

C Line Planning Phase Public Engagement Plan

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1. Introduction

The primary goal of the C Line Planning Phase was to finalize station locations and prepare the *C Line Station Plan* to be presented to the Metropolitan Council for adoption in early 2016. Metro Transit staff completed a Preliminary Planning Phase in 2015 that included outreach and engagement with several neighborhood associations in North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center, as well as outreach to individual residents and business owners.

Coordination with the Penn Avenue Community Works (PACW) Project played an important role in establishing engagement opportunities within the community. As part of the PACW project, input was gathered from neighborhood associations, community councils, and other local organizations. Blue Line Extension open houses were also utilized to gather public input. Community involvement continued through fall and early 2016 and provided stakeholders opportunities to review the *C Line Station Plan*, a document that will guide the project's detailed engineering phase.

Stakeholders gained information regarding C Line development in the Preliminary Planning Phase, provided input on final C Line station locations, and gained insight on the remaining process including funding, final design and engineering, and construction. Stakeholders were able to engage the process through electronic communication and workshops.

1.1. Planning Phase Decision Making

The key decision made during the Planning Phase was where to locate C Line stations. The station location process was informed by input by various organizations, agencies, and the general public. The members, roles, and responsibilities of each of these groups are described below.

1.2. Planning Phase Public Engagement Goals

Establishing clear goals help ensure a transparent process that clearly defines what input Metro Transit is receiving. Goals also help outline the scope of the work being completed during the C Line Planning Phase. The goals of the C Line Planning Phase are provided below:

- Gain support for the *C Line Station Plan* being presented to the Metropolitan Council in early 2016
- Gain input on station locations to solidify for the *C Line Station Plan* being presented to Metropolitan Council
- Communicate the work that was done in the pre-planning stage
- Build support for the project by ensuring that the *C Line Station Plan* reflects the needs of the North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center communities

2. Community and Station Neighbor Outreach and Engagement

A variety of methods were used to engage stakeholders during the C Line Planning Phase. The project utilized both traditional and non-traditional methods for stakeholders to participate in the C Line project. Residents had the opportunity to meet with Metro Transit project staff and provide input. Stakeholders were encouraged to participate by providing input on the *C Line Station Plan*.

Station neighbors—businesses and residents located in the immediate vicinity of a proposed station—were engaged through in-person visits and mailed letters. In-person visits provided a meaningful space for station neighbors to gather information regarding station locations and other relevant information.

See Appendix A for a full list of outreach and engagement activities with specific dates. The general planning phase outreach process is outlined below::

2.1. Engagement Schedule

OCTOBER 2015

Metro Transit staff conducted outreach to station neighbors and reached out to stakeholders to provide information on the C Line and encourage their participation to provide input on the draft *C Line Station Plan*. Outreach activities included pop-up outreach and presentations to community groups.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

In November, Metro Transit hosted open houses and neighborhood meetings for stakeholders to provide input on the draft *C Line Station Plan*. Open house attendees learned about Metro Transit's C Line planning process and reviewed draft station locations. Public comments on the draft *C Line Station Plan* and specific station locations were also collected to inform development of final station location recommendations.

DECEMBER 2015

In December, project staff continued to meet with neighborhood organizations and community groups to allow more opportunity to provide input on the draft *C Line Station Plan*. Station neighbor outreach continued throughout the draft C Line Station Plan comment period to capture public input corridor-wide.

2.2. Electronic and Social Media

Electronic media are essential to reaching those businesses, residents, students, commuters, and policy makers who have daily computer access. Having an effective website is critical for reaching students and other younger people in addition to stakeholders unable to attend a workshop. Several additions were made to the C Line webpage to improve communication related to the Planning Phase. These additions are as follows:

- Electronic Newsletter
- Webpage outlining the planning phase
- Notification of release of draft and recommended *C Line Station Plan* on social media

Social media was not used as a method of engagement, but as a connection to engagement. Effectively used, social media reached audiences that are not traditionally engaged in Metro Transit's outreach activities. The challenge was effectiveness; C Line social media competes with many organizations for attention. C Line social media can play a valuable role to bring more attention to the C Line engagement process.

Materials were provided on the C Line webpage that allowed stakeholders to view the draft and recommended *C Line Station Plan*, materials from meetings and presentations, and newsletter publications.

See Appendix A for list social media activities.

2.3. Printed Materials

Print media was utilized to inform station neighbors of upcoming meetings and information on how to get in contact with project staff. Informational leaflets and materials supplemented public workshops.

Printed materials utilized throughout the Planning Phase included door hangers, flyers in Route 19 shelters, C Line Fact Sheets, and comment forms.

2.4. Media

Local media is a vital tool to connect stakeholders to the C Line engagement process. Radio stations, television, and newspaper have a broad base of consumers and with effective campaigns, the C Line can reach new audiences in the North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center communities. Throughout the Planning Phase, publications regarding the C Line were included in the Sun Post and Star Tribune. The *C Line Station Plan* was also the subject of news stories. C Line related news stories can be found on the C Line project website.

3. NEPA Outreach

Metro Transit is currently completing required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for the C Line, including Section 106 cultural resources analysis. NEPA information was incorporated into the *C Line Station Plan* public engagement process and will continue to be provided on an ongoing basis on the C Line project website. As necessary, Metro Transit staff will post NEPA-related documents as they become finalized.

4. Incorporating Input into Decision Making

Metro Transit staff collected public comments, questions, and suggestions throughout the C Line engagement process. As part of the Planning Phase, Metro Transit hosted five open houses and several mobile open houses for stakeholders to provide input on the draft *C Line Station Plan*. Metro Transit staff also gave several presentations to community groups and government agencies to gather input on the *C Line Station Plan*.

Input from agencies and community stakeholders was influential in recommending final station locations. Additional agency coordination and community engagement work was focused at several stations, including:

- Osseo & 46th/Victory Area: This station was removed from C Line Project consideration after further coordination with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the City of Minneapolis, the Victory Neighborhood Association (ViNA), and other community members.
- Penn & 43rd: Additional agency coordination occurred with the City of Minneapolis to review an alternative station location at Penn & 44th; this alternative was ultimately not recommended for approval.
- Penn & 36th: An alternative station location at Penn & 35th was explored in coordination with the Cleveland Neighborhood Association (CNA) and a community survey; this alternative was ultimately not recommended for approval.

See Appendix C and *C Line Station Plan* for more information on how input was incorporated into decision making.