



# Where We Are Today

## CENTRAL CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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**This first section, “Where We Are Today,” introduces the Development Strategy and answers a series of important questions: What opportunity does LRT provide for the Central Corridor and Saint Paul? Why do we need a Development Strategy? How was the community involved? How does the Central Corridor work today? The purpose is to introduce the Central Corridor, and to provide some background on the role and importance of this study.**

### **In this section you will find:**

Section 1.1 – “The Opportunity” describes the positive change that an investment in light rail transit can generate over time, and the role a shared vision and strategy can play in guiding that change to improve mobility, neighborhoods and economic opportunities.

Section 1.2 – “What is the Central Corridor” provides a detailed account of the Corridor and this process. It lists the study objectives, the process schedule, and key dates in the planning and future construction of Central Corridor LRT.

Section 1.3 – “The Corridor Today” is a broad look at the many lenses through which the community views the Central Corridor in Saint Paul – as a place of diversity and community, as a corridor for transportation and mobility, and as an area of economic growth and development opportunity.



# The Opportunity

**A \$1-billion investment in public transit is a once-in-a-century opportunity for any city. In addition to the resulting transportation improvement, it is a tremendous occasion for city-building and place-making.**

As our transportation infrastructure - the roads, highways, and bridges we rely on every day - become increasingly congested and strained under the pressures of age, rising demand and deferred maintenance, cities must increasingly find efficient ways to accommodate new growth and demand within existing transportation networks.

In many instances, these networks actually pre-date the automobiles they now serve, with additional layers of activity expanding over time to include heavy commercial traffic, buses, street cars, pedestrians and bicycles. The effects of this over-burdening and dependence on our road and highway systems are well-documented: decreased economic competitiveness, increased reliance on cars, environmental degradation and decreased quality of life and health.

A modern, efficient and accessible public transit system, as a component of a balanced, multi-modal transportation network, can play a vital role in ameliorating these negative effects. Cities across North America are rediscovering and reinvesting in transit in impressive numbers, and the City of Saint Paul is now poised to receive a similar boost in its public transit network.

The Central Corridor LRT, totaling 11 miles in length with 16 planned stations, will provide a direct link between the downtowns of Saint Paul and Minneapolis via a route that traces the most important east-west transportation corridor within the Twin Cities region. It will connect major activity and employment centers such as the State Capitol campus, the Midway Shopping District and Industrial District, and the University of Minnesota. With a direct link to almost 280,000 jobs, 123,000 residents and 15 distinct neighborhoods that include many cultures, schools, places of worship and community institutions, the Central Corridor LRT represents an opportunity to 're-think' how people move in Saint Paul - between home, work, shopping and recreation.

But a major investment in public transit, such as the Central Corridor LRT, represents much more than a new way to get from point A to point B. Successfully planned and executed, LRT can become the launching pad for a whole range of city-building and place-making initiatives. For Saint Paul, this means a chance to:

- redefine the role of the Central Corridor in the region;
- promote the evolution of University Avenue as a "place" where friends and families meet, and guests come to explore
- enhance the Corridor's economic competitiveness, its strong and diverse neighborhoods and its evolving downtown; and
- begin a dialogue between the many residents, businesses and stakeholders for whom the Central Corridor is a part of their daily lives, and to create new partnerships between them.

**In short, the planned LRT is an opportunity to reposition the Central Corridor, and Saint Paul, as a contemporary, healthy and livable urban center that inspires both residents and visitors alike. This document is the first step in making that happen.**



