



All Parks Alliance for Change ■ APAC

*An Organization of Manufactured Home Park Residents*

# Rush Line Corridor: Connecting Manufactured Home Parks to Opportunity



JULY 2016



ALL PARKS ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE  
A STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OF MANUFACTURED  
HOME PARK RESIDENTS

# Rush Line Corridor: Connecting Manufactured Home Parks to Opportunities

July 2016

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## What is All Parks Alliance for Change?

All Parks Alliance for Change is the statewide organization for Minnesota's 180,000 manufactured home park residents. APAC provides a vehicle for manufactured home owners to express their needs and concerns in their parks and in the larger community. Through education, grassroots organizing and leadership development, APAC works with residents to improve the quality of life in park neighborhoods, protect the rights of park residents, advance public policy change that supports safe, affordable, and stable park communities, and preserve this vital source of affordable housing.

## Why is APAC interested in transit?

APAC is a member of the Rush Line Public Engagement Advisory Panel and also attends meetings of the policy advisory and technical advisory panels. APAC supports using the region's emerging transit way system to promote sustainable, vibrant, and healthy communities in the Twin Cities region, including manufactured home park communities. APAC works to engage park residents in planning, decision-making, and implementation processes on and around transit-oriented corridors.

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## I. Executive Summary

This study aimed to gain insight into the public transportation use in the Ramsey County and Washington County parks along the Rush Line Corridor, including Thirty Twenty Estates, Northstar Estates, Terrace Heights Mobile Home Court, 5 Star Estates, Maplewood Mobile Home Court, Woodlund MHP, Town and Country MHP, and Twin Pine MHP. The research had two parts: an analysis of 2013 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) data on resident transportation uses along the proposed transit corridor, and a survey of manufactured home park residents who live along the corridor. The survey was created containing four question topics: residents' background information, access to a personal vehicle, current public transportation use, and future transportation use. A total of 144 residents were randomly selected to complete the survey. Findings suggest that residents of parks located closer to the urban center have more interest in public transportation as a use and report a higher frequency of use. Residents reported wanting to see more stops provided and cheaper fares. Also, residents overwhelmingly chose light rail as the preferred public transportation type.

## II. Introduction

### **What is the Rush Line Corridor?**

The Rush Line Corridor is an 80-mile travel corridor that runs from Hinckley to the Union Depot in Saint Paul. The corridor links growing urban neighborhoods, suburbs, and rural cities and townships. Total corridor population is forecasted to grow by 43 percent between 2000 and 2030 – an increase of more than 158,000 people. The robust economic growth potential in this corridor is essential for the elimination of concentrated areas of poverty. Growth in population and employment opportunity allow communities along the corridor to evaluate economic development opportunities, including transit-oriented development.

The purpose for the Rush Line Corridor project is to support sustainable growth and development in the surrounding region. As the population grows, additional mobility options such as public transit are needed. This project will provide transportation for those who need it. This project is also working to increase improvements and services of public transit. Last but not least, it also working to increase demand for transit.

### **What is the Purpose of this Report?**

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into residents' current public transportation use in the manufactured home park community. This research is also conducted to understand what would encourage residents to use public transportation in the future. Residents' thoughts and opinions on the Rush Line Corridor transit line should be considered because they are located near the proposed line. This new line could have a powerful impact on residents' transportation needs.

Manufactured housing is an affordable living option, usually providing lot rents around 30 to 50 percent of area median income. Residents living in manufactured home parks are mostly low-income. The average household income falls between \$10,000 and \$19,999. According to the 2013 five-year American Community Survey, there are no bus stop stations within 0.5 mile from the Ramsey County and Washington County parks, including Thirty Twenty Estates, Northstar Estates, Terrace Heights Mobile Home Court, 5 Star Estates, Maplewood Mobile Home Court, Town and Country, Woodlund, and Twin Pine. These eight parks are located along north Highway 35E.

### III. Manufactured Home Parks

In June 15, 1976, the U.S. Congress passed the National Mobile Home Construction and Safety Act. A Manufactured Home is a single and multi-section home constructed entirely in a controlled factory environment built under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) code. Manufactured homes were known to be built for easy relocation and travel.

Manufactured homes make up one out of every 20 households in Minnesota. According to HUD guidelines, 80 percent of manufactured home residents are low- to very-low income. According to the APAC Rush Line Corridor survey, the average income in the eight parks that were surveyed is in the range of \$10,000 to \$20,000. Manufactured home parks provides affordable housing for residents with an average monthly lot rent of \$418. Statewide the households are 87 percent owner occupied and 42 percent of residents have lived in the same unit for 10 or more years.

Within the Rush Line Corridor (which runs from Hinckley to St. Paul), there are 10 cities with 27 park communities and 2,779 households. The proposed transit lines only run for a portion of the corridor, so we are only concerned at this time with those households in Forest Lake, Hugo, Little Canada, Maplewood, and Vadnais Heights, which translates to five cities with 8 parks and 1,133 households. Here are the specific park communities:

<b>Manufactured Home Park</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>
Woodlund MHP	Forest Lake	137
Twin Pine MHP	Hugo	134
North Star Estates	Little Canada	209
Terrace Heights Mobile Home	Little Canada	189
Thirty Twenty Estates	Little Canada	75
Maplewood Mobile Home Court	Maplewood	19
Town and Country	Maplewood	120
Five Star Mobile Estates	Vadnais Heights	250
<b>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS:</b>		<b>1,133</b>

## IV. Demographic Background

### Overview

This analysis is intended to provide insight into the particular transit needs of people living in and around Manufactured Home Parks along the proposed Rush Line Corridor. The Rush Line stands to bring an unprecedented amount of public transit service to the corridor that runs along highway 61 from Forest Lake to Downtown Saint Paul. As the planning process develops, the transit habits and potential needs of people living in manufactured homes along the corridor should be considered. This is generally a marginalized group of people with low incomes and limited access to resources. The Rush Line project could be a boon for them, depending on stop placement, route, and type of transit. The analysis below examines the characteristics of seven parks that run directly along the proposed corridor in an attempt to provide the planning process a more robust picture of this often overlooked stakeholder group.

### Methodology

The methodology for this analysis included using 2013 5-year American Community Survey estimates retrieved from the U.S. Census website. Data included commute types, commute times, demographic, and household data by block group.

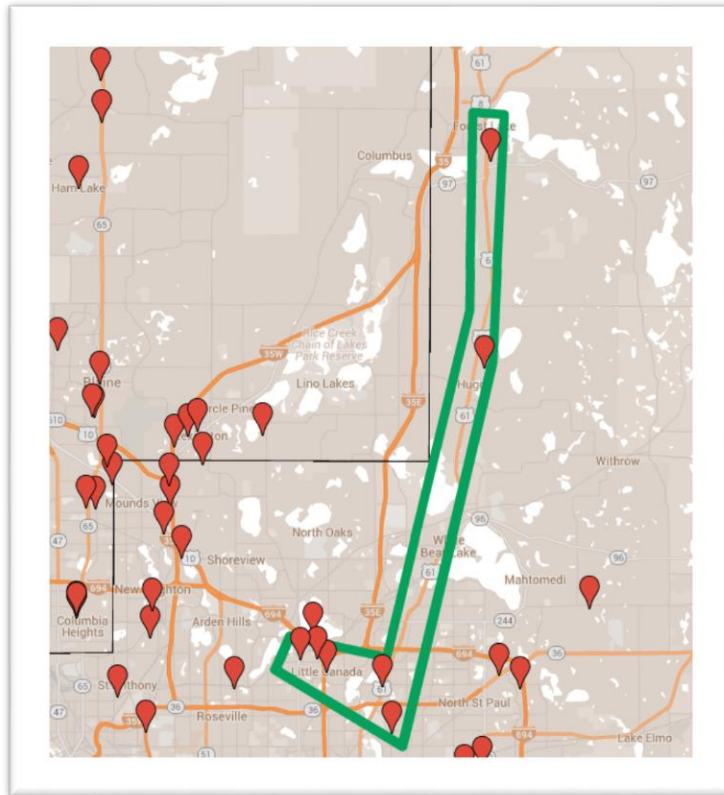
Data was compiled and cleaned in Excel. Parks were identified with Google's My Map tool. Ramsey County and Washington County parks were identified. There were four parks that existed within a mile of the Rush Line Corridor, the center line of which was identified as Highway 61. Google maps was used to measure distances of parks from the corridor. Block Groups were identified using the following geocoding lookup tool located on the Census website:

<http://geocoding.geo.census.gov/geocoder/geographies/address?street=15057+Forest+Boulevard+North&city=Hugo&state=MN&zip=55038&benchmark=4&vintage=4>

Park block group data was compared against census tract data to distinguish trends and discrepancies. While the block groups do not exactly conform to the parks themselves, they do represent the immediate vicinity of the park. This is helpful with understanding transit trends associated with the Park because it shows how the population of the area uses different modes of transit. The data tells us how amenable areas currently are to alternative transit modes as well as what current car-use levels are.



**Description of Findings**



The corridor being studied runs from Forest Lake to Downtown St. Paul. In total there are seven Manufactured Home parks contained in this analysis. Five are in Ramsey County and two are in Washington County.

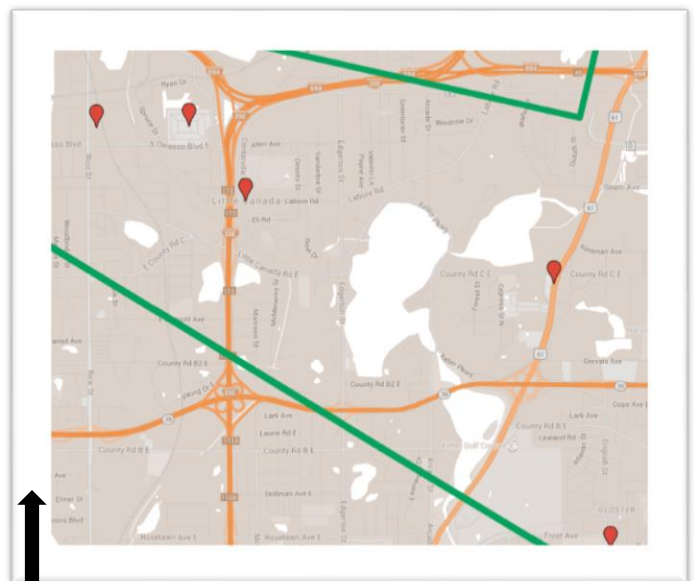
The Ramsey County parks include Thirty Twenty Estates, Northstar Estates, 5 Star Estates, Maplewood Mobile Home Court, and Town & Country.

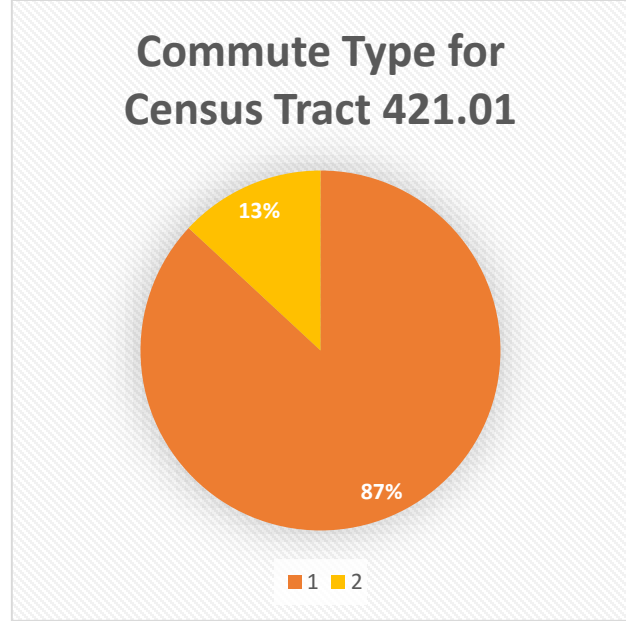
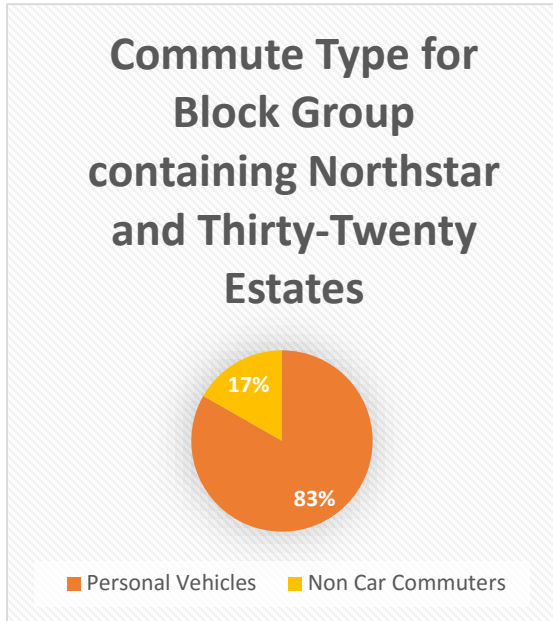
Thirty Twenty Estates is served by two bus routes: the 62 and the 262. North Star is served by one bus route, the 223, which stops about a half mile from the park. 5 Star Estates is served by the 62 and 262, both of which can be accessed

about a half mile from the park. Maplewood Mobile Home Court is served by route 64. Finally, Town & Country is served by 3 routes: 265, 270, and 272.

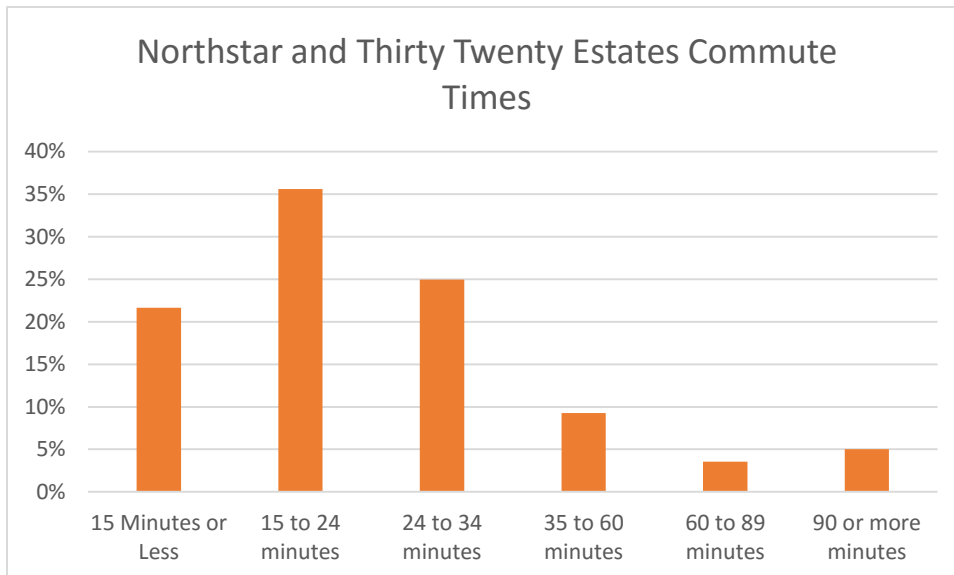
**Ramsey County Manufactured Home Parks along Rush Line Corridor**

In the census tract that includes Northstar and Thirty Twenty Estates, most people drive to work. In the graph below, the census tract is broken down into the most specific category available for analysis: block groups. The graph compares the percentage of commuters who drive to work with the percentage who use some other form of transportation, including bus, train, taxi, walking, biking, and working from home. As the two pie charts below show, there is a higher percentage of non-car commuters in the block group containing two manufactured home parks than overall in the census tract.

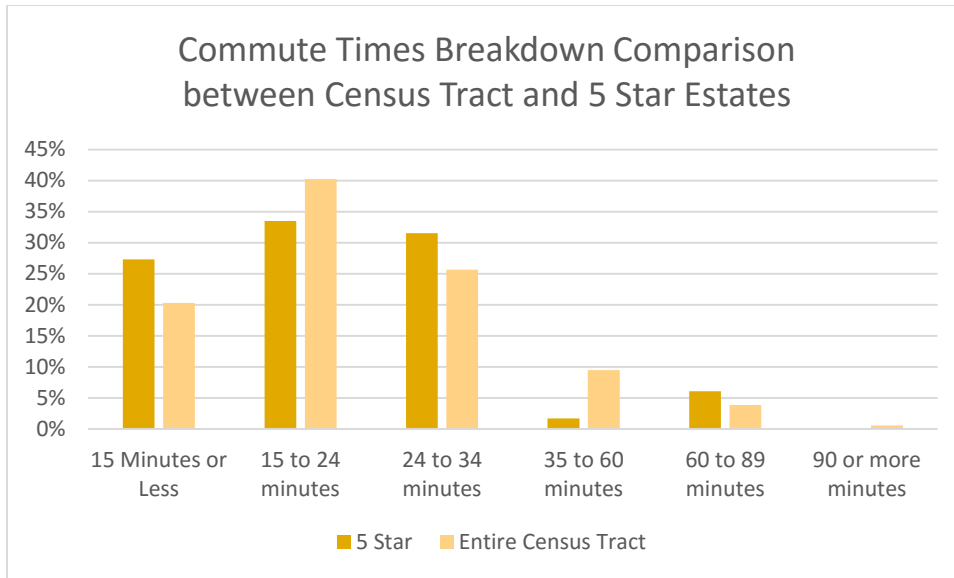




Regardless of the mode Northstar and Thirty Twenty area workers use to get to work, the majority have a commute time of less than 35 minutes. The graph below shows commute times for block group containing Northstar and Thirty Twenty Estates. The commute times are broken up into six categories: less than 15 minutes, 15 to 24 minutes, 25 to 34 minutes, 35 to 60 minutes, 60 to 89 minutes, and 90 or more minutes. As the graph shows, commute times over 34 minutes drop off substantially. Nearly 4 out of 5 commuters spend more than 15 minutes getting to work.



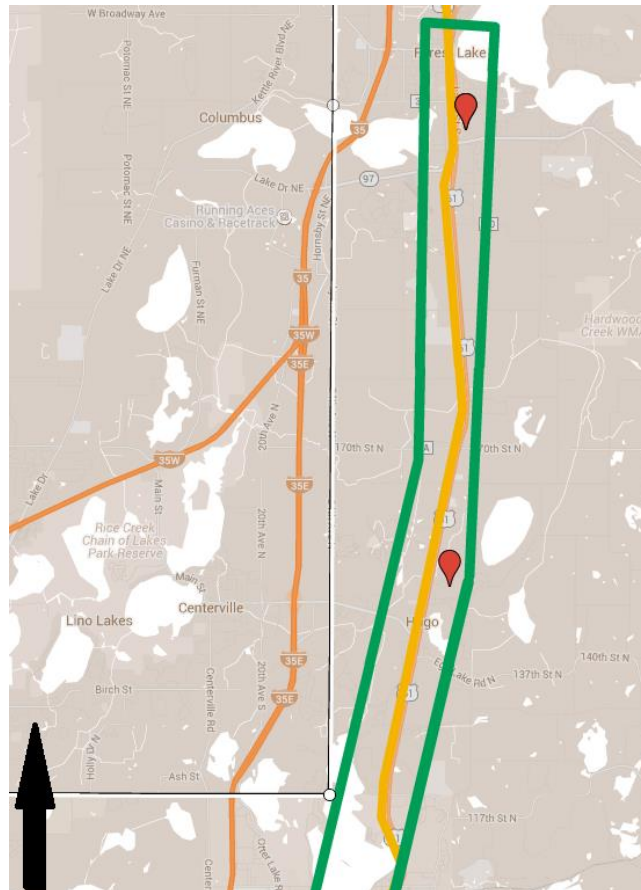
The racial makeup of this census tract is about eighty percent white, though block group 1 is an outlier at nearly half nonwhite.



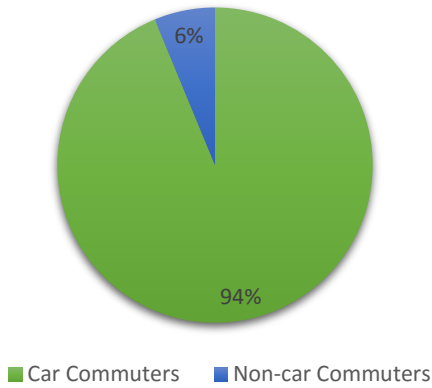
### Washington County Manufactured Home Parks along the Rush Line Corridor

There are two Washington County Manufactured Home Parks along the Rush Line Corridor. One is Woodlund MHP (to the north of the corridor) and the other is Twin Pines (to the south of the corridor). In the census tracts that contain these two parks, most people drive to work. However there are double the number of non-car commuters in the census tract containing Woodlund Park.

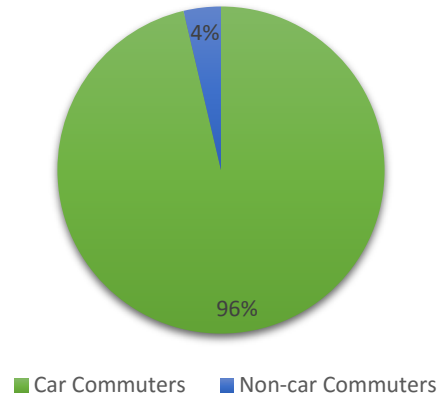
As with Ramsey County, analysis of commuting tendencies was done by comparing commuting data within the census tracts where the parks are located with the data of the block groups where the parks are located. The idea being that block groups provide a close picture to the commuting tendencies of park residents, while the census tract itself provides a standardized comparison population.



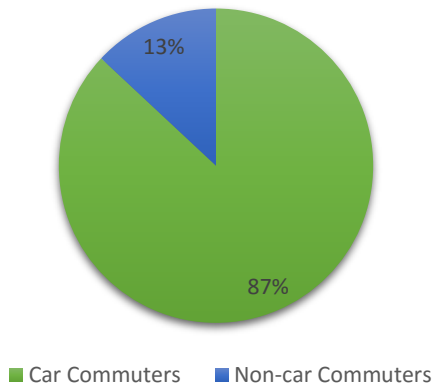
**Commute Types in Census Tract 702.03**



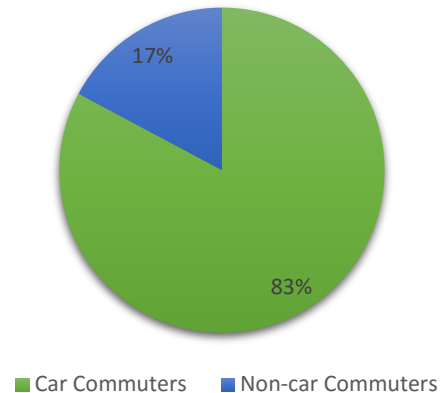
**Twin Pines Mobile Home Park**



**Commute Types in Census Tract 701.04**



**Woodlund Park Mobile Home Park**



Woodlund Park has a larger percentage of non-car commuters than either the census tract as a whole or Twin Pines MHP. More than 95 percent of Twin Pines MHP residents drive to work, a percentage slightly higher than the surrounding area.

### Data Analysis Conclusion

Parks located closer to the central city show higher percentages of resident non-car transportation use. Even so, data suggests that less than a quarter of residents in any park use a mode other than a car/truck to get around. Additionally, analysis of commute times in Ramsey County show commute times along the corridor to be mostly under 60 minutes. This is important to consider when determining stop locations and frequency. If a transit line is going to compete with cars, it must be competitive in its frequency and speed.

## V. Survey Methodology

### **Sampling Procedure**

The survey sample size goal was 149 residents. There was a goal of having a 95 percent confidence level and no more than a 7.5 percent margin of error. The survey used a stratified random sample to balance the influence of each of the source communities used for the sample. The survey categorized, or stratified, the sample by establishing quotas for each of these sources. As part of the selection, a simple random sample was used for each of these sources until the desired proportion of respondents was achieved for each category. If there was a problem achieving the right proportions, a statistical weighting technique was used during the data analysis phase to adjust for under- and over-represented groups.

Residents within the age range of 18 to 70 from eight manufactured home parks in Ramsey and Washington Counties were randomly selected to take the survey. The number of residents from each park were selected according to the park population. The results consist of 27 residents from 5 Star Estates, 3 from Maplewood Mobile Home Court, 28 from NorthStar Estates, 23 from Terrace Heights Mobile Home Court, 11 from Thirty Twenty Estates, 13 from Town and Country, 19 from Twin Pine, and 19 from Woodlund. Only one of the surveys did not list the name of the park, which is listed as Blank.

### **Survey Method**

The survey questions consisted of the name of the park, residents' household number, income, race/ethnicity, access to personal vehicle, current and future public transportation use. The data was collected through a self-administered paper form survey mailed to the respondents' homes with a self-addressed stamped envelope. A follow up post card was sent to each selected resident after three weeks to encourage individuals to respond, which was followed up with door-to-door contacts. However, a few of the selected residents declined to take the survey. In order to keep the same sample size, other random doors were knocked to complete the survey. Residents who completed the survey were in a drawing for chance to win a \$10 Target gift card.

### **Survey Instrument**

The survey instrument included 16 questions. The purpose of this survey is to help determine where stops might go, which kind of transit will be used (e.g. bus or light rail), and how often the transit will run. The questions are divided into five sections related to park residents' backgrounds, and whether they have access to a personal vehicle, currently use public transit, and plan to use public transit in the future. Respondents were asked to provide their name and address, however, this identifying information was only collected in order to track submissions. They were informed that their responses will be kept confidential. Individuals were also invited to check a box on the questionnaire if they wished to receive a copy of the analyzed results of this survey once the information was published.

## VI. Survey Results

- Parks that are located closer to the Twin Cities tend to use public transportation more and would also like to use it more in the future. According to survey results, North Star and Terrace Heights parks currently use public transit the most. They are both located in the city of Little Canada, which is about 10 to 15-minute drive from Saint Paul downtown.

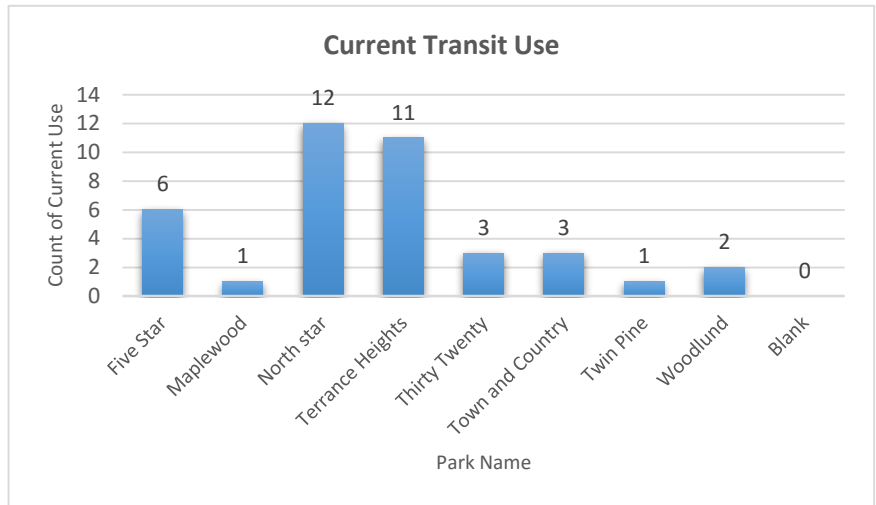
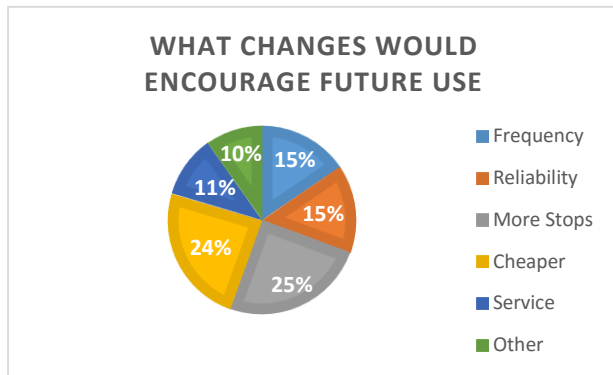


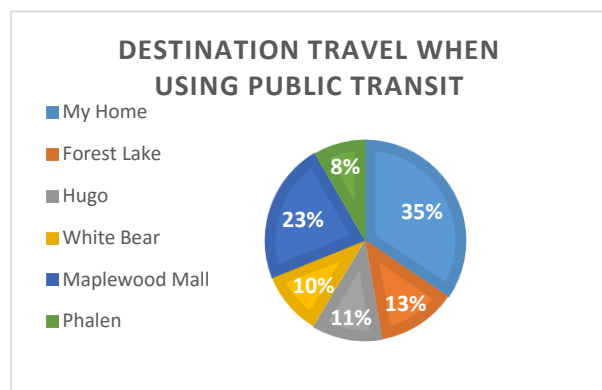
Table 1

- About half of residents who responded want to have more stops and cheaper bus fares, which would encourage them to public transit more. 26 percent of park residents would also be encouraged to use public transportation more if service was improved and buses ran more frequently.



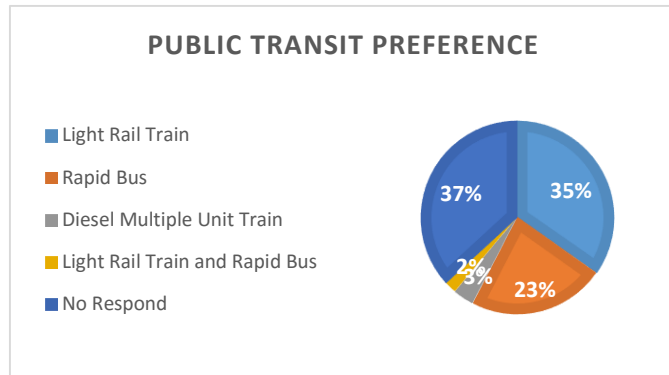
Graph 1

- 50 percent of residents would travel to use public transportation from close to their home and at the Maplewood Mall. Residents can park their car at Maplewood Mall to use public transit to travel to their destinations such as downtown Saint Paul. It would be cheaper and more convenient to find a parking lot space at Maplewood mall than in downtown.



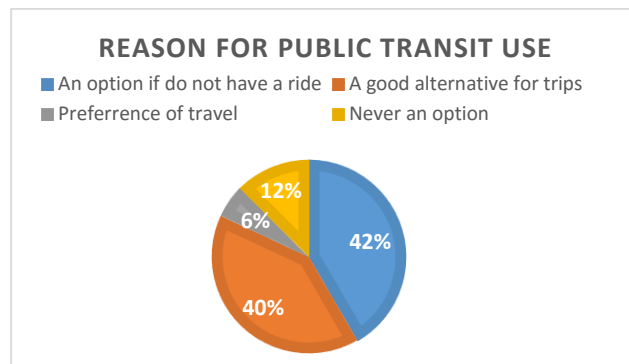
Graph 2

- 35 percent of residents would like to use or have a light rail running around their community in the future. The second highest choice, 23 percent, is a bus rapid transit.



Graph 3

- 42 percent of respondents reported that public transportation is only an option when they do not have a ride. However, 40 percent also responded that public transportation is a good alternative for some trips around the metro area.



Graph 4

## VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

Ramsey and Washington Counties' manufactured home parks currently have few public transportation resources. It is important to be aware of public transportation needs in these areas. Their voices and opinions should be heard and considered for the Rush Line Corridor. Though survey and data analysis indicate that few residents currently use public transportation, an increase in affordable transit options would be a boon for residents who need to travel in an increasingly populous, dense suburban area.

Residents living in manufactured home parks are mostly low-income families. Our survey results showed that 21 percent of residents' income range from \$10,000 and \$19,999. Residents with this income range confirmed that they own a personal vehicle. They also responded that their vehicle is either extremely or very reliable. Even though they considered their personal vehicle extremely reliable, our survey results showed that they are the income group that uses public transportation more than the other group, 31 percent of the total.

In addition, our survey results showed 11 percent of residents' incomes were \$50,000 or more and who also responded to also owning their own personal vehicle. They labeled their car as either very reliable or moderately reliable. However, they were also the second group most likely group to use public transportation, 13 percent of the total.

Fifty percent of residents report wanting to see more stops provided and cheaper fares. This indicates that residents from these areas would be more likely to use public transportation if there is a stop closer to their home as well as providing more stop options. It would be more convenient for residents to travel to their destinations.

Providing more stops would locate them within walking distance (10-15 minutes) to commercial nodes. According to our survey results, 41 percent responded they would use public transportation to get to a shopping center. Twenty-six percent responded they would use public transit to go to work. If transit options continue to improve, we would see higher usage of public transportation from residents in the Ramsey and Washington Counties.



## VIII. Appendix - Survey



## Rush Line Corridor Public Transportation Survey

Your background information is being requested only to help APAC track returned surveys. This information along with your responses to questions will be kept **confidential**. (Note: *When you return a completed survey, you will be automatically entered to win one of ten \$10 Target gift cards.*)

### **Background:**

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

Address / Lot Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Number in household: \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you make trips from your home to somewhere in the metro area? (Check one)

- Daily
  Every few days
  Weekly
  Every couple weeks

Where do you go? (Check all that apply)

- Work  
 School  
 Church/temple  
 Shopping or Entertainment (movies, live shows, bars)  
 Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnicity (Check all that apply)

- White  
 Hispanic or Latino  
 Black or African American  
 Native American or American Indian  
 Asian/Pacific Islander  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Household Income (**OPTIONAL**) (Check one)

- Less than \$10,000  
 \$10,000 to \$19,999  
 \$20,000 to \$29,999  
 \$30,000 to \$39,999  
 \$40,000 to \$49,999  
 \$50,000 or more

**Access to Personal Vehicle:**

Do you make use of a personal vehicle (e.g. car, truck, etc.)? (Check one)

Yes  No

If YES, please describe your access to this vehicle. (Check one)

I own it  I own with another person or people  I do not own but have access

Do you consider this vehicle a reliable source of transportation? (Check one)

Extremely reliable  Very reliable  Moderately reliable  Slightly reliable  Not at all reliable

**Current Public Transit Use:**

Have you used public transit to get to places from your current home? (Check one)

Yes  No

If YES, What transit route do you use? (Check all that apply)

- Bus (288, 285, 275, 265, or other \_\_\_\_\_)
- Nice Ride Bikes
- Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you currently use public transit? (Check one)

Daily  Weekly  Monthly  A few times a year  Almost never  Never

**Future Public Transit Use:**

If transit stopped close to your home and went where you want to go, would you use it? (Check one)

Yes  No  Maybe

If one of these ran near your home, which one would you prefer to use? (Circle one)



Light Rail Train



Bus Rapid Transit



Diesel Multiple Unit Train

**What would encourage you to ride public transit more often? (Check all that apply)**

- Frequency of service
- Reliability
- More stops/stops closer to home
- If it was cheaper than driving
- If service is better
- Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

**How far would you travel to ride public transit? (Check all that apply)**

- Stop near my home
- Forest Lake Transit Center
- Downtown Hugo
- Downtown White Bear Lake
- Maplewood Mall
- Phalen Village

**How would you complete this sentence? Public transportation is: (Check one)**

- An option only when I do not have a car or cannot get a ride
- A good alternative to driving for some trips
- My preferred method of travel
- Never an option I would select

**If you wish to receive a copy of the analyzed results of this survey, please check the box.**

- YES! I would like to receive a copy of the analyzed results.