



Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2023, 4:30 p.m.
St. Paul Park City Hall

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

Staff	Agency	Present
Andrea Rehm	Washington County RRA	X
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County RRA	X

Other Attendees	Agency	Present
Emma Lucken	Ramsey County	X
Will Schroeer	East Metro Strong	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

Chair Bigham noted she would like to add say a personal thank you to outgoing members after Agenda Item 4. With that addition, Dingle moved approval of the agenda. Ortega seconded. All were in favor.

Approved. Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4: Approval of August 2023 Minutes

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

Added Item: Thank You to Out-Going Commissioners

Chair Bigham thanked Mayor Dingle and Councilmember Prince for their years of service to the Red Rock Corridor Commission, as well as their contributions and leadership in improving the Red Rock Corridor.

Agenda Item #5: Presentation: Next Steps for a New Red Rock Corridor Vision

Will Schroeer, Executive Director of East Metro Strong, presented an update on the Red Rock Corridor Vision Refresh. The presentation is attached.

Schroeer provided an overview of the findings from public input and corridor analysis. He summarized the various means of collecting public input, including an online survey, pop ups at community events, focus groups, and other stakeholder meetings. He noted that the input was overwhelmingly in favor of transit; and that community needs identified in previous planning engagement still were relevant but intensified in recent years. He stated that the diverse land uses present in the corridor makes planning transit service particularly challenging; that station areas along the corridor have very different characteristics; Highway 61 and the railroad are substantial barriers.

Schroeer presented a draft vision statement and some potential service concepts for further consideration. He stated that the draft vision for the red rock corridor is transit that 1) serves the whole corridor; 2) connects the corridor to other places; and 3) works closely with employers and residents in planning and providing services. He provided several draft service concepts that may accomplish the vision including combinations of express busses, microtransit zones, east / west connections, and local bus routes.

Schroeer provided recommendations for how the Commission may proceed given the direction of the vision refresh including 1) work with stakeholders to develop expanded and new transit options; 2) advocate for those options; and 3) investigate creating a Transportation Management Organization to fund and implement recommendations.

Schroeer opened the conversation for discussion.

Prince noted her excitement for positive public input. She added that transportation changes following COVID has not changed the need for folks working industrial jobs to commute.

Bigham stated that the variety of solutions presented is fitting of a diverse area. She added that the east-west connections have the potential to enhance ridership and add new riders to the system. She emphasized the impact of the growing industrial park in Cottage Grove, noting that microtransit could be one way to address the growing needs of commuters in the area. She noted that the Transportation Management Organization idea should be brought to the Regional Rail Authority as well.

Dingle added that Dakota County should also be brought into conversations. She agreed that serving people working in light industrial jobs was an important consideration in planning service for this area.

Pemble noted the opportunity transportation service has in supporting growth in Hastings.

Ortega requested staff to prepare a timeline of activities and how to proceed on the information provided.

Leitner noted that the first step is taking the Commission's input and incorporating it into a final report. She added that a memo could be prepared to submit to the Commission on activities to pursue.

Ortega asked that the bylaws be reviewed to ensure flexibility of the Commission to do its work.

Leitner noted staff would consult our attorneys on this question.

Agenda Item #6: 2024 Work Plan and Budget

Rehm summarized the draft 2024 Work Plan and Budget included in the packet. She noted that the budget was similar to the 2023 budget, the major change being that no additional funds are allocated in the 2024 budget for the visioning process. She stated that the expected recommendations from the vision refresh can be pursued via staff rather than a consultant. She noted that the total budget is completely covered by fund balance.

Ortega made a motion to approve the 2024 Work Plan and Budget. Pemble seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7: 2024 Proposed Meeting Schedule

Rehm presented the 2024 proposed meeting schedule included in the packet.

Prince made a motion to approve the 2024 Proposed Meeting Schedule. Pemble seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #8: 2023 State Legislative Update

Leitner presented the 2023 State Legislative Update included in the packet. She noted that this session saw the largest transportation funding increase since 2008. She explained how it relates to the Red Rock Corridors efforts.

Agenda Item #9: Communications Update

Rehm reviewed the information provided in the packet.

Agenda Item #10: Other

Leitner presented brief updates on other projects in the region:

- **Gold Line** construction is on-going from downtown St Paul into Woodbury. She noted the project is one schedule and on budget. Opening is targeted for early 2025.

Ortega complimented staff on their great work in making the project run smoothly.

Prince agreed that Liz Jones (engagement lead) and other staff did a great job preparing the community for construction.

- **Great River Rail** is still working towards the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) second train.

No other updates.

Agenda Item #11: Adjourn

Chair Bigham adjourned the meeting.

A Refreshed Vision *for* Serving and Connecting the Red Rock Corridor



Draft Recommendations

October 26, 2023



Agenda

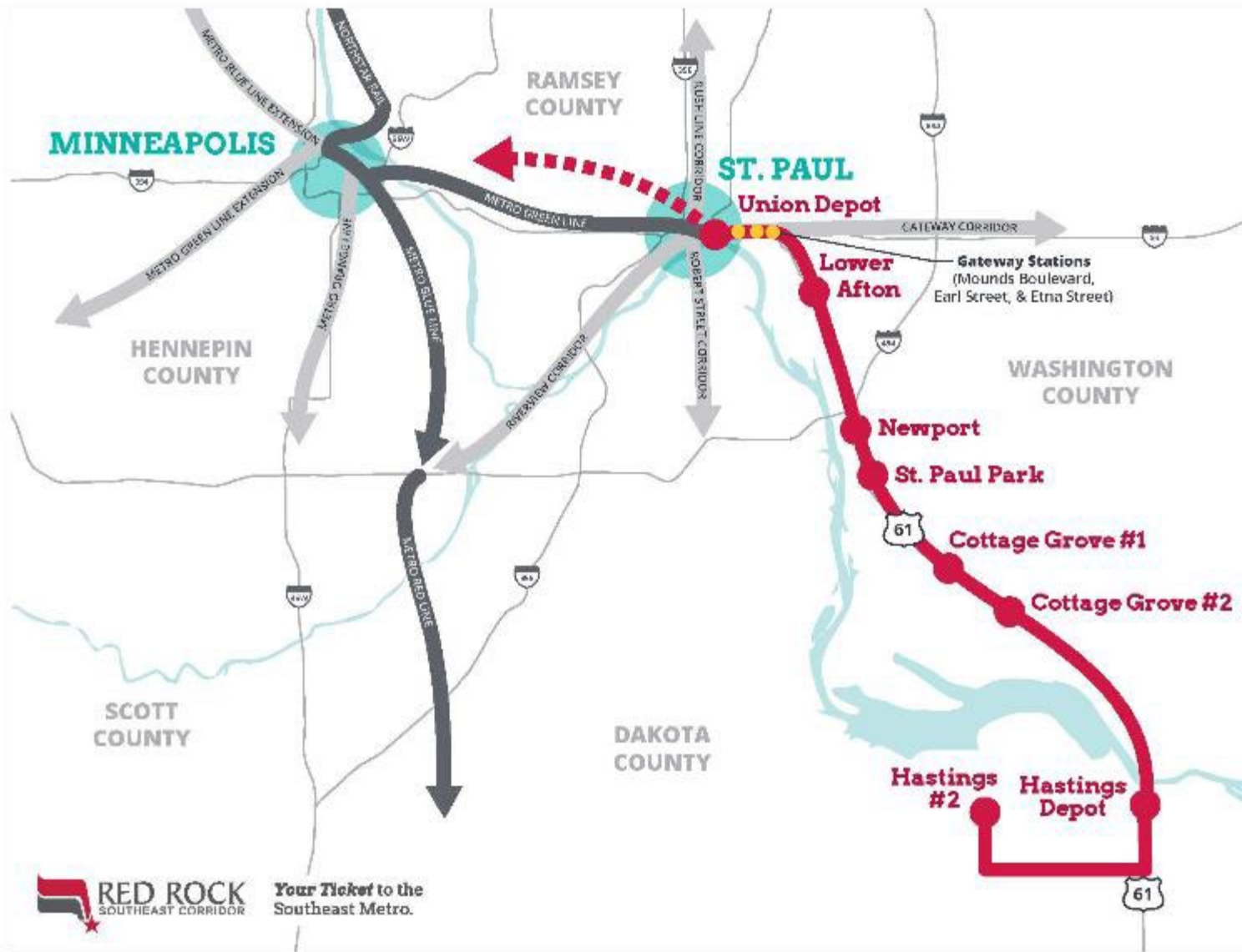
I. What we learned

- Public input
- Corridor analysis

II. Vision and service concepts

III. Recommendations

IV. Discussion and next steps



**2014 - 2016
Implementation Plan**

Highway BRT
serving stations

I. Public and employer input

Goal: update outreach done 2014 - 2016

Public engagement

- On-line surveys
 - Employers
 - Employees
 - Residents
- Hastings Party in the Park

Focus groups

- Renewal by Anderson
- 3M Cottage Grove
- Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

Meetings and other stakeholder input

- Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce
 - Hastings Family Service
 - Payne-Phalen District Council
-

I. Public and employer input

What we learned

Surveys from public, employers, employees

- People say they *need* and *want* to use transit.
- People who say they wouldn't use transit recognize the need and value.
 - Other people need transit
 - Reduces congestion for me and others

Focus groups with employers and employees

- Employers:
 - We're losing applicants because of lack of transit
- Employees:
 - We're spending too much on transportation
- As industrial jobs grow, so does the need for transit

Other focus groups

- Workforce Solutions (potential employees):
 - We need transit to access your jobs
- Hastings Family Service (residents)
 - We need transit to access services
- Existing transit services don't work well

I. What we learned

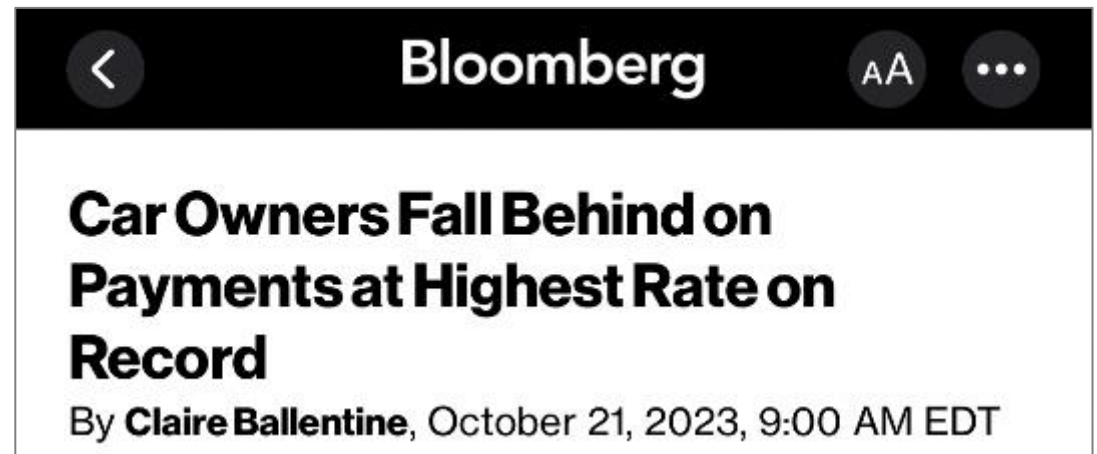
The public and employers know what they're talking about

Since 2016:

- Cars and fuel are much more expensive
- People can't afford it

“Among the pandemic’s many casualties is the affordable used car, which has nearly vanished from the used car marketplace”

- Forbes



I. What we learned
Corridor analysis

Land uses



Residential

Newport: apartments + Transit station



Employment

Cottage Grove: AirGas and Renewal by Andersen

Corridor analysis
Station areas



Downtown

Saint Paul Park



Downtown

Saint Paul

Corridor analysis
Unique barriers



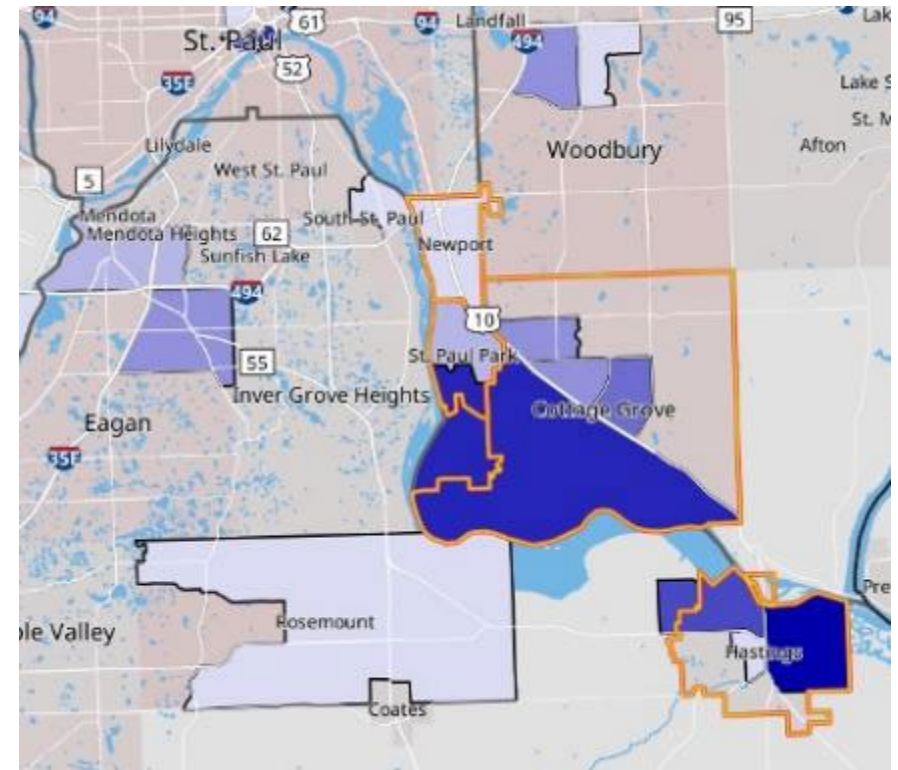
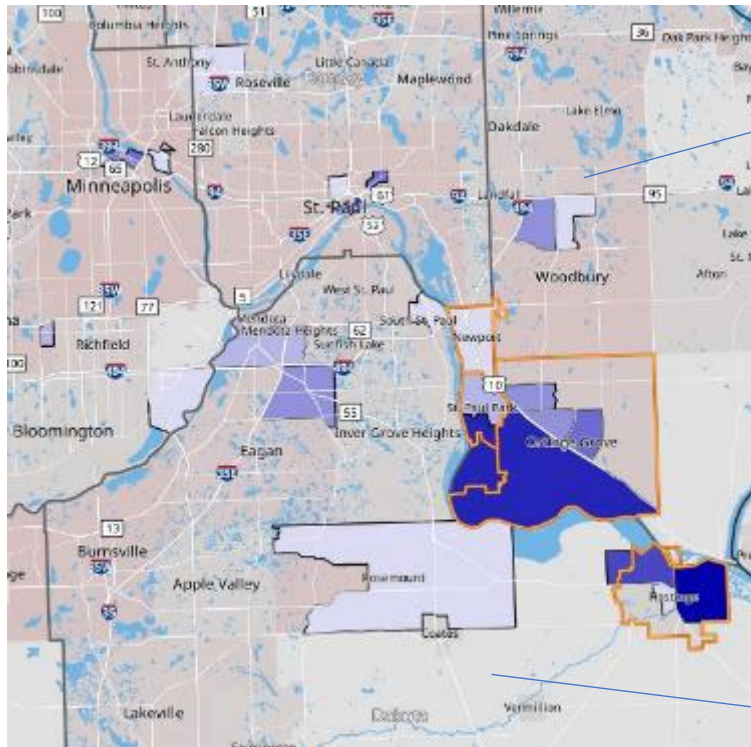
Newport

Highway 61

Railroad

Corridor analysis

Where people who live in the corridor work



(Not including residents of Saint Paul.)

Areas with darker shades have more employees from the corridor. Note destinations in Eagan and Mendota Heights.

II. How best to meet the needs of people living and working in the Red Rock Corridor?

Draft Refreshed Vision and possible service concepts

A Vision for Serving and Connecting the Red Rock Corridor

Transit for the Red Rock Corridor will:

- ▶ ***Serve the whole corridor***

Transit will connect people to all parts of the communities in the corridor.

- ▶ ***Connect the corridor to other places***

Transit will connect people to and from other regional destinations and transit services.

- ▶ ***Work closely with employers and residents***

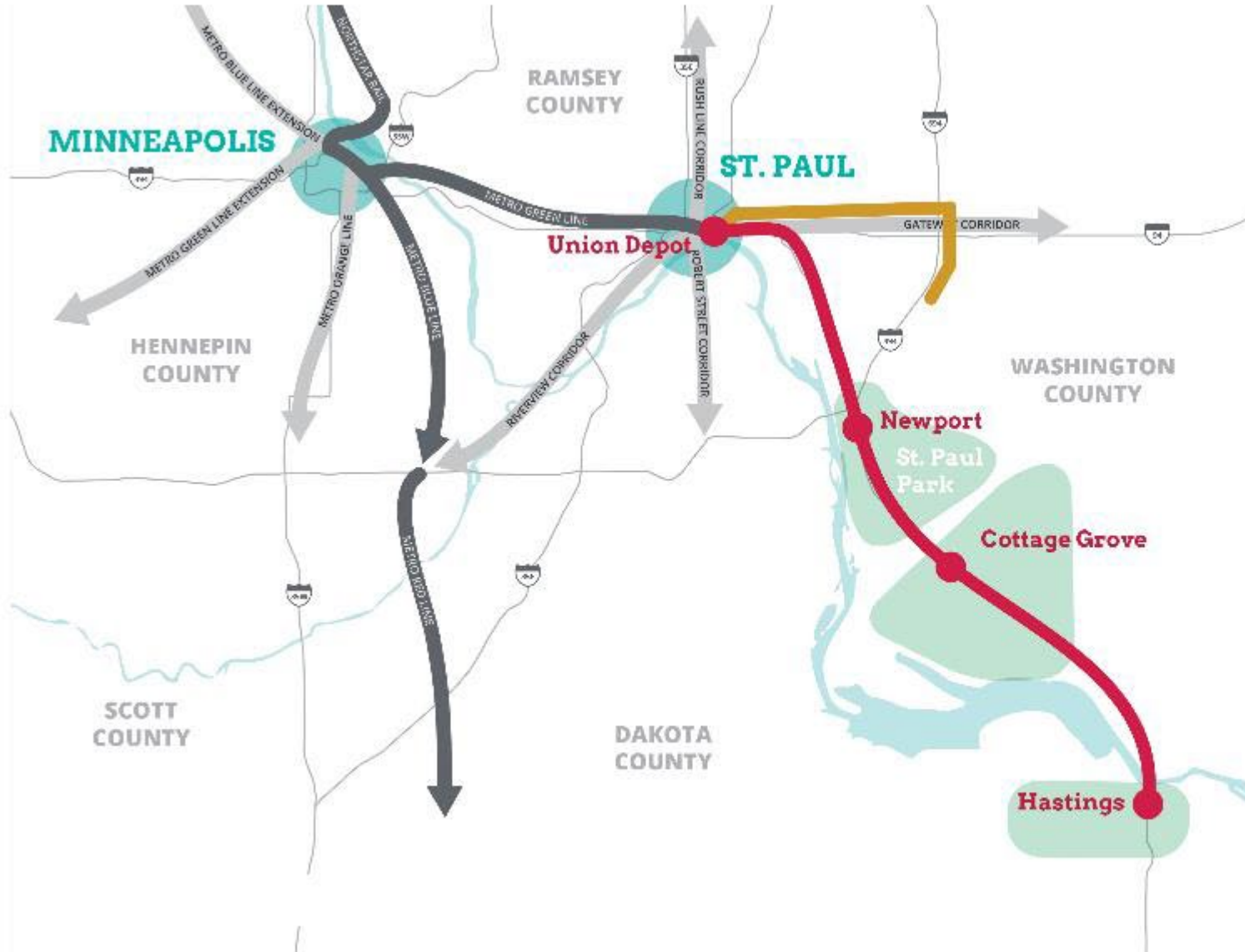
Transit providers will include employers and residents in planning and providing services.



DRAFT

II. What service concepts might fulfill this Vision?

- Goals for service concepts
 - *Illustrate concepts* that would fulfill one or more parts of the Vision
 - *Spur thinking* about service concepts to investigate further
- These examples need further study
- Goal tonight is not to pick one

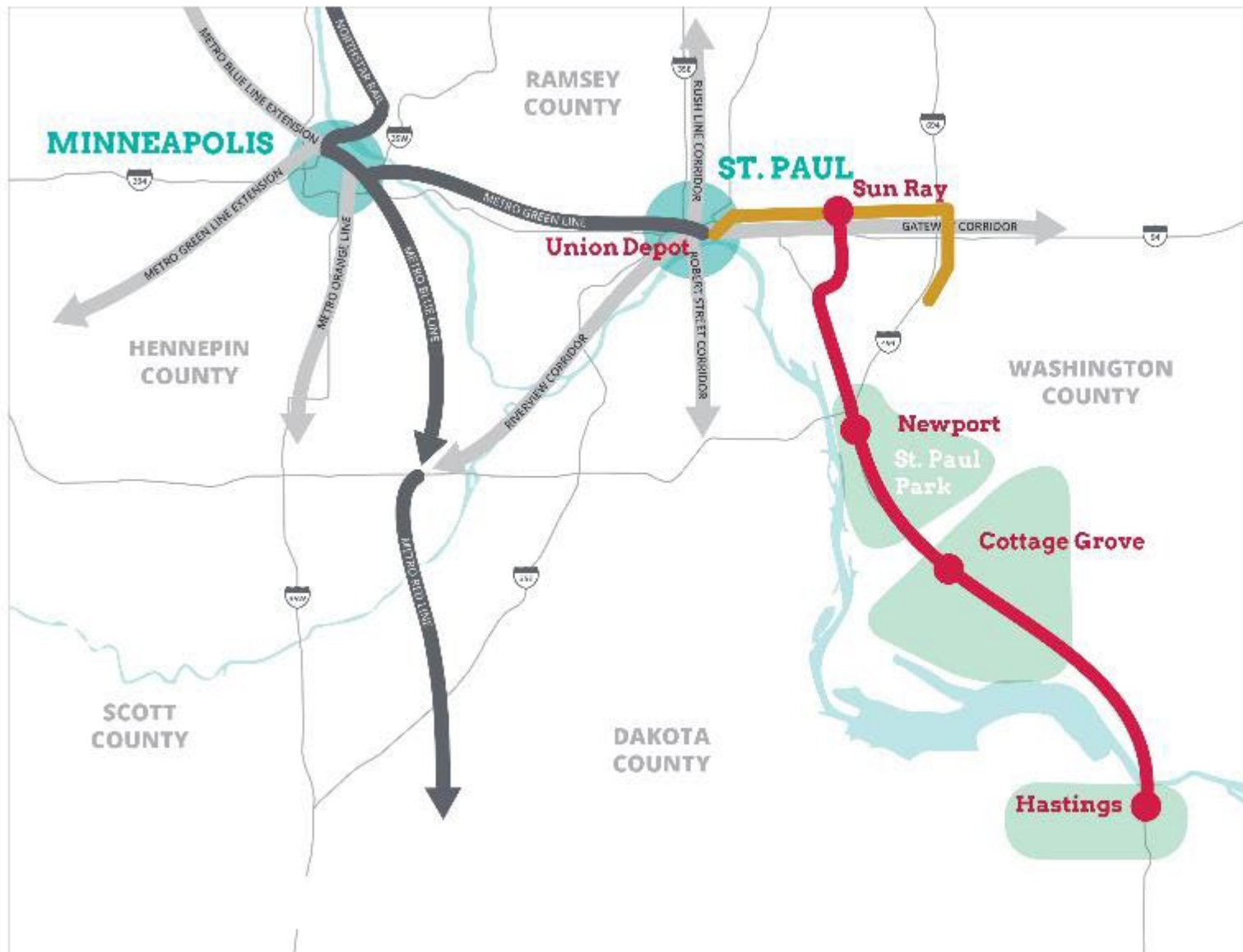


Vision concept

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

+

*Microtransit zones
centered on transit
centers*



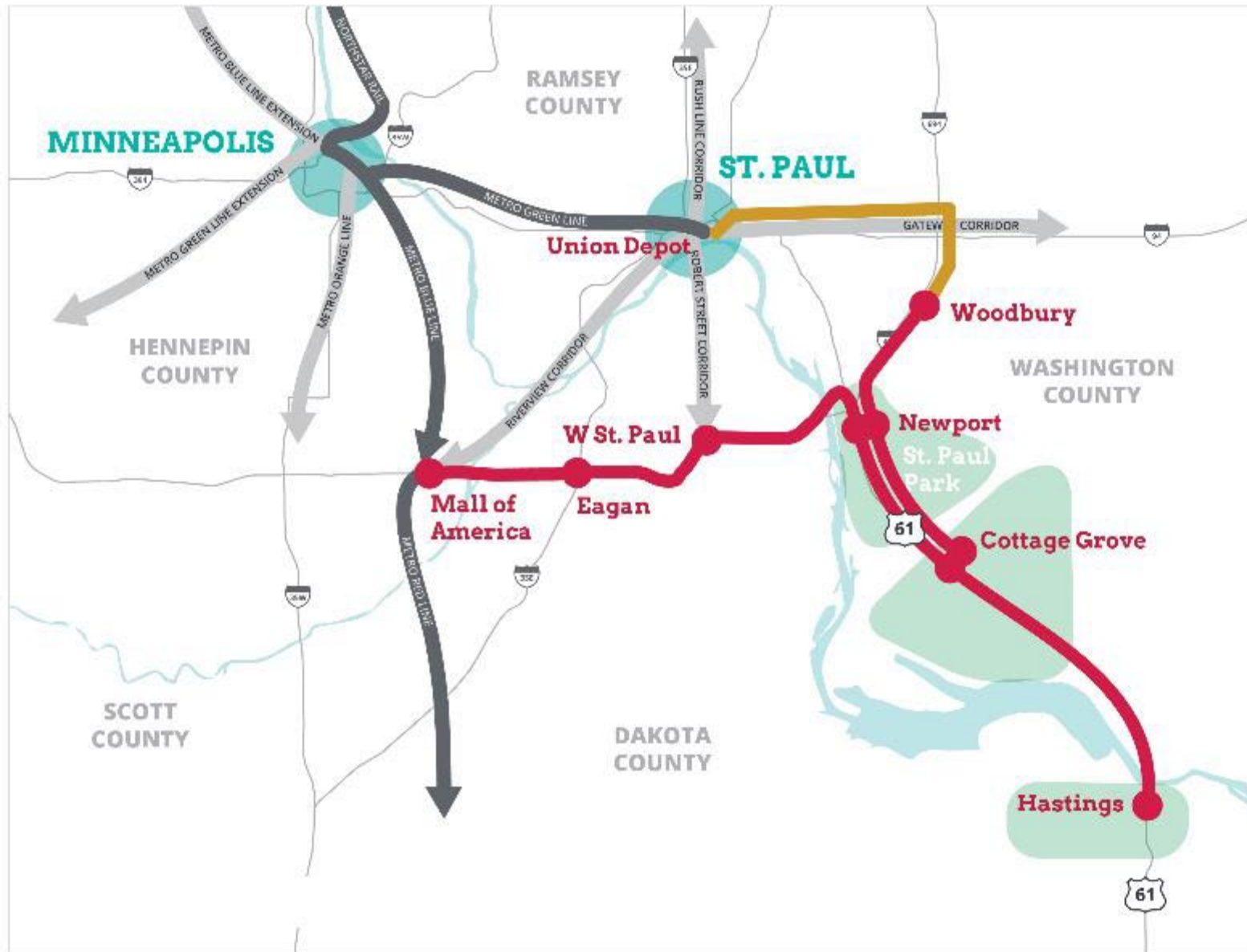
Vision concept

Serve and connect people more directly to Gateway jobs

Freeway express bus
Sun Ray to Hastings
stopping at transit centers

+

Microtransit zones
centered on transit centers



Vision concept

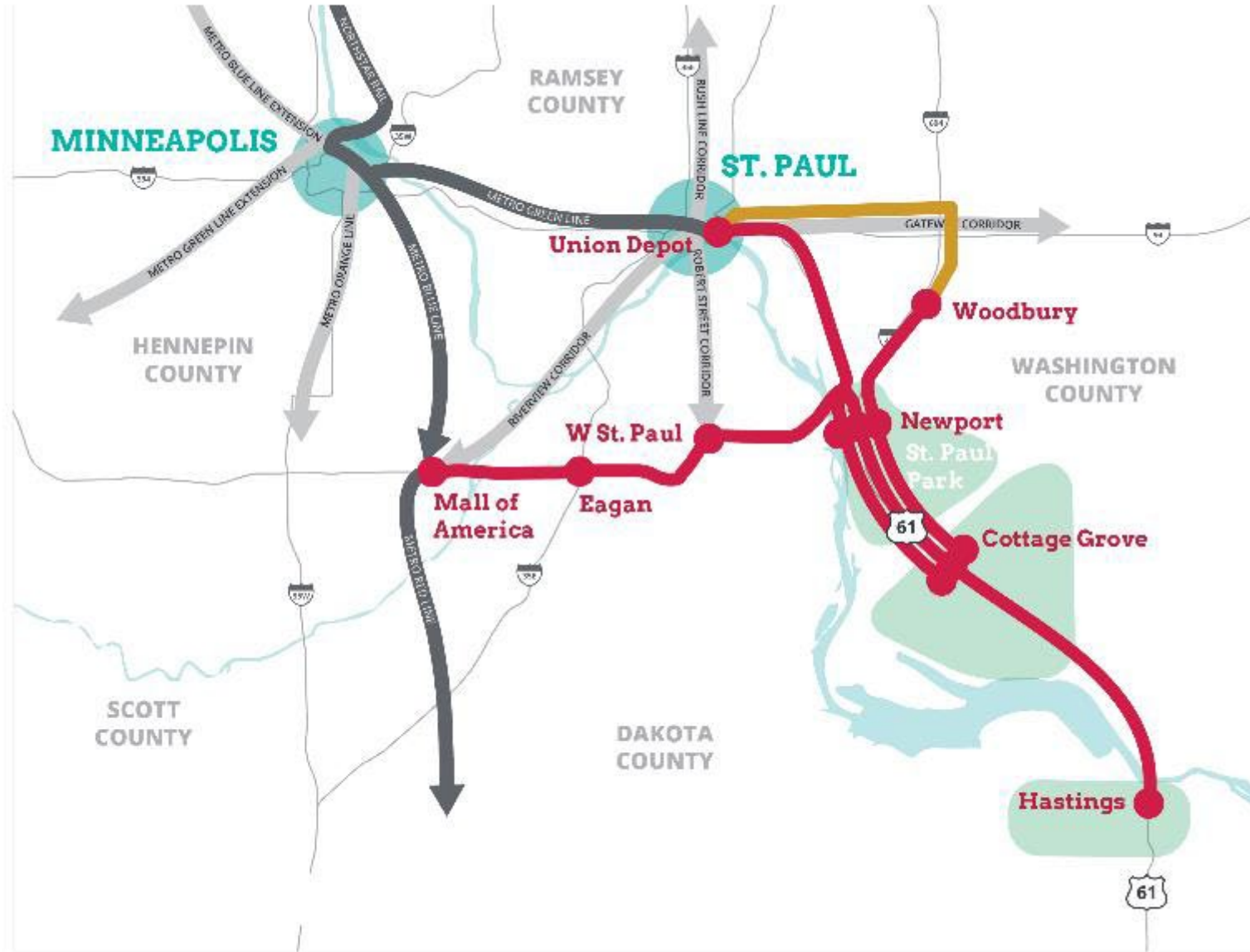
Connect people East and West using two routes

Freeway express bus

- *Woodbury to Cottage Grove*
- *Mall of America to Hastings*

+

Microtransit zones
Serving transit centers



Vision concept

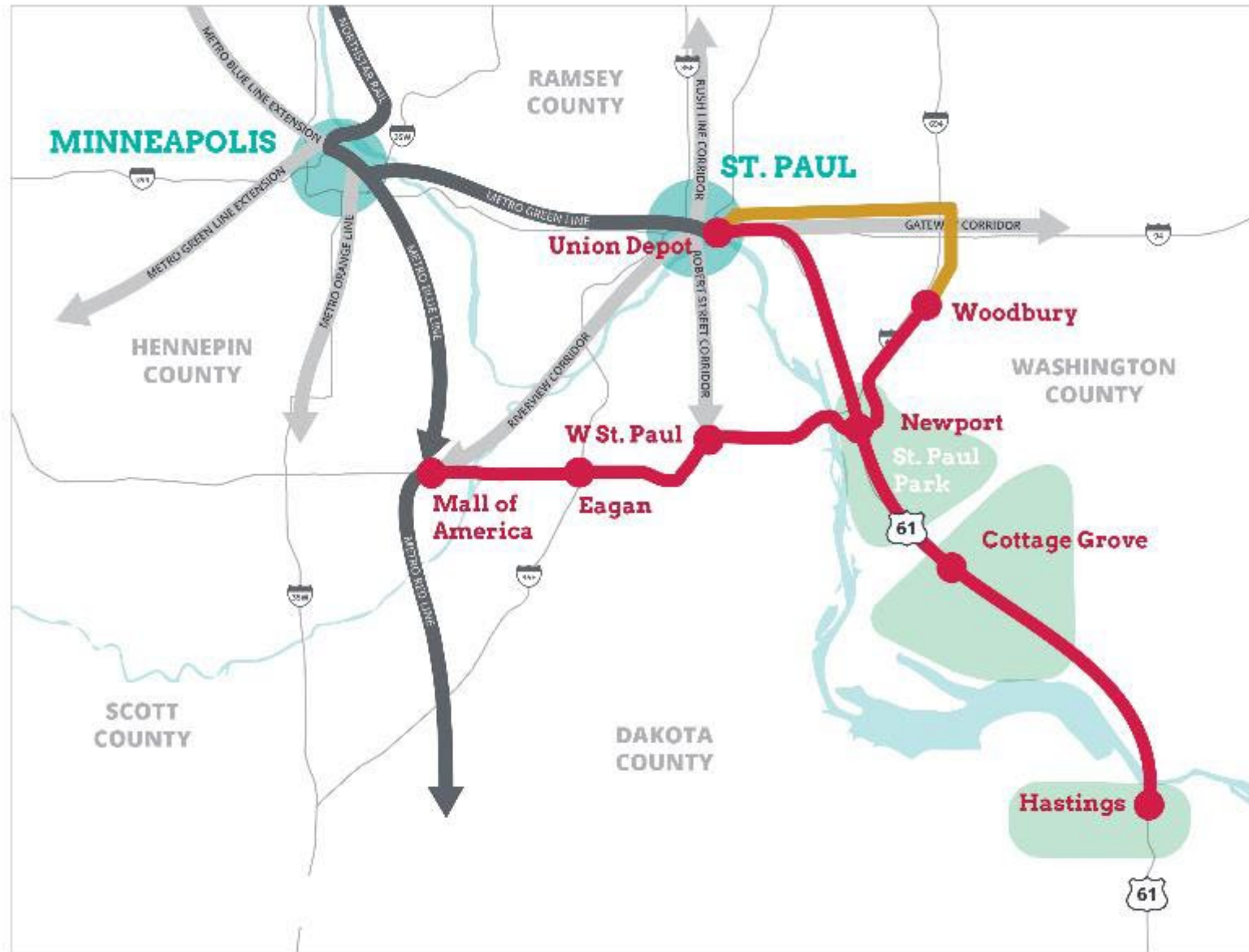
Connect people with three routes

Freeway express buses

- *Saint Paul to Cottage Grove*
- *Woodbury to Cottage Grove*
- *Mall of America to Hastings*

+

Microtransit zones connections to and from transit centers



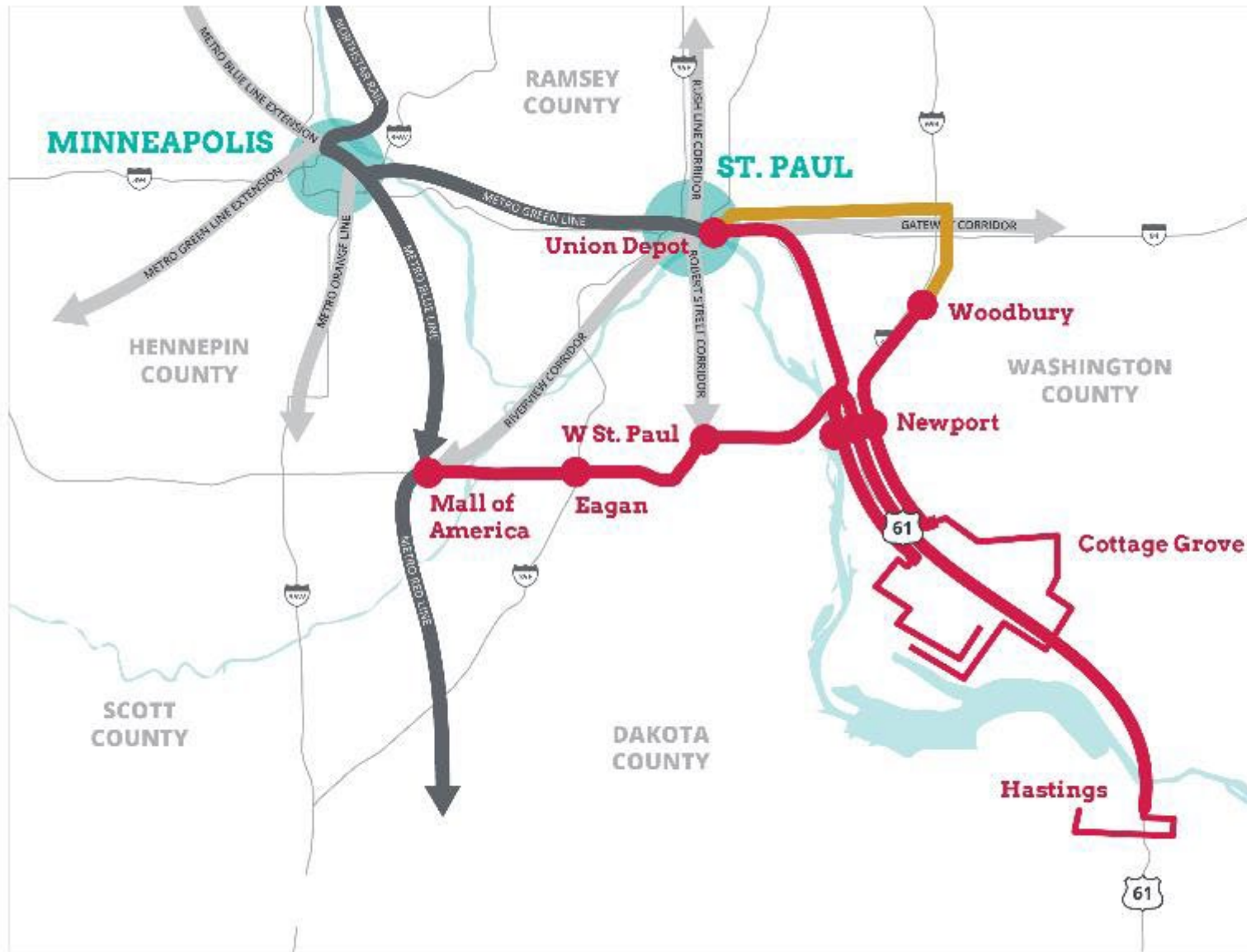
Vision concept

Freeway express bus

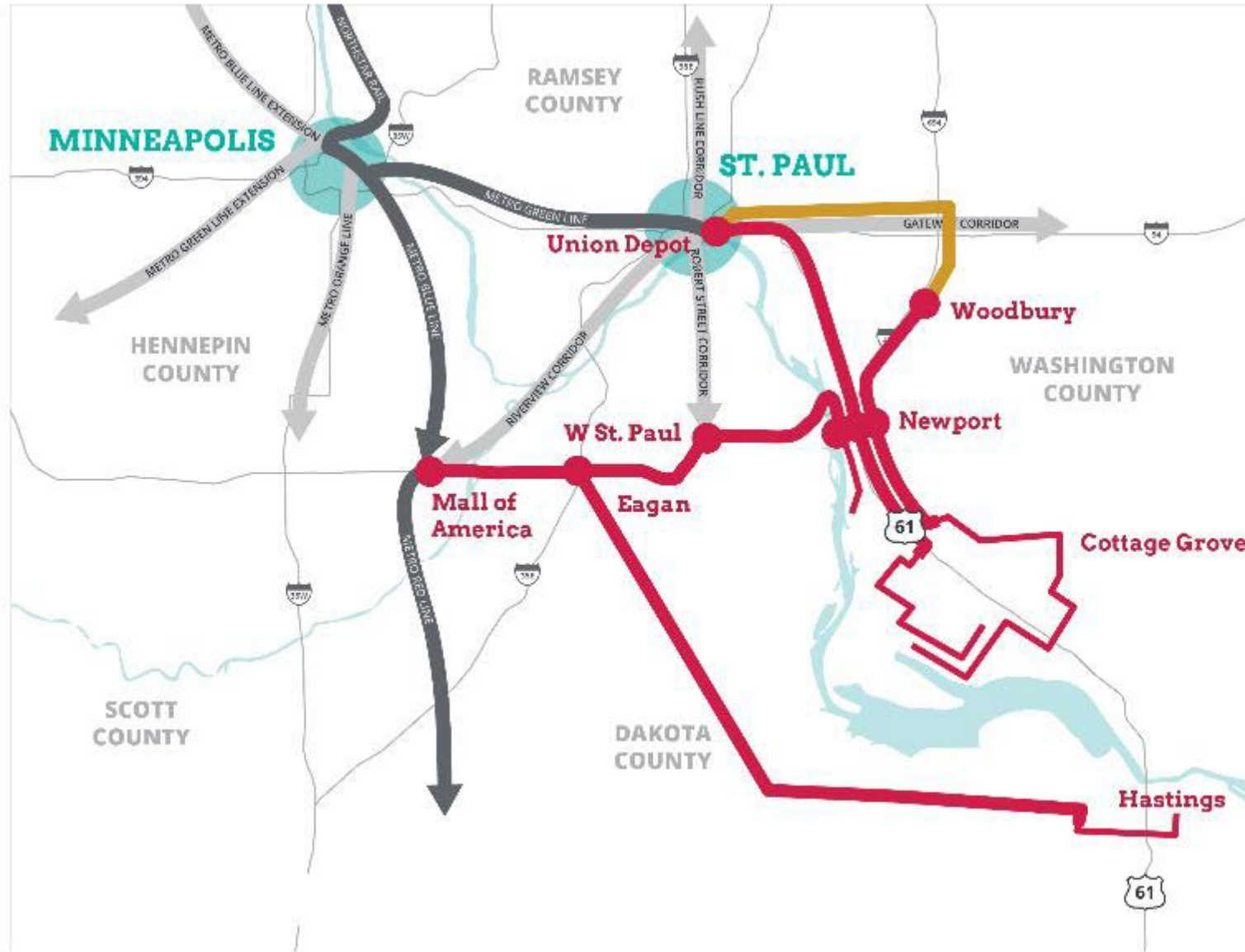
- *Saint Paul to Hastings*
- *Woodbury to Mall of America*

+

Microtransit zones centered on transit centers



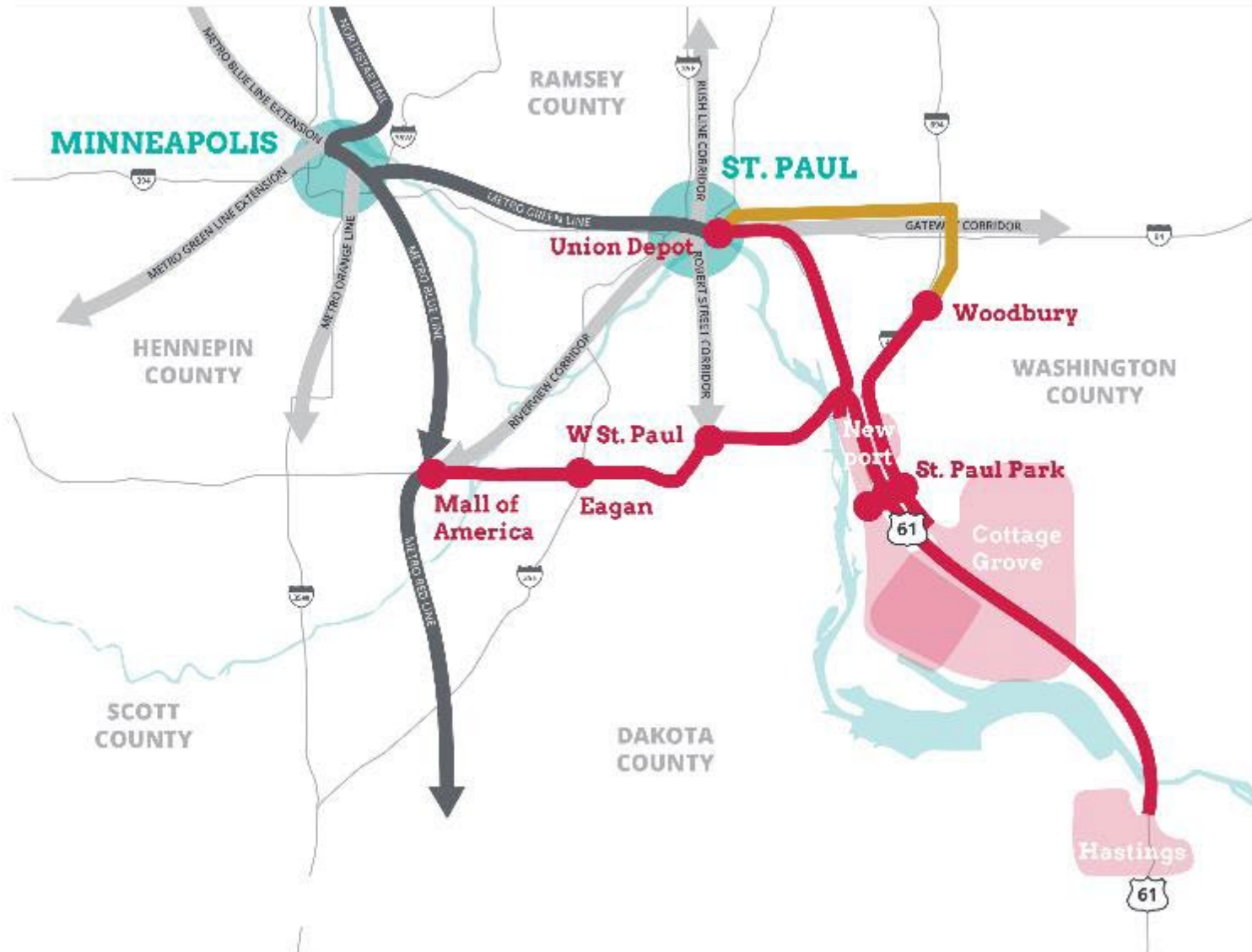
- Vision concept**
- Freeway express + local bus**
- Saint Paul via Newport continuing as local service
 - Woodbury via Newport continuing as local service
 - Mall of America via Newport to Hastings continuing as local service



Vision concept

Freeway express +local bus

- *Saint Paul via
Newport
continuing as local*
- *Woodbury via
Newport
continuing as local*
- *Mall of America to
Newport
continuing as local*
- *Eagan to Hastings
continuing as local*



Vision concept

Deviated fixed route

*Freeway expresses
+local bus*

III. Initial Recommendations

- Work with stakeholders (including Metro Transit, counties) to develop *expanded* and *new* transit options
 - Can use Service Concepts as guidance
 - Advocate for those options
 - Leverage new regional sales tax to *develop* and *implement* expanded and new options
 - Investigate creating a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) to fund and implement recommendations
-

III. Initial recommendations

Investigate creating a TMA or TMO

What is a Transportation Management Association/Transportation Management Organization?

- A locally controlled organization that helps manages the transportation needs of a district, community, or region. Helps people and organizations *use existing transportation resources and develop and implement new ones.*

Example work:

- Promote and inform people about options: how to use existing transit, where to park, etc.
- Support residents and employers in creating and running vanpools and carpools
- Organize members to advocate for new services
 - Develop specific service proposals
 - Support applications for funding
- TMO: Typically, a government organization
- TMA: Typically, independent non-profit organizations, controlled by members. Governments can be members.

Terms are not used consistently. Both exist in this region.

III. Initial recommendation: Investigate creating a TMA or TMO

TMO/TMA funding

Possible sources of funding

- Counties and/or cities
 - Federal grants administered through Metropolitan Council / Transportation Advisory Board “Regional Solicitation”
 - Employers and other stakeholders
 - Some TMOs seek state funding at the Legislature
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IV. Discussion and Next Steps

- Discussion and feedback on initial recommendations
- Feedback will be incorporated into a final report that will be presented to the RRCC for approval, after staff review, in early 2024.

Thank you

Will Schroer

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East Metro
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