METRO D Line Bus Rapid Transit Project
Design Phase
Public Engagement Plan
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Introduction

The METRO D Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Design Phase Public Engagement Plan (PEP) is an outline for interacting with the public during the design phase of the D Line project. The purpose of the plan is to identify opportunities to engage or inform the community to resolve issues and build project support.

Route 5, which connects Brooklyn Center Transit Center to Mall of America through downtown Minneapolis, is the region’s busiest bus route with about 16,000 riders every weekday. To make the trip faster and more comfortable for thousands of riders, Metro Transit is developing the D Line project. Instead of stopping every block, buses will make limited stops at stations spaced every ¼ mile to every ½ mile depending on stop conditions. Like A Line, and C Line, fares will be collected at stations prior to boarding to decrease time a bus spends at a station. D Line buses will also communicate with traffic lights to keep lights green or shorten red lights. Stations will include heat, lighting, real-time transit information, and security features, and snow will be removed by Metro Transit in the winter.

Design and engineering activities will begin in early 2019 and continue through the end of 2019. After design completion, construction is anticipated to begin in 2020 or 2021 pending full funding.

Background

The D Line planning process, in which station locations were determined, concluded in July 2018 with the approval of the Final D Line Station Plan. The Station Plan represents two years of planning and engagement work in the Route 5 corridor. Metro Transit used a variety of activities to reach the broadest audience possible during this previous phase. Activities included:

- Hosting open houses
- Coordination with neighborhood associations
- Newsletter distribution
- Social media posts encouraged stakeholders to review and provide comments on the draft D Line Station Plan online
- On-bus outreach to gather current customer feedback

Metro Transit staff hosted or participated in 52 structured community events, in addition to one-on-one conversations with station neighbors and transit riders.

Nearly 500 comments were submitted during the D Line planning phase. Approximately 254 comments were submitted via email and 130 comments were submitted during on-bus conversations. 98 comments were submitted during open houses and agency letters contributed about 5 additional comments.

This high level of engagement and community input informed two key principles to bring into the design phase:

1. Accessible and consistent communications.
The D Line corridor stakeholders include a wide range of cultures, backgrounds, and levels of English proficiency. Communications should use plain language, consider reading levels and aim to be transparent so that information is available to all stakeholders at all levels of participation.

2. **Continued use of broad outreach strategies.**

Throughout the planning process, staff connected with a wide range of individuals and organizations. To reach as many unique stakeholders as possible, staff will continue to a variety of outreach methods to ensure a wide range of voices are contributing to the design of each station.

**Goals**

The goals for public engagement during the design phase are:

1. Build upon engagement successes from D Line Planning phase and continue to learn from input received.
2. Inform the public about the design and construction process and how previously made planning decisions will inform those phases.
3. Communicate upcoming project decisions, timelines, and impacts to stakeholders.
4. Build public support for the project into the construction phase.
5. Enhance project decision making by providing meaningful opportunities for input, participation, and dialogue on specific station elements at each D Line station location.
6. Continue to build mutual trust and engagement capacity by creating two-way communication that is transparent, informative, demonstrates how input is used, and details opportunities for further engagement.
7. Respect the unique background and cultural experience of transit riders and station neighbors on the corridor.
8. Use a variety of different engagement methods to ensure a diverse range of input from underrepresented stakeholders and ensure connection is made with station neighbors.
9. Maintain ongoing communication with project stakeholders and the public and ensure key messages are clear, consistent, responsive, and equitable.
10. Balance input from users of each station as well as the surrounding community.

**Timeline**

Design activities will begin in spring 2019 and continue through the end of 2019 into Spring of 2020.

**Planned Outreach and Engagement**

To reach project goals, a robust and varied outreach and engagement strategy is needed. This next section outlines the methods that will be used to engage stakeholders.

**External Communications**

External communications will be a key element of the process to inform communities of the design process and the ways in which they can participate. External communications will be delivered throughout the D Line project and will be completed both on an ongoing and as-needed basis to ensure both corridor-wide education and station-specific attention.
Ongoing Communications

- Quarterly D Line Newsletter (email)
- Regular website updates (weekly)
- Letter to station neighbors at planned stations at beginning of design phase.
  - Stations that have been previously constructed as shared C Line and D Line stations will not be included in these mailings as these stations have already been designed and constructed.
- Email communication of major design updates and milestones to elected officials and community organizations for distribution in their newsletters or social media
- Quarterly Social Media updates

Event-Specific Communications

- Letters to station neighbors at least two weeks before design workshops
- Door-knocking and phone calls to reach station neighbors at station locations before design workshops
- Targeted social media posts to station areas notifying upcoming design workshops

Languages

Approximately 80,000 people live within .25 miles of this corridor, and of those 80,000 approximately 20,000 people speak a language other than English and half of those people speak English less than “very well” (Source: MN Compass). Key project documents will be translated into Spanish, Somali, and Hmong languages as these are the most commonly spoken non-English languages on the corridor. Interpreters will be made available as needed and resources are available.

Internal Communications

Internal Communications are important to reach the 3000 employees at Metro Transit. Ensuring the entirety of our workforce (many of whom are transit operators or users) can participate in the design process as they are able is of great importance. To reach our internal workforce, the following methods will be used.

- Publications in internal newsletters including Insights and The Wire
- Regular updates at all-staff meetings
- Open houses at work locations to reach transit operators and facilities maintenance staff

Events

Holding community events is an important way to connect and communicate with station neighbors and transit users around D Line stations. Design-focused public comments gathered as part of events, workshops, and through official communication channels will be gathered and included (with identifying information removed) on station-specific pages at the end of the design phase.

Design Workshops

Metro Transit staff will hold public design workshops around individual stations, or groups of stations in a community. Design workshops will be split into two phases:
The first phase will focus on sharing preliminary station layouts and collecting information from the community on design questions. These workshops will be focused during the first quarter of 2019.

The second phase of workshops will report information back and show how community input was incorporated into design decisions as well as begin to prepare station neighbors for upcoming construction. These workshops will be held in late 2019 or early 2020.

Content developed for these workshops will also be made available online with ways for stakeholders to provide comment.

**Rider Conversations**
Throughout the early design process, Metro Transit staff will ride Route 5 buses and meet riders at bus stops to inform customers about D Line plans, gain input on D Line design questions, increase turnout at any Phase 1 Design Workshops, and reach customers that we may not reach through other methods to hear feedback on specific stops by those that use them.

**Public Comments**
Input from the public is one of many factors that will be considered in this design process. Station-specific, design-focused comments given as part of design workshops or during public comment phases will be compiled at the end of the design phase and shared on the D Line website with identifying information removed.

**Schedule**
This section contains an outlined schedule for planned outreach during the design phase of the D Line project. As the project progresses and more information is available, this schedule will be further developed. Information about future meetings and opportunities to interact with the project will be posted on the project website at [metrotransit.org/d-line-meetings](http://metrotransit.org/d-line-meetings).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Workshops: Phase 1</th>
<th>On an as needed basis: located in communities, localized to stops or areas, meant to gather feedback on specific design questions.</th>
<th>June-July 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design Workshops: Phase 2</td>
<td>On an as needed basis: located in communities, localized to stops or areas, meant to report back to the community on design decisions and highlight how feedback was used.</td>
<td>Winter 2019-Spring 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>Internal and External</td>
<td>Quarterly from Early 2019- Spring 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Updates</td>
<td>Informational updates</td>
<td>As needed from Early 2019- Spring 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Wide Letter</td>
<td>Detailing beginning and end of design phase</td>
<td>Early 2019, Spring 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Specific Letter</td>
<td>Within .25-mile radius of stations</td>
<td>2 weeks before any public design workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Updates</td>
<td>Beginning and end of design phase</td>
<td>Early 2019-Spring 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doorknocking, Flyering, and Phone Calls | Informational, and to alert of any upcoming public meetings | Spring/Summer 2019-Spring 2020
---|---|---
Rider Conversations and Stop Conversations | Gather information from regular station users | Spring/Summer 2019-Spring 2020

**Stakeholders**
- Station neighbors (property owners, tenants, and business owners whose homes or businesses are adjacent to D Line stations)
- Transit riders
- Neighborhood associations, business associations, and community organizations along the D Line Corridor
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Community Advisory Committees and Organizations
- Cities of Brooklyn Center, Minneapolis, Richfield, and Bloomington
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Hennepin County
- Corridor elected and appointed officials
- Federal Transit Administration

**Outreach and Engagement at Planned Station Locations**
Along the majority of the D Line, locations of the station have been determined in the planning process and are identified in the [D Line Final Station Plan](#).

Communications and outreach at these station locations will focus on corridor transit users, station neighbors adjacent to the station, as well as those nearby that may be affected by the changes to the street that will result from an enhanced D Line station.

Additionally, the following considerations for engagement at stops include:

1. At all stops, the location of the specific station elements, including shelters and shelter size, benches, bike racks, waste management, and signage, will be determined throughout this engagement process. Location of platforms (and elements on those platforms) will be largely driven by engineering requirements, including drainage, pedestrian accessibility, transit operations, traffic operations, vehicular turning movements, below-ground utility constraints / conflicts and other limiting factors.
2. Stations should be as consistent in layouts as possible to make them easy to navigate.
3. Many stops involve the movement of a stop from a near-side to a far-side location to maximize the effectiveness of transit signal priority, avoid sightline conflicts for drivers, and improve overall transit operations. This may represent a change to transit users and station neighbors. The design process should clearly communicate location changes planned at each stop.
4. In many cases, a D Line station is planned for space currently used for on-street parking. On-street parking impacts for residents and commercial properties will be communicated at every station location.

For more detail on specific station locations, refer to the D Line Final Station Plan.

Coordination with Other Projects
Some D Line stations are being implemented in coordination with other street projects. Communications around these stations will focus on corridor transit users and station neighbors. Design activities and engagement will be coordinated with project partners to inform station neighbors and transit users of additional changes outside of the station. Coordination on these projects allows for greater engagement with the public to ensure a design and construction process that is intentional and limits the amount of disruption from construction of stations.

METRO Green Line Extension 7th Street Bikeway
The recommended station location is within the limits of the planned 7th Street bikeway improvements to be implemented in conjunction with METRO Green Line Extension construction.

Hennepin County Portland Avenue Bikeway Gap Project
Plans for the Portland & 60th Street and Portland & 66th Street stations were developed with consideration of Hennepin County’s planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements on Portland Avenue between 60th and 66th Streets. The northbound and southbound stops will remain at current existing locations. Design of the D Line will be coordinated with the Portland Avenue improvements. Hennepin County will lead communications and outreach for this project, in coordination with Metro Transit. Construction of the planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements is planned for 2020.

Mall of America Station
As the terminus of the D Line, this station will be integrated into the planned Mall of America Transit Center renovation project to be completed in 2019. The transit center will be improved with BRT-ready improvements that can be utilized by the D Line.

Additional Outreach at Unresolved Station Locations
The following station locations were not fully defined in the station plan. Staff will work closely with project partners and with the community to solidify station locations and the locations of station elements when more information is available.

44th Avenue & Penn-Oliver, 44th Avenue & Humboldt-Girard
The D Line station plan identified general locations for these stations, because they will be sited and designed in coordination with a broader street redesign of 44th Avenue. Hennepin County is planning to reconstruct 44th Avenue from Penn to Fremont in 2020, with preliminary design advancing in late 2018 and detailed design in 2019. The identification of platform locations was not feasible prior to reconstruction project design advancing.

The street design process will consider how transit platforms will fit into the rest of the street to maintain multimodal facilities throughout the length of the 44th Avenue reconstruction project. Hennepin County will lead communications and outreach for this project. Metro Transit will supplement
the street project’s outreach by communicating and engaging with corridor transit users and station neighbors.

Construction of D Line platforms will be coordinated with the 44th Avenue/Webber Parkway reconstruction project to minimize disruption.

**Chicago & 38th Street**
The D Line station plan identified a general location for the southbound platform of this station on the southwest corner of Chicago and 38th Street. Further design review and station neighbor engagement is needed to determine how the station will fit on this corner given an existing driveway.

**American and Portland/Chicago**
The D Line station plan identified a general location for this station on American Boulevard between Portland and Chicago Avenues. Further design review and station neighbor engagement is needed to determine how the station will fit on this corner given potential for an enhanced crossing of American Boulevard at this location.

**C Line Shared Stations**
These stations will be shared between Metro Transit’s C Line and D Line and will be constructed and operational prior to the C Line’s anticipated opening in Spring 2019.

Stations that have been previously constructed as shared C Line and D Line stations have gone through an extensive engagement process though the C Line design and construction phases and the D Line planning phase. These stations will not be a focus during the D Line design engagement phase as there are no changes to the shelters proposed and will be few opportunities for meaningful design-focused engagement around these stations. Project updates will be communicated through our communications channels, elected officials, and neighborhood and community partners to ensure station neighbors are kept up to date on project milestones.

**Summary**
A well-informed and engaged public strengthens the D Line project and helps create a more useful transit system for all. This PEP aims to create long-lasting relationships with under-represented communities and will provide guidance to staff for effective communications will all members of communities that the D Line serves. As Metro Transit engagement and design staff bring plan elements to the community, it is important that the procedures in this Design Public Engagement Plan are followed and implemented to all stations along the D Line to ensure a fair, equitable, and cohesive D Line Design Plan to take into the construction phase of the project.