

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: September 9, 2024

For the Metropolitan Council: September 25, 2024

Business Item: 2024-193

METRO G Line – Authorization to Release Recommended Corridor Plan for Public Comment

Proposed Action

That the Council authorize release of the METRO G Line Recommended Corridor Plan for public review and comment; and direct staff to collect public comments through Friday, October 25, 2024, summarize comments, and report the findings to the Metropolitan Council.

Summary of Transportation Committee Discussion/Questions

Metro Transit Planner Laura Greteman presented this item.

Dolkar asked why the line doesn't extend out to Inver Grove Community College. Greteman stated that the population density is much lower further south into Inver Grove Heights and BRT service is focused on higher density areas. Greteman added that key destinations will continue to be served by local routes in that area and could be looked at for potential increase in service or potential for micro transit.

Dolkar asked if bus only lanes are being proposed, to which Greteman responded that these were considered but did not advance as part of the City of Saint Paul's Robert Street downtown project. There are no proposed bus only lanes on the project.

Dolkar asked why staff evaluated stops mid-block platform locations if these are not standard in BRT planning. Greteman stated that staff do not typically recommend mid-block platforms but sometimes do need to consider them while trying to balance all considerations for siting a platform. Chair Barber stated that staff receive public comments from business and communities regarding stations (including mid-block), so staff evaluate all options.

Toni Carter asked whether there were specific engagement techniques we would be using to ensure people we engage reflect demographics of ridership. Greteman offered to provide more demographic information and noted that engagement staff will be continuing to build relationships with local community groups and meeting our riders and community where they are at the bus stop and nearby planned stations.

It was moved by Vento, seconded by Carter, Toni. Motion carried.

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District(s), Member(s):	District 10 (Lindstrom), District 13 (Lee), District 14 (Carter), District 15 (Dolkar)
Policy/Legal Reference:	PIC 2-2 - Accountability to the Public Policy
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Lesley Kandaras, General Manager, 612-349-7513 Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507 Katie Roth, Director, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7772 Kyle O'Donnell Burrows, Planning Manager, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7749 Laura Greteman, Planner, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7546
Division/Department:	Metro Transit / Arterial BRT

Proposed Action

That the Council authorize release of the METRO G Line Recommended Corridor Plan for public review and comment; and direct staff to collect public comments through Friday, October 25, 2024, summarize comments, and report the findings to the Metropolitan Council.

Background

In March 2021, the Council adopted the G Line bus rapid transit (BRT) alignment as defined in the Network Next plan (Business Item 2021-52). The G Line Recommended Corridor Plan identifies station locations for the G Line corridor. Recommended station locations result from planning activities throughout 2023-2024, including public outreach and engagement, interagency coordination, and transit analysis within the corridor.

The G Line Draft Corridor Plan was published on September 25, 2023. Comments on the G Line Draft Corridor Plan were accepted through November 6, 2023, with a variety of communications and outreach activities conducted throughout the comment period. Metro Transit received over 350 comments on the plan (via online survey, email, phone) in addition to one comment letter from an agency partner.

Staff read and categorized each of the comments received during the Draft Corridor Plan public comment period, as well as those submitted by agency partners. Staff have completed additional analysis of alternative platform locations at multiple station locations and are recommending five revisions be made to stations proposed in the Draft Corridor Plan. The plan also includes additional analysis and responses to comments are included in the Recommended Corridor Plan.

Following Council action, staff will release the Recommended Corridor Plan for a month-long public comment period and continue outreach and communications to engage community members around the plan. Staff will bring a Final Corridor Plan for Council approval following the comment period. Upon completion and approval, the plan will identify the final planned locations

for G Line stations in advance of project engineering.

Rationale

The proposed comment period continues transparent and meaningful discussion with the public about the G Line ahead of finalizing station locations.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The G Line will enhance transit in the Rice Street / Robert Street corridor, currently served by Route 62 and Route 68.

Investment in high-quality transit options in the G Line corridor will advance the Thrive outcome of Prosperity by making the region more economically competitive through increased workers' access to employment and support to employers by increasing available workforce with affordable, convenient transportation.

The G Line project advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by improving transit access for people with low incomes and communities of color. About 70 percent of Route 62 and Route 68 customers live in households with lower than average incomes, and over half of Route 62 and Route 68 customers are people of color. Investment in the G Line will provide riders with faster and more reliable service and a more comfortable waiting and riding experience.

The proposed action also advances the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by planning for G Line corridor improvements efficiently with regional partnership from MnDOT, counties, cities, and other stakeholders.

Funding

While there is no direct funding attached to this action, eventual approval of the Final Corridor Plan will establish the scope of the G Line project to include defined number of stations in determined locations, a necessary step to delivering the project within budget.

Small Business Inclusion

There is no contracting, and therefore no small business inclusion, associated with this action.

