min)	93 min	93 min	93 min	93 min
Layover	27 min		27 min	
Cycle Time	120 min		120 min	

<sup>3</sup> The route operates at 10-minute frequencies during the AM Peak, Midday, and PM Peak periods, 15-minute frequencies during the Early Evening period, and 30-minute frequencies during the Early Morning and Late Evening periods.

**Table 7** and **Table 8** below present the cumulative run time at each station, and the associated dwell in seconds for both the NB and SB directions for Alternative 2 - 5<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center.

**Table 7: Alternative 2 - Northbound Station-to-Station Travel Time Estimates**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Cumulative Run Time (hh:mm:ss)</b>	<b>Dwell (seconds)</b>
5th Street Transit Center Gate B	00:00:00	1
Washington Avenue & 3rd Avenue Station	00:02:50	20
Washington Ave & 6th Ave Station	00:04:50	20
Plymouth Avenue Station	00:07:50	20
West Broadway Station	00:09:23	20
Lyndale Avenue Station	00:12:47	20
James Avenue Station	00:14:48	20
Penn Avenue Station	00:17:12	20
Lowry Avenue Station	00:19:04	20
Downtown Robbinsdale Station	00:21:51	20
Bass Lake Road Station	00:26:26	20
63rd Avenue Station	00:28:40	20
Brooklyn Boulevard Station	00:32:34	20
85th Avenue Station	00:35:26	20
93rd Avenue Station	00:37:49	20
Oak Grove Parkway Station	00:42:32	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>00:42:32</b>	<b>282</b>

**Table 8: Alternative 2 - Southbound Station-to-Station Travel Time Estimates**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Cumulative Run Time (hh:mm:ss)</b>	<b>Dwell (seconds)</b>
Oak Grove Parkway Station	00:00:00	1
93rd Avenue Station	00:03:58	20

<b>Name</b>	<b>Cumulative Run Time (hh:mm:ss)</b>	<b>Dwell (seconds)</b>
85th Avenue Station	00:06:21	20
Brooklyn Boulevard Station	00:09:14	20
63rd Avenue Station	00:13:05	20
Bass Lake Road Station	00:15:26	20
Downtown Robbinsdale Station	00:20:00	20
Lowry Avenue Station	00:22:47	20
Penn Avenue Station	00:24:40	20
James Avenue Station	00:27:06	20
Lyndale Avenue Station	00:29:07	20
West Broadway Station	00:32:34	20
Plymouth Avenue Station	00:33:40	20
Washington Ave & 6th Ave Station	00:36:40	20
Washington Avenue & 3rd Avenue Station	00:37:40	20
5th Street Transit Center Gate B	00:39:59	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>00:39:59</b>	<b>282</b>

# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **B. Ridership, Operations, and Maintenance Cost Technical Memorandum**

# Blue Line Extension Ridership, Operations and Maintenance Cost

Bus Rapid Transit

4/10/2026

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## Introduction

The purpose of this technical memorandum is to document assumptions and results of ridership forecasts and operations and maintenance (O&M) costs developed for Metro Transit's Blue Line Extension (BLE) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative Analysis.

# Ridership Forecasts

## Modeling Approach

Ridership estimates were developed for each alternative using FTA’s Simplified Trips-on-Project Software (STOPS), using the model developed as part of Metro Transit’s Blue Line Extension evaluation. Version 2.53 of FTA’s Simplified Trips-on-Project software was used for the analysis. The BLE BRT model was developed using Metro Transit’s Blue Line Extension Light Rail STOPS model as a baseline, where the two BRT alternatives were evaluated in the STOPS model by editing the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) files, and replacing the light rail baseline alternative.

Ridership estimates were developed for the two build alternatives for two analysis periods: current year (2024) and horizon year (2045). The two alternatives include: **Alternative 1: 8th Street/9th Avenue** and **Alternative 2: 5<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center**.

## Inputs

Inputs for the current-year estimates reflect 2024 Metro Transit service, service plans and stations for each BLE alternative. Horizon-year estimates reflect anticipated 2045 Metro Transit service, service plans and stations for each BLE alternative. The following local route modifications were included in the Blue Line Extension STOPS model:

### No-Build Modifications

Modifications that are assumed to occur regardless of BLE implementation include:

- Addition of Route 723
- Improved service frequency of Route 705 from 60 minutes to 30 minutes (combined A and B trip patterns)
- Updated alignment for Route 721, to provide a consistent route on weekdays and weekends
- Changed Purple Line to Bronze Line

### Build Modifications

Modifications that are assumed to occur (in addition to those identified for the No-Build) with BLE implementation include:

- Discontinue Route 724 north of Starlite Transit Center
- Extend Route 703 to Anoka Station

## Daily Ridership Forecast

Forecast results for each alternative are displayed in Table 1: Project Ridership Summary. Generally, the STOPS model develops ridership forecasts based on stop-level and adjacent area inputs, including variations in transit service (e.g., travel times, connections (transfers), access types, etc.), changing demographics, and zone-to-zone markets across a transit system (including mode choice and estimates based on optimal travel times between zones).

A slight increase in ridership on the BRT in the horizon year can be attributed to a combination of factors. In aggregate, population and employment are forecasted to grow around 1% per year between 2024 and 2045 within one half of a mile of each BRT station. Additionally, the horizon year networks include other high-frequency routes that are not represented in the current year and may be more convenient for riders, impacting project specific ridership levels

**Table 1: Project Ridership Summary**

Ridership Measure	8th Street / 9th Avenue		5th Street Transit Center	
	2024	2045	2024	2045
Trips on Project	3,700	4,000	3,400	3,700
New Transit Trips	960	1,500	975	1,430
Change in Auto PMT	-9,300	-20,100	-9,400	-19,100
Change in Auto VMT	-8,500	-18,300	-8,500	-17,400

Table 2: Project Boardings by Access Mode tabulates the total project boardings by transit access mode. Most trips on the project are made by walking to and from stations. Due to expanded commuter services in the horizon year, Park-and-Ride and Kiss-and-Ride services are forecasted to experience a significant reduction in the horizon year.

**Table 2: Project Boardings by Access Mode**

Project Boardings by Access Mode	8th Street / 9th Avenue		5th Street Transit Center	
	2024	2045	2024	2045
Walk	2,700	3,360	2,280	3,080
Park-and-Ride	650	430	780	450
Kiss-and-Ride	310	210	320	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>3,730</b>

Weekday project boardings for each alternative, by individual station, are shown in Table 3: Alternative 1: 8th Street / 9th Avenue Station Level Project Boardings and Table 4: Alternative 2: 5th Street Transit Center Station Level Project Boardings.

**Table 3: Alternative 1: 8th Street / 9th Avenue Station Level Project Boardings**

Station	Alt. 1: 8th Street / 9th Avenue	
	2024	2045
Oak Grove Station	20	245
93rd Avenue Station	55	110
85th Avenue Station	60	95
Brooklyn Boulevard Station	310	360
63rd Avenue Station	335	435
Bass Lake Road Station	250	220
Downtown Robbinsdale Station	345	325
Lowry Avenue Station	215	205
Penn Avenue Station	215	200
James Avenue Station	70	70
Lyndale Avenue Station	215	240
West Broadway Station	115	115
Plymouth Avenue Station	105	90
7th & Olson Station	235	365
Ramp A/7th St Transit Center Station	15	50
8th St/7th St & Hennepin Station	310	245
8th St/7th St & Nicollet Station	435	295
8th St/7th St & 3rd/4th Ave Station	210	115
8th St/7th St & Park Station	125	215
8th St and 9th Ave S Station	35	15
<b>Total Project Boardings</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>4,005</b>

**Table 4: Alternative 2: 5th Street Transit Center Station Level Project Boardings**

Station	Alt. 2: 5th Street Transit Center	
	2024	2045
Oak Grove Station	15	240
93rd Avenue Station	60	100
85th Avenue Station	50	90
Brooklyn Boulevard Station	265	350
63rd Avenue Station	335	395
Bass Lake Road Station	255	205
Downtown Robbinsdale Station	385	300

Station	Alt. 2: 5th Street Transit Center	
	2024	2045
Lowry Avenue Station	155	190
Penn Avenue Station	395	565
James Avenue Station	120	110
Lyndale Avenue Station	210	235
West Broadway Station	95	95
Plymouth Avenue Station	65	70
Washington Ave N & 6th Ave N Station	60	50
Washington Ave & 3rd Ave N Station	160	175
5th St Transit Center Gate B Station	755	555
<b>Total Project Boardings</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>3,730</b>

## Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimate

### Overview of Service Plan Inputs

The forecasted project service levels are displayed in Table 5: Projected Service Plan, below. The service plan inputs assumed time periods, time spans, and frequency constraints to inform the operating plan. It is proposed that service would not vary between weekday, weekend, and holiday schedules.

**Table 5: Projected Service Plan**

Day	Time Period	Time Span	Frequency (mins.)
Weekday/Weekend/Holiday	Early Morning	5:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.	30
	AM Peak	6:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	10
	Midday	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	10
	PM Peak	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	10
	Early Evening	7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	15
	Late Evening	8:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	30

### Overview of Running Time Inputs

Across the two proposed BRT alternatives, the service plan and running times were inputs in determining the operating plan and vehicle needs shown in Table 6: Alternative 1: 8<sup>th</sup> St/9<sup>th</sup>

Avenue Operating Plan Summary and Vehicle Requirements and Table 7: Alternative 2: 5th Street Transit Center Operating Plan Summary and Vehicle Requirements below. Cycle times were determined by applying a minimum of 20 percent layover/recovery ratio to the total running time. This layover allowance was then rounded to the nearest multiple of the proposed service frequency for each operating period, ensuring that the resulting cycle times aligned with scheduling needs and supported reliable service delivery.

Because the two proposed BRT alternatives have variations in alignments, peak vehicle needs differ among the two alternatives, as shown in Table 6: Alternative 1: 8<sup>th</sup> St/9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Operating Plan Summary and Vehicle Requirements and Table 7: Alternative 2: 5th Street Transit Center Operating Plan Summary and Vehicle Requirements below. The operating plan applied an assumed spare vehicle ratio of 20 percent of the in-service vehicles.

**Table 6: Alternative 1: 8<sup>th</sup> St/9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Operating Plan Summary and Vehicle Requirements**

Time Period	Southbound Running Time (mins)	Northbound Running Time (mins)	Minimum Layover Time (mins)	Cycle Time (mins)	Headway (mins)	Number of Vehicles Required in Service	Number of Spare Vehicles	Total Number of Required Vehicles
Early Morning	55.0	56.7	38	150	30	5	1	6
AM Peak	55.0	56.7	28	140	10	14	3	17
Midday	55.0	56.7	28	140	10	14	3	17
PM Peak	55.0	56.7	28	140	10	14	3	17
Early Evening	55.0	56.7	23	135	15	9	2	11
Late Evening	55.0	56.7	38	150	30	5	1	6

**Table 7: Alternative 2: 5th Street Transit Center Operating Plan Summary and Vehicle Requirements**

Time Period	Southbound Running Time (mins)	Northbound Running Time (mins)	Minimum Layover Time (mins)	Cycle Time (mins)	Headway (mins)	Number of Vehicles Required in Service	Number of Spare Vehicles	Total Number of Required Vehicles
Early Morning	44.7	47.5	28	120	28	4	1	5
AM Peak	44.7	47.5	28	120	28	12	3	15

Midday	44.7	47.5	28	120	28	12	3	15
PM Peak	44.7	47.5	28	120	28	12	3	15
Early Evening	44.7	47.5	28	120	28	8	2	10
Late Evening	44.7	47.5	28	120	28	4	1	5

## Operating and Maintenance Cost Basis and Estimate

To inform the cost assumptions for the operations plan, the analysis draws on established operations and maintenance data provided by Metro Transit, based on previous agency service.<sup>1</sup> The service plans developed for the two alternatives estimate the corresponding annual vehicle hours and vehicle miles. These inputs reflect both service-related metrics and fixed infrastructure elements that drive annual operating costs. The cost basis includes:

- **Annual Revenue Bus Miles:** Total in-service miles operated annually
- **Annual Revenue Bus Hours:** Total in-service hours operated annually
- **Maximum Buses in Service:** Peak vehicle requirement used to size fleet-related costs
- **Passenger Stations:** Number of stations requiring operations, cleaning, and maintenance
- **Dedicated Lane Maintenance:** Upkeep of exclusive bus guideway, including pavement and markings
- **Guideway Lighting:** Maintenance and energy costs associated with corridor guideway lighting systems
- **Traffic Signals:** Signals along the guideway requiring periodic maintenance
- **TSP Intersections;** Transit signal priority locations upkeep
- **Bridge Inspection:** Routine inspection and maintenance of elevated guideway structures along the alignment
- **Fare Enforcement:** Staffing and operational resources for fare inspection activities
- **Snow Removal:** Winter operations for roadways, stations, and dedicated guideway areas

Based on the cost elements outlined above, an operations and maintenance cost estimate was developed for each alternative. The resulting annual cost estimates are provided in **Table 8**.

**Table 8: Operating and Maintenance Cost Estimate**

	Alt. 1: 8 <sup>th</sup> St/9th Ave	Alt. 2: 5 <sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center
Total (2026 Dollars)	\$ 17,910,000	\$ 15,610,000

<sup>1</sup> Operations and maintenance costs were based off Metro Transit’s Gold Line BRT cost model

# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **C. Capital Improvements Grant Assessment Technical Memorandum**

# Blue Line Extension Capital Improvements Grant Assessment

Bus Rapid Transit

4/17/2026

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## Purpose of Capital Investment Grant Assessment

This report evaluates the Build Alternatives for the Blue Line Extension to predict and assess the ratings that Metro Transit would receive in an application for a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts (New Starts) discretionary Capital Investment Grant (CIG). FTA's New Starts program is the federal government's largest discretionary grant program for major transit capital projects. With successful application, FTA's New Starts Program can fund up to 60 percent of the capital cost of a project. However, generally FTA is awarding 45 percent or less of total project cost.<sup>1</sup> Generally, cities that complete large capital investments in High Capacity Transit (HCT) systems use CIG funds.

As Metro Transit evaluates the Blue Line Extension options, a predicted CIG rating will help the agency, agency partners, and the public make informed decisions on how local transit funding can be most impactful at improving mobility and building upon the success of Metro's existing transit system.

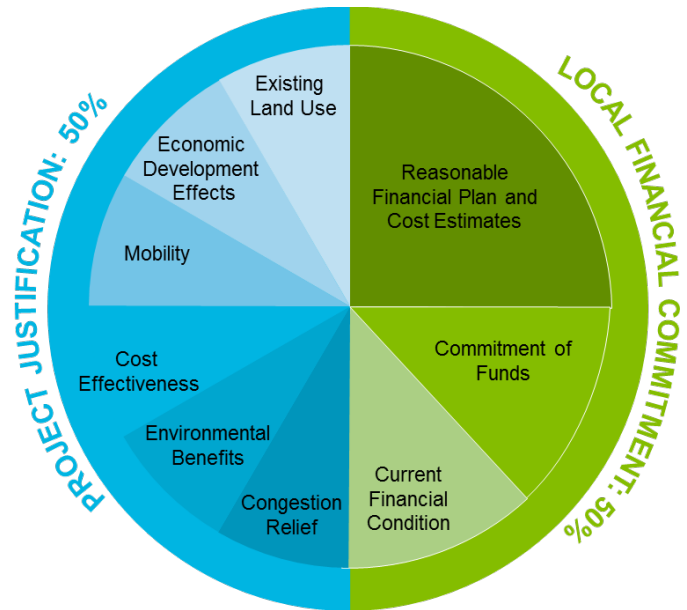
As shown in Figure 1. FTA's New Starts Criteria, a project rating is split between Project Justification and Local Financial Commitment, each of which are made up of various quantitative and qualitative criteria and subfactors (or sub-criteria). Each criterion is rated on the five-point

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/funding/grant-programs/capital-investments/131541/fy20-annual-report.pdf>

scale, from Low to High. A project must attain at least a Medium rating (on a five-point scale including Low, Medium-Low, Medium, Medium-High and High) in both Project Justification and Local Financial Commitment to receive a Medium overall project rating and qualify for potential New Starts funding. Each criterion within Project Justification are weighted equally and must achieve a Medium or higher rating when combined. This project, however, will not be assessing economic development and local financial commitment as part of its analysis. These two elements are given an assumed rating of medium, based on analysis conducted in earlier adjacent project assessments.

Figure 1. FTA's New Starts Criteria

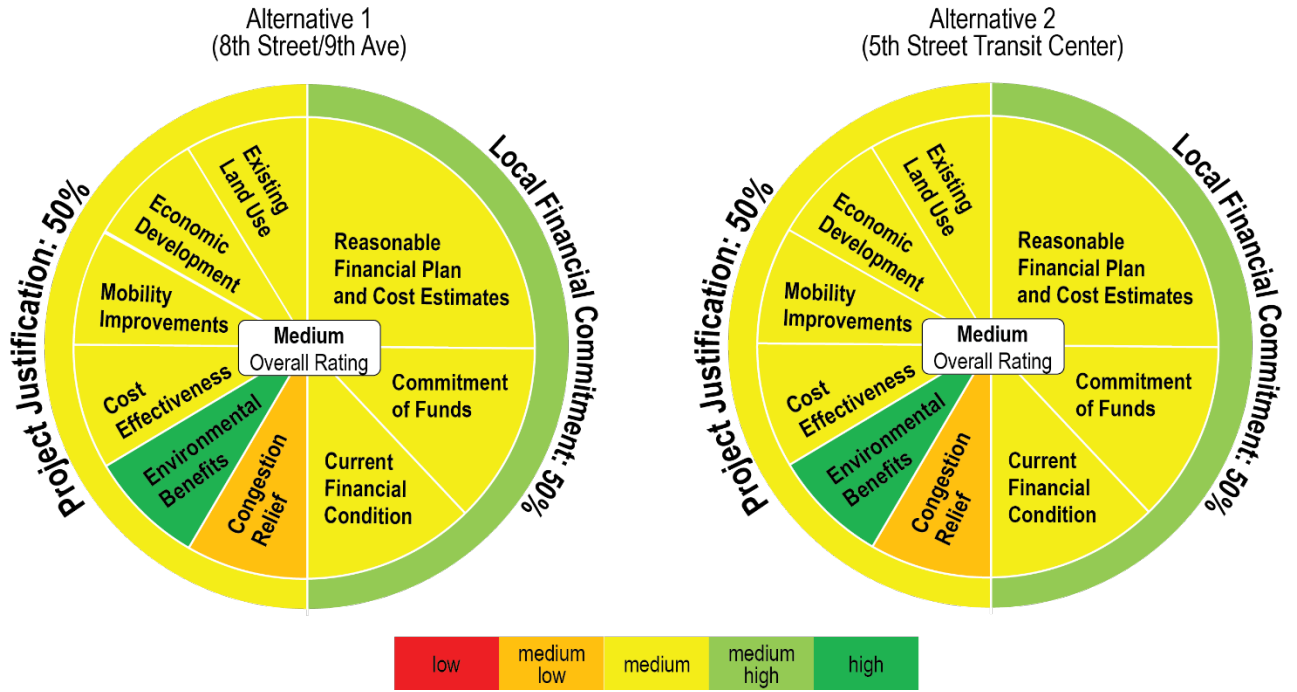


## Overall Assessment of Expected Blue Line BRT Extension FTA New Starts Rating

Based on the evaluation of the BLE BRT Extension it is expected that both Build Alternatives evaluated would receive Medium ratings for the Project Justification half of the Overall Rating as shown in Figure 2. Summary of Expected BLE BRT CIG Rating (April 2026). The Local Financial Commitment Rating is being evaluated and documented separately by Metro Transit. Per FTA requirements, a project must attain an overall Medium rating to be eligible for FTA’s New Starts program. It is therefore assumed for this assessment that each of the Local Financial Commitment criteria would receive a Medium rating and a Local Financial Commitment summary rating of Medium.<sup>2</sup> Based on these assumptions, both BLE BRT Alternatives are eligible for FTA’s New Starts program.

<sup>2</sup> If a project’s requested CIG share is less than 50 percent of total capital cost, FTA may increase the summary Local Financial Commitment (LFC) rating by one level, provided the underlying financial subfactors support it, as stated in FTA’s Guidelines and Standards for Assessing Local Financial Commitment and reinforced in the final CIG Policy Guidance currently in effect.

Figure 2. Summary of Expected BLE BRT CIG Rating (April 2026)



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Blue Line Corridor Description

The Project is proposed to run 13.4 miles generally northwest from Downtown Minneapolis, connecting North Minneapolis, the City of Robbinsdale, the City of Crystal, the City of Brooklyn Park, and surrounding communities to new opportunities and destinations.

METRO Blue Line LRT currently terminates in Downtown Minneapolis, and the Project would extend the existing high-capacity transit as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service to terminate in the City of Brooklyn Park. While integrating with other existing and planned transitways, the Project and its stations would connect people to jobs, education, healthcare, culture, and recreation.

## 1.2 Build Alternatives Description

Two BRT alternatives were developed to be analyzed as possible blue line extensions. Alternative 1: 8th Street/9th Avenue and Alternative 2: 5th Street Transit Center. Both share a common alignment from the project corridor through Plymouth Avenue Station and into downtown Minneapolis. South of Plymouth Avenue Station, the alternatives diverge. Details of each alternative are as follows:

- Alternative 1 (8<sup>th</sup> Street/9<sup>th</sup> Ave) follows an alignment along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, transitioning to a split alignment on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue couplet within downtown Minneapolis, with a terminus located near Hennepin County Medical Center.
- Alternative 2 (5<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center) continues along North Washington Avenue from the Plymouth Avenue Station, serving a dense residential and commercial corridor, and terminates at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center adjacent to Target Field and Target Center.

## 1.3 Report Organization

This report is intended to provide a preliminary evaluation of the likelihood of qualifying for federal funding through FTA's competitive New Starts discretionary grant program. To support this assessment, the document includes analysis, discussion, and expected ratings for the six Project Justification criteria and an expected overall rating for the Blue Line Corridor. Report organization is illustrated in Table 1. Report Organization.

**Table 1. Report Organization**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	Review of the CIG rating assessment and recommended next steps
<b>Section 1 Introduction</b>	Overview of the BLE Alternatives under consideration, the FTA New Starts Program, and report organization
<b>Section 2 Ridership Forecasts</b>	Includes the methodology and ridership forecasting results for the Blue Line Corridor. The ridership information is an input for several of the criteria for FTA New Starts Project Justification ratings
<b>Section 3 Project Justification Criteria</b>	The FTA ratings for the six Project Justification Criteria are explained and predicted ratings for each are provided for the eight Build Alternatives for the Blue Line Corridor
<b>Section 4 New Starts Evaluation Findings</b>	The overall estimated rating for the Blue Line Corridor as an applicant for the New Starts Program is provide
<b>Section 5 Next Steps</b>	A discussion of next steps

## 2.0 Ridership Forecast

### Estimated Daily Ridership

Ridership forecasting provides a key indicator of route performance and informs four of the six Project Justification Criteria. FTA’s Simplified-Trips-on-Projects Software (STOPS) model was used to produce ridership forecasts for the BRT Blue Line Extension. STOPS is a standalone ridership model created by FTA for evaluating candidate transit projects. Developed in 2013 by the FTA, the model is an alternative to the conventional four-step regional travel demand model, evaluating zone-to-zone travel markets based on socioeconomic characteristics and the existing transit network. STOPS has been calibrated and validated using ridership data from BRT, LRT, and CR projects across the country. In its application, the model is also calibrated to local conditions based on local data inputs.

Version 2.53 of FTA’s STOPS software was used for the BLE BRT analysis. The model was developed using Metro Transit’s Blue Line Extension Light Rail STOPS model as a baseline, where the two BRT alternatives were evaluated in the STOPS model by editing the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) files, and replacing the light rail baseline alternative.

Ridership estimates were developed for the two build alternatives for two analysis periods: current year (2024) and horizon year (2045). A no-build scenario was also analyzed to better understand the ridership estimates developed through the STOPS model. Both the no-build and build scenarios are detailed in the sections below.

The STOPS model employs a Fixed Guideway Setting (FGS) to differentiate the attractiveness of various modes, including BRT and LRT, relative to the attractiveness of full fixed guideway modes such as heavy rail. The term “guideway” used in STOPS is equivalent to “transitway” for the Blue Line Corridor. A higher value for FGS is used to indicate a higher level of attractiveness and produces higher ridership estimates. For the Blue Line Corridor forecasts, BRT schedules were modeled using an FGS of 0.5, in alignment with the Metro Transit Gold Line. An FGS of 1.0 was used with LRT schedules.

## Model Inputs

Inputs for the current-year estimates reflect 2024 Metro Transit service, service plans and stations for each BLE alternative. Horizon-year estimates reflect anticipated 2045 Metro Transit service, service plans and stations for each BLE alternative. More detailed information on the STOPS model and forecast assumptions and methodology used is available in the *Blue Line Extension Alternatives Ridership, Operations and Maintenance Costs: Bus Rapid Transit Technical Memorandum (Metro Transit, April 2026)*.

## No-Build Alternative

The No-Build scenario includes both the 2024 existing conditions and the 2045 horizon year, reflecting how the transit network would evolve without implementing the BLE project.

The 2024 No-Build represents today’s system with no changes to current transit service. The 2045 No-Build incorporates only those system modifications expected to occur independently of the BLE, including the addition of Metro Transit Route 723, improved service frequency on Metro Transit Route 705 from 60 to 30 minutes (combining the A and B trip patterns), an updated and consistent weekday–weekend alignment for Metro Transit Route 721, and the rebranding of Metro Transit Purple Line as the Bronze Line.

## Build Alternatives

The Build scenario evaluates the two alternatives, Alternative 1: 8th Street/9th Avenue and Alternative 2: 5th Street Transit Center.

In addition to all system changes included in the No-Build 2045 network, the Build alternatives incorporate transit modifications necessary to support BLE service. These include discontinuing Metro Transit Route 724 north of Starlite Transit Center and extending Metro Transit Route 703 to

Anoka Station, improving connectivity and restructuring service to complement the new rail corridor. Together, these enhancements define the operational conditions under each Build alternative for comparison against the No-Build baseline.

### Ridership Estimate Results

Forecast results for each alternative are displayed in Table 2. CIG Assessment Daily Ridership Inputs. Generally, the STOPS model develops ridership forecasts based on stop-level and adjacent area inputs, including variations in transit service (e.g., travel times, connections (transfers), access types, etc.), changing demographics, and zone-to-zone markets across a transit system (including mode choice and estimates based on optimal travel times between zones).

Table 2. CIG Assessment Daily Ridership Inputs

	Alt. 1: 8th Street / 9th Avenue		Alt. 2: 5th Street Transit Center	
	2024	2045	2024	2045
Reduction in Person Miles Traveled	9,300	20,100	9,400	19,100
New Linked Transit Trips	960	1,500	975	1,430
Non-Transit Dependent Trips	1,911	1,900	1,861	1,835
Transit Dependent Trips	1,758	2,105	1,518	1,894
Trips on Project	3,669	4,005	3,379	3,729

### 3.0 Project Justification Criteria

The *Final Interim Capital Investment Grant Final Policy Guidance Federal Transit Administration (November 2025)* provides a summary of the six Project Justification Criteria and subfactors under each criterion. The sections below summarize the CIG assessment performed for the Blue Line BRT Extension (BLE).

## Criteria 1: Land Use

### Measures & Calculation

The land use criterion involves a quantitative assessment of existing conditions within the proposed CIG project corridor, examining the average population density across all station areas, the total number of existing jobs served by the project, the proportion of legally binding affordability-restricted (LBAR) housing located within a half-mile of station areas compared with the share of LBAR housing in the counties the project traverses, the level of community risk as indicated by specific census data characteristics, and the degree of access residents currently have to essential services.

Table 3. New Starts Land Use Rating Breakpoints for Employment, Population, Parking, and Affordable Housing provides the rating breakpoints for quantitative subfactors – the station area population density, employment served, Legally Binding Affordability Restricted (LBAR) Housing, and community risk. Ratings are presented as one for the two Build Alternatives given that the inputs focus on the land within the project corridor, which is the same for both Build Alternatives. As the project progresses, more detailed assessment will be required to present information on pedestrian facilities and access for persons with disabilities in addition to research on existing development and development character.

**Table 3. New Starts Land Use Rating Breakpoints for Employment, Population, Parking, and Affordable Housing**

Rating	Station Area Development		Affordable Housing	Community Risk
	Employment served by system	Avg Population density (persons/square mile)	Legally Binding Affordability Restricted Housing	Percent High Risk Population (High risk pop. per .5 mi. of station)
High	≥ 220,000	≥ 15,000	≥ 2.50	≥ 50%
Medium-High	140,000-219,999	9,600-14,999	2.25 – 2.49	40 – 49.9%
Medium	70,000-139,999	5,760-9,599	1.50 – 2.24	18 – 39.9%
Medium-Low	40,000-69,999	2,560-5,759	1.10 – 1.49	5 – 17.9%
Low	≤ 39,999	≤ 2,559	≤ 1.09	≤ 4.99%

Source: Final Interim Policy Guidance. Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grant Program. November 2025.

### Land Use Predicted Rating

For the purpose of estimating a New Starts Land Use rating for the Project, it was assumed that population density, total employment, legally binding affordability restricted housing, and

community risk are equally weighted to obtain an overall rating. In practice, FTA has considerable discretion to determine the overall Land Use rating. The same rating applies to the two Build Alternatives - 8th Street/9th Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street Transit Center.

Figure 3. New Starts Land Use Predicted Ratings below provides the results of the calculations for each Land Use subcategory and where those values fall within FTA’s New Starts Program breakpoints for Employment, Population, Parking, and Affordable Housing. Altogether, the Land Use rating is assumed to be **Medium**.

**Figure 3. New Starts Land Use Predicted Ratings**



**Employment Served (Quantitative)**

This subfactor uses the most current Metropolitan Council Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) 2020-2040 forecasts for cities and townships within the 7-County Metropolitan Area. As such, the TAZ dataset was used to calculate the total employment served by the Blue Line Corridor forecasted within a ½-mile radius of each station area.

**Population Density (Quantitative)**

This subfactor uses the 2020 United State Decennial Census. The socioeconomic dataset by census tract was used to calculate the total population served by the Blue Line Corridor within a ½-mile radius of each station area.

**Existing “Legally Binding Affordability Restricted Housing” (Quantitative)**

For this subfactor, the FTA requires project sponsors to calculate and compare the proportion of existing “legally binding affordability restricted” housing within a ½-mile radius of station areas to the proportion in the counties through which the project travels. The FTA is interested in tallying the proportion of units restricted to renters with incomes below 60% of the area median income and/or owners with incomes below the area median income. This may include, but is not limited to, “state or federally supported public housing and housing owned by organizations dedicated to providing affordable housing”<sup>3</sup>.

The proportion of legally binding affordable housing in the corridor compared to the county is calculated based on National Housing Preservation Database (NHPD) numbers for active and inconclusive units within ½-mile radius of the station areas and within Hennepin County compared to the number of housing units sourced from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2024) per FTA requirements for New Starts projects.

### **Community Risk (Qualitative)**

This subfactor evaluates community risk using the U.S. Census Bureau’s Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) tool, consistent with FTA guidance. The CRE tool combines data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Population Estimates Program to assess the social vulnerability of residents at the census tract level based on ten defined risk factors related to disaster resilience and socioeconomic conditions. Census tracts are categorized as Low Risk (zero risk factors), Medium Risk (one to two risk factors), or High Risk (three or more risk factors).

For this measure, the FTA examines the percentage of the total population designated as High Risk within a ½-mile radius of proposed station areas. This metric is intended to capture the extent to which the project serves communities facing higher levels of vulnerability and transportation burden, and to encourage transit investments in areas where enhanced mobility may help mitigate or alleviate existing disadvantages.

## **Criteria 2: Cost Effectiveness**

### **Measures & Calculation**

FTA evaluates the Cost Effectiveness criteria based on Cost per Trip. Cost per Trip is the annualized capital and operating and maintenance (O&M) cost per trip on the project. The rating considers the annualized capital cost based on the expected useful life of each project component (e.g. bridges have a longer useful life than vehicles) plus the annual operating cost, divided by the annual linked trips on the project. Ridership is the average of the current year

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<sup>3</sup> Final Interim Policy Guidance. Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grant Program. November 2025.

(2024) and the horizon year (2045) and uses the most conservative FGS appropriate for the mode. The number of trips on the BLE is not an incremental measure but simply total estimated trips on the project. Table 4. New Starts Cost Effectiveness Rating Breakpoints shows the breakpoints for the Cost Effectiveness Rating.

**Table 4. New Starts Cost Effectiveness Rating Breakpoints**

Rating	New Starts Cost Effectiveness: Annualized Federal Share per Trip
High	< \$8.00
Medium-High	Between \$8.00 and \$9.99
Medium	Between \$10.00 and \$19.99
Medium-Low	Between \$20.00 and \$34.99
Low	> \$35.00

Source: Final Policy Guidance. Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grants Program. November 2025

The project capital construction costs for the Blue Line Corridor is approximately \$28,054,784 (2026 dollars). Costs for both capital (Table 5) and O&M (Table 6) are combined and presented as an annualized total in Table 7. Annualized Capital and Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimate (2026\$ millions) using the methodology prescribed by FTA for the Cost Effectiveness rating. Further details can be found in the *Blue Line Extension Alternatives Ridership, Operations and Maintenance Costs (Metro Transit, April 2026)* and *Metro Blue Line BRT Study Project Redesign Schedule and Cost Impacts (Metro Council, April 2026)* memorandums.

**Table 5. Annualized Capital Cost Estimate (2026\$ millions)**

	Alternative 1 (8th Street/9th Avenue)	Alternative 2 (5th Street Transit Center)
<b>BRT</b>	\$28,222,631	\$28,054,784

**Table 6. Annualized Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimate (2026\$ millions)**

	Alternative 1 (8th Street/9th Avenue)	Alternative 2 (5th Street Transit Center)
<b>BRT</b>	\$17,910,000	\$15,610,000

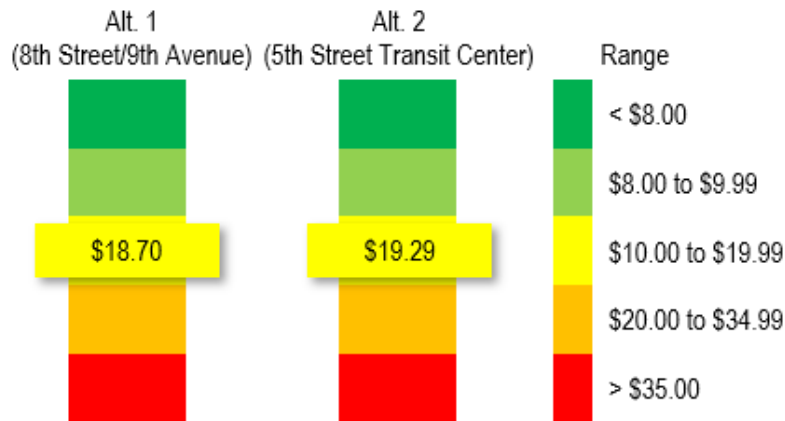
**Table 7. Annualized Capital and Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimate (2026\$ millions)**

	Alternative 1 (8th Street/9th Avenue)	Alternative 2 (5th Street Transit Center)
<b>BRT</b>	\$46,132,631	\$43,832,631

## Cost Effectiveness Predicted Rating

Figure 4. Blue Line Extension New Starts Cost Effectiveness Predicted Rating summarizes the annualized project cost, based on the above assumptions, and the resulting Cost Effectiveness Rating for the Blue Line Corridor. The expected Cost Effectiveness Rating for BRT is **Medium**.

**Figure 4. Blue Line Extension New Starts Cost Effectiveness Predicted Rating**



## Criteria 3: Mobility Improvements

### Measures & Calculation

FTA evaluates mobility improvements for FTA’s New Starts Program as the total number of linked trips using the proposed project. Unlike the ridership used in the Cost Effectiveness rating, the Mobility Improvements rating gives a weight of two trips that would be made on the project by transit dependent persons. Transit dependent person trips can be estimated using STOPS and are defined as trips made by persons in Zero-Car Households. Table 8. New Starts Mobility Improvements Rating Breakpoints shows the Mobility Improvements Rating breakpoints.

**Table 8. New Starts Mobility Improvements Rating Breakpoints**

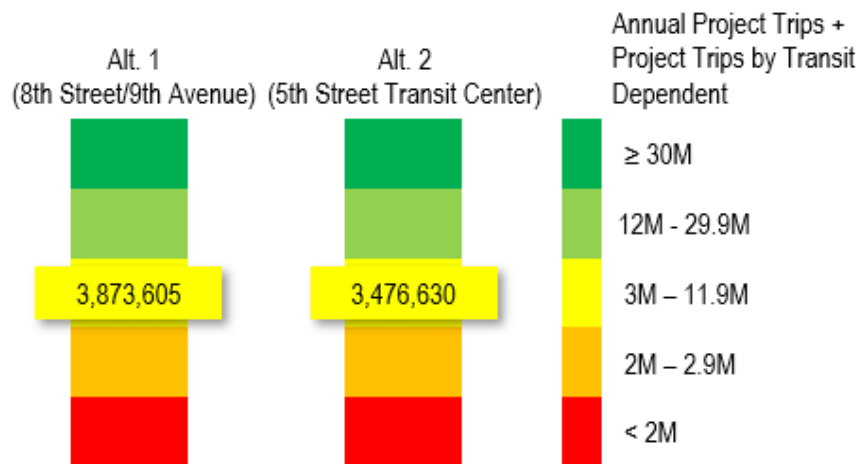
Rating	Mobility Improvements
	Estimated Annual Trips = Trips by Non-Transit Dependent Persons + Trips by Transit Dependent Persons x 2)
High	≥ 30 Million
Medium-High	12 Million – 29.9 Million
Medium	3 Million – 11.9 Million
Medium-Low	2 Million – 2.9 Million
Low	< 2 Million

Source: Final Policy Guidance. Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grants Program. November 2025

## Mobility Improvements Predicted Rating

Figure 5. Blue Line Extension Forecasted Annualized Ridership and Predicted Ratings summarizes the estimated annualized ridership on the Blue Line Corridor as an average of the current year (2024) and the horizon year (2045) and using the most conservative FGS appropriate for the mode. An annualization factor of 335 is applied based on the ratio of Metro Transit’s 2024 annual total ridership to Metro Transit’s 2024 systemwide average weekday ridership. Trips by persons from Zero-Car Households as modeled in STOPS represent the transit-dependent portion of project ridership. The expected rating for this criterion is **Medium** for Alternative 1 and **Medium-Low** for Alternative 2 based on the ‘trips on project’ forecasted results below.

**Figure 5. Blue Line Extension Forecasted Annualized Ridership and Predicted Ratings**



# Criteria 4: Congestion Relief

## Measures & Calculation

FTA evaluates congestion relief based on the number of new weekday linked transit trips resulting from construction of the BLE. FTA recognizes that this is an indirect measure of roadway congestion relief resulting from implementation of a transit project, but it serves as an indicator of potential cars taken off the road. New weekday linked transit trips are calculated by comparing total weekday linked transit trips for the No Build Alternative with total weekday linked transit trips once the proposed project is implemented. These values come directly from the STOPS Model developed for *Blue Line Ridership, Operations and Maintenance Technical Memorandum (Metro Transit, February 2026)*. Table 9. New Starts Breakpoints for Congestion Relief Rating shows the breakpoints for the Congestion Relief Criteria.

**Table 9. New Starts Breakpoints for Congestion Relief Rating**

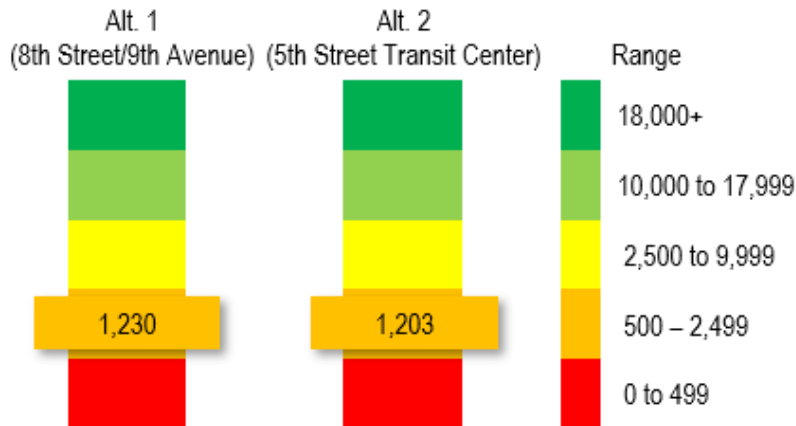
Rating	New Weekday Linked Transit Trips
High	18,000 and above
Medium-High	10,000 to 17,999
Medium	2,500 to 9,999
Medium-Low	500 to 2,499
Low	0 to 499

Source: Final Policy Guidance. Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grants Program. November 2025

## Congestion Relief Predicted Rating

Figure 6. Congestion Relief Predicted Rating provides the expected Congestion Relief ratings for the BLE Build Alternatives. The expected rating for both BRT Build Alternatives is **Medium-Low**.

Figure 6. Congestion Relief Predicted Rating



## Criteria 5: Environmental Benefits

### Measures & Calculation

Under the current FTA Capital Investment Grants Policy Guidance (November 2025), environmental benefits are no longer evaluated using modeled vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reductions. Environmental benefits are now assessed using a simplified, location-based approach tied to EPA air quality designations.

For purposes of the CIG environmental benefits criterion, FTA evaluates a project's location within EPA-designated air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas for four criteria pollutants regulated under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, ozone, particulate matter (PM 2.5), carbon monoxide, and nitrogen dioxide, rather than on quantified vehicle miles traveled or emissions modeling.

### Environmental Benefits Predicted Rating

Table 10. Criteria Pollutant Predicted Rating provides the expected Environmental Benefits ratings for both BLE Build Alternative. The expecting rating is High based on an Attainment status among three of the four air quality criteria.

Table 10. Criteria Pollutant Predicted Rating

Criteria Pollutants	Attainment Status
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Maintenance
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)	Attainment
Ozone (O3)	Attainment
Particulate Matter (PM 2.5)	Attainment
<b>Rating</b>	<b>High</b>

## Project Justification Rating Summary

The objective of this assessment was to identify an expected New Starts project rating for the Build Alternatives based on information from Metro Transit, previously develop Blue Line LRT Extension documentation, and technical memos developed for the BLE BRT project, including:

- *Blue Line Extension Alternatives Running Time Model: Bus Rapid Transit Technical Memorandum (Metro Transit, March 2026).*
- *Blue Line Extension Alternatives Ridership, Operations and Maintenance Costs: Bus Rapid Transit Technical Memorandum (Metro Transit, April 2026).*

Sources referenced for the Project Justification preliminary evaluation include readily-available information on land use and economic development. This assessment does not include a full evaluation and documentation of the Land Use and Economic Development Effects criteria, which would require extensive data analysis, community outreach, agency coordination and documentation. For the purposes of this evaluation, the Land Use and Economic Development criteria rating is assumed to be Medium. Based on the assessments documented above, the expected summary ratings for Project Justification are **Medium** for the two BRT Alternatives, as shown in Table 11. Project Justification Criteria and Predicted Summary Ratings. Both BLE Build Alternatives evaluated are therefore eligible for FTA’s New Starts program.

Table 11. Project Justification Criteria and Predicted Summary Ratings

Criteria	Alternatives	
	Alternative 1 (8th Street/9th Avenue)	Alternative 2 (5th Street Transit Center)
Mobility Improvements	Med.	Med-Low
Cost Effectiveness	Med.	Med.
Land Use	Med.	Med.
Economic Development	Med.	Med.
Environmental Benefits	High	High
Congestion Relief	Med-Low	Med-Low
Project Justification Summary	Med.	Med.

## 4.0 New Starts Evaluation Findings

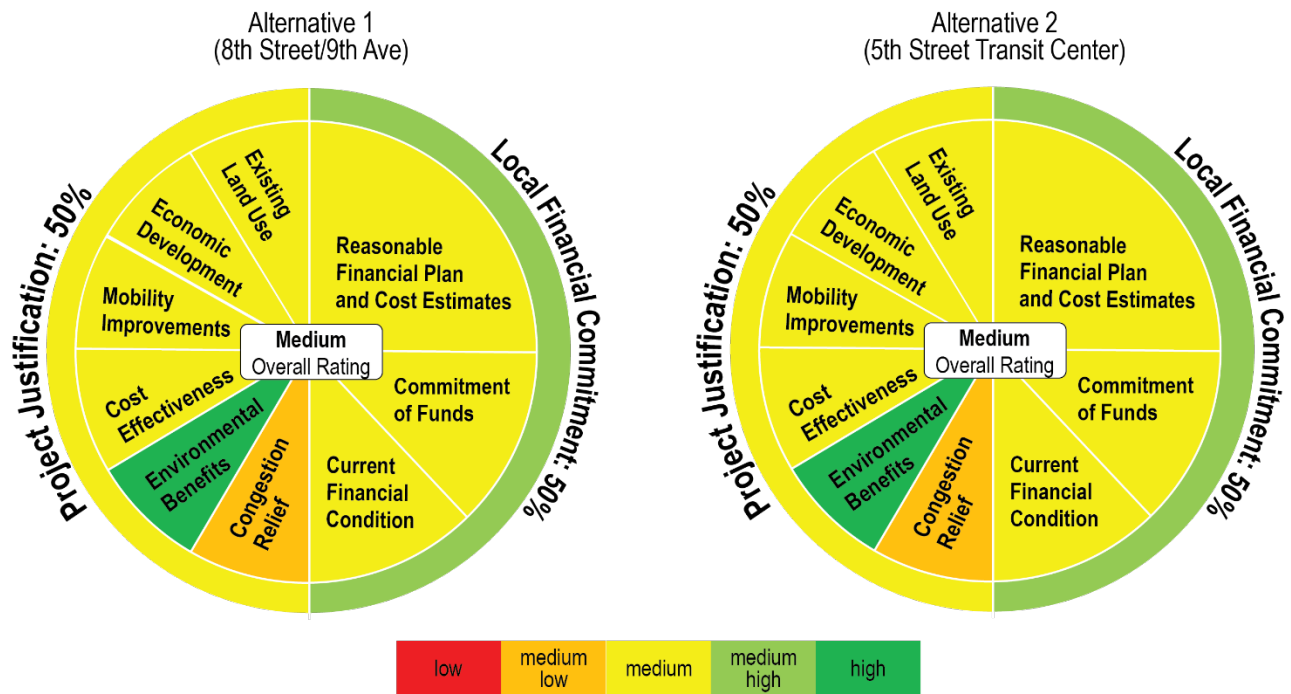
The FTA evaluates projects applying for New Starts grant funding based on six Project Justification criteria and three Local Financial Commitment criteria. The Project Justification and Local Financial Commitment summary ratings each account for half of the overall project rating. A project must attain at least a Medium rating in both components to receive a Medium overall project rating and qualify for potential New Starts funding. Section 3 of this document includes the discussion and results for each of the Project Justification criteria ratings.

The Local Financial Commitment consists of the Current Financial Condition of the project sponsor and Commitment of Non-Federal Funds, which each account for 25% of the Local Financial Commitment. The remaining 50% is determined by the project sponsor’s Reliability and Capacity to operate and maintain the project, or the “reasonableness of the financial plan.”

An acceptable degree of Local Financial Commitment includes evidence of stable and dependable funding sources to construct, maintain and operate the transit system, extension or project, and maintain and operate the entire public transportation system without requiring a

reduction in existing services.<sup>4</sup> Metro Transit will evaluate the Local Financial Commitment Criteria, however, the rating for individual Local Financial Commitment criteria are assumed to be Medium as it is the minimum rating required in order to be eligible for New Starts funding and to determine the overall predicted ratings shown in Figure 7. Summary of Expected BLE BRT CIG Rating (April 2026) below. It is also assumed that the federal CIG share will be less than 50%, which would give each of the Build Alternatives a one-level increase in the Local Financial Commitment rating, raising it from a Medium to a Medium-High rating.

Figure 7. Summary of Expected BLE BRT CIG Rating (April 2026)



## 5.0 Next Steps

The CIG Assessment will be incorporated into a forthcoming Alternatives Analysis report that documents other work undertaken for the BLE. Additional refinement of the alternatives will take place with public outreach and involvement before determining the Locally Preferred Alternative.

<sup>4</sup> Final Policy Guidance. Federal Transit Administration Capital Investment Grants Program. November 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2025-11/CIG-Policy-Guidance-November-2025.pdf>

# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **D. Risk Register Assessment Matrix**



# Blue Line Extension

## BRT Study

PROGRAM RISK REGISTER - DRAFT  
As of 04/14/2026

Critical
Major
Serious
Moderate
Minor

Risk ID	Risk Status	Date Identified	Program / Project	Risk Category	Risk Type	Risk Description	Impact	Risk Strategy	Risk Rating
01	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Threat	Identified local funding sources may no longer be available and other sources must be sought.	Cost & Schedule	Mitigate	Critical
04	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Threat	Project is removed from CIG New Starts Program resulting in loss of Federal funding match, increasing the need for funding from local stakeholders.	Cost & Schedule	Accept	Critical
06	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Threat	Multi-agency coordination due to change in mode (Metro Transit, MnDOT, Hennepin Co, City of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Brooklyn Park) results in the addition of Joint Powers Agreements and increased cost to SCC 80.	Cost & Schedule	Accept	Critical
08	Proposed	04/14/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Threat	Potential loss of 2026 FY \$100M allocation and pre-award authority.	Cost & Schedule	Accept	Critical
09	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Real Estate	Opportunity	Reduced need for ROW or need for additional easements decreases project costs.	Cost & Schedule	Optimize	Critical
11	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Construction	Opportunity	Lower number of issues, claims, or delays for construction access restrictions than LRT, due to multiple contractors (utility relocation) working in same vicinity.	Cost & Schedule	Optimize	Critical
24	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Regulatory	Threat	FTA views the BRT conversion as a fundamentally new project rather than a modification. This would result in significant scope changes which would necessitate dropping out of the CIG program and having to re-enter as a BRT.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Accept	Critical
31	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Opportunity	Shift to BRT provides lower capital cost and O&M cost with a similar revenue service date.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Optimize	Critical
33	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Design	Threat	Changes in project alignment could occur in response to the flexibility of a rubber tire bus mode and potential community desire to consider previously less-feasible locations. This would impact project scope, schedule and budget.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Critical
35	Proposed	04/14/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Threat	New CIG guidance makes the project unacceptable to local partners, making the determination to fund the project locally, increasing local costs.	Cost & Schedule	Accept	Critical

20	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Design	Threat	Previously completed LRT design elements (alignments, stations, structures) cannot be efficiently repurposed for BRT, resulting in additional redesign effort, cost, and schedule impacts.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Major
21	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Design	Threat	Changes in pavement configuration or station footprints require redesign of drainage and stormwater systems.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Major
27	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Ridership	Threat	The conversion to BRT results in the loss of a one-seat ride to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport which would result in loss of ridership to the project.	Cost	Accept	Major
32	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Threat	Updated CIG requirements for entry into Project Development or FTA evaluation methodology changes result in CIG rating changes that could impact CIG readiness and project competitiveness for funding.	Cost	Accept	Major
10	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Environmental	Opportunity	Possibility of less wetland mitigation results in lower mitigation costs.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Optimize	Serious
17	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Procurement	Opportunity	BRT would allow for early completion of design, advanced construction packaging, phased construction, and long-lead procurements.	Cost & Schedule	Optimize	Serious
25	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Political	Threat	Reconsideration and delayed decision over mode choice affects project perception and stability, resulting in project opposition.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Serious
30	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Political	Threat	Future political administration changes result in changed project requirements or funding.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Accept	Serious
37	Proposed	04/14/2026	Project	Stakeholder	Threat	Stakeholders believe that LRT drives more economic development than BRT. Change in mode will be seen as a loss in local economic development and therefore reduced support from stakeholders.	Cost & Schedule	Mitigate	Serious
38	Proposed	04/14/2026	Project	Resources	Threat	Loss of project resources/staffing and therefore project history due to the delay created in changing the mode and definition of the project.	Cost & Schedule	Mitigate	Serious
14	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Schedule	Opportunity	Integration testing takes less time than LRT systems testing resulting in lower cost to project.	Cost & Schedule	Optimize	Moderate
15	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Resources	Opportunity	Start-up cost become lower with change in mode reducing project costs.	Cost & Schedule	Optimize	Moderate
18	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Stakeholder	Threat	Uncertainty among stakeholders on the preferred mode, service concept, and corridor purpose.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Moderate
23	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Project-Wide	Threat	BRT mode scores lower on cost-effectiveness, mobility, ridership or economic development criteria resulting in a low project rating.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Moderate
28	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Design	Threat	Transfer station, including improved connections to Target Field station, may be required for riders going from BRT to LRT to get to desired destination.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Moderate

02	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Financial / Funding	Threat	Project will need to borrow money and incur finance costs if the distribution of federal funds is limited to the \$100M a year.	Cost	Accept	Minor
03	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Environmental	Opportunity	Fewer unknown adverse effects determined for identified historic properties result in reduced costs to project.	Cost	Optimize	Minor
05	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Permitting	Threat	Right of Entry required for new environmental process surveys and geotechnical investigations is not granted or received late impacting project cost and schedule.	Cost & Schedule	Mitigate	Minor
07	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Environmental	Threat	A shift in alignment may trigger need for the addition of noise walls and result in increased cost.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Accept	Minor
12	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Operations	Threat	Limited capacity at Metro Transit bus facilities results in the need for a maintenance facility for the project, increasing scope.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Minor
13	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Regulatory	Threat	BRT/aBRT does not currently require Municipal Consent process at this time, a future change in these requirements could impact scope, schedule, and cost.	Cost & Schedule	Monitor	Minor
16	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Technology	Threat	Bus propulsion mode selection delay (diesel, hybrid, BEB) impacts fleet availability, charging infrastructure.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Minor
19	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Utilities	Threat	BRT roadway or station design introduces unforeseen utility conflicts not encountered under LRT assumptions.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Minor
22	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Design	Threat	BRT design compromises previously planned urban development, streetscape, or TOD objectives associated with LRT result in potential lawsuits from developers.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Avoid	Minor
26	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Public Outreach	Threat	Gaps in communication regarding change of mode may contribute to unanticipated media attention and public concern, potentially impacting stakeholder confidence, project momentum, approval timelines, resulting in increased cost for communications, outreach resources.	Cost & Schedule	Mitigate	Minor
29	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Permitting	Threat	Alignment shift results in differing class of action and additional permitting is required.	Cost & Schedule	Accept	Minor
34	Proposed	04/03/2026	Project	Design	Threat	Changes to the alignment that result in the reduction of dedicated guideway could result in longer travel times.	Scope/Cost/ Schedule	Mitigate	Minor
36	Proposed	04/14/2026	Project	Stakeholder	Threat	Opportunity for local workforce is reduced with the change in mode from LRT to BRT.	Cost	Accept	Minor

# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **E. Project Redesign Schedule and Cost Impacts Report**

# METRO BLUE LINE BRT STUDY PROJECT REDESIGN SCHEDULE AND COST IMPACTS

April 23, 2026



The Met Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region.

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## Introduction

This report documents the anticipated schedule and cost impacts associated with the proposed transition of the METRO Blue Line Extension project from Light Rail Transit (LRT) to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The analysis evaluates the implications of this change across key project development phases, including environmental review, design, federal funding eligibility, and construction readiness.

The Blue Line project was previously advanced through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program with LRT as the selected mode. A shift to BRT represents a material change in project definition, necessitating additional environmental review, redesign, and re-entry into elements of the federal funding process. This report outlines the procedural requirements, risks, and constraints associated with restarting these processes, as well as the resulting impacts to project timeline and financial commitments.

The purpose of this memorandum is to document the potential schedule delays, cost exposure, and funding risks that would result from a mode change at this stage of project development.

## Schedule

### Consultant Off Ramp and Exit CIG Process

Assuming termination of the LRT project by July 30, 2027, Metro Transit would initiate a six-month procurement process to select consultant support to advance BRT in the Blue Line corridor. This is an aggressive schedule given that Metro Transit's average timeline for procurement is about one year. However, the need for this aggressive timeline would be driven by the goal to have revenue service in Fourth Quarter 2033 or First Quarter 2034.

### NEPA and Public Outreach

With professional services on board by January 2028, Metro Council would immediately initiate the federal environmental review process consistent with NEPA and 30 percent design activities. The Blue Line was previously advanced through the NEPA process with the proposed transit investment identified as LRT. The Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD) evaluated the environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and public benefits of the project.

Metro Transit is now proposing to implement BRT in place of LRT. This change in transit mode has not previously been disclosed to the public through the NEPA process. NEPA's implementing regulations and longstanding agency practice emphasize that environmental review must be conducted to ensure that information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken.

While BRT may result in environmental impacts that are comparable to or less than those associated with LRT, the shift in mode represents a material change to the nature of the proposed action, including differences in operations, traffic interaction, emissions profiles,

right-of-way needs, station design, and perceived permanence. Because the original NEPA decision was based on an LRT project description, the existing environmental document no longer fully reflects the project as proposed.

A NEPA reevaluation would not be sufficient in this circumstance, as reevaluations do not provide a mechanism for public notice or comment and are intended only to confirm that a project remains essentially unchanged. Proceeding without additional public disclosure would present procedural and legal risk by undermining NEPA's core objectives of transparency and informed public participation.

Based on the considerations described above, preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) is recommended to:

- Clearly disclose the revised BRT proposal;
- Evaluate the environmental impacts of BRT;
- Provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the project; and
- Ensure that decision-makers and the public are informed of the environmental consequences of the project as currently proposed.

## Design

There are several considerations for the design of BRT, which include:

- Previously completed LRT design elements (alignments, stations, structures) cannot be efficiently repurposed for BRT, which would result in additional redesign effort, cost, and schedule impacts.
- Changes in pavement configuration or station footprints would require the redesign of drainage and stormwater systems.
- A transfer station would be required for riders going from BRT to LRT to get to desired destinations.
- BRT roadway or station design introduces unforeseen utility conflicts not encountered under LRT assumptions.
- BRT design also compromises previously planned urban development, streetscape, or transit-oriented development (TOD) objectives associated with LRT, which could result in potential lawsuits from developers.

It is important to note that changes in the project alignment could also occur in response to the flexibility of a rubber tire bus mode and potential community desire to consider previously less-feasible locations. This may affect the NEPA class of action and require additional permitting, which would impact project scope, schedule and budget. Further, changes to the alignment that result in the reduction of dedicated guideway could result in longer travel times, which would affect ridership, operation and maintenance costs, as well as potential vehicle fleet requirements. This would in turn affect capital costs.

## **FTA Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Process**

With professional services on board, Metro Transit would immediately initiate the preparation of “readiness” documents, such as the Project Management Plan, Risk Management Plan, and other plans and procedures required by FTA to demonstrate Metro Transit’s technical capacity to successfully deliver the project. Ridership forecasts and other information - including a project financial plan - which would permit FTA to evaluate and “rate” the project against the statutory CIG project justification and financial criteria would also need to be developed. Metro would also request entry into the Project Development phase of the CIG process, which would permit expenses associated with environmental review and design to be reimbursable in a future federal grant. However, it is unclear if FTA would approve the request, given that the previous LRT project had already advanced through Project Development. If not, the project would proceed but without the ability to reimburse locally funded project development activities.

Assuming that Metro Transit completes required documentation, which includes incorporating the project in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), FTA would likely assign a Project Management Oversight Contractor (PMOC) to begin its oversight of the project in Fall 2027. Upon completion of NEPA and review of the project’s 30 percent scope, schedule, and budget, FTA’s PMOC would undertake a risk assessment of the project in the Spring of 2028. The risk assessment would lead to the determination of a project cost estimate to carry into the New Starts Engineering phase of the CIG process. The assessment would also contribute to FTA’s finding that the project is “ready” to advance into Engineering. At this time, Metro Transit would submit the CIG project justification criteria and financial plan to FTA for rating and formally request entry into New Starts Engineering. Assuming a CIG rating of Medium or higher, FTA should be expected to approve the BRT project into Engineering in the Summer of 2029. Engineering approval establishes the maximum CIG funding amount in a future Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the project, as well as permit other locally funded preconstruction activities (such as right-of-way acquisition, utility work, final design and vehicle procurement) to be reimbursable in a future federal grant.

As the project nears completion of final design, Metro Transit would update its readiness documents to reflect how it intends to manage construction of the project. FTA would review these documents along with 90 percent design plans, the project cost estimate, and schedule. FTA’s PMOC would perform a “risk-refresh” to determine the final project cost to be included in an FFGA, as well as Metro Transit’s readiness for the FFGA. Assuming that 1) Metro Transit has secured all non-CIG funding commitments; 2) the project maintains at least a Medium CIG rating; and 3) CIG funding has either been previously appropriated to the project by Congress or FTA has unallocated CIG funding available, the project should be expected to receive an FFGA by late 2030.

## **Construction**

A change in project mode from LRT to BRT would materially delay the initiation of construction and increase delivery risk because a change in mode would require completion of additional environmental review, redesign, and reentry into the CIG process before construction could be authorized through a future FFGA. Under an aggressive schedule, construction would not begin until late Fall 2030.

Significant preconstruction work has been undertaken to prepare the LRT project for construction. While these efforts have not yet transitioned into physical construction, much of this work would require reassessment or redevelopment to reflect BRT infrastructure and operating requirements. Differences in guideway configuration, station design, pavement structures, drainage systems, and right of way needs would limit the applicability of prior construction planning and extend preconstruction timelines.

The delayed construction start would also coincide with a period of elevated regional and national infrastructure investment, increasing the potential for contractor and skilled labor shortages. Major infrastructure projects anticipated to be underway during the same timeframe may compete for the same pool of experienced prime contractors, specialty subcontractors, and key materials. This heightened competition could result in fewer bidders, reduced pricing competition, higher bid costs, and increased risk to construction schedules if contractor availability is constrained.

Further, extended delays between completion of design and construction mobilization increase exposure to labor and material market volatility and raise the likelihood that design standards, regulatory requirements, or third party agreements would need to be revisited. To mitigate contractor availability challenges, Metro Transit may need to consider more complex procurement strategies, revised contract packaging, or longer procurement timelines, all of which could further affect cost and schedule certainty.

In addition, deferring construction extends the duration of local funding commitments required to sustain project development and engineering activities without near term construction authorization. Collectively, these factors increase construction risk, reduce cost certainty, and complicate the timing and predictability of project delivery.

## **Cost Implications**

Pursuing and securing CIG funding would require completing the following:

- NEPA documentation;
- Preliminary engineering, engineering, and final design;
- Revisions to the Project Management Plan and subplans;
- Updates to capital and operating cost estimates;
- Revised ridership forecasts;
- Financial plan updates;
- Project management, risk assessments, and constructability review;
- Execution of all critical third-party agreements; and
- The commitment of local funds.

For New Starts level projects, the cost of progressing through the CIG process is commonly 25 to 35 percent (\$106M to \$149M) of the overall construction cost (standard cost category [SCC] 10-50). (Refer to the March 2026 Conceptual Capital Cost Estimate Report for more information on the cost estimates). As a point of reference, the Gold Line BRT SCC 80 is 32

percent of construction cost (SCC 10-50). Other costs to consider include, but are not limited to (see the risk register for more information):

- Inflationary escalation due to multi-year delay before construction authorization
- Loss of sunk costs tied specifically to the prior project definition (e.g., LRT specific design or modeling)
- Likely loss of Federal FY 2026 \$100M allocation and pre-award authority.
- The project would need to borrow funds and incur finance costs if the distribution of future federal funds is limited to \$100M in a year.
- Extended local funding obligations to sustain project development and engineering without construction authorization.

Restarting the NEPA and CIG process also exposes the project to:

- New competition under future federal funding cycles
- Changes in statutory CIG evaluation criteria or policy guidance
- Potential shifts in national funding priorities reflected in FTA's Annual CIG Reports to Congress

FTA evaluates and rates projects at multiple points in the process, and prior ratings are not carried forward once a project is readmitted into the CIG process.

## **Schedule Implications**

Assuming an aggressive schedule, restarting Project Development, NEPA, and Engineering would take an additional 3 years before the project would be eligible for an FFGA. Construction would not begin until the Fall of 2030 with operations commencing early 2034.

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# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **F. Conceptual Capital Cost Estimate**

# CONCEPTUAL CAPITAL COST ESTIMATE

May 2026



METROPOLITAN  
COUNCIL

The Met Council's mission is to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous metropolitan region.

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# CONCEPTUAL CAPITAL COST ESTIMATE REPORT

## Purpose

This basis of estimate report summarizes the approach and assumptions that inform the conceptual capital cost estimate. The report outlines the cost methodologies, assumptions and exclusions that define the capital cost estimate. The documents used to develop this estimate include:

- Conceptual Drawings produced by HNTB
- Blue Line Extension BRT Alternative Analysis Construction Schedule

## Cost Estimating Methodology

Unit costs were developed by using MnDOT average cost information, pricing from previous similar projects and industry standards. Further details are provided below for specific portions of the estimate. All costs are in 2026 dollars and are escalated to the assumed year of expenditure. All work is assumed to occur in standard daytime shifts with minor overtime work as needed to achieve the conceptual construction schedule.

Takeoffs were performed on the conceptual drawings for sufficiently developed work items. Where detail was not sufficient to quantify work, allowances were used for known scopes of work.

### SCC 10 Guideway and Track Elements

Costs for SCC 10 include bus guideway costs. A standard section from the recently constructed Gold Line BRT was used as a basis for the guideway section. This section is composed of the following.

- 12" of Select Granular Material
- 6" of Aggregate Base
- 8" of Concrete Pavement

An allowance was also included for pavement joints, reinforcement, and driveways.

### SCC 20 Stations, Stops, and Terminals

A unit cost was included for at-grade stations. The unit cost is meant to include the concrete platform, shelter, handrail, and amenities.

### SCC 30 Support Facilities: Yards, Shops, Administration Buildings

In discussions with Metro Transit, it has been decided that no cost should be included for new facilities or renovations to existing facilities. If this changes, additional costs will need to be added to this cost estimate.

## **SCC 40 Sitework and Special Conditions**

Costs in this section include pedestrian facilities and roadways. Typical sections for trails and roadways were taken from the recently constructed Gold Line BRT and are as follows:

### Trails

- 6" of Aggregate Base
- 3" of Asphalt Pavement

### Roadway

- 12" of Select Granular Material
- 6" of Aggregate Base
- 6" of Asphalt Pavement

Quantity takeoffs were also completed for bridge areas, retaining walls, sidewalk, and median areas. Other scopes of work were costed with allowances or as a percentage of the total work based on similar projects. It is assumed that no noise walls will be included in the project.

## **SCC 50 Systems**

Systems costs include work to modify existing traffic signals, add new traffic signals, install communication devices at stations as well as ticket vending and fare collection machines at stations.

## **SCC 60 ROW, Land, Existing Improvements**

Right of Way costs are based on the current alternative and have been reduced by \$15 million to account for the lack of a maintenance facility in a BRT alternative. The base costs were obtained from Metropolitan Council and are presented in current year dollars without contingency.

## **SCC 70 Vehicles**

For budgeting purposes, it was assumed that the project would purchase 17 each 60' long diesel buses to operate along the conceptual route.

## **SCC 80 Professional Services**

Costs have been included for project development, which would include modifications needed for NEPA documents and approvals. Costs have also been included for engineering and final design, management and administration costs during the design and construction phase as well as insurance, legal and permit fees, testing and start up costs.

Costs that have already been incurred for the current Light Rail Transit Alternative or any cost that may be incurred due to termination of current project contracts have not been included.

## **SCC 100 Finance Charges**

No cost for finance charges are included in the estimate.

# Contingencies and Escalation

## Contingencies

Allocated contingency has been included for all items at the rate of 30%. Unallocated contingency has been applied at a rate of 10%. Contingency has been applied to be in line with FTA guidelines as well as to account for undeveloped items that are associated with a conceptual level of design.

## Escalation Factors

All base year costs are in 2026 dollars. Costs were then escalated at a rate of 3.5% per year in the SCC workbook. The following items were assumed to occur in the following time periods:

SCC10-50 Construction: 2030-2033

SCC 60 ROW: 2029-2030

SCC 70 Vehicles: 2030-2033

SCC 80 Professional Services: 2028-2033

SCC 90 Unallocated Contingency: 2030-2033

**MAIN WORKSHEET-BUILD ALTERNATIVE**

(Rev.23, May, 2022)

Metro Transit  
Blue Line Extension - BRT Alternative  
BRT Alternative

Today's Date **5/27/2026**  
Yr of Base Year \$ 2026  
Yr of FFGA Revenue Ops 2034

	Quantity	Base Year Dollars w/o Contingency (X000)	Base Year Dollars Allocated Contingency (X000)	Base Year Dollars TOTAL (X000)	Base Year Dollars Unit Cost (X000)	Base Year Dollars Percentage of Construction Cost	Base Year Dollars Percentage of Total Project Cost	YOE Dollars Total (X000)
<b>10 GUIDEWAY &amp; TRACK ELEMENTS (route miles)</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>15,032</b>	<b>4,510</b>	<b>19,541</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>23,195</b>
10.01 Guideway: At-grade exclusive right-of-way	13.40	15,032	4,510	19,541				23,195
10.02 Guideway: At-grade semi-exclusive (allows cross-traffic)				0				0
10.03 Guideway: At-grade in mixed traffic				0				0
10.04 Guideway: Aerial structure				0				0
10.05 Guideway: Built-up fill				0				0
10.06 Guideway: Underground cut & cover				0				0
10.07 Guideway: Underground tunnel				0				0
10.08 Guideway: Retained cut or fill				0				0
10.09 Track: Direct fixation				0				0
10.10 Track: Embedded				0				0
10.11 Track: Ballasted				0				0
10.12 Track: Special (switches, turnouts)				0				0
10.13 Track: Vibration and noise dampening				0				0
<b>20 STATIONS, STOPS, TERMINALS, INTERMODAL (number)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>8,400</b>	<b>36,400</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>43,773</b>
20.01 At-grade station, stop, shelter, mall, terminal, platform	28	28,000	8,400	36,400				43,773
20.02 Aerial station, stop, shelter, mall, terminal, platform				0				0
20.03 Underground station, stop, shelter, mall, terminal, platform				0				0
20.04 Other stations, landings, terminals: Intermodal, ferry, trolley, etc.				0				0
20.05 Joint development				0				0
20.06 Automobile parking multi-story structure				0				0
20.07 Elevators, escalators				0				0
<b>30 SUPPORT FACILITIES: YARDS, SHOPS, ADMIN. BLDGS</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>
30.01 Administration Building: Office, sales, storage, revenue counting				0				0
30.02 Light Maintenance Facility				0				0
30.03 Heavy Maintenance Facility				0				0
30.04 Storage or Maintenance of Way Building				0				0
30.05 Yard and Yard Track				0				0
<b>40 SITEWORK &amp; SPECIAL CONDITIONS</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>239,901</b>	<b>71,970</b>	<b>311,871</b>	<b>23,274</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>514,850</b>
40.01 Demolition, Clearing, Earthwork		28,584	8,575	37,159				61,344
40.02 Site Utilities, Utility Relocation		50,633	15,190	65,823				108,663
40.03 Haz. mat'l, contam'd soil removal/mitigation, ground water treatments		3,000	900	3,900				6,438
40.04 Environmental mitigation, e.g. wetlands, historic/archeologic, parks			0	0				0
40.05 Site structures including retaining walls, sound walls		27,462	8,239	35,701				58,936
40.06 Pedestrian / bike access and accommodation, landscaping		33,654	10,096	43,750				72,224
40.07 Automobile, bus, van accessways including roads, parking lots		63,281	18,984	82,266				135,808
40.08 Temporary Facilities and other indirect costs during construction		33,287	9,986	43,273				71,437
<b>50 SYSTEMS</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>40,150</b>	<b>12,045</b>	<b>52,195</b>	<b>3,895</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>63,015</b>
50.01 Train control and signals				0				0
50.02 Traffic signals and crossing protection		31,750	9,525	41,275				49,832
50.03 Traction power supply: substations			0	0				0
50.04 Traction power distribution: catenary and third rail			0	0				0
50.05 Communications		5,600	1,680	7,280				8,789
50.06 Fare collection system and equipment		2,800	840	3,640				4,395
50.07 Central Control				0				0
<b>Construction Subtotal (10 - 50)</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>323,083</b>	<b>96,925</b>	<b>420,007</b>	<b>31,344</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>644,833</b>
<b>60 ROW, LAND, EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>165,500</b>	<b>49,650</b>	<b>215,150</b>	<b>16,056</b>		<b>25%</b>	<b>241,069</b>
60.01 Purchase or lease of real estate		165,500	49,650	215,150				241,069
60.02 Relocation of existing households and businesses				0				0
<b>70 VEHICLES (number)</b>	<b>25,500</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>33,150</b>				<b>4%</b>	<b>39,652</b>
70.01 Light Rail				0				0
70.02 Heavy Rail				0				0
70.03 Commuter Rail				0				0
70.04 Bus	17	25,500	7,650	33,150	1,950			39,652
70.05 Other				0				0
70.06 Non-revenue vehicles				0				0
70.07 Spare parts				0				0
<b>80 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (applies to Cats. 10-50)</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>84,005</b>	<b>25,202</b>	<b>109,207</b>	<b>8,150</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>124,981</b>
80.01 Project Development		12,924	3,877	16,801				19,228
80.02 Engineering		25,847	7,754	33,601				38,455
80.03 Project Management for Design and Construction		16,155	4,847	21,002				24,035
80.04 Construction Administration & Management		16,155	4,847	21,002				24,035
80.05 Professional Liability and other Non-Construction Insurance		3,231	969	4,200				4,807
80.06 Legal; Permits; Review Fees by other agencies, cities, etc.		3,231	969	4,200				4,807
80.07 Surveys, Testing, Investigation, Inspection		3,231	969	4,200				4,807
80.08 Start up		3,231	969	4,200				4,807
<b>Subtotal (10 - 80)</b>	<b>13.40</b>	<b>598,088</b>	<b>179,426</b>	<b>777,514</b>	<b>58,023</b>		<b>91%</b>	<b>1,050,535</b>
<b>90 UNALLOCATED CONTINGENCY</b>				<b>77,752</b>			<b>9%</b>	<b>91,774</b>
<b>Subtotal (10 - 90)</b>	<b>13.40</b>			<b>855,266</b>	<b>63,826</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>1,142,309</b>
<b>100 FINANCE CHARGES</b>				<b>0</b>			<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Project Cost (10 - 100)</b>	<b>13.40</b>			<b>855,266</b>	<b>63,826</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>1,142,309</b>
Allocated Contingency as % of Base Yr Dollars w/o Contingency				30.00%				
Unallocated Contingency as % of Base Yr Dollars w/o Contingency				13.00%				
Total Contingency as % of Base Yr Dollars w/o Contingency				43.00%				
Unallocated Contingency as % of Subtotal (10 - 80)				10.00%				

Metro Transit  
Blue Line Alternative Analysis  
Conceptual Cost Estimate  
Cost By SCC Categories

Category/Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Base Year Dollars	
<b>SCC 10 GUIDEWAY AND TRACK ELEMENTS</b>					
<b>10.01</b>	<b>Guideway: At-grade exclusive right-of-way</b>				
	Select Granular	212,714	CY	\$ 30	\$ 6,381,420
	Aggregate Base	35,453	CY	\$ 35	\$ 1,240,855
	Concrete Pavement 8"	70,904	SY	\$ 95	\$ 6,735,880
	Allowance for Pavement Joints, Reinforcement and Driveways	1	LS	\$ 673,588	\$ 673,588
<b>SCC 20 STATIONS, STOPS, TERMINALS</b>					
<b>20.01</b>	<b>At-grade station, stop, shelter, mall, terminal, platform</b>				
	Stations	28	EA	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 28,000,000
<b>30 SUPPORT FACILITIES: YARDS, SHOPS, ADMIN. BLDGS</b>					
<b>30.02</b>	<b>Light Maintenance Facility</b>				
	Maintenance Facility	-	LS	\$ -	
<b>40 SITEWORK &amp; SPECIAL CONDITIONS</b>					
<b>40.01</b>	<b>Demolition, Clearing, Earthwork</b>				
	Clearing & Removals	1	LS	\$ 19,590,000	\$ 19,590,000
	Excavation	449,696	CY	\$ 15	\$ 6,745,440
	Embankment	224,848	CY	\$ 10	\$ 2,248,480
<b>40.02</b>	<b>Site Utilities, Utility Relocation</b>				
	Storm Drainage	1	LS	\$ 19,580,000	\$ 19,580,000
	Sanitary Sewer and Water Line Relocations	1	LS	\$ 9,137,000	\$ 9,137,000
	3rd Party Utility Relocations	1	LS	\$ 18,000,000	\$ 18,000,000
	Street Lighting	1	LS	\$ 3,916,000	\$ 3,916,000
<b>40.03</b>	<b>Haz. mat'l, contam'd soil removal/mitigation, ground water treatments</b>				
	Hazardous Materials Allowance	1	LS	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000
<b>40.05</b>	<b>Site structures including retaining walls, sound walls</b>				
	Bridges	64,175	SF	\$ 250	\$ 16,043,750
	Retaining Walls	76,122	SF	\$ 150	\$ 11,418,300
	Noise Wall Allowance	1	LS	\$ -	\$ -
<b>40.06</b>	<b>Pedestrian / bike access and accommodation, landscaping</b>				
	Aggregate Base	23,608	CY	\$ 35	\$ 826,280
	Asphalt	2,325	TON	\$ 90	\$ 209,250
	Sidewalk & ADA Ramps	1,739,408	SF	\$ 15	\$ 26,091,120
	Temporary Erosion Control and Landscaping	1	LS	\$ 6,527,000	\$ 6,527,000
<b>40.07</b>	<b>Automobile, bus, van accessways including roads, parking lots</b>				
	Select Granular	239,934	CY	\$ 30	\$ 7,198,020
	Aggregate Base	142,980	CY	\$ 35	\$ 5,004,300
	Bituminous Pavement	237,534	TON	\$ 90	\$ 21,378,060
	Allowance for Patching, Spot Milling and Driveways	1	LS	\$ 428,000	\$ 428,000
	Barriers and Fencing	1	LS	\$ 1,306,000	\$ 1,306,000
	Concrete Curb and Gutter	1	LS	\$ 5,222,000	\$ 5,222,000
	Median Concrete	1,882,893	SF	\$ 10	\$ 18,828,930
	Signs and Striping	1	LS	\$ 3,916,000	\$ 3,916,000
<b>40.08</b>	<b>Temporary Facilities and other indirect costs during construction</b>				
	Construction Surveying	1	LS	\$ 2,611,000	\$ 2,611,000
	Mobilization	1	LS	\$ 13,053,000	\$ 13,053,000
	Additional General Conditions & Expenses	1	LS	\$ 3,264,000	\$ 3,264,000
	Quality Control	1	LS	\$ 9,137,000	\$ 9,137,000
	Maintenance of Traffic	1	LS	\$ 5,222,000	\$ 5,222,000
<b>50 SYSTEMS</b>					
<b>50.02</b>	<b>Traffic signals and crossing protection</b>				
	Modify Traffic Signals	46	EA	\$ 250,000	\$ 11,500,000
	New Traffic Signals	45	EA	\$ 450,000	\$ 20,250,000
<b>50.05</b>	<b>Communications</b>				
	Station Communication Allowance	28	EA	\$ 200,000	\$ 5,600,000
<b>50.06</b>	<b>Fare collection system and equipment</b>				
	Ticket Vending and Fare Collection	28	EA	\$ 100,000	\$ 2,800,000
				<b>SCC 10-50 Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 323,083,000</b>
<b>60 ROW, LAND, EXISTING IMPROVEMENTS</b>					
<b>60.01</b>	Purchase or lease of real estate	1	LS	\$ 165,500,000	\$ 165,500,000
<b>70 VEHICLES (number)</b>					

70.04	Bus	17	EA	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 25,500,000
<b>80 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (applies to Cats. 10-50)</b>					
80.01	Project Development			4%	\$ 12,924,000
80.02	Engineering			8%	\$ 25,847,000
80.03	Project Management for Design and Construction			5%	\$ 16,155,000
80.04	Construction Administration & Management			5%	\$ 16,155,000
80.05	Professional Liability and other Non-Construction Insurance			1%	\$ 3,231,000
80.06	Legal; Permits; Review Fees by other agencies, cities, etc.			1%	\$ 3,231,000
80.07	Surveys, Testing, Investigation, Inspection			1%	\$ 3,231,000
80.08	Start up			1%	\$ 3,231,000
<b>Subtotal (10 - 80)</b>					\$ 598,088,000

Project Total (With Contingency, YOE) \$ 1,142,309,000

See SCC Workbook for breakdown of Contingency and YOE costs



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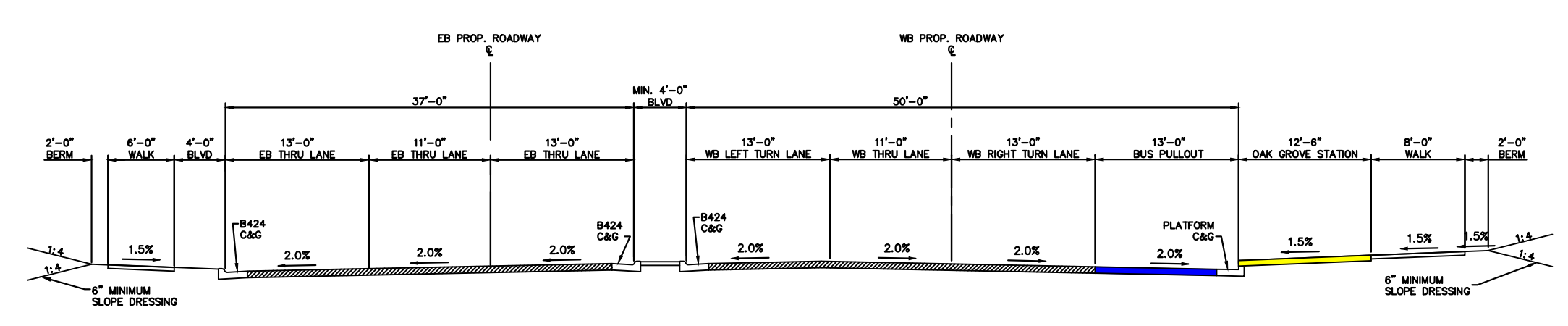
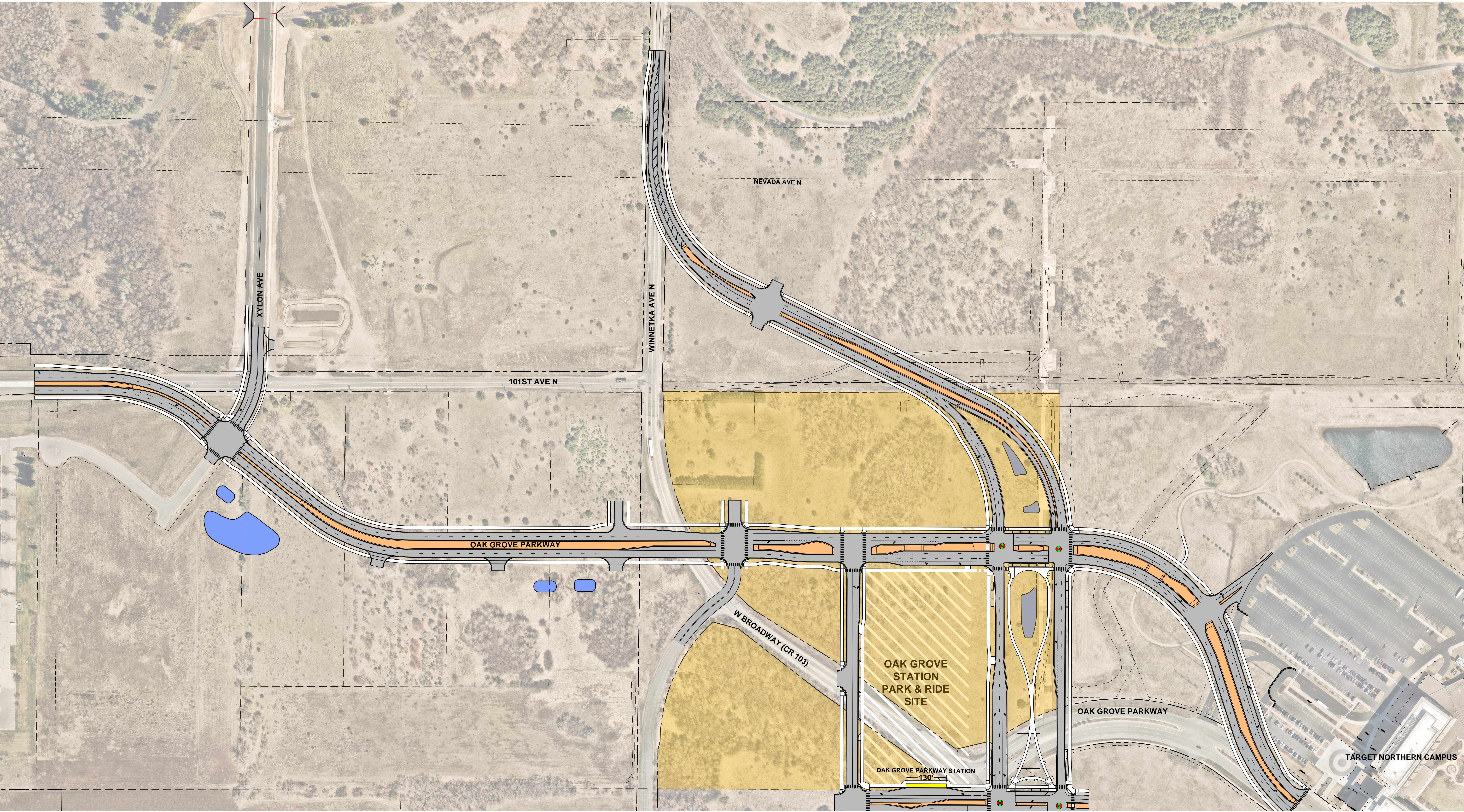
Facebook: Metropolitan Council

Instagram: [@metcouncilnews](https://www.instagram.com/metcouncilnews)

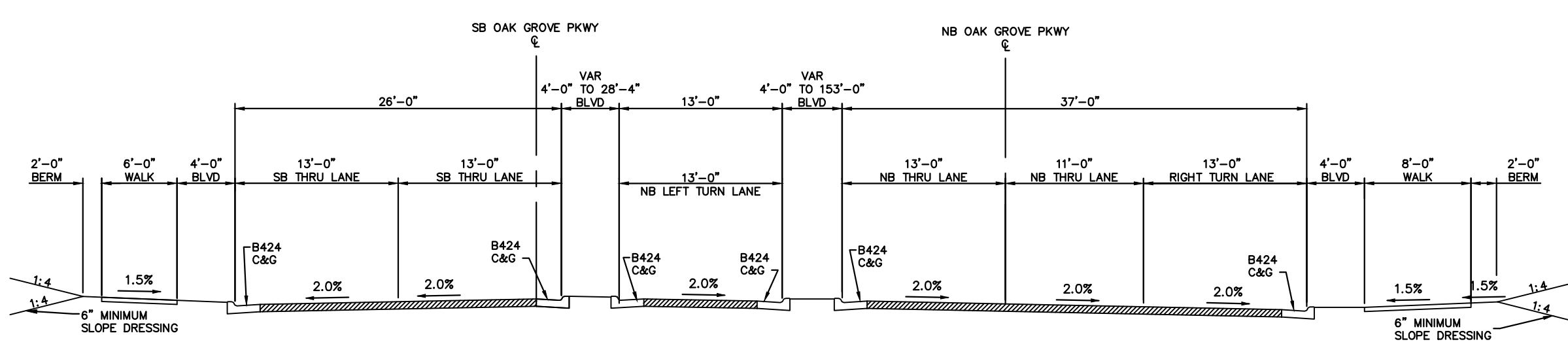
LinkedIn: Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

## G. BRT Conceptual Plans



TYPICAL SECTION OAK GROVE PARKWAY STATION

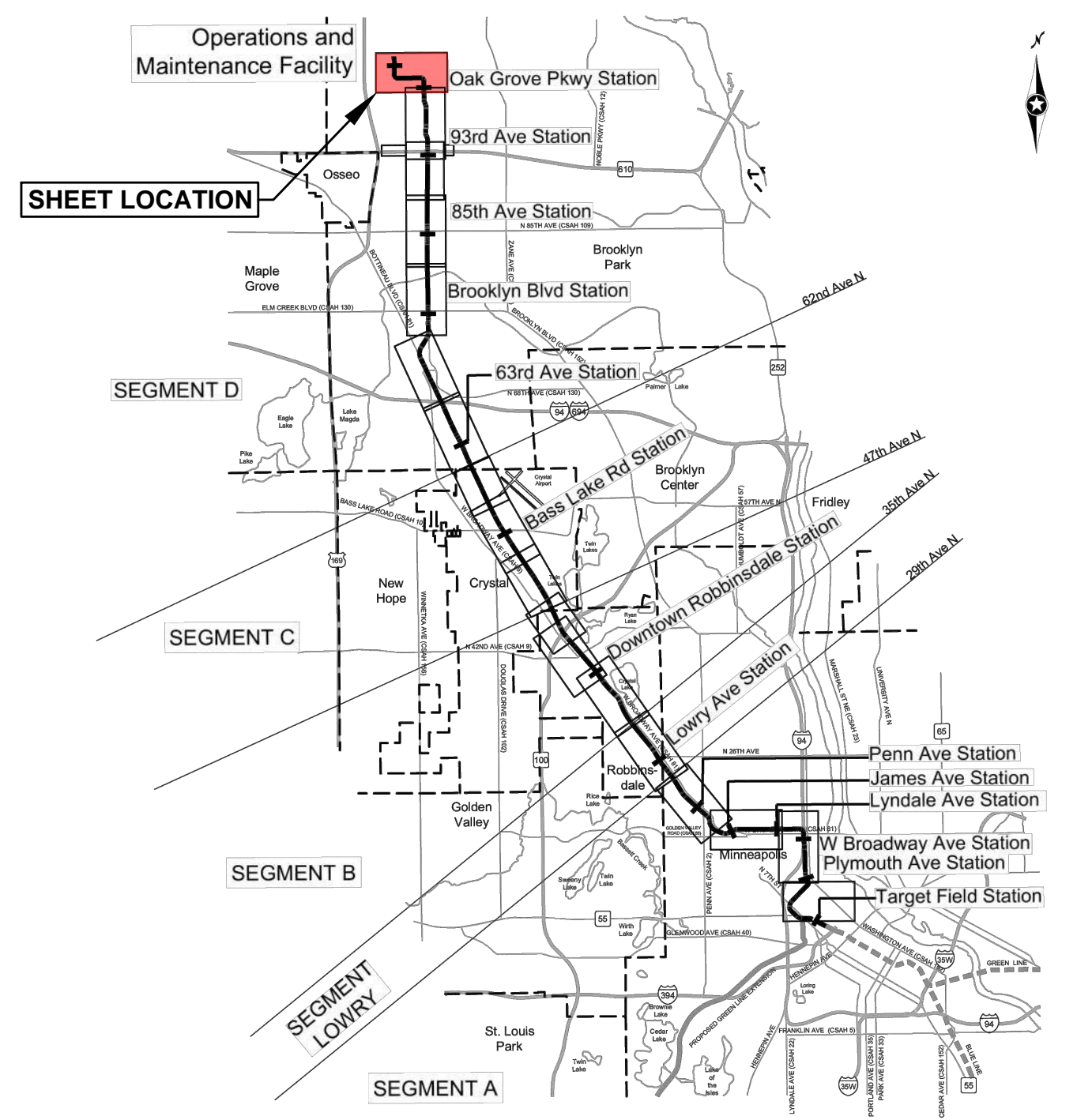


TYPICAL SECTION OAK GROVE PARKWAY

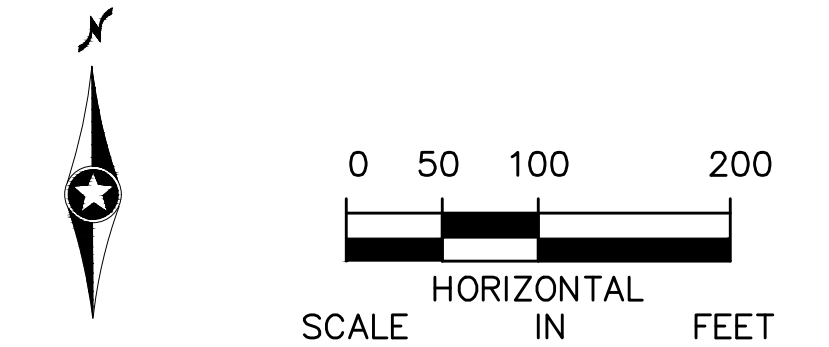
## BLUE LINE EXTENSION

SEGMENT D - BROOKLYN PARK  
OAK GROVE PARKWAY STATION

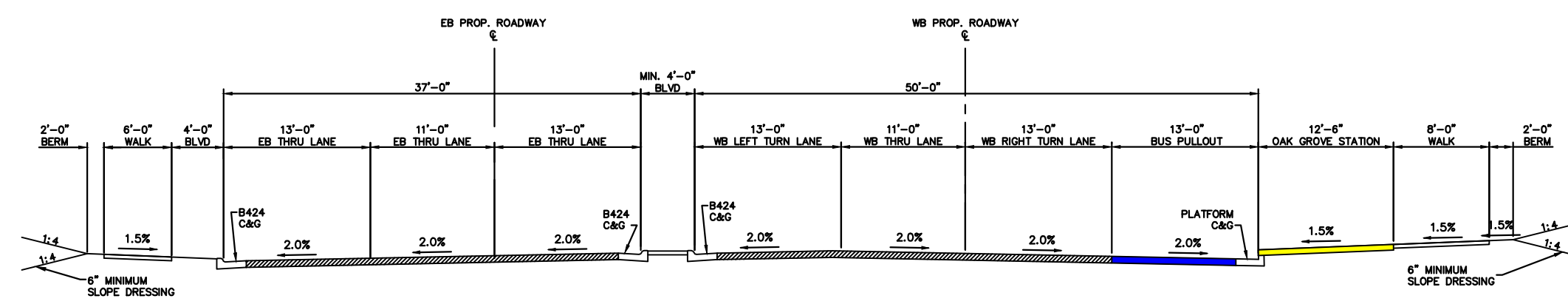
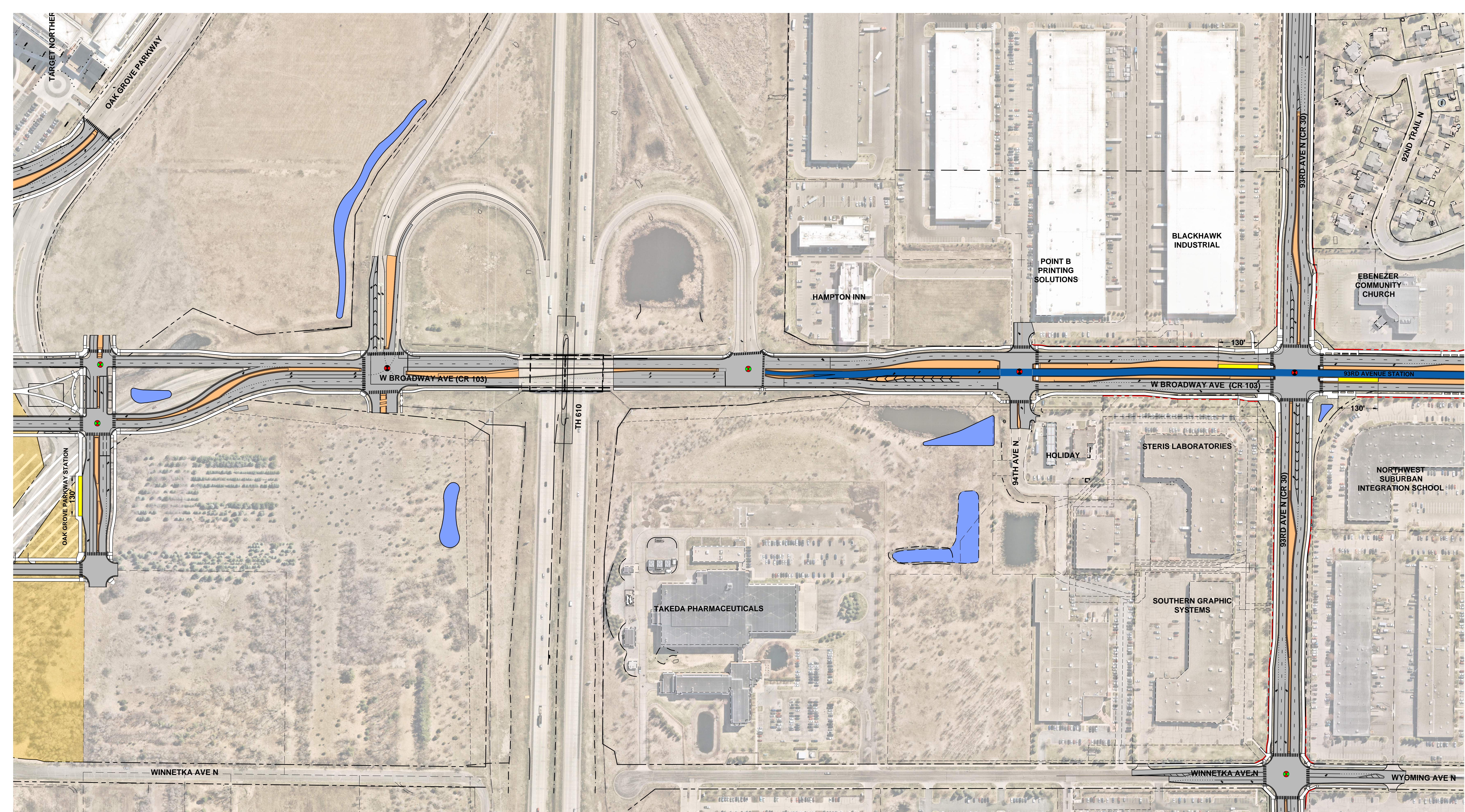
LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA / TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		



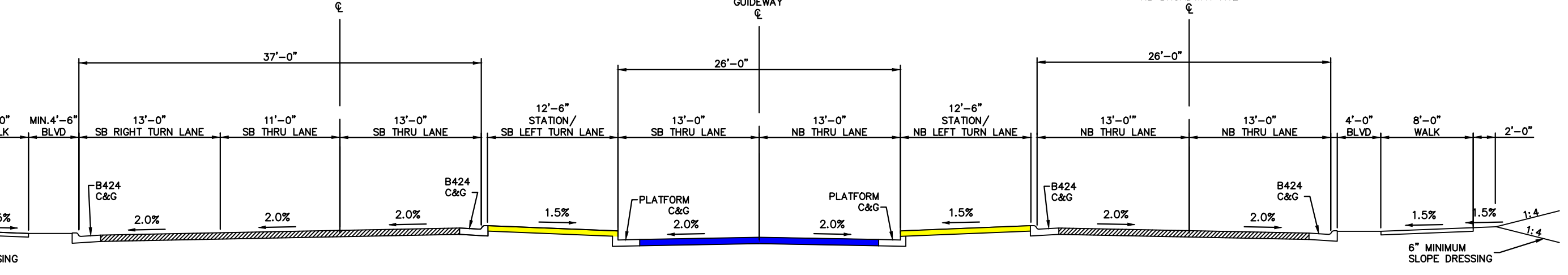
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TYPICAL SECTION OAK GROVE PARKWAY STATION



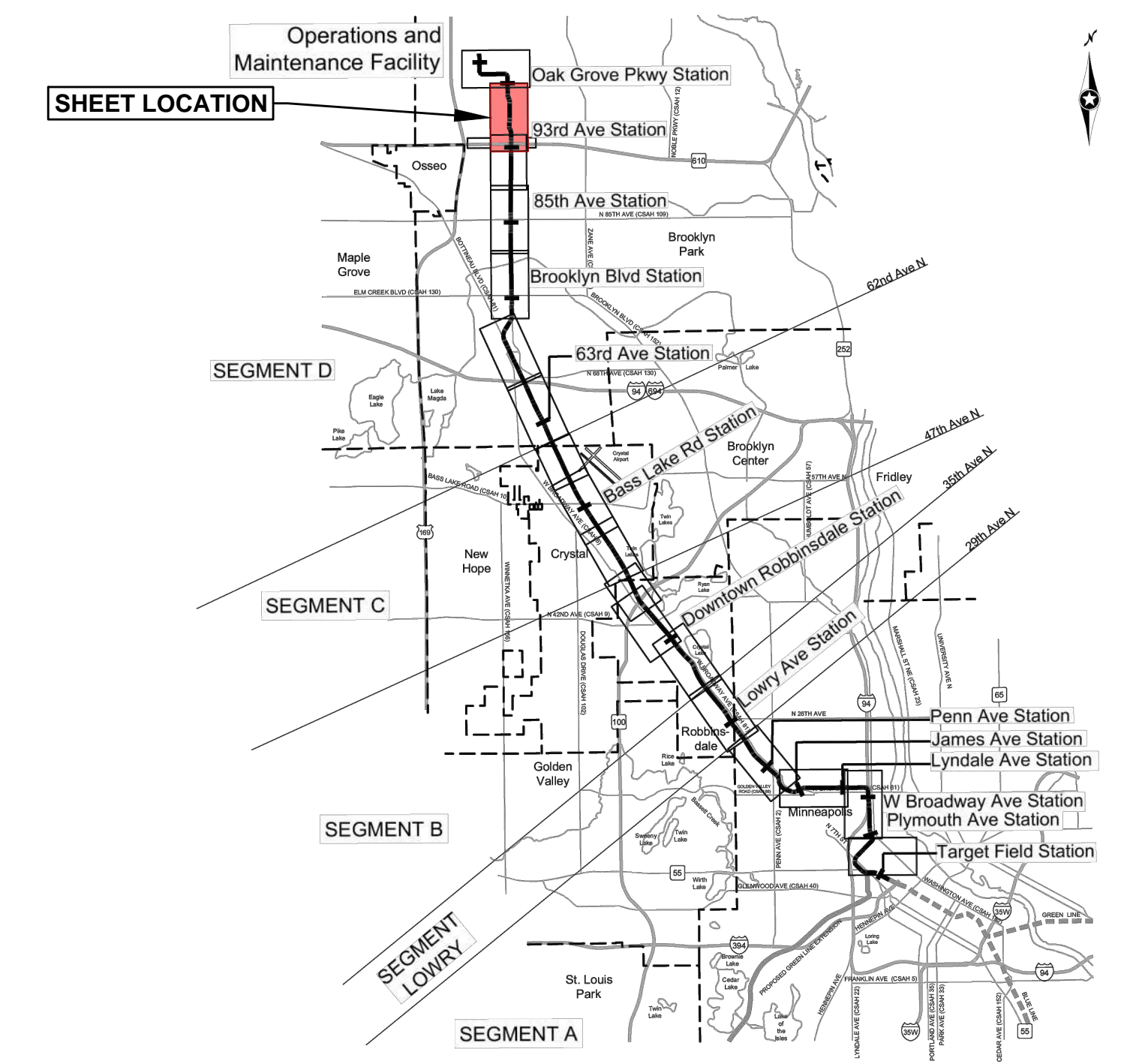
TYPICAL SECTION 93RD AVE STATION

## BLUE LINE EXTENSION

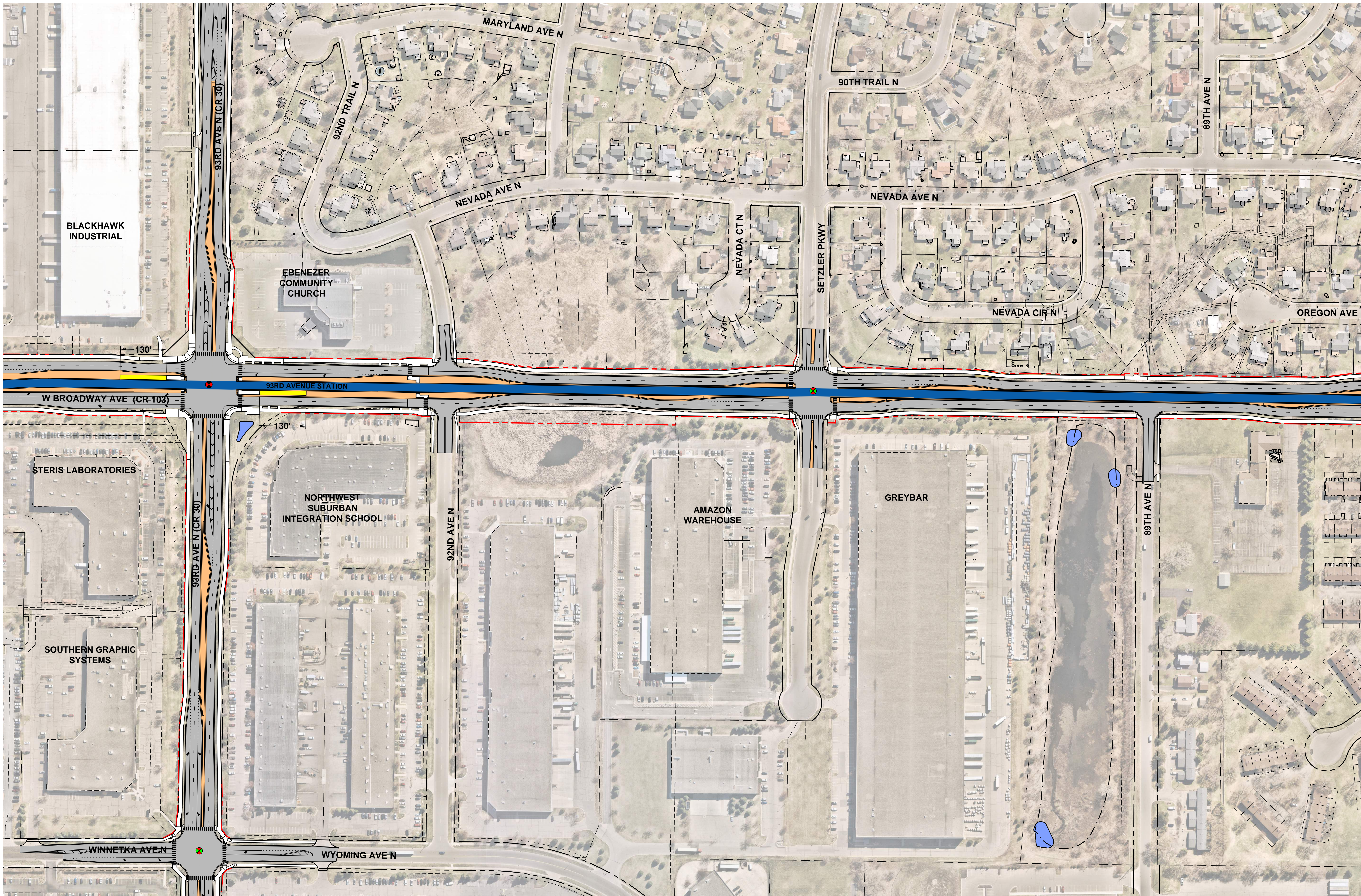
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#### 93RD AVENUE STATION

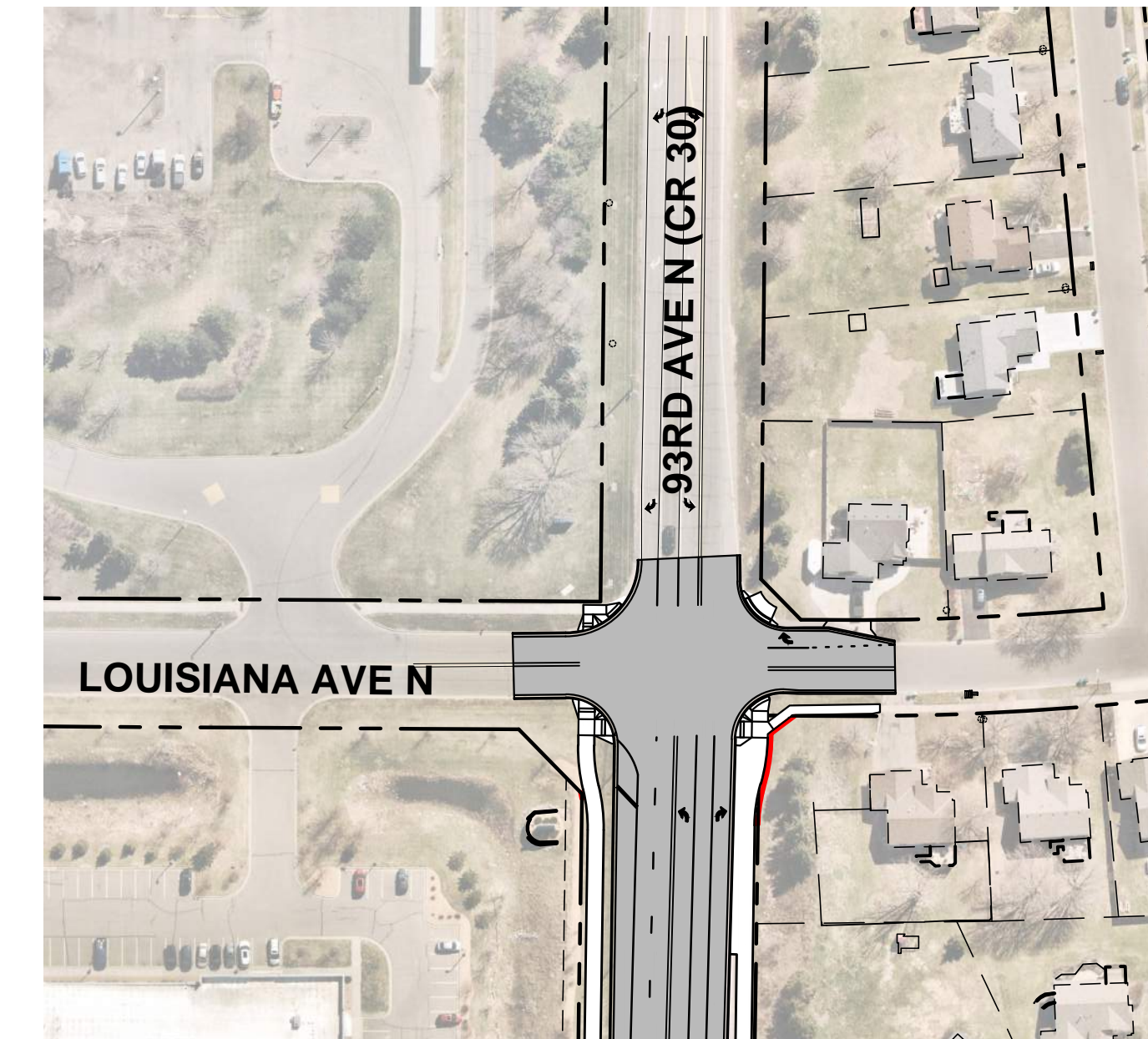
LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



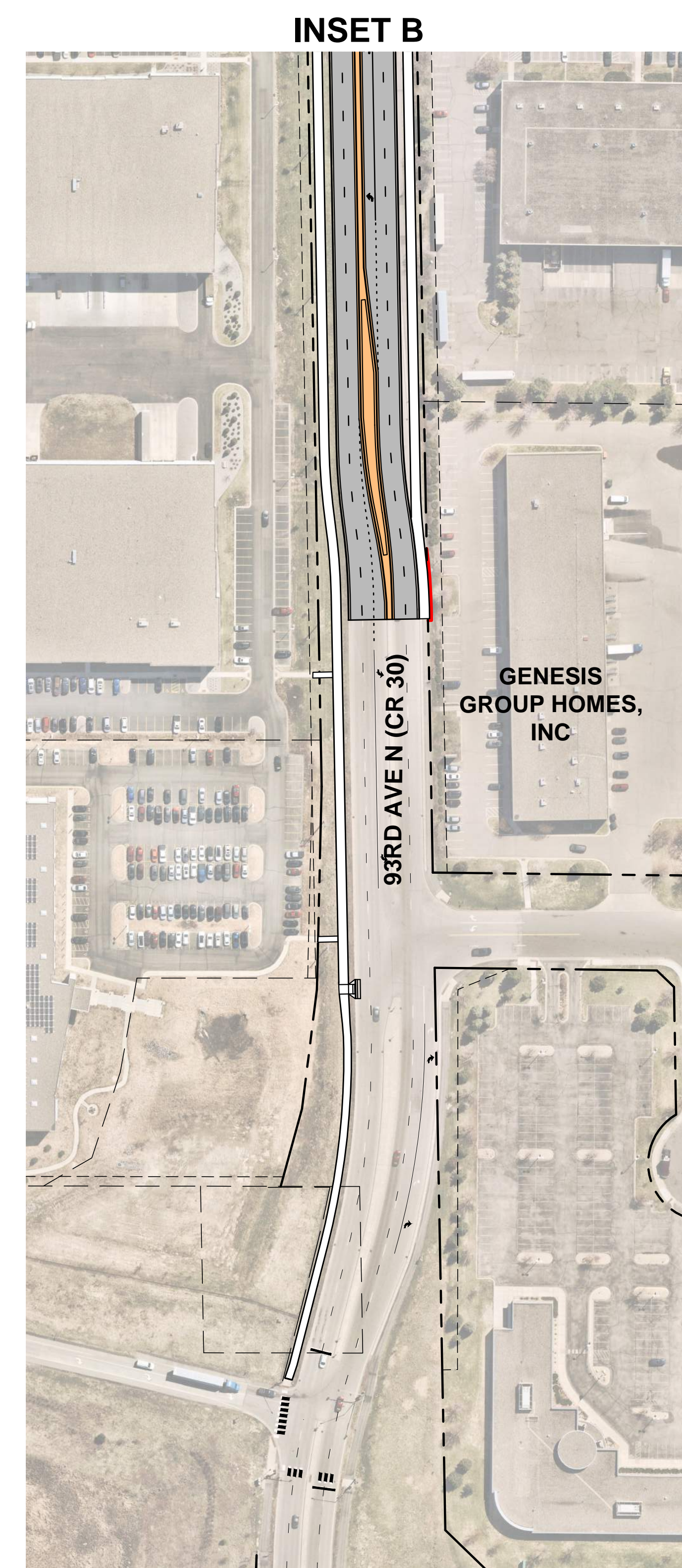
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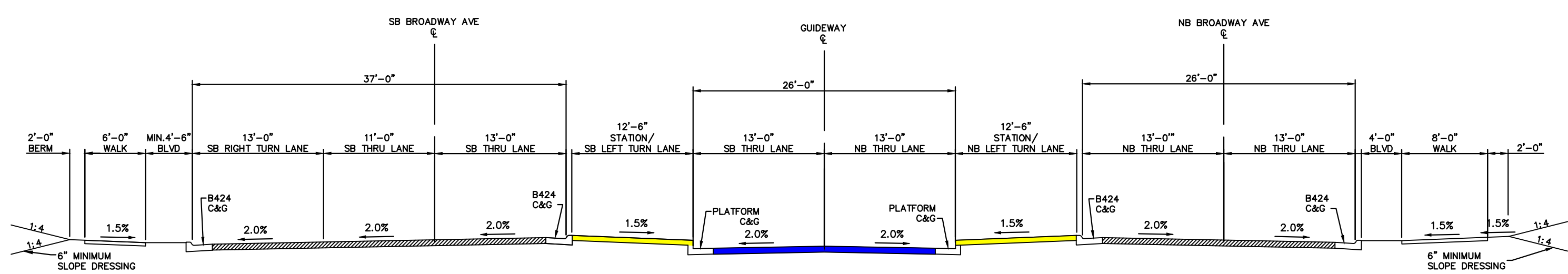
SEE INSET B



INSET A



INSET B



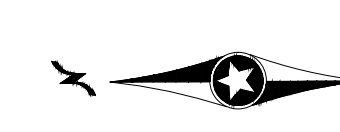
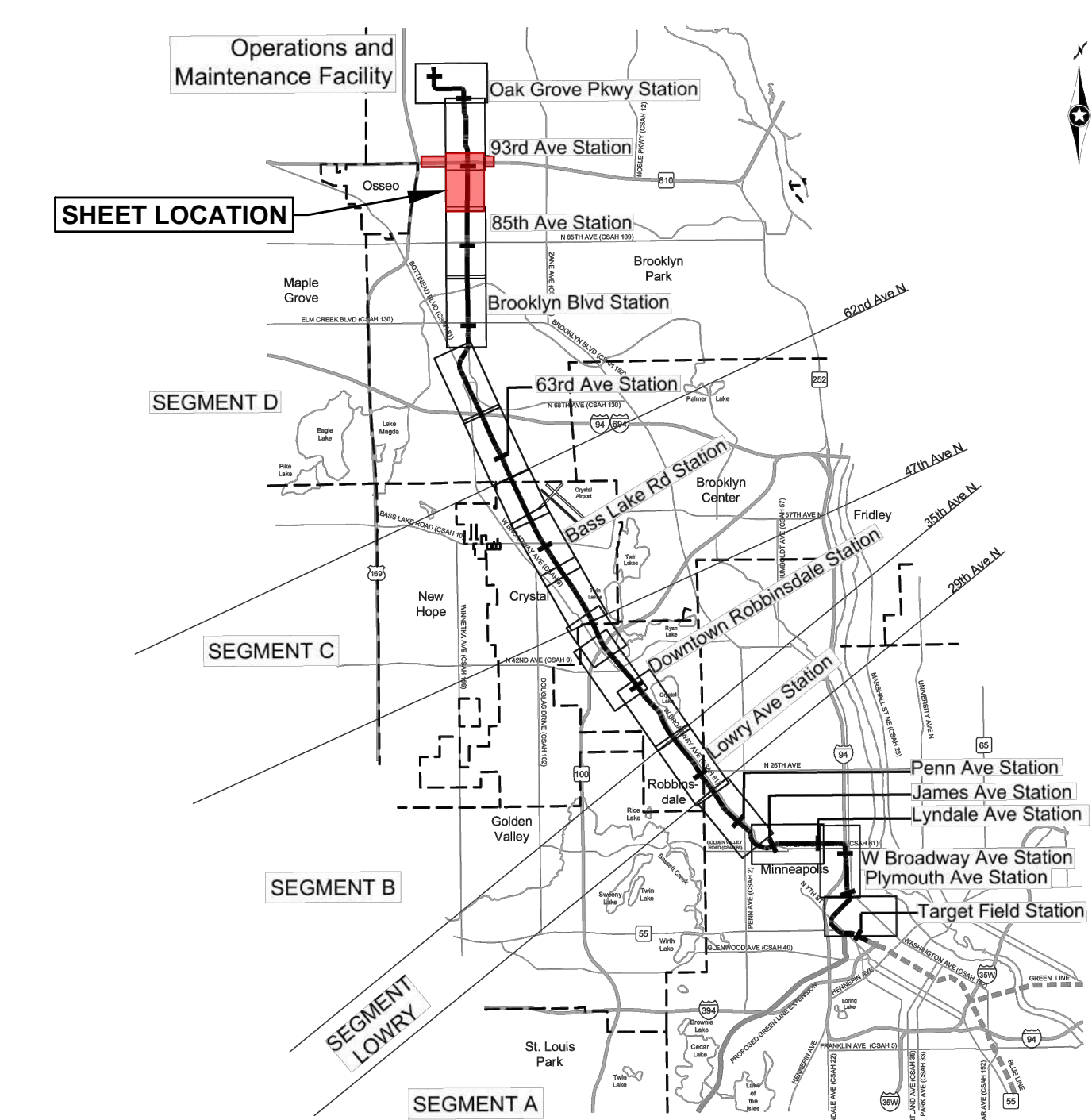
TYPICAL SECTION 93RD AVE STATION

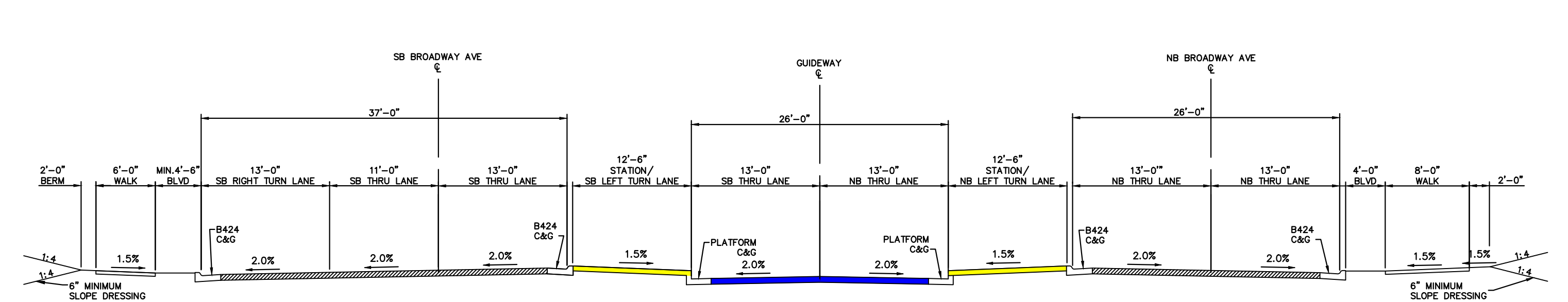
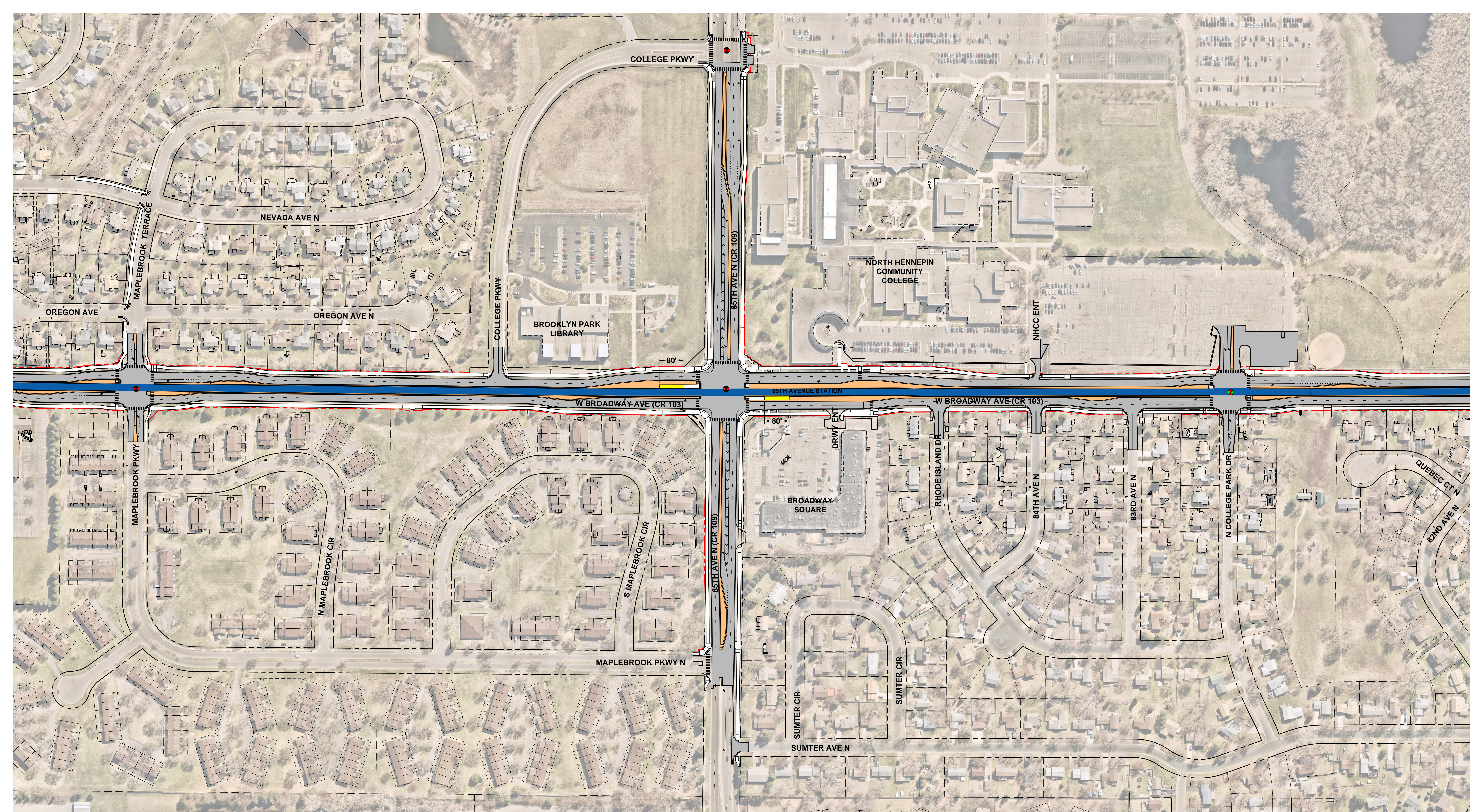
# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

SEGMENT D - BROOKLYN PARK

93RD AVENUE STATION

LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		





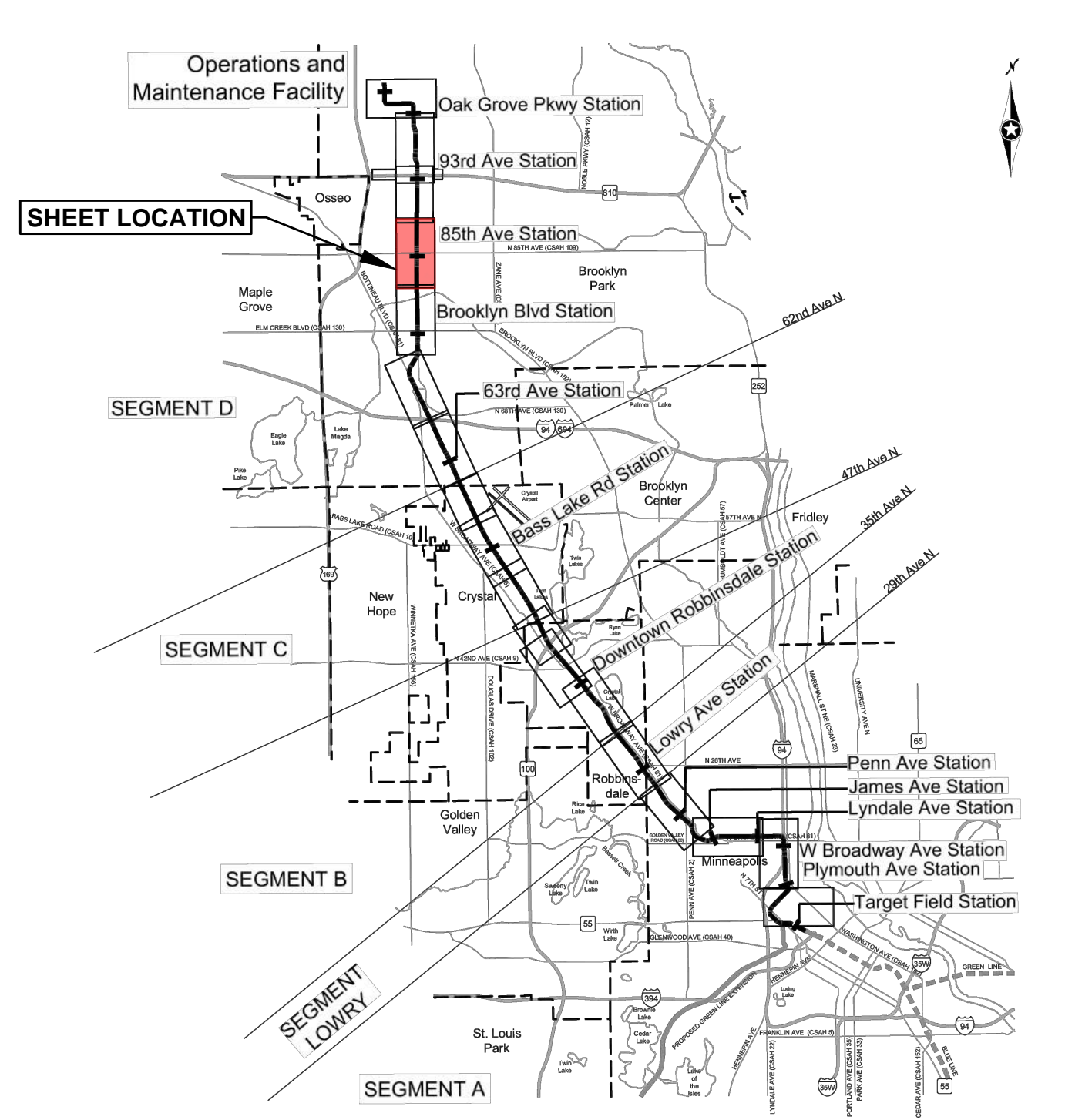
TYPICAL SECTION 85TH AVE STATION

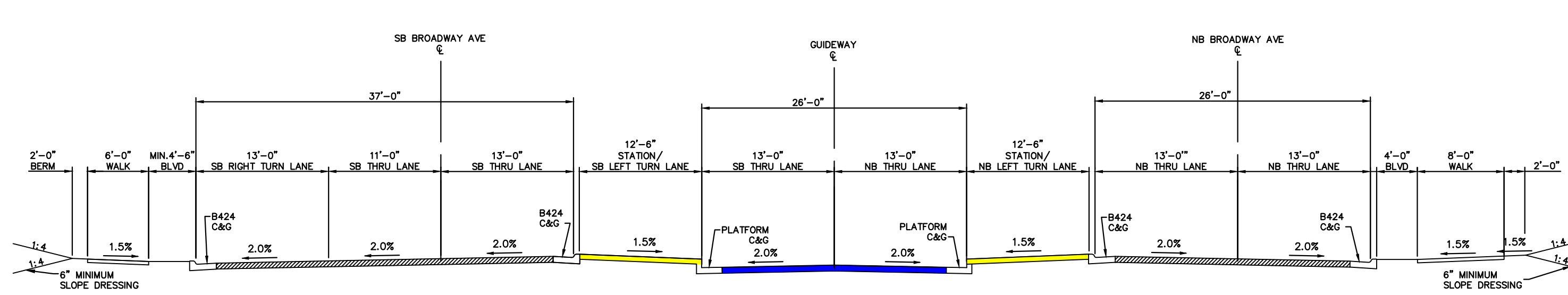
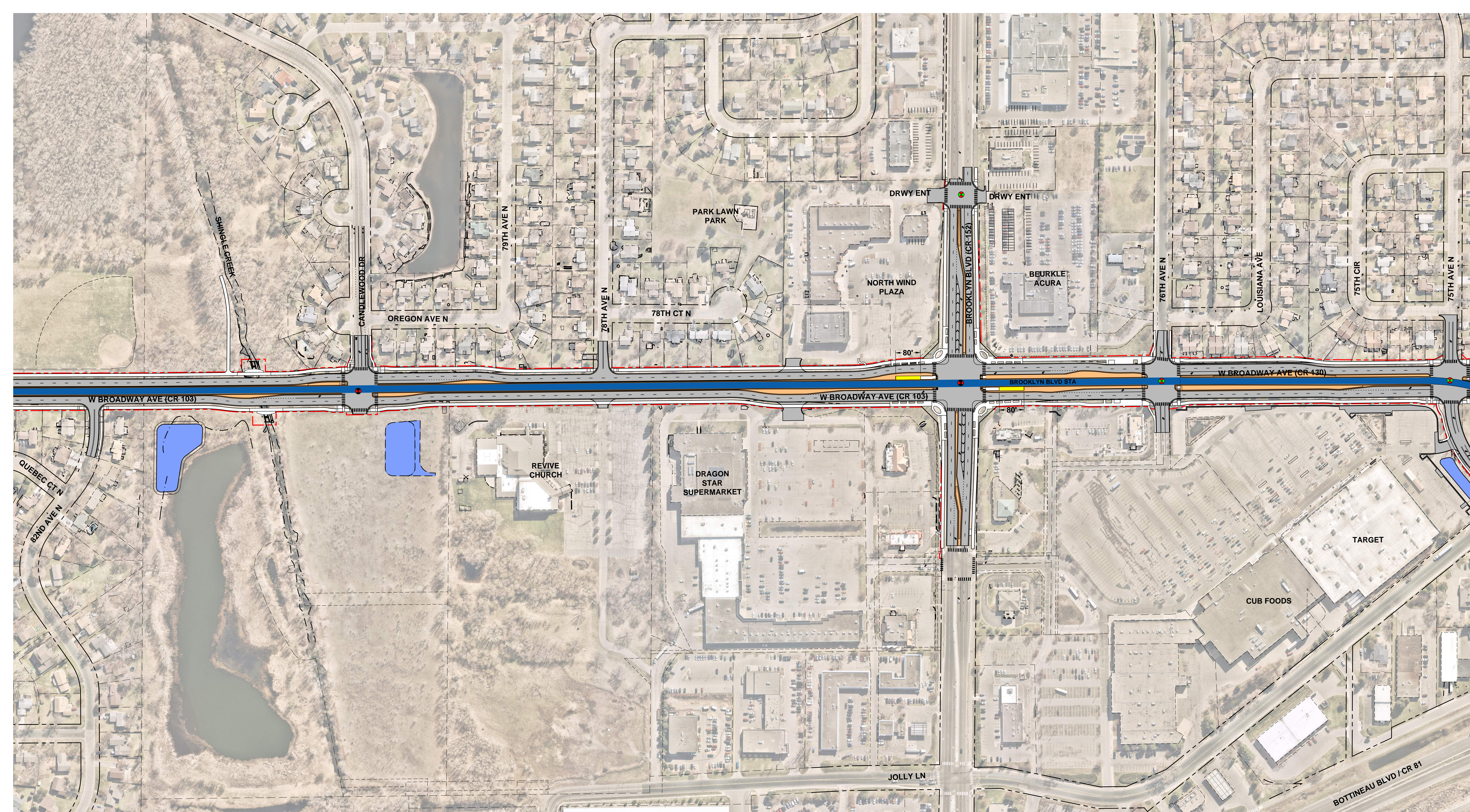
## BLUE LINE EXTENSION

### SEGMENT D - BROOKLYN PARK

#### 85TH AVENUE STATION

LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA/ TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		





TYPICAL SECTION BROOKLYN BLVD STATION

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

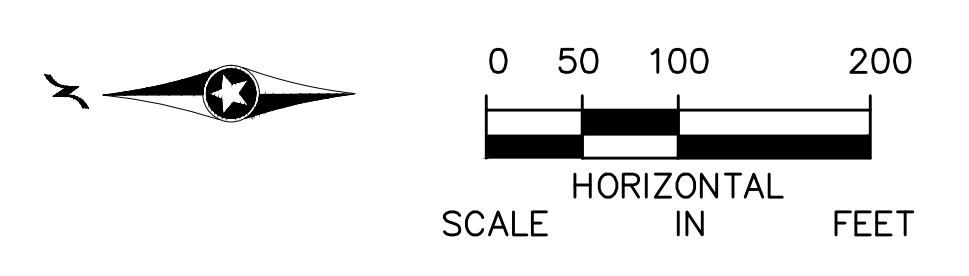
## SEGMENT D - BROOKLYN PARK

### BROOKLYN BOULEVARD STATION

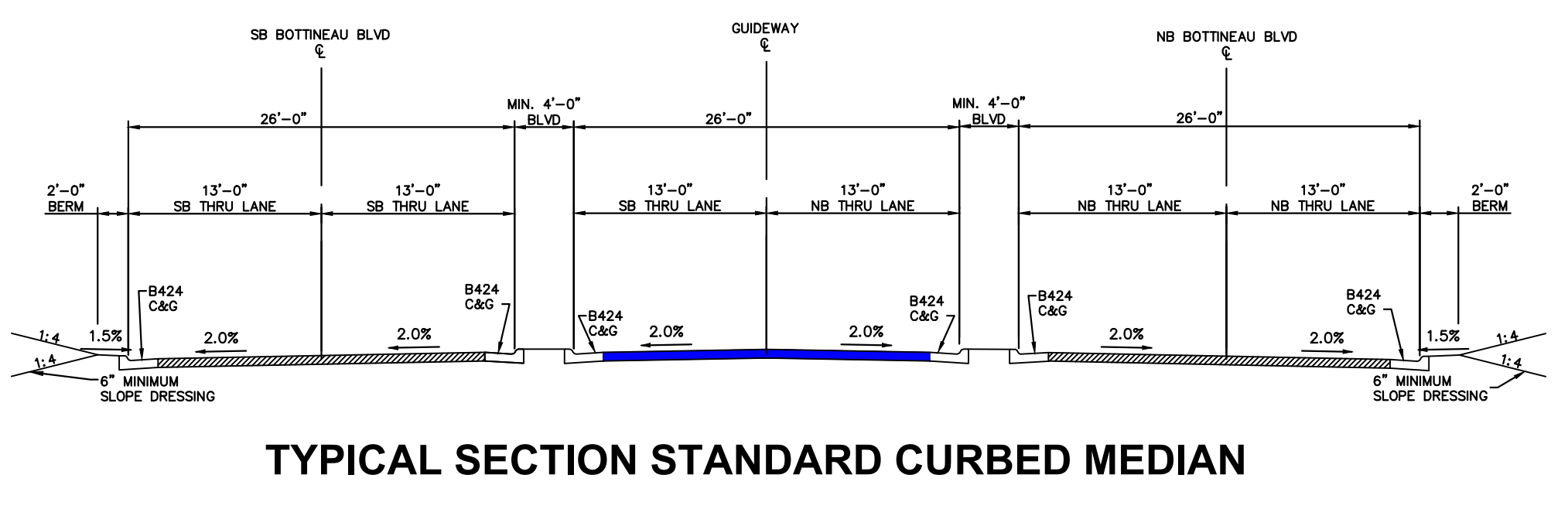
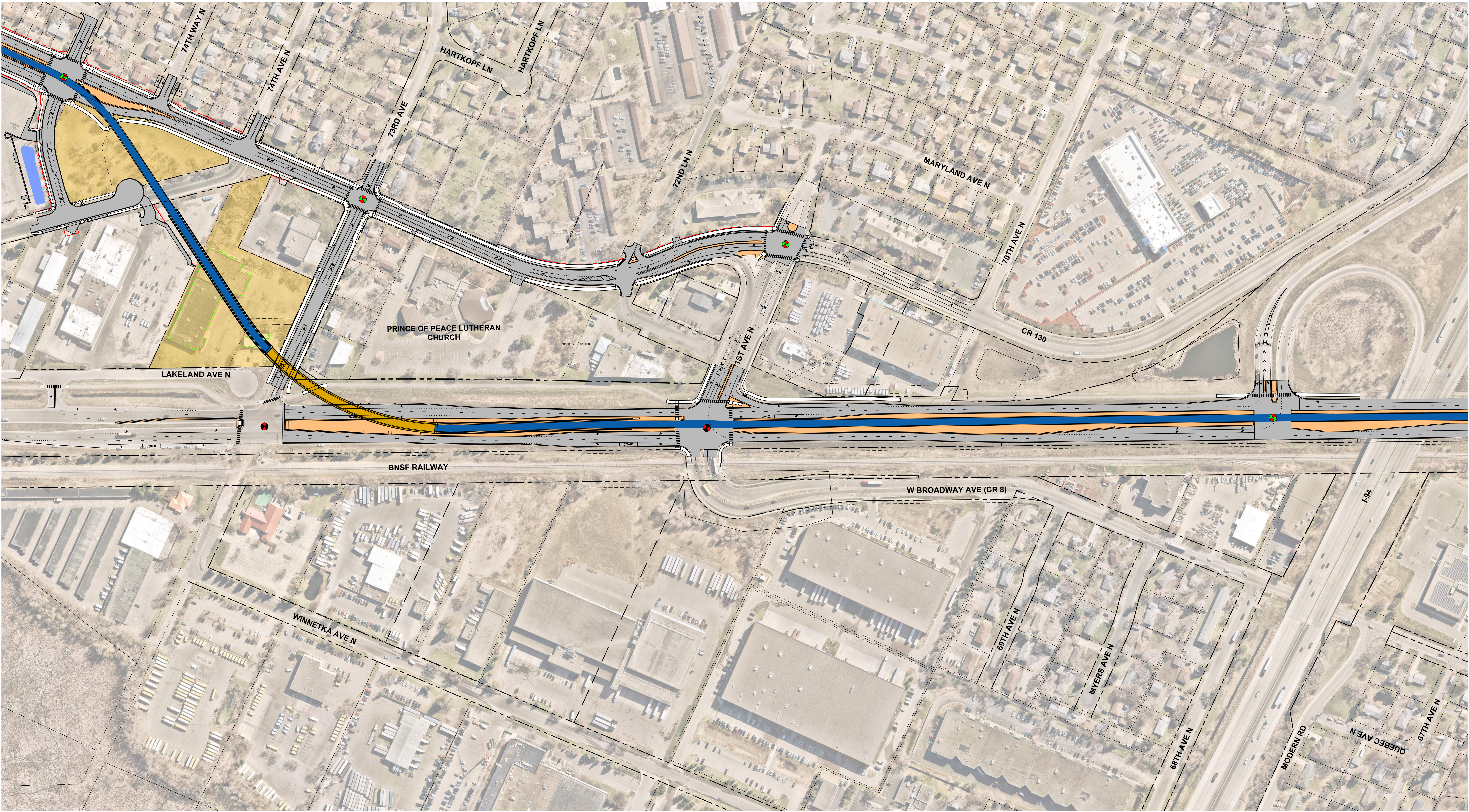
LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



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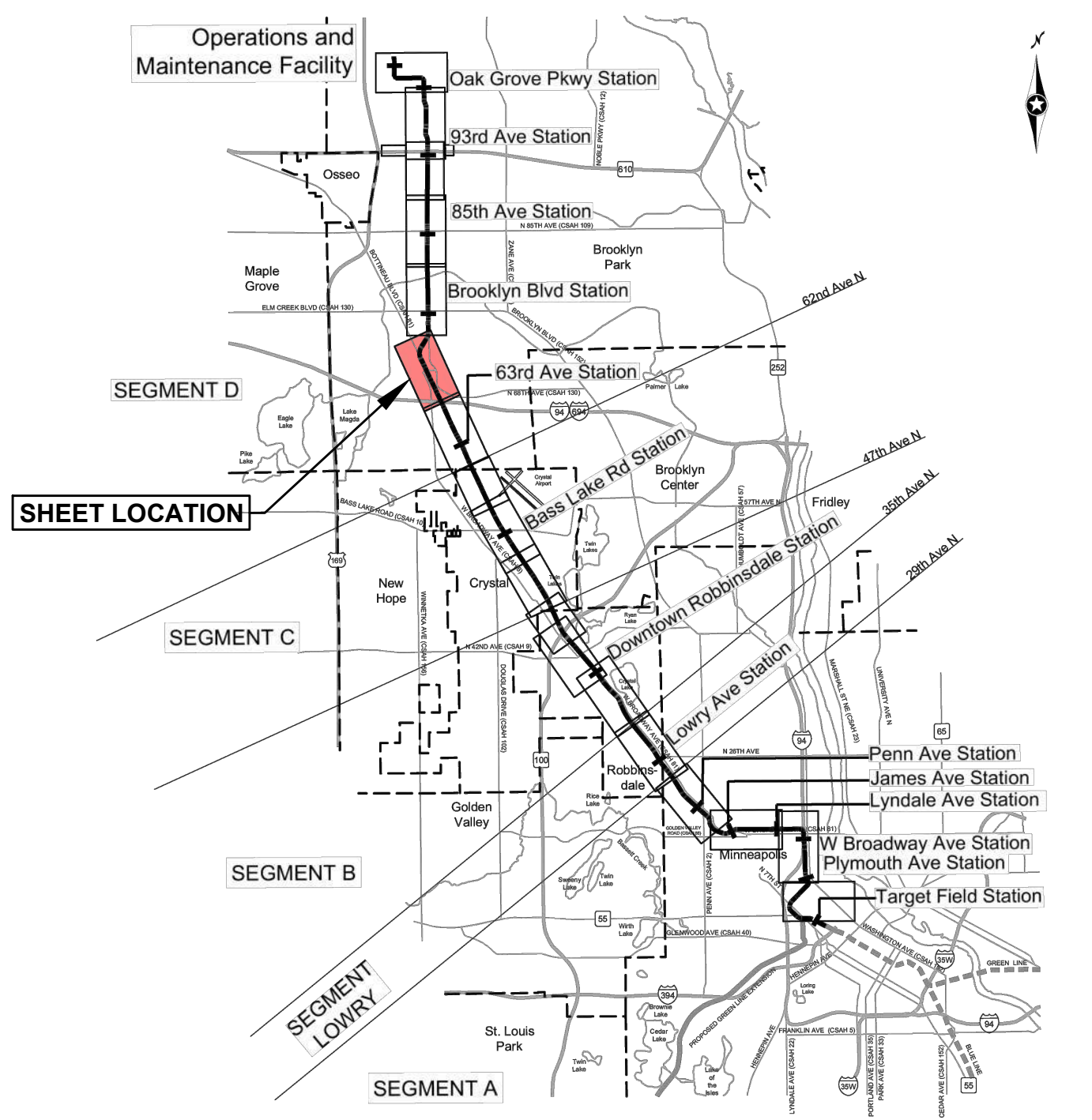
TYPICAL SECTION STANDARD CURBED MEDIAN

## BLUE LINE EXTENSION

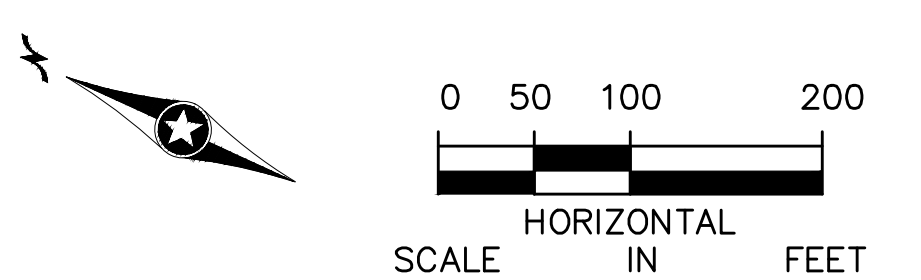
SEGMENT D - BROOKLYN PARK

WEST BROADWAY AVENUE TO  
BOTTINEAU BOULEVARD TRANSITION

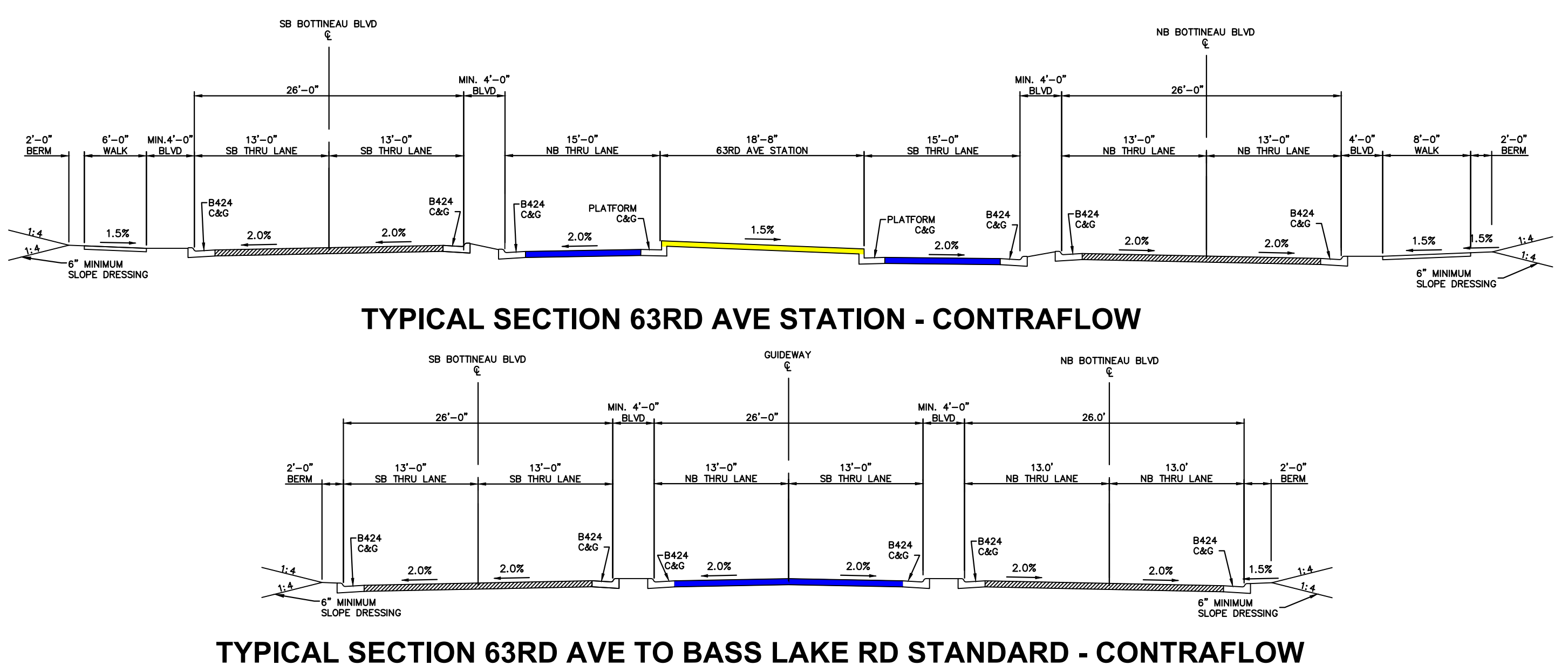
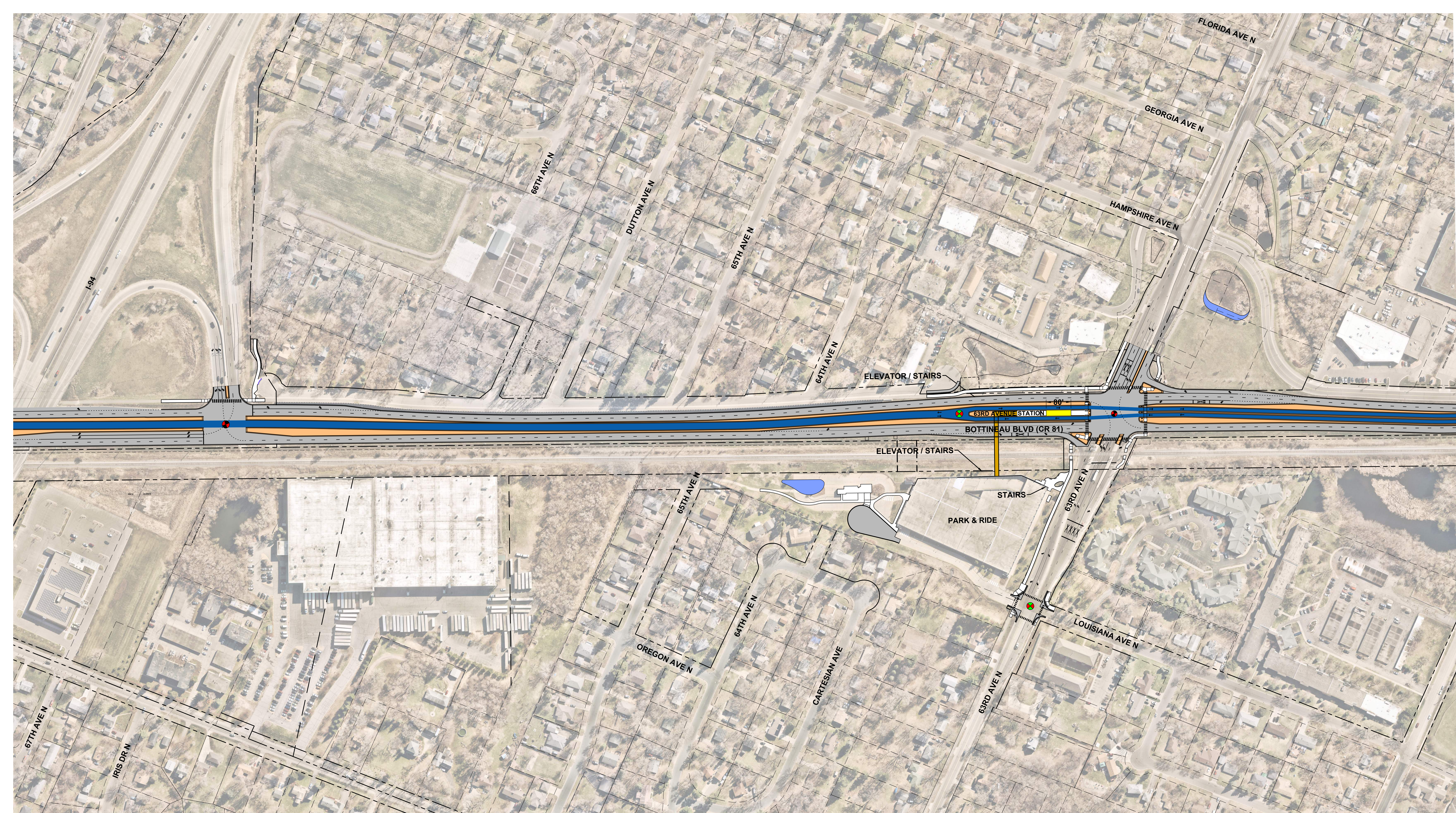
LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



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# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

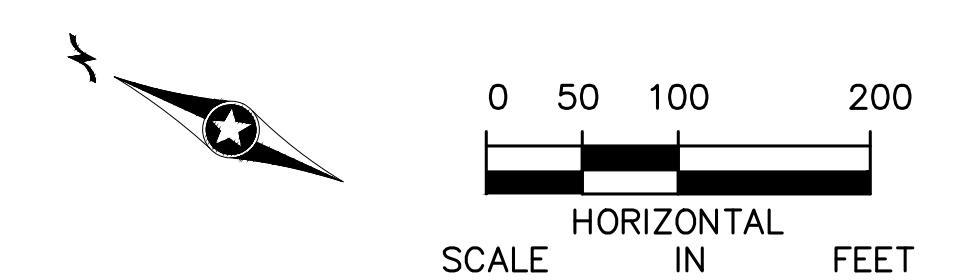
## SEGMENT D - BROOKLYN PARK

### 63RD AVENUE STATION

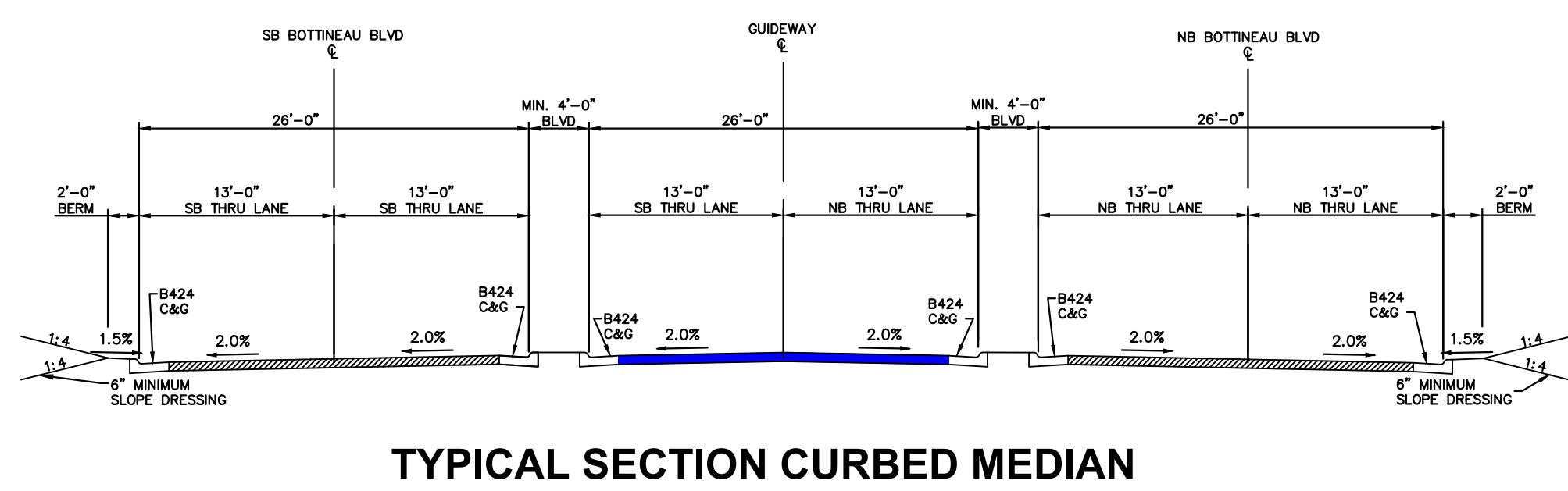
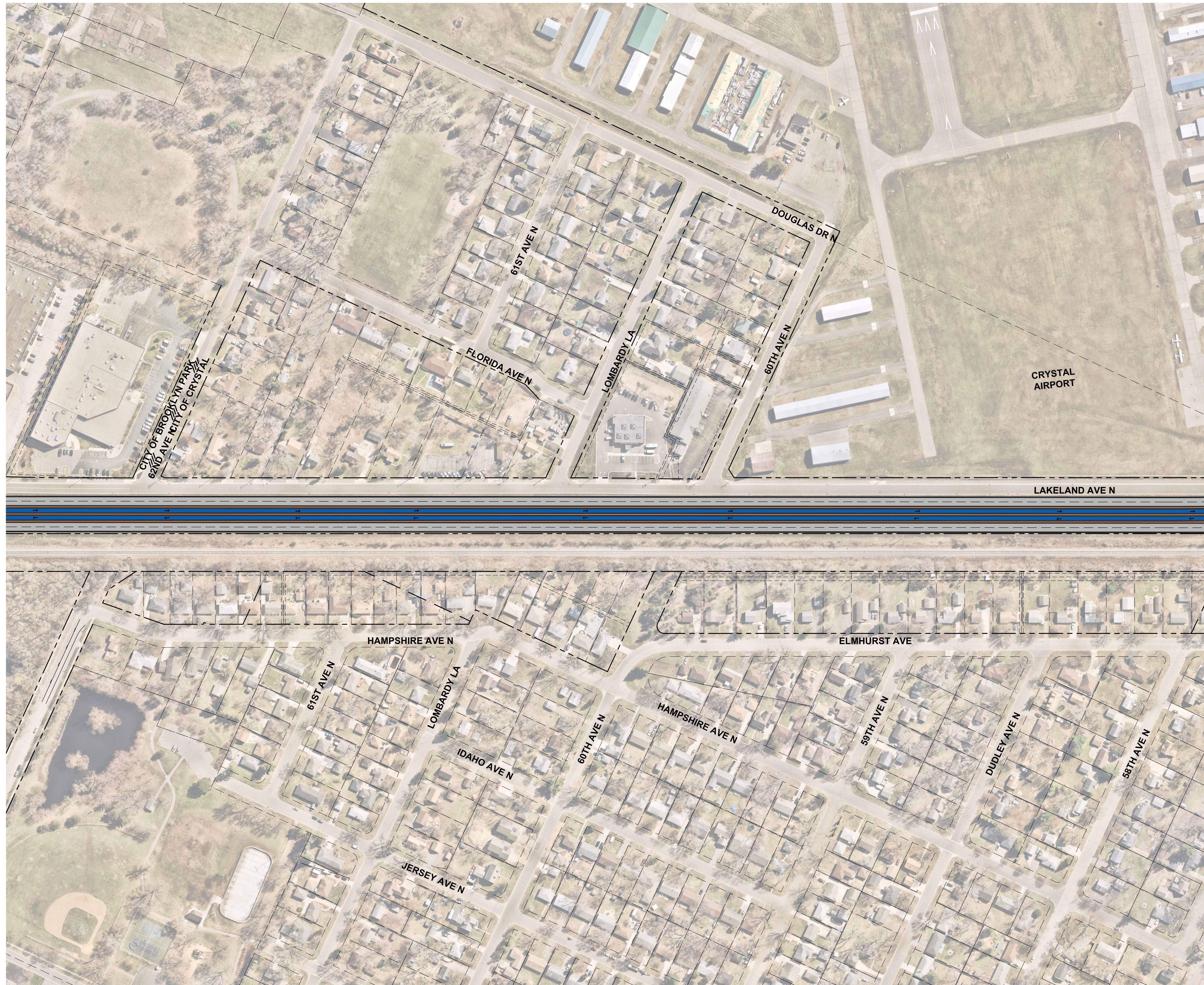
LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



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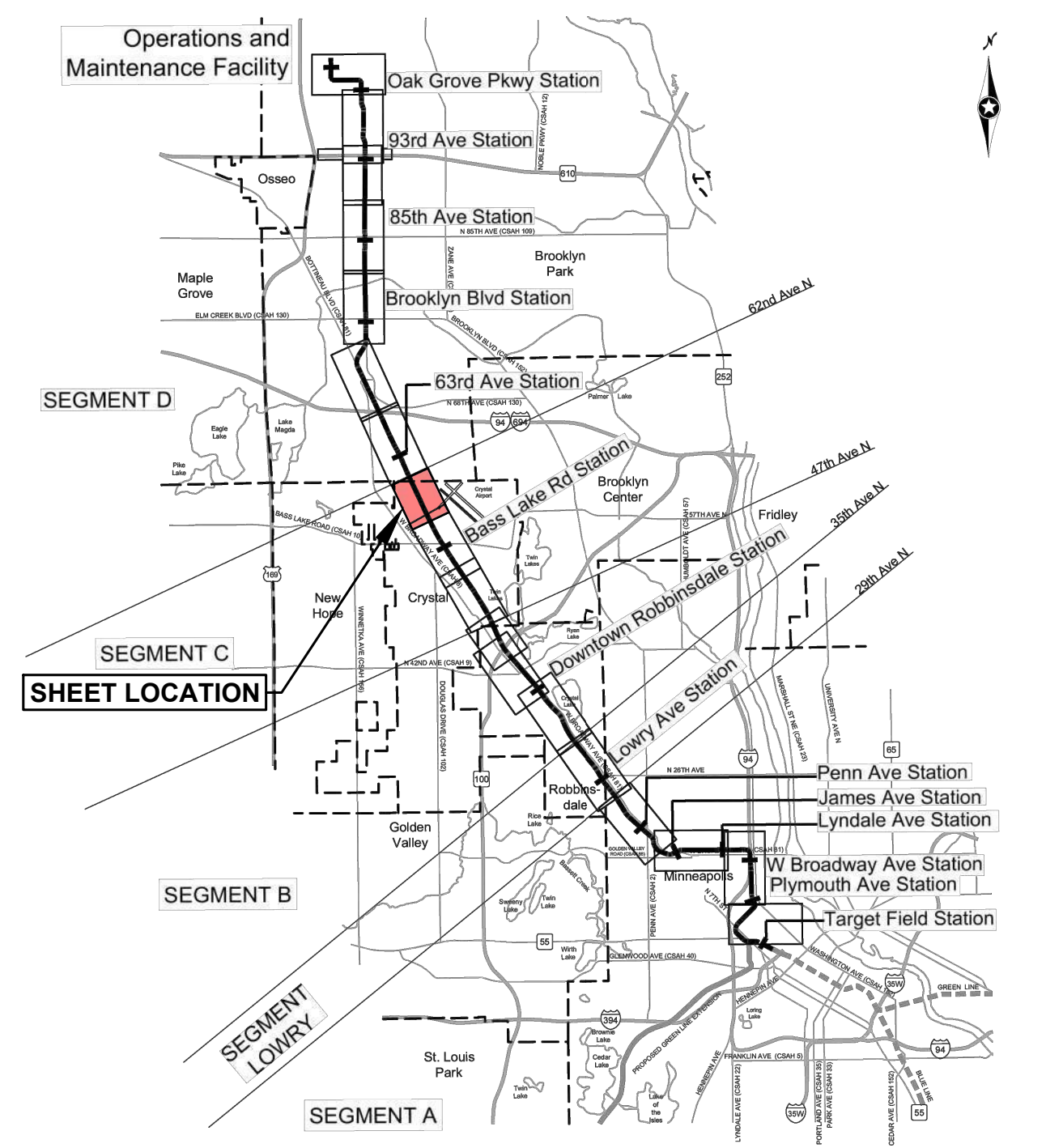
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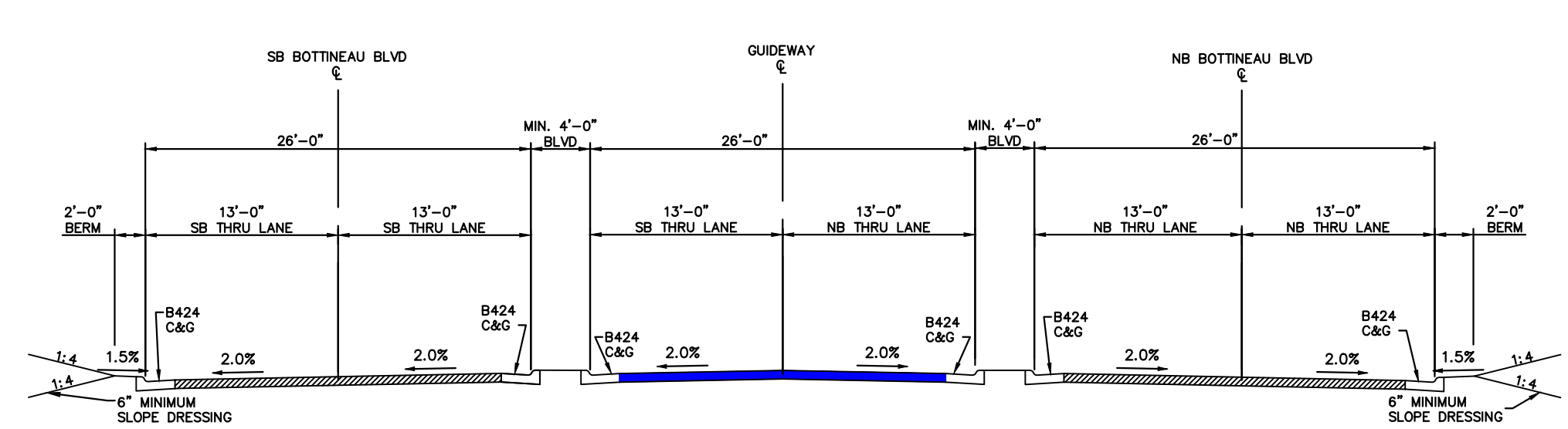
## BLUE LINE EXTENSION

### SEGMENT C - CRYSTAL

LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA / TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		





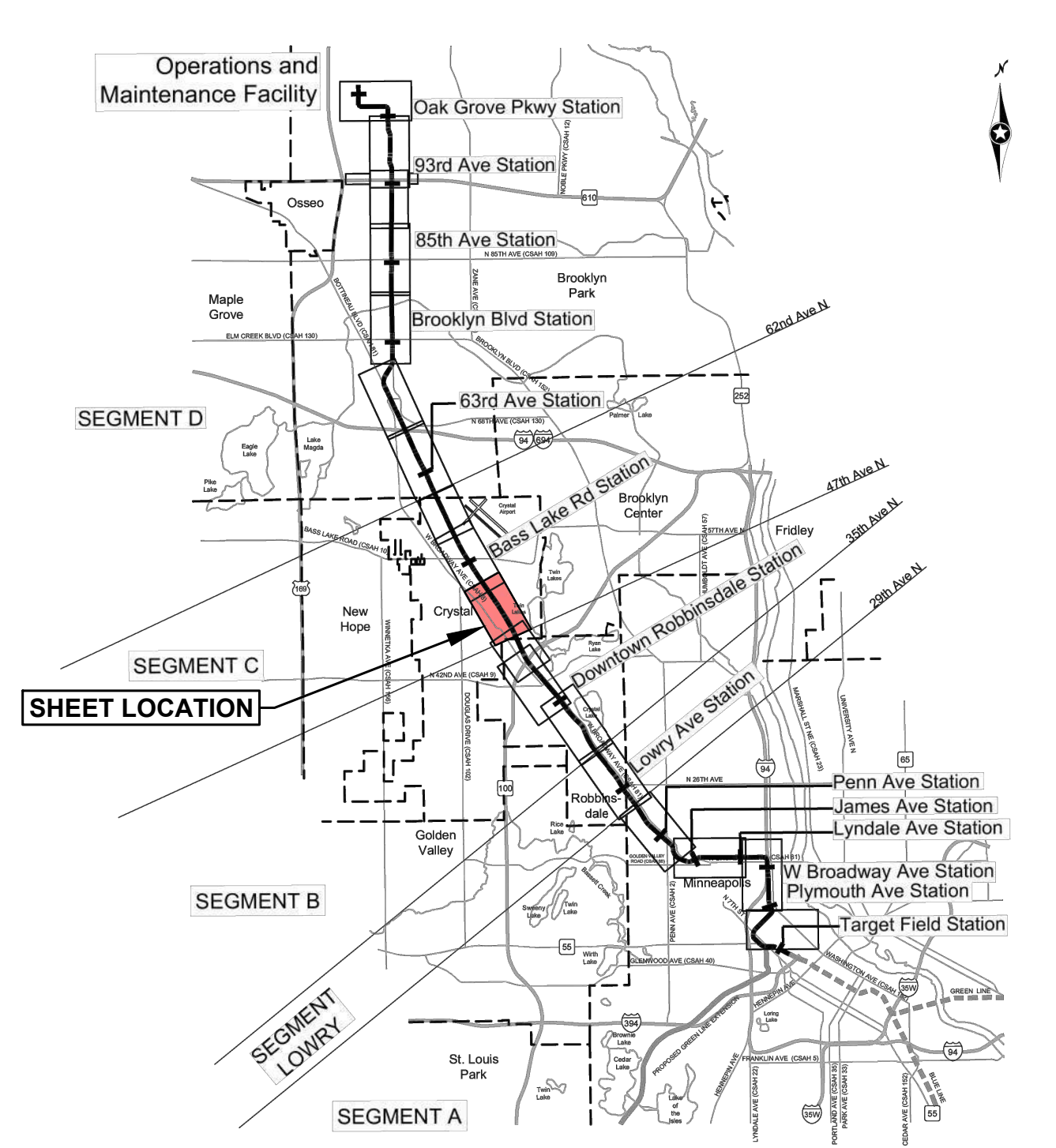


TYPICAL SECTION STANDARD CURBED MEDIAN

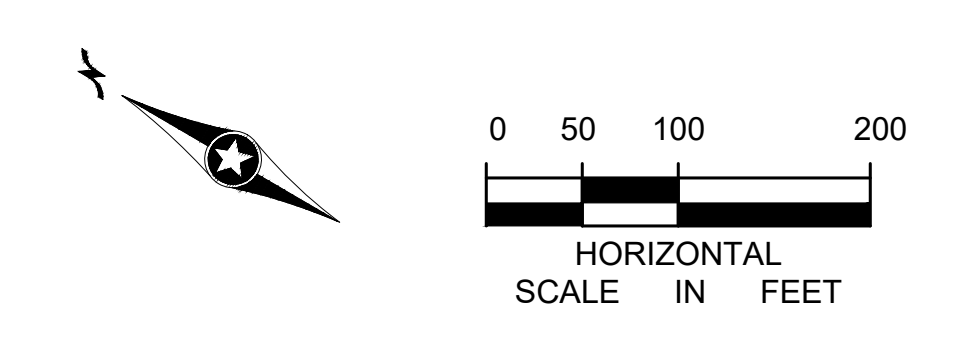
# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

## SEGMENT C - CRYSTAL

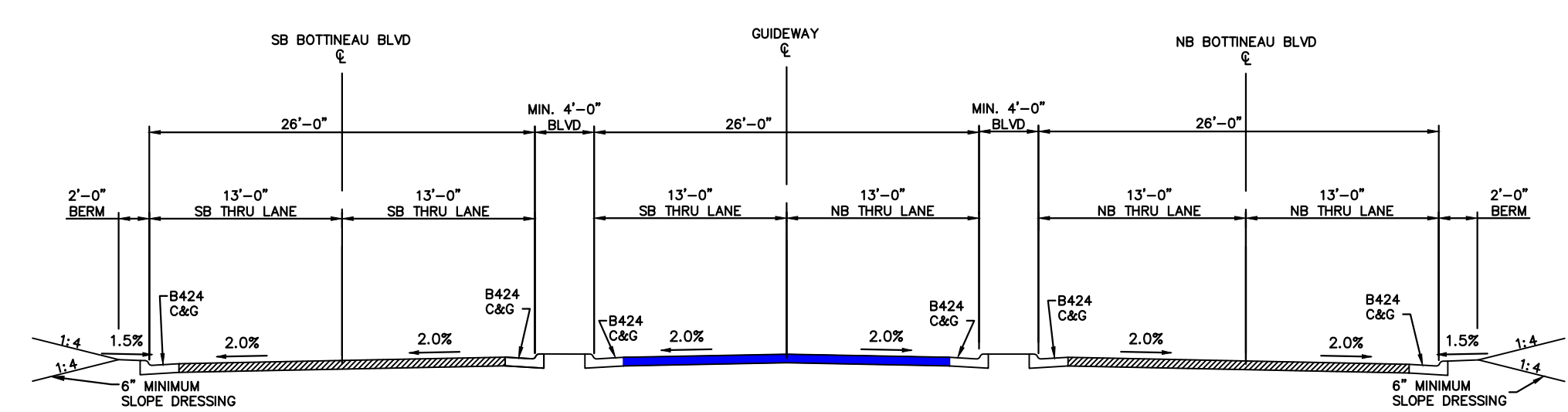
LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA / TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		



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10

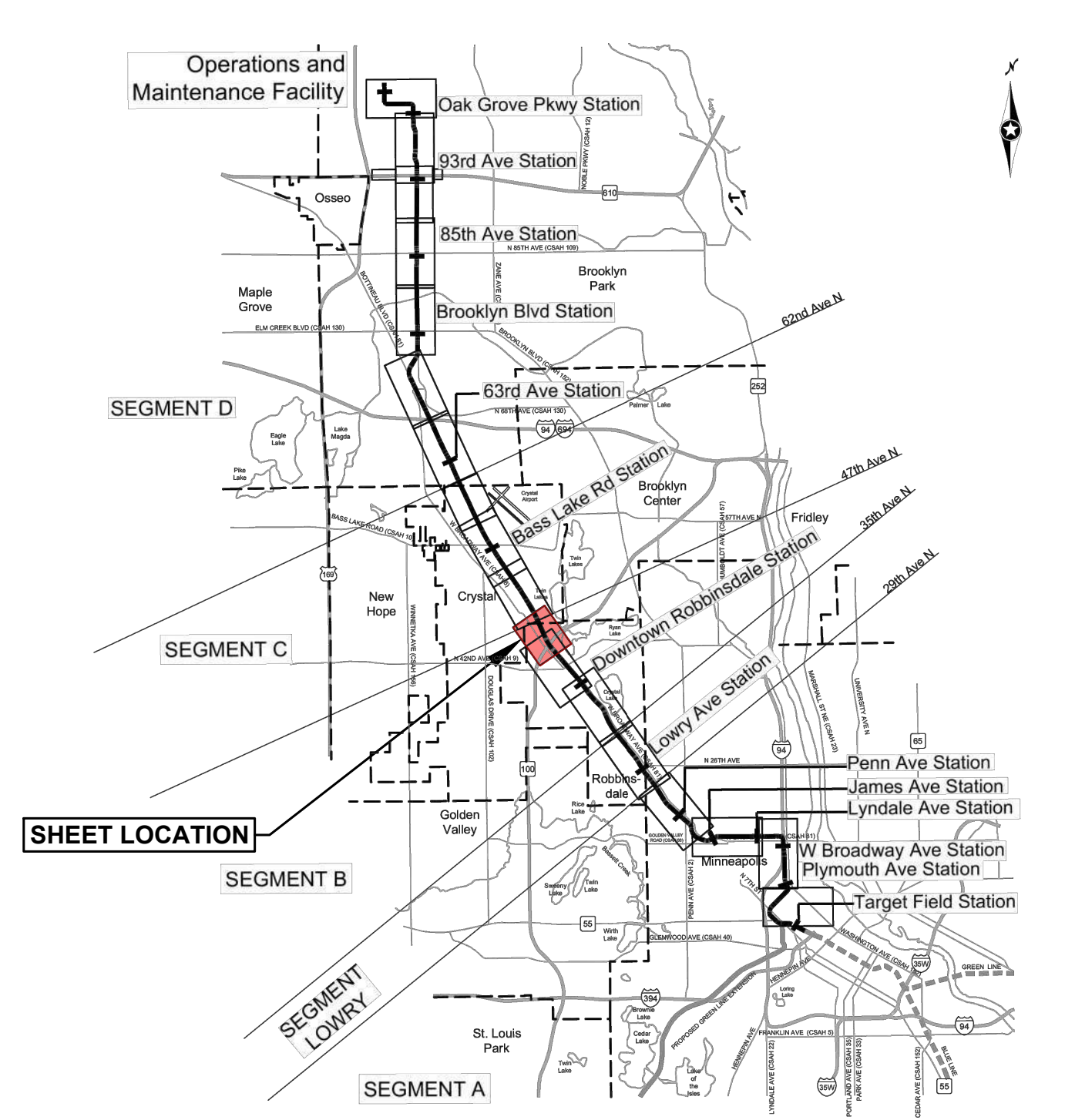


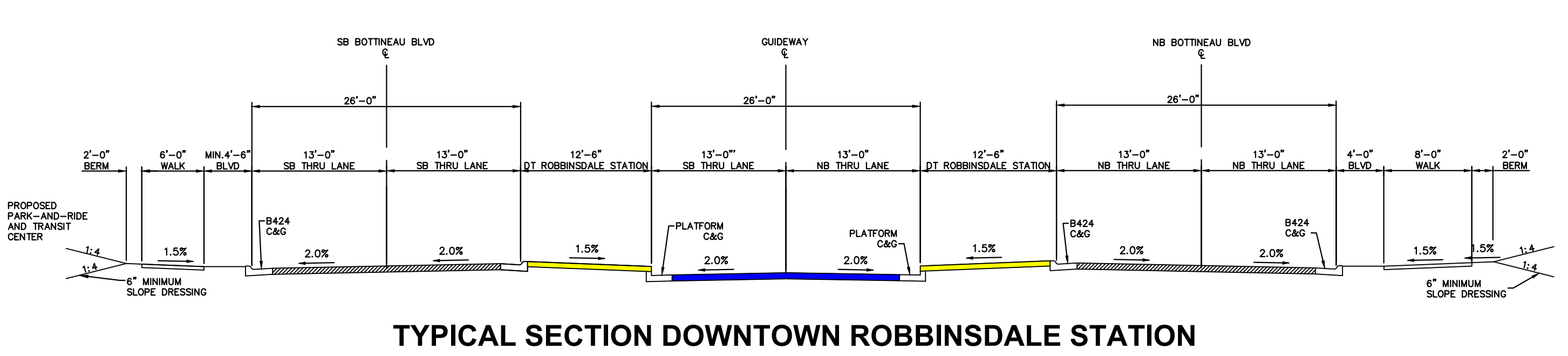
# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

SEGMENT B - ROBBINSDALE

TH 100

LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA / TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		





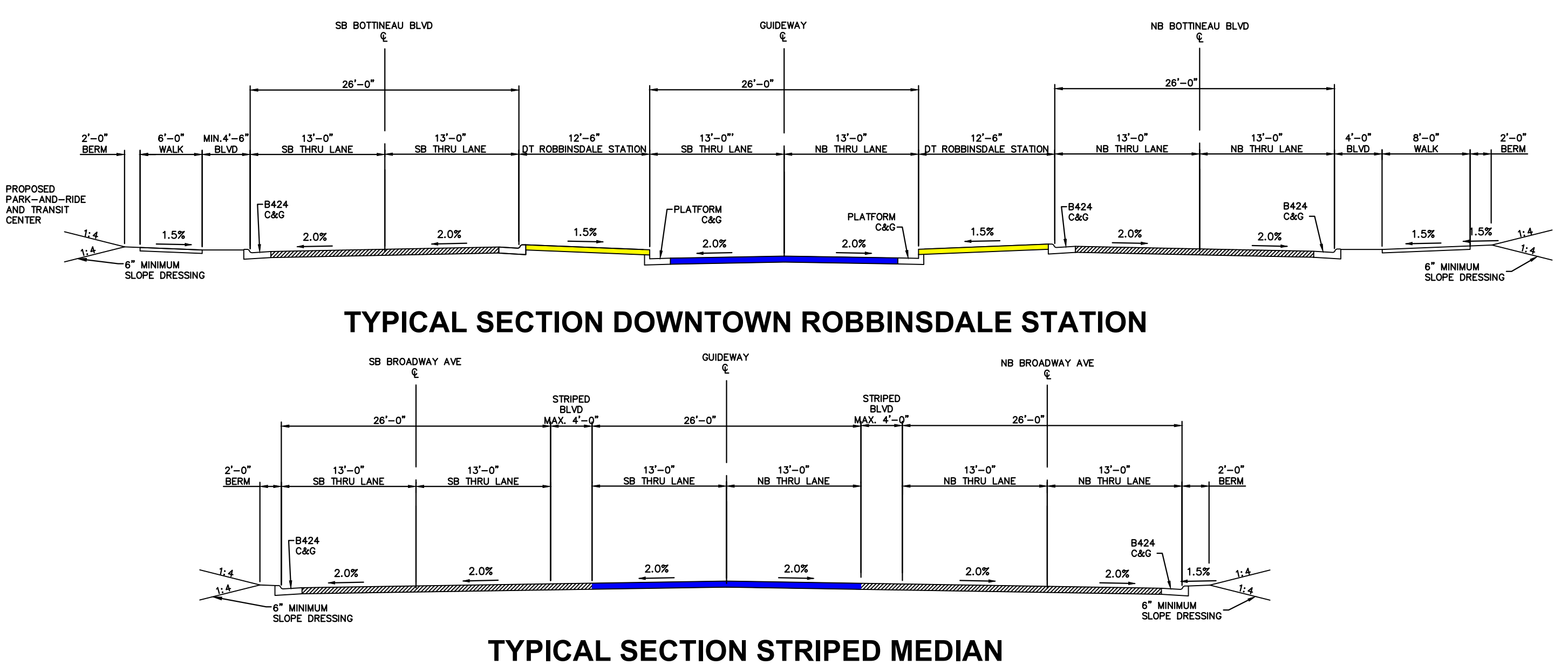
# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

## SEGMENT B - ROBBINSDALE

### DOWNTOWN ROBBINSDALE STATION

LEGEND			
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	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		

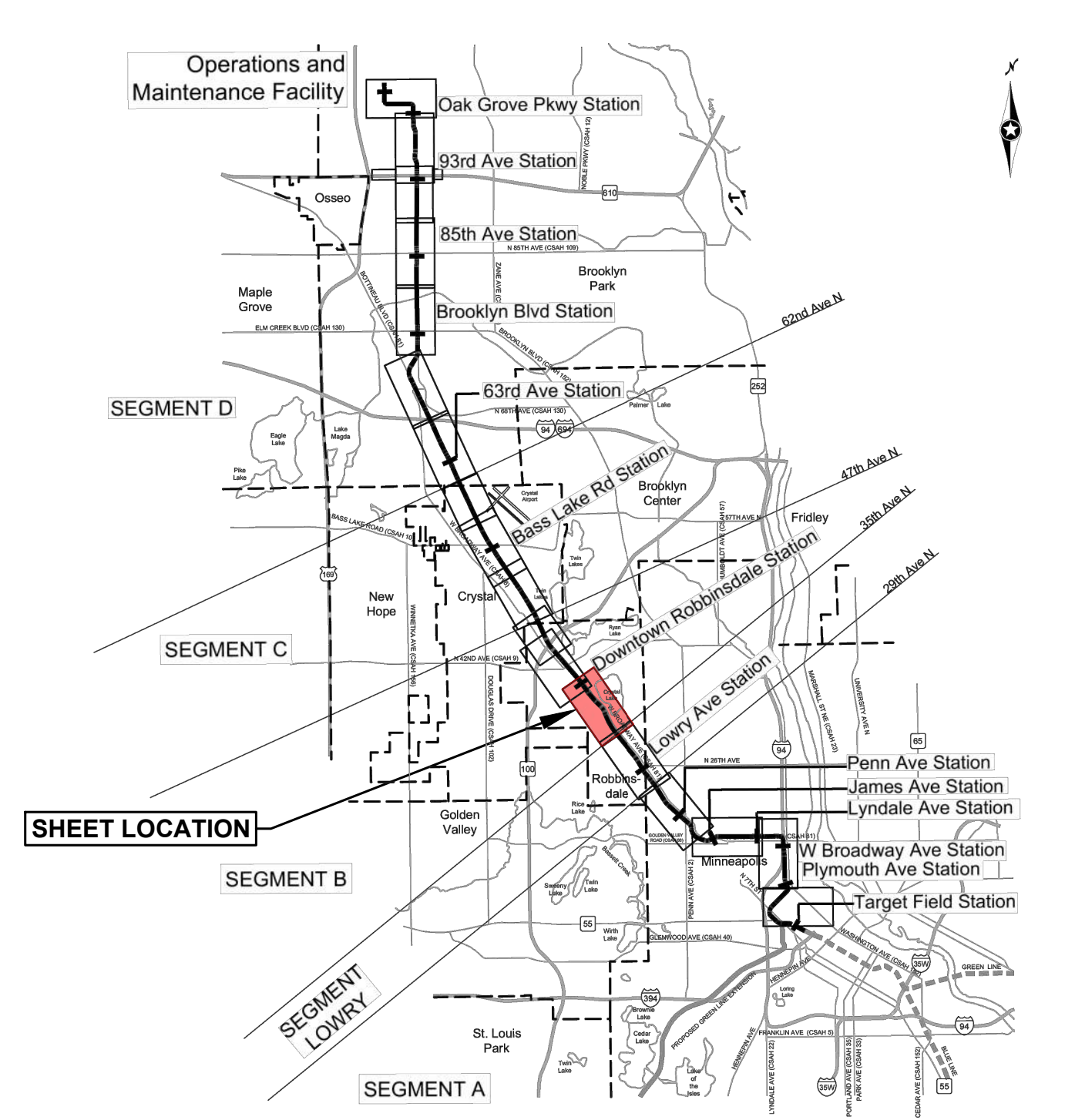


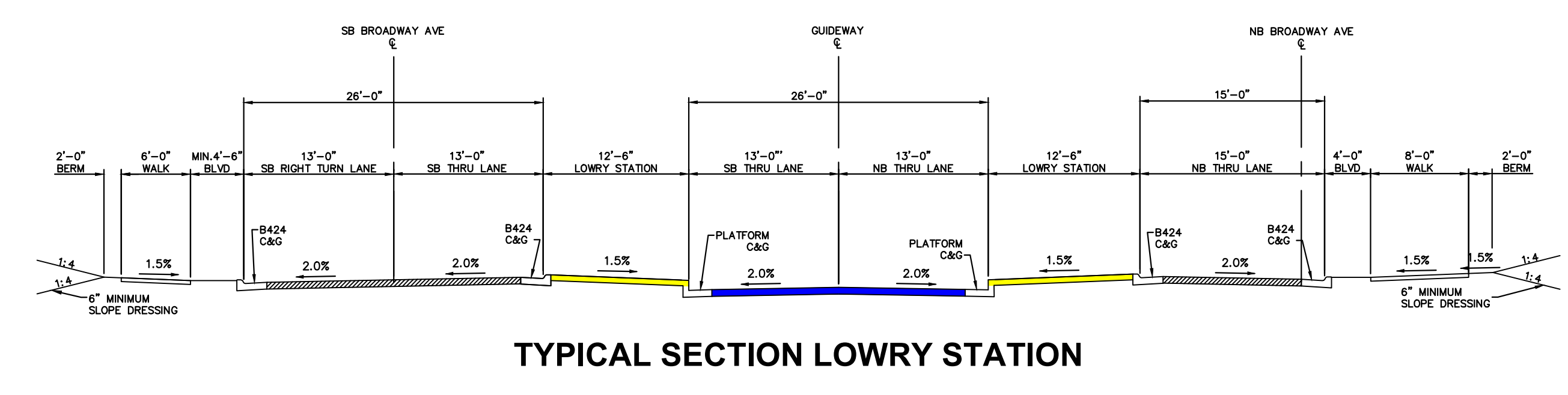
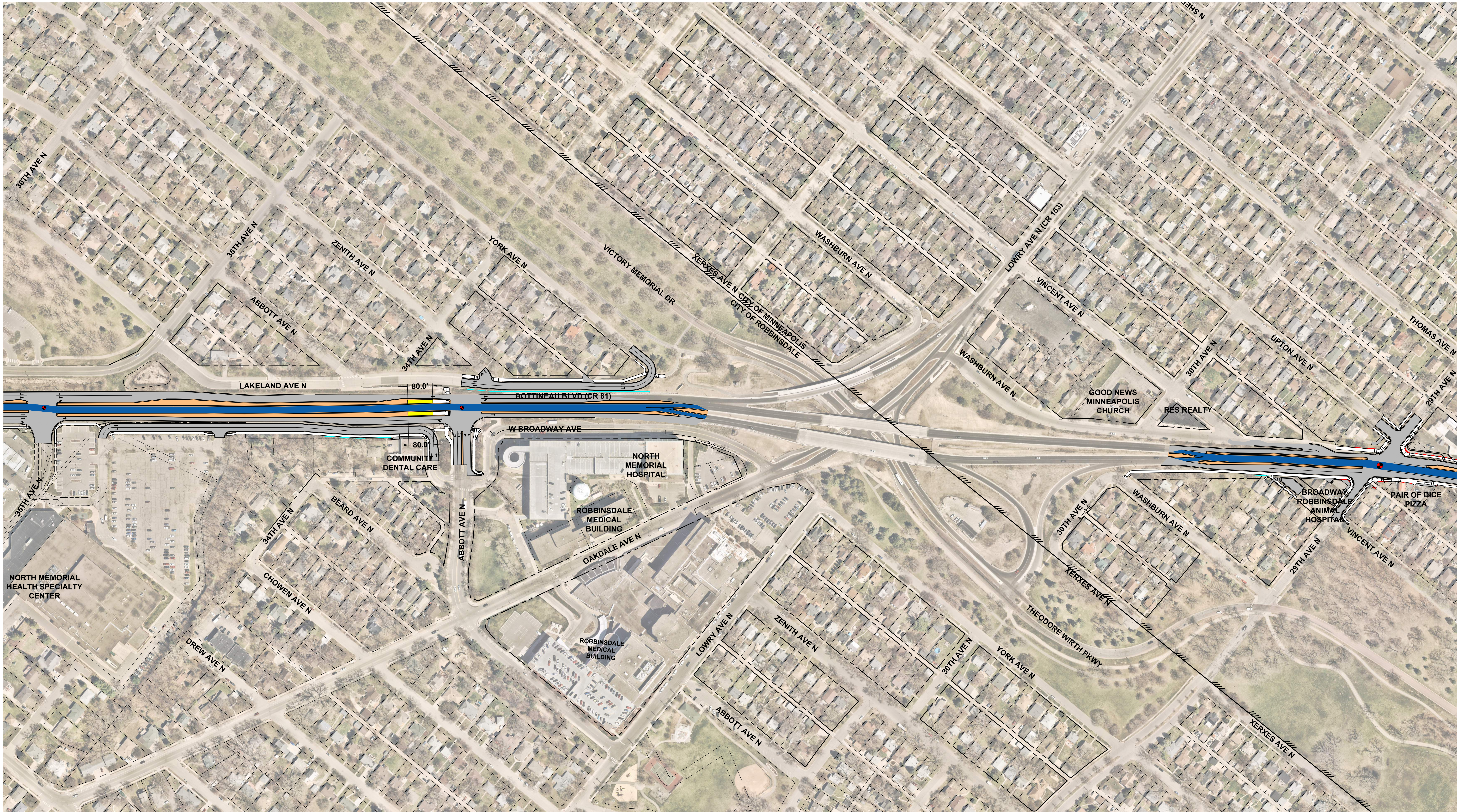


# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

SEGMENT B - ROBBINSDALE  
BOTTINEAU BLVD FROM 36TH AVE TO  
40TH AVE

LEGEND			
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	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA/ TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		



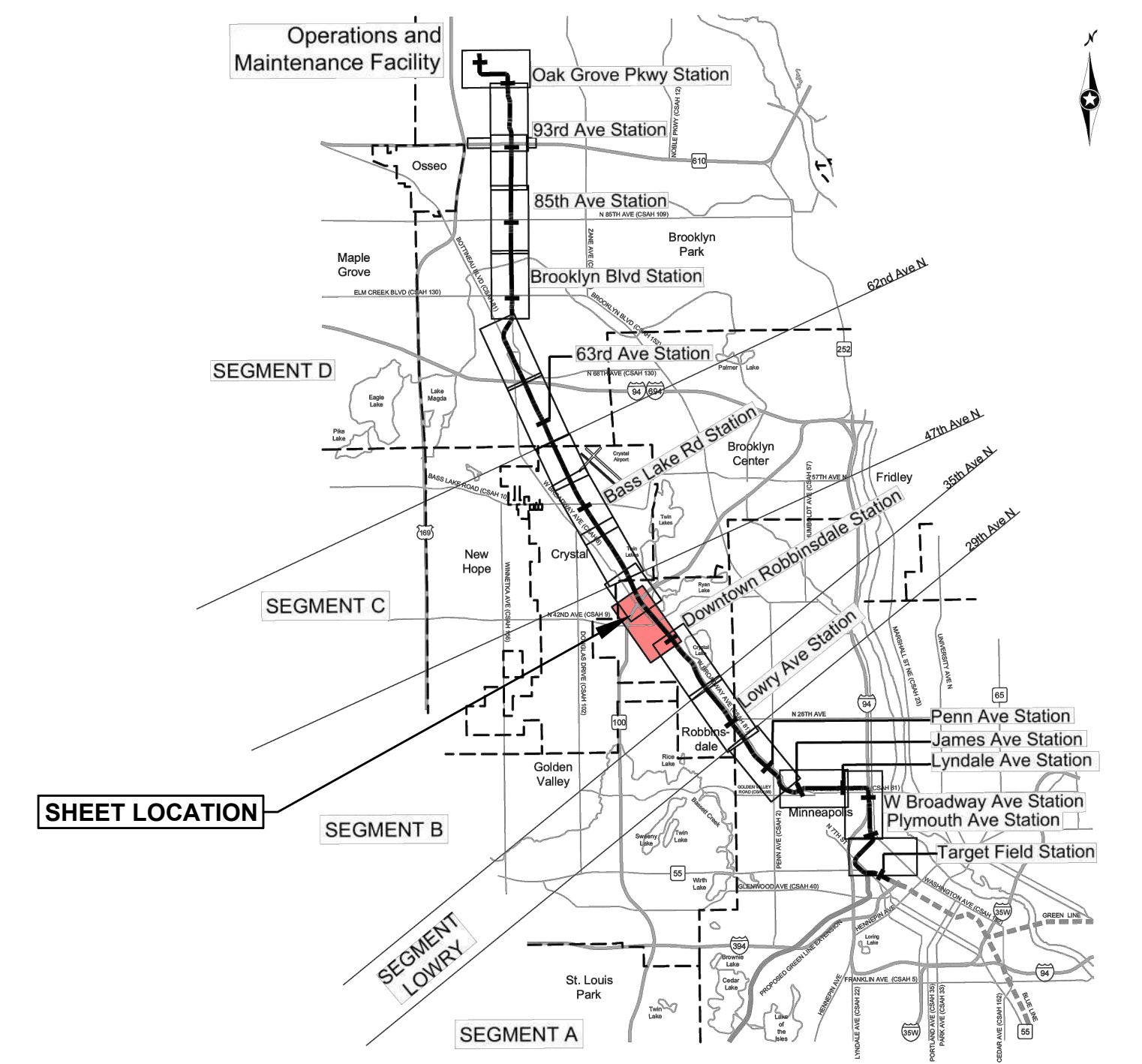


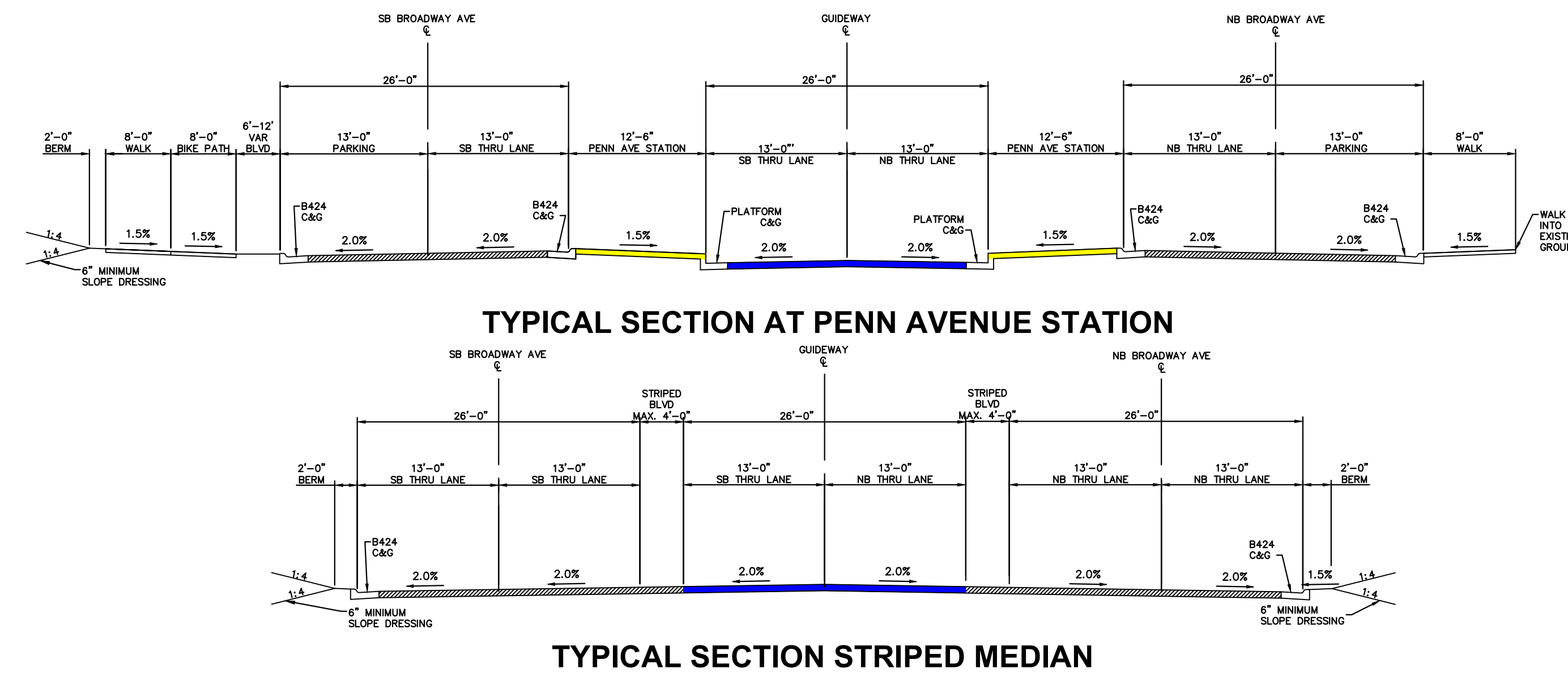
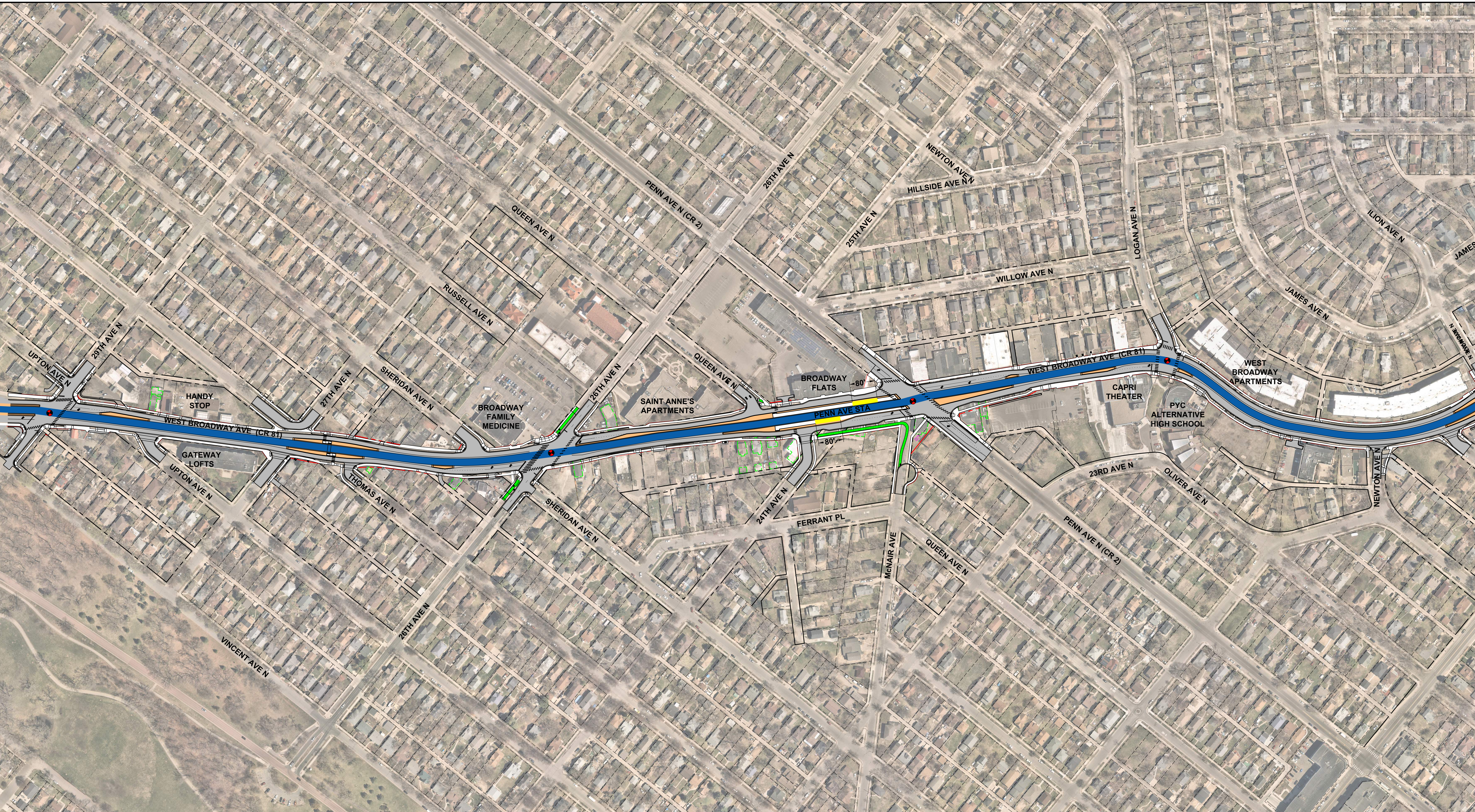
TYPICAL SECTION LOWRY STATION

## BLUE LINE EXTENSION

SEGMENT LOWRY - ROBBINSDALE/MINNEAPOLIS  
BOTTINEAU BLVD FROM 29TH AVE TO 35TH AVE

LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



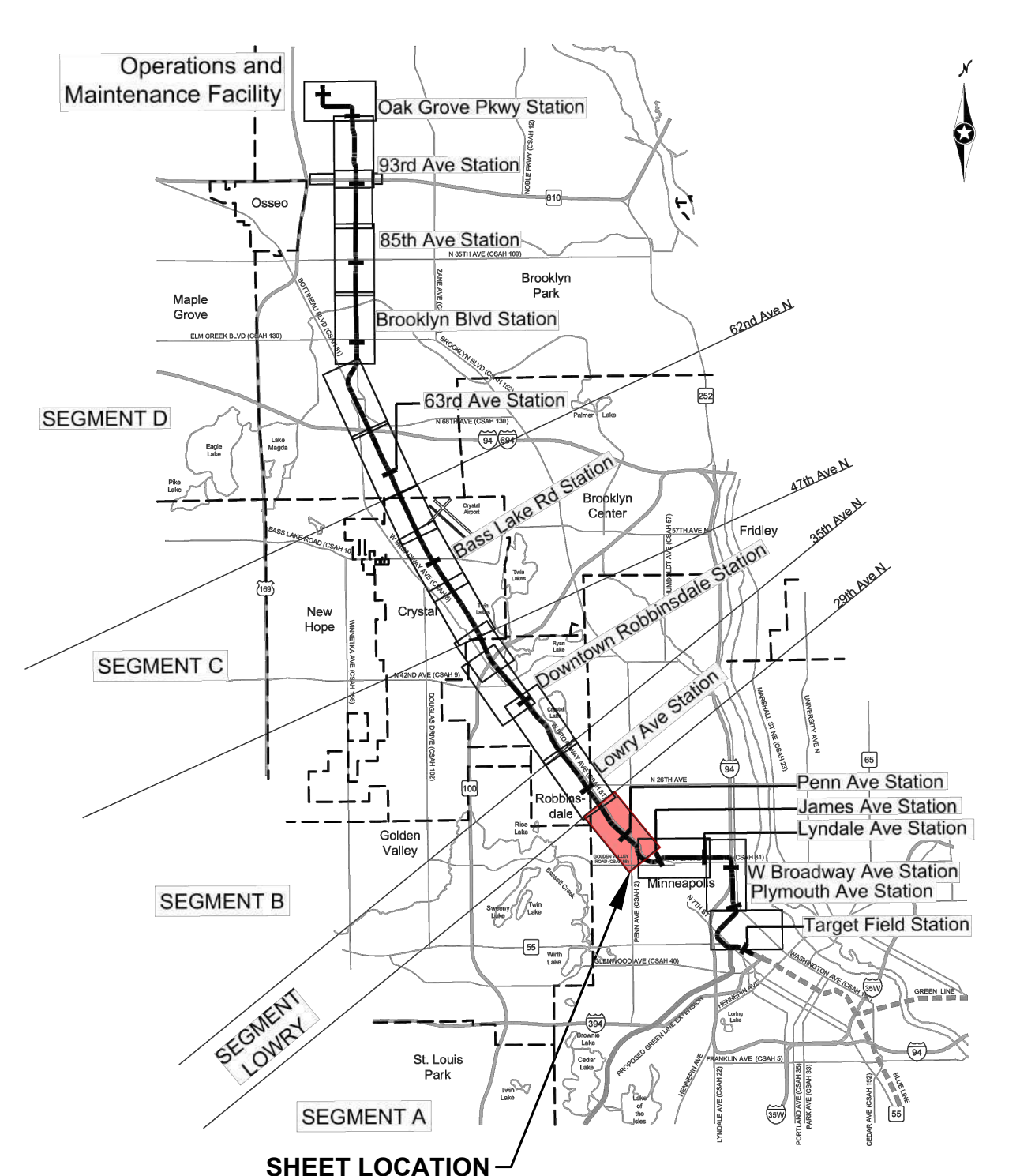


# BLUE LINE EXTENSION

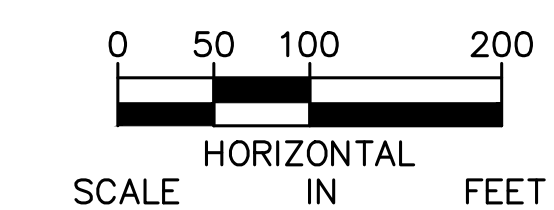
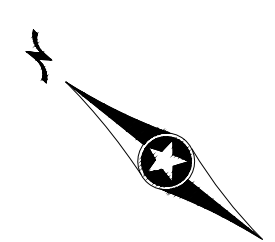
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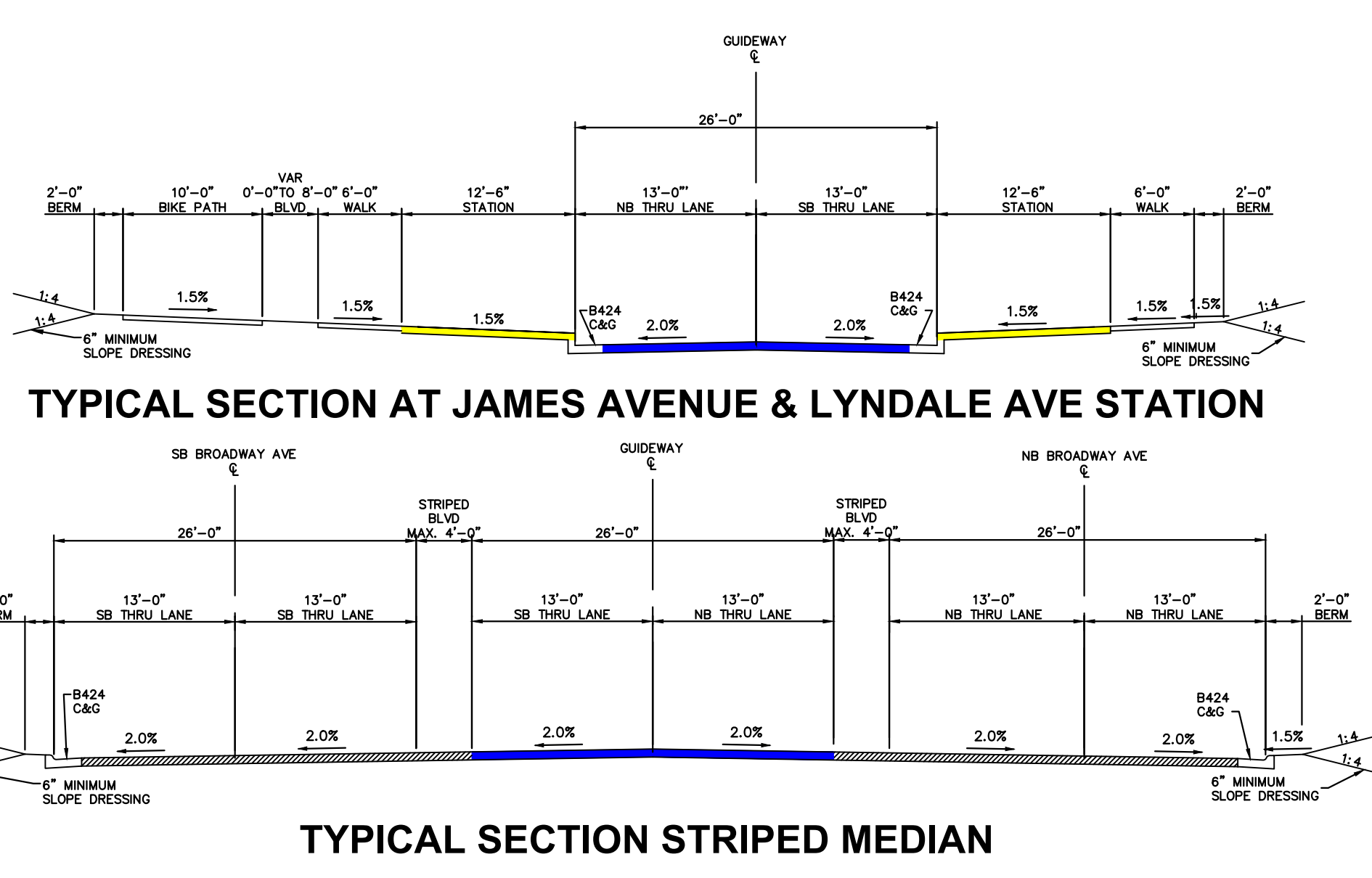
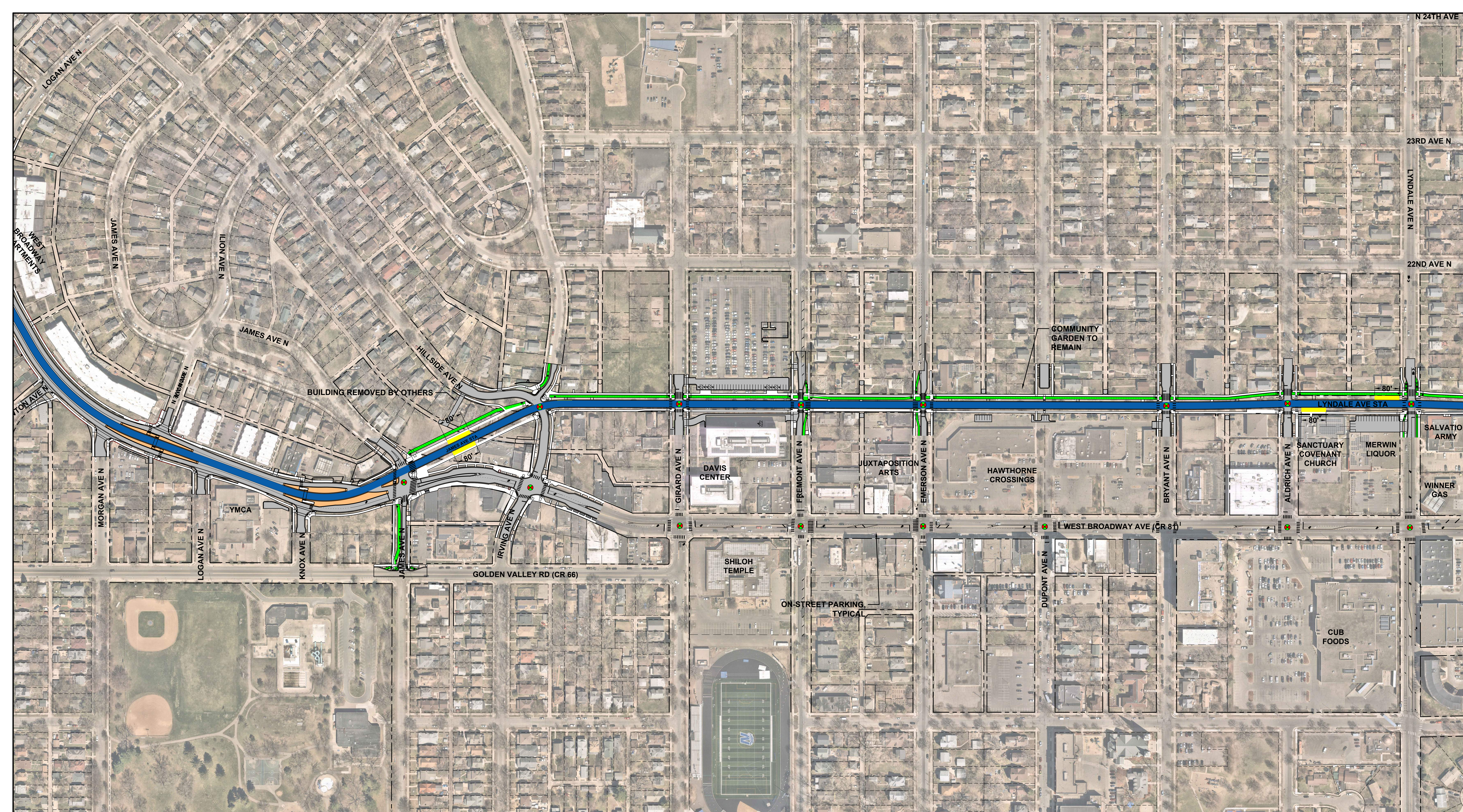
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	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA/ TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		



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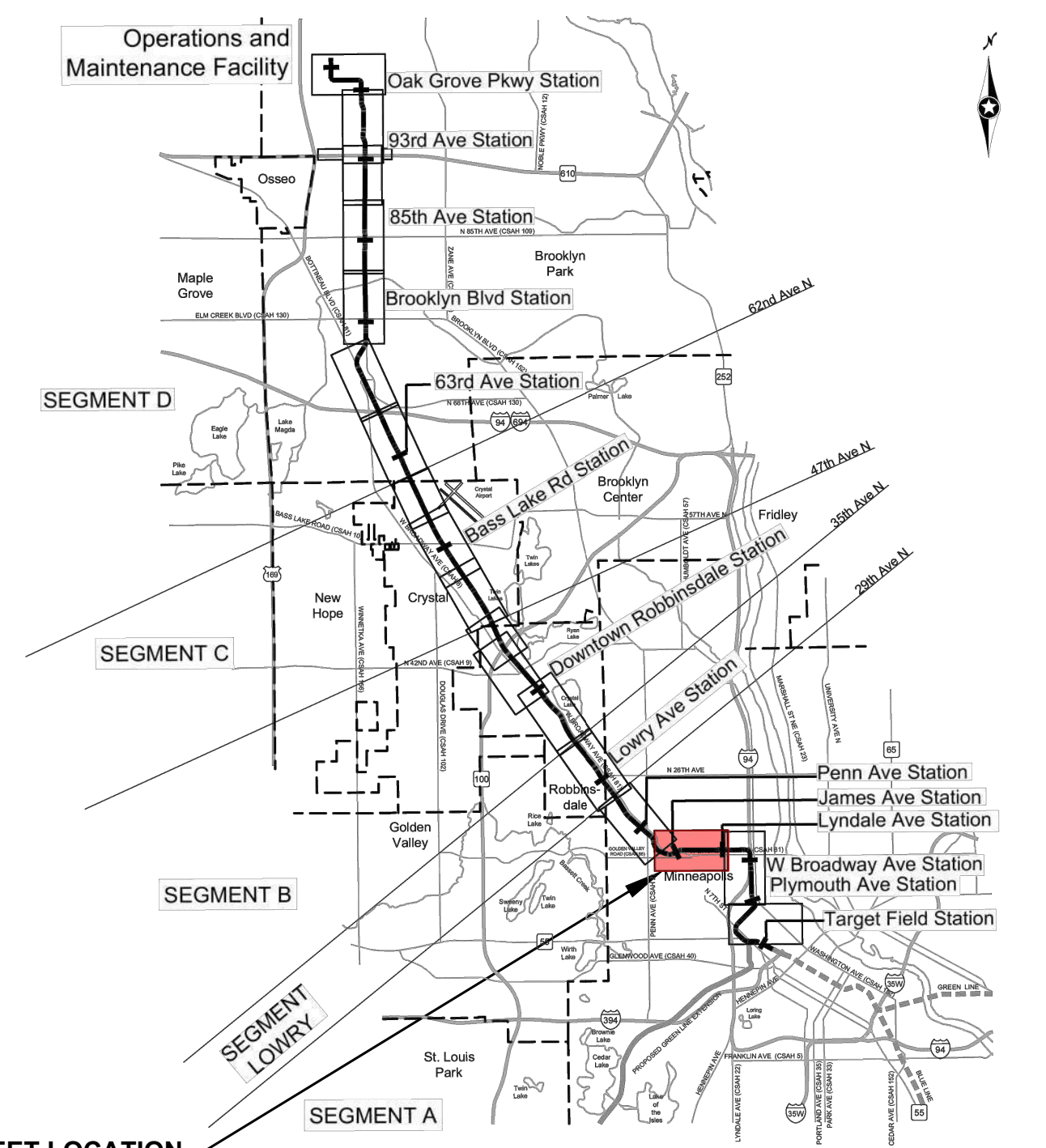


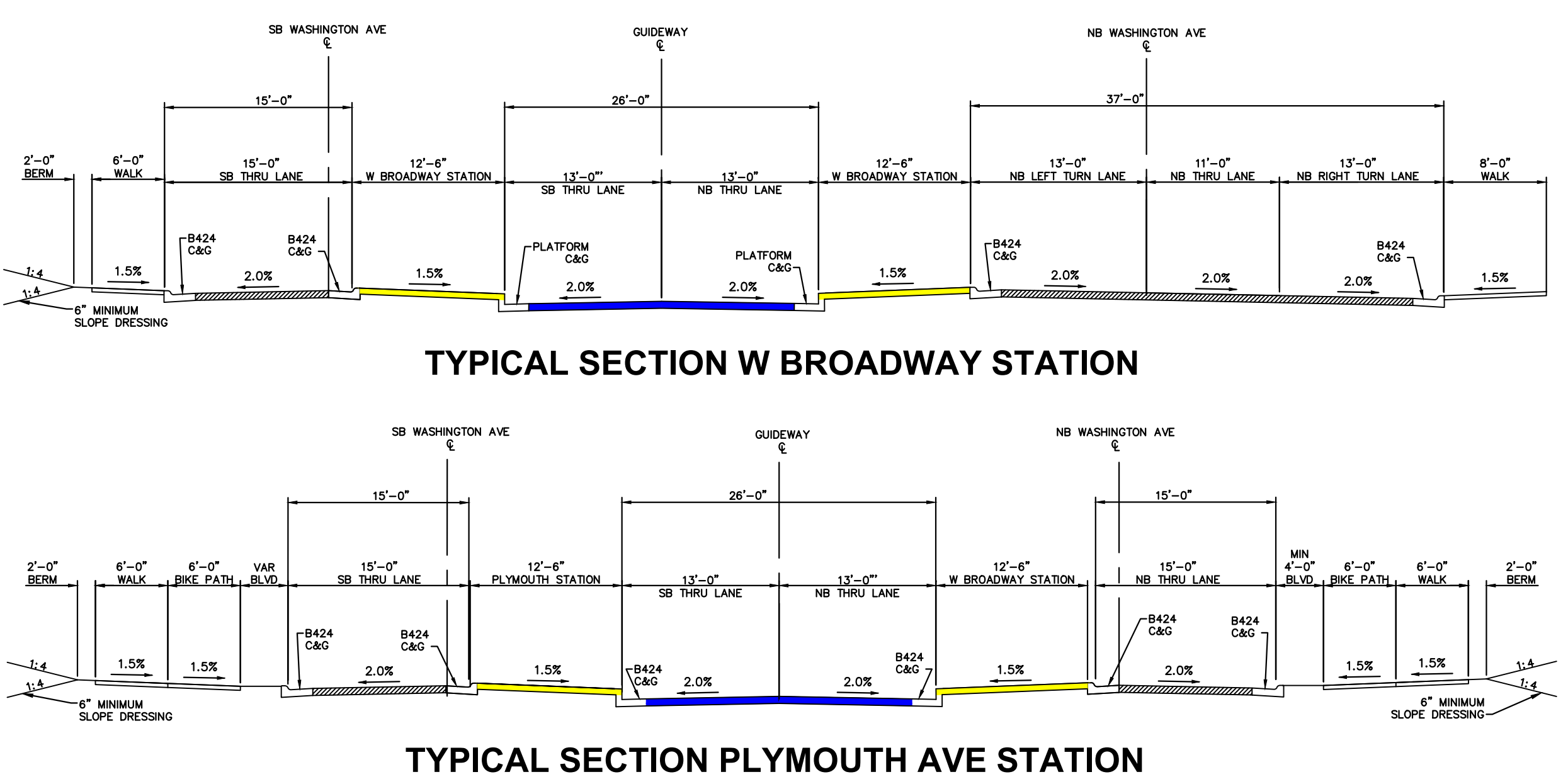
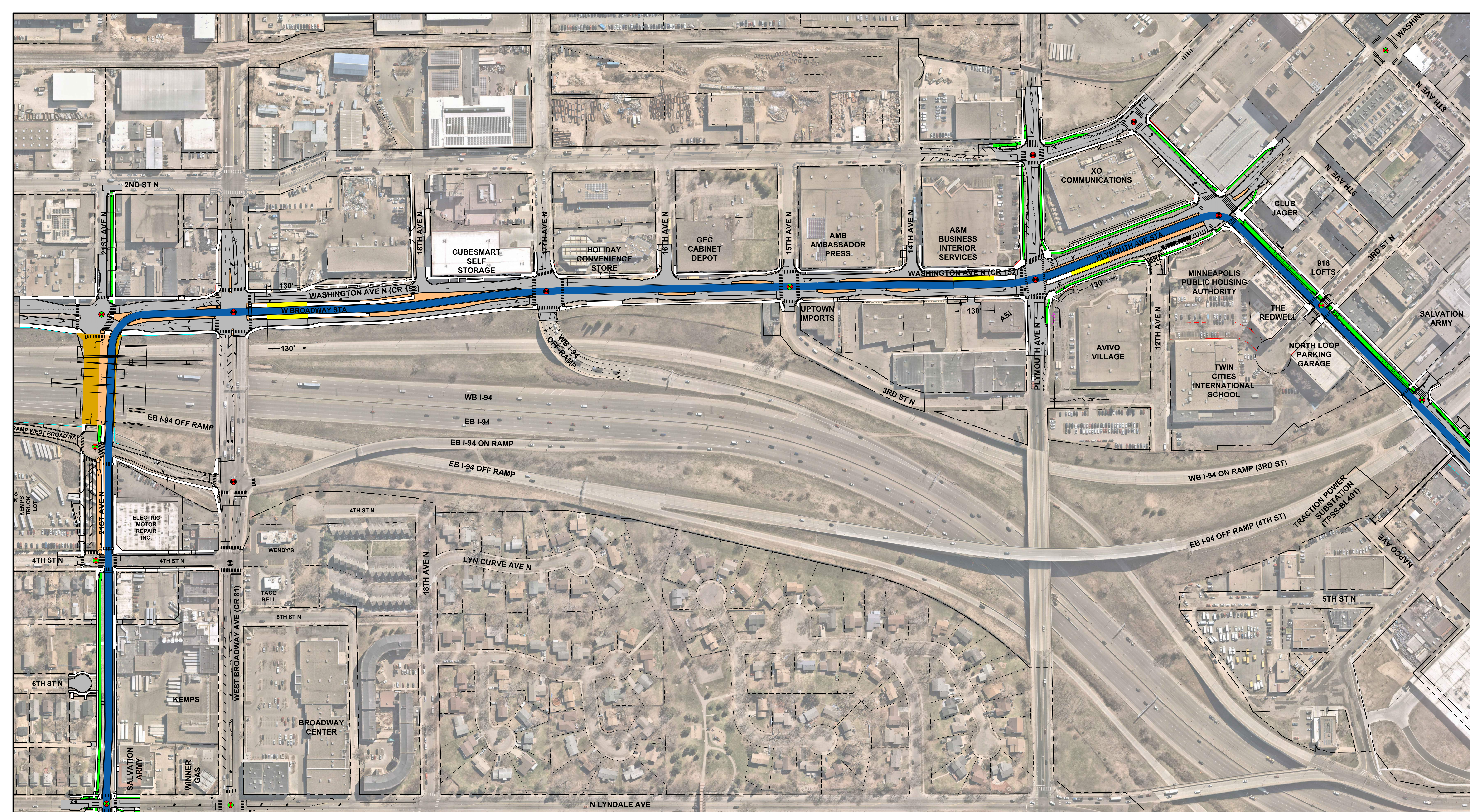
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**BLUE LINE EXTENSION**  
 SEGMENT A - MINNEAPOLIS  
 JAMES AVENUE & LYNDALE AVENUE STATION

LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	PEDESTRIAN / SIDEWALK AREA / TRAIL		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STATION PLATFORM		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	BRIDGE		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RETAINING WALL		
	RRFB		



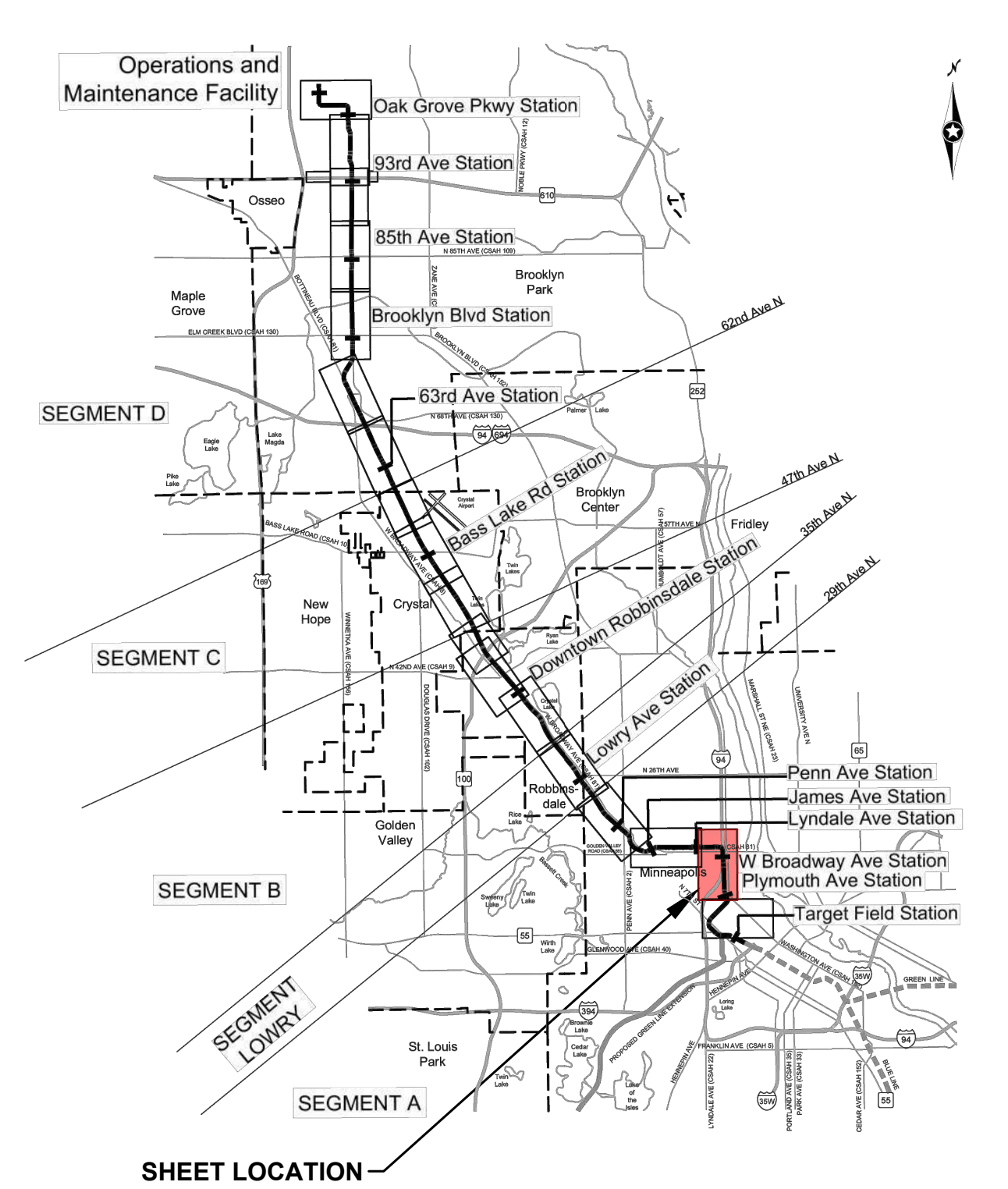


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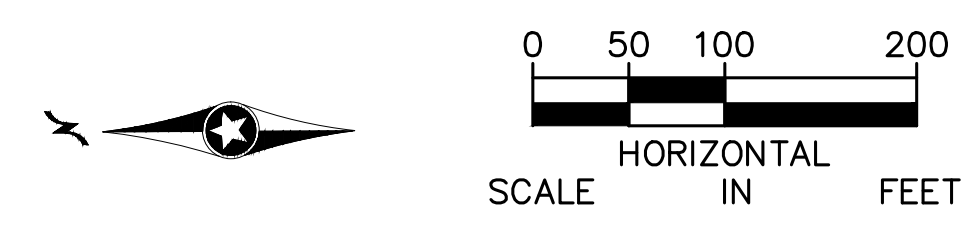
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### WEST BROADWAY & PLYMOUTH AVENUE STATION

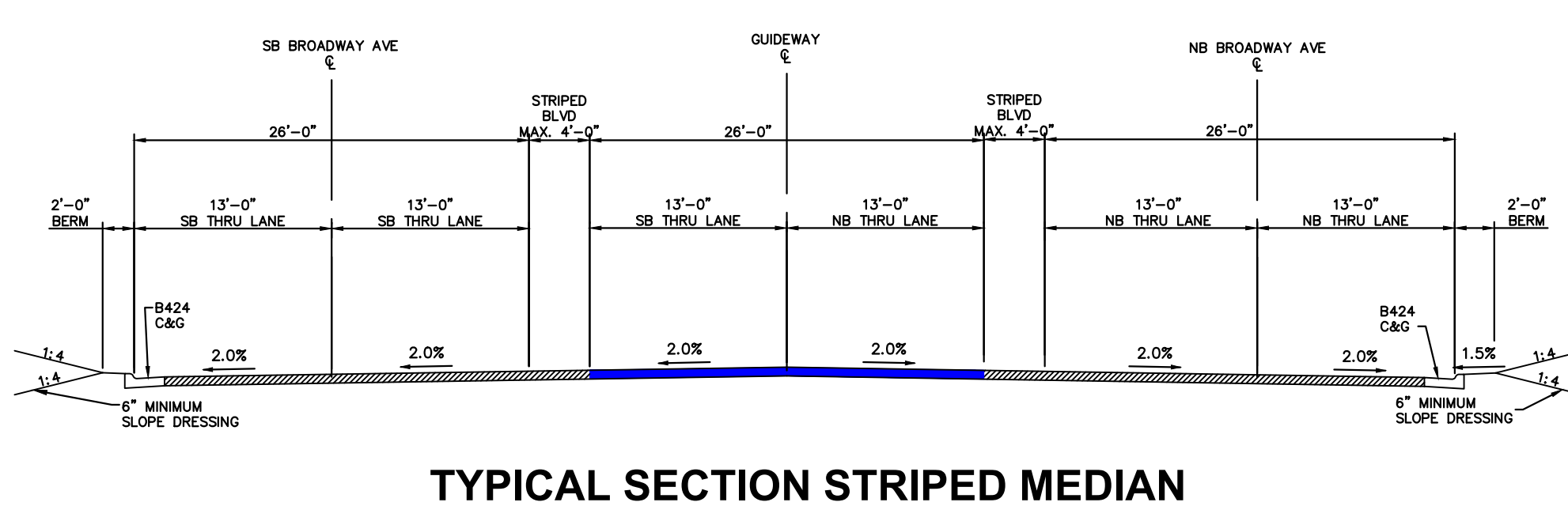
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	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
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	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



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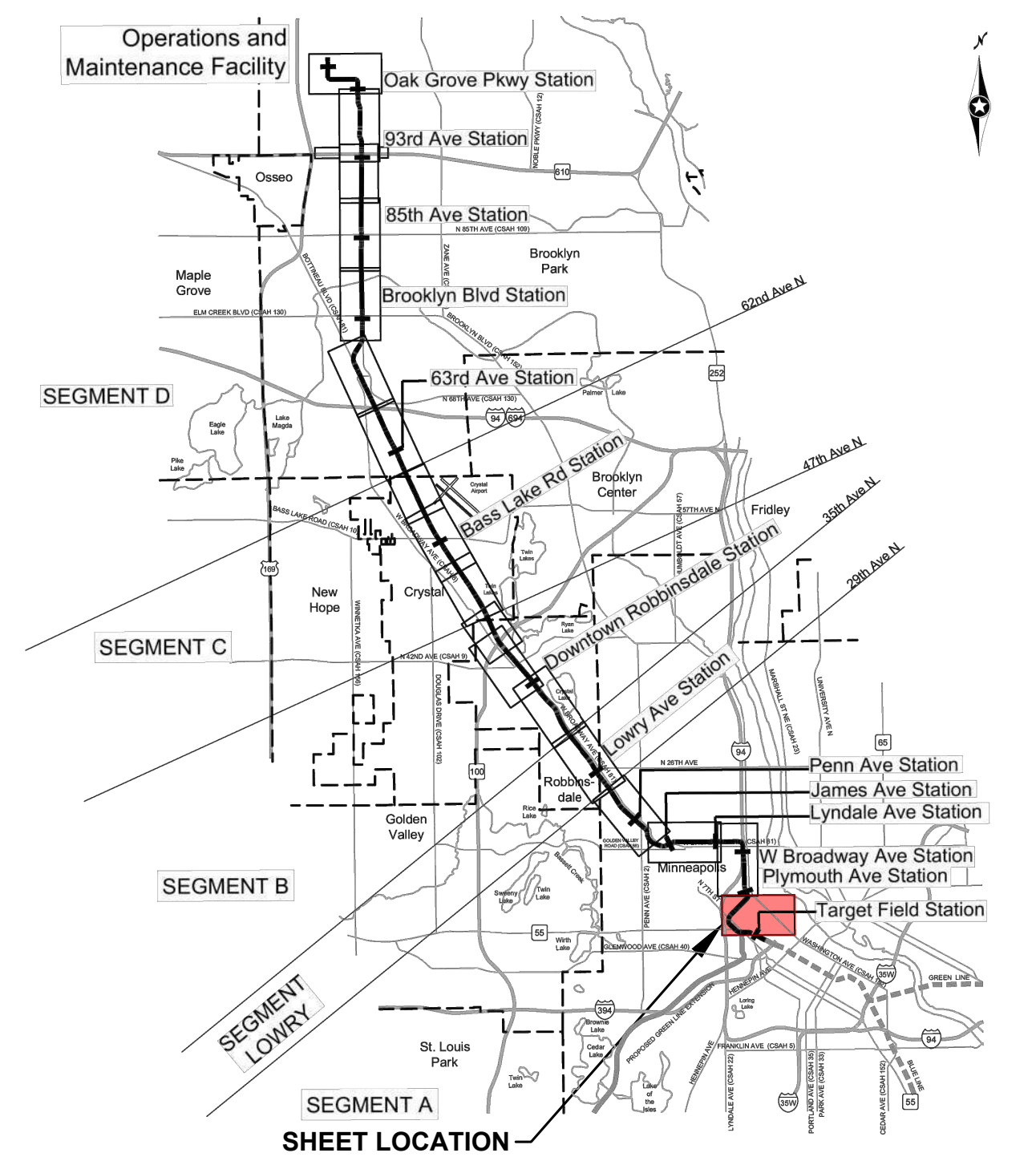


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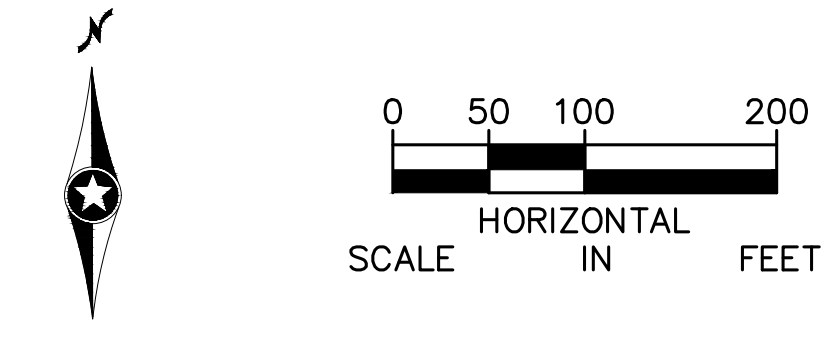
## SEGMENT A - MINNEAPOLIS

### DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS

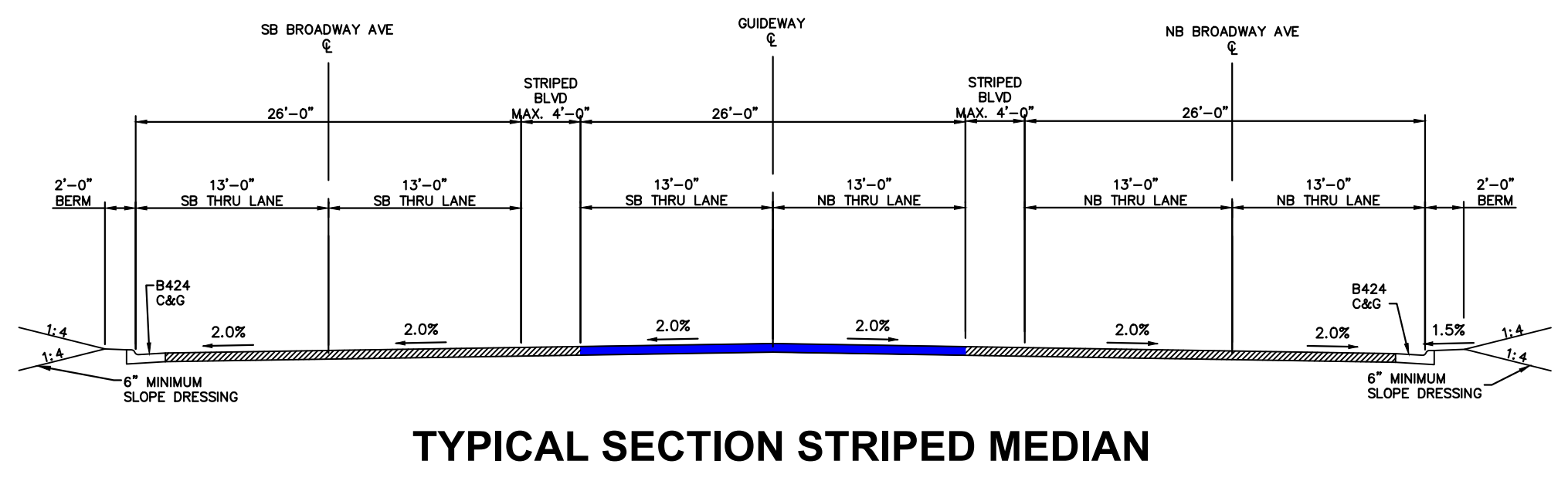
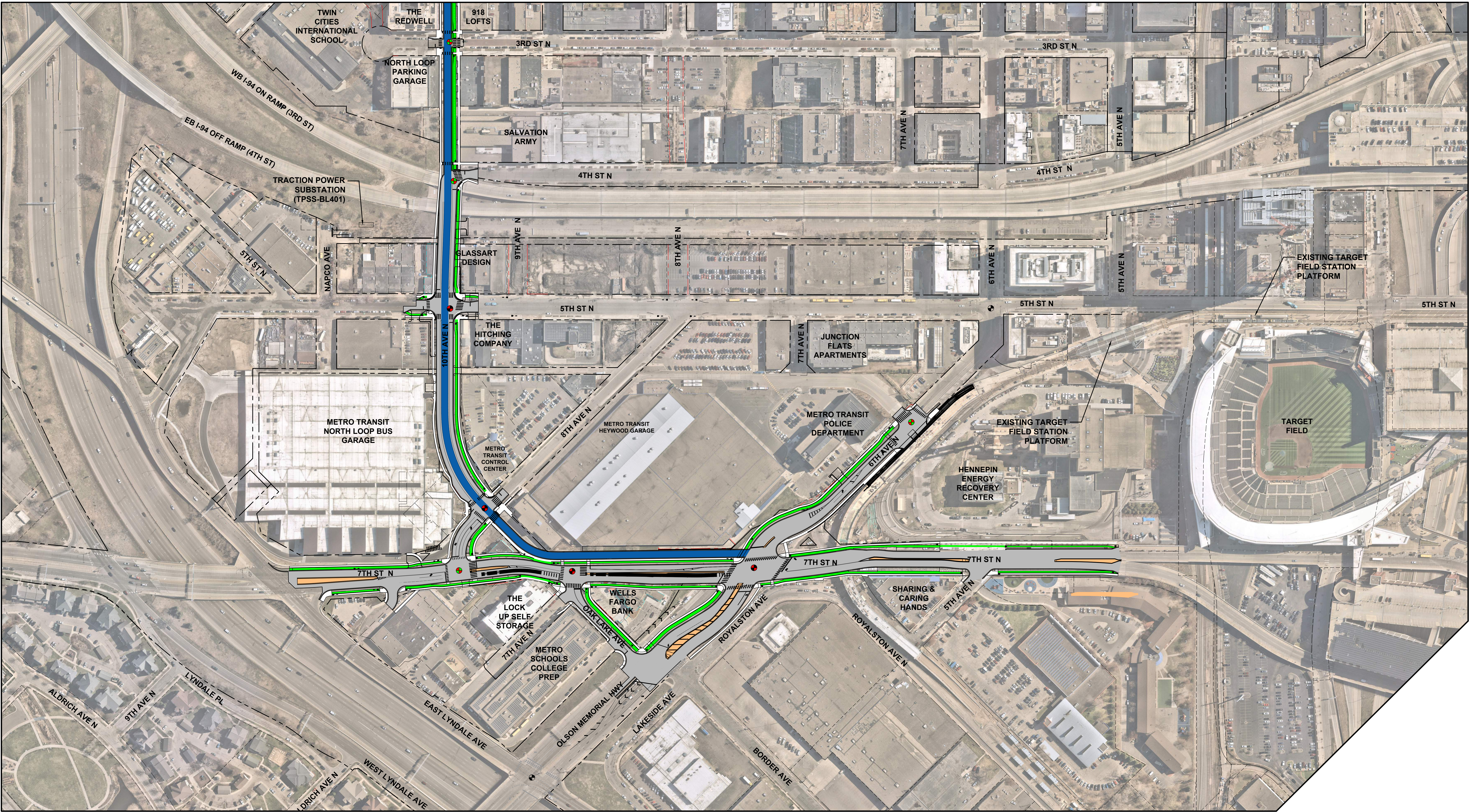
LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



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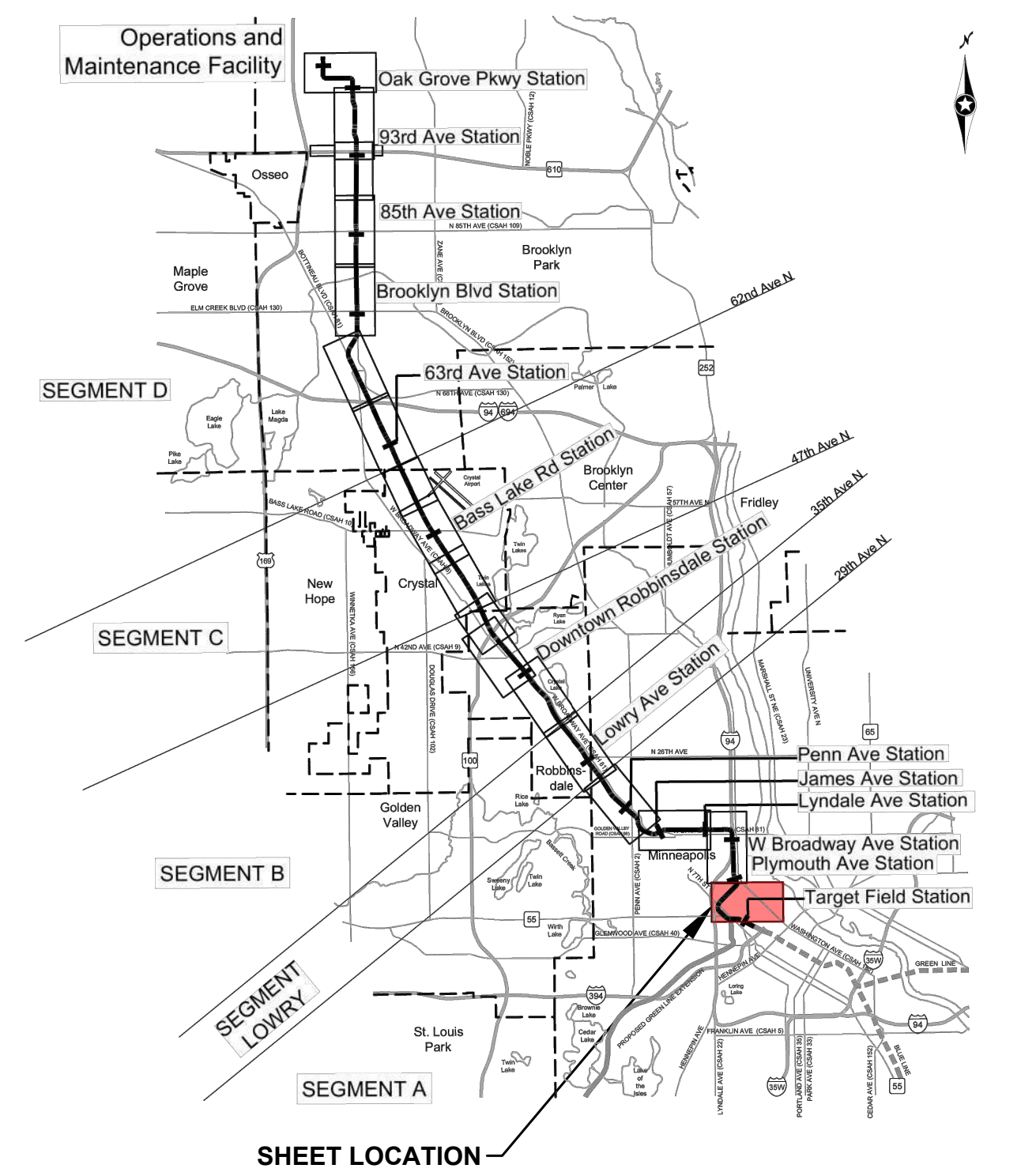
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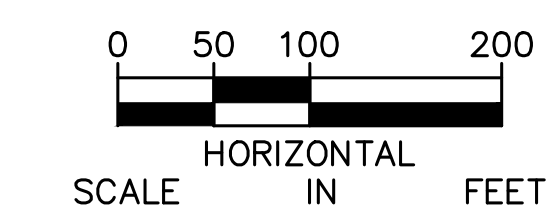
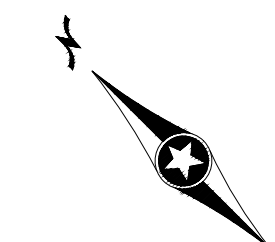
## BLUE LINE EXTENSION

SEGMENT A - MINNEAPOLIS  
DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS

LEGEND			
	BRT AREA		GUARDRAIL
	STATION PLATFORM		EXISTING SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY		PROPOSED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	MEDIAN		MODIFIED SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	STORMWATER BMP		EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
	BRIDGE		EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY
	TOTAL PARCEL ACQUISITION		CONCEPTUAL RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE
	RETAINING WALL		BUILDING REMOVAL
	RRFB		



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# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **H. Conceptual Arterial BRT Alternative**

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION ARTERIAL BRT CONCEPT

June 15, 2026



METROPOLITAN  
COUNCIL

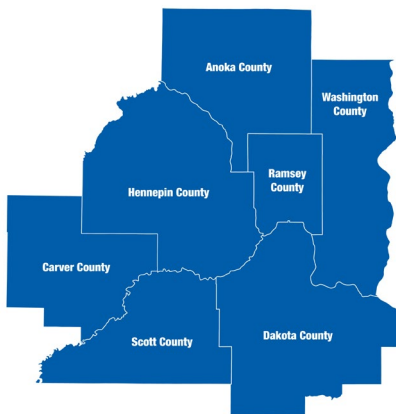
# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

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---

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Reva Chamblis	District 2	Gail Cederberg	District 11
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# Contents

- Conceptual Arterial BRT Alternative ..... 1
- Arterial BRT vs BRT ..... 1
- Arterial BRT Concept ..... 1

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

## Conceptual Arterial BRT Alternative

Through Minnesota Session Laws-2025 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Chapter 8, Article 2, Sec. 122,<sup>1</sup> the Minnesota Legislature directed the Metropolitan Council (Met Council) to study bus rapid transit (BRT) for the Metro Transit METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) as an alternate mode to light rail transit (LRT). As part of this effort, the BLE study analyzed a guideway BRT option, which would operate primarily on a dedicated, transit-only roadway for most of the corridor. In addition, a conceptual Arterial BRT alternative was developed.

### Arterial BRT vs BRT

Arterial BRT is a form of BRT that operates mainly in mixed traffic on existing arterial roadways with constrained right-of-way. Rather than relying on exclusive lanes, it focuses on operational and station improvements to enhance customer experience and improve travel time. Key features include enhanced stations and amenities, wider stop spacing of approximately one-third to one-half mile, transit signal priority, and other bus-priority treatments where feasible.

The primary difference between Arterial BRT and full BRT lies in infrastructure and cost. Arterial BRT operates in regular traffic and depends on operational strategies to improve speed and reliability, making it less expensive and faster to implement across multiple corridors. In contrast, full BRT, such as the METRO Orange Line, typically uses dedicated lanes, freeway alignments, or bus-only roadways, along with larger stations and greater separation from general traffic. These features allow for higher speeds and more reliable service, but at significantly higher cost and with fewer corridors that can be feasibly served.

### Arterial BRT Concept

The conceptual Arterial BRT alternative runs north-south approximately 13.5 miles from Brooklyn Park to downtown Minneapolis, via Crystal, Robbinsdale, and north Minneapolis. It follows the corridor alignment as closely as possible but deviates to West Broadway between Robbinsdale and Brooklyn Park to maintain safe operation. There are limited or no designated shoulders along Bottineau Boulevard, requiring buses to stop to pick up passengers while in a lane of traffic. High speeds and limited sidewalk infrastructure create safety challenges for this operation. The slower speeds and available shoulder along West Broadway mitigate these challenges. A map of the corridor is shown in Figure 1.

For the Arterial BRT concept, 28 station locations were identified and spaced approximately every 1/3- to every 1/2-mile (where feasible) along the corridor. The southern terminal would be at the existing 5th Street Transit Station in downtown Minneapolis. Stations are assumed to use the standard Arterial BRT station and platform design, including shelters with light and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2025/1/Session+Law/Chapter/8/>

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

heat, real-time bus arrival signage, fare collection at the station, and raised (9-inch) curbs for near-level boarding.

One-way travel times for the conceptual Arterial BRT alternative in the morning and afternoon peak periods are estimated to be approximately 55 to 65 minutes from end-to-end. Travel times for the Arterial BRT alternative are higher than the LRT or BRT alternatives and provided in ranges, due to the complexities and associated delays of operating primarily in mixed general-purpose traffic, rather than a dedicated guideway separated from private vehicles.

Estimated capital cost for the conceptual Arterial BRT alternative, including buses and stations, is approximately \$120.1 million. Estimated annual operating cost for the alternative is approximately \$24.5 million.

Key characteristics about the population and demographics, including total population, population density, employment, and service to historically disadvantaged populations, served within station areas of the Arterial BRT concept are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Arterial BRT Concept FTA Criteria Measures

Measure	Arterial BRT Concept (5th St TC)
Station Area Population	63,345
Population Density	4,867
High Risk Population Served	13,071
Station Area Employment	34,453
Affordable Housing Near Stations	3,481

This Arterial BRT concept was developed as a point of reference, however, and was not advanced in more detail as the mode type does not align with the overall context for this corridor. Metro Transit has developed and deployed a variety of different types of transit service to be applied to the appropriate roadway and land development context, given a particular transit need in a corridor.

Arterial BRT is best implemented as an upgrade to existing high-ridership bus routes in a developed, urbanized context where right-of-way is typically too constrained on arterial roadways to implement fully dedicated transit guideway, separating buses from general purpose traffic. In this corridor, with opportunity for dedicated guideways for LRT or BRT, Arterial BRT operating primarily in mixed traffic for this distance will result in slower and less reliable service than LRT or BRT alternatives.

Arterial BRT is most successful in areas that have higher existing population and employment densities as opposed to creating opportunities for future transit-oriented development. There is typically a higher level of anticipated development around station areas associated with BRT or

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

LRT than there is with Arterial BRT, making Arterial BRT less suited for longer transitway corridors that have significant development goals around future station areas.

Figure 1. Concept Arterial BRT Alternative





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# **BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

## **I. Blue Line Extension Study Crosswalk with Legislation**

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION STUDY CROSSWALK WITH LEGISLATION

June 15, 2026



# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

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Legislative Crosswalk with Blue Line Extension (BLE) Study ..... 1

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

## Legislative Crosswalk with Blue Line Extension (BLE) Study

This appendix provides a structured crosswalk between the requirements established in Minnesota Session Laws-2025 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Chapter 8, Article 2, Sec. 122,<sup>1</sup> and the content contained in the *Blue Line Extension Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Summary Report*. The purpose of this crosswalk is to demonstrate how the report fulfills each statutory requirement and to identify where specific analyses are documented within the report.

The legislation directs the Metropolitan Council to evaluate bus rapid transit (BRT) as an alternative to light rail transit (LRT) in the BLE corridor, to compare BRT and LRT across a range of performance and cost measures, and to assess considerations associated with redesigning the project to implement BRT. It also requires that the final report summarize the analysis and provide information addressing each of the specified requirements.

Table 1 identifies each legislative requirement and provides:

- A description of the requirement
- The corresponding sections of this report where the requirement is addressed
- A brief summary describing how the report responds to the requirement

Table 1. Summary Report Response to Legislative Requirements

Legislation and Description	Report Sections Addressing Requirement	Summary of Response
(a)(1) Evaluate bus rapid transit (BRT) as an alternative mode in the corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Purpose</li> <li>• What is Being Evaluated? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ BRT Alternatives</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Appendix G: BRT Conceptual Plans</li> <li>• Appendix H: Conceptual Arterial BRT Alternative</li> </ul>	<p>The report documents Metro Transit’s development and evaluation of two conceptual BRT alternatives that generally follow the Blue Line Extension corridor. The alternatives are defined by alignment, service characteristics, station locations, and operating assumptions, establishing BRT as a viable mode and providing sufficient detail for comparison with LRT.</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2025/1/Session+Law/Chapter/8/>

# BLUE LINE EXTENSION BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Legislation and Description	Report Sections Addressing Requirement	Summary of Response
<p><b>(a)(2)</b> Compare LRT and BRT, including life cycle costs, ridership, system impacts, risks, and other relevant costs and benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network Connectivity</li> <li>• Comparing LRT to BRT</li> <li>• Regional Planning Considerations</li> <li>• Cost and Funding</li> <li>• Federal Funding Eligibility</li> <li>• Impacts of Proceeding with BRT</li> <li>• Appendices B, C, D, and F</li> </ul>	<p>The report provides a comprehensive side-by-side comparison of LRT and BRT alternatives, evaluating capital and operating costs, cost per trip, ridership, travel behavior impacts (Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)/Passenger Miles Traveled (PMT), rider experience, land use, and system connectivity). It also assesses project risks, funding competitiveness, and regional planning outcomes, providing a multi-dimensional comparison of costs and benefits.</p>
<p><b>(a)(3)</b> Review considerations and develop recommendations for a project redesign to implement BRT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts of Proceeding with BRT</li> <li>• Appendix E: Project Redesign Schedule and Cost Impacts Report</li> </ul>	<p>The report evaluates key considerations of shifting from LRT to BRT, including restarting environmental review, re-entering the federal funding process, and revisiting project development decisions. It identifies schedule delays, cost escalation risks, and regulatory and funding uncertainties, and outlines tradeoffs in cost, flexibility, ridership, and rider experience to inform redesign decisions.</p>
<p><b>(b)(1)</b> Summarize the analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Purpose</li> <li>• Comparing LRT to BRT</li> <li>• Impacts of Proceeding with BRT</li> </ul>	<p>The report is structured as a summary-level document that synthesizes technical analyses into accessible narrative sections and comparative tables. Key findings are integrated throughout, particularly in comparison and tradeoffs sections, to clearly convey outcomes related to cost, performance, and implementation.</p>
<p><b>(b)(2)</b> Provide information addressing all requirements in (a)(1)–(3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entire report (Sections and Appendices A–I)</li> </ul>	<p>The report collectively addresses all legislative requirements, including evaluation of BRT alternatives, comparison with LRT across required metrics, and assessment of redesign considerations. Supporting appendices provide detailed technical documentation underlying the summary findings.</p>



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