I-35W Past, Present, and Future: METRO Orange Line

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Metro Transit: A Twin Cities tradition for nearly 150 years

- 1872: first horse-drawn streetcars
- 1920: 238 million rides
- 1931: 523 miles of streetcars
- 1954: buses fully replace streetcars
- 2004: Introduction of light rail
- 2016: First bus rapid transit line
- 146-year history marked by continuous evolution... and periodic reinvention
• FTA Small Starts BRT Project
• Construction underway, applying for full funding grant Q3 2018
• Service begins 2020
• 12 stations, 17 miles
• All-day, frequent station-to-station express service
• 14,000 avg. weekday rides on I-35W
• Serves 30,000 jobs outside of downtown Minneapolis
Today’s Presentation

- How we got there: The 50 Years before I-35W
- How we got here: The Past 50 Years of I-35W
- Where we’re headed: The Next 50 Years
  - I-35W partnership in Minneapolis
  - Integrating frequent transit in the suburbs: The Orange Line
The First 50 Years: Streetcars Enable Development

- Electric Streetcars introduced by 1890
- Rapid expansion fueled by real estate
- The original TOD

“...Development of 4th Avenue, south of 38th street, have been very slow because of the continued colored trend southerly and the fact that the street car runs ... through the heavily populated colored section.”

-HOLC Description of area later demolished for I-35W

- Redlining practices pre-determined opportunity to create and generate personal wealth

- 1950s highway land acquisition principles of economy, path of least resistance

1934 Home Owners Loan Corporation Map
The Past 50 Years: Building today’s highway

- Highway planning 1930s-50s
- Construction began 1959
- Open to downtown 1967
- Only partial access to/from I-35W
  - Cut off neighborhoods and businesses along Lake St
  - Cut off access to opportunity

- Gridlock occurred by 1969

- Start of 50 years of debate and discussion over expansion (and the alternatives)

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/06mar/07.cfm
The Past 50 Years: Transit Development

• 1971- First express bus service
• 1980s-1990s Study of corridor for LRT, freeway expansion and reconstruction. Later cancelled due to lack of funding
• 1990s- Repackaging of projects, incremental transit expansion
• 2005- Legislature funds study of 35W for BRT Improvements
• 2010- Urban Partnership Agreement sets stage for BRT
BRT built incrementally...over four decades

46th Street Station

HOT Lanes

Downtown bus lanes & stations
The Past 50 Years: Lake Street Bus Stop Access

Inaccessible station on I-35W at Lake Street
Preparing for the Next 50 Years

July 2018: Lake Street Station site earthwork underway

- Project Details
- Partnership
- Environmental Coordination
- Project Budget
- Construction Progress
35W@94 Partnership: Project Benefits

• Improved roadway- new pavement replaces 50-year old highway
• Additional access to Minneapolis
• New congestion-free travel option in/out of downtown Minneapolis with MnPASS Express lane, transit
• Online station for Orange Line BRT at Lake Street
• Direct transit ramp into downtown Minneapolis at 12th Street
Partnership: Orange Line and MnDOT’s 35W@94 Project

MnDOT’s 35W@94 Project
$239M
FHWA, MnDOT, Hennepin County, Minneapolis

Orange Line BRT
$150M FTA
and Metro Transit

Lake St Station + 12th St Ramp
Federal Partnership- Combining Environmental Processes

- Lake Street station included in county-prepared Environmental Assessment for broader highway project, for FHWA
  - FONSI received from FHWA in August 2016
- Metro Transit prepared Documented Categorical Exclusion for FTA
  - FHWA reviewed in April 2016 at request of FTA
  - FTA concurrence provided in December 2016
Partnerships: Orange Line Project Budget

- **Project Budget $150.7M**
  - ~$50M in MnDOT Project
  - $100M Other Orange Line Scope

- **Funding Partnership**
  - 49% FTA Small Starts (requested)
  - 6% Other Federal Transit Funding
  - 35% Local Funding from Hennepin County and Dakota County
  - 10% State of Minnesota

- **Local dedication, federal LONP allowed construction to begin**
The Next 50 Years - Lake Street Station

Existing Lake Street Level

Planned Lake Street Level

Existing Access

Planned Access
12th Street Ramp Access to Minneapolis CBD
Construction Now Underway!

http://www.dot.state.mn.us/35w94/webcam.html
35W@94: Construction Schedule

- Notice to Proceed 8/21/2017
- Heavy construction spring 2018 - 2021
- 5 overlapping stages
- Interstate access closed up to 4 years
- Full downtown access closure June-October 2018
- Complete Fall 2021
The Next 50 Years- Opening 2021
Disparate outcomes persist along racial and ethnic lines

The Twin Cities region has some of the nation’s biggest disparities

Suburban/rural poverty increased 92% from 2000 to 2013

Jobs continue to decentralize

Transportation and housing contribute to disparate outcomes
The Next 50 Years- Reversing automobile exclusivity

- Strong movement in Twin Cities suburbs to retrofit streets, increase safety of biking and walking
- Significant examples in the Orange Line corridor
  - Richfield
  - Bloomington
  - Burnsville
- Redevelopment opportunities continue pedestrian orientation
- Challenge: extending transit to larger walkable employment concentrations
The Next 50 Years - put transit where people want to be

Richfield

Bloomington

Burnsville
Considerations for Station Siting

• Population served
• Functional access
• Speed of bus
• Operations
• Connecting Service
Access vs. Speed

Existing Route 535 (BRT Precursor)

Planned BRT Route

Long-held BRT Vision

MORE ACCESS

FASTER SERVICE
Understanding suburban walksheds

- I-494 was not considered as a barrier in previous visioning process
- Ensure walk access is functional
Best Buy HQ Existing Conditions
The Next 50 Years - Orange Line at Best Buy HQ
The Next 50 Years- Partnerships Make it Possible

- Orange Line construction plans nearly shovel-ready
- Preparing for fall 2018 letting and 2019 construction start, pending full project funding
- Small Starts application submittal planned August 2018
- Construction 2019-2020, precedes larger MnDOT I-494 project 2020+
- Visit us to ride the Orange Line in 2021!
www.metrotransit.org/orangeline

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