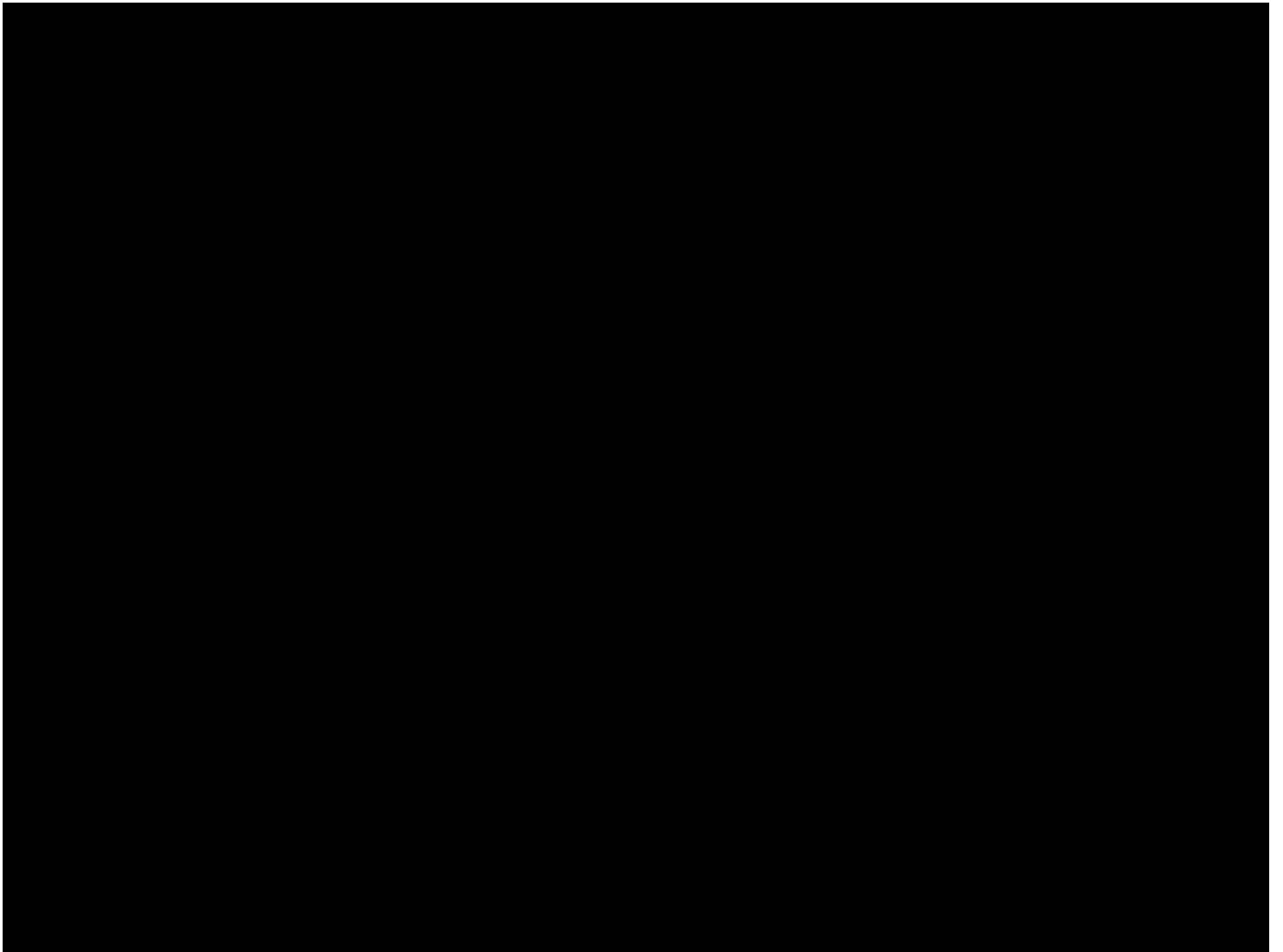


Joan Vanhala, Coalition Organizer  
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

# **ALRIGHTA!! INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**







# Overcoming historic disinvestment and disregard



**Credjafawn Co-op Store  
Rondo Ave., St. Paul MN**

In the 1960s, Interstate 94 destroyed Rondo Avenue and devastated the vibrant historic African American neighborhood.

70 businesses were lost and 400 families were displaced.



**I94 construction St. Paul MN**

# Transit investments: What is at stake?

Everyone must benefit equitably:

- DBE Jobs, contracting and procurement
- Economic development investments
- Small business and entrepreneurship
- Access to a regional system especially for those who are transit dependent:  
walk, bike, and bus
- Long-term affordable housing
- Neighborhood preservation and livability
- Neighborhood prosperity



# Applying federal environmental justice principles



- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately adverse effects on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the ***full and fair participation*** by all affected communities in the decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits.



# Cornerstones of Transitway development organizing

- Organizing & Action
- Research
- Participation in the Process
- Strategic Alliances
- Persistence over Time





# Organize, Organize, Organize!!

- Grassroots groups and regional allies connect and commit
- Grassroots groups in the lead
- Form coalition based on common goals
- Community turn out at project meetings and events
- Organize special community meetings and rallies
- Congresswoman convened major players meetings
- Media plan: op-ed, letters to the editor, local television, radio, and online media



# Transportation Equity / Stops for Us! Coalition

## Community-based

- District Councils Collaborative of St Paul & MPLS  
(14 neighborhood organizations)
- University UNITED

## Community Advocacy

- Community Stabilization Project
- Got Voice, Got Power
- JUST Equity
- Preserve and Benefit Historic Rondo
- Saint Paul NAACP
- Saint Paul Urban League

## Community Development

- Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Model Cities, Inc.



## Local Business

- Asian Economic Development Assoc.
- University Avenue Business Assoc.

## Regional Advocacy

- Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
- Housing Preservation Project
- Hmong Organizing Program, Take Action MN
- ISAIAH
- Jewish Community Action
- MICAH
- MN Center for Environmental Advocacy
- Transit For Livable Communities

## Labor

- UFCW Local 789

# Research to Make Our Case

# Participated in the Process

## **New Starts Project Review**

- Track Key Decision Points
- Monitor stakeholder meetings
- Community Advisory Committee

## **National Environmental Review Process (NEPA)**

- Public Hearings
- Comment Periods

## **Local Municipal Consent**

- Public Hearings



## **St. Paul Land Use Planning**

- Central Corridor Development Framework

# Developed Strategic Alliances

- Local Elected Officials

- Local
- State
- Federal



- Community Leaders & Foundations
- Staff: Project, County, and City
- Federal Staff — FTA & EPA







From left to right: Congressman Ellison, Mayor Rybak, Commissioner Carter, Senator Klobuchar, Sec. LaHood, Commissioner McDonough, City Councilmember Carter, Mayor Coleman

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at a historic press conference in the Rondo neighborhood, Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced that the CEI would no longer be a pass/fail measure and the additional 3 stations would be built for the environmental justice communities on the Central Corridor.



# The Future: Reviving the economic engine for the Rondo Community



Dale Street  
LRT Station





**Moving forward with Equitable Development**

Old Home site at Western Station



# Benefits of community engagement

- Identify issues early
- Integrated problem solving
- Prevent future conflicts
- Opportunity for win/win project solutions
- Results in a better project with community ownership
- Outcomes support neighborhood livability and placemaking
- Develop lasting community relationships





## Community Engagement Opportunities in Transitway Development Overview

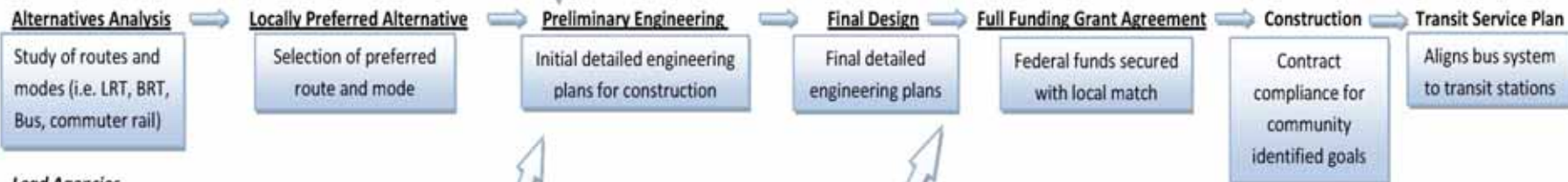
### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Protection Agency

Scoping → Draft Environmental Impact Statement → Final Environmental Impact Statement → Record of Decision

An environmental impact statement (EIS), under United States environmental law, is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for certain actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. An EIS is a tool for decision making. It describes the positive and negative environmental (natural, social, & economic) effects of a proposed action, and it usually also lists one or more alternative actions that may be chosen instead of the action described in the EIS. Both the Draft and Final EIS are published for public comment.

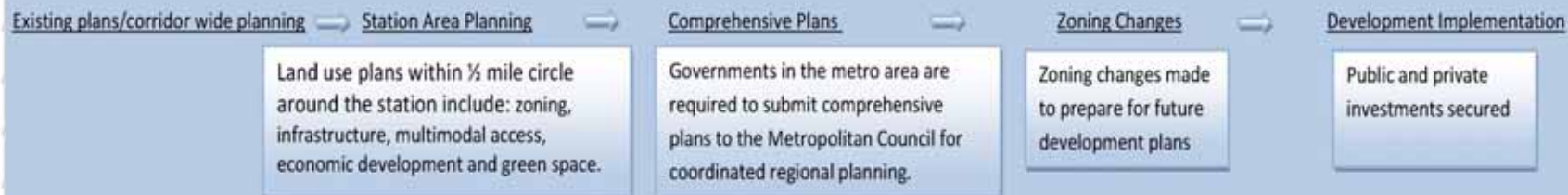
#### Lead Agencies

### New Starts Application Federal Transit Administration



#### Lead Agencies

### Land Use Planning Local municipalities, counties, MPO



#### Lead Agencies

# Small Group discussion:

1. What are the community engagement opportunities within infrastructure investments in your community?
2. How can environmental justice communities be included in the planning and decision making?
3. What is the potential for specific benefits for environmental justice communities?

# Small Group discussion:

1. How can you support the capacity of environmental justice communities to increase the outreach and engagement in the planning and decision making?
2. How can your local planning systems integrate environmental justice principles into their practices?