

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: October 24, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council: November 9, 2022

Business Item: 2022-275

METRO C Line – Olson Memorial Highway Long-Term Alignment

District(s), Member(s):	District 7 (Lilligren)
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 Laura Greteman, Planner, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7672
Division/Department:	Metro Transit / Arterial Bus Rapid Transit

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the staff recommendation to retain the long-term METRO C Line alignment on Olson Memorial Highway.

Background

When C Line project plans were developed in 2016, the Blue Line Extension light rail was planned to operate along Olson Memorial Highway, with the two transitways sharing an alignment on Olson Memorial Highway between Penn Avenue and 7th Street. In anticipation of LRT construction on Olson, temporary C Line stations were planned at three locations along Olson Memorial Highway. Council approved the C Line Station Plan in April 2016.

During C Line planning, stakeholders expressed interest in studying potential long-term relocation of the C Line from Olson Memorial Highway to Glenwood Avenue after Blue Line Extension light rail service commencement. Metro Transit staff studied this long-term alignment in 2016 and recommended moving BRT to Glenwood Avenue to better distribute access to high-frequency and high-capacity transitway services in this area. In November 2016, the Council approved an action to move the C Line to Glenwood Avenue concurrent with the METRO Blue Line Extension opening on Olson Memorial Highway.

Since 2016, the Blue Line Extension route has been revised. In June 2022, Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council adopted a new Blue Line Extension route that will travel via West Broadway Avenue, rather than Olson Memorial Highway.

With the revised Blue Line Extension route no longer traveling via Olson Memorial Highway, there will be no partial duplication of C Line transitway service, and the key condition for shifting the C Line alignment to Glenwood Avenue will not exist. Retaining the C Line on Olson Memorial Highway will preserve transit service matching established travel patterns in the corridor and avoid a disruption for existing C Line customers.

With approval of this action, the existing temporary C Line stations along Olson Memorial Highway will be made permanent and station amenities will be added to match the other stations along the

C Line. Permanent station construction is planned to advance in coordination with MnDOT construction scheduled for 2027. Metro Transit will advance planning and engagement for permanent stations in coordination with MnDOT's project. C Line stations are anticipated to remain at the same intersections as today, but platform locations may shift from one corner of an intersection to the other to provide faster, more reliable service and better integrate with roadway improvements identified through the MnDOT project. Any revisions to station locations resulting from the coordinated planning and engagement process would be considered by the Council in a separate future action to amend the C Line Station Plan.

Rationale

Council approval of the staff recommendation will establish the long-term C Line alignment on Olson Memorial Highway, providing direction for developing permanent stations on this alignment and coordination of station delivery with future MnDOT-led construction.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This recommendation advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by retaining existing fast, frequent, and more comfortable BRT transit access for communities of color and for workers at low wage jobs. This recommendation will preserve transit service that matches existing travel patterns and has demonstrated success in meeting the needs of the community.

The proposed action also advances the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by planning for permanent C Line stations on Olson Memorial Highway efficiently with regional partnership and coordination with a planned roadway construction project led by MnDOT.

Funding

While there is no funding associated with this action, Council direction to retain the existing alignment will allow staff to begin developing a scope and project budget to construct permanent C Line stations along Olson Memorial Highway. Full funding for delivery of permanent stations along Olson Memorial Highway will likely be sought 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.

