



## Meeting Minutes

August 15, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

St. Paul Park City Hall

<b>Commission Members</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Present</b>
Karla Bigham	Washington County RRA	X
Rafael Ortega	Ramsey County RRA	X
Tony Khambata	City of Cottage Grove	X
Jane Prince	City of St. Paul	
Sandi Dingle	City of St. Paul Park	X
Dave Pemble	City of Hastings	X
Marvin Taylor	City of Newport	X

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Present</b>
Andrea Rehm	Washington County RRA	X
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County RRA	X

<b>Other Attendees</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Present</b>
Kevin Roggenbuck	Ramsey County	X
Will Schroeer	East Metro Strong	X
Christof Spieler	Huitt-Zollars	X
Alissa Zimmer	Huitt-Zollars	X

### **Agenda Item #1: Introduction**

Chair Bigham called the meeting to order. Quorum was met.

### **Agenda Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance**

The Commission stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda**

Dingle moved approval of the agenda. Pemble seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

### **Agenda Item #4: Approval of May 2023 Minutes**

Ortega made a motion to approve the minutes. Pemble seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

### **Agenda Item #5: Red Rock Vision Refresh Update and Discussion**

Will Schroeer (East Metro Strong) provided an update on the Red Rock Vision Refresh engagement process. Schroeer discussed the online survey, focus groups, and in-person events including Hastings Party in the Park. The presentation attached to these minutes included samples of some of the survey responses.

Schroeer introduced Christof Spieler, Transportation Director at Huitt-Zollars and consultant for the Red Rock Vision Refresh.

Christof Spieler (Huitt-Zollars) provided an overview of what the team has uncovered in the data on travel patterns and touring the corridor. He also outlined specific issues in this corridor including: one transit line will not solve all the issues in this corridor; travel patterns to jobs are not strictly linear (go to many destinations, including Dakota County, Woodbury, St. Paul); and there are major physical barriers to overcome such as TH 61 and the railroad.

Spierer noted one key takeaway is that trying to serve all areas in this corridor would result in very few people being served well so this corridor will need to be a network as opposed to one line meeting all the needs. Spieler provided background information on different types of transit including express bus, local bus, microtransit, employer shuttles, and deviated fixed route. He also discussed the tradeoffs between frequency, simplicity, speed, and coverage.

Spierer presented some options for consideration but noted that we are not yet at the stage in the process to determine a final vision. These are all options to help illustrate the wide range of opportunities for the corridor. There is likely not one service that will solve all the issues but a combination of multiple services.

Spieler stated there are some options in the corridor today but many people do not know about them, particularly dial-a-ride. He emphasized that employers must play a role in making sure their workforce is aware of transit options, promoting those options, and potentially providing financial support to them.

Khambata noted that Renewal by Anderson (in Cottage Grove) has parking issues and would likely be supportive of becoming an advocate for transportation options.

Bigham requested that cities connect economic development entities or employers to County staff for this study. She stated her vision has always been multiple transit options, including connections to Dakota County (airport, Mall of America). She added that Red Rock needs to complement Gold Line. She agreed that we need to expand and promote what we have available now, like dial-a-ride. She stated new state legislation does provide a lot of new revenue sources, but service will have to be phased in.

Pemble discussed how the TH 61 river bridge will continue to be a bottleneck especially with new development and redevelopment. He agreed education about available options for the public is a large component of improving transportation in the corridor.

Spieler stated that we often think about capital costs as the largest barrier for transit but the reality is that operation costs are the larger issue. He added that a new revenue stream for operating is a real opportunity.

Dingle stated that the presented options were interesting and could work. She noted that she had not previously considered thinking outside the box of a north/south corridor and pursuing complementary options that are east/west from the TH 61 corridor.

Khamabata agreed that the east-west service in addition to north-south service was promising and had the potential to alleviate traffic congestion in key areas.

Taylor stated that the City of Newport just approved a new apartment and noted his concern that the area might be being overbuilt if the Newport Transit Center is not used as planned. He emphasized the importance of forward thinking so the City develops in compatible ways with future transit.

Spieler stated that the best way to create great transit service is to develop places people can walk to, such the Newport Transit Station and surrounding area. He added that it could still serve an important role in the service network if past planning direction changes.

Dingle emphasized the importance of the last mile of a commute, and the ways the system will get people to the many different final destinations. She suggested a potential relocation of the existing Cottage Grove park and ride closer to the growing industrial park.

Khambata agreed that the existing park and ride was planned with the single purpose of express service to St Paul. He suggested it could be improved by introducing local busses to collect there.

Ortega stated that Ramsey County is in the process of approving many new developments. He noted his concern about whether expanding transit can keep up with development.

Khambata agreed that infill development is sometimes higher density than what master plans might account for. He added that this leads to many problems stemming from inadequate infrastructure. He discussed the rapid development occurring in Cottage Grove and the neighboring communities.

Ortega added that the workforce is not only 9 to 5 shifts, and that the range of schedules and transportation needs makes planning difficult.

Spieler stated that employers can play an important role in preparing the area for the introduction of more transit options in the way they design new development—such as orienting employee entrances near public streets and potential future bus stops.

Schroeer discussed the project team's next steps, including refining recommendations.

**Agenda Item #6: Communications Update**

Rehm reviewed the information included in the meeting packet.

**Agenda Item #7: Other**

Bigham stated the Cottage Grove Park and Ride will offer shuttle service to the Minnesota State Fair.

No other updates.

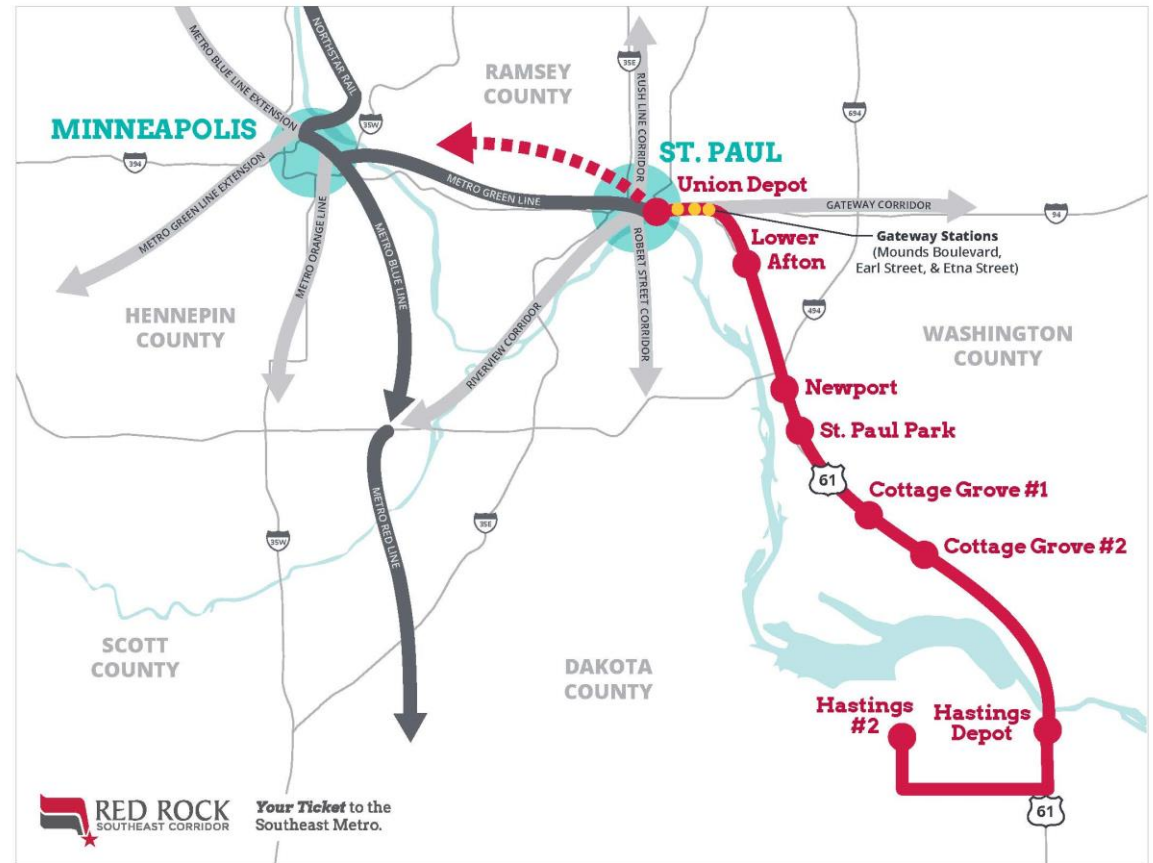
**Agenda Item #11: Adjourn**

Chair Bigham adjourned the meeting.

# Red Rock Corridor Vision Refresh

Progress report and  
corridor evaluation

August 15, 2023



# Agenda

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I. Introductions

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II. Engagement update

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III. Corridor analysis

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IV. Discussion

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## II. Engagement update



### On-line survey

- Survey for employers
- Survey for employees
- Promoting through RRCC web site, Facebook, Twitter, in-person meetings

### Hastings Party in the Park

- Everyone receptive to transit.
- Only semi-negative comment:  
“I would never use transit, but I’d be glad if it reduced congestion.”

### Focus group with Renewal by Andersen

- This morning
  - Losing applicants because of lack of transit
  - Part of large and growing industrial park

### Scheduled

- Focus group with Ramsey Co. Workforce Solutions
- Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce
- Hastings Family Service

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*Sample responses from survey*

Q: Where would you like to go, but limited transportation options make it difficult or impossible?

i have dr  
appointments/pharmacy pickups  
along the corridor if i cant drive i  
have no way to get there.

Work in Minneapolis. Difficult  
and expensive via car

Living in Minneapolis, I would  
love the opportunity to be able to  
travel to my work in Cottage  
Grove using public  
transportation.

I live in Hastings and will start  
commuting to downtown St. Paul  
soon. Implementing the red rock  
corridor would be of great  
benefit and I would use the  
commuter train daily if it was  
implemented.

visit the family cemetery

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*Sample responses from survey*

Q: If public transit were more conveniently available in this area, would you use it?

Yes, more importantly our patients could come to us. I  
Work in Healthcare

no, would prefer to drive but  
acknowledge that others don't  
have that option.

I probably would not, unless I was  
immediately close to a tram or  
bus route that was relatively  
direct.

yes, .... It would be great to hook  
up with the gold line.

I would use it to see family and  
friends

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*Sample responses from survey*

Q: Have you experienced any challenges or issues while traveling within the corridor?

Plenty of jobs I had to refuse  
because there was no reliable way  
for me to get there

You have to have a car to get  
anywhere in this town, Hastings

Road congestion and time delays

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## III. Corridor analysis

Christof Spieler



- 2010 - 2018: Board of Directors, Houston METRO. Oversaw the Transit System Reimagining, a blank sheet re-design of the entire bus system. As a result, Houston increased transit ridership as most cities -- even transit-oriented cities like New York -- lost riders.
- Nationally recognized expert
- For us, led
  - East Metro Transit Network Opportunities
  - Dakota County Transit Service Needs and Opportunities







There is a need for transit in this corridor.





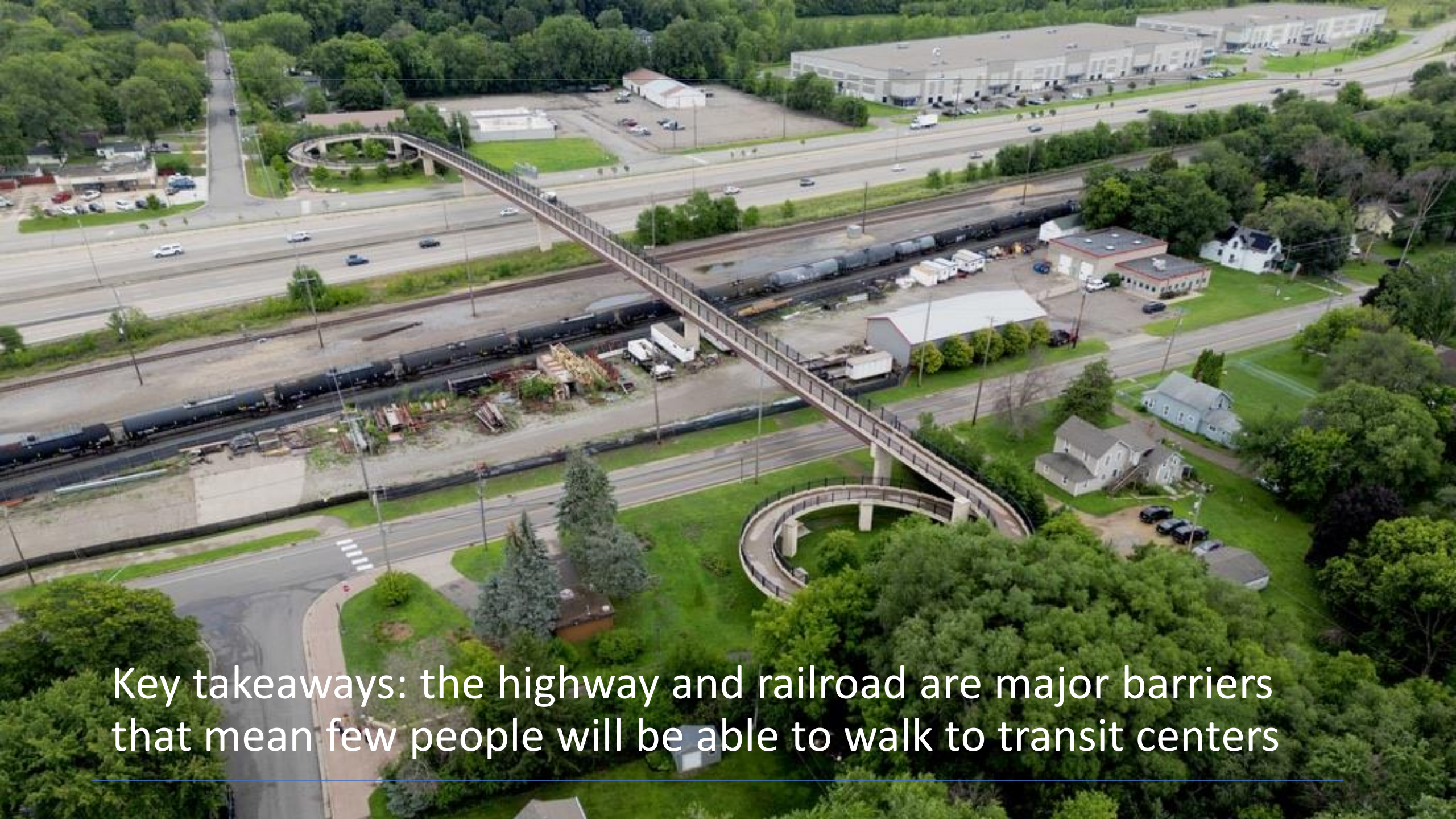
Key takeaways: a single BRT or rail corridor by itself will not meet the transit needs in the corridor.











Key takeaways: the highway and railroad are major barriers that mean few people will be able to walk to transit centers

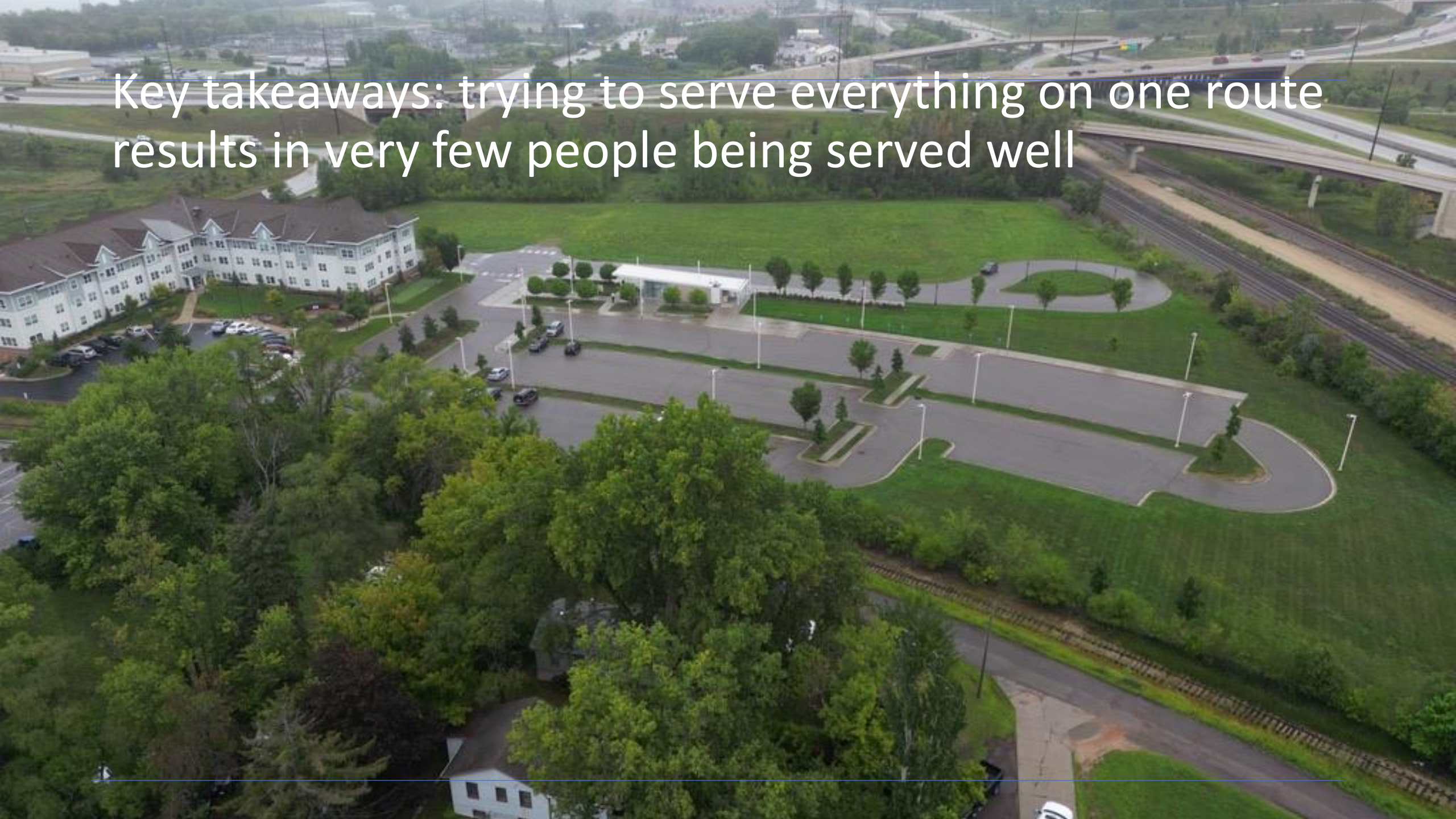




Key takeaways: the land use in the corridor does not work well for transit



Key takeaways: trying to serve everything on one route results in very few people being served well





Conclusion: we need a network



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# Possible tools

Express bus (supported by new infrastructure)

Local bus

Microtransit

Employer shuttle

Deviated fixed route

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# Key tradeoffs

Frequency vs. Coverage

Simplicity vs. Coverage

Speed vs. Coverage

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# What role does transit play?

Are we trying to replace car trips?

Are we trying to serve riders who do not have a car / have limited car access?

Are we trying to support new land use patterns?

Are we trying to connect new workforce to employers?

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# What are our goals?

Getting people who live in the corridor to:

- jobs in St. Paul?

- jobs in the corridor?

- jobs in Woodbury?

- jobs in Dakota County?

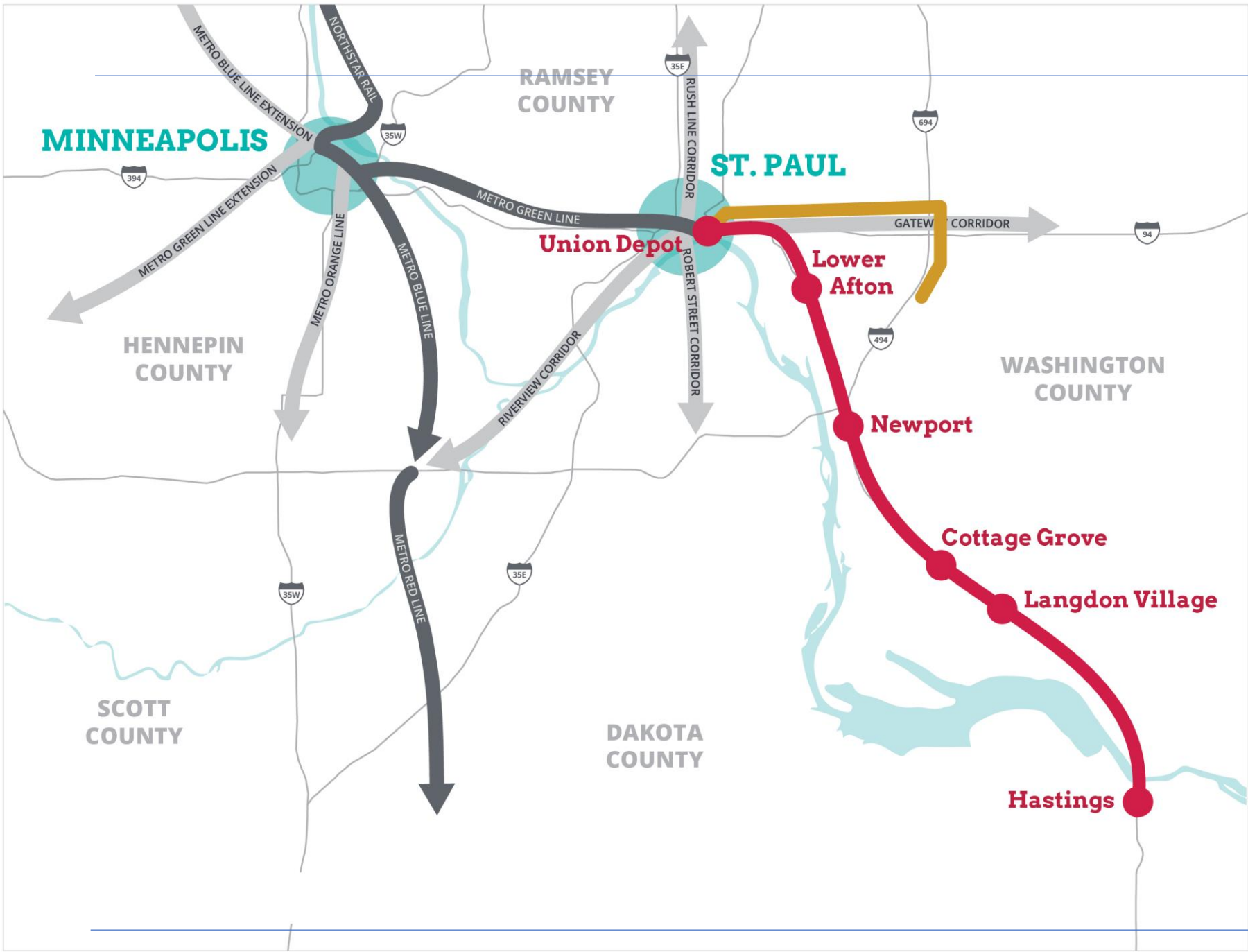
- grocery/medical care/etc.?

Getting people who live in St. Paul to jobs in the corridor?

Creating a connection from Hastings to the Twin Cities for a variety of trips?

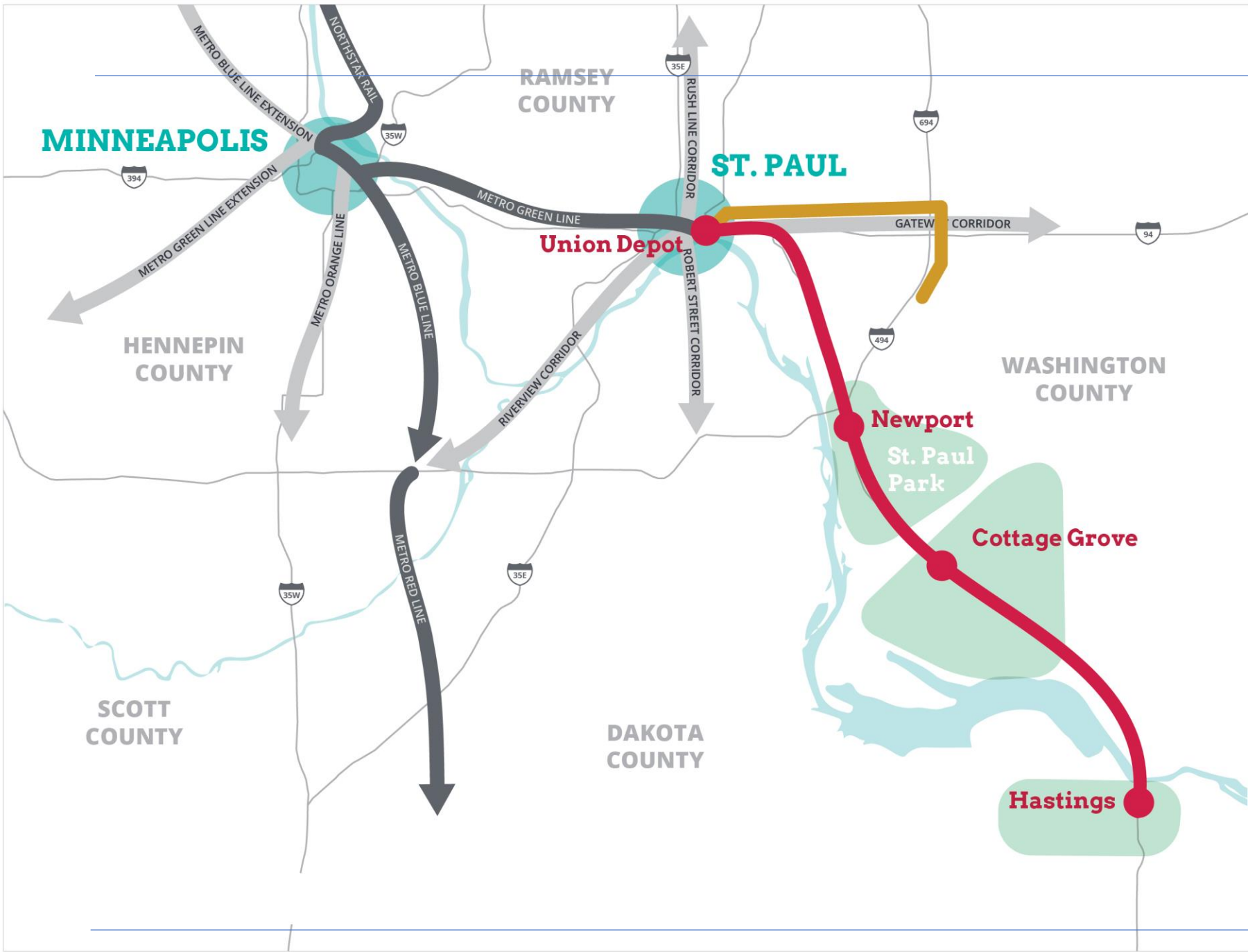
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# Conventional fixed guideway

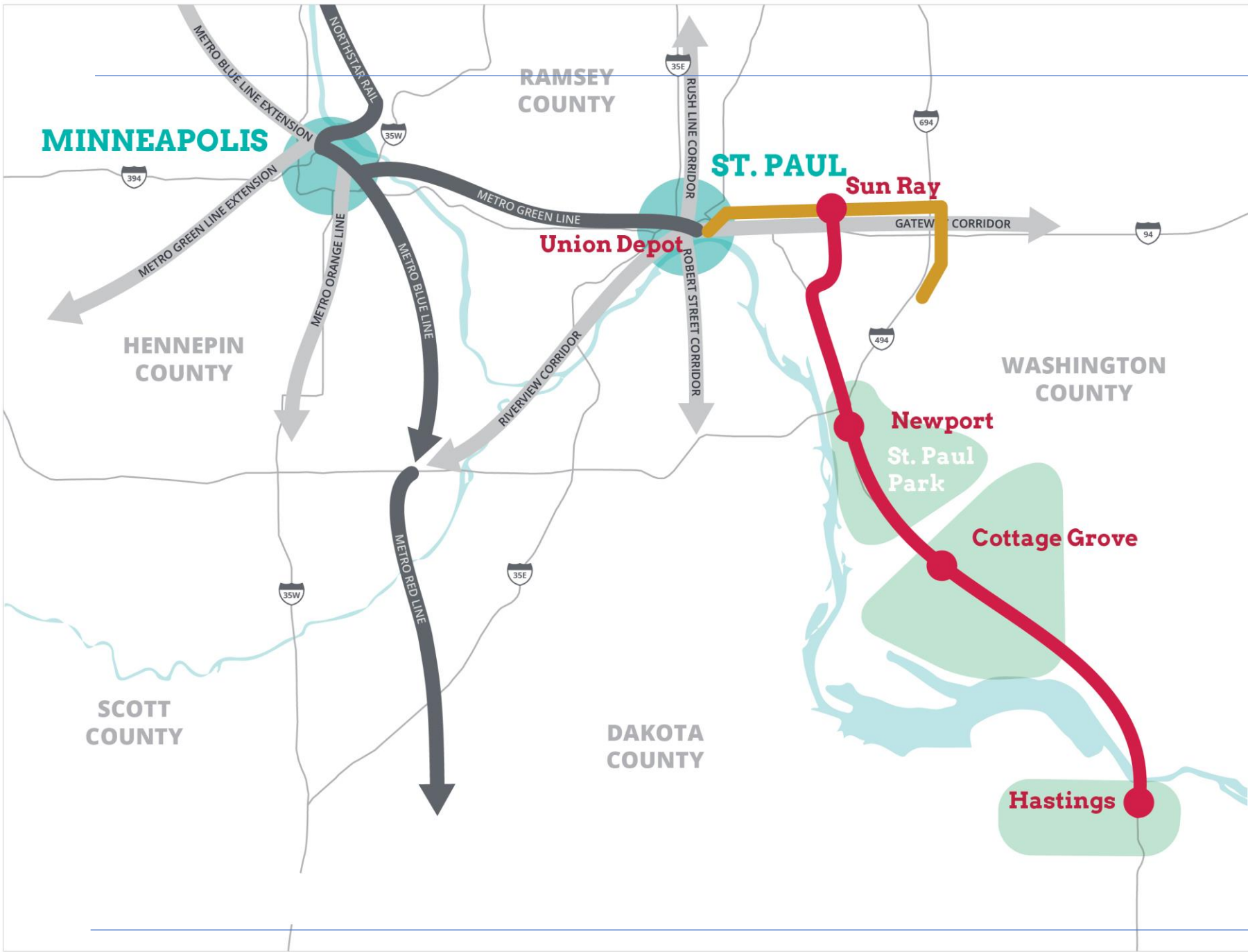




**What if we did microtransit feeders?**

*Freeway express bus  
Downtown St. Paul to  
Hastings stopping at  
transit centers only*

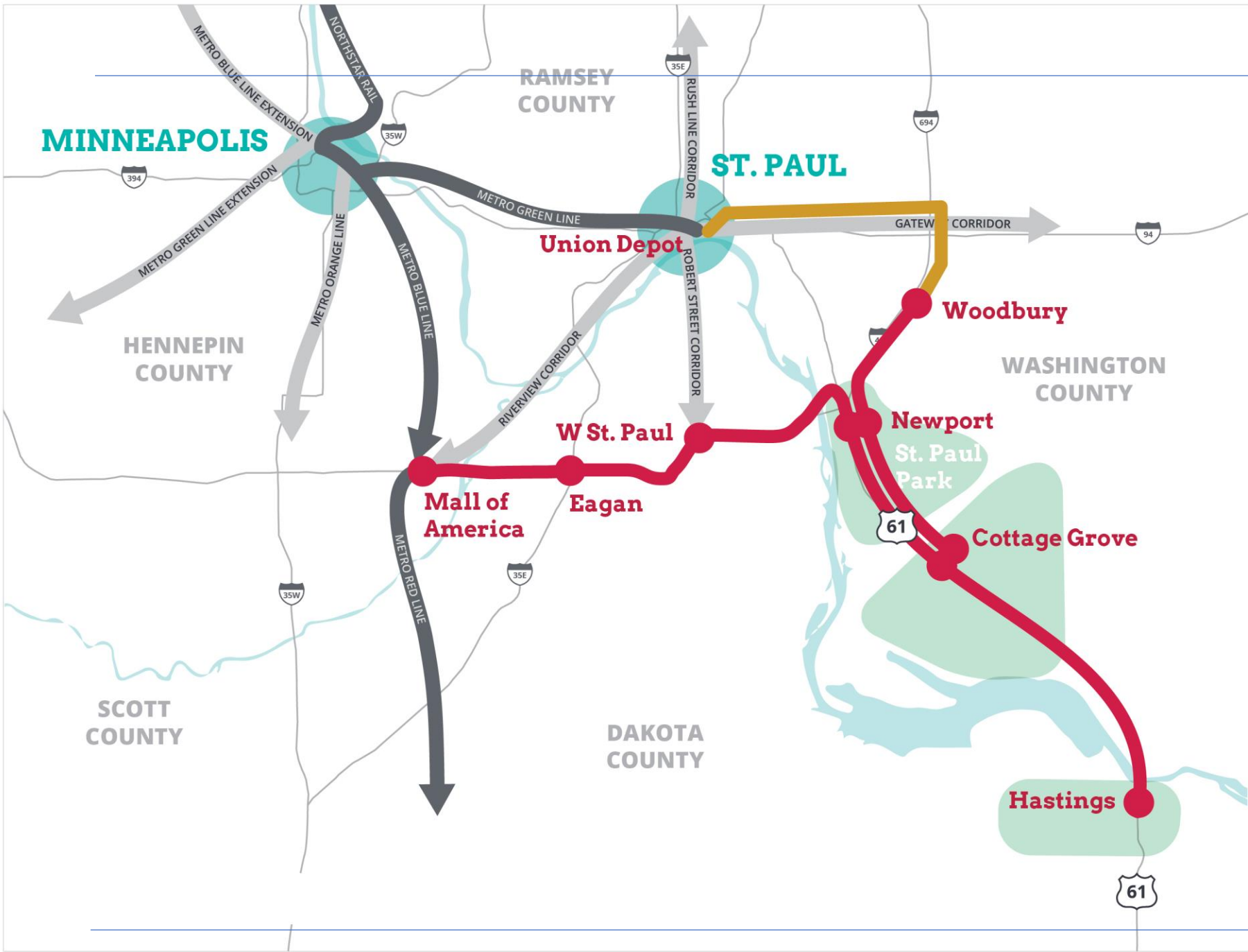
*Microtransit zones  
centered on transit  
centers*



**What if we didn't go to Downtown?**

*Freeway express bus  
Sun Ray to Hastings  
stopping at transit  
centers only*

*Microtransit zones  
centered on transit  
centers*

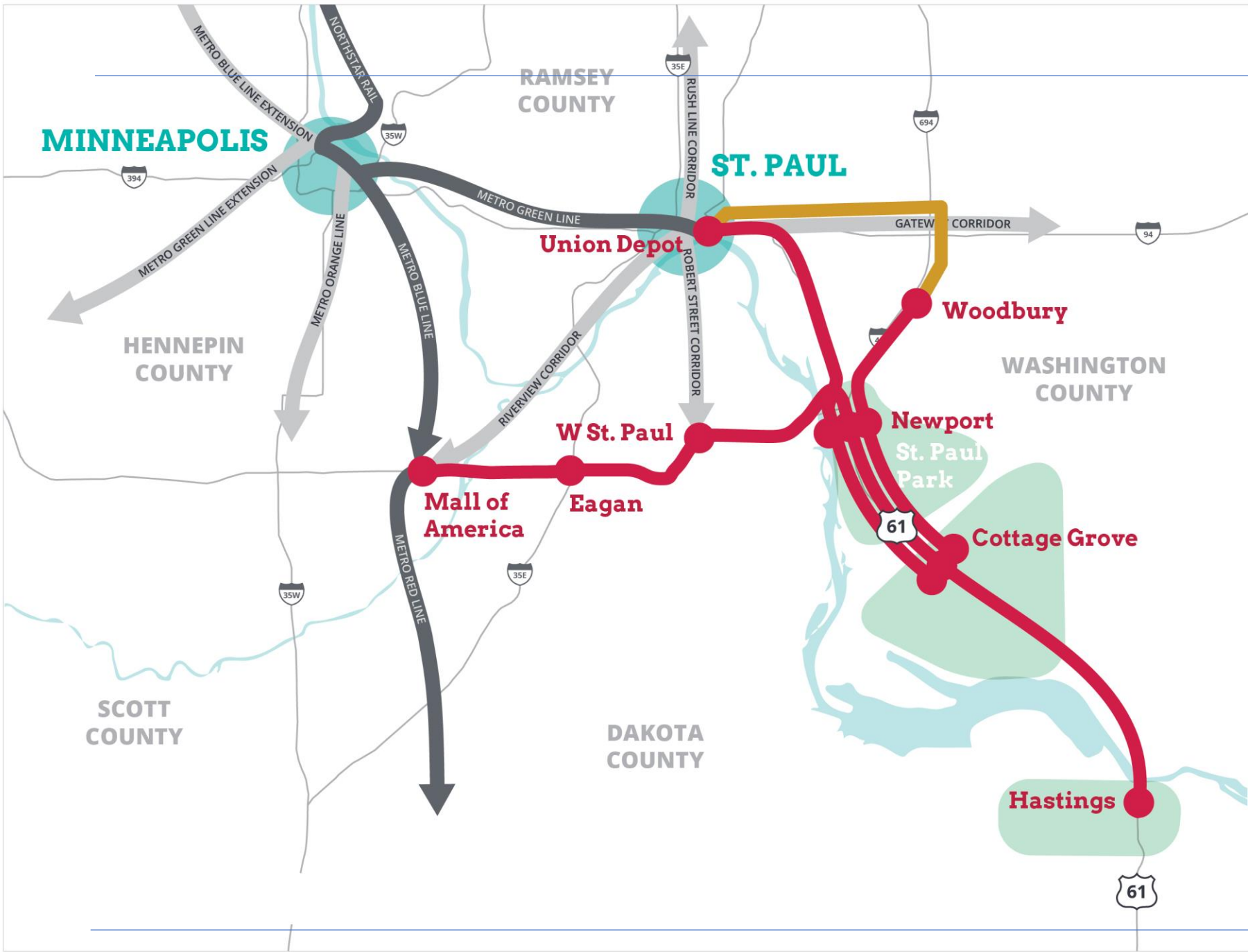


**What if we did two routes?**

**Freeway express bus**  
 Woodbury to Cottage Grove stopping at transit centers only

**Freeway express bus**  
 Mall of America to Hastings stopping at transit centers only

**Microtransit zones**  
 centered on transit centers



**What if we did three routes?**

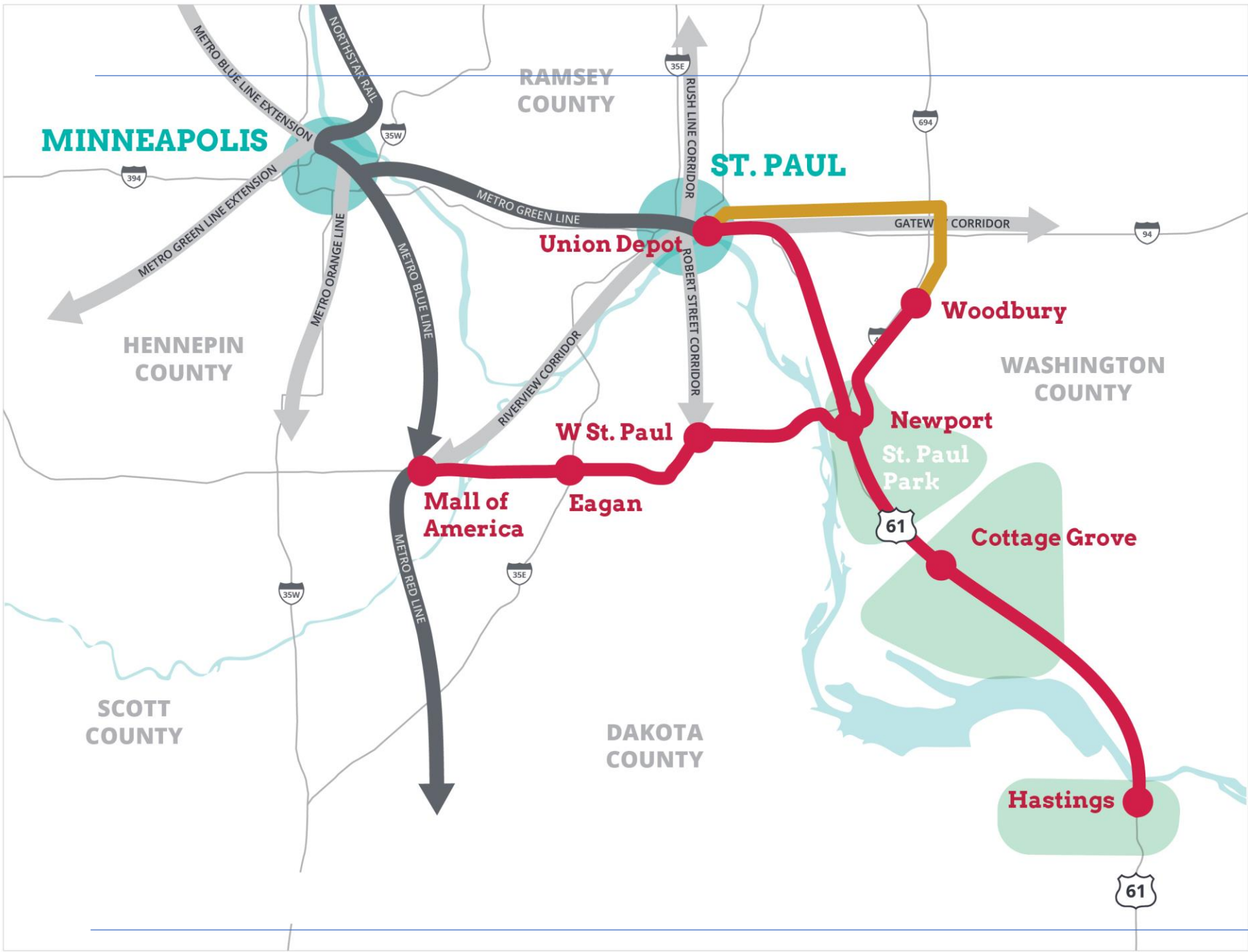
**Freeway express bus** St. Paul to Cottage Grove stopping at transit centers only

**Freeway express bus** Woodbury to Cottage Grove stopping at transit centers only

**Freeway express bus** Mall of America to Hastings stopping at transit centers only

**Microtransit zones** centered on transit centers



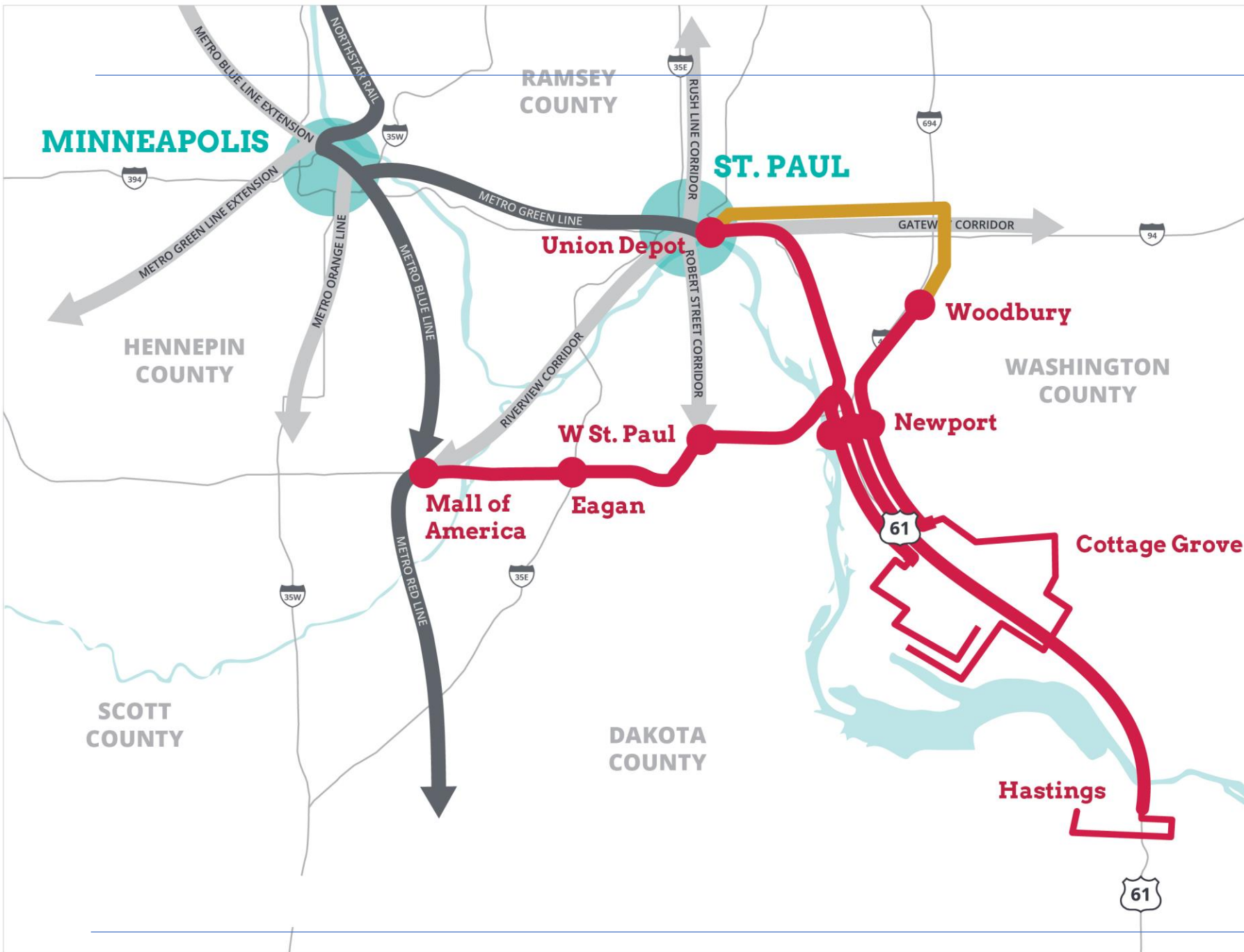


**Or maybe two routes?**

***Freeway express bus** St. Paul to Hastings stopping at transit centers only*

***Freeway express bus** Woodbury to Mall of America stopping at transit centers only*

***Microtransit zones** centered on transit centers*

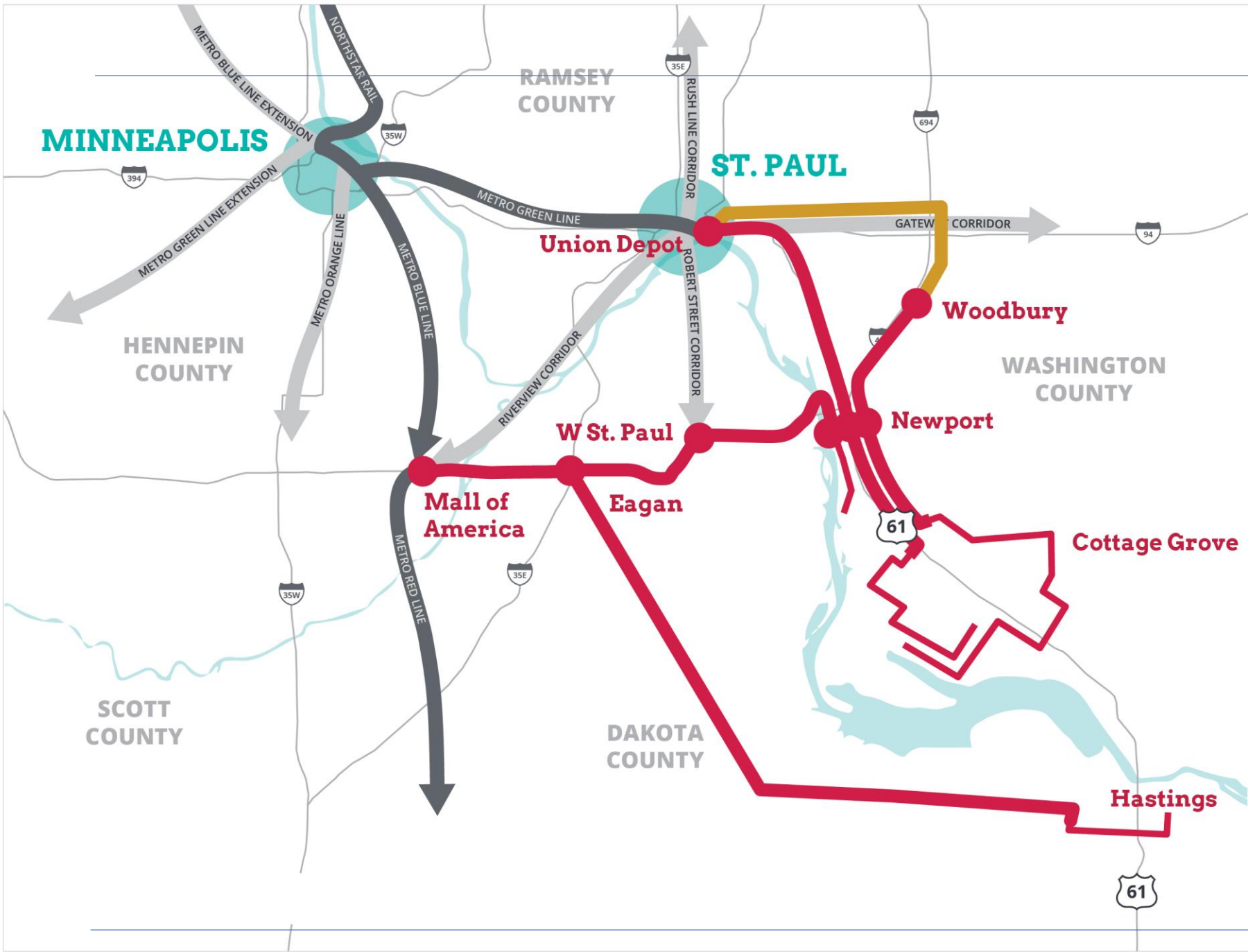


## What if we tried fixed routes

**Freeway express + local bus** St. Paul via Newport continuing as local service in corridor

**Freeway express + local bus** Woodbury via Newport continuing as local service in corridor

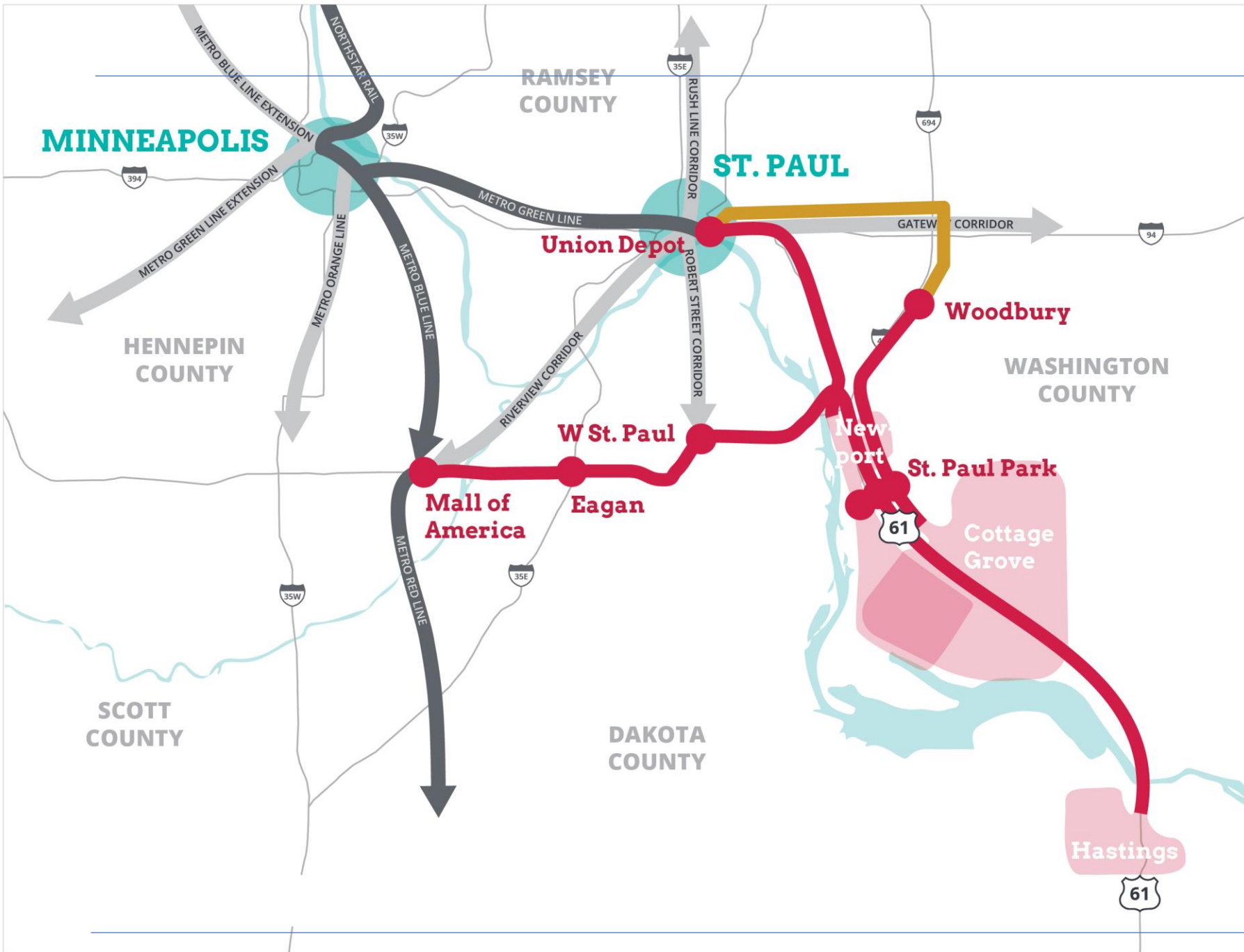
**Freeway express + local bus** Mall of America via Newport to Hastings continuing as local service in corridor



**What if we tried fixed routes, but separated Hastings?**

- Freeway express + local bus** St. Paul via Newport continuing as local service in corridor
- Freeway express + local bus** Woodbury via Newport continuing as local service in corridor
- Freeway express + local bus** Mall of America to Newport continuing as local service in corridor
- Freeway express + local bus** Eagan to Hastings continuing as local service in corridor





## What if we tried deviated fixed route?

**Freeway express + local bus** St. Paul via Newport continuing as local service in corridor

**Freeway express + local bus** Woodbury via Newport continuing as local service in corridor

**Freeway express + local bus** Mall of America to Newport continuing as local service in corridor

**Freeway express + local bus** Eagan to Hastings continuing as local service in corridor



There are some tools already available.





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Employers have to play a role.





Questions?

