

## Questions for NRLC

1. How was your survey distributed and what efforts did you take to hear from a diverse representation of Maplewood residents in regards to income, race, primary language, and disability status?

Our transportation card was distributed in a variety of ways. We held pop-ups on the Bruce Vento Trail to capture the same segment of the population that Ramsey County captured in their pop-ups on the Bruce Vento Trail. We went to numerous National Night Out events, we made arrangements with the building management of numerous high density housing units to have the transportation survey card in the lobby or mail room area with a drop box that we later picked up, we attended public events open to the general public. In total, we received responses from individuals living in 17 different high density housing complexes (179 individuals out of 321 respondents) as well as single family homes. We had survey tables available in front of local businesses to obtain responses from patrons of the establishment. Our goal was to distribute the transportation survey into environmentally neutral environments along the entirety of the corridor. The cards did not ask for information on race or primary language. We did ask where they worked or if they worked. We did ask if they were able or not able to go 3 blocks to a bus stop.

2. Were other components of the Green Step Cities program, such as mobility options to increase alternatives to single occupancy car travel, and local air quality/prevention of generation of local air contaminants considered? In 2022, Maplewood Green Step City program focused on reducing City population vehicle miles traveled per person per day and reduction in greenhouse gases city wide. Transit and BRT helps the city to achieve these goals.

Absolutely! Mobility options to increase alternatives to single occupancy car travel were researched and presented at our various outreach events as well as the presentation at the City Council workshop with the Purple Line BRT Advisory Committee members. Such mobility options include Arterial BRT; Metro Mobility; Transit Link; NewTrax; Local Connectors; Dedicated Connectors; Metro Micro Mobility; Mobility4all; and other innovative Post-Covid transit solutions such as autonomous dedicated transit services. Further, we provided alternative routes for the Purple Line and its routing – from the use of HWY 61 as a route that can support both a north and south bound dedicated guideways to the concept of having a north bound dedicated guideway on one street, such as White Bear Avenue, and a Southbound dedicated guideway on another street, such as Arcade, with connector transit connecting the two dedicated routes with east/west bound routes. This would serve a greater range of population, increase ridership and get riders closer to the services they desire such as grocery stores, schools, jobs etc.

Additionally, we presented information on the importance of maintaining the healthy, lush, mature tree canopy currently existing on the Bruce Vento Trail that has developed over the past twenty-five + years. As explained by the US Forest Service, “urban

forests are dynamic ecosystems that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits.” Two of our presenters, who are Master Naturalists, explained how we rely upon trees, especially the treed canopy of the Bruce Vento Trail, for storm-water retention, filtering toxins out of water before it reaches the water table, soil stabilization, clean air and carbon sequestration as well as providing essential habitat and travel corridors for wildlife and the endangered Rusty-Patched Bumblebee. Such a tree canopy should not be looked upon as expendable – but rather – a cost-saving, indispensable component of Maplewood’s infrastructure and system of greenway corridors as set forth under the City’s comprehensive plan. From an equity stand point, preserving the Bruce Vento Trail in its current natural splendor, to be enjoyed by all, provides environmental equity.

Maplewood should not be put in the position of elevating one environmental green step goal at the expense of another. Maplewood deserves good transit that meets the residents’ needs as well as maintain the status of being a community that has one of the top 10 trails in the State of Minnesota as an amenity to brag about. We deserve both and Maplewood can have both with our vision.

3. The survey that was presented on Tuesday night consisted of 321 respondents. As I recall, 111 of them were Maplewood residents. I would like to see Maplewood-only data from the survey in the same break down that was presented to the task force on Tuesday evening. In addition, I am also curious if demographic information was collected and if so, what the demographic composition was of respondents from Maplewood.

The Purple Line is part of a regional system. It is our understanding that Ramsey County nor the Metropolitan Council segregate their data and survey responses per community, but rather, treat the data as a composite relevant to the entire system. We believe it is important to follow their lead. While our transportation survey remains ongoing. The communities are currently represented as follows:

Gem Lake	1	Roseville	2
Hugo	5	St. Paul	12
Lexington	1	Vadnais Hts	14
Mahtomedi	1	WBLake	153
Maplewood	111	WBTownship	8
North Oaks	1	Woodbury	1
No St. Paul	1		

To date we are not aware that the agencies’ survey data from the various engagement sessions, conducted over the past 5+ years have been as specific as our transportation survey. Usage of the Purple Line is dependent upon whether people are willing or able to get to the transit stops, where the origin and destination of the potential rider is, and convenience. We included neutral, non-leading questions. See below.

**Transportation Usage & Preference in RUSH LINE CORRIDOR**  
 Sponsored by NRLC, PO Box 10514, WBL, MN 55110

(Check all that apply)

Age:  70+  56-70  36-55  18-35

Do you use a car for transportation?  Yes  No  Sometimes

Do you work in:

NA  St. Paul  Maplewood  White Bear Lake  Other

Would you walk 3 blocks to/from a bus stop?  Yes  No  Unable

To get to medical or other healthcare appointments, do you use:

Public bus?  Yes  No      Metro Mobility?  Yes  No

If cost was the same for you, which Transport would you prefer to use?

Bus service with handicap accessible bus stops  Yes  No

Curb to curb transport (Metro Mobility; Transit Link; New Trax)  Yes  No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**★ ★ ★ TRANSPORTATION SURVEY ★ ★ ★**

4. Tim mentioned that 6000 people have signed an online petition, 1500 signatures have been collected via a paper petition, and 100 businesses have demonstrated support of the petition. As with the survey, I'd like to know how many of the signatures are from Maplewood residents and how many businesses are Maplewood-based?

It is important to recognize that the Purple Line is part of a regional system that is larger than Maplewood. Individuals throughout the corridor have signed the petition regarding a regional project. Additionally, the Bruce Vento Trail is not just a Maplewood trail, it is one of the top 10 trails in the State of MN and is a regional amenity. However, with that said, in our canvassing of businesses, 12 businesses in Maplewood, along the BRT corridor between Larpenteur and Beam Ave, of the 19 canvassed, were not supportive of the project, 1 was for the project and 6 needed more information. While this number is less than the number of businesses north of Maplewood's border who were not supportive (82 businesses out of 85 canvassed), it is in great part because there is a lack of commercial businesses within a ½ mile of the current proposed Maplewood BRT route where it first enters Maplewood at Larpenteur Ave and goes north to Beam Ave down the Bruce Vento Trail. For those businesses we canvassed around Beam Ave or north of Beam Ave, they either were corporate chains that could express no opinion, did not know about the project or were medical institutions that could not express an opinion other than their patients do not take a bus to appointments.

On the paper petition we have a total of 2357 signatures, after duplicates are removed. Of those who signed the paper petition, 457 are from Maplewood. Our NRLC online Change.org petition started in 2020 by Kit Artig now states that a total of 2,052 people have signed that petition since it was started. We are still in the process of attempting to access the data base so we can provide Maplewood numbers. Additionally, during 2018 to 2019, a total of 4,500 people signed an online Change.org petition opposing

the "Rush Line." This online petition was started and managed by an attorney in White Bear Lake and he no longer has access to the data in that petition.

5. Can we get a copy of the Peter's presentation?  
Please see supplement provided.
6. I would ask again for the numbers they have collected for cars parking at the Maplewood Mall transit station. While I spoke to the gentlemen the other night at our meeting who said he was the one collecting the data, and he said he would send it to me, I have not received it.

### Maplewood Mall Ramp Occupancy

Year	Month	Ave. Cars/Mo.		Comments
2021	Sept.	35.6		
	Oct.	41.6		
	Nov.	39.7		
	Dec.	27.4		
2022	Jan.	23.1		
	Feb.	33.1		
	Mar.	45.3		Restrictions of COVID were reduced.
	Apr.	49.6		
	May	48.2		
	June	53.2		
	July	47.2		
	Aug.	48.6		
	Sept.	44		
	Oct.	46.4		
	Nov.	47.9		
	Dec.	39.4		

- \* Cars were counted daily, between 8-9 am, Mon. - Fri., no weekends.
- \* Maplewood transit station at Maplewood Mall has 1040 parking spaces.
- \* Prior to COVID, hundreds of cars were parked daily.

Compiled by Darwin Demeny of the No-Rush-Line-Coalition (NRLC).  
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7. The gentleman from the Center for The American Experiment presented the same data as Metro Transit did in the first session. Does No Rush Line coalition have any commentary on Metro Transit's plan to address crime?

We have a two part response. First, we offer our response as volunteers and members who live in our community along the Purple Line transit corridor. Second, we offer a response from our speaker.

**NRLC – committee members.**

Metro Transit has not been able to solve the crime issue on their transit systems. Until Metro Transit can report that the crime on their transit systems is equal to, or below, the crime rates of the national average for all similar U.S. transit systems, the Met Council and Metro Transit should not be implementing any further transit systems in the Twin Cities.

**Peter Nelson CAE.**

My presentation added important information and context to the data provided by Metro Transit. While Metro Transit does not dispute the federal data showing higher crime on Twin Cities transit versus transit agencies in other parts of the country, they did not provide information providing context for the data. Specifically, they did not explain how the data represent only the most serious crimes which involve victims who need medical attention. In addition, they discounted the data by saying other areas of the country are likely under reporting. Yet, this point failed to acknowledge the sharp rise in crime on Twin Cities transit regardless of what is happening elsewhere in the country. Finally, my presentation also added new information on the substantial rise in robberies and aggravated assaults over the past ten years. The Metro Transit presentation suggested the rise in crime was primarily due to drug- and homeless-related incidents versus serious crimes against people. That may be true for just comparing 2021 to 2022, but they ignored the longer term trend. Aggravated assaults reported by Metro Transit police spiked from 38 in 2016 to 172 in 2022.

With the rise in crime across the Twin Cities' transit system, I am hopeful that the newly launched Metro Transit Safety & Security Action Plan will succeed in making transit feel safer and more welcoming. The plan's strategy appropriately leads with actions to fully staff the police force without compromising standards for hiring. However, success will depend on keeping the safety of passengers the top priority and giving the police the backing they need to fully enforce the law.

I am not confident that Metro Transit can restore and sustain the level of safety necessary to make the Purple Line a comfortable experience for riders and the surrounding community. Certain information provided in the plan creates concerns that the Metro Transit leadership may still be distracted by political considerations which helped contribute to the rise in transit crime. The discussion on the development of the plan concludes by highlighting how "Metro Transit will continue to apply an equity lens to investments when advancing public safety work." The use of the term "equity" echoes

activist voices that call for defunding the police and reducing enforcement. These voices have influenced prosecutors, judges, politicians, and police leaders to under enforce crime which unfortunately has had the largest negative impact on minority communities. Data presented in the quarterly update to the action plan suggests these voices also influenced Metro Transit. Metric 3 shows regular fare checks on the Blue Line dropped from over 60,000 in October 2018 to under 30,000 in October 2019.

The fact that Metro Transit is transparently reporting this fare check data certainly sends a positive sign that their leadership recognizes the need to move back to a strong enforcement stance. By reporting this data, they are holding themselves accountable. Unfortunately, the appointed members of the Met Council are not directly accountable to the communities they serve. Therefore, I remain concerned that Metro Transit's commitment to public safety may still be undermined by other political commitments. Until there is some change to the governance structure of the Met Council, communities need to consider major expansions of mass transit like the Purple Line very carefully.

8. Your questions did not specify "Purple Line" but your event was at an event by what is clearly called "No Rush Line Coalition" on social media. Could this have affected the type of answers you received?

Are you asking about the transportation survey card? If so, the answer is "no," in that the transportation survey cards were distributed in many environmentally neutral locations (see question 1). Further, the survey cards themselves make no mention of the Rush Line or the Purple Line. Regarding our coalition's name, our association was named and formed prior to Ramsey County's hand-off of the Rush Line BRT Project to the Metropolitan Council and is filed with the Secretary of State. It was after the Ramsey County hand-off that the BRT route was assigned the name the "Purple Line." The project has been known by the name "Rush Line" in excess of 15 years and as the Purple Line since December 13, 2021.