



Engagement Strategies and Approach

January – May 2024

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): 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): 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.
- **Round 9** (September to December 2023): Feedback from business owners along the corridor. Staff also received feedback on two proposed route options in the North Loop neighborhood of Minneapolis.
- **Round 10** (January to May 2024): Shared 30% design plans and solicited feedback on how BLE infrastructure can improve local neighborhoods through engineering design, anti-displacement initiatives, station design, and station area planning work.



This document summarizes the feedback received during the tenth round of public engagement from January to May 2024, including a summary of responses and questions received from public meetings, online surveys, and the interactive feedback map. Project staff have engaged with the public about the project through the following events:

Public meetings (9 in-person, 1 virtual)

Virtual Meetings

- METRO Blue Line Extension Quarterly Community Meeting (~45 attendees total)
 - Wed, February 28 starting at 5:30 p.m.

In-person meetings

- Great Day in Transit (~15 attendees)
 - Wed, January 17 at Metro Blue Line Stations
- 2024 Community Connections Conference (~170 attendees)
 - Sat, February 17 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Minneapolis Convention Center
- Crystal Open House (~98 attendees)
 - Thu, Mar 7 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Crystal Community Center
- Your Blue Line Extension, North Minneapolis and Beyond (~25 attendees)
 - Fri, March 22 at Summit Academy OIC
- Robbinsdale Open House (~126 attendees)
 - Tue, April 9 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Elim Lutheran Church
- Blue Line Extension Minneapolis Design Charette for West Broadway Avenue (~40 attendees)
 - Mon, April 15 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at Capri Theater
- Minneapolis Open House (~60 attendees)
 - Wed, April 17 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Capri Theater
- Brooklyn Park Open House (~70 attendees)
 - Tue, April 23 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Brooklyn Park Library
- METRO Blue Line Extension Quarterly Community Meeting (~30 attendees)
 - Wed, May 15 from 5:00 to 7 p.m. at Capri Theater



Meeting Types

- Open House
 - Open houses featured informational boards and detailed route layouts. Staff were present to answer questions and take notes from community members as they explored the information.
- Community Meeting/Quarterly Meeting
 - Community meeting featured a presentation followed by a Q&A, informational boards displaying the proposed route and background information on the project as well as large engineering layouts with a more detailed view of the route. 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 the latest design of the route/stations, environmental review schedule, and updates on the anti-displacement initiative. This was followed by a question-and-answer session.
- Design Charette for West Broadway Ave
 - Staff met with business owners along West Broadway in Minneapolis to discuss their vision for the reconstruction of West Broadway.

Other Meeting Metrics:

- 20 community cohort meetings and pop-up events
- 27 events with stakeholder and business representatives
- 5 Advisory Committee meetings
- 2 Minnesota Senate Hearings
- 496 interactive map and survey comments
- Many more questions, one one-on-one stakeholder meetings, and phone calls



Figure 1 Image of Brooklyn Park Open House on April 24, 2024



Common Engagement Themes

Below are common themes that emerged from feedback received during this round of engagement.

- Anti-displacement
 - Concern that the light rail will change neighborhood character, especially along West Broadway
 - Desire for light rail to create new small businesses along the corridor rather than drive them away
 - Design stations that feel inclusive and integrated with the community through logical placement and incorporation of local art
- Construction
 - Concerns about construction impacts on community and businesses
- Environmental
 - Hope this project will not introduce excessive noise pollution, structural eye sores, or uncleanness
 - Increase access and trail connections to nearby parks
- Pedestrian accessibility
 - Desire for the light rail to be easy and safe to get to for walkers and bikers
 - General improvements to surrounding pedestrian infrastructure and trails
 - Traffic calming near light rail stations and along corridor
- Safety
 - Fear that the light rail will introduce crime and drug use to neighborhoods along the corridor
- Staff accountability
 - The project office needs to offer solutions to recurring project concerns such as public safety, parking, displacement, etc.
 - Fear that promises will not be fulfilled

Feedback from Open Houses

Crystal (3/7/2024)

- Ensure the light rail is safe for all to use and doesn't introduce more crime or drug use
- Design stations that are welcoming and incorporate art representative of the community
- Create easy pedestrian access to stations
- Excited for easier transit access to downtown
- Mitigate noise pollution and other environmental impacts from the project



Robbinsdale (4/9/2024)

- Make the light rail a comfortable, well-lit, crime-free community resource
- Focus on making the light rail somewhere safe and accessible for pedestrians
 - Slow down traffic near 36th Ave N
 - Incorporate bike-friendly infrastructure
 - Construct new walking trails—particularly along lakes
- Looking forward to easier access to theater district and sports games
- Happy to see Lowry station will be at grade
- Mitigate noise pollution during and after completion of project

Minneapolis (4/17/2024)

- Desire for light rail project to create more small businesses along corridor
- Regular and dependable bus access to and from light rail stations
- Display cultural art from folks in the community at stations
 - Interest in commemorating Ewald Bros. Dairy
- Introduce more greenery along W Broadway
- Improve trails and walkability along corridor
- Build the light rail to be well-lit and ensure it is safe and crime free for years to come
- Use design features like flashing cross walks and bike lanes that protect pedestrians
 - Slow down car traffic along corridor

Brooklyn Park (4/23/2024)

- Make sure the light rail is crime and drug free
- Create stations that are easily accessible from north and south bound sides
- Connect light rail stations to local business hubs

West Broadway Improvements Feedback

In addition to the other roads that the Blue Line Extension route travels on, West Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis will be rebuilt from curb to curb between James and Lyndale avenues. This will allow for improvements to lighting, landscaping, benches, and other streetscape elements to provide the community with a safer and more welcoming environment.

At the Minneapolis Business Meeting on April 15, 2024, project staff asked business owners which streetscape elements were most appealing to them. The categories included Seating and Sidewalks, Parking and Crossings, Planting and Sidewalks, Stormwater Management, Night Time



Experience, and Art and Elements. Attendees were given a selection of images for each of these categories which showed different examples of these streetscape elements across the Twin Cities. Responses are shown below

What Residents Want to See

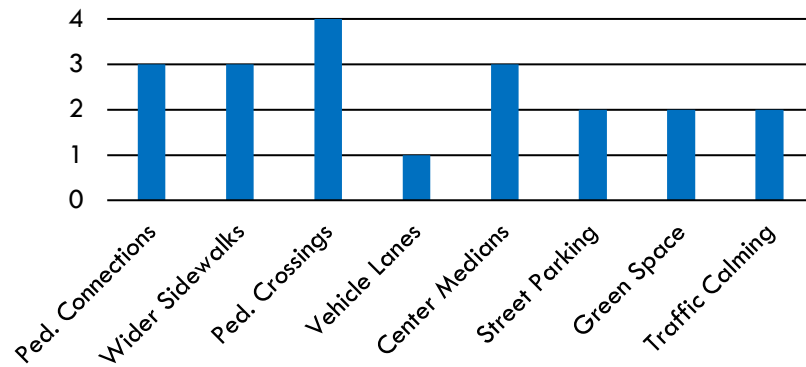


Figure 2 The chart above shows that residents were most interested in pedestrian improvements, such as more crossings and connections, wider sidewalks, and center medians. They were least interested in additional vehicle lanes

What Business Owners Want to See

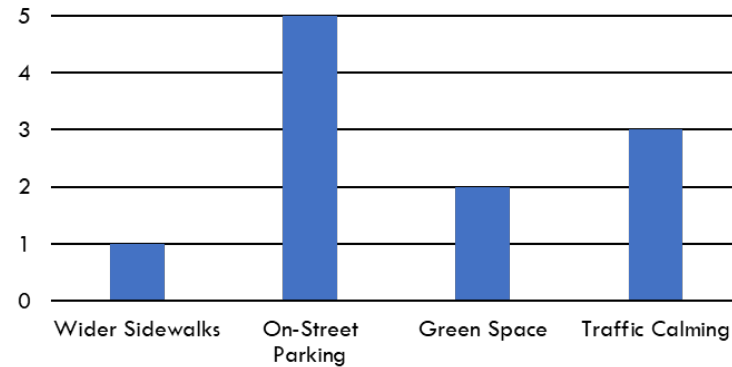


Figure 3 The chart above shows that West Broadway business owners were most interested in additional on-street parking options and traffic calming. They were least interested in wider sidewalks.

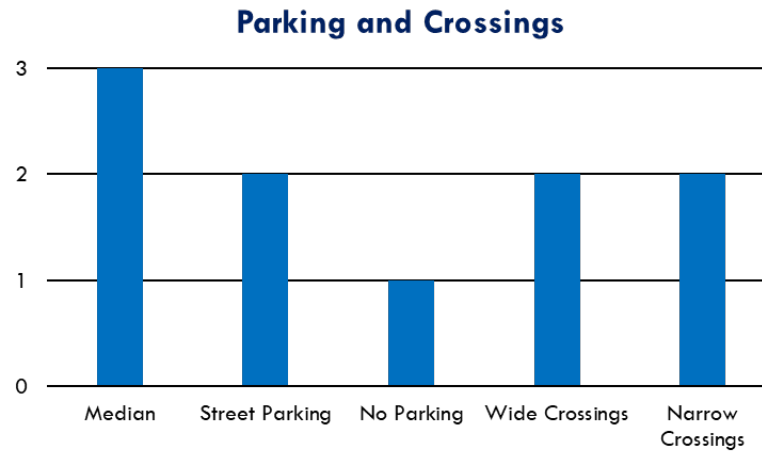


Figure 4 Respondents were most interested in medians

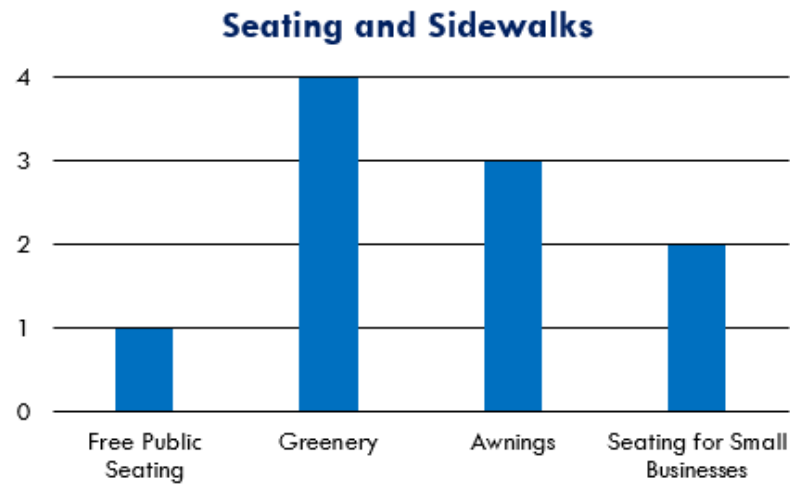


Figure 5 Respondents were most interested in greenery

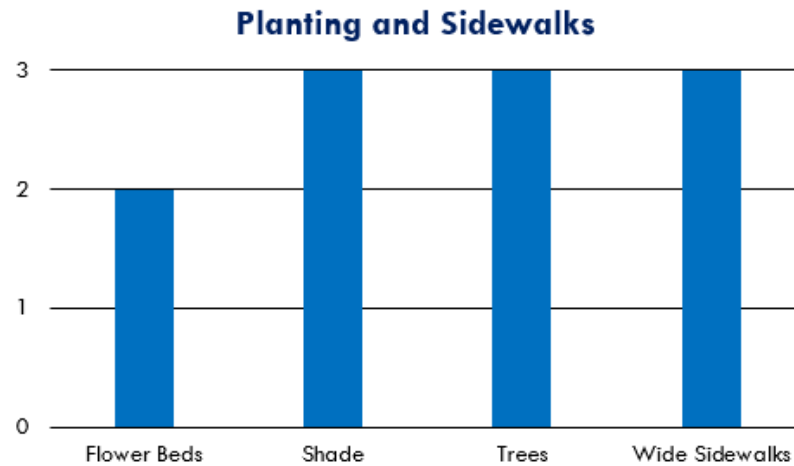


Figure 6 Respondents were most interested in wide sidewalks and shade

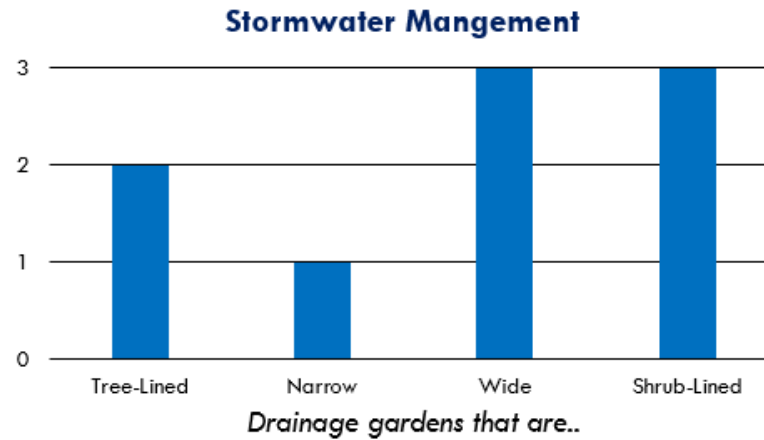


Figure 7 Responders were most interested in wide and shrub-lined drainage gardens

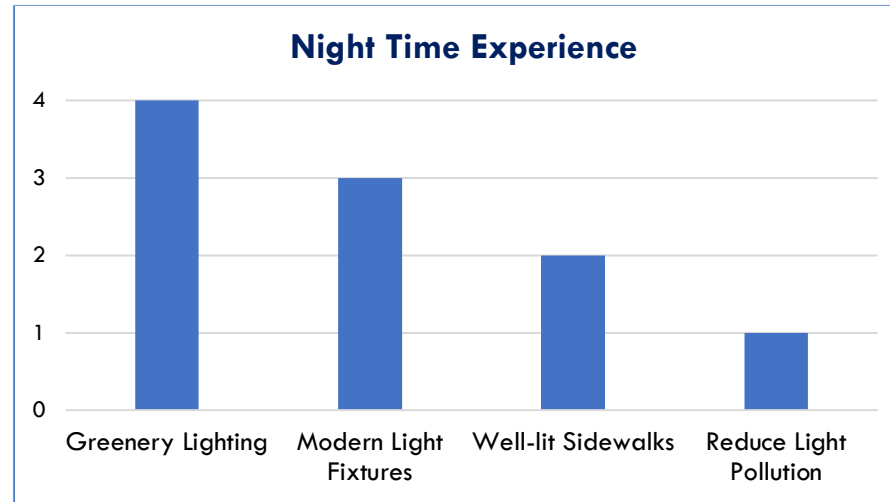


Figure 8 Respondents want to see lighting in green spaces

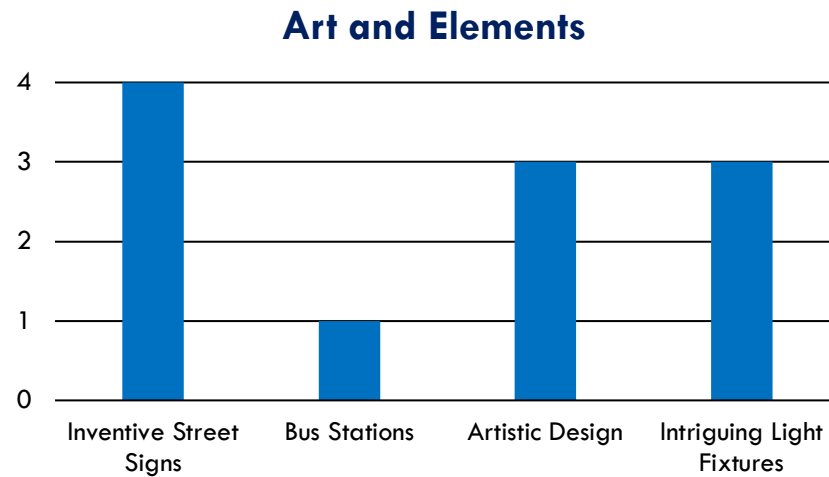


Figure 9 Respondents want to see inventive street signs

Interactive Map Comments (March to May 2024)

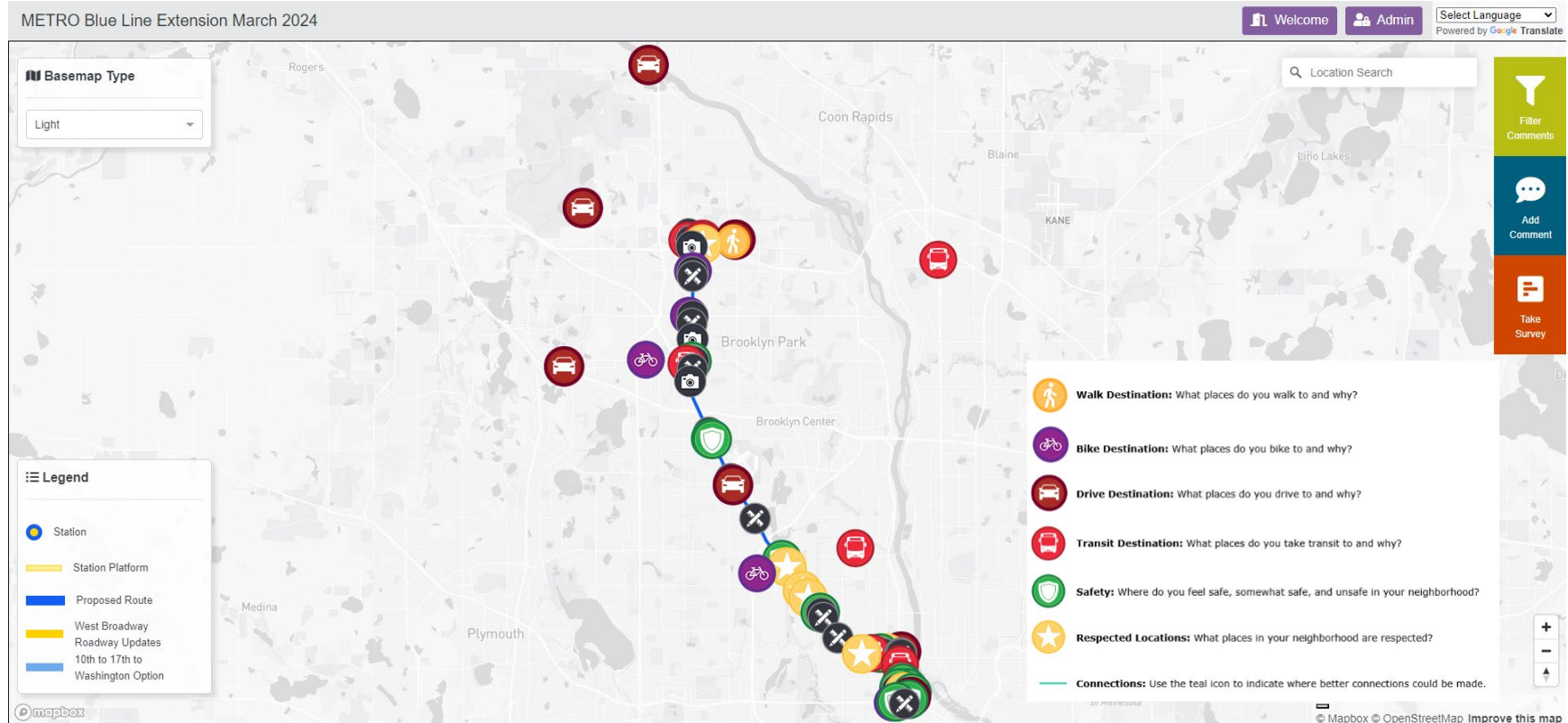


Figure 10 Image of comment pins on interactive map

The interactive map (updated in March 2024) featured and sought feedback on the 30% design plans and asked for feedback on how BLE infrastructure and investments can achieve neighborhood aspirations and desired amenities or connections via the BLE project. **128** comments were received between March and May 2024.



Table 1. Comment pins on the interactive map

City	Total Number of Comments	Walk Destinations	Bike Destinations	Drive Destinations	Transit Destinations	Safety	Respected Locations	Visualizations (replies)	Engineering Drawings (replies)
Brooklyn Park	31	1	7	6	10	3	1	2	1
Crystal	4	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
Robbinsdale	29	0	1	0	1	3	10	10	4
Minneapolis	33	0	4	2	4	11	5	5	2

Map Feedback Themes

Walk Destinations

Desire for:

- BLE alignment should end near shops and housing

Bike Destinations

Desire for:

- Dedicated and protected bike lanes on 93rd Ave, West Broadway, Jefferson Hwy, and 85th Ave
- Connection to Shingle Creek Regional Trail and other trails
- New bike path that connects to downtown Robbinsdale
- Bike bridge over Hwy 100 to connect to downtown Robbinsdale
- Protected bike lanes on 93^d Avenue and West Broadway

Drive Destinations

Desire for:



- Traffic congestion mitigation at the Washington-Broadway intersection
- Pedestrian safety improvements near 3rd Ave

Transit Destinations

Desire for:

- Connection to Camden and other North Minneapolis neighborhoods
- Direct connection to Target Campus
- Connection to D-Line (BRT)
- Shuttle that connects riders to stations

Safety

Desire for:

- Improved pedestrian crossings and safety near the 63rd Avenue station area and Bass Lake Road interchange
- Intersection improvements near the Lowry Avenue station location
- Traffic calming in North Loop and along West Broadway

Respected Locations

Desire for:

- Businesses to benefit from the BLE
- Stations to be located near restaurants, shops, and other community amenities
- Historic preservation in North Loop and downtown Robbinsdale

Visualizations (replies)

Desire for:

- Traffic calming design around Brooklyn Boulevard station
- Downtown Robbinsdale station to be closer to the central, dense district
- The Lowry Avenue station to have high-quality pedestrian facilities
- Ped, bike, and transit-only bridge on 21st Ave
- Protected bike lanes near Plymouth Avenue station



Engineering Drawings (replies)

Desire for:

- Pedestrian connectivity across Bottineau near the 47th Avenue to 39th Avenue station
- Cost efficient roadway improvements
- Separate crossings across 21st Avenue for ped/bikers, transit, and drivers

Neighborhood Survey

Project staff solicited feedback at community meetings and via an online survey on how the BLE could better serve the needs of the corridor and how it could fit into communities. Minneapolis residents were also asked about West Broadway improvements. Below are the themes from the responses.

Neighborhood Aspirations

Brooklyn Park

What do you value about your neighborhood?

- Diversity
- Local parks

What is something missing in your neighborhood that would make life easier?

- Safer streets for bikers/walkers
- Faster and more frequent bus routes that connect to northwest suburbs

How can your values be reflected in this light rail project?

- Equitable transit access

How could your culture be better represented in your neighborhood in the future?

- Include cultural art and representations in station design

What history do you think needs to be made visible in your neighborhood?

- The displaced businesses near 63rd Ave N



How could your neighborhood bring you joy?

- Safer streets
- Improved and widened sidewalks and protected bike lanes

What do you want future neighborhood residents to thank you in regard to your guiding of this project?

- Improved access and connections throughout the metro area

What do you want this neighborhood to be like in 10-20 years?

- Improved connectivity
- Less car-centric and more people-centered neighborhoods
- More home ownership opportunities

Crystal/Robbinsdale

What do you value about your neighborhood?

- Quiet and peaceful
- Safe
- Small-town feeling
- Sense of community

What is something missing in your neighborhood that would make life easier?

- Well-maintained pedestrian trails
- Destinations that do not require car use
- Better street lighting
- Separate bike and pedestrian paths
- More retail and restaurants

How can your values be reflected in this light rail project?

- Build a city for people, not cars
- Protecting the neighborhood feel of the community
- Making businesses more accessible to visitors



How could your culture be better represented in your neighborhood in the future?

- Inclusive celebrations and festivals
- Lessen reliance on cars

What history do you think needs to be made visible in your neighborhood?

- Quaint downtown
- Protect and celebrate local businesses

How could your neighborhood bring you joy?

- Update streets in need of repair
- Improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure
- Slower car speeds/less traffic
- Splash pad and/or swimming pool

What do you want future neighborhood residents to thank you in regard to your guiding of this project?

- Ease of access to city and surrounding areas
- Livable and connected neighborhood
- Opposing the project

What do you want this neighborhood to be like in 10-20 years?

- Walkable and bikeable
- Safe
- Less cars
- Environmentally friendly/green
- More parks and recreation opportunities

Minneapolis

What do you value about your neighborhood?

- Walkability and pedestrian-friendly
- Low crime



Questions

- What do you value about your neighborhood?
- What is something that is missing in your neighborhood that would make your life easier?
- How can your values be reflected in this light rail project?
- How could your culture be better represented in your neighborhood in the future?
- What history do you think needs to be made visible in your neighborhood?
- How could your neighborhood bring you joy?
- What do you want future neighborhood residents to thank you for in regard to your guiding of this project?
- What do you want this neighborhood to be like in 10-20 years?



METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION



Figure 11 Sample questions on the Blue Line Extension Neighborhood Aspirations survey



- Shops, restaurants, and other destinations
- Sense of community
- Parks and nature

What is something missing in your neighborhood that would make life easier?

- Train and public transport options
- Safe and quality crosswalks (dedicated, raised, underpass, flashing lights)
- Less car traffic and more pedestrian-only areas

How can your values and culture be reflected in this light rail project?

- Value pedestrians over cars
- Dense growth
- Modern urban infrastructure

How could your culture be better represented in your neighborhood in the future?

- Connection to nature
- Prioritize local residents over visitors
- Indigenous culture represented on line

What history do you think needs to be made visible in your neighborhood?

- Streetcar era of Minneapolis
- North Loop historic district/protect warehouses
- Place cards on historic buildings

How could your neighborhood bring you joy?

- Connect people and support friendly environments
- Better walking connections to popular destinations
- Less traffic

What do you want future neighborhood residents to thank you in regard to your guiding of this project?

- Logical station locations
- Safe crossings



- Improving access

What do you want this neighborhood to be like in 10-20 years?

- Mixed-use shops and buildings
- Dense and thriving
- Less cars and more pedestrians and bicyclists
- Green spaces
- Quiet and peaceful
- People-centric neighborhoods

West Broadway

Do you visit any places along West Broadway?

- Yes – 41%
- No – 59%

What places do you hang out along West Broadway?

- MPS Schools HQ
- Capri Theatre

What places do you tend to avoid along West Broadway?

- I do not avoid, but I do not go often because it is challenging to get to
- Merwin Liquors area

How would you like to be able to describe West Broadway in the future?

- Cultural corridor
- Walkable/bikeable
- Accessible
- Thriving businesses
- Happy residents and community



Do you think events that close West Broadway to vehicles are positive or negative for the neighborhood? Have you attended such events? Why or why not?

- Positive – 80%
 - Events such as Juneteenth and Open Streets are fun and will improve West Broadway
 - Supports community connection
 - Pedestrians and walking should be prioritized over driving
- Negative – 20%
 - No car access can harm businesses and reduce the ability to navigate/visit the neighborhood

What is something that is missing from West Broadway that you would like to see in the future?

- Green spaces
- Effective public transit
- Pedestrian infrastructure
- Safety
- Dense housing

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.
- Heritage Park Association
- Juxtaposition Arts
- Lao Assistance Center of MN
- Liberian Business Association
- NEON
- Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza
- One MN



Public Engagement Report (January – May 2024)

METRO Blue Line Extension

During cohort check-in meetings, cohort members gave 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 January to May 2024, members shared feedback they had received during their engagement efforts. Feedback included:

- Anti-Displacement
 - Concern about construction impacts on local businesses
 - Curiosity about funding allocation to the anti-displacement initiative
 - Desire for status updates on anti-displacement work
- Engagement
 - Desire for more one-on-one meetings between project staff, community members, and businesses
 - Not all communities are aware/know about the BLE project