



Engagement Strategies and Approach

June – August 2023

Since August 2020, the project team, along with the community engagement cohort, Cultivate artists, Anti-Displacement Work Group, and committee members, have engaged with communities through a variety of activities, including in-person and virtual community meetings, door knocking, attending community events, online and paper surveys, and interactive maps. See below for the timing and project updates shared during each round of engagement.

- **Round 1** (August 2020 through January 2021): Input on project goals, concerns, opportunities, and thoughts on potential new routes
- **Round 2** (March to June 2021): Input on new route options released as part of the Initial Route Modification Report
- **Round 3** (July to August 2021): Input on the connections that light rail would make within communities and station locations within those areas
- **Round 4** (September to December 2021): Input on updated design concepts and potential opportunities and impacts of light rail options
- **Round 5** (April to May 2022): Input on the route recommendation as part of the Final Route Modification Report
- **Round 6** (September to December 2022):
 - **September** – Input on three route options between Target Field Station and West Broadway and four route options between Washington Avenue and Irving Avenue in Minneapolis.
 - **October – December** – Input on route options that will be studied in the environmental document, share updates on the anti-displacement working group’s work, and discuss next steps for the project.
- **Round 7** (January to May 2023): Receive input on the two route options between Target Field Station and West Broadway (East of I-94 or Lyndale Avenue) and two route options between Washington Avenue and Irving Avenue in Minneapolis (21st Avenue or West Broadway). Updated designs and options were also presented in Brooklyn Park, Crystal, and Robbinsdale for feedback.
- **Round 8** (June to August 2023): Receive input on the east of I-94 route options between Target Field Station and West Broadway:
 - **Option 1:** east of I-94 connection would run alongside the highway to become at grade and center running on Washington Avenue
 - **Option 2:** 10th Avenue to Washington Avenue (either with 10th Avenue being a transit mall or one-way northbound traffic)
 - Both would require a crossing over I-94 to either 21st Avenue or West Broadway Avenue.
 - Public input was solicited again on placing tracks on 21st Avenue instead of West Broadway in north Minneapolis.

This document summarizes the feedback received during the eighth round of public engagement from June to August 2023, including a summary of responses and questions received from public meetings, advisory committee meetings, community cohort engagement, the online comment form, and the interactive feedback map. Project staff have engaged with the public about the project through the following events:



Public Engagement Report (June - August 2023)

METRO Blue Line Extension

- 8 public meetings (7 in-person, 1 virtual)
 - Virtual Meetings (~27 attendees total)
 - Minneapolis Community Meeting for East of I-94
 - Thurs, July 27 from 6 – 7:30 p.m.
 - In-person meetings (attendees total)
 - Quarterly Meeting (~40 attendees)
 - Wed, August 23 from 6 – 8 p.m. at Capri Theater
 - Minneapolis Community Meeting for East of I-94 (~4 attendees total)
 - Tues, July 25 from 6 – 7:30 p.m. at Metro Transit North Loop Garage
 - 21st Ave Summer Block Party (~80 attendees total)
 - Sat, July 22 from 1 – 4 p.m. at Sanctuary Covenant Church
 - Minneapolis Community Meeting for East of I-94 (~15 attendees total)
 - Sat, July 22 from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at Twins Cities International School
 - Brooklyn Park Open House (~7 attendees)
 - Wed, June 29 from 6 – 8 p.m. at Brooklyn Park Library
 - Workforce and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Meet and Greet
 - Wed, June 29 from 6 – 8 p.m. at
 - Brooklyn Park Library Crystal Station Area Plan Update Open House (~25 attendees)
 - Thurs, June 22 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Crystal Community Center

Meeting Types

- Community Meeting
 - Open houses featured informational boards displaying the route options and background information on the project as well as large map layouts with a more detailed view of route options. Staff were present to answer questions and take notes from community members as they explored the information.
- Virtual Community Meeting
 - On Microsoft Teams, staff presented the same information offered at the in-person meetings on updated information on the Blue Line Extension including engineering, environmental, and anti-displacement. This is followed by a question-and-answer session.
- Workforce and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Meet and Greet
 - To ensure community opportunities to work on or subcontract on this major construction project, project staff are building up a network of relationships with key workforce and Disadvantages Business Enterprise (DBE) stakeholders in the corridor. Project staff invited workforce and DBE organizations to meet and greet with the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County to hear project updates along with workforce and DBE opportunities.



Other Meeting Metrics:

- 39 community cohort meetings and pop-up events
- 30 events with stakeholder and business representatives
- 8 Advisory Committee meetings
- 292 Interactive map comments
- Many more questions and phone calls

Feedback from Community Meetings on the Minneapolis Route Options

In-person and virtual community meetings were to inform the public on the Minneapolis route options, gain feedback on corridor opportunities and limitations, and to better understand how the public uses the corridor and their vision for it.

Based on feedback from the meetings, most people prefer the East of I-94 sub-option route that uses 10th Avenue to Washington Avenue. Majority of community members wanted to see 21st Avenue advance along with other roadway improvements on West Broadway Avenue.



Figure 1: Live polling results from July meeting

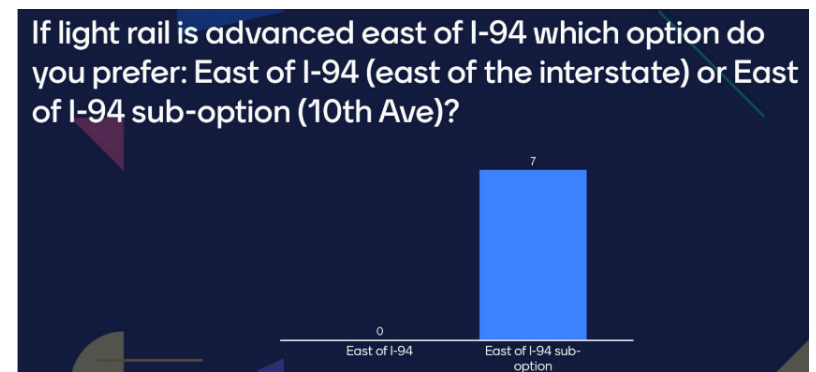


Figure 2: Live polling results from July meeting

- Parking and property impacts (especially along Broadway)
 - Light rail construction and infrastructure may hinder parking options which can impact businesses and residents along Broadway
 - Parking impacts near the light rail bridge over northbound County Rd 81 and 73rd Ave
- Traffic and congestion impacts
 - More signals and stops will lead to traffic
 - Concern that reduction vehicle lanes will block emergency vehicles



Public Engagement Report (June - August 2023)

METRO Blue Line Extension

- Preference for railroad arms over traffic signals
- Safety concerns
 - Stations, tracks and trains so close to young children is potentially dangerous (TCIS)
 - Desire for more security at stations and along route
 - Walking and biking safety
 - Pedestrian access to stations
- Economic Impact
 - Stations and service can contribute to development in the area, specifically on the south side of 3rd/4th connectors
 - Light rail construction process and service can impact businesses on West Broadway
- Train speed in the corridor
 - Speed can impact pedestrian safety
 - Speed can impact traffic (train stop time, frequency)
- Involvement of stakeholders and agencies in the decision-making process
 - Involvement level of different stakeholders (county, city, state, MNDOT, etc.)
 - Timeline of stakeholder involvement (who become involved when, for how long, etc)
- Accessibility
 - Densely populated residential areas
 - Handicap accessibility
 - Winter weather
- Desire for the transit mall configuration on 10th Ave
- Impact on greater transportation system
 - Extension presents advantages to the larger transit system
 - Line could benefit public transport, roadways and trail systems a like

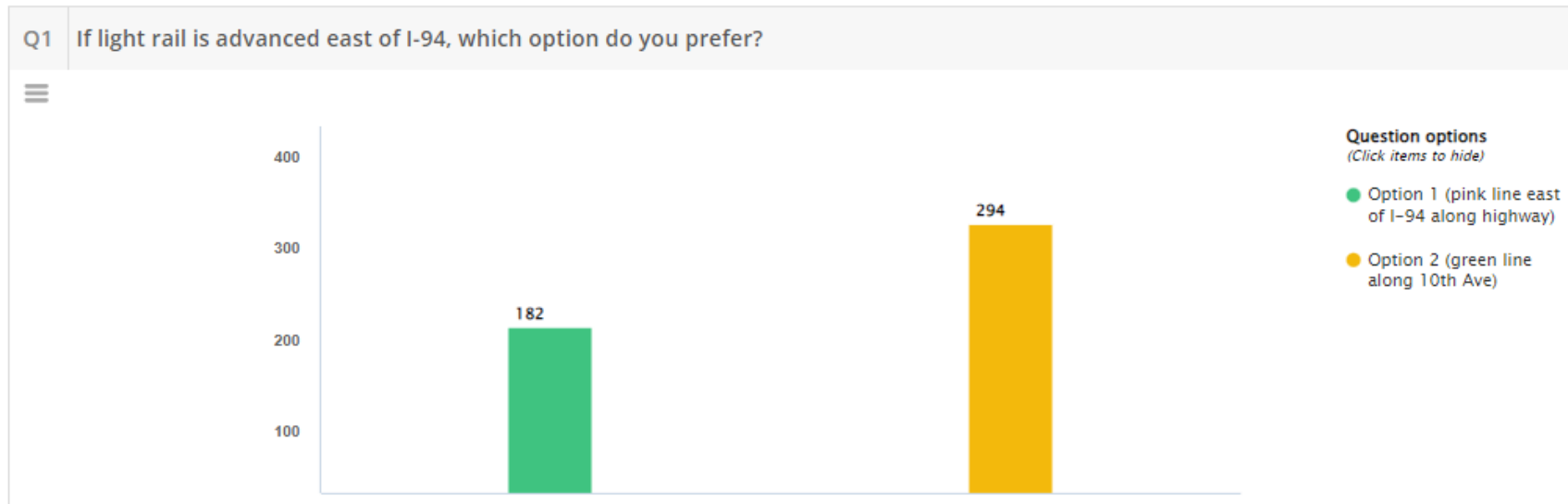


Figure 2: Photo from July Community Meeting



Online Survey Results

An online survey was used to collect feedback virtually and distributed via the website, email newsletter, and directly to Minneapolis stakeholders and community groups. Below are the results from 476 responses as of September 5, 2023:

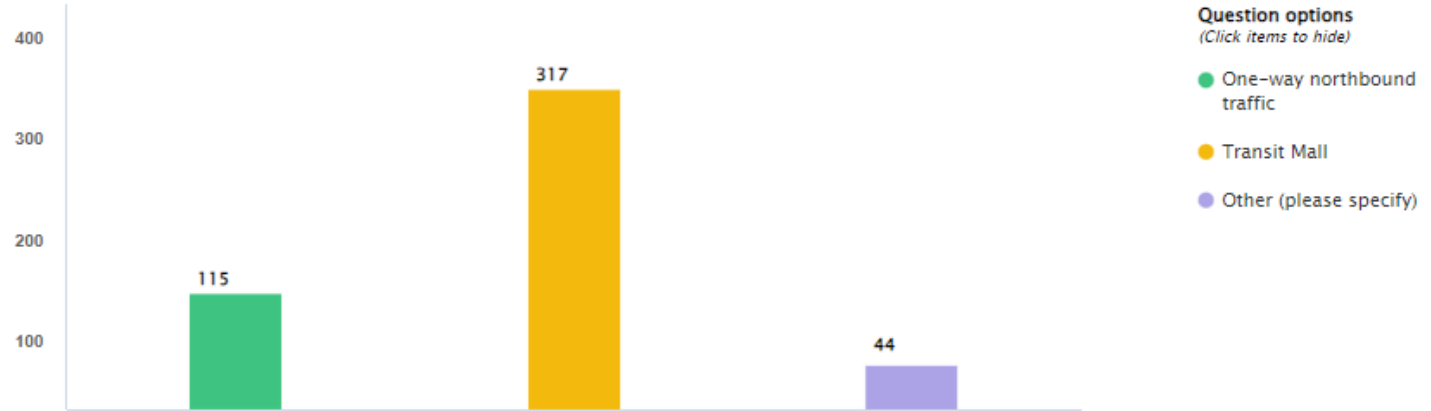




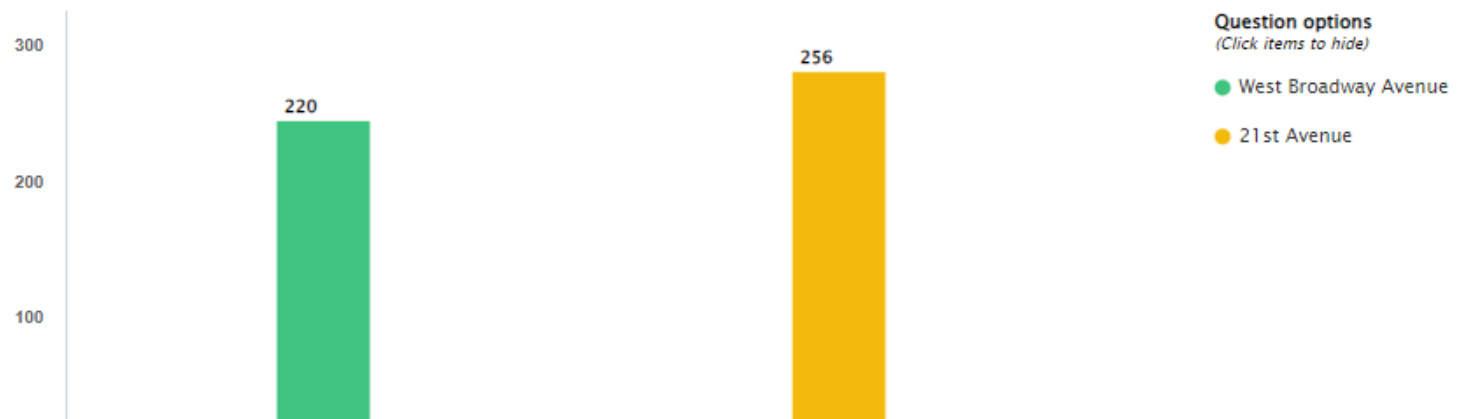
Public Engagement Report (June - August 2023)

METRO Blue Line Extension

Q2 If light rail is advanced on 10th Avenue, which design do you prefer?



Q3 Which option for LRT tracks would you like to see advanced: West Broadway or 21st Avenue?

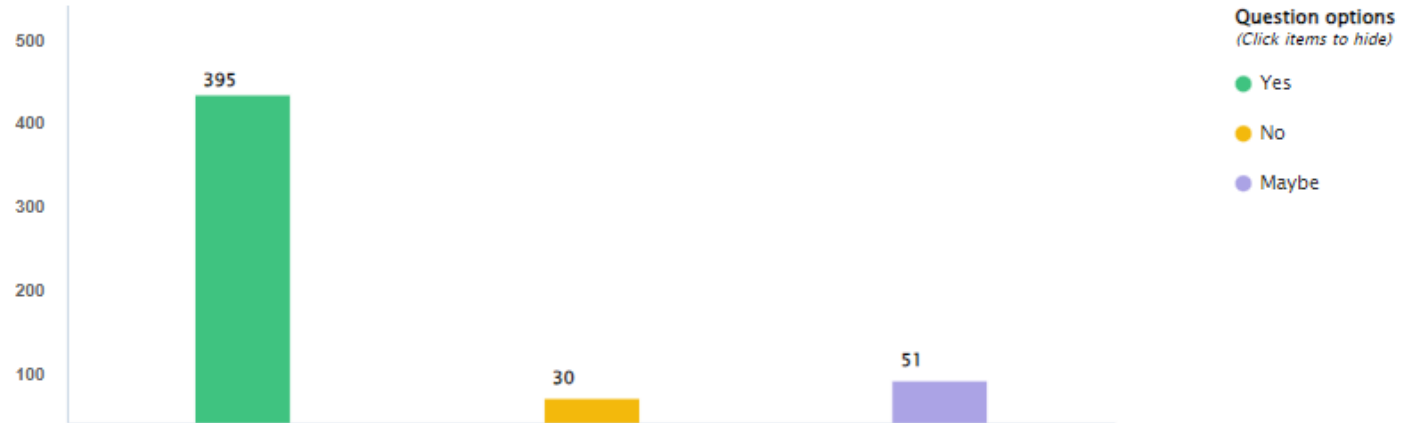




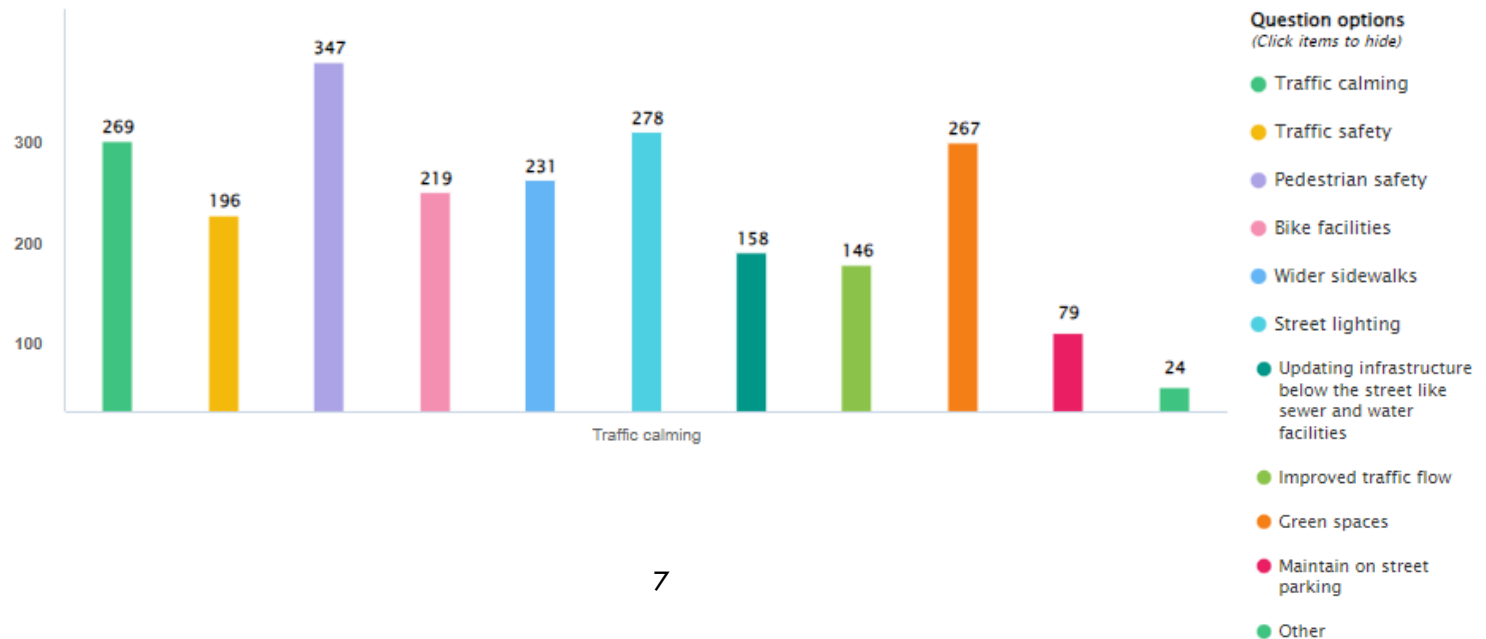
Public Engagement Report (June - August 2023)

METRO Blue Line Extension

Q4 If light rail tracks are put on 21st Avenue, would you like to see improvements on West Broadway?



Q5 What improvements would you most like to see to West Broadway if LRT tracks are put on 21st Avenue?



Interactive Map Comments (June – August 2023)

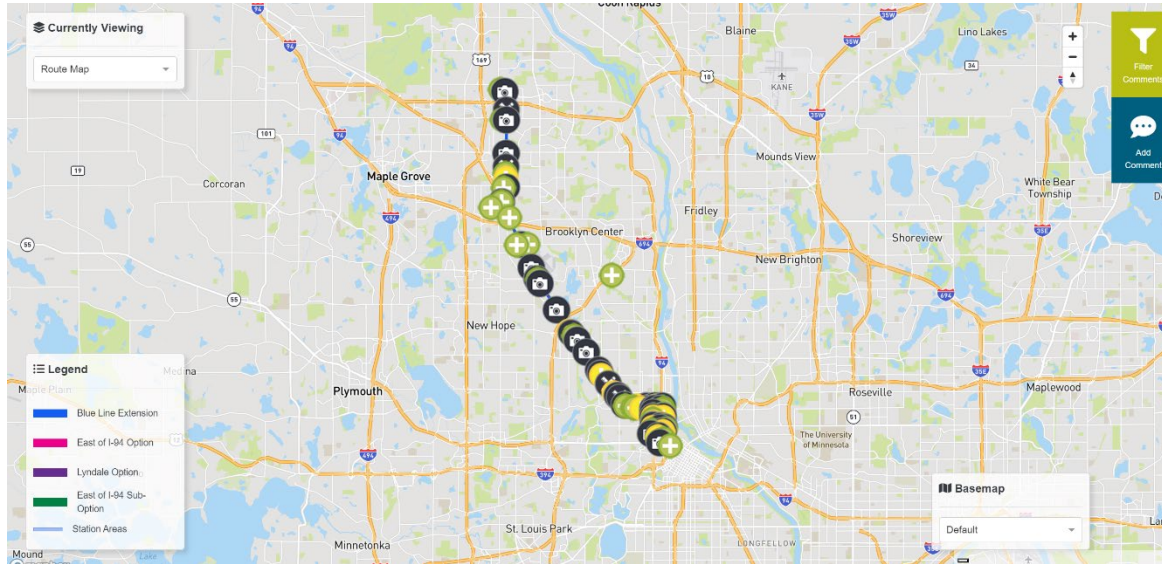


Figure 4. Comment pins on interactive map

The interactive map featured and sought feedback on the Minneapolis route options. **292** comments have been received between June and August 2023.

	Total Number of Comments	Concern Comments	Opportunity Comments	Responses to Visualizations	Engineering Drawings Comments
Comments Received	292	73	59	114	46

Concerns

- Impact on businesses and private property access
- Crime and safety issues need to be addressed
- Prioritize speed over number of stops along the route



- Vehicle congestion and reduced parking on Broadway
- Fly overs are costly and hard to maintain
- Traffic is already a problem on 10th Ave
- Buildings should not be demolished
- Preference for bus infrastructure

Opportunities

- West Broadway should become a transit mall
- Consider connectivity to St. Cloud and other towns
- Improve sidewalks and bike lanes along the route
- Route the Blue Line Extension down the middle of I-94
- The Lyndale route serves more people
- A station should be placed on Washington Ave
- Broadway provides access to residential homes, businesses, jobs and cultural resources
- Transit helps businesses and promotes economic development
- Downtown Robbinsdale will improve with the light rail
- A station to serve Heritage Park, Sumner-Glenwood, Harrison, and north loop
- An alignment option running down 5th

Visualizations

- The light rail should continue up the east side of I-94
- Stations need to be pedestrian friendly
- Concern for emergency vehicle access near North Hospital
- Impact on children and schools in the area
- Provides transportation options for those without a car and who are transit dependent
- A stop to serve Heritage Park
- A flyover bridge over I-94 and Broadway
- Reducing vehicle lanes will calm traffic and make the route more pedestrian and biker-friendly
- Desire for plants and landscaping along route
- Concern that residential properties will be impacted
- The light rail will increase traffic issues
- Preference for a transit mall along route
- Stops should not force riders to cross busy streets



- Off-street parking options are needed along Broadway

Engineering Drawings

- Limit the interaction between trains and cars
- The route allows for connectivity to important community resources such as the V3 sports center
- A Washington to Broadway/21st route would not benefit the community like the Lyndale option would
- The East of I-94 option will displace small businesses
- Desire for elevated tracks
- Remove traffic lights to reduce traffic impacts
- Concern for displacement
- Current crime issues on the light rail need to be addressed
- Route alternatives may impact bus operations
- Support for downtown Robbinsdale station
- Stations should provide connectivity to diverse neighborhoods

Community Cohort Feedback

Since 2020, the METRO Blue Line Extension Project has extended the reach of their communications and public involvement by directly contracting with community and cultural groups. These groups' experience, expertise, and trusted relationship networks in the corridor are essential to ensuring that the needs and concerns of all communities are understood and incorporated into project development. Community cohort organizations meet monthly with project staff to report community feedback, share upcoming events, and learn about timely project updates. Organizations participating in the current community engagement cohort include:

- A Mother's Love
- Asian Media Access Inc.
- Encouraging Leaders
- Heritage Park Association
- Juxtaposition Arts
- Lao Assistance Center of MN
- Liberian Business Association
- Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza
- Northside Economic Opportunity Network
- West Broadway Coalition



Public Engagement Report (June - August 2023)

METRO Blue Line Extension

During cohort check-in meetings, participants give an overview of the communities they have been reaching and the tactics they use. Cohort members reach the community via social media, in-person engagement, door knocking at homes and businesses, events, and relationships with other community institutions like churches and schools.

During the cohort's monthly meetings from June to August 2023, participants shared feedback they had received during their engagement efforts. Feedback included:

- Safety
 - Concerns about crime while riding transit
 - Fear of existing and increasing crime around station area
 - Concern about lighting and heating during winter
- Access to information
 - Confusion between LRT and a bus route
 - Youth in the community are largely unaware that LRT is coming
- Transit access
 - Some populations have difficulty boarding the bus and fear of riding transit in general
 - Older residents are waiting for alignment details to determine if they can assess LRT easily
 - Excitement for improved transportation options
 - Environmental and economic benefit with more public transportation
 - Concern that by the time Blue Line Extension is built, it will be outdated
 - Concerns about access to stations for elders and those with language barriers
- East of I-94 Options
 - BLRT Cohort Businesses prefer the new preferred route east of I-94 and on 21st Avenue option instead of West Broadway



Figure 3: Photo from August Community Meeting

Anti-Displacement Survey

The Anti-Displacement recommendations from CURA and the Anti-Displacement Work Group were released in May 2023 and the project team solicited feedback from the public on the recommendations via a survey from May-August 2023. Below are the themes from the responses.

Question 1: What desired outcomes of anti-displacement strategies are most important to you?

Themes in responses: Community empowerment and transparency in the decision-making process and support of residents and businesses throughout all phases of the project were the most desired outcomes of anti-displacement strategies

Question 2: Which anti-displacement strategies would you personally prioritize?



Themes in responses: Affordable housing preservation/development, limitation of investor purchasing/corporate ownership, and small business support were anti-displacement strategies that should be prioritized

Question 2: Are there other anti-displacement policies or strategies you think should be considered?

Themes in responses: Themes included commitment to community development that specifically increases safety, walkability and urban amenities in the corridor and economic renewal and opportunity to local businesses as a result of the Blue Line Extension

Advisory Committees

The Business Advisory Committee (BAC), Community Advisory Committee (CAC), and Corridor Management Committee (CMC) met monthly from June through August to introduce the new committee members, review committee charters, discuss the roles of the committees and their members, and receive a project update from staff. Discussion during these meetings included:

- BAC: Conversation was had regarding the recommendation of light rail tracks on 21st Avenue and improvements to West Broadway, as part of the project. Members also asked for more clarity on resources that will be available to businesses during construction.
- CAC: Several members expressed a desire for more details regarding station locations and amenities. Additionally, there was discussion regarding the recommendation of light rail tracks on 21st Avenue, including specific concerns regarding safety and security as well as development opportunities.
- CMC: Members asked for continual updates on the progress of Anti-Displacement prior to design decisions.