# 7. STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

This chapter presents the Southwest Policy Advisory Committee's (PAC) recommendation regarding the future of rail transit in the Southwest Metro Area. In developing their recommendation, the Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) considered the Southwest Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) recommendation and comments from the public.

The Southwest PAC recommendation will be forwarded to the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) in late 2003 for their consideration.

## Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Recommendations

The Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), a group composed of elected officials or their representatives from Hennepin County, the study area cities, the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, Southwest Metro Transit, the Three Rivers Park District, and the Twin West and Eden Prairie Chambers of Commerce, provided policy direction to the study and developed the following recommendation for consideration by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA).

The Southwest PAC recommended that study continue on four light rail transit (LRT) alignment alternatives because they are the most likely to achieve the Southwest Transitway goals of improving mobility, providing a reliable travel choice, serving population and employment concentrations, providing for a seamless/integrated transit system, reasonable costs, enhancing the environment, enhancing the study area and region's quality of life, and promoting economic development and redevelopment.

The light rail transit (LRT) alternatives recommended for further study include:

***LRT 1A:*** LRT from Highway 312/5 to downtown Minneapolis via the HCRRA property & Kenilworth.

***LRT 2A:*** LRT from the Southwest Metro Station to downtown Minneapolis via I-494, the HCRRA property, & the Kenilworth Corridor.

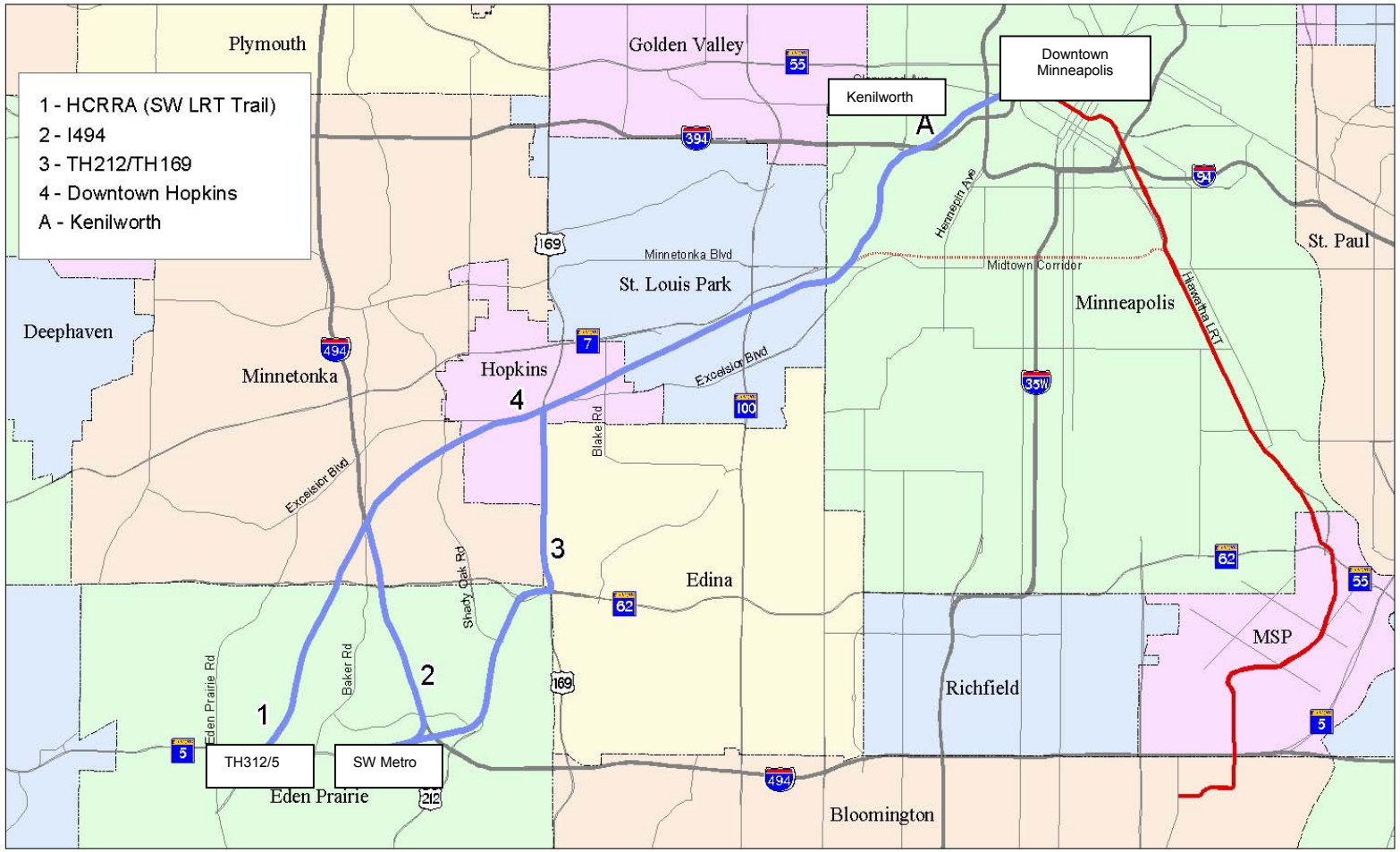
***LRT 4A:*** LRT from downtown Hopkins to downtown Minneapolis via the HCRRA property and the Kenilworth Corridor.

***LRT 3A(modified):*** LRT from the Southwest Metro Station to downtown Minneapolis *modified* via the Eden Prairie Center Mall, the Golden Triangle, Opus, downtown Hopkins, the HCRRA property, and the Kenilworth Corridor.

In addition, future studies should include an analysis of a rail transit connection along the Midtown Greenway Corridor, environmental impacts and mitigation measures, public involvement, and retention of the trails.

The Southwest PAC also recommended that study not be continued for the Diesel multiple unit (DMU) technology (DMU 5) and for Light rail transit (LRT) options on Lyndale Avenue (LRT 1B, LRT 2B, LRT 3B, and LRT 4B).

## Figure 7.1 Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Recommendation



The Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) concurred with the Southwest Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) rationale for recommending that study be discontinued for the Diesel multiple unit (DMU) technology, discontinued for light rail transit (LRT) on Lyndale Avenue, and that alternative 3A be modified.

## Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Technology

The diesel multiple unit (DMU) technology was included in the Southwest Rail Transit Study to determine if it is a lower cost alternative that could more easily be implemented than light rail transit (LRT). Based upon the analysis conducted for this study, the Southwest TAC determined and the Southwest PAC concurred that the Aero DMU technology would not result in significantly lower cost alternative and would not necessarily be easier to implement than LRT.
While the DMU capital costs were estimated to be approximately 10 percent less than LRT these cost savings are quickly eroded due to the higher operating and maintenance costs for the DMU technology. The higher operating and maintenance costs are due to higher costs, $1 to $2 million/year, for general operations and maintenance as well as the annual lease payment, estimated to range from $1 million to $7.5 million per year, to the private freight rail companies. In order to implement a DMU system an additional track must be constructed and a lease agreement must be negotiated with the Canadian Pacific, Twin City & Western, and Burlington Northern & Santa Fe freight rail companies.

Other issues with the DMU technology included the lack of a seamless connection to downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, the Airport, the Mall of America, and downtown St. Paul; the fact that the Aero DMU is a prototype and not currently in operation; and the potential noise, vibration, and emissions impact of the DMU vehicle.

## Lyndale Avenue Light Rail Transit (LRT) Alternatives

The Southwest PAC rationale for excluding the Lyndale Avenue LRT alternatives (i.e., LRT 1B, LRT 2B, LRT 3B, and LRT 4B) included traffic, business, visual/aesthetic, and cost impacts.
In terms of traffic impacts, a median running Lyndale Avenue LRT line will mean the elimination of the center two lanes of traffic on Lyndale Avenue. In addition, the Bryant and Aldrich bridges over the Midtown Greenway Corridor would be removed in order to allow the light rail vehicles sufficient space to accomplish the grade change that exists between the Midtown Greenway Corridor and Lyndale Avenue.

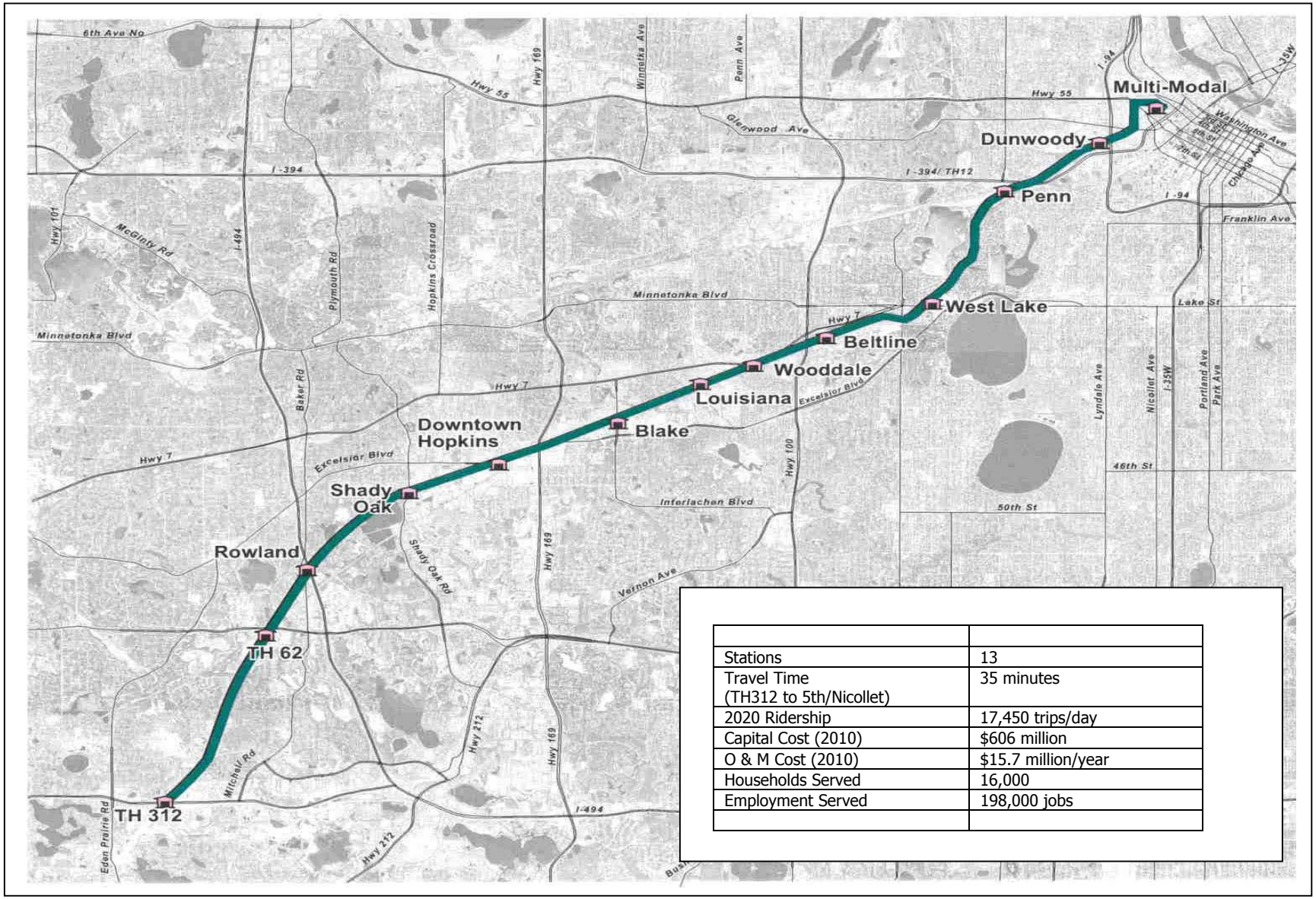
In terms of business impacts, the 300 on-street parking spaces on Lyndale Avenue would be removed and consolidated into one to two parking structures along Lyndale Avenue. In addition, due to the required structure for the LRT to climb over the Hennepin/Lyndale Avenue exit ramps from I-94 there will be access restrictions to Lyndale Avenue businesses in the vicinity of Franklin Avenue.

In terms of visual/aesthetic impacts, an LRT structure would be required from south of Franklin Avenue to the Basilica. This structure would be elevated to carry the LRT over the Hennepin/Lyndale Avenue exit ramps from I-94 and the Harriet Irene Huxley pedestrian bridge between Loring Park and the Walker Sculpture Gardens.
In terms of capital costs, the Lyndale Avenue LRT option is estimated to cost approximately $100 million more than the Kenilworth option.

## Modified 3A: LRT from Southwest Metro to downtown Minneapolis

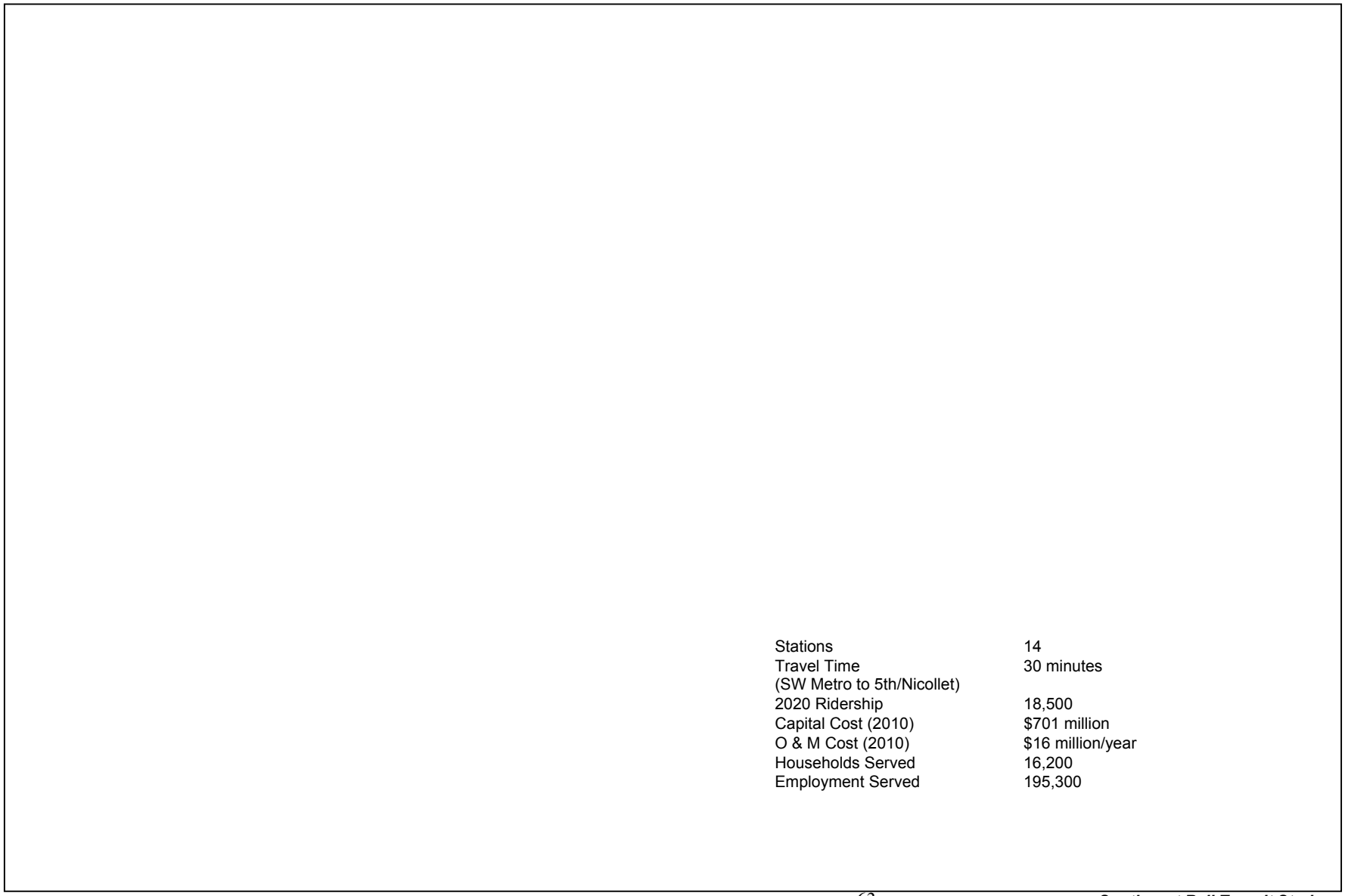
The Southwest PAC recommended that additional study be conducted to reroute LRT 3A in order to better serve employment generators including the Eden Prairie Center Mall, the Golden Triangle, Opus, and downtown Hopkins. The current 3A alignment does not provide direct service to these employment sites because it remains within the existing Highway 169 and 212 rights-of-way. Once a revised alignment is developed, new ridership forecasts and cost estimates should be conducted. The modified 3A alternative should be included in future study phases for a Southwest Transitway.

**Figure 7.2 LRT 1A: TH312 to downtown Minneapolis via the HCRRA property and the Kenilworth Corridor**



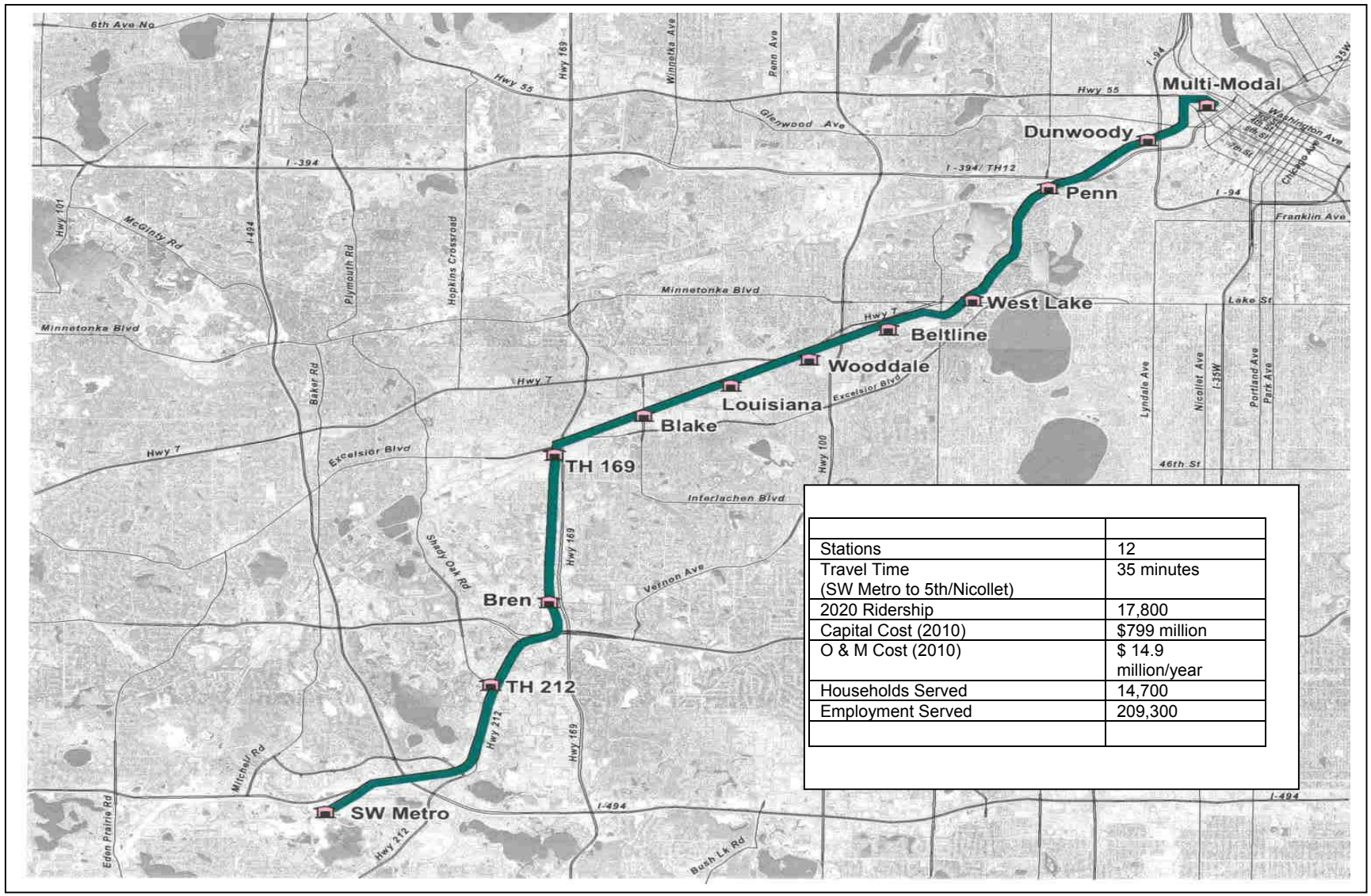

| | |
|---|---|
| Stations | 13 |
| Travel Time (TH312 to 5th/Nicollet) | 35 minutes |
| 2020 Ridership | 17,450 trips/day |
| Capital Cost (2010) | $606 million |
| O & M Cost (2010) | $15.7 million/year |
| Households Served | 16,000 |
| Employment Served | 198,000 jobs |
| | |

**Figure 7.3 LRT 2A: SW Metro to downtown Minneapolis via I-494, HCRRA property & Kenilworth Corridor**



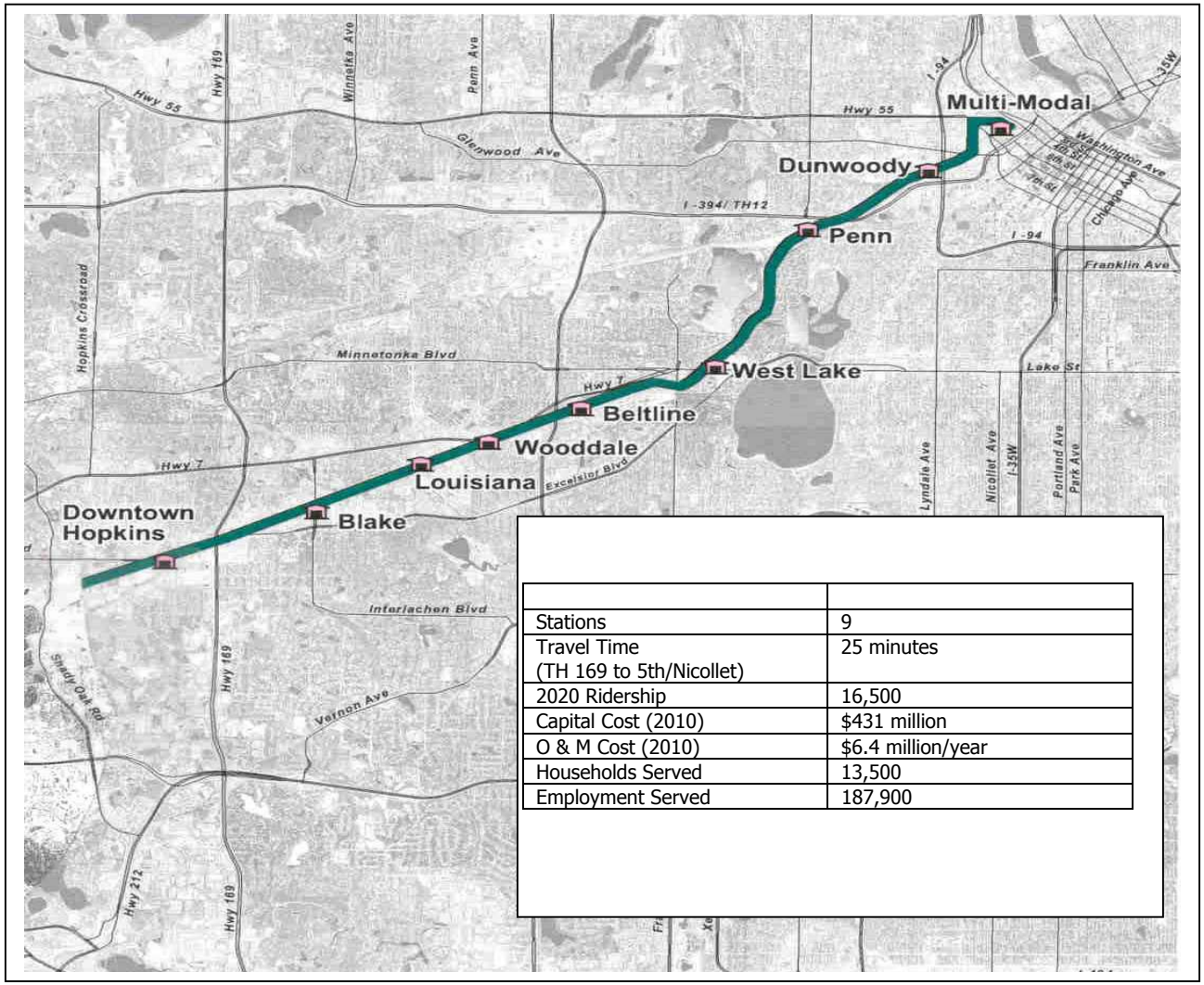
| | |
|---|---|
| Stations | 14 |
| Travel Time (SW Metro to 5th/Nicollet) | 30 minutes |
| 2020 Ridership | 18,500 |
| Capital Cost (2010) | $701 million |
| O & M Cost (2010) | $16 million/year |
| Households Served | 16,200 |
| Employment Served | 195,300 |

**Figure 7.4 LRT 3A: SW Metro to downtown Minneapolis via Eden Prairie Center Mall, the Golden Triangle, Opus, downtown Hopkins, HCRRA property & Kenilworth Corridor**




| | |
|---|---|
| Stations | 12 |
| Travel Time (SW Metro to 5th/Nicollet) | 35 minutes |
| 2020 Ridership | 17,800 |
| Capital Cost (2010) | $799 million |
| O & M Cost (2010) | $ 14.9 million/year |
| Households Served | 14,700 |
| Employment Served | 209,300 |
| | |

**Figure 7.5 LRT 4A: downtown Hopkins to downtown Minneapolis via HCRRA property & Kenilworth Corridor**




| | |
|---|---|
| Stations | 9 |
| Travel Time (TH 169 to 5th/Nicollet) | 25 minutes |
| 2020 Ridership | 16,500 |
| Capital Cost (2010) | $431 million |
| O & M Cost (2010) | $6.4 million/year |
| Households Served | 13,500 |
| Employment Served | 187,900 |