

Office of the Legislative Auditor
Southwest Light Rail Transit: Project Budget and Timeline

OLA Office of the Legislative Auditor
State of Minnesota



Southwest Light Rail Transit: Project Budget and Timeline

September 8, 2022

Overview

- Background
- Key drivers of cost increases and project delays

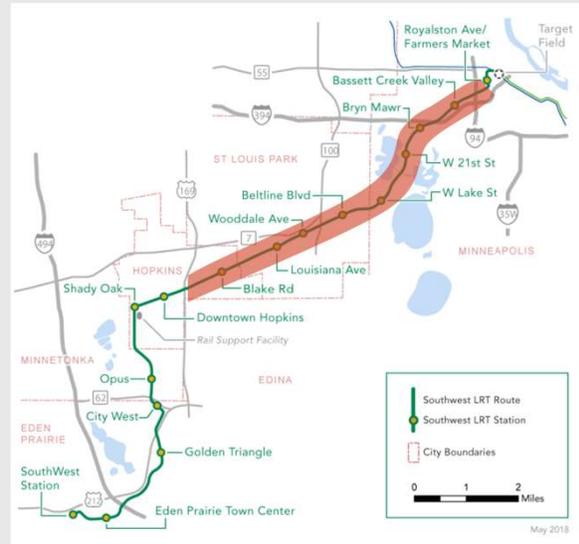
OLA

2

Office of the Legislative Auditor
Southwest Light Rail Transit: Project Budget and Timeline

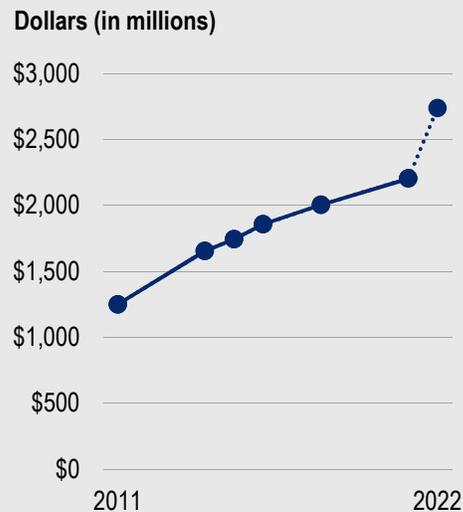
Background

- Will connect Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie
- Metropolitan Council is responsible for overseeing the project
- Key drivers are related to the proximity to existing freight rail lines



Project Cost

- 2011: \$1.25 billion
- 2022: \$2.74 billion (estimate)



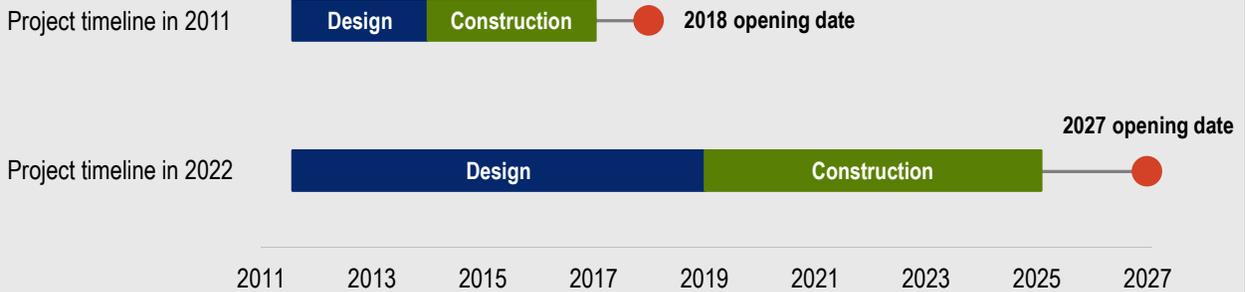
Office of the Legislative Auditor
Southwest Light Rail Transit: Project Budget and Timeline

Funding Sources

Dollars (in millions)



Delays



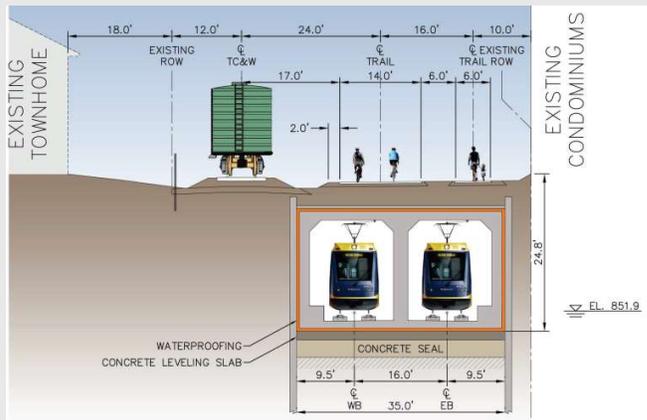
Key Drivers of Cost Increases and Project Delays

- Uncertainty about the final location of freight rail
- The light rail tunnel in Minneapolis's Kenilworth Corridor
- The concrete barrier wall between freight rail and light rail traffic

Key Driver #1: Final Location of Freight Rail

- Prior to 2011, the Southwest LRT project's scope did not include planned freight rail relocation
- In 2014, the Metropolitan Council decided to colocate freight rail and light rail in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park
- The time to get to this decision added years to the project's schedule

Key Driver #2: Kenilworth Tunnel



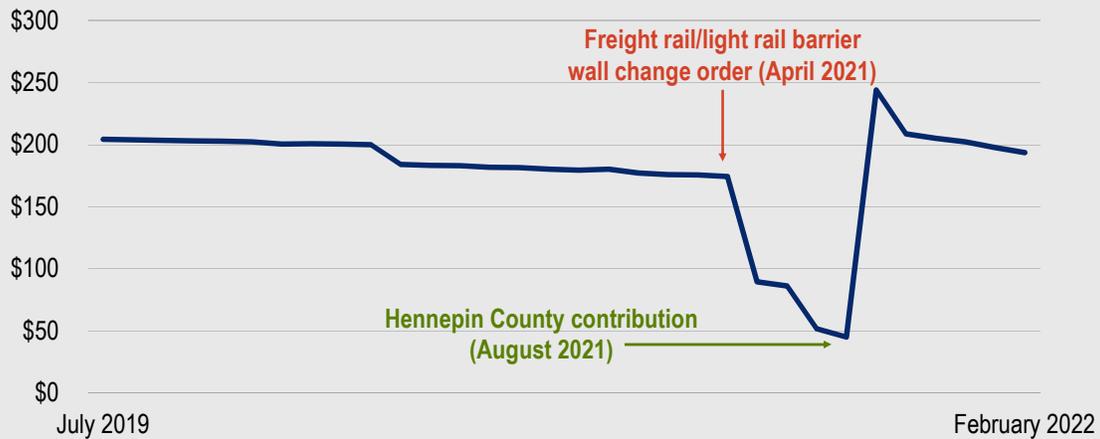
- September 2021: new construction method
- \$30 million change
- Required different crews, equipment, and construction plan

Key Driver #3: Concrete Barrier Wall

- Negotiations with BNSF resulted in the extension of a concrete barrier wall
- April 2021: \$83 million change

Key Driver #3: Concrete Barrier Wall

Contingency Funds (in millions)



Key Driver #3: Concrete Barrier Wall

- The change was expected when the Council opened the civil construction contract for bids
- OLA's program evaluation plans to examine this change and others further

Office of the Legislative Auditor
Southwest Light Rail Transit: Project Budget and Timeline

Southwest Light Rail Transit: Project Budget and Timeline
<https://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/>