



Engagement Strategies and Approach

March – June 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.

- **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.
- **Round 13** (March to June 2025): Input from community meetings on proposed routes, project information background, Lowry Avenue station design, and opportunities that would benefit the people in the community.

This document summarizes the feedback received during Round 13 of public engagement from March through June 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 (11 in-person)

In-person meetings

- North Loop Monthly Community Meeting
 - Thurs, March 13, 2025, from 6-8 p.m. at Metro Transit North Loop Garage (30 attendees)
- Lowry Avenue Station Community Workshop
 - Mon, March 24, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Sanctuary Church (9 attendees)
- Quarterly Meeting
 - Tues, March 25, 2025, from 6:30-8 p.m. at Brooklyn Park Library (12 attendees)
- Lowry Avenue Station Community Workshop
 - Thurs, March 27, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Elim Church (25 attendees)
- Minneapolis Community Design Workshop and Minneapolis DREAM Session #1
 - Tues, May 13, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (40 attendees)
- West Broadway DREAM Session #2
 - Thurs, May 15, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Twin Cities Urban League (20 attendees)
- Quarterly Meeting and North Loop DREAM Session #1
 - Tues, May 20, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Metro Transit North Loop Garage (5 attendees)



Figure 1. North Loop Quarterly Meeting, May 2025



Public Engagement Report (March - June 2025)

METRO Blue Line Extension

- North Loop DREAM Session #2
 - Thurs, May 22, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Metro Transit North Loop Garage (15 attendees)
- Robbinsdale and Crystal DREAM Session #1
 - Tues, June 3, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Elim Church (14 attendees)
- Robbinsdale and Crystal DREAM Session #2
 - Thurs, June 5, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Crystal Airport (6 attendees)
- Crystal Open House
 - Tues, June 24, 2025, from 5-7 p.m. at Crystal Community Center (~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.
- Lowry Avenue Station Community Workshop – 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.
- Minneapolis Community Design Workshop – Community workshop style meeting where project staff provided an update on the design in Minneapolis. Community members were asked to provide their input on public realm improvement preferences, including planting, lighting, paving, and seating.
- DREAM Session – standing for Develop Recommendations, Empower, Action, and Mobilize, DREAM was a community-led process that explored opportunities for the design and development of the Blue Line Extension in a way that would benefit the people in the communities it will serve.

Other meeting metrics:

- 6 pop-up events
- 11 events with stakeholders and business representatives
- 1 Advisory Committee meeting
- One-on-one stakeholder meetings, office hours, and phone calls

Engagement metrics from August 2020 – June 2025

- **953** events resulting in nearly **45,050** points of contact with the public
- **430,000** reached on social media and **10 million+** reached through newsletters and paid ads on community and cultural media
- Approximately **7,153** survey responses
- **+4,000** comments on the interactive map
- **+4,720** comments from comment forms
- Corridor postcards mailed to **+250,000 properties**
- Over **7,050** 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.

- Impact on community
 - Excitement for new public infrastructure
 - Lack of parking by nearby businesses
- Community investment
 - Desire for amenities in 21st Avenue and West Broadway Avenue corridor
 - Interest for express Light Rail Transit (LRT) options during certain times
- 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 and connectivity
 - Desire for improved pedestrian and bike connections along West Broadway Avenue and in Crystal
 - Desire for pedestrian safety on Washington Avenue and crosswalk distinctions throughout the stations
- 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
 - Concerns about increase traffic along 8th Avenue
- Construction
 - Concerns of property impacts and 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
 - Eager to hear about placements for the fence
 - Interest in the exact construction schedule
- Funding
 - Concerns about tax dollars not being spent efficiently (LRT vs BRT)
 - A desire for transparency regarding funding
 - Budget concerns
- Housing Displacement
 - Fear of being forced to live somewhere else without prior notice
 - A need for list of properties that will be impacted



SFEIS Comment Period

On May 22, 2025, Metropolitan Council and the Federal Transit Administration published the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS). This document provided the refined benefits and impacts of the project since the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was published last summer in 2024. The SFEIS identifies specific measures that will be taken to avoid, minimize and mitigate potential negative impacts. Comments were accepted from the date of publication through June 22.

Forms of feedback collection

- Email comments to BlueLineExt@metrotransit.org.
- Written comments will also be accepted by project staff at in-person events

Notices

- Flyer
- Newsletter
- SFEIS provided at community hubs including public libraries
- Social media – Instagram and Facebook

Stakeholder Presentations

During the stakeholder presentations, project staff provided a comprehensive overview of the Blue Line Extension project, including a timeline of upcoming steps and key milestones. Each presentation was customized to address the specific interests and concerns of the group being presented to.

Stakeholder groups included:

- Hawthorne Neighborhood Council
- Robbinsdale City Staff
- Northside Green Zone Leadership
- North Loop Neighborhood Association Board
- Minneapolis Youth Congress Board
- Minneapolis Animal Control Leadership Board
- Brooklyn Park City Council
- New Hope/Crystal Business Networking Group

Feedback from DREAM Sessions

Standing for **D**evelop Recommendations, **E**mpower, **A**ction, and **M**obilize (DREAM) was a community-led process the project team has done before that explored ways the BLE could benefit communities, specifically North Minneapolis in 2024. This year, community leaders facilitated six total sessions in May and June across the four corridor communities: North Minneapolis, North Loop, Robbinsdale, and Crystal. Participants were asked to imagine what opportunities a large transportation project like the BLE could bring to their community.

Common Themes:

- Opportunities
 - Educate students on how to use transit
 - New development due to LRT
 - Desire for greenery and streetscaping
 - Increase accessibility to jobs
 - Add public restrooms near stations
 - Multimodal transportation
 - New developments
 - Accessibility to public transportation, jobs
 - Public restrooms near the stations
 - Daycare centers in proximity to stations
 - Students able to use LRT to and from school
 - Friendly architecture such as public restrooms, pedestrian only spaces, green spaces
 - Proximity to public transportation
 - New employment opportunities
- Concerns
 - Noise and vibration impacts
 - Gentrification
 - Housing affordability
 - Residents not being heard during decision-making process
 - Vandalism
 - High increase of traffic
 - Gentrification
 - Lighting and sidewalks around the stations
 - Not being able to fulfill the needs of people with disabilities
 - Concerns about the train going slow
 - Concerns about one-lane traffic impacting emergency vehicles



Figure 2. Minneapolis DREAM Session, May 2025



- Budget shortfalls for the project
- Car travel time

Minneapolis Community Meeting

The project team held two community meetings in Minneapolis to gather feedback on the Blue Line Extension. The first meeting on May 13th had 30 attendees, and the second on May 15th had 10 attendees. Project staff presented an update on the environmental review and design for North Minneapolis. Staff received 16 comment cards providing feedback on public realm improvements and streetscape design elements were most important to them.

Comment Themes

- Unique greenspace streetscape design
- Abundant, diverse, evergreen and native planting design
- Fixed seating and unique lighting
- Unique paving and planters
- Some bike racks, lots of waste bins, and seasonal banners

Lowry Avenue Station Decision

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

In February 2025, the project team made a decision with the help of the Corridor Management Committee and chose to change from Option A to Option H. Option H was preferred by the Cities of Minneapolis and Robbinsdale, North Memorial Hospital, the MPRB, and a majority of community members for its grade separation from the Grand Rounds and Victoria memorial Parkway, continuity of parkland, and maintained emergency access routes.

Comment Summary and Themes

- 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 Avenue North Memorial parking garage
 - Ridership impacts due to station location relating to foot traffic
- Maintaining park land
 - Maintenance programs for litter and debris around the station
 - Trail user safety with an at-grade crossing on parkway and grand rounds



Public Engagement Report (March - June 2025)

METRO Blue Line Extension

- 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
- Exploring BRT rather than an LRT

Cultural Placekeeping Kickoff

To help address cultural displacement, the project launched the cultural placekeeping program as guided by the Blue Line Extension environmental review process. A cultural placekeeping workgroup comprised of Blue Line Extension Corridor community members was established. The purpose of this group is to collaborate with community members to develop visual design elements for the station areas. Applications for community members to join the program opened in December 2024 and were promoted through the website, newsletters, social media, and in-person meetings. The program officially commenced in May 2025, with project staff holding monthly workshops with selected community members.

Meeting dates

- May 17, 2025 – Meeting #1 – Kick off
 - Explaining the purpose of the meeting
 - Introducing members and project staff
- June 12, 2025 – Virtual Kick off meeting
 - Same content as May 17, 2025 Kick off
 - Virtual for those unable to join in May
- June 25, 2025 – Meeting #2
 - Planned out timeline and goals with group members
 - Began discussion of community and cultural themes per city

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	14
Crystal	13
Robbinsdale	14
Minneapolis	158

Table 1: Number of general feedback comments on interactive map

Map Feedback Themes

- Opportunities
 - Personal excitement for using the Blue Line Extension
 - Expansion of public transportation
 - New bike lanes by Lowry Avenue station
 - Access to a car-free pedestrian mall
 - Lighting and sidewalk improvements
 - Public amenities such as public restrooms, bike racks, and water fountains
 - Accessibility to green spaces
- Concerns
 - Potential demolition of residents' homes
 - Increase in local traffic
 - Concerns regarding the speed and efficiency of the train
 - Impact on local communities and businesses
 - Lack of parking spaces for local businesses
 - Increase property taxes for homes near the stations
 - Fair compensation for homeowners being displaced

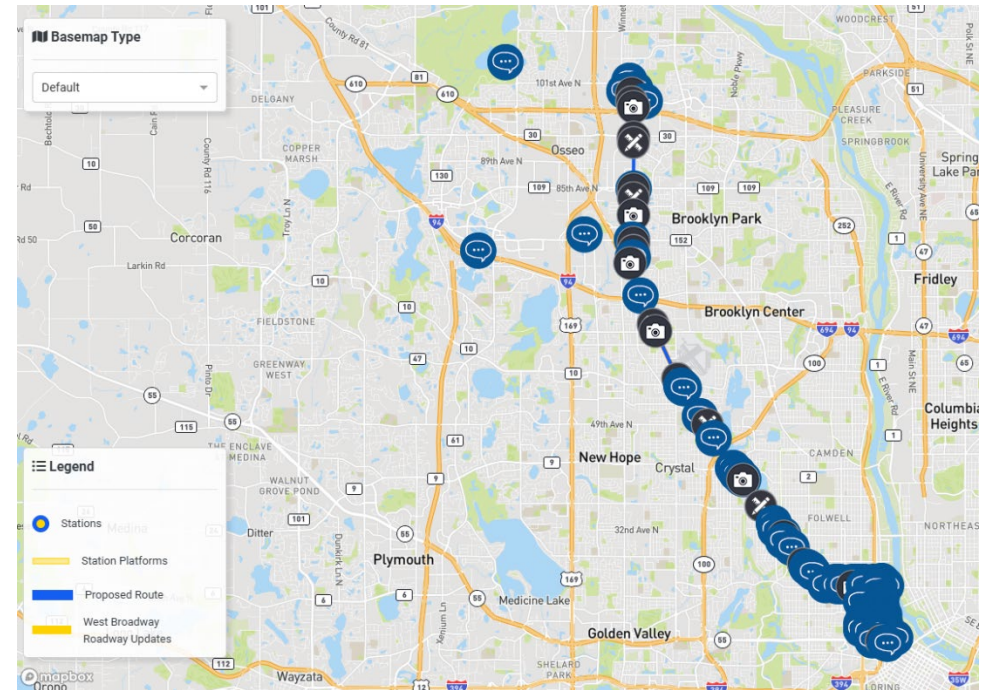


Figure 3. Interactive map with general feedback comments