Faster transit is coming to Fremont and Emerson

Folks are now enjoying the rapid bus transit on Penn Avenue since the introduction to the Rapid C Line on June 8. Now Metro Transit is planning improvements to the Route 5 corridor (Fremont-Chicago) with the Metro D Line bus rapid transit project. The D Line will substantially replace Route 5, running primarily on Emerson/Fremont and Chicago Avenues. Route 5 is the busiest bus route in the Twin Cities. Today it carries 13,000 passengers per weekday.

The D Line bus rapid transit will bring better amenities, faster service and a more comfortable ride: faster, more frequent service; pre-boarding fare payment for faster stops; neighborhood-scale stations with amenities; enhanced security; and larger/specialized vehicles.

The D Line corridor stretches 18 miles from the Brooklyn Center Transit Center to the Mall of America Transit Center, serving Fremont/Emerson Avenues on the Northside, 76th/78th Streets downtown, Chicago and Portland Avenues in South Minneapolis, Portland Avenue in Richfield, and American Boulevard in Bloomington.

The new Northside stations will include: 44th Avenue and Penn, 46th and Humboldt, Fremont and 42nd, Fremont and Dowling, Fremont and 35th; Emerson/Fremont and Lowry, Emerson/Fremont and 26th, and Emerson/Fremont and West Broadway. Stations will take you through downtown and on to the Mall of America.

The project schedule has station designs and other improvements taking place 2019-2020, and construction (pending full funding) will take place 2020-2021.

A scheduled trip on the current Route 5 bus from Brooklyn Center Transit Center to the Mall of America can take about 90 minutes, depending on the time of day. The goal of the Metro D Line is to make service 20-22 percent faster by stopping less often, allowing customers to board faster and stopping at fewer red lights.

The D Line will become the main service along the corridor, with service about every 10 minutes on larger buses throughout most of the day. The Route 5 bus will continue to operate about every 30 minutes. Both the D Line and Route 5 will run less frequently in the early morning and late at night. The final service plan will be established when the D Line is closer to construction.

The D Line will have "off-board fare payment." Transit customers will buy their ticket or validate their pass at "readers" on the station platform rather than inside the bus. Customers will then be able to enter the bus through any door, speeding up the boarding process. There's no fare to pay on the bus.

D Line buses will pull up to the station, allowing customers to board and exit the bus, and then will pull away. In some parts of the corridor there are bike lanes on the street. While a bus is stopped, it will occupy the bike lane and the lane of traffic and vehicles and bicycles will not be permitted to drive around the bus. Because all customers pay before boarding and can get on the bus through three wide doors, most stops take about 10-15 seconds.

D Line station features will include: A safe, well-lit environment; real-time next bus displays; and on-demand announcements that mention the bus (for people with low vision); security cameras — key to Metro Transit's crime prevention strategy; shelters to provide weather protection and on-demand heaters; benches for sitting; bicycle parking loops to encourage multi-modal transportation; containers for garbage and recycling; and an emergency telephone that will be available at each D Line station with a 24/7 connection to the Metro Transit Police Department.

You can learn more about the D Line during the Open Streets event on West Broadway on September 14. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. And of course check the Metro Transit website, metrorideline.org/d-line.