



Engagement Strategies and Approach

January – May 2023

The METRO Blue Line Extension is continuing to refine route options, alignments, and station locations after selecting the West Broadway route modification recommendation.

Since August 2020, the project team, along with the community engagement cohort, has 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.

This document summarizes the feedback received during the seventh round of public engagement from January to May 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 (January – May 2023)

METRO Blue Line Extension

- 12 public meetings (10 in-person, 2 virtual)
 - In-person meetings (147 attendees total)
 - Penn/West Broadway Business Workshop
 - Wed, January 25 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Capri Theater
 - Brooklyn Park Open House
 - Mon, January 30 from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Brooklyn Park Library
 - Crystal Open House
 - Mon, February 27 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Crystal Community Center
 - Minneapolis Community Workshop
 - Thurs, March 2 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Capri Theater
 - Robbinsdale Open House
 - Mon, March 6 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Elim Lutheran Church
 - Minneapolis Community Workshop
 - Tues, March 7 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Cub Northside Community Room
 - Minneapolis Open House
 - Wed, March 22 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Capri Theater
 - Minneapolis Open House
 - Mon, April 17 from 5 – 7 p.m. at Sanctuary Covenant Church
 - Virtual meetings (94 attendees total):
 - Wed, March 29 from 1 – 2 p.m.
 - Wed, May 17 from 5 – 6 p.m.

Meeting Types

- Open house
 - 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 Open House
 - On Microsoft Teams, staff presents updated information on the Blue Line Extension including engineering, environmental, and anti-displacement. This is followed by a question-and-answer session.
- Community Workshop
 - A discussion on project opportunities, impacts, and solutions along the route facilitated by project staff and cohort members. Participants are broken into groups that discuss various topics about the light rail such as station design and parking. Staff present the topic and participate in the discussion to provide clarity and updated information.



Public Engagement Report (January – May 2023)

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- Anti-Displacement Work Group Meeting
 - The Anti-Displacement Work Group hosted five day-long events where participants from the community reviewed, discussed, and refined potential goals and policies to present as recommendations for addressing gentrification and displacement along the Blue Line corridor.
- Business Meeting
 - Project staff share resources available to businesses before, during, and after construction and address the unique concerns of business owners in addition to discussing project updates and anti-displacement efforts.
- Anti-Displacement Work Group Meetings
 - Work Group Meeting #4
 - Sat, February 11 from 10 – 4 p.m. at Humphrey School of Public Affairs
 - Work Group Meeting #5
 - Sat, February 25 from 10 – 2 p.m. at Humphrey School of Public Affairs
- 40+ community cohort meetings, pop-up events, and driveway chats
- 15 door-knocking events with businesses on West Broadway in Minneapolis and Robbinsdale reaching over 45 business and/or property owners and community members
- 6 Advisory Committee meetings
- 2 Anti-displacement Work Group meetings
- Interactive map: 123 comments
- Many more questions and phone calls

Common Themes

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

Minneapolis

- Feedback on the Target Field Station to West Broadway route options (Number of comments explicitly for or against the proposed route):
 - **Prefer the Lyndale Avenue option (16 comments):** The Lyndale option serves many residents on the west side of I-94. It provides access to the new V3 Sports Center and is accessible for the mixed-income residents of Heritage Park. This route is also the fastest route from the North Loop to West Broadway.
 - **Do not prefer the Lyndale Avenue option (14 comments):** The Lyndale option creates hazards for children and elderly looking to cross Lyndale Ave. Residents of the LynPark neighborhood are concerned about decreasing property values and reduced quality of life from noise and property impacts.

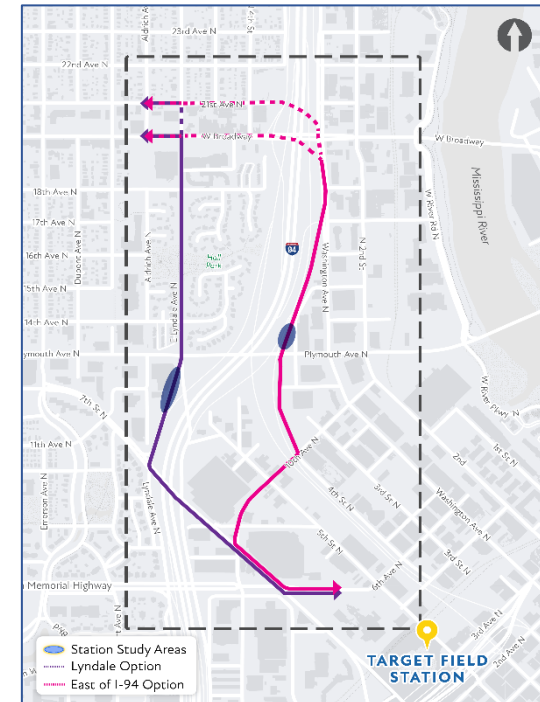


Figure 1. Target Field Station to West Broadway route options



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- **Prefer the east of I-94 option** (4 comments): There is opportunity for development along Washington Ave with light rail there. The primary benefit is the lack of impact to residential properties.
- **Do not prefer the east of I-94 option** (4 comments): The east of I-94 alignment is longer, slower, and serves less people than a route on the west side. While there are few residential impacts, there are schools and businesses whose trucks and buses use this route. There may also not be a good development opportunity here due to of the size and shape of parcels.
- Feedback on West Broadway/21st Avenue between Washington and Irving route options (Number of comments explicitly for or against the proposed route):
 - **Prefer West Broadway option** (5 comments): The West Broadway business corridor needs development, and the West Broadway option is more accessible for residents to get to and from destinations. All comments regarding the number of stations along West Broadway preferred two or more for better transit connections and destination access.
 - **Do not prefer West Broadway option** (4 comments): The removal of on-street parking and displacement are the largest concern for business and property owners along West Broadway. Lack of parking also creates concerns around accessibility for residents using Metro Mobility's door to door service and safety for shoppers who would have to park further away from their destination and walk.
 - **Prefer 21st Avenue option** (6 comments): The 21st Ave option has less property impacts than the West Broadway option. Using this option protects those businesses while not being too far from destinations.
 - **Do not prefer 21st Avenue option** (6 comments): Residential properties next to light rail on 21st Ave face similar challenges to Lyndale such as noise, safety, and traffic. There are concerns about property impacts here. It is also farther and less visible from the business destinations that people would come to West Broadway for.

Robbinsdale

- Robbinsdale residents have mixed reactions to light rail in their community. Concerns include safety and security on the light rail, noise created by the light rail and its construction, and changes to the character of the community from new development.

Crystal

- Crystal residents have mixed reactions to light rail in their community. Many were concerned for the safety of passengers and residents. With construction, they expressed wanting sound and sight barriers between the neighborhoods and light rail.

Brooklyn Park

- Residents want increased visibility for pedestrians and to consider connecting the Blue Line Extension to the Noble Park & Ride that connects to local bus routes.

Feedback from Open Houses

- Brooklyn Park (1/30)
 - Increase visibility for pedestrians
 - Light rail could connect to Noble park-and-ride
 - Senior complexes in area could increase ridership demand

- Crystal (2/27)
 - Concern for older residents crossing intersection in one light
 - Sight and sound barrier between light rail and neighborhoods
 - Consider elevating light rail above road to prevent delays for first responders
 - Concerns for safety of light rail passengers
 - Mixed reaction to light rail. Some feel it is not needed
 - Add cameras for intersection safety

- Robbinsdale
 - 3/6 Robbinsdale Open House
 - Mixed feelings about light rail going through Robbinsdale
 - Safety concerns on and near light rail stations
 - Concerns about how changes and future development will impact character of community
 - Project cost concerns
 - Noise concerns at North Memorial Station
 - Consider having 36th Ave Station as only station in Robbinsdale to make security manageable

- Minneapolis (1/25, 3/2, 3/7, 3/22, 4/17)
 - 1/25 – Penn Avenue Business Meeting
 - Station locations
 - Concerns about fitting light rail, roads, and wider sidewalks on West Broadway
 - Penn intersection needs turn lanes
 - Station 1, near 26th street, has more property impacts
 - Penn Avenue station has less building impacts and high potential for development
 - Parking
 - Removal of on street parking could hurt event attendance at Capri Theater
 - Metro Mobility needs to be able to stop in front of businesses for door-to-door service



Figure 2. Staff talking to residents at Crystal Open House



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- Safety is a concern with walking from parking structure to businesses
- Short-term parking needed for deliveries, hair appointments, etc. Parking bays could be solution
- Displacement concerns
- Customers unlikely to park further away and walk to businesses and businesses won't succeed
- Need additional lighting
- Amenities
 - Visibility of destinations when getting off light rail is important for safety
 - Use glass in station design to increase visibility
 - Heated stations, benches, wind barriers
 - Include art in station design
 - Bicycles and scooters for distance between stations and destinations
 - Maintained landscaping
- 3/2 – Minneapolis Community Workshop
 - Concerns
 - Parking concerns
 - Displacement concerns
 - Concerns for existing bus stops on Lyndale
 - Concerns for bike, pedestrian, and transit connections
 - Cub Foods trucks won't be able to make right turns
 - Lyndale is a main artery for fire station to North Minneapolis. Concerned about no shoulder or access lane for emergency services
 - Opportunities
 - Elevated route for seniors to cross Lyndale on wheelchairs
 - Want mid-block crossing on West Broadway at Capri Theater parking lot
 - Lyndale option is faster option than east of I-94
 - East of I-94 option has no residential impacts
 - Removal of parking on 4th and 10th Ave along Lyndale will improve pedestrian safety and sight lines for vehicles
 - Access to V3 center is positive for Lyndale option. Center is a strong investment in the community
 - Improved pedestrian area on new 7th St bridge is positive
 - Interested in more community engagement with Lao community
 - Protect trees along corridor
 - Information needed for RFPs for public art
- 3/7
 - Concerns
 - Concerns about walking distance to station
 - Concerns about longer emergency response times



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- Address existing crime problems
- 2 station option is better for walkers, but locations are unsafe
- Housing impacts on 21st Ave
- Opportunities
 - Emphasize LRT to BRT connections
 - New senior housing creates demand for transit to Hennepin County and Nicollet Walgreens
 - No charge for train fare in North Minneapolis
 - More stops along West Broadway are better for future density
 - Minimize displacement, especially for small, minority-owned businesses
 - West Broadway option is better than 21st because it is where growth should happen
 - Want key connections to businesses
 - Consider elevated station between Fremont Ave and Emerson Ave Build on West Broadway to save mature trees
 - Opportunity for more grocery stores
- 3/22
 - Concerns
 - Lyndale Option complicates transportation and quality of life for residents living on it
 - Concern about displacement of important businesses
 - Two stations provide more access and better connections
 - North Loop station will be ineffective due to car dependency
 - Displacement of families is very important to people in Minneapolis
 - Disappointed by meeting structure 3/22
 - Opportunities
 - West Broadway needs development
 - Lyndale Ave serves the most people
 - Limit access on 14th Ave to prevent Park & Ride
 - Sound barrier desired on Lyndale Ave
- 4/17
 - Concerns
 - Lyndale option not safe for children or seniors
 - Inadequate space for emergency vehicles
 - One stalled vehicle will block traffic
 - Concern about loss of housing
 - Lyndale option would disrupt people and keep them awake
 - Opportunities
 - Construction creates jobs and business development opportunities



Community Cohort Feedback

Many different organizations have been and will be a part of the community engagement cohort depending on their interest and current project needs. Phase 2 of the community engagement cohort began in September 2022. At this time a new cohort was formed to address the environmental phase of the project. 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

During 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 January to May 2023, participants shared feedback they had received in their initial engagement efforts. Feedback included:

- Small business and job creation
 - People expressed interest in opportunities for job creation within communities.
 - Desire to support existing small businesses and concern about displacement impacts.
 - Concern about parking impacts for small businesses.
 - Concerns that there is not enough space in the road for light rail
- Safety
 - Concerns about crime while riding transit.
 - Fear of existing and increasing crime around station areas.
- Transit access
 - Some populations have difficulty boarding the bus and fear of riding transit in general.
 - Excitement for improved transportation options
- Access
 - Some groups reached by cohort engagement cannot easily access information online.
 - Confusion about what routes are being considered
 - Most would use Blue Line to travel downtown



- Concerns about access to stations for elders and those with language barriers

Interactive Map Comments (May 2023)

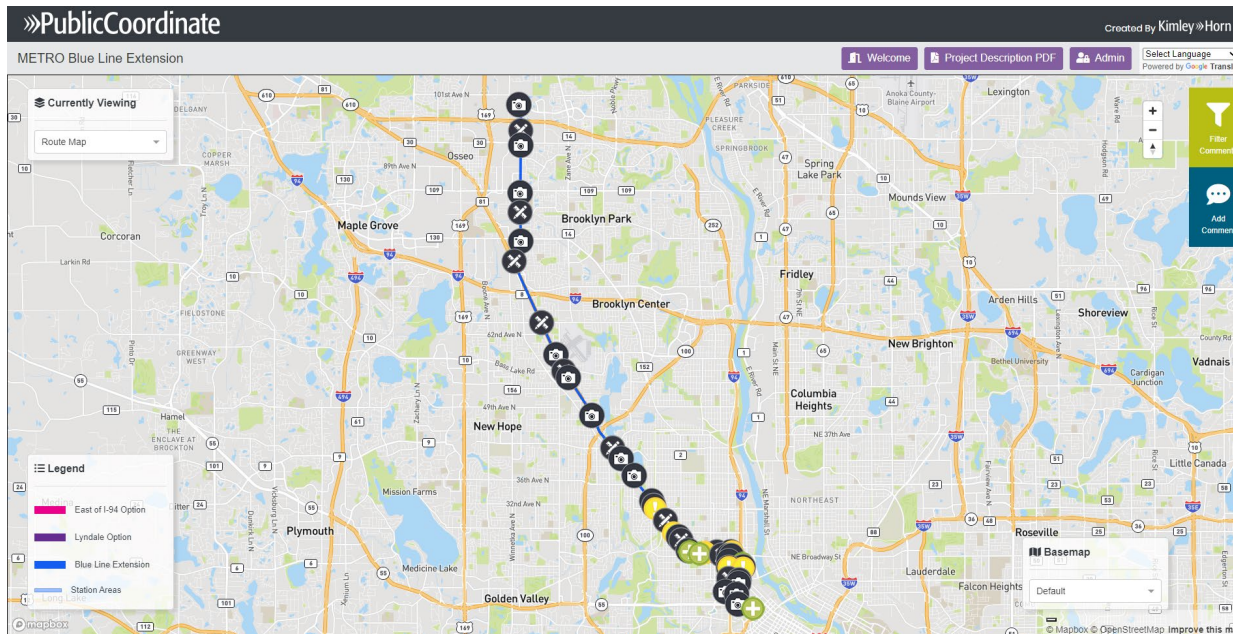


Figure 2. Comment pins on interactive map

The interactive map featured and sought feedback on potential station locations and visualizations of how light rail could fit at locations along the Blue Line Extension corridor. 123 comments have been received in 2023.

May Layer	Total Number of Comments	Concern Comments	Opportunity Comments	Responses to Visualizations	Engineering Drawings Comments
Comments Received	123	20	18	49	36



Concerns

- Consider concerns of Robbinsdale residents along County Road 81
- More stops needed along West Broadway near transfers
- Tunnels should be considered to allow for wide pedestrian areas
- Lyndale option has negative property impacts
- Lyndale option makes the most sense financially and will have the highest positive impact on the neighborhood
- East of I-94 option will block traffic to the public school and create a large ongoing expense with the flyover bridge
- 21st Ave route will impact homeowners and increase expense of the project
- Flyover towards Victory Memorial seems unnecessary
- Lyndale option will help bring development to area that needs stronger transit access
- Renters in north Minneapolis and Heritage Park will be well served by the Lyndale option
- Property impacts on Lyndale Ave are small
- Station at north end of the North Loop would create too many small turns and slow the entire travel experience
- Current Lyndale encourages drivers to speed. Reducing to one lane with light rail would calm traffic

Opportunities

- Light rail on 7th St causes traffic issues getting downtown from north
- Mixed ideas on if land east of I-94 along Washington would bring development
- Unsure how light rail causes Lyndale Ave neighborhoods new or unique inconveniences
- Light rail on Washington doesn't serve people
- Consider elevated options along the route to improve speed and reduce conflicts
- Removal of Walgreen's makes Washington option more feasible
- East of I-94 option does not serve Heritage Park residents
- Consider moving light rail to Golden Valley Road then north on Penn Ave to West Broadway
- Trucks and delivery vehicles use east of I-94 route heavily
- Evaluate moving terminus towards Oak Grove Pkwy to capture ridership in new apartments

Visualizations

- Concerns about reducing West Broadway to one lane
- There should be a stop for Heritage Park with Lyndale option. Current Lyndale Ave and 7th St intersection is dangerous
- Barrier to block noise and visual of traffic on Bottineau Blvd will be needed
- Fixed infrastructure of light rail will attract more development



- Blue line is a better use of public right of ways than highway traffic
- Sidewalks should be widened and improved
- Crime is a concern
- Consider barriers between train and traffic to prevent collisions
- Light rail is needed to improve car-centric communities
- Gentrification and displacement is a concern
- Electric busses could cover this route at a reduced cost
- Keep center platform for route terminus in Brooklyn Park
- West Broadway is the best option for light rail that will spur development in the area
- Blue line in Robbinsdale will improve commuting and public life by improving access to downtown
- Need landscaping separation between pedestrians and cars
- Too much happening on 10th Ave already to add light rail

Engineering Drawings

- Support for light rail for older, younger, and disabled populations
- Concern about added congestion
- Need aggressive light rail expansion, especially in underserved communities
- Concerns about displacement with property acquisitions
- Climate controlled or sheltered access should be considered for cold months
- Park and ride structure is important in Robbinsdale, so businesses there can still be accessed
- Stop near V3 center is effective
- One station design on West Broadway does not allow for effective transfers to other transit lines
- West Broadway option allows access to grocery stores that 21st Ave option does not

Anti-Displacement

Beginning in March 2022, the Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Work Group started a process that will result in actionable recommendations to prevent displacement and maximize community benefits along the planned light rail line that will connect the communities of North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park to the regional transit network.

Led by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) in partnership with Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council, the 26-member Anti-Displacement Work Group includes people who are residents and business owners in the area, people with lived experience with displacement, and people from the philanthropic community and government agencies.



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In 2023, the Anti-Displacement Work Group hosted their fourth and fifth workshops to refine and finalize anti-displacement recommendations to move forward with.

The fourth meeting was held on February 11th. Small groups refined goals and the policies to move closer to recommendations. They reported issues and policies pre-construction, policies during construction, policies post-construction. Issues discussed included financial assistance for impacted communities, land ownership, and prioritization of local needs over investor interests.

The group decided that one meeting did not offer enough time to appropriately vet and select recommendations, so a shorter final meeting was added to the schedule.

On February 25, the Anti-Displacement Work Group held their final meeting with the goal of voting on recommendations to move forward in the final report. The following policy recommendations were moved forward by the Work Group:

- Mandatory relocation assistance
- Tenant opportunity to purchase
- Limiting investor purchasing/corporate ownership
- Land disposition policy
- Right to return
- Rent stabilization
- Commercial and residential land trusts
- Financial resources for organizing/the right to organize
- Zero to low interest loans
- Small business grants/small business support
- Workforce programs
- NOAH preservation
- Inclusionary zoning
- Universal basic income/guaranteed basic income
- Right to counsel
- Tenant screening reform
- Cultural placemaking/place-keeping

After meeting for over a year, the Work Group published their recommendations in May 2023 for public review. While the anti-displacement recommendations report has been completed, review and implementation will be ongoing throughout the life of the project. The report can be viewed and commented on at yourblueline.org/anti-displacement.

Advisory Committees

The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met on May 9 (BAC) and May 10 (CAC) receive an update on the ADWG's anti-displacement report from CURA and project staff. Discussion during these meetings included:

- **Both BAC and CAC:** A desire for accountability to ensure that the anti-displacement strategies identified by the ADWG are implemented.
- **BAC:** Members discussed the communication strategy for bringing the recommendations of the report to the public with an emphasis on transparency and accessibility.
- **CAC:** Members debated the recommended route and the project's community engagement strategy.



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