



39.5 Crossing Closure Comment Summary

In Fall of 2015, the city of Robbinsdale worked with the Blue Line Extension Project Office (BPO) to gather community feedback about the potential closure of the crossing of the BNSF Railway at 39 ½ Ave. Closing this crossing would eliminate automobile, pedestrian and bike traffic across the railway. Comments were received from residents through various events and media. This is a brief summary of the collected community feedback regarding the potential closure of 39 ½ Ave.

Because personal identifying information was not collected, the comments from different events cannot simply be totaled. It is assumed that some Robbinsdale residents each voiced their opinions on this matter multiple times throughout the last couple months. However, three distinct snapshots of public sentiment were collected and are presented below.

Robbinsdale Meet-and-Greet: September 14, 2015

At the Robbinsdale Chamber of Commerce's Annual Meet-and-Greet, BPO set up a table and exhibits, including a board and roll plot with the potential closure indicated. This issue was one of the more popular topics of discussion during the night. Of the approximately 50 people who stopped by to talk at the table, 35 offered a verbal opinion on whether or not to close the crossing. **22 (63%) individuals indicated that they preferred the crossing to be closed, while 13 (37%) individuals indicated that they preferred the crossing to remain open.**

39 ½ Public Open House: October 7, 2015

On October 7, an open house was held at the Robbinsdale City Hall from 5:00 – 7:00pm. This meeting was promoted through a mailer that was sent to about 950 residents in Robbinsdale, including the residents who live within 10 blocks of the crossing. The time of day was chosen based on previous comments within the Robbinsdale community that events that occurred later in the evening were difficult to attend. BPO and Robbinsdale staff attended the event, where residents could ask questions and discuss the closure or any other part of the BLRT project. Of 45 attendees, 44 people completed the survey at the event or submitted comments following the event to city staff, elected officials, or BPO staff. Attendees were asked to fill out a short survey in which they indicated the following:

1. Please check one:
 - a. The 39 ½ Ave crossing of the BNSF railway should be CLOSED
 - b. The 39 ½ Ave crossing of the BNSF railway should remain OPEN
 - c. I have no opinion about the closing of the crossing at 39 ½ Ave
2. What factors led you to make the choice above?
3. Do you live within 5 blocks of the railroad crossing at 39 ½ Ave in Robbinsdale?

Of the 44 respondents, **31 (70%) indicated that the crossing should be closed and 13 (30%) indicated that the crossing should remain open.** 42 people indicated that they live within 5 blocks of the crossing. The most popular reasons for closing the crossing were:

- The area will be safer
- The area will be less congested with traffic



- There will be less of a noise impact to the residents in the area

The most popular reasons for keeping the crossing open were:

- Regular use for local residents (car and pedestrian)
- Important use for school busses
- Use as a route for people looking to patronize Robbinsdale businesses, specifically in downtown Robbinsdale.

Social Media Observations: October 2015

The 39 ½ Ave Open House was promoted by city staff and officials on Facebook in the weeks leading up to the event. Though people were asked to attend the event to provide feedback, Robbinsdale residents also voiced opinions in the comments section of the announcements. Some comments were explicitly in favor of closing the crossing or keeping it open, while a number of comments simply stated that they used the crossing often or that they generally supported the BLRT project. Comments could be interpreted differently depending on the reader, but generally, the “I use the crossing a lot” comments were thought to infer a general support for keeping the crossing open. That being said, **20 individuals indicated that the crossing should stay open, and 12 individuals indicated that the crossing should be closed.**

Additionally, at the October 21, 2015 open house, four comments were recorded that dealt with the 39 ½ Ave crossing. All four comments were in favor of closing the crossing.

The comments from the October 7, 2015 open house area catalogued and available in an attached spreadsheet.

39.5 October 7 Open House Comments

	Close	Open	No opinion	Factors	Within 5 blocks of crossing	Other feedback
1	X			Noise, traffic - it's too busit as it is! Safety	Y	n/a
2	X			I live next to the crossing (38XX Major Ave) and feel this is already a very dangerous intersection! People use this as a shortcut and the road is not set up for traffic. It is mainly a residential area and is unsafe for neighborhoods on both sides.	Y	I believe the right thing is to close this road. If it does end up staying open, something must be done with the intersection (specifically south side) to make it more safe as the lightrain will cause more traffic congestion. Currently there are not any stop signs. It is very dangerous. I choose safety over convenience.
3	X			The dinging of the crossing arms moving up and down every 5-10 minutes is noise pollution my neighbors and I do not need	Y	I'm concerned that Robbinsdale will become a more divided community because of light rail traffic. I would love to see some pedestrian option either above the train or below the train. There are a lot of kids who cut across the tracks to get to and from school near Lee Park.
4	X			Noise (short cut or park & ride) road can't handle traffic. Not good for people who live on road	Y	
5	X			Noise	Y	
6	X			I don't want to hear the constant dinging	Y	
7	X			Safety	Y	
8	X			Safety	Y	
9	X			Traffic/noise	Y	
10	X			I live on 39 1/2 and Noble. I would like to minimize the sights and sounds and intrusion of the train as much as possible. I would be inconvenienced as much as anyone by the closing because I use that street daily but it would be worth it to close it. And I like the Hiawatha Line, I'd like to see a large wooden wall type barricade to block the view.	Y	Many are concerned about the school bus use of 39 1/2 but the city adjusted just fine when the Highway 100 and 39th Ave intersection was closed years ago. 39 1/2 is also not well designed for the amount of traffic it gets. People ride bikes, strollers, skateboards, and rollerblade down the middle of it often because of lack of sidewalks and proper street width. I'm surprised in the 7 years I've lived there that no one has been hit that I am aware of.
11	X			I live within 2 blocks of the crossing. It is NOISE POLLUTION to have a neighborhood listen to the dinging of those arms. We don't deserve that for our families. There are many other options for people who want to drive across town. No Alternative for the ones who own homes there.	Y	The feedback should be taken from the people who live [within 5 blocks of the railroad crossing at 39 1/2] - NOT the citizens who are concerned their shortcut will be jeopardized.
12	X			Safety, noise	Y	
13	X			Noise of crossing bell	Y	
14	X			Noise, safety	Y	
15	X			Noise for folks living in vicinity of 2 close crossing areas; Danger to pedestrians using this area	Y	I live at 37th and Lee
16	X			Safety	Y	Please close this intersection for the safety of the neighborhood and all the young children who live on Major between 38th and 39 1/2
17	X			The noise of the crossing arms every ten minutes. Concerned about property values changing, noise vs. proximity to public transit options	Y	
18	X			Noise and safety. This is a dangerous intersection, which is used as a shortcut. We have other options. Keep this neighborhood safe.	Y	The intersection is very dangerous with no stop/yield signs. The noise will effect [sic] the area greatly. Please close the intersection.
19	X			We live at 38XX Major Ave N which is extremely close to the 39 1/2 Ave crossing. Closing the crossing will eliminate noise from repeated crossing arm signals, plus eliminate the prospect of numerous traffic backups on our narrow street.	Y	If the crossing is closed, I would recommend a pedestrian crossing remain at 39 1/2 Ave. As long as it does not involve extra noisy signals as trains come.
20	X			Safety - no crossing noise	N	Biggest concern is 42nd back up and congestion
21	X			I sadly made this decision because I walk and drive that way often. However I am concerned about the safety of children crossing there, so perhaps 39 1/2 should be closed. If it is not closed, I would be happy though.	Y	If 39 1/2 is closed and the traffic gets really bad on the other streets what will be done? The traffic on 36th and 42nd is already bad and difficult to cross. Maybe we should be proactive and work on those first.
22	X			I don't want to hear the crossing arm noise.	Y	I am concerned about walking traffic - It would be great to have a walk bridge if you can find the correct bridge design. I would also like to see better fencing along the route so no one can cut openings in them, climb over, them, etc. I am concerned about vibration since my house is up to the tracks.
23	X			Noise from crossing arms will be unacceptable if the crossing is open, though I use this crossing regularly and would otherwise prefer it to stay open.	Y	Please, please, please create a pedestrian over or underpass. The increased traffic at other pathways (36th and Lee/Major and 40th and Noble) will make already unsafe crossings even worse.

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24	X			As long as traffic would slow at other intersections. Maybe add a tunnel at 39 1/2.	Y	
25	X			Noise and traffic	Y	
26	X			I wasn't able to attend the session regarding this topic, but would like to chime in. I live within 5 blocks of the intersection and occasionally use it to get home, as does my wife. That said, I'd support closing it if it means getting the light rail up and running sooner and making it safer. There are alternative driving routes to get home but the light rail project coming through Robbinsdale is fantastic news for those of us who commute downtown or go there just for fun.	Y	I'd love to know what we can do as Robbinsdale residents to help push the light rail forward and make it happen. Both my wife and I are excited about this project.
27	X			1. Close the crossing 2. it only serves a few; and to create a noisy and expensive crossing seems counterproductive. 3. No. I live at 45XX France Ave N; My grandson attends Sacred Heart so I'm familiar with the area and rarely have used it. I feel like I'm cutting through someone's neighborhood. 4. Consider a walk/bike bridge over the tracks. Is it too late to also consider more elevated tracks as in Chicago & Seattle?	n/a	
28	X			I use that crossing several times a week, up to daily. If the project is built, I am willing to give up that crossing in the interest of better service for everyone.	Y	
29		X		I use it daily!!	Y	How close to BSN rail line will be to my property!!
30		X		Major bus crossing for many schools; I use it at least 3+ times per day with my alley opening up to it; easy way to get around locally; keeps traffic down on other major roads	Y	
31		X		I travel the road a lot, approx. 4-5 times a day. I believe closing it will increase traffic on West Broadway. There are a lot of Bike & pedestrians & kids who use this road instead of busier roads. I will miss this greatly if it is closed.	Y	Less than 1 block away. I am also concerned about wildlife that come down the tracks from Sohacki Park. If that is closed off, they could be trapped & hit if no exits are available for them when a train comes.
32		X			Y	
33		X		I drive through the intersection EVERY SINGLE DAY. You should cancel the light rail. It costs too much to build, too much to run, and it doesn't serve the majority of citizens.	Y	Lives on Hubbard 1 block from the crossing. No questions, just factual objections.
34		X		Quicker way to downtown B-town	Y	
35		X		In my neighborhood	Y	
36		X		I use that road daily and would be annoyed to take a longer route.	Y	Also, I feel like the new train situation will be dividing our city already - Iw we close that road I feel it would further divide our city and I feel m house would be on the "wrong side" of the tracks.
37		X		Daily use of crossing	Y	
38		X		If want people to shop in downtown Robbinsdale we will need ALL the easy access we can.	Y	
39		X		I could not attend the meeting, but I would like to state that I would like the 39 1/2 Ave Crossing to remain open. I do live within 5 blocks of the railroad crossing and use that crossing quite often.	Y	
40		X		I believe the railroad crossing at 39 1/2 should remain open because our family drives and walks it daily. School buses use that route also. Noble is too busy for school buses.	Y	We live one block from the intersection
41		X		The 39 1/2 Ave North crossing of the BNSF railroad should remain open. I live within 5 blocks of the crossing and use it many times a week. It is the only crossing from Noble to Wesst Broadway between 36th Avenue and 41st. It is also used by our school buses.	Y	

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42	X			<p>I am writing to express my concerns about the light rail system, specifically the crossing at 39 1/2 Avenue in Robbinsdale. I attended the October 7th open house initially hoping to keep the crossing open but after learning more from the neighbors who were more informed than myself and the officials present, I definitely want this crossing closed. I live two blocks away at 37th and Major and would gladly give up the convenience in order to reduce the noise level and preserve the neighborhood. I welcome the light rail but believe the impact to quality of life, safety, property values and the feel to the neighborhood is best served by closing the railroad crossing at 39 1/2 Avenue.</p>	Y	<p>impact from the horns and dingling cross arms. I believe they will also experience the first losses to property values, and as they can they will sell, become landlords or abandon properties to avoid living with the noise, the extra traffic the light rail station will bring and the changes in the neighborhood including: increased safety issues for both pedestrians and vehicles, reduced quality of life and the use of the street in front of their homes for parking for those not wishing to use the parking ramp. I also believe that keeping the crossing open at 39 1/2th Avenue will continue the erosion further into the surrounding neighborhood for the very same reasons. I will be affected by both because of the close proximity of the crossing to my home and the impact it will have on my neighborhood, my community.</p> <p>I have heard Mayor Murphy suggest that an option would be to keep the 39 1/2 Avenue crossing open for now and that it can always be closed later but to try it for five years. That is fiscally irresponsible! In addition to being a complete waste of money and resources to update the crossing to pass over the light rail and then again use public funds to close it makes no sense and I am opposed to that suggestion. The horns and dingling cross arms will have an immediate impact and waiting for five years to try it out won't stop the damage from being done. And yes, I understand that the hope is that all three crossings in Robbinsdale would qualify as quiet zones, but none of the officials involved have been able to assure me that this will definitely be the case.</p> <p>My neighbors and I enjoy our yards and the sidewalks are frequently used by residents jogging, walking pets and pushing babies in strollers through what is mostly a quiet neighborhood. It's not uncommon to recognize each other, say hello and wave at cars passing on the street or driving through the alley. We trade produce from our gardens, help with shoveling snow from bordering driveways and keep an eye out when neighbors go out of town. I want my neighborhood and city to stay that way. I understand that downtown is for business and the light rail station will bring in customers and more businesses. That's great for downtown Robbinsdale but the effects from growing a business district should not make the surrounding residential community a lesser place to live. Closing the crossing at 39 1/2 Avenue can create a natural barrier appropriately directing traffic to the major arteries already in place, eliminate one of three sources for noise pollution and reduce the other problems for those bordering the rail line and in the proximity of this crossing.</p>
43	X			<p>I think when it comes to Quiet and Safe, there's an opportunity to make a decision that benefits our neighborhood as we move forward to welcoming the light rail into Robbinsdale. I live within 2 blocks of the 39th & 1/2 crossing and as long as it doesn't pose a risk to emergency response times, I am strongly of the opinion that the intersection should be closed in order to mitigate noise pollution for our neighborhood.</p> <p>I understand that there are many residents (and non-residents) who like to use 39th & 1/2 as a shortcut. I admit, I use it almost every day. Closing it would mean an inconvenience to me, as well. But the design of the intersection was never meant to handle the amount of traffic it currently receives and there are plenty of viable alternate routes. Residents and non-residents alike will adapt. Ultimately, I think it better for Robbinsdale to cultivate a neighborhood with fewer dingling bells and idling cars. Losing an awkwardly-designed shortcut is a relatively small sacrifice.</p> <p>At the upcoming council meeting I hope you will make a vote for the greater good of our neighborhood and vote to close 39th & 1/2.</p>	Y	

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44	X			<p>XXXXX and I are unable to attend the meeting tomorrow night regarding the LTR. We absolutely love the idea of revitalizing downtown and adding more. This is why we moved here and are so pleased to hear this may happen. We love being able to walk downtown with the family and are super excited to get more options downtown! :)</p> <p>Regarding the 39 1/2 street crossing. I must say, I absolutely hate that intersection, as I know many of our neighbors do also. It is very dangerous. People speed down all 4 roads that intersect with no concern for others. There needs to be at least a yield sign, if not a 3 way stop. I have almost been hit many times and do not allow my kids to ride their bikes that way. I think with the LTR it is a great excuse to close the intersection. Going over to Noble to cross, when it is so close should not be a problem. It would make my neighborhood so much better, there would be much less traffic and much safer.</p>	Y	