

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: June 13, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council: June 22, 2022

Business Item: 2022-134

METRO E Line – Approval of Final Corridor Plan

District(s), Member(s):	District 5 (Cummings), District 6 (Pacheco), District 7 (Lilligren), District 8 (Muse), District 14 (Fredson)
Policy/Legal Reference:	PIC 2-2 – Accountability to the Public Policy
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510 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
Division/Department:	Metro Transit / Arterial BRT

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the Final E Line Corridor Plan to establish the number and location of stations included in the project.

Background

On March 9, 2022, the Council authorized the release of the Recommended Corridor Plan for public review and comment (BI 2022-46). The Recommended Corridor Plan summarized feedback received from partner agencies and the public on the Draft Corridor Plan and included additional analysis at several station locations and recommended changes to three station locations in response to that feedback.

Public comments on the Recommended Corridor Plan were accepted through April 8, 2022. Plan release was communicated via print and digital communications including postcards, flyers at bus stops and on buses, limited in-person conversations, partnerships and meetings with community organizations and neighborhood groups, shared promotion by partner agencies, emails to subscribers and Rider Alerts, and targeted social media posts.

Metro Transit received 359 individual survey responses and emails on the Recommended E Line Corridor Plan. Additionally, letters were received opposing the recommended station locations at 1st Avenue NE & 2nd Street NE from residents of the Village Lofts and Village Brownstones condominiums and the Nicollet Island East Bank Neighborhood Association, and at France & 50th Street from the 50th & France Business Association and the France Avenue Condo Association. A letter supporting bus only lanes on University Avenue and 4th Street was received from the Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association.

Metro Transit received formal comments from the City of Minneapolis supporting the E Line project and the direction identified in the Recommended Corridor Plan. The letter acknowledges additional analysis of alternative station locations along 1st Avenue NE and indicates a commitment to finalize a recommended station along 1st Avenue NE. Metro Transit also received formal comments from the City of Edina supporting the Recommended Corridor Plan, with the exception of a request to move the France & 50th Street station to 51st Street.

Consistent with feedback received throughout the corridor plan development process, public engagement on the Recommended Corridor Plan has identified strong overall support for the E Line and transit improvements on the Route 6 corridor. Several stations locations, including those noted above, have been subject to a high degree of interest, both in support and opposition.

Metro Transit has reviewed the feedback received from the public and our agency partners on these locations in detail, analyzed alternative station locations, developed additional information, and met with concerned stakeholders throughout the process to better understand and respond to the concerns raised. Based on that review, staff recommend retaining the station locations identified in the Recommended Corridor Plan in the Final Corridor Plan. No additional changes are proposed in the Final Corridor Plan.

Rationale

Approval of the Final E Line Corridor Plan will establish E Line station locations at the intersection quadrant level, providing critical direction and focus to the detailed design and engineering phase beginning in mid-2022.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The E Line will upgrade the Route 6, one of Metro Transit's highest ridership bus routes. Investment in high-quality transit options in the Route 6 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 E Line project advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by improving transit access for communities of color and for workers at low wage jobs. Investment in the E 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 E Line corridor improvements efficiently with regional partnership from Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Edina, the University of Minnesota, MnDOT, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Funding

Approval of the Final E Line Corridor Plan will establish the scope of the E 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 E Line project has been secured through a combination of federal, state, and Metro Transit sources.

Small Business Inclusion

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

