



## 3.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

### 3.1 Introduction

Communities in the Rush Line Corridor are experiencing increasing transportation-related problems and needs. Roadway users are experiencing worsening levels of service with only limited transportation alternatives to driving private vehicles. Large increases in traffic volumes are expected on all portions of the I-35/I-35E corridor, and operational conditions are degraded by the large number of trucks and recreational vehicles. Furthermore, the level of congestion is expected to spread both geographically and throughout the day. No major highway capacity expansions are currently planned by Mn/DOT by 2030; and the ability to expand transit services is hindered by Chisago and Pine Counties being outside of the seven county metro areas that includes the Regional Transit Capital Communities.

Local and regional authorities in the Rush Line Corridor recognize the need to develop transportation alternatives to mitigate increasing congestion and maintain mobility in response existing and forecasted growth. Transit improvements offer an opportunity to enhance mobility, foster economic development, and encourage transit supportive land uses. The complete statement of the project's "Purpose and Need" is included as **Appendix E** of this report.

Transportation needs in the Corridor are related to population and employment increases in Pine, Chisago, Anoka, Washington and Ramsey Counties. Total Corridor population is expected to increase by 43 percent between 2000 and 2030, an increase of over 158,000 people with Chisago County's population expected to nearly double, to 71,000, over the thirty-year period. In addition to the expansion of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, significant concentrations of growth are occurring in Chisago County including North Branch and the Chisago Lakes area. Study Area population growth by county is shown in **Table 3-1**.

#### *Rush Line Corridor Purpose and Need Statements:*

- *Limited Transit Linkages*
- *Unresolved Corridor Safety Issues*
- *Decreased Mobility Hindering Economic Development*
- *Vulnerable Environmental and Community Resources*

**Table 3-1: Forecasted Study Area Growth: 2000-2030**

Study Area By County <sup>1</sup>	2000	2030	Net Change	% Change
Anoka	28,618	46,080	17,462	61%
Chisago	37,350	71,340	33,990	91%
Isanti	2,470	3,024	554	22%
Pine	17,789	25,312	7,523	42%
Ramsey	253,244	297,729	44,485	18%
Washington	24,399	78,440	54,041	221%
TOTAL	365,870	523,955	158,055	43%

Sources: Metropolitan Council, U.S. Census Bureau, MN State Demographic Center

Downtown St. Paul is the largest concentration of existing employment in the Corridor, followed by industrial districts across the northern Ramsey County suburbs. Employment in greater downtown St. Paul was nearly 70,000 in 2000 and is expected to increase to over 91,000 by the year 2030. Forecasted employment growth by county is shown in **Table 3-2**.

**Table 3-2: Forecasted Study Area Job Growth: 2000-2030**

Study Area By County <sup>1</sup>	2000	2030	Net Change	% Change
Anoka	3,695	5,380	1,685	46%
Chisago	9,359	19,070	9,711	104%
Isanti	232	317	85	37%
Pine	4,685	5,876	1,191	25%
Ramsey	158,470	215,294	56,824	36%
Washington	11,713	18,392	6,679	57%
TOTAL	188,154	260,634	76,175	40%

Sources: Metropolitan Council; Chisago County Transportation Plan; DEED Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Large portions of Corridor roadways suffer from mobility issues. Interstate 35E and US Highway 61 already experience congestion; a number of interchanges are experiencing capacity constraints; and congested periods are becoming longer. Conditions in the Corridor are also exacerbated by seasonal and weekend recreational traffic. These conditions are expected to worsen as the total population increases. This reflects a trend toward an intensification and northward expansion of population. **Table 3-3** lists and **Figure 3-1** shows existing congested Corridor roadway segments.

<sup>1</sup> Study Area data includes geographic units that, in general, fall within the Study Area. Population for the Ramsey County portion of the Study Area includes data from Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) that fall within the Study Area, not all of St. Paul. Additionally, forecasts for Ramsey County are not directly comparable to those of the previous Rush Line Corridor Transit Study because of differences in the geographic extent of the data.

**Table 3-3: Congested Rush Line Corridor Roadway Segments**

Roadway	From To	City	Lanes	Volumes	LOS
I-35E	Downtown St. Paul I-694	St. Paul / Little Canada / Maplewood	6	120,000 - 148,000	F
I-35E	CR E TH 96	Vadnais Heights / White Bear Lake	4	77,000	F
TH 36	Rice St. US 61	Roseville / Little Canada / Maplewood	4	68,000 - 83,000	F
TH 36	US 61 White Bear Ave.	Maplewood	4	57,000 - 59,000	E
I-694	Victoria St. White Bear Ave.	Shoreview / Little Canada / Vadnais Heights / White Bear Lake	4	79,000 - 103,000	F
US 61	Buffalo St. CR J	White Bear Twp.	2	15,200	E
US 61	Broadway Ave North Shore Dr.	Forest Lake	2	18,500	F
TH 97	I-35 Harrow Ave.	Columbus / Forest Lake	2	15,500 - 17,000	F
US 8	Greenway Ave. West of CR 9	Wyoming Twp. / Chicago City / Lindstrom	2	15,600 - 19,900	F
US 8	West of CR 9 CR 9	Center City	2	15,100	E
CR 22	I-35 US 61	Wyoming	2	13,800	E
CR 96	Centerville Rd. White Bear Pkwy	White Bear Lake	4	31,000 - 36,000	F

Source: Mn/DOT

### 3.2 Summary of Transportation Needs

Corridor transportation needs can be summarized as:

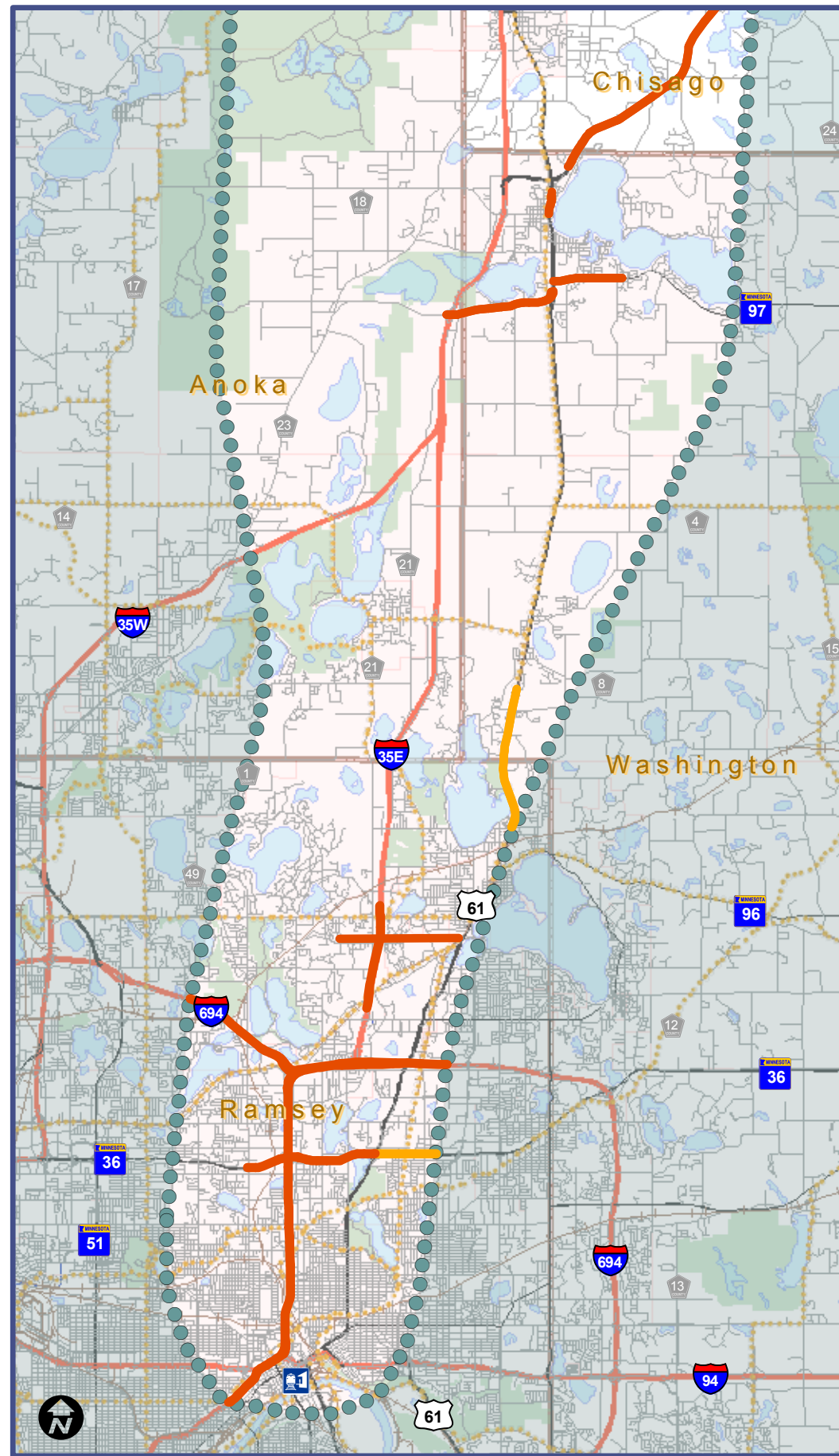
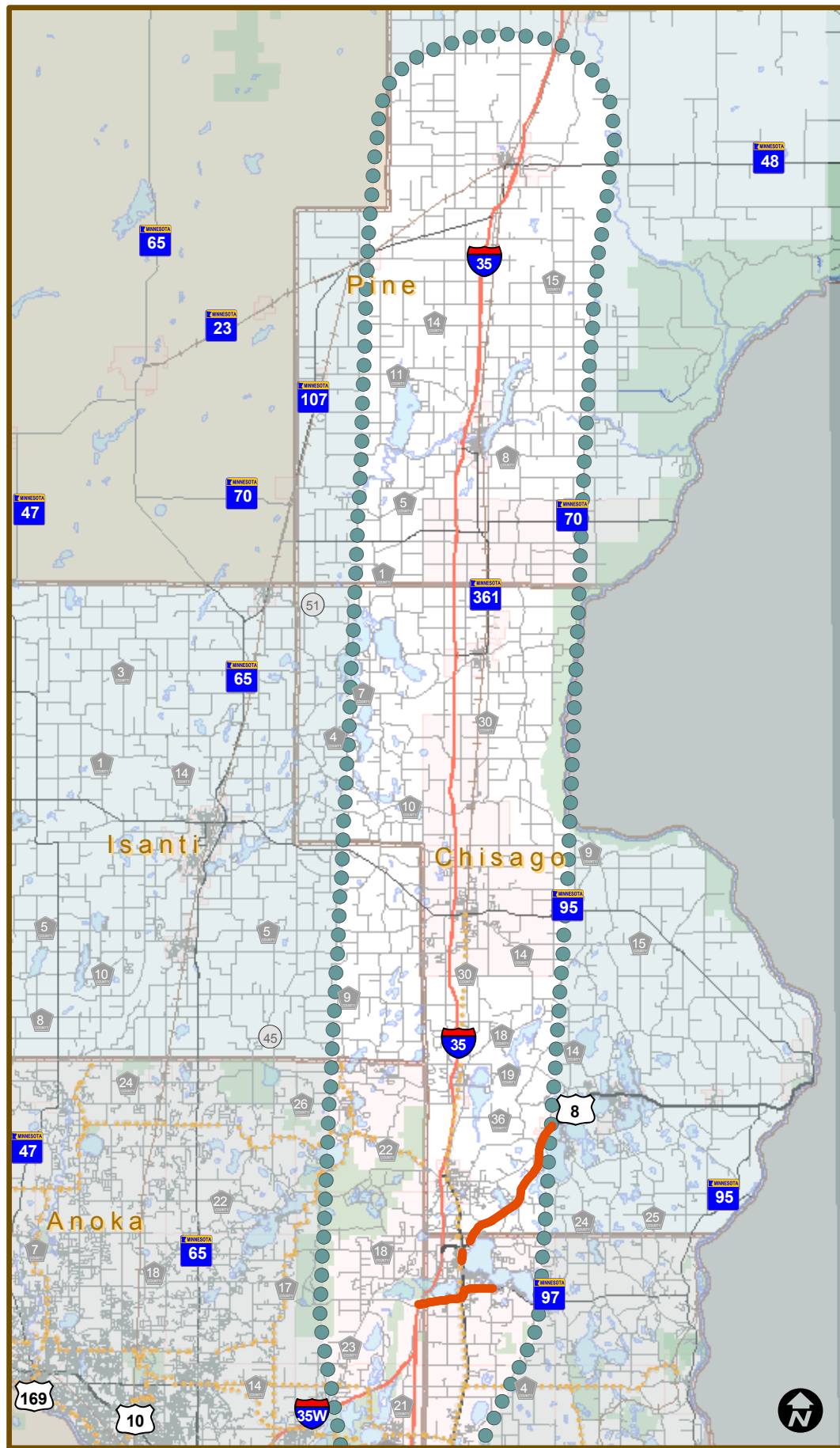
*Limited Transit System Linkages:* The Rush Line Corridor and adjoining areas include a range of transportation options, but they serve different areas and needs. They include frequent all-day local bus service in the urban area, express buses and park-and-ride lots in suburban areas, and dial-a-ride services offered by human services providers in rural areas.

*Unresolved Corridor Safety Issues:* The Rush Line Corridor and connecting corridors such as TH 8 experience safety problems associated with congestion, a mix of vehicle types with different operating conditions, and access management/spacing.

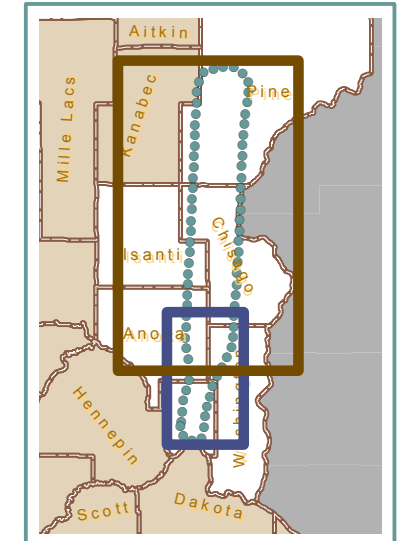
*Decreased Mobility Hindering Economic Development:* The Rush Line Corridor and adjoining areas are experiencing significant suburban and exurban residential growth as well as associated traffic congestion that leads to lost productivity as workers and goods in transit are stalled on Corridor transportation system.

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*Vulnerable Environment Quality and Community Character:* The Rush Line Corridor and vicinity include a number of major natural areas such as the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area and the Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park. These resources are complemented by numerous parks and lakes as well as forests and grassland in the undeveloped portions of the Corridor. Developed portions of the Corridor include examples of urban, suburban and rural character.



Key Map



Legend

Level of Service

- F
- E
- Study Area
- ⋯ Trail
- +— Railroad
- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Roadway
- Lake, River
- Park and Open Space
- Municipality
- County

Figure 3-1  
**Congested Roadway Segments  
in the Rush Line Corridor**

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