



Engagement Strategies and Approach

November 2024 – February 2025

Since August 2020, the project team, along with the community engagement cohort, Cultivate Art 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.
- **Round 11** (May to October 2024): Shared environmental impacts through the Supplemental Draft Impact Statement (SDEIS) publication and preliminary design plans for municipal consent and solicited feedback through two comment periods on these topics. Staff also gathered input from North Minneapolis residents regarding their vision for the future of the BLE corridor during DREAMNorth events.



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- **July 16 – August 5:** Comment Period for the SDEIS
- **July 26 – October 10:** Comment period on preliminary design plans for municipal consent.
- **Round 12** (November 2024 to February 2025): Input on proposed strategies to address the environmental and community impacts identified in the SDEIS, on design options for the Lowry Avenue station to ensure the station works for all users and integrates with the surrounding environment and community, and community character needs for reconstruction of the 21st Avenue corridor.

This document summarizes the feedback received during Round 12 of public engagement from November 2024 through February 2025, including a summary of community meetings and comment sessions. Project staff have engaged with the public about the project through the following events:

Public Meetings (4 in-person)

In-person meetings

- METRO Blue Line Extension Quarterly Community Update Meeting
 - Wed, October 30, 2024, from 5–6 p.m. at Metro Transit North Loop Garage (~7 attendees)
- Lowry Avenue Station Community Workshop
 - Tues, December 3, 2024, from 5–7 p.m. at Elim Lutheran Church (~50 attendees)
- 21st Avenue Community Workshop
 - Tues, December 10, 2024, from 5–7 p.m. at Sanctuary Covenant Church (~30 attendees)
- Lowry Avenue Station Design Update Meeting
 - Tues, January 14, 2025, from 5–7 p.m. at North Regional Library (~40 attendees)

Meeting types

- Community Meeting/Quarterly Meeting – Community meetings 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.
- Community Workshop for Lowry Avenue Station – Community workshop style meeting where project staff provided an update on the Lowry Avenue Station design options. Community members were asked to provide their input to help inform station design.
- Community Workshop for 21st Avenue Community Character – Community workshop focused on enriching the community character on 21st Avenue. Community members and staff engaged in discussion around community concerns, desired amenities in the corridor, and opportunities that could inform the design of the 21st Avenue corridor.

Other meeting metrics:

- 3 pop-up events
- 18 events with stakeholder and business representatives
- 16 Advisory Committee meetings
- One-on-one stakeholder meetings, office hours, and phone calls



Engagement metrics from August 2020 – February 2025

- **929** events resulting in nearly **40,000** points of contact with the public
- **80,000** reached on social media and **10 million+** reached through newsletters and paid ads on community and cultural media
- Approximately **7,153** survey responses
- **+3,925** comments on the interactive map
- **+4,720** comments from comment forms
- Corridor postcards mailed to **+250,000 properties**
- Over **7,000** emails and phone calls

Common Engagement Themes

Below are common themes that emerged from feedback during this round of engagement from meetings and on the PublicCoordinate Map.

- Community investment
 - Desire for amenities in 21st Avenue corridor
 - Desire for project to assist renters in addition to homeowners
 - Desire for project to help keep cost of living in neighborhood from increasing
 - Strong interest in environmental mitigation tactics
 - Emphasis on need to listen to residents and key stakeholders
 - Concern about property and loss of parking impacts of businesses and residents
 - Desire for revitalization of parks along 21st Avenue (on Girard Avenue) and increasing amount of green spaces
 - Concern for displacement through development
 - Concern that residents' voices aren't being heard
 - Desire to maintain green spaces
 - Maintaining parkland
- Safety
 - Fear of increased crime rate in neighborhoods
 - Hope that the stations will be safe and secure
- Pedestrian and bike improvements
 - Excitement for pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure
 - Desire for improved pedestrian and bike connections along West Broadway Avenue and in Crystal
 - Walkability from station location to destinations
- Traffic impact concerns
 - Concerns about light rail decreasing lanes for vehicular traffic
 - Preference for making the new bridge along the 21st Avenue corridor car free
 - Questions about why not Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for less impact



- Construction
 - Concerns of damage during construction
 - Unwanted noise and vibration impacts
 - Interest in prioritizing partnering with local businesses during construction
 - Concerns of maintenance accountability
 - Impacting newly constructed infrastructure
- 10th Avenue
 - Concern that limited action would cause congestion
 - Believe that I-94 route alignment would be faster
 - Concern about access to properties along 10th Avenue including fire station, schools, and residential buildings
 - Cost concern

Environmental and Community Impact Survey Feedback

After the release of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) in summer 2024, Project staff identified strategies to help offset environmental and community impacts. Project staff created a survey in November 2024 to collect the community’s feedback on how the project would address certain environmental and community impacts. The survey explained the impact and proposed strategies for each topic and asked respondents to what extent they agree or disagree that the strategies addressed their concerns. Specific commitments to address impacts will be detailed in the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement in mid-2025. Environmental and community impact topics and common themes (as of February 25, 2025) are listed below.

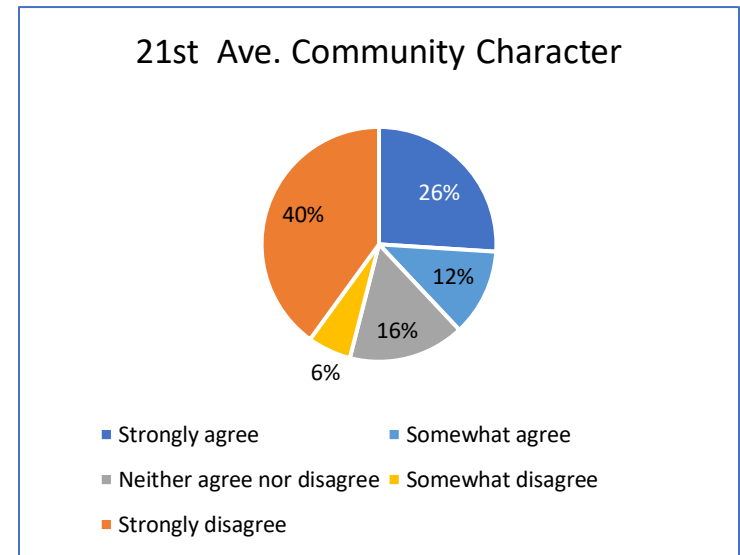
21st Avenue community character

Impact: the project will result in impacts to community amenities, character, and cohesion in the 21st Avenue North corridor.

Strategy: cultural placekeeping design groups, public realm improvements, noise and vibration mitigations, and community investment will be conducted to offset these impacts and create a better experience for the community to walk, roll, bike, take transit, and gather.

Feedback:

- Safety concerns
 - Pedestrian and cyclist
 - Crime and drug use on and around station



Graph 1: "The strategy for 21st Ave Community Character addresses my concerns for this topic" survey results.



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- Displacement/gentrification
 - Concerns that the project will lead to displacing residents and businesses
 - Worry that the project will lead to gentrification
 - Comparisons to historical neighborhood disruptions
- Community impact
 - Concern about impacts due to construction
 - Concerns that the project will divide and damage already struggling neighborhoods
- Cost
 - Skepticism about the overall cost of the project versus benefits
- Beautification and development
 - Emphasis that any beautification or development efforts should prioritize enhancing the safety of the neighborhood
 - Suggestions to support businesses that increase foot traffic, to create a vibrant and safe community atmosphere

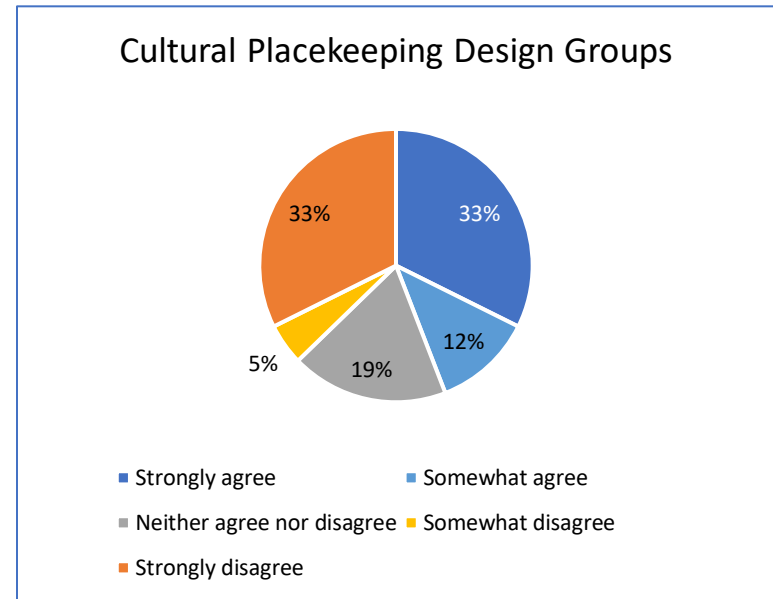
Cultural placekeeping design groups

Impact: The Project will result in both impacts and benefits to community amenities, character, and cohesion.

Strategy: To preserve, strengthen, and celebrate the diverse cultures and histories along the Blue Line Extension corridor, cultural placekeeping design groups will be created to guide the design of architectural, aesthetic, and visual elements of the project. The Metropolitan Council will identify areas such as station platforms, sidewalks, and lighting where visual design input could be incorporated. Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park will each have one cultural placekeeping design group, who will co-create design elements with the Met Council design teams. This approach will allow for direct community input on the character, design, and feel of the project.

Feedback:

- Suggestions
 - Platforms, sidewalks, lighting where visual design input could be incorporated
 - Connecting bus service improvements



Graph 2: "The strategy for Cultural Placekeeping Design Groups addresses my concerns for this topic" survey results.



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METRO Blue Line Extension

Community investment

Impact: The Project will result in both impacts and benefits to community amenities, character, and cohesion.

Strategy: To help position communities to better address the risks of indirect displacement and build long-term community prosperity for existing residents and businesses, funding would be provided to local community organizations. Funding will be allocated based on effectiveness in offsetting impacts from the Blue Line Extension project and ability to meet needs identified by the community.

Feedback:

- Community programs
 - Emphasis on youth involvement
- Safety
 - Concerns for safety on trains and stations
 - Invest in more police presence around stations and on trains
 - Safe access to businesses that offer a sense of belonging and community (i.e., coffee shops, restaurants, parks, lighting, police/safety presence).
- Cost
 - Concerns and questions regarding how community invested will be funded
 - Concerns about lowered property value

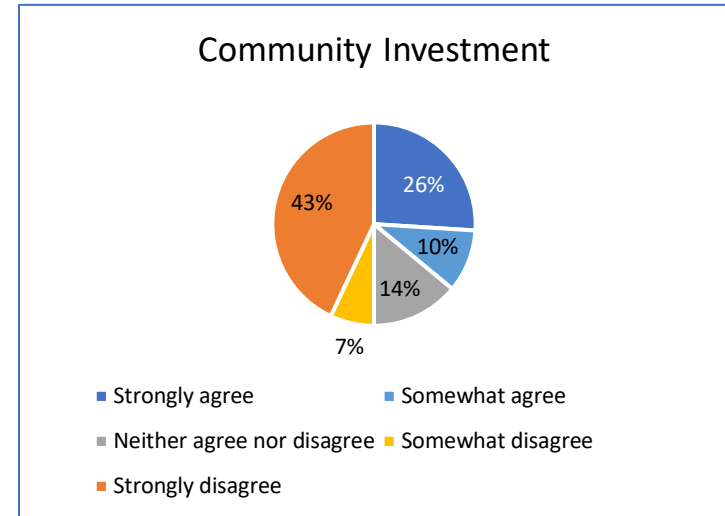
Business support during construction

Impact: From access for customers and employees, parking impacts, and general visual and noise disruptions, utility disruptions, and more, construction creates challenges for businesses, no matter how well it is managed.

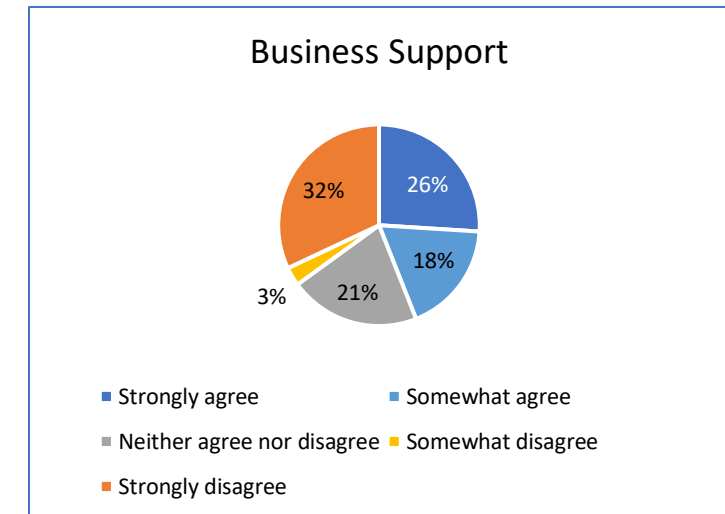
Strategy: Implementation of a Construction Mitigation Plan and business support programs. Initiatives include customer wayfinding, 24-hour construction hotline, 48+ hour utility shutoff warnings, marketing services, and commercial corridor shuttles.

Feedback:

- Financial
 - Suggestion for grants and funding to cover lost profits and potential business growth during construction



Graph 3: "The strategy for Community Investment addresses my concerns for this topic" survey results.



Graph 4: "The strategy for Business Support During Construction addresses my concerns for this topic" survey results.



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METRO Blue Line Extension

- Concerns
 - Disruption to businesses
 - Loss of parking for customers and employees
- Suggestions
 - Provide extra side street and online advertising for businesses that are open during construction

Online portal and storefronts

Impact: The Project would result in a desire to access anti-displacement resources and project information/construction updates.

Strategy: To improve access to project and anti-displacement resources such as relocation assistance, business support, and construction complaints, an online portal would be created and two physical storefronts in Brooklyn Park and Minneapolis would be opened.

Feedback:

- Suggestions
 - Dedicated staff in multiple languages to assist residents and business owners
 - Hours of these storefronts should not be during normal business hours, so owners have time after hours to use services

Public realm improvements

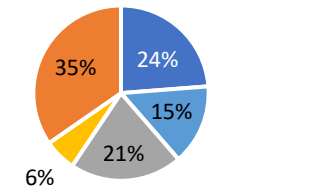
Impact: The Project would result in impacts to community amenities, character, cohesion, and visual quality.

Strategy: To offset impacts to community character and to improve existing infrastructure, the Blue Line Extension project would include public realm improvements and infrastructure modernization elements with a focus on improving the overall experience for those who walk, roll, bike, and take transit to and from the stations. This topic would be implemented and designed according to community input, cultural placekeeping design groups, project partners, and the Met Council.

Feedback:

- Opportunities

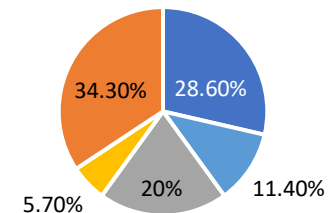
Online Portal & Storefront



- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Graph 5: "The strategy for Online Portal and Storefronts addresses my concerns for this topic" survey results.

Public Realm Improvements



- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

Graph 6: "The strategy for Public Realm Improvements addresses my concerns for this topic" survey results.



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METRO Blue Line Extension

- Could increase pride in the area and improve the character of the residential and commercial zones near and around West Broadway
- Connections to bus lines
- Protected bike lanes
- Bike rack installations near businesses
- Concern
 - Potential to diminish the character and views within the North loop. Historic district and building need protection

Workforce development and small business commitments

Impact: The project will create opportunities for workers by connecting them to new jobs and training opportunities and bringing new jobs to the corridor.

Strategy: The Met Council would implement workforce development initiatives and leverage existing workforce development programs in the Blue Line Extension corridor to maximize opportunities for workers. These programs would improve job prospects, lower the risk of economic displacement, and support the creation of generational wealth in corridor communities.

Feedback:

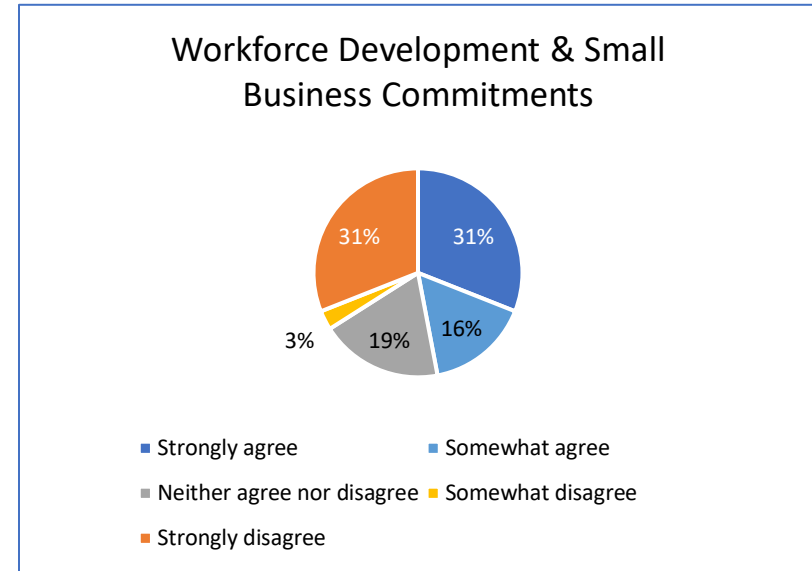
- Opportunities
 - Promote job opportunities and employ local residents
 - Create training opportunities

Overall feedback

- Concerns:
 - Safety
 - Displacement
 - Cost and ridership
 - Access for emergency vehicles near North Memorial Hospital
- Lack of overall support for project and feelings like Project staff are not listening to community
- Excited for new light rail system in their area

Lowry Avenue Station Feedback

Following municipal consent, the Minneapolis Parks and Rec Board (MPRB) and North Hennepin Memorial Hospital expressed concerns regarding access to the proposed Lowry Avenue Station. In response to these concerns, the Project and a collaborative stakeholder workgroup, created nine station design alternatives. The alternatives were presented for public feedback at two community workshops.



Graph 7: "The strategy for Workforce Development & Small Business Commitments addresses my concerns for this topic" survey results



Public Engagement Report (November 2024 – February 2025)

METRO Blue Line Extension

Engagement activities:

- Robbinsdale Lowry Avenue Station Community Workshop
 - December 3, 2024, Elim Lutheran Church
- Minneapolis Lowry Avenue Station Community Workshop
 - January 14, 2025, North Regional Library
- Minneapolis Park Board Meeting – 8 Park Board Commissioners in attendance
 - February 5, 2025, Mary Merrill Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Headquarters - Board Room
- Lowry Ave Station Survey, online – 44 responses

Project staff gathered feedback at community workshop meetings and through an online survey. Common themes are listed below.

Concerns:

- Residents' voices not being heard
- Perceived potential of increased crime/drug use in the area
- Walkability to the hospital and viability given the station location
 - To get to destinations near the station, there is a large hill
 - Desire to move the station closer to Oakdale Parking garage
 - Ridership impacts due to station location relating to foot traffic
- Maintaining parkland
 - Maintenance programs for litter and debris around the station
 - Trail user safety with an at-grade crossing on parkway and grand rounds
 - Disruption to trail connectivity during construction
- Traffic pattern impacts on County Road 81 after the light rail is built
 - Continuity of parkway and grand rounds could be interrupted
 - Removal of access to the hospital from the parkway
- Cost of this project
 - Where will the additional \$50M for option H come from
- Construction impacts
 - Costly bridges were just developed, and this could impact them
 - Damage to property during construction
- Noise and vibration mitigation



Figure 1. Minneapolis Lowry Avenue Station Community Workshop, January 2025



- Exploring BRT rather than Light Rail Transit (LRT)

Summary of survey results

- Option A was the most common choice among the responses for several reasons including:
 - Cost and construction efficiency since it is embedded in project already and maintains current bridge system
 - Convenience and safety of trail users
 - At-grade station access
- Option H was chosen by a few respondents for the following reasons:
 - Convenience and safety of trail users
 - At-grade station access
 - Does not have gates and does not cross parkway at-grade
- Other options mentioned – including options B, D, F, and G – were desired due to their potential to minimize park, traffic and pedestrian impacts during operations, cheaper cost – some options maintaining current infrastructure,
- Some preferred for the station location to be moved altogether

Based on the feedback received from the meetings and survey, most prefer option H, an at-grade station without an at-grade or gated crossing of the parkway, trail, and Lowry Avenue. Concerns and suggestions will continue to be taken into consideration as the design evaluations move forward.

On February 19, 2025, the Project Decision Board directed the Project to continue with option H and modify the Lowry Avenue Station to include a grade separation of Theodore Wirth Parkway and Lowry Avenue from the LRT infrastructure, and to analyze the modified concept in the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS). Engagement and outreach will continue throughout the design process, with open houses scheduled for March 2025.

21st Avenue Feedback

When the Blue Line Extension is complete, the 21st Avenue corridor between I-94 and James Avenue in Minneapolis will become a car-free transitway with space for people to walk, bike, and take transit. Since this will change the character of the area, project staff hosted a workshop style meeting on December 10, 2024, with community members along 21st Avenue to discuss their ideas for cultural placekeeping, public realm improvements, and community investment opportunities to enrich the community character.

Topics of conversation with the design team included:

- Displacement and community impact concerns
 - Desire for events such as open streets, art crawl, and back to school events on James Avenue to continue and not be relocated
- Noise pollution and safety concerns
- Community programs and organizations priorities
 - Down payment assistance and housing cost assistance (3 votes)
 - Home repair programs, affordable housing preservation and development, and business technical and financial assistance (2 votes)



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- Others:
 - Inspire North CDC
 - Subsidies for businesses to offset increased overhead costs

Common Themes:

- Desired Amenities
 - Community garden
 - Playground or play areas
 - Housing
 - Artwork
 - Trees
 - Parks, green space
 - Gathering spaces, seating
 - Parking
 - Elevated mall
 - Bike stations
 - Public restrooms
 - Activating lots along 21st Avenue, avoid empty/vacant lots
- Opportunities
 - Create a station closer to existing retail
 - Lift up current businesses
 - Add retail
 - Educational information at community gardens
 - Engage local artists and horticulturists.
- Concerns
 - Route is very close to homes
 - Safety
 - Loss of trees
 - There would no longer be a convenient roadway alternative to West Broadway Avenue



Figure 2: Project staff engaging with community members at our Dec. 10 workshop



Interactive Map Feedback

The interactive map has been updated as of October 2024 to reflect preliminary design plans post municipal consent approval and is open to collect comments and feedback.

City	Total Number of Comments
Brooklyn Park	5
Crystal	7
Robbinsdale	7
Minneapolis	105

Table 1: Number of general feedback comments on interactive map

Map Feedback Themes

- 10th Avenue as car-free transitway
 - Traffic impact concerns
 - Suggestions to move route alignment closer to I-94
 - Access to and from buildings in corridor concerns
 - Excitement for pedestrian-oriented transitway
- Station location suggestions to access retail spaces and encourage development
- Project cost and low ridership concerns
- Pedestrian safety improvements due to new traffic flow
 - Desire for better pedestrian connections to river near West Broadway station
 - Desire for preserved green spaces
- Excitement for a faster transit option
- Accessibility concerns during construction for disabled people and for businesses
 - Parking for businesses on West Broadway
- Displacement and community isolation concerns

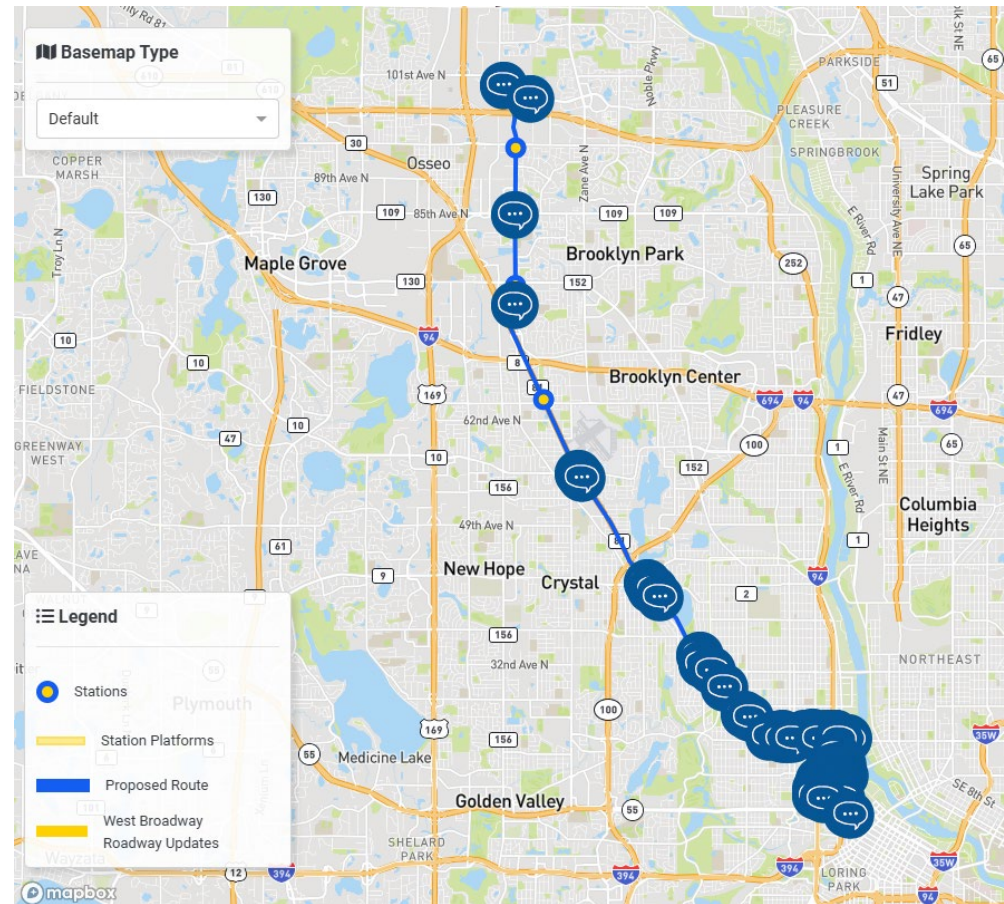


Figure 3: Image of general feedback comments on interactive map