

Rochester-Twin Cities Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan and Tier 1 EIS



ROCOG Update

January 17, 2014



Introductions

Study Sponsors

Olmsted County Regional Rail Authority
Minnesota Department of Transportation

- Chuck Michael, OCRRA / Project Manager



Purpose of Today's Review

- Update ROCOG on where OCRRA/MNDOT are in Study Process
 - Review purpose & elements of study
 - Review work that has occurred to date
 - Head's up on what will be coming up
- Opportunity for feedback on any aspect of study



STUDY BACKGROUND



How did we get here?

History of HSR Studies



*Network
Planning*

- 1991: Tri-State High-Speed Rail Study
- 2000: Tri-State II High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study
- 2003: Rochester Rail Link Feasibility Study
- 2009: Tri-State III High-Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment
- 2010: Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Rail Plan

*Study
Agreement*

- 2011: Zip Rail Project Initiated
- 2012: MnDOT Grant Agreement Approved
- 2012: FRA sanctions project to move ahead

*Study
Initiation*

- 2012: Initiate Tier 1 EIS and Service Development Plan

Project Context

Rationale

- Regional in Nature
- Nature of Trips
 - 100 miles too short to fly
 - Long Enough to consider alternative mode
- Major Ridership Anchors exist
 - Metro Area; Mayo Clinic

Framing Principles

- Facility Development
 - Maximizing existing rail and public rights-of-way
 - Significant Private Sector Capital Participation
- Service Operation
 - Capturing 1st Time Riders
 - Developing repeat business
 - Meeting passenger expectations
 - Avoiding operating subsidy



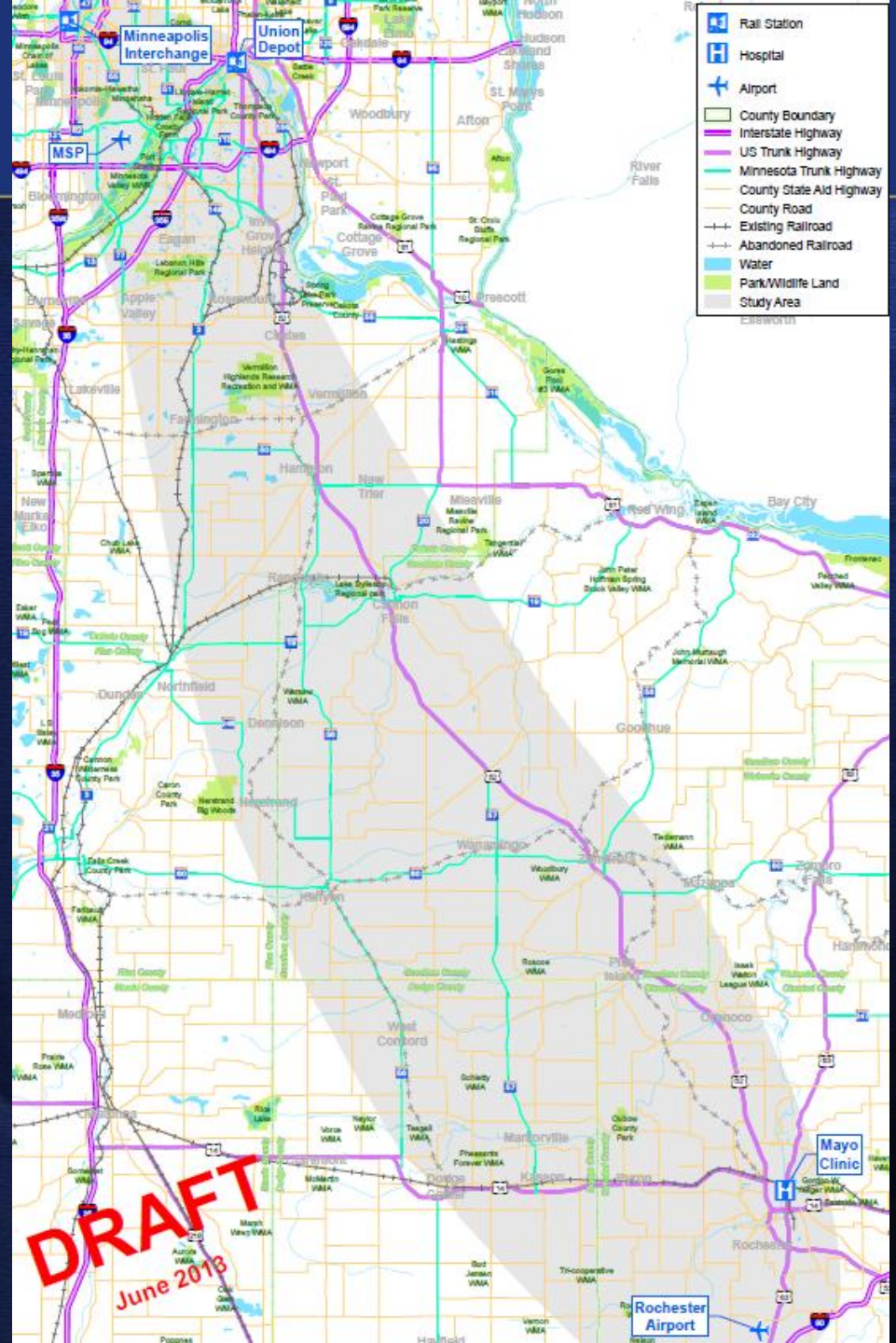
Implementation Vision

- Phased Development
 - Phase 1 can stand alone
- Evolve track capacity
 - Start with single track including sidings
 - Evolve to track capacity as demand develops
- Increase Speeds
- Expand Service Options



Study Area

- **Twin Cities**
 - Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport
 - St. Paul Union Depot
 - Target Field Station
- **Rochester**
 - Downtown Rochester
 - Rochester International Airport
- **Intermediate station(s) ?**
- **Include consideration of major transportation corridors**
 - TH 52
 - N/S Rail Corridors



ZipRail Development Process

Stage 1

- Rail Service Concept Planning
- Preliminary Route Development/Evaluation
- Tier 1 EIS (*federal environmental document*)
- Service Development Plan

Complete
Fall
2014

Work Guided by Technical Advisory Committee

Stage 2

- Tier 2 Final EIS (*federal environmental document*)
- Preliminary Engineering
- Station Development Planning

? Start ?
Funding needed
~48 months

Stage 3

- Final Funding Agreements
- Final Design Work
- Right of Way / Corridor sharing Agreements
- Construction

Unknown



Funding



Funding for Stage 1 Planning

- \$2,000,000 MnDOT - 2009 Bonding Bill
- \$400,000 Olmsted County
- \$500,000 Non-Governmental Funds
- Current Work Completion: Fall 2014
 - *Alternatives Analysis*
 - *Tier 1 EIS*
 - *Service Development Plan*

Note:
Destination Medical Center (DMC) funding does not include any funding for Zip Rail development

Future Funding Request for Stage 2

- \$15,000,000
 - *Tier 2 Final EIS*
 - *Preliminary Engineering*
 - *Station Development Planning*
- Federal Funding Follows State Commitment



Technical Advisory Committee



- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Metropolitan Council
- Metropolitan Airports Commission
- Rochester International Airport
- Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Dakota County
- Dodge County
- Goodhue County
- Hennepin County
- Olmsted County
- Ramsey County
- Rice County
- City of Rochester

- *Additional Cities will be added as route studies proceed*
- *Additional Agencies will be added during Tier 1 EIS Scoping*



Review of Work to Date

STAGE 1



Stage 1 Process

Steps

- Rail Service Concept Development (underway)
 - *Leads to EIS Scoping Document*
- Prepare Environmental Document
 - *Leads to Tier 1 EIS*
- Prepare Final Service Development Plan
 - *Leads to Business Plan for Rail Service*

Rail Service Concept Planning

- Purpose & Need
- Alternatives Development
- Alternatives Evaluation
- Capital/Operating \$\$
- Service/Operating Plan
- Ridership and Benefits
- Land Use Impacts
- Implementation Plan



Purpose & Need

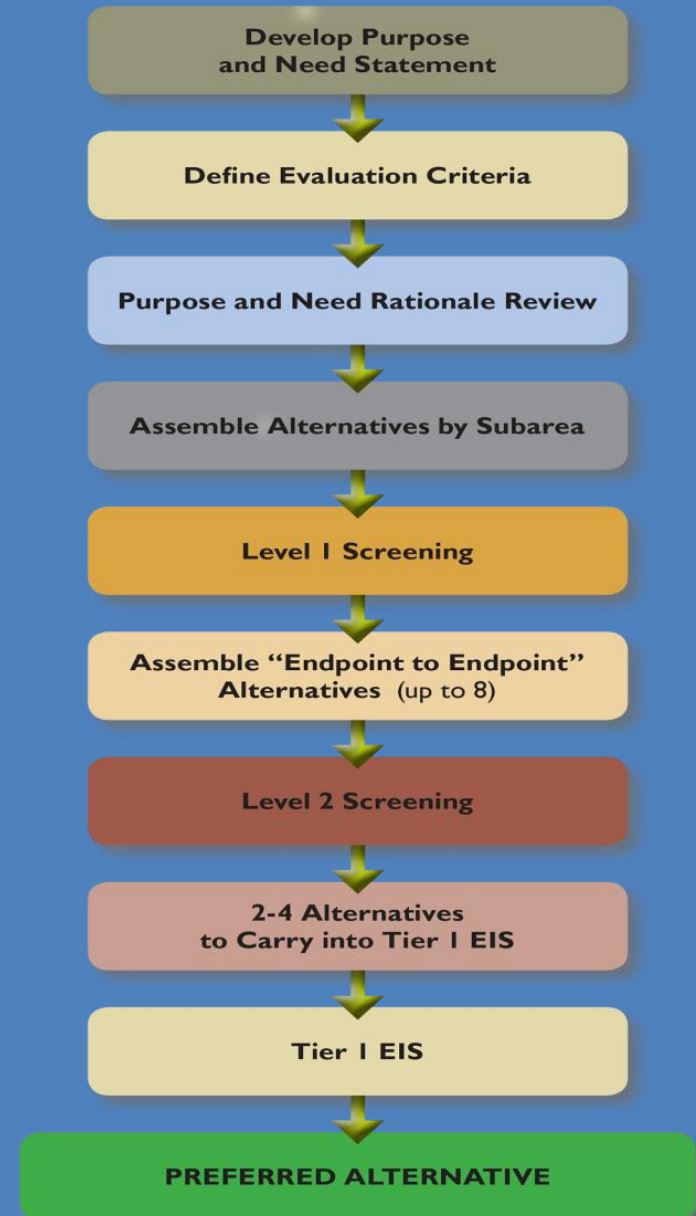
P&N guides all alternatives evaluation efforts

- Purpose:
 - Provide intercity passenger rail service linking the regional economic center of Rochester and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area economic hub
 - Provide travel options for the growing population and accessibility to population centers
 - Improve safety, convenience and time of travel
 - Compliment the plans of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
- Need:
 - Increase in population and employment in Rochester, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and Southeast Minnesota
 - Future travel demand due to growth in economic generators and destinations such as the Mayo Clinic, and the University of Minnesota as well as services and industries that will support those facilities
 - Limited existing direct and convenient connection opportunities for the corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities



Alternatives Evaluation

- Level 1 Screening
 - *TAC Recommendations*
- Level 2 Screening
 - *Underway*
- EIS Scoping Document
 - *Final Alternative(s) for EIS*
- Tier 1 EIS



Considerations in Alternatives Development



Alternatives - Stations

- **Twin Cities**
 - Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport
 - St. Paul Union Depot
 - Target Field Station
- **Rochester**
 - Downtown Rochester
 - Rochester International Airport
- **Intermediate station(s) ?**

Alternatives – Service Options

- Convenience is the key
- Design schedules for no wait transfers
- Cross platform transfers where possible
- Coordinate ticketing
- Design infrastructure to support schedule

Alternatives - Technologies

Conventional

- 90 to 110 MPH
- Shared Track
- Off-the-shelf
- Diesel Fuel



Super Interurban

- 110 to 125 MPH Diesel
- 140 MPH Electric
- Dedicated track
- Worldwide use



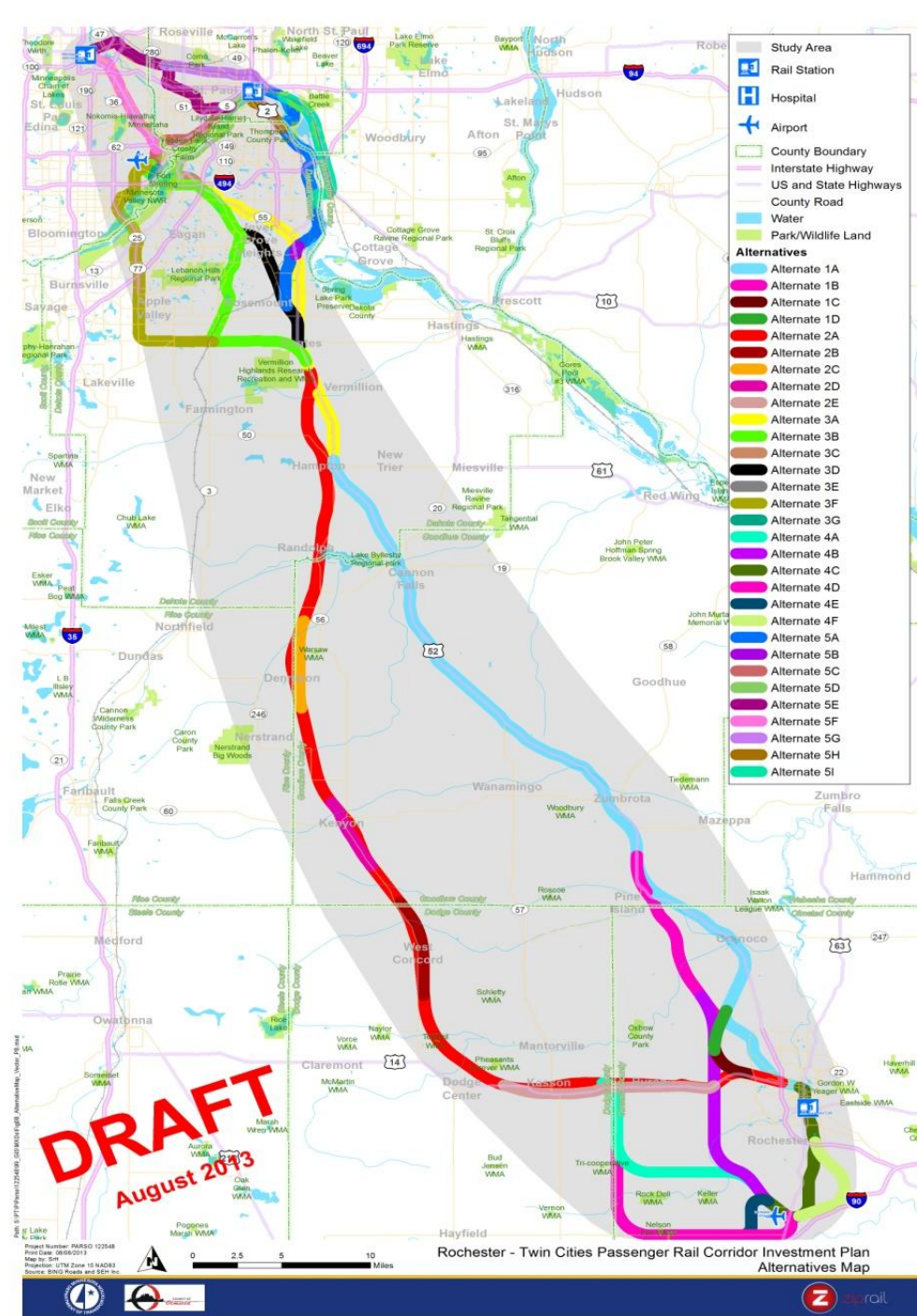
Euro-Asian HSR

- Up to 220 MPH
- Electric
- Dedicated track
- Sealed Corridor



Considerations in Alternatives Development

- Potential Paths on the Ground
- 1100 possible permutations



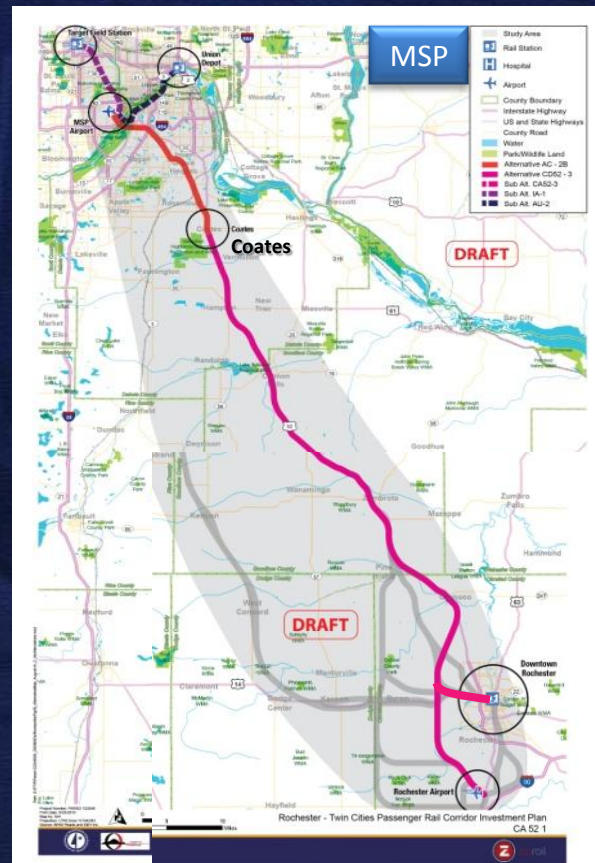
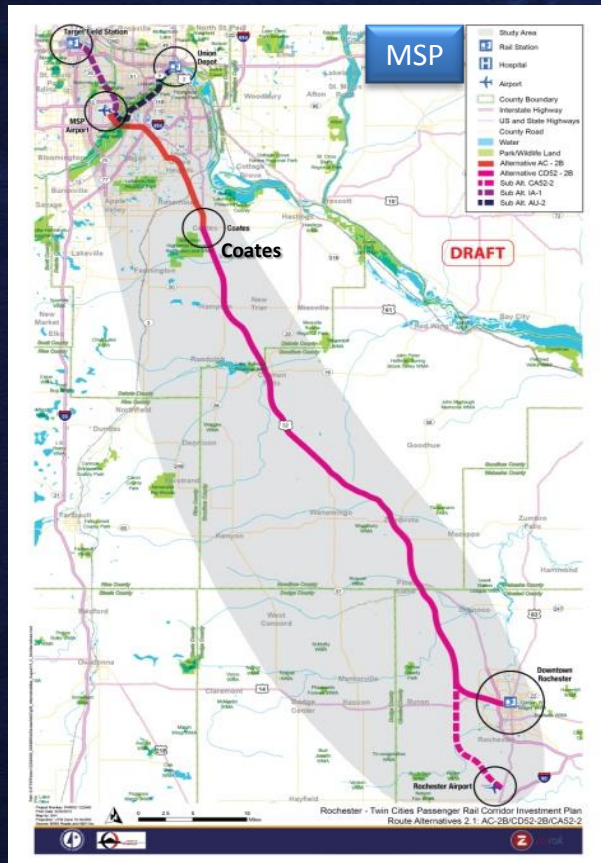
Level 1 Refinement

- Identify up to 8 “End to End” Alternatives from 1100+ possible options
 - Redundancy
 - Preliminary Travel Time
 - Impacts to Natural Environment
 - Impacts to Built Environment
 - Satisfy Purpose and Need



End to End Alternatives / TAC Review

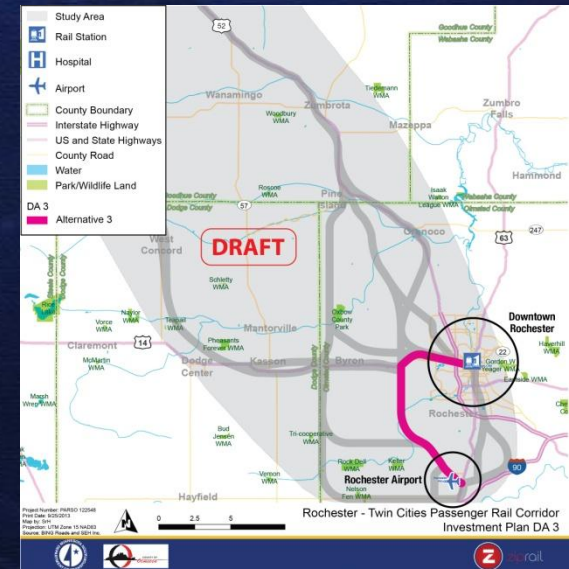
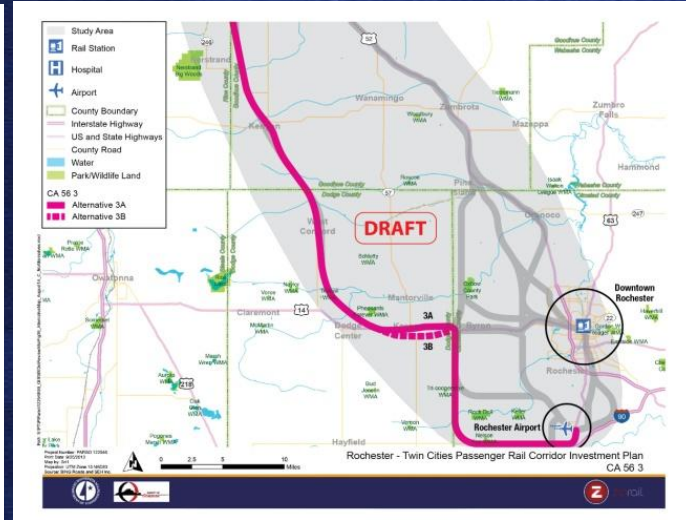
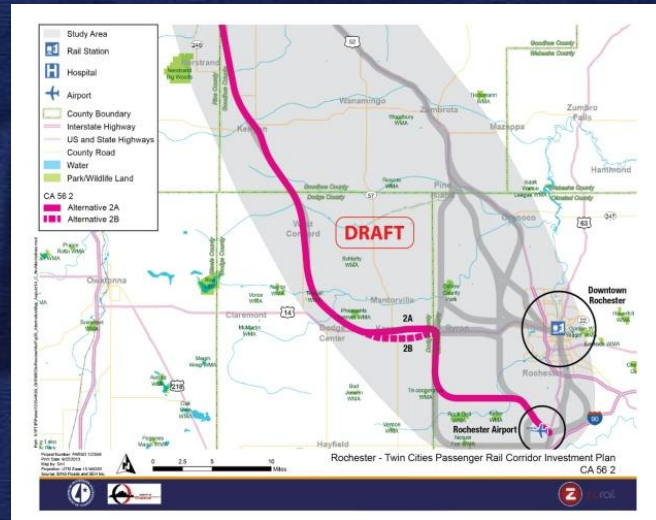
MSP or Union Depot to Downtown Rochester (with some possible RST option shown)



Additional RST Options

Highway 56 Route

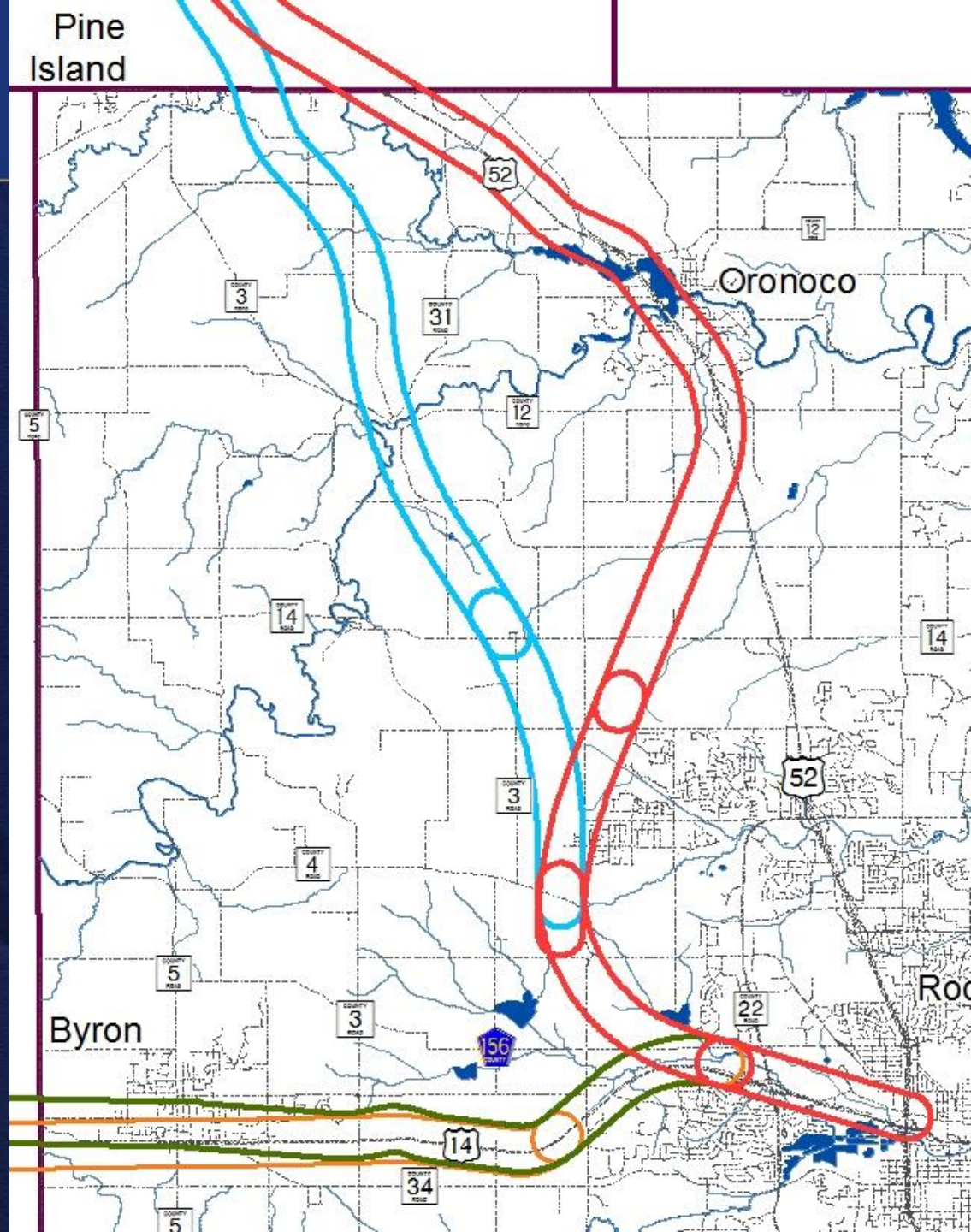
All Routes



Olmsted County Area

Level 1 Corridor Concepts

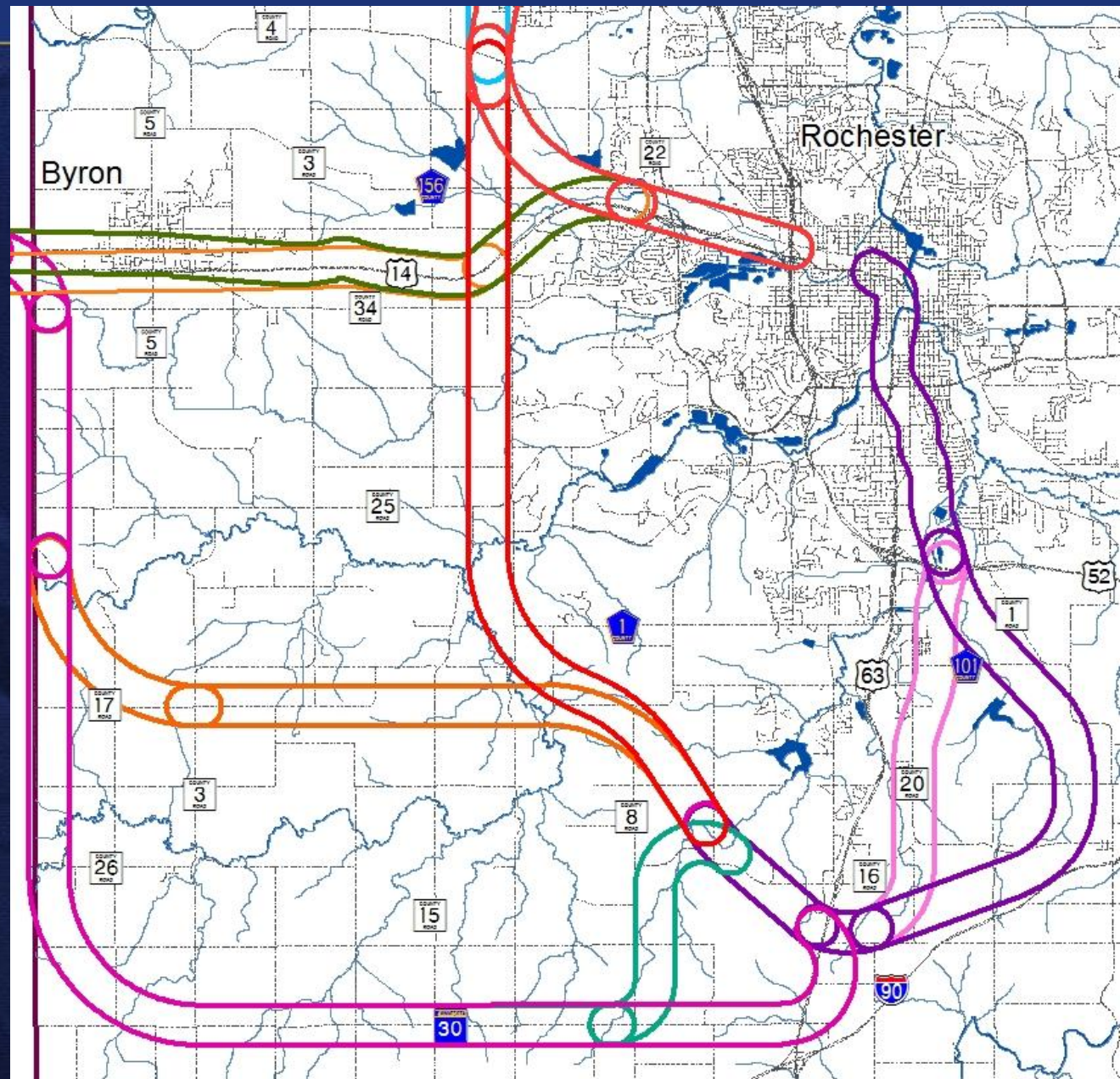
Downtown Station



Olmsted County Area

Level 1 Corridor Concepts

Airport Station



Next Steps

Two more series of Public Meetings

Spring 2014: EIS Scoping Document

- *Will document early rail service planning findings and conclusions*
- *GOAL: To identify up to 4 “End to End” Alternatives to carry into Tier 1 EIS*

Summer 2014: Draft Tier 1 EIS Public Comments

- *GOAL: To identify a Preferred Alternative to carry into Tier 2 EIS for detailed environmental assessment*



Questions

