



9 Consultation and Coordination

Planning for the Project involves extensive outreach and coordination with community members residing in the Project area, as well as individuals, businesses, groups, clubs, civic organizations, and others interested in the Project. Agency coordination has involved local governments and State and federal agencies with regulatory oversight and permitting responsibilities. This chapter summarizes the efforts and outcomes of the various consultation and coordination efforts made for the Project.

9.1 Public Outreach and Engagement

The following sections identify goals and objectives, strategies, and communications methods employed during public outreach and engagement for the Project.

9.1.1 Guiding Goals and Principles

The overarching goal of public outreach through the route modification phase of the Project is to collaborate with various communities in the Project area to identify an alignment that upholds equity and community trust while meeting the growing regional transit demand. Primary engagement principles guiding public outreach for the Project are as follows:

- **Meaningfully engage stakeholders:** Honoring and building on previous robust community engagement and tailoring engagement practices to meet the needs of the individual communities in the Project area.
- **Engage, inform, and consult diverse communities to co-create project solutions that reduce disparities:** Ensuring that communities of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities are engaged so that all communities and Project cities share in growth opportunities, with an emphasis on low-income and cultural communities. Engage to use community goals, priorities, and criteria for growth to inform decision-making and adjust strategies and approach as needed to ensure that Project area communities are fully represented in engagement efforts. In addition, prioritize informal engagement throughout the design process as alignments and LRT station options have been refined.

9.1.2 Outreach Team

The Project is co-led by Council and Hennepin County. Engagement conducted for the Project involves partnerships and collaboration with local organizations and community groups including:

- The Council (Blue Line Extension Project Office Engagement Team)
- Advisory/steering committees
- Municipalities (Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis)
- Hennepin County
- Bottineau Community Works (Hennepin County)
- Community engagement cohort organizations (identified in Table 9-1)
- Cultivate Arts Initiative (Hennepin County)
- Anti Displacement Working Group (Hennepin County)
- CURA (University of Minnesota)
- Elevate Hennepin (Hennepin County)

9.1.2.1 Blue Line Extension Project Engagement (Council)

The Blue Line Extension Engagement Team includes dedicated Council and Hennepin County Project Staff. Led by the Public Involvement Manager, community outreach coordinators are assigned by geography along the Project area. A Community Engagement Framework describes the context for how and why Project staff engage and communicate with the multiple audiences within the Project area and across the region and is available on the Project website in English and Spanish.¹



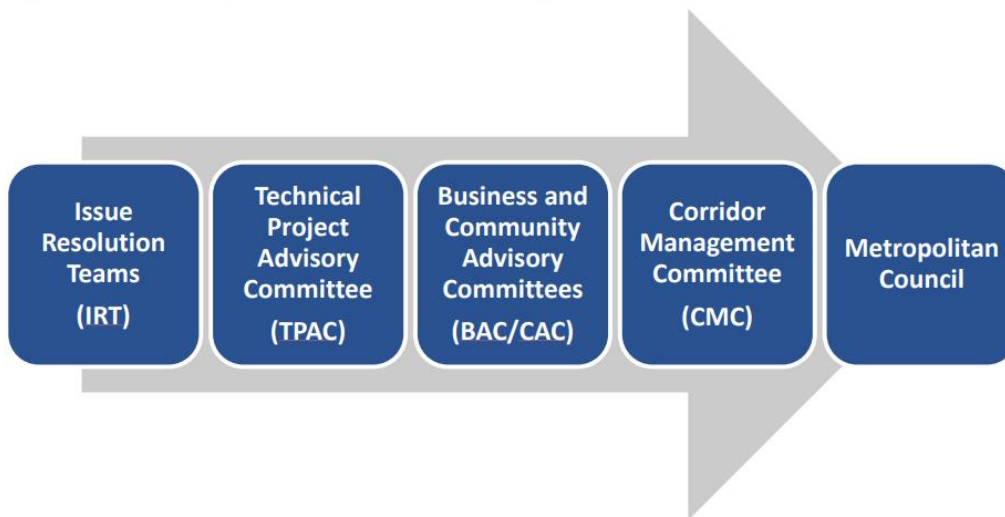
9.1.2.2 Advisory Committees

Advisory committees continue to provide critical guidance and support to the Project. Advisory committees include the BAC, CAC, CMC, and TPAC. The CMC has a voting seat for the BAC and the CAC among other voting seats. The CMC also includes a voting seat for BLC.² BLC represents 12 organizations from immigrant/refugee; low-wealth; and BIPOC communities in the Project area. Project staff maintains regular communication and meetings with BLC.

Advisory committee decisions and Project development are informed by results and recommendations developed by Issue Resolution Teams. Issue Resolution Teams are geographically focused and include Council representatives from the Project’s engineering and environmental staff, Metro Transit Engineering and Facilities, Hennepin County, MnDOT, Project cities, and administrators of park properties in the Project area.

Advisory Committees convene monthly to elevate technical questions regarding light rail design, provide guidance on selection of a preferred alignment, and address community concerns. Committee roles in Project decision-making are shown in Figure 9-1.

Figure 9-1 Metropolitan Council Decision-Making Process



9.1.2.3 Bottineau Community Works

Since 1994, Hennepin County Community Works has partnered with cities and other agencies, businesses, neighborhood organizations, and Hennepin County residents to build the long-term value of communities; create and sustain great places; and make quality investments in redevelopment, transportation, public-works infrastructure, parks, trails, and the environment. In 2015, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners established Bottineau Community Works (BCW), a collaborative partnership between Hennepin County and the Cities of Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park to coordinate planning, policy, and infrastructure improvements to help realize the community and economic benefits of LRT. In addition, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has allocated \$14.2 million in capital funding for investments through BCW.



BCW has a steering committee that meets monthly and provides policymaking direction and the Bottineau Technical Implementation Committee, comprising staff who focus on project identification, management, and implementation. BCW was the subrecipient of a grant received by the Council from FTA's Pilot Program for TOD. These grant funds were used to build on previously completed station area planning work. With the addition of funding from public and philanthropic partners, the grant funds were used to complete work to attract and guide development in station areas. This work includes:

- Analyzing and meeting housing needs and opportunities
- Considering and implementing transit-friendly zoning changes
- Conducting a Commercial Market Analysis
- Planning for potential retail market and commercial development
- Project-wide marketing and branding
- Developing wayfinding systems
- Supporting small businesses
- Activating station areas through arts and placemaking

In 2023, BCW work centered around five focus areas: TOD, small business support, workforce connections, infrastructure investments, and placemaking and is on-going. Work in these areas is designed to expand wealth-building opportunities for residents and business owners, create sustainable development that meets community goals and desires, increase access to and skills readiness for family-sustaining jobs, make communities more walkable and bikeable, and amplify the success and vibrancy of cultural and community assets.

BCW funded the Affordable Commercial Incentive Fund, place-based investments to support small business growth and local economic prosperity. The Affordable Commercial Incentive Fund, formerly known as the Community Investment Initiative, aims to grow long-term economic opportunity and support community wealth building by supporting development projects that provide affordable commercial spaces and ownership opportunities for locally owned small businesses. In 2023, up to \$500,000 was available to support eligible projects only in Project area communities within one-half mile of LRT stations. The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners approved this funding as one early strategy to strengthen Project area businesses and grow community prosperity in areas that will be served by the Project.

For additional details on engagement relating to economic impacts, see Chapter 4.

9.1.2.4 Community Engagement Cohort

Since 2020, the Project has extended the reach of its communications and public involvement by directly contracting with multiple community and cultural groups. This current cohort model was built on the foundation from 2016 Project planning processes that included the Health Equity Engagement Cohort, which was active from 2013 to 2018.

These groups' experience, expertise, and trusted relationship networks in the Project area are essential to ensuring that the needs and concerns of all communities are understood and incorporated into Project development. Each phase of community engagement has a different configuration of cohort members ranging from three members to 15 members depending on the level of engagement required. A summary of each phase is provided to project staff that includes cohort final reports. Cohort organizations meet monthly with Project staff to report community feedback, share upcoming events, and learn about timely Project updates. Community cohort organizations were selected based on the geography and cultural groups they represent (Table 9-1).



Table 9-1 Community Cohort Overview

Organization	Community Focus
A Mothers Love	Residents and small businesses in North Minneapolis and the City of Robbinsdale
Asian Media Access	Asian and immigrant community in North Minneapolis and the City of Brooklyn Park
Blue Line Coalition	Coalition of EJ communities in the entire Project area
CAPI USA	Asian and immigrant communities in North Minneapolis and northwest suburbs
Center for Leadership & Neighborhood Engagement	North Minneapolis faith communities and neighborhood groups
Encouraging Leaders	Youth and young adults, faith leaders in North Minneapolis
Harrison Neighborhood Association	Low-income residents and residents of color in the Harrison neighborhood, City of Minneapolis
Hawthorne Area Community Council	Low-income residents and residents of color in the Hawthorne neighborhood, City of Minneapolis
Heritage Park Neighborhood Association	Low-income residents and residents of color in the Heritage Park neighborhood, City of Minneapolis
Jordan Area Community Council	Low-income residents and residents of color in the Jordan neighborhood, City of Minneapolis
Juxtaposition Arts	Youth and transit customers in North Minneapolis
Lao Assistance Center	Lao and Hmong residents, businesses, and community leaders in the Project area
Liberian Business Association	Liberian and immigrant small businesses along with community leaders in the Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, and Robbinsdale
Northside Economic Development Network	Small businesses and faith-based leaders in North Minneapolis
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council	Low-income residents and residents of color in the Near North and Willard Hay neighborhoods, City of Minneapolis
Pueblos de Lucha Y Esperanza	Latino/Latinx community in the Project area
West Broadway Business & Area Coalition	Businesses and organizations within the W Broadway Ave corridor in North Minneapolis

9.1.2.5 Cultivate Arts Initiative

Cultivate Bottineau: Culture, Community, and Commerce (Cultivate) was a collaborative effort to activate spaces, build connections, celebrate diversity, and promote opportunity through local artist-led creative placemaking projects in the Project area. Supported by the McKnight Foundation, this project was coordinated by BCW and Springboard for the Arts in partnership with the Cities of Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park and other community organizations from January 2018 to October 2019.

Cultivate was reactivated in July 2022, and collaboration continues with local artists to engage communities in the Project area to inform the community about Project planning, build artist capacity, demonstrate arts and placemaking tools, and activate the creative economy. *Cultivate* leads multiple culturally representative, arts-based engagement events in communities along the Project area each year. Events, center around music, dance, paint, photography, and interactive art installations, and educating communities about the Project. Through these efforts, *Cultivate* engaged thousands of residents from a diverse range of ages and cultural backgrounds. From August to December 2023, Cultivate Arts provided a creative approach to engaging Project communities with workshops,



conversations, concerts, and other cultural programs that highlighted the diversity of Project area and continues in 2024. More information is available on the Your Blue Line Extension website <https://yourblueline.org/Cultivate>.³

9.1.2.6 Anti-Displacement Working Group

The Council and Hennepin County selected the University of Minnesota's CURA to lead an anti-displacement initiative. This program has been added to the Project scope to respond to community input received during the outreach and engagement phases of the Project.

CURA is working with community members, philanthropic representatives, and government representatives to identify strategies to minimize displacement and to support equitable development and community wealth building. The work group's 26 members include residents and business owners in the Project area, some of whom have experienced displacement, and representatives from the philanthropic community and government agencies within the Project area. Monthly public meetings and four day-long workshops were held between May 2022 and February 2023. Workshop materials and the published recommendations report are available on the Project website, [Anti-Displacement Efforts - Metropolitan Council \(metrocity.org\)](https://metrocity.org/anti-displacement).⁴ Future anti-displacement work focuses on implementation, including potential Project mitigation measures.

The CMC received CURA's report and directed advancement in partnership with project sponsors to coordinate, explore, and develop a proposed framework and public engagement plan with community members, public, non-profit, philanthropic, and private sector partners. The goal is to attain the Report's recommended outcomes, including securing funds needed for implementation for anti-displacement measures before, during, and after the Project construction.

The planning and implementation of the recommended outcomes and potential policies and programs that achieve those outcomes is underway. Local agencies are meeting monthly to select, adapt, and adopt various policies to put into action collectively. Initial effort seeks concurrence on Project-wide policies and to prioritize action on protecting the current Project area communities. Additionally, development of a draft framework and engagement plan to collaborate with the larger community is underway.

For a summary of public outreach and engagement with EJ communities, see Chapter 7 subsection 7.3.2.

9.1.2.7 Elevate Hennepin County

In collaboration with the Project, Elevate Hennepin⁵ offers support and resources at no cost to help businesses along the planned routes. The resource hub is powered by Hennepin County to connect local entrepreneurs to trusted resources and expert advisors. For additional details on engagement relating to economic impacts, see Chapter 4.

9.1.3 Public Outreach Approach and Timeline

Public involvement through the 2016 Draft EIS and Final EIS established the framework for the engagement conducted for this Supplemental Draft EIS. The technical, social, economic, and environmental issues and concerns that were identified in the early stages of public involvement have been considered throughout Project development. Project partners are working closely with a variety of partners, businesses, cities, and other stakeholders to involve as many voices as possible in the planning and decision-making processes.

Community engagement entered a new phase in 2020 following the initiation of the Project in its current iteration. Outreach and engagement activities continue to evolve as Project design and decision-making advance. Project engagement has been divided into four phases, which are described in the following sections.



9.1.3.1 October 2020 through June 2021

An initial phase of public outreach re-activated community relationships, updated the community on the new direction of the Project, conducted stakeholder analysis to identify key cultural groups and communities, and collected recommendations for engagement strategies. Three community organizations (BLC, Harrison Neighborhood Association, and Juxtaposition Arts) organized stakeholder interviews, surveys, and community listening sessions. Table 9-2 describes concerns, recommendations, and themes that emerged from this preliminary engagement.

Table 9-2. Recommendations from Initial Community Input on Engagement Strategies

Theme	Recommendations
Coordinate and collaborate across Project partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure that the Project Management Team of Hennepin County and Metro Transit are coordinated and collaborative in their approach to community engagement that includes the BAC, CAC, and future community consultants such as engagement cohorts, nonprofits, EJ representatives, and faith organizations. ■ Continue to consult and inform Project area partners on community engagement strategies, tactics, and activities.
Partner with community consultants to improve and expand community engagement efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement an open Request for Proposals process soliciting proposals from the refreshed Project stakeholder list, focusing on community and cultural nonprofits that serve residents and small businesses in the Project area. ■ Ensure that the evaluation panel for the proposals has representatives from communities of color. ■ Select consultants to work together as a cohort coordinating their communications and outreach across their focused communities, complimentary services, and areas served. ■ Apply a tiered funding approach to contracts, evaluating and awarding contracts according to level of services provided and area(s) served. ■ Contract with community and cultural organizations that have trusted relationships with their residents and small businesses and bring creative ways to engage.
Focus on EJ communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Place emphasis on low-income communities and communities of color by developing culturally specific approaches to engagement. ■ Recognize cultural diversity as a strength and an asset: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are more than 50% of people of color in the Project area, including concentrated populations of African American, African Immigrant (primarily Liberian), Latino/Latinx, and Asian (primarily Lao, Hmong, and Vietnamese) communities. ● Historically, these communities have not always been included in planning processes in their areas. ■ Prioritize translations because multiple populations speak English as their second language. ■ Incorporate a communications plan that uses culturally based media for Project communications. EJ communities are less likely to receive Project information shared through standard communications channels and outlets.



Theme	Recommendations
<p>Incorporate comprehensive engagement approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understand that the community has had frustrations with the new direction but is ready to discuss solutions for new alignments. ■ Address preventing displacement, recognizing that it is a community priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a need for developing strategies, policies, and investments for building wealth in place. ● Approach displacement prevention across agencies and key stakeholders. ● Focus on community benefits such as connecting to jobs and services, climate action, and disparity reduction. ● Address gentrification impacts of the 2016 Alignment in North Minneapolis. ● Include communities in the design of anti-displacement strategies from the beginning. ■ Move at the speed of trust: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize that low-income communities and communities of color have had stressful impacts from COVID-19 and the George Floyd incident. ● Refresh and build sustainable, responsive relationships. ● Utilize community-trusted communication systems. ■ Use plain language in communicating Project status, clearly stating what we are asking community to respond to as well as how community input will influence the outcome. ■ Use more graphics and visualizations to present alignment concepts. ■ Engage communities on tangible elements with clear timelines on decision points. ■ Translate Project materials into Spanish, Lao, Hmong, Vietnamese, Oromo, and Somali. ■ Acknowledge that online surveys can be a useful tool but do not reach low-income communities and communities of color, as well as other approaches. ■ Tie in community input gathered from the beginning of the Project process in 2014, recognizing that this is a continuation of ongoing Project community engagement.
<p>Address 2016 Alignment anticipated impacts and opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acknowledge how the Project Alignment will impact those communities adjacent to the previously planned route. ■ Engage communities along the 2016 Alignment to ensure that positive benefits from the Project are still pursued, including establishing a work group to address the abandoned 2016 Alignment. ■ Recognize that communities were affected by the release of the abandoned 2016 Alignment through impacts such as increased property values and the consequent displacement of community members. ■ Address previous plans for 2016 Alignment infrastructure improvements along Olson Memorial Hwy along with previous station area plans for reinvestment opportunities identified at Van White and Penn Stations.

9.1.3.2 November 2020 to February 2021

To pivot the from the 2016 Alignment identified in the 2016 FEIS, in addition to various engagement activities, a four-month engagement process informed by the cohort focused on community stakeholder analysis and investigating key cultural and community groups in the Project area. This phase recommended the future community engagement strategies and approaches along with analysis of cultural groups and geographies in the Project area. In addition, this phase carried forward specific community issues, concerns, and opportunities to continue engagement efforts.



9.1.3.3 July 2021 to March 2022

This phase of engagement focused on gathering community input on updated design concepts and potential opportunities and impacts of Project alignment and LRT station options. Input was used to guide development of a recommended alignment; locate key destinations and community facilities along the Project area; and identify potential community concerns around traffic, parking, and property impacts.

9.1.3.4 March 2022 to August 2022

Engagement during this phase focused on expanding outreach to community and cultural groups along the Project area and collecting community input leading up to the finalization of a Route Recommendation Report. After the Route Recommendation Report was finalized in June 2022, engagement activities pivoted to focusing on the selection of Project alignment and LRT station options.

9.1.3.5 September 2022 to Present

Beginning in September 2022, community cohort organizations began supporting the environmental review phase of the Project. Outreach conducted during this time frame led to evaluation of Alignment build options in the Cities of Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis. Outreach conducted during this phase continued to improve the understanding of community interests and concerns related to the Project and were conducted in the form of public meetings, community-hosted events, pop-up events, and driveway chats (Figure 9-2).

Figure 9-2 Photograph of Driveway Chat (July 2022)



9.1.4 Public Outreach Activities

Since August 2020, the outreach team and partners have hosted hundreds of in-person and virtual events resulting in nearly 25,000 points of contact with the public (see Figure 9-3). As part of this outreach, the Project contracted with 17 community and cultural organizations to increase feedback and representation from low-income and communities of color. Engagement Reports are published on the Project website as well as a compiled document of



all [public comments](#)⁶ collected in the form of written feedback from surveys, interactive map comments, comment forms, and community meetings.

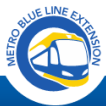
Major themes heard from outreach participants included the following:

- Loss of parking
- Crime and safety
- Avoiding impacts/disruption to communities and the environment
- Safety on transit and in communities served
- Easy pedestrian access to and from LRT stations
- Making anti-displacement efforts a priority
- Support for businesses during construction
- Access to regional destinations
- Supporting economic development
- Improving the transit experience
- Improving access for and serve transit dependent populations

Figure 9-3 Engagement Summary (February 2024)

Engagement Metrics: Aug 2020-Feb 2024

- **800** events resulting in nearly **25,000** points of contact with the public
- **80,000** reach on social media and **6.5 million+** reach through newsletters and paid ads on community and cultural media
- Approximately **4,750** survey responses
- **+3,000** comments on the interactive map
- **350** comments from comment forms
- Corridor postcards mailed to **+28,000**
- Over **5,000** emails and phone calls



9.1.4.1 In-Person and Virtual Events

These events have included public meetings, open houses, listening sessions, tours, door-knocking, and other direct engagement as described in the following sections.

Public Meetings and Open Houses

Public meetings and open houses were held in person and virtually beginning in August 2020 and are ongoing. Content of these meetings varied based on the agendas but was intended to share Project details for feedback and display up-to-date design information. Meeting formats were tailored to the stakeholders involved and the topics at hand.



Listening Sessions

Seven listening sessions were organized and facilitated by the initial community cohort and the Project team to discuss the Project transition, decision-making processes for identifying a community-supported alignment, and community expectations. The purpose of the listening sessions was to allow for community members to provide verbal and written feedback to Project staff with a discussion in both virtual and in-person settings. These listening sessions were focused on low-income communities and communities of color. They were held from November 2020 to January 2021 and had a total of 160 attendees.

In addition, outreach coordinators for the Project met with representatives from the Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis to discuss recommended approaches to future community engagement.

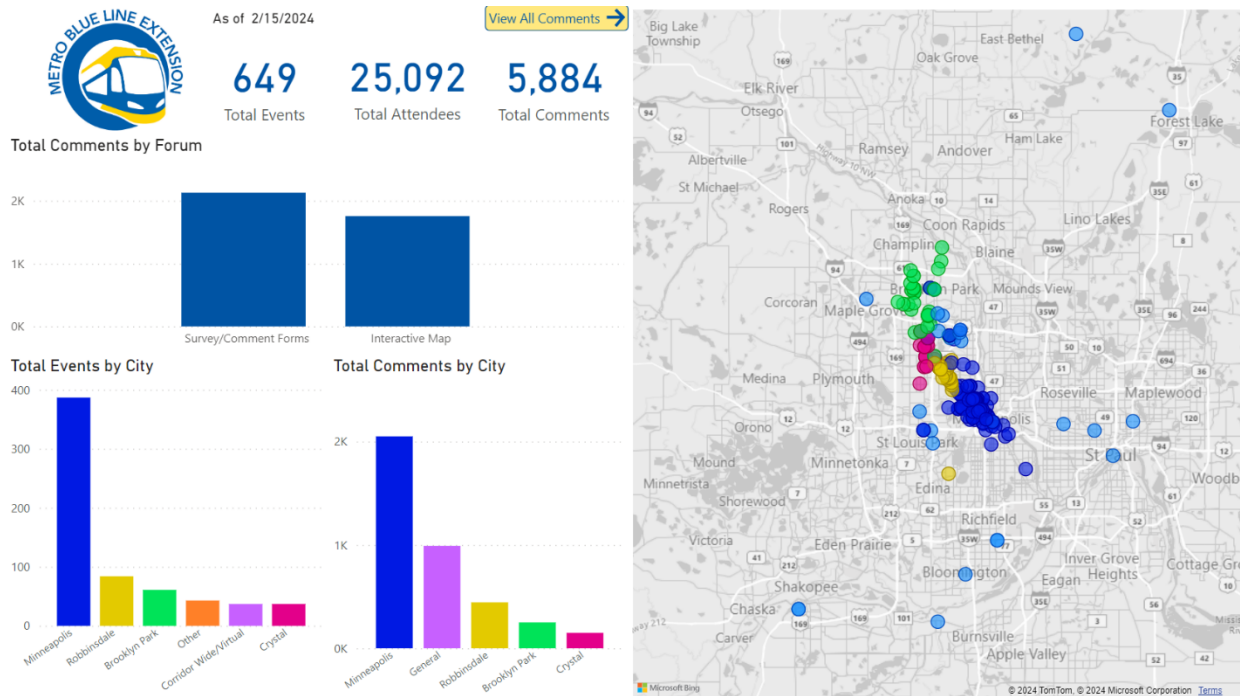
Stakeholder Interviews

Community cohort members organized and facilitated 13 stakeholder interviews with community and culturally based nonprofit leaders whose organizations represent low-income communities and communities of color within the Project area. Interviews began in November 2020 and concluded in late January 2021. At least one Project partner attended every stakeholder interview to provide Project information and to listen to stakeholders.

Project Website Engagement Resources

The Council website includes a Community Engagement page where details about the Community Engagement Framework, Community Engagement Cohort, Community Meetings and Events, Engagement Reports and Comment Data are available. Detailed engagement summaries are summarized in engagement reports available on the [Council website](#)⁷ and in Appendix A-9 of this Supplemental Draft EIS. Additionally, an interactive website overview summary of engagement is available online at <https://yourblueline.org/our-approach-to-engagement>⁸ as shown in Figure 9-4.

Figure 9-4 Council Engagement Comment Data Interactive Website Overview Summary (February 2024)





Community-Led Events

Community-led outreach events were planned and organized by cohort organizations to engage with specific cultural groups and communities along the Project area. These activities included:

- A bus, bike, and walk tour along the Project Alignment followed by a community listening session (see Figure 9-5)
- A tour of the Little Africa Cultural District on the METRO Green Line
- Project-sponsored events with youth apprentices presenting their table top 3D models of alignment options and station area designs
- Tabling and attendance at community events and festivals
- Focus groups in Lao and Spanish
- Focus groups with North Minneapolis small businesses
- Focus groups with immigrant small businesses in the Project area, primarily Asian and Liberian
- Asian American Pacific Islander Summits to discuss economic opportunities
- Community sponsorship of project meetings
- Door knocking small businesses and residents in the Project area
- Outreach and engagement of African American and Latino faith leaders
- Project presentations at community events

Thanks to cohort organizations, community-led outreach continued during the difficult times of COVID-19 and civil unrest. Cohort organizations tabled at COVID-19 testing and vaccination sites, hosted community meetings and focus groups, and supported emergency food shelves and vaccination clinics.

Figure 9-5 Community-Led Bike Tour of the Project Alignment (October 2021)



9.1.4.2 Direct Engagement Activities

Direct engagement activities included community door knocking, driveway talks, and meetings with individual stakeholders. The Project team has also received thousands of emails and phone calls.



9.1.4.3 Project Postcards

Printed Project postcards were mailed to 26,000 residents and businesses to share updates and information in the Project area about the release of the draft and final Route Modification Report and the engagement events being hosted by the Project from June to August 2023.

9.1.4.4 Surveys

Surveys (online and in-person) have been used during different phases of the Project to gather community and stakeholder input. See below for the list:

- A formal community survey (open from December 2020 through February 2021) explored community perspectives regarding the Project updates and received approximately 4,000 responses. The survey asked 21 questions focusing on key destinations, opportunities, issues/concerns, and engagement preferences.
- From March to June 2021, an interactive feedback map and survey were used to ask the public for feedback on the new alignment options and potential station study areas.
- From July to August 2021, an interactive feedback map and survey were used to ask about connections that light rail would make within communities and feedback on station study areas within the alignment options being studied.
- From September to December 2021, an interactive feedback map and survey were used to ask about updated design concepts and potential opportunities and impacts of light-rail options.
- From April to May 2022, an interactive feedback map and survey were used to ask for input on the alignment recommendation as part of the Final Route Modification Report.
- From September to December 2022, an interactive feedback map and survey were used to ask for input on three alignment options between Target Field Station and W Broadway Ave and four alignment options between Washington Ave and Irving Ave in the City of Minneapolis and input on alignment options that will be studied in the environmental document.
- From January to May 2023, an interactive feedback map and survey were used to receive input on the two alignment options between Target Field Station and W Broadway Ave (east of I-94 or Lyndale Ave) and two alignment options between Washington Ave and Irving Ave in the City of Minneapolis (21st Ave or W Broadway Ave).
- From June to August 2023, an interactive feedback map and survey were used to receive input on the east of I-94 alignment options and 21st Ave versus W Broadway Ave alignment options in the City of Minneapolis.
- Community cohort organizations utilized printed project surveys and also conducted independent surveys to gather community perspectives often translating surveys one on one for participants.
- Various quick polls were used on Hennepin County's website to hear feedback on the anti-displacement work and recommendations, approach to engagement on the Project, and feeling toward the Project.
- From October 2023 to February 2024, an online survey hosted at <https://yourblueline.org/> collected feedback on alignment options in the North Loop Neighborhood of the City of Minneapolis, including positives and drawbacks of route options from 10th Ave to Washington Ave and 10th Ave to 17th Ave, as well as possible roadway configurations along 10th Ave, including a transit mall option or one-way traffic option.

9.1.4.5 Community Update Meeting

Project staff are hosting regular community update meetings providing a Project update, held quarterly at a minimum and facilitate a Question and Answer (Q and A) discussion with the community on the Project alignment recommendations, schedule, anti-displacement efforts, impacts and upcoming decision-making opportunities.

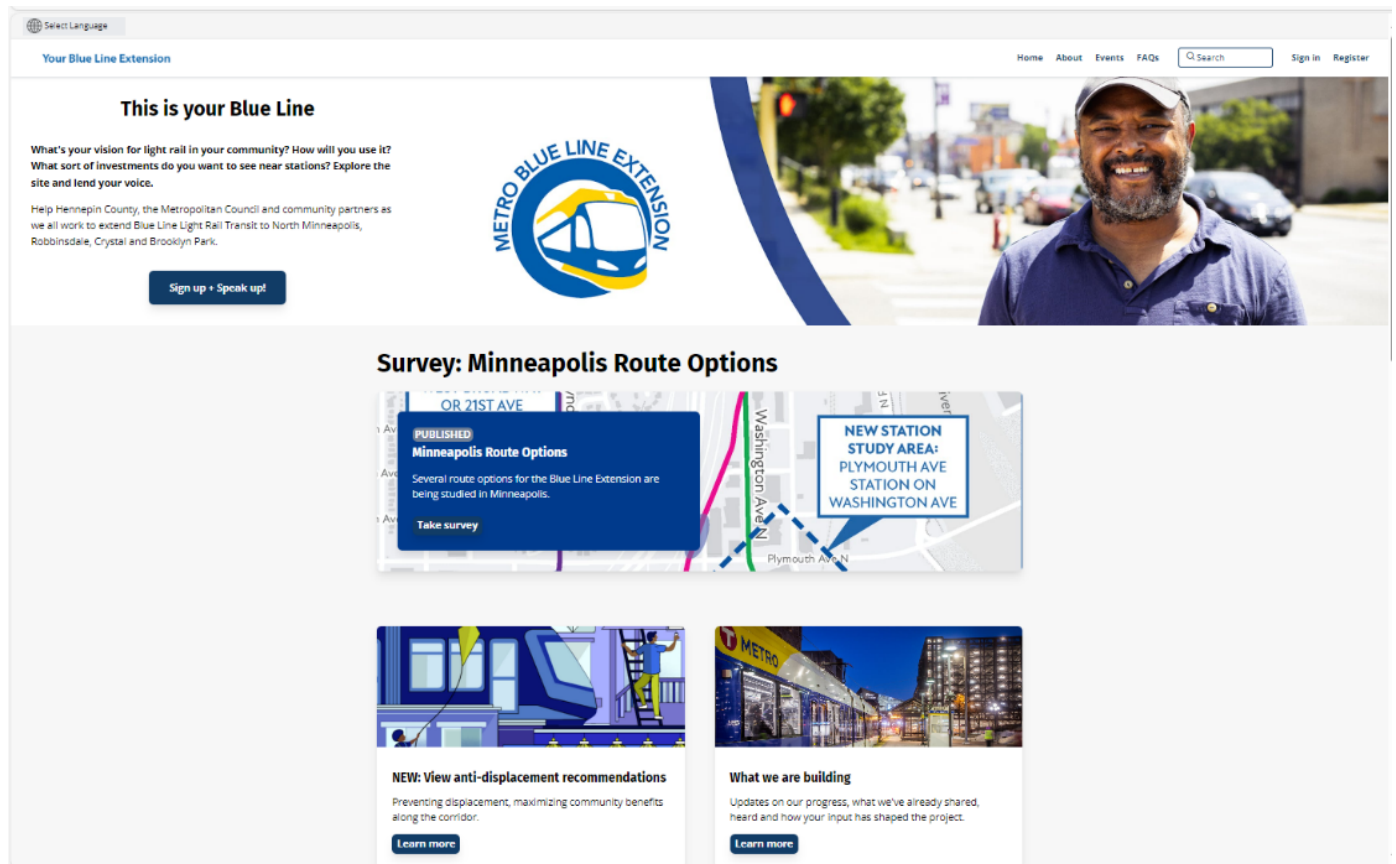


9.1.4.6 Online Resources

Online resources used for outreach on the Project include:

- **Your Blue Line Extension website:** An interactive website dedicated to providing engagement information and collecting continuous public feedback (see website home page image in Figure 9-6 below) hosted and managed by Hennepin County. The website answers a suite of frequently asked questions about the Project and provides additional context on key topics. The website also hosts an online comment form that has receives comments.
- **Project website:** Hosted by the Council, the Project website contains a wealth of information on the Project in its past and current iterations.
- **Public Coordinate interactive map:** Public Coordinate is an online, interactive mapping tool for public comment. Public Coordinate is routinely updated as design and decision-making.
- **City websites:** Cities within the boundaries of the Project provide links to the Project website and updates on Project development and upcoming meetings.

Figure 9-6 Your Blue Line Extension Website



9.1.4.7 Social Media Project

The Council used social media to provide Project updates, including new website information, press releases, information on upcoming public meetings, Project visualizations, Project newsletters, and other related materials. Community cohort organizations, Project cities, and other partners amplified Project messaging by sharing content through their social-media networks. This amounts to approximately 85,000 individuals reached on social media and more than 1 million reached through paid ads on community cohort organizations' social-media sites and growing.



9.2 Agency Coordination

The Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Draft EIS on the Project was published on Aug. 18, 2023, in the *Federal Register* (Vol. 77, No. 6). Coordination relative to specific areas of agency jurisdiction is discussed in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8. Agency correspondence for this Supplemental Draft EIS is provided in Appendix A-9.

9.2.1 Cooperating and Participating Agencies

The FTA, Council, and Hennepin County coordinated with federal, state, regional, and local agencies that were cooperating or participating agencies during the original environmental review process (2012 – 2016). This coordination involved verifying either that these agencies desired to continue in their cooperating or participating role, or if a change in role was warranted. Additional local community organizations were contacted in March 2023. As a result of this coordination, agencies listed in Table 9-3 are considered cooperating or participating agencies in the Supplemental Draft EIS process.

Table 9-3 Cooperating and Participating Agencies

Agency	Type of Participation
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Cooperating
U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Aviation Administration	Cooperating
U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration	Cooperating
U.S. Department of the Interior – National Park Service	Cooperating
U.S. Department of the Interior – Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	Participating
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Participating
U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Administration	Participating
Minnesota Department of Transportation	Cooperating
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Participating
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Participating
Minnesota Department of Health	Participating
Minnesota Department of Agriculture	Participating
Three Rivers Park District	Participating
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	Participating
Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission	Participating
Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions	Participating
City of Minneapolis	Participating
City of Robbinsdale	Participating
City of Crystal	Participating
City of Brooklyn Park	Participating
City of Golden Valley ^a	Not Participating

^a The City of Golden Valley was involved as a participating agency during previous iterations of the Project but is not formally a participating agency for the Project in its current iteration.

9.2.2 Section 106 Coordination

Consulting parties in the Section 106 process include local governments, SHPO, Native American tribes, and other interested organizations and individuals. Invitations were sent to consulting parties in September 2011 as part of the Section 106 consultation for the 2016 Alignment. Each city along the Project Alignment, and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, accepted and identified a contact person for the Section 106 process. In November 2022, letters were sent to invite local community organizations along the Project Alignment to participate in the Section 106 process for the Project Alignment as additional consulting parties. The Brooklyns Historical Society, Heritage Park



Neighborhood Association, Jordan Area Community Council, Robbinsdale Historical Society, and West Broadway Business and Area Coalition accepted the invitation.

In accordance with 36 CFR § 800.8, the Section 106 consultation process outreach activities and events have been coordinated with NEPA process and other outreach activities for the Project. Tasks completed as part of the Section 106 process were completed in consultation with SHPO and other consulting parties. Additional consultation with SHPO and the Section 106 consulting parties will continue throughout the Section 106 process.

Documentation of Section 106 consultation activities is provided in Appendix A-4. A list of documents related to Section 106 consultation activities is included in Table 9-4.

Table 9-4 Documents Related to the Section 106 Process

Document (PDF Format)	Summary
Archaeology Assessment	Archaeological Literature Review and Assessment for the Project
Compliance Plan	Cultural Resources Section 106 Compliance Plan
Consultation Kickoff Meeting Materials	Section 106 Consultation Meeting Agenda, Notes, and presentation materials.
Historic Property Information Outreach Letters and Response	Correspondence to engage community partners and gather information regarding culturally important properties
Invitations to Consulting Parties	Correspondence to invite participation in the Section 106 process as a Consulting Party
MOA	Agreement between FTA and SHPO regarding the Project (executed Aug. 23, 2016, and amended Sept. 20, 2022)
Re-Opening Consultation Letters 2023	Letters to Consulting Parties from FTA to re-open the Section 106 consultation (August 2023)
Responses to Invites	Correspondence from parties invited to consult in the Section 106 process
SHPO Correspondence	Correspondence and meeting agendas/notes with SHPO to date

A list of meetings related to Section 106 coordination and public involvement efforts is included in Table 9-5.

Table 9-5 Meetings Related to the Section 106 Process

Date	Meeting Type	Purpose
Aug. 11, 2022	SHPO	Provide Project update, discuss approach for additional studies and schedule
Jan. 12, 2023	SHPO	Discuss Project design and schedule, consulting party invitations, and draft Section 106 compliance plan
Aug. 7, 2023	Consultation meeting	Section 106 consultation meeting to reopen the Section 106 process

9.2.2.1 Section 106 Tribal Coordination

Section 106 tribal coordination will involve conducting outreach to tribes to identify concerns about the Project’s potential effects and inviting tribes to participate in public meetings and/or scheduling a separate meeting to discuss specific tribal issues and concerns. In January 2012, FTA sent letters to potentially affected Indian tribes, requesting that they identify any concerns about the proposed BLRT Extension project’s potential effects and inviting them to participate in public Scoping meetings and/or schedule a separate meeting to discuss any specific tribal issues and concerns. Comments were received from one tribe, and FTA provided the tribe with the additional information requested. However, no further correspondence was received in response, and no other tribes expressed an interest



in meeting or participating in the Section 106 process. In August 2023, FTA sent letters to potentially affected Indian tribes (Table 9-6), requesting that they identify any concerns about the Project’s potential effects and inviting them to participate in Section 106 consultation process. Coordination will include the tribes listed in Table 9-6.

Table 9-6 Tribes in Section 106 Tribal Coordination

Tribe
Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
Flandreau Santee Community
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes
Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Lower Sioux Indian Community
Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
Prairie Island Indian Community
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians
Santee Sioux Nation
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Travers Reservation
Sokaogon Chippewa Community (Mole Lake Band)
Spirit Lake Tribe
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin
Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (Three Affiliated Tribes)
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
Upper Sioux Indian Community
White Earth Nation

To date, no historic properties significant to tribes have been identified within the Project’s APE. If such properties are identified in the future or occur as unanticipated discoveries during construction, consultation would proceed per the terms of the Section 106 MOA.

9.2.3 Section 404/NEPA Merger Process

As a cooperating agency, USACE can adopt the Supplemental Draft EIS for its own NEPA compliance and have a more formal role and input into Project development. This helps USACE determine whether the Project complies the CWA, which allows USACE to issue a permit. USACE has its own process for determining the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), known as the NEPA/Section 404 permit merger process. As part of this process, USACE evaluates the Project and issues four points of concurrence on the Project:

1. Purpose and Need and Alternative Screening Criteria



- 2. Alternatives to be Evaluated in Detail
- 3. Preferred Alternative and LEDPA
- 4. Permit Application and Compensatory Mitigation

During the agency coordination process discussed in Section 9.2.1, USACE indicated that it would continue in its role as a cooperating agency. Furthermore, it indicated that it would approach the Section 404 permitting process as an amendment to the permit that was granted in 2018 for the 2016 Alignment. Therefore, the concurrence points previously achieved would not need to be revisited.

9.2.4 Section 4(f) Evaluation Coordination

This section summarizes Section 4(f) Evaluation coordination activities that have occurred since publication of the ROD in 2016, which addresses Section 4(f) coordination and concurrence requirements set forth in 23 CFR Part 774. Additional information on Section 4(f) activities is provided in Chapter 8.

9.2.4.1 United States Department of the Interior

The Supplemental Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation was provided to the United States Department of the Interior for review and comment during the Supplemental Draft EIS comment period, which will conclude a minimum of 45 days after the publication of this document.

9.2.4.2 Official(s) with Jurisdiction

FTA will make its final Section 4(f) determinations in the Project’s Supplemental Final EIS/Amended ROD, subsequent to its consideration of public and agency comments received on the Supplemental Draft EIS. FTA will seek concurrence from the OWJs on the preliminary determinations prior to making a final determination in the Supplemental Final EIS/Amended ROD, as required by regulations. See Appendix A-8 for documentation of Section 4(f) coordination meetings with OWJs, which are listed in Table 9-7.

Table 9-7 Official(s) with Jurisdiction

Permit/Decision
Three Rivers Park District
City of Brooklyn Park
City of Crystal
City of Robbinsdale
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Minneapolis Public School District
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer

9.3 Permits and Approvals

Table 9-8 below presents a preliminary list of permits that are anticipated to be required for construction of the Project.

9.3.1.1 Federal Highway Administration

The Supplemental Draft EIS was provided to FHWA, which is a cooperating agency for the Project. The Project will impact three interstate ramp facilities which will require an Interstate Access Modification Request upon publication of the Supplemental Final EIS and Amended ROD. The Project will need to address five of seven FHWA policy points in the Supplemental Final EIS; these five policy points focus on the need for the access modification, consistency with land use planning, and appropriate interagency coordination. The other two policy points will be addressed in a detailed traffic analysis focusing on traffic operations, safety, and mobility; the results of this analysis will be



summarized in an appendix of the Supplemental Final EIS. Interstate ramp modifications at 21st Street for the westbound off ramp of I-94 to W Broadway Ave will require a full Interstate Access Modification Request. The I-94 westbound off ramp terminal at Washington Ave and 17th St and the I-94 and CR 81 interchange are anticipated to be addressed with a simple Interstate Access Modification Request. As the engineering design advances for these locations, analysis will be coordinated with FHWA to prepare the access requests, and additional details will be documented in the Supplemental Final EIS.

21st Street Bridge

In response to feedback from the City of Minneapolis, MnDOT, and FHWA, the Project developed a design layout for a 21st Ave N bridge crossing over I-94. The bridge layout includes LRT guideway, two-way vehicular traffic that accommodates truck turning movements, pedestrians, and bicycles. The I-94 ramp modifications associated with 21st Ave N will be coordinated through an Interstate Access Modification Request with FHWA as design advances and will be reflected in the Supplemental Final EIS. Traffic operational analysis will be conducted, and traffic mitigation will be identified and incorporated as necessary.

Table 9-8 Permits and Approvals Required

Permit/Decision	Jurisdiction
Amended ROD	Federal Transit Administration
Supplemental Draft Section 4(f) Determination	Federal Transit Administration
Amended MOA	Federal Transit Administration, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office
Letter of No Objection for use within Runway Protection Zone	Federal Aviation Administration
Amended Section 404 Permit	United States Army Corps of Engineers
Interstate Access Modification Request	Federal Highway Administration
Right-of-Way Permit	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Application for Drainage Permit	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Application for Utility Accommodation on Trunk Highway Right-of-Way	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Application for Miscellaneous Work on Trunk Highway Right-of-Way	Minnesota Department of Transportation
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Public Waters Wetland Permit	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Water Appropriation Permit	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Hazardous Materials Management Plan	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Noxious Weed Management Plan	Minnesota Department of Agriculture
EIS Adequacy Determination	Metropolitan Council
Road Crossing/Right-of-Way Permit	Hennepin County and the Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis
Utility permits	Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis
Building permits	Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis
Sediment and Erosion Control permits	Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis; Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission; Shingle Creek; and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions



Permit/Decision	Jurisdiction
Wetland Conservation Act Permit	Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis; Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission; Shingle Creek; and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions
Municipal Consent	Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis

¹ Document can be accessed on Council website at: <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Community-Engagement/Framework.aspx>.

² The BLC website can be accessed at: <https://bluelinecoalition.org/>.

³ Your Blue Line Extension website can be accessed at: <https://yourblueline.org/Cultivate>

⁴ Anti-Displacement Efforts can be accessed on the Metropolitan Council website at: <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Anti-Displacement-Efforts.aspx>

⁵ Elevate Hennepin website can be accessed at: <https://www.elevatehennepin.org/>

⁶ Engagement summary reports can be accessed at: <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Community-Engagement/Reports-and-Comments.aspx>

⁷ Engagement summary reports can be accessed at: <https://metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Community-Engagement/Reports-and-Comments.aspx>

⁸ Engagement dashboard can be accessed on the Your Blue Line Extension website at: <https://yourblueline.org/our-approach-to-engagement>