

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: June 28, 2021

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 14, 2021

Subject:	METRO B Line – Authorization to Release Recommended Corridor Plan for Public Comment
District(s), Member(s):	District 6 (Atlas-Ingebretson), District 7 (Lilligren), District 8 (Muse), District 14 (Fredson), District 13 (Lee)
Policy/Legal Reference:	PIC 2-2 - Accountability to the Public Policy
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510 Charles Carlson, Director, BRT Projects, 612-349-7639 Katie Roth, Assistant Director, BRT Projects, 612-349-7772 Adam Smith, Senior Planner, BRT Projects, 612-349-7160
Division/Department:	Metro Transit / BRT Projects

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Authorize release of the METRO B Line Recommended Corridor Plan for public review and comment
- Direct staff to collect comments through Friday, August 13, 2021, summarize comments, and report the findings to the Metropolitan Council

Background

The B Line Recommended Corridor Plan identifies station locations for the B Line arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor. Recommended station locations result from planning activities throughout 2019-2021, including public outreach and engagement, interagency coordination, and system analysis.

A draft version of this plan was published on February 22, 2021. Comments on the B Line Draft Corridor Plan were accepted through March 22, 2021, with significant communications and outreach activities conducted during the comment period. Over 650 comments were received in addition to ongoing interagency coordination, prompting changes to platform locations at four stations in the recommended plan.

Following release of the recommended plan, staff will continue outreach and communications to engage community members around the plan. Staff will bring a final corridor plan for Council approval following the Recommended Plan comment period. Upon completion and approval, the plan will identify the final planned locations for B Line stations in advance of engineering.

Rationale

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

Thrive Lens Analysis

The B Line will upgrade and substantially replace Route 21, Metro Transit's second-highest ridership bus route. Investment in high-quality transportation options in the Route 21 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 B Line project advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by investing in a transit corridor serving communities of color. More than half of Route 21 riders identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). Investment in the B Line will provide riders with faster service and a more comfortable waiting and riding experience.

The proposed action also advances the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by planning for B Line corridor improvements efficiently with regional partnership from Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis, and St. Paul.

Funding

While this action carries no direct funding implications, eventual approval of the Corridor Plan will establish the scope of the B Line project to include defined number of stations in determined locations, a necessary step to delivering the project within budget. Full funding for delivery of the B Line project has been secured through a combination of federal, state, and Metro Transit sources.

Known Support / Opposition

Public engagement on the draft plan has identified strong support for the B Line and transit improvements in the Lake-Marshall-Selby corridor. Local partners have been supportive of the project and will continue to be closely involved as the project transitions into engineering.