

# Lake Street/Midtown Station Renovation

Survey Report

10/17/2024

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## Project Overview

The Lake St./Midtown (Hi-Lake) station renovation project is part of Metro Transit's initiative to enhance the safety, accessibility, and functionality of key transit locations. The renovation plans for the Lake Street/Midtown Blue Line Station focus on improving infrastructure, including changes to staircases, the addition of a ramp, and other station amenities. As part of the project's community engagement process, feedback was collected at the beginning of design phase to ensure that community voices are heard and reflected in the final plans.

## Engagement Summary

Metro Transit conducted a public survey from July 9th to September 6th, 2024, to solicit input from the community on proposed renovations. The survey focused on several key aspects, including staircase design, the potential for an accessible ramp, and which station amenities should be prioritized. A total of 287 community members responded to the survey.

## Key Findings

### Staircase Preferences

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on two staircase design options:

- **Option A:** A shorter staircase with more landings and corners to turn.
- **Option B:** A longer staircase with fewer landings and a continuous view.
  - **50.87%** of respondents preferred **Option B**, citing the ability to view the entire staircase as a key factor in their preference. It was also considered safer by **56.10%** of respondents.

- **Option A** was preferred by **29.97%** of respondents, who mentioned the shorter distance and increased landings as being more convenient.
- **21.25%** of respondents indicated they had no preference or that either option would suffice.

### Ramp Usage and Importance

The survey explored how an accessible ramp would be used by community members and its importance in the station's design.

- **32.06%** of respondents stated they would "definitely" use the ramp.
- **20.91%** indicated they would "probably" use it, and another **23.69%** said they "might" use it.
- **41.46%** of respondents rated the inclusion of a ramp as "very important," with **27.87%** considering it "pretty important."

### Common Themes from Question 6 (Ramp Usage):

- **Ease of Access with Luggage and Strollers:** Many respondents noted that a ramp would make it easier to navigate the station when carrying heavy items such as luggage, strollers, or bikes. The ramp was seen as a critical alternative for those who may not want to use elevators.
- **Concerns about Elevator Reliability:** A common sentiment was that the station's elevators are frequently out of service or unpleasant to use due to cleanliness/biohazard issues. Several respondents expressed that the ramp could serve as a necessary backup when the elevators are malfunctioning.
- **Inclusivity for Those with Limited Mobility:** Respondents emphasized that a ramp would benefit individuals with mobility issues who find stairs difficult, even if they do not use wheelchairs. This includes elderly passengers and those with temporary impairments, such as injuries or joint pain.
- **Bicycle Access:** Several respondents expressed that they would prefer to use the ramp for walking their bicycles rather than carrying them upstairs or waiting for the elevator.

**Comments on Ramp Design:** A few respondents noted that while they might not use the ramp personally, they supported its inclusion for accessibility reasons. Others suggested integrating greenery or seating alongside the ramp to create a more pleasant user experience.

### Ranking of Station Amenities

In addition to questions about the staircase and ramp, the survey asked respondents to prioritize station amenities for the renovation. Respondents were given a list of potential improvements, including:

1. **Transit Service Center** (ranked highest)
2. **Decorative Lighting**
3. **Street Level Seating**
4. **Secure Bike Parking**
5. **Additional Public Art**
6. **Public Water Fountain** (ranked lowest)

### Community Concerns and Feedback

Throughout the survey, respondents provided additional comments and posed questions regarding the renovation. Several common themes emerged:

- **Safety Concerns:** Many respondents raised concerns about personal safety at the station, noting issues such as loitering, drug use, and occasional violent incidents. Some felt that improvements to the station's physical design would not be enough unless accompanied by stronger security measures.
- **Cleanliness and Maintenance:** Several respondents commented on the station's cleanliness, particularly regarding the elevators. Multiple people mentioned the unpleasant smell and lack of upkeep in these areas, calling for more frequent cleaning and better maintenance.
- **Design Enhancements:** Several respondents suggested integrating greenery, such as trees and plants, into the station design to create a more inviting atmosphere. A few also proposed adding art or cultural elements to reflect the community's diversity.
- **Inclusion of Escalators:** Some respondents expressed disappointment that escalators were not being included in the new design. These individuals emphasized that escalators could offer a faster, more convenient option for passengers who do not wish to use stairs or a ramp.
- **Station's Existing Issues:** Several comments reflected frustration with existing problems at the station, including the presence of unhoused individuals and ongoing safety issues. Respondents emphasized that these social concerns should be addressed alongside the renovation for the station to feel truly welcoming and safe.

## Demographics

### Demographic Report:

To better understand who participated in the survey and ensure inclusive representation in the feedback process, the survey included several optional demographic questions. These questions helped Metro Transit gauge the diversity of respondents based on age, race/ethnicity, gender, and disability status.

### Age Group Distribution:

The majority of respondents fell into the **18-64 age group**, with the following breakdown:

- **18-34 years old:** 40.78% of respondents (115 individuals)
- **35-64 years old:** 44.68% of respondents (126 individuals)
- **Under 18 years old:** 2.48% of respondents (7 individuals)
- **65 years or older:** 12.06% of respondents (34 individuals)

### Race/Ethnicity:

Respondents were asked to identify their race or ethnicity, with **White** respondents making up the largest portion of the survey population:

- **White:** 78.85% of respondents (220 individuals)
- **Black, African, or African American:** 8.24% of respondents (23 individuals)
- **Asian or Asian American:** 6.45% of respondents (18 individuals)
- **Hispanic, LatinX, or Latino:** 4.30% of respondents (12 individuals)
- **American Indian or Alaskan Native:** 2.15% of respondents (6 individuals)

- **Other Race/Ethnicity or Prefer to Self-Describe:** 4.66% of respondents (13 individuals)

#### **Gender Identity:**

The survey respondents included a diverse range of gender identities:

- **Man:** 48.40% (136 respondents)
- **Woman:** 43.06% (121 respondents)
- **Non-Binary:** 6.76% (19 respondents)
- **Other gender or prefer to self-describe:** 1.78% (5 respondents)

#### **Disability or Ability Status:**

Respondents were also asked about their disability or ability status to better understand accessibility needs at the station. 43.9% of respondents identified as **having a disability**:

- **Do not identify as having a disability:** 64.66% (183 respondents)
- **Mobility Impairment:** 12.72% (36 respondents)
- **Mental Health Disability:** 10.95% (31 respondents)
- **Learning Disability:** 9.54% (27 respondents)
- **Blindness or Low Vision:** 2.47% (7 respondents)
- **Deafness or Hearing Loss:** 2.83% (8 respondents)
- **Other Disabilities:** 6.01% (17 respondents)

#### **Preferred Languages:**

Most respondents preferred to communicate in **English** (99.29%). However, there was some representation from individuals who spoke other languages:

- **Spanish:** 4.61% (13 respondents)
- **French:** 1.06% (3 respondents)
- Other languages (German, Chinese, Lao, Hmong, and others) were each represented by fewer than 1% of respondents.

\*Note: Survey was conducted in English with reliance on web browser for translation.