

May 19, 2014

Christina Morrison BRT Project Office Metro Transit 1810 East Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55454

Subject: Comments on Orange Line Project Plan

Dear Ms. Morrison,

The Bloomington City Council has reviewed Metro Transit's draft Orange Line Project Plan including its recommendation for the Knox Avenue alignment option for Orange Line BRT as part of the I-494/35W interchange vision layout. The Council concurs that Knox Avenue should be the preferred option because:

- The Knox alignment better serves about 3 times more residents and 1.5 times more jobs in Bloomington and Richfield than the I-35W online station option;
- Has potential for providing a much better transit user experience;
- Simplifies and improves connections to other bus and BRT routes;
- Increases options for providing park-and-ride spaces and developing park and ride as part of a mixed use development; and
- Better integrates the planned Penn American District development with transit and park and ride services.

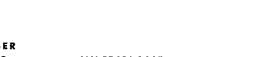
As Metro Transit moves forward with detailed design, the Bloomington City Council asks you to keep the following issues in mind:

- Work with impacted landowners to prepare designs that maximize developable land area and redevelopment opportunities while minimizing negative impacts on existing businesses;
- Design the Penn American District park and ride with active ground floor uses (e.g. commercial or retail leasable space) and to be operated in a way that allows for district-wide parking during off-peak weekend and evening hours. There may be opportunities for a public/private partnership to locate the park and ride;
- Continue to work with Bloomington staff on the related transit route modifications and additions depicted in the plan (e.g. service on Lyndale Avenue and American Boulevard) and with property owners to maximize benefits and minimize impacts of the transit investments. Adding a new bus route along Lyndale Avenue as proposed in the plan has long been a City objective.

In addition, the Council thanks you for attending several Bloomington City Council study sessions to keep the city up to date on the details of the Orange Line and I-494/35W interchange layout study.

Sincerely. Gene Winstead

Mayor



AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

MAYOR AND CITY MANAGER 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027 PH 952-563-8780 FAX 952-563-8754 TTY 952-563-8740

From:	Paige Rohman
To:	BRTprojects
Subject:	Comments on the Orange Line Project Plan Update
Date:	Monday, May 26, 2014 9:14:27 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the proposed Orange Line from Burnsville to Minneapolis. I am a resident of Bloomington, and long-time transit user. Over the past ten years, I have lived in two locations in Minneapolis as well as my current location in Bloomington. At my first home, I took the Blue Line and transferred to local buses (3, 16, 50) to get to my work at the U. At my second home, I took an express bus (579) from the 46th Street Station to work at the U. At my current home, I will be able to take the Orange Line from American Boulevard to downtown and then transfer to the Green Line, however I am driving right now due to childcare commitments and lengthy bus travel time.

First, I am a supporter of transit. I think the expansion of rail lines and bus rapid transit are great. My main concern is with total travel time. MetroTransit has, time and again, made the same mistake: we add too many stops and slow the entire route down. We are seeing this played out right now on the Green Line, where travel time is almost 60% longer than projected in part because we added more stations to try and appease every location along the route. We are also seeing this played out along the Red Line at the Cedar Grove Station, where it's just taking too long for buses to get off the highway and back on again. It was put there under the guise of redevelopment, much like the Knox location is being proposed in Bloomington/Richfield, but we see that it just isn't working and now the local authorities are trying to come up with \$14 million to do it the way it should have been done.

My public comment on the proposed route is, please keep buses in the median all the way. Yes, there are costs associated with a new station in the median at American Boulevard. Yes, the bridge at 66th Street is not that old. <u>Do this right</u>. If you take the cheap route (66th Street Station on the off ramps) as well as try to provide stops for everyone along the way (Knox ave 3A option) the entire route slows down and you lose ridership. Our goal should be to reduce congestion, and that means reliable, fast options. It should not take me longer to travel by BRT than it would by car. Keep the buses in the median so that they have fast access off and on the HOV lanes.

I recommend option 1A at American Boulevard and adding the option to rebuild the 66th Street bridge so that buses will stay in the median all the way. This is the only way to make this program truly <u>rapid</u>. Please do it right.

Thank you. Paige Rohman Bloomington MN

# **RESOLUTION NO. 10937**

# RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE METRO ORANGE LINE BUS RAPID TRANSIT PROJECT AND KNOX AVENUE ALIGNMENT

WHEREAS, The City of Richfield promotes an integrated transportation system that will serve the future needs of its residents, businesses and visitors, support the City's redevelopment plans and complement the portion of the metropolitan transportation system; and

WHEREAS, the City's Comprehensive Plan promotes mass transit options, such as bus rapid transit, to reduce dependence on automobiles and provide a diverse, balanced set of public transportation alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the City's Comprehensive Plan promotes improvement of nonmotorized and pedestrian travel in the City by connecting pedestrian and bike trails to adjacent communities; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is planned on I-35W, with BRT stations at 66<sup>th</sup> Street and 76<sup>th</sup> Street and a new transitway under I-494 at Knox Avenue that would accommodate pedestrians and bicycles; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line would enhance transit service frequency and access to both I-35W transit routes and local routes; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line using the Knox Avenue alignment would provide the greatest benefit to Richfield residents and those working within the city; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line station location has been closely integrated with MnDOT's I-494/35W Interchange Vision Layout process to advance and benefit both projects; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Council has provided the draft Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Project Plan Update for public comments through May 30, 2014; and

WHEREAS, receiving public comments on the Orange Line Project Plan provides an opportunity for Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council to better understand the preferences and needs for BRT in our community; and

WHEREAS, after the comments are received and incorporated into the plan, it will be brought to the Metropolitan Council for review and adoption; and

WHEREAS, the finalized document will be used to support local and federal funding applications, help determine a path for environmental processes, and refine and update the Metropolitan Council's Regional Transportation Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richfield has identified the implementation of the METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Project as a legislative priority.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Richfield hereby supports the METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Project; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City supports the Knox Avenue alignment for the METRO Orange Line.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Richfield, Minnesota this 27th day of May, 2014.

Debbie Goettel, Mayor

ATTEST:

Nancy Gibbs, Q ity Clerk



Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400 Minneapolis, MN 55415-1842 612-348-9260 Fax: 612-348-1842 www.hennepin.us

May 28, 2014

Christina Morrison BRT Project Office, Metro Transit 1810 East Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55454

Re: Draft METRO Orange Line Project Plan Update - Comments

Ms. Morrison,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft METRO Orange Line Project Plan Update. The bus rapid transit on I-35W is an important part of our regional transit network and Hennepin County supports the advancement of our network.

Our comments, on the draft *METRO Transit Orange Line Bus Rapid transit project plan* are the following:

**Page 38**, we respectfully request that the "10% Hennepin and Dakota Counties" text under the anticipated sources of capital funding be removed and replaced with "10% local funding – to be determined" or similar in messaging.

Currently, there is no funding commitment from Hennepin County or HCRRA for the Orange Line project. Additional dialogue with our County Board including board action will need to occur to officially dedicate monies for the Orange Line.

<u>Page 39</u>, estimated capital costs for the METRO Orange line, this should be cross referenced to the detailed cost estimating that is being developed for the 35W and Lake Street Access project / transit station.

We look forward to continuing to coordinate and collaborate with you on the METRO Orange Line project.

Sincerely, R Blisk. Debra R. Brisk, P.E.

Deputy Executive Director Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority

C: Chair HCRRA, Commissioner McLaughlin Joseph Gladke, John Doan File

# Larkin Hoffman

#### Larkin Hoffman Daly & Lindgren Ltd.

1500 Wells Fargo Plaza 7900 Xerxes Avenue South Minneapolis, Minnesota 55431-1194

GENERAL: 952-835-3800 FAX: 952-896-3333 WEB: WWW.larkinhoffman.com

May 29, 2014

Charles Carlson Senior Manager BRT/Small Starts Metro Transit 1810 East Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55454

Christina Morrison BRT Project Office Metro Transit 1810 East Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55454

Re: Metro Transit Orange Line Comment Letter Our File #36,977-0

Dear Mr. Carlson and Ms. Morrison:

We represent Kraus-Anderson, Inc. ("Kraus-Anderson") regarding the proposed Metro Transit Orange Line BRT project (the "Orange Line"). Kraus-Anderson manages the Southtown Shopping Center ("Southtown") in the City of Bloomington, which would be bisected by the proposed Knox Avenue alignment. We are writing to express serious concerns regarding the proposed alignment as described in the Orange Line BRT Project Plan Update, dated April 2014 (the "Project Plan"), and we strongly encourage Metro Transit to pursue an alternative route.

# Economic Damages

The proposed Knox Avenue alignment will require a broad right-of-way through the Southtown property, effectively splitting the property into two disconnected sections. Running the right-of-way directly through the Southtown Complex would leave portions of the property east of the proposed right-of-way with limited access. Maintaining viable development on the economic remnants that would result would be difficult, if not impossible. The damages of a partial taking go well beyond the loss of the land itself. There would likely be a loss in value to the remaining improvements, temporary construction related damages, or the improvements may become obsolete depending on the scope and nature of the taking. Moreover, approving the proposed alignment would discourage any future investment or upkeep in the existing properties because of the looming threat of construction that would be years in the future. The Knox Avenue alignment would create

Charles Carlson and Christina Morrison May 29, 2014 Page 2

irreparable damage to the Southtown complex, and leave the remainder of the property as an uneconomic remnant.

# Incomplete Analysis of Impacts

The Metropolitan Council has not fully analyzed all costs associated with the Knox Avenue alignment. The Project Plan glosses over the tremendous negative impact that would be associated with constructing an underpass below Interstate 494, one of the busiest and most congested roadways in the state. There is no mention of the significant engineering or costs that would be required to construct the underpass, let alone millions, in economic productivity for the entire metropolitan region that would occur if traffic on Interstate 494 was delayed or rerouted for any duration. The Project Plan also fails to adequately consider the extent of mitigative measures that would be necessary to relocate and rebuild existing infrastructure that would be damaged or displaced due to the proposed alignment. There is also no mention of the economic impact or costs that will be borne by the Metropolitan Council in effecting the taking of such a large right-of-way. As discussed above, even absent a complete taking, the economic damages to business and property owners will be substantial.

# Unrealistic Projections

The Project Plan makes much of the fact that the City of Bloomington (the "City") is engaged in concurrent land use planning. The City's Penn American Plan, establishes ambitious and unrealistic expectations for development in the area that ignore the reality of projected market conditions. No economic study has been conducted to support the overly-ambitious plans of the City for transit oriented development. Much like the Penn American Plan, the proposed Knox Avenue alignment is based on overly-optimistic expectations of what the future development of Southtown will look like, and any redevelopment is 10-20 years in the future. While Kraus-Anderson is hopeful about the development potential of Southtown, the Knox Avenue alignment would have a detrimental impact in the near term and pursuing this alignment will only serve to create uncertainty and economic stagnation.

We urge Metro Transit to review and consider alternative alignments that will not create economic remnants as a result of splitting Southtown, and that are based in realistic projections of costs and future development.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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William C. Griffith, for Larkin Hoffman Daly & Lindgren Ltd.

Direct Dial:	952-896-3290
Direct Fax:	952-842-1729
Email:	wgriffith@larkinhoffman.com

Charles Carlson and Christina Morrison May 29, 2014 Page 3

cc: Ken Vinje, Kraus-Anderson, Inc.

4811-9030-8379, v. 1

## I-494 Corridor Commission Resolution

WHEREAS, the 494 Corridor Commission promotes managing congestion by promoting multimodal commuting options to employees and residents in the 494 corridor; and

WHERAS, the Commission has identified the reconstruction of the I-494/35W Interchange as their top legislative priority which also enables transit stations at American Boulevard and Lake Street; and

WHERAS, the Commission has identified the implementation of the Orange Line Transitway as a legislative priority:

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is planned on I-35W, with BRT stations immediately north and south of I-494 at American Boulevard/Knox Avenue and 76<sup>th</sup> Street/Knox Avenue, and with a new transitway under I-494 at Knox Avenue; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line would enhance transit service frequency and access to both I-35W transit routes and crosstown local routes, including increased transit frequency and span on American Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line station location and routing has been closely integrated with MnDOT's I-494/35W Interchange Vision Layout process to advance and benefit both projects; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Council has provided the draft Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Project Plan Update for public comments through May 30, 2014; and

WHEREAS, receiving public comments on the Orange Line Project Plan provides an opportunity for Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council to better understand the preferences and needs for BRT in our community; and

WHEREAS, after the comments are received and incorporated into the plan, it will be brought to the Metropolitan Council for review and adoption; and

WHEREAS, the finalized document will be used to support local and federal funding applications, help determine a path for environmental processes, and refine and update the Metropolitan Council's Regional Transportation Policy Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 494 Corridor Commission hereby supports the METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission hereby authorizes staff to submit comments as part of the public record on the draft Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit Project Plan Update.

a Madreon

Melissa Madison, Executive Director

5-30-14

Eric H. Galatz 612.335,1509 DIRECT 612.335,1657 DIRECT FAX eric.galatz@stinsonleonard.com



May 30, 2014

Metro Transit 560 Sixth Avenue North Minneapolis, MN 55411 Attn: Christina Morrison, Project Manager e-mail: <u>Christina.morrison@metrotransit.org</u> brtprojects@metrotransit.org

Dear Ms. Morrison:

Please accept this letter on behalf of Lupient Automotive Group ("Lupient") as Lupient's comment in support of the proposed Metro Orange Line ("Orange Line") Option 3A route as it impacts the Penn American District of Bloomington, Minnesota. Lupient owns and operates the Lupient Chevrolet auto dealership at 1601 Southtown Drive, Bloomington, Minnesota. Lupient also owns the adjacent lot, 1700 American Boulevard West, which Lupient acquired for future development of another auto dealership or expansion of Lupient Chevrolet. The two Lupient properties are on the north side of American Boulevard, separated from Knox Avenue by the Richfield Bloomington Mitsubishi site.

Lupient is excited about and welcomes the continued growth and expansion of bus rapid transit ("BRT") service to and through the Penn American District. We had some initial concerns that the Orange Line would disrupt our operations by taking land and access to accommodate the route or transit stops. We have reviewed the Orange Line plans, as updated by the April 2014 METRO Orange Line BRT Project Plan Update ("Plan Update") and we have discussed those plans with staff and now understand that Metro Transit has elected to pursue "Option 3A," which aligns the proposed Orange Line route with the northerly extension of Knox Avenue across American Boulevard and under Interstate 494. Based on that understanding we support the Orange Line for the reasons stated in this letter.

Lupient welcomes BRT as an important new piece of the transportation system in which Lupient has participated for over 60 years. Lupient has been in the automotive industry since 1950 and has operated the Chevrolet dealership at its Bloomington location for over 45 years. Lupient plans to continue operations at the Lupient Chevrolet location indefinitely. Those plans include improving and expanding the existing dealership at its current location and possibly expanding the Chevrolet dealership or developing a new dealership on the adjacent lot at 1700 American Boulevard West. Lupient anticipates improved mass transit to play a part in its growth by providing alternatives for bringing its customers and employees to and from the site.

There is synergy between the BRT stop and Lupient's auto dealership business. A significant part of Lupient's business includes delivering cars to people, including purchasers who are coming to pick out or pick up their new cars and car owners who are dropping off or

picking up their cars at our service department. Lupient Chevrolet also has approximately 75 employees coming to and going from the site every day. The expansion of BRT down Knox Avenue will provide access to mass transit to customers when they pick-up and drop off their vehicles and to our employees for their daily commute.

Lupient endorses the Option 3A alignment along Knox Avenue because it uses an existing drive and minimizes disruption of existing businesses and the taking of private property. Although we understand that the northerly extension of Knox Avenue may currently be privately owned, it is already used for public access to Southtown Shopping Center, the Lucky 13 Restaurant, and Southtown Drive. There is even an existing bus stop on the extension of Knox Avenue, at the northeast corner of Knox and American Boulevard. Further, there are no existing buildings in the proposed alignment. Option 3A also enhances the existing traffic patterns and establishes a street grid by providing for a new east-west street parallel with American Boulevard, north of the Mitsubishi site, that would provide additional access to businesses north and east of the Knox-American Boulevard intersection. Our support of Option 3A is also based on our understanding that the Option 3A would <u>not</u> require taking of any land from Lupient, or affect access to either Lupient property from American Boulevard.

Lupient opposes any modifications to Option 3A and any alternative alignment that would require taking of additional land or access from Lupient or other existing businesses. Lupient understands that Metro Transit has considered alternative alignments of the Orange Line BRT route through the Penn American District, including a few contorted alternatives that would snake through the Lupient property. We oppose any alternative routing of the Orange Line to the extent it requires a public taking of Lupient's land or access, including existing access to American Boulevard. Any such taking would have consequences to Lupient, Lupient's employees, and Metro Transit that are far beyond the value of the land itself. All of the proposed alternative routes that run through the Lupient property would result in a total taking of the Lupient property because all of those alternatives would deprive Lupient Chevrolet of sufficient land, access or both, to conduct its business. If Lupient Chevrolet cannot conduct business on the site, Lupient Chevrolet will almost certainly have to close, because it will not be able to relocate. The location of the Chevrolet dealership is limited by Minnesota Statutes that establish spacing requirements between competing dealerships. The current locations of other Twin Cities Chevrolet dealerships effectively block Lupient Chevrolet from relocating to a site outside the Penn American District. Because Lupient Chevrolet cannot relocate, if Metro Transit elects an alternative routing of the Orange Line that would result in a taking of Lupient's land or access, the takings damages would include the loss of the business, not just the value of the land. If a taking forced Lupient Chevrolet to close and discharge is employees, the business losses could include funding of a currently unfunded union pension liability in excess of \$31,000,000, which would be triggered by a significant reduction in union workforce. Option 3A provides a rational, straight line route over land that is currently unoccupied by buildings and is used as a public drive. There is no reason to look at alternative indirect routes that require taking of land that is currently in use for private business purposes.

May 30, 2014 Page 3

**Conclusion.** On the basis of our review of the Updated Plan and our discussions with Metro Transit staff, and specifically on our understanding that Option 3A does not require taking of private land that is currently in use for private business purposes, we support the Option 3A alignment of the Orange Line. The studies performed by Metro Transit and summarized in the Plan Update show that the Option 3A alignment best serves the community at large by creating jobs, minimizing to the extent possible the costs of construction, and providing a convenient and efficient route for riders. The Option 3A route not only minimizes any negative impact on existing businesses but allows for the opportunity to create partnerships with existing businesses to ensure the success of the Orange Line.

Sincerely,

STINSON LEONARD STREET LLP Eric H. Galatz EHG/cle

11361124v3



2600 US Bancorp Center 800 Nicollet Mall Minneapolis, MN 55402 Peter K Beck Attorney at Law

peter@peterbecklaw.com 612-991-1350 www.peterbecklaw.com

May 30, 2014

Christina Morrison Senior Planner Metro Transit BRT Project Office 1810 East Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55454

## **Re:** Comments on Orange Line BRT Project Update

Dear Christina:

This letter is submitted on behalf of The Luther Company, LLLP ("Luther") in response to the request for public comments on the draft Orange Line BRT Project Plan Update.

Luther owns several parcels of property surrounded by I-35W, American Boulevard, Knox Avenue and West 81<sup>st</sup> Street in the City of Bloomington. Luther operates an Infiniti dealership on the east side of this block, adjacent to I-35W; and Fiat and Kia dealerships on the west side of the block, adjacent to Knox Avenue. Development of a new Infiniti dealership building has been approved by the City of Bloomington and will begin this summer. Although Luther has no plans at this time to redevelop its Fiat or Kia dealerships, those are very successful dealerships and Luther intends to operate them in this location for as long as possible.

The Orange Line BRT Project has the potential to impact all of Luther's properties in this area. Earlier proposals for an inline transit station on I-35W, south of American Boulevard, contemplated the potential acquisition of all or a portion of Luther's Infiniti property for the transit station and/or a proposed park and ride facility. Luther opposed this proposal and continues to be opposed to any proposal which would take land from any of its properties in this area. We understand there has been a more recent proposal to route BRT buses in an alignment along Humboldt Avenue that would, once again, take all or a significant portion of Luther's Infiniti property for BRT transit way and/or park and ride facilities. Luther would strongly oppose such an alignment or any effort to acquire any portion of the new Infiniti dealership, which will be completed in the next 12 to 18 months.

It is also our understanding that the current preferred alternative for the Orange Line BRT Project is to route BRT buses along Knox Avenue, and that the Knox Avenue alignment will not require the acquisition of any property from Luther. If no acquisition of property from any of Luther's properties is required, Luther has no objection to the Orange Line BRT Knox Avenue alignment. If the Orange Line BRT Project does move forward along the Knox Avenue alignment, Luther requests that Knox Avenue between West 76<sup>th</sup> Street and American Boulevard be open to general traffic and that no portion of this new roadway be reserved exclusively for

Christina Morrison May 30, 2014 Page 2

BRT buses or otherwise exclude general traffic. The City's Redevelopment Plan for the Penn-American District anticipates redevelopment at an intensity which the current roadway system cannot accommodate. Opening a connection to the north along Knox Avenue for all traffic would appear to be a logical way to address future congestion and to provide an outlet to the north for traffic congestion in the American Boulevard/Knox Avenue area.

The City's Penn-American District Plan contemplates that it will take several decades for redevelopment in the Penn-American area to reach Luther's properties on the eastern end of the District. Luther desires and intends to continue to operate its automobile dealerships in this area until its properties are acquired by others for redevelopment and will need all of the land it currently owns to operate these dealerships successfully. Luther has no interest in selling property for a transit station and/or a park and ride facility, and will continue to strongly oppose any proposal or effort to acquire property from it for such facilities.

On the other hand, if no acquisition of Luther's property for purposes related to the Orange Line BRT Project is proposed, Luther has no objection to the Orange Line BRT Project and recommends that if it proceeds, it do so along the Knox Avenue alignment and that Knox Avenue be open to all traffic.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Orange Line BRT Project Plan Update and will continue to monitor the progress of the Project. If you have any questions or require any further information from Luther, please contact the undersigned or Linda McGinty at Luther.

Very truly yours,

PETER K. BECK ATTORNEY AT LAW PLLC

By: Ph Bed

Peter K. Beck

PKB:tk

cc: Linda McGinty, The Luther Company, LLLP Dick Friedrichs, Colliers

730110.DOCX



952-895-4400

100 Civic Center Parkway • Burnsville, Minnesota 55337-3817

www.burnsville.org

May 28, 2014

Ms. Christina Morrison Metro Transit 707 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55454

RE: METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (OLBRT) Draft Plan

Dear Ms. Morrison:

The City of Burnsville has reviewed the draft project plan update for the above referenced project, and offers the following comments:

- 1) We support both the proposed and future phases of the OLBRT project with stations in Burnsville and an extension to Lakeville.
- 2) We support the additional proposed analysis of both the Burnsville Transit Station (BTS) and Travelers Trail site. It is important to make sure that Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) is very involved in this process. MVTA's existing BTS site issues and future expansion should be included in any analysis to ensure the appropriate funding is budgeted for the required improvements.
- As part of the site analysis for the initial OLBRT project, we believe additional study of the future extension and possible southern Burnsville Station may be necessary to conduct a complete analysis of the options.
- 4) The OLBRT Burnsville Station analysis should include analysis of pedestrian access from the various locations along with needed enhancements.
- 5) As a member of MVTA, it is important that the proposed OLBRT service be an enhancement and not duplicative of existing service. Please work closely with MVTA staff to ensure that this is the case.

Thank your for the opportunity to review the draft plan. As you are aware, our City Council will be considering a Resolution of Support for OLBRT at their June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Steve Albrecht, PE Public Works Director City of Burnsville

## **RESOLUTION NO. 14-6209**

## CITY OF BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA

## **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE METRO ORANGE LINE BUS RAPID TRANSIT BETWEEN MINNEAPOLIS AND BURNSVILLE, MINNESOTA**

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line is a planned bus rapid transit (BRT) line between Minneapolis, Richfield, Bloomington and Burnsville; and

WHEREAS, the Orange Line will benefit existing riders and attract new riders by improving transit access, service and reliability on the I-35W corridor; and

WHEREAS, all-day frequent BRT service will complement local and express bus routes along the I-35W, providing competitive running times for station-to-station trips and new option for reverse commute markets; and

WHEREAS, as part of the METRO system, the Orange Line will connect people across the region to job centers, housing options, transit stations and key destinations in the I-35W corridor; and

WHEREAS, Metro Transit will work closely with the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, City of Burnsville, Dakota County and MnDOT to identify the best Burnsville station location that meets both short and long term needs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Burnsville supports the METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit between Minneapolis and Burnsville, and the future extension to Lakeville.

Passed and duly adopted by the City Council of the City of Burnsville, Minnesota this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of June, 2014.

Acting Mayor William J. Coughlin

ATTEST: hacheal. Macheal Collins.

WHEREAS, *The 35W Solutions Alliance* is a Joint Powers Agreement whose members include the cities of Bloomington, Burnsville, Elko New Market, Lakeville, Minneapolis, Richfield, Savage and Dakota, Hennepin and Scott Counties. Ex-Officio members include the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Solutions Alliance supports efforts to facilitate traffic flow and capacity in the I-35W Corridor that includes funding, building, operating and maintaining a robust multimodal transportation system that reduces congestion, improves safety and promote economic growth; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line BRT is planned on I-35W to enhance transit service frequency and access to both I-35W transit routes and crosstown local routes; and

WHEREAS, METRO Orange Line station location and routing have been closely integrated with MnDOT's I-494/35W Interchange Vision Layout process to advance and benefit both projects; and

WHEREAS, the Solutions Alliance has made both METRO Orange Line and the interchange top priorities; and

WHEREAS, Metropolitan Council has provided the draft Orange Line Project Plan Update for public comments; and

WHEREAS, receiving public comments on the Orange Line Project Plan provides an opportunity for Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council to better understand the preferences and needs for BRT in our communities; and

WHEREAS, after the comments are received and incorporated into the plan, it will be brought to the Metropolitan Council for review and adoption; and

WHEREAS, the finalized document will be used to support local and federal funding applications, help determine a path for environmental processes, and refine and update the Metropolitan Council's Regional Transportation Policy Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that *The 35W Solutions Alliance* hereby supports the METRO Orange Line BRT project as outlined in the Project Plan Update.



US Bank Building 919 East Lake Street Minneapolis, MN 55407 P: 612-822-0232 F: 612-821-6219 E: jwisdom@lakestreetcouncil.org WWW.LAKESTREETCOUNCIL.ORG WWW.VISITLAKESTREET.COM

June 12, 2014

Lake Street Council has been involved in several transit planning efforts, including the 35 Lake Transit/Access Project and the Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis. We fully support the 35W BRT and proposed Lake Street Station. Our organization's inclusion in the planning process has allowed us to review the details, operations planning and renderings. Given our review and further conversation with area stakeholders, we support the project at Lake and 35W.

The Orange Line will serve over 8,000 jobs and 12,000 households within a 10-minute walk of the Lake Street station, and will greatly increase all-day, reliable, frequent transit access to destinations in the area. Transit service will be restored and improved at Lake Street (currently restricted due to the inability of merging from the inside MnPASS lane at 46th Street Station to the Lake Street shoulder). Our business community looks forward to improved access that will increase business and encourage development.

The new station will improve personal safety and comfort for both riders on the I-35W Orange Line and riders on Lake Street buses, and have a heightened level of maintenance as part of a transitway. The Project Plan Update recognized the deteriorating condition of the existing 35/Lake bus stops, recommending both short and long-term improvements, including better trash collection, rider signage, shelter refurbishment, coordinated maintenance efforts, and better communication with customers about the planned stations improvements.

The station will improve the appearance of the area. Our expectation is that Metro Transit will continue to connect with both the neighborhood associations and our organization when the station is operable, and that the station will show the pride and care we expect in our community. We look forward to this successful transit development in an area of our community in need of re-investment.

This letter is written on behalf of the Lake Street Council Board of Directors. You will find names and business affiliations below. We are looking forward to the Lake Street Station and BRT becoming an asset to our community. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

royce AWisdom

PAST PRESIDENT

Ryan Companies

Dave Burrill

Joyce Wisdom Executive Director

## EXECUTIVE COMMITEE

PRESIDENT Candice Washington *Allina Health* 

VICE PRESIDENT Ruhel Islam Gandhi Mahal

TREASURER Jackie Knight Ackerberg Group

## OTHER AREA DIRECTORS

Assad Awaijane *Stop-N-Shop* Nicollet

Julie Ingebretsen *Ingebretsen's* Midtown

Dipankar Mukherjee *Pangea World Theater* Lyndale Aaron Day Blue Construction Longfellow

Alicia Garatoni *Keller Williams* Uptown Rich Esquivel Sunrise Banks

> Joe Gilpin *Wells Fargo*

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#### June 12, 2014

#### **Physical Development Division**

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#### **Environmental Resources**

Land Conservation Groundwater Protection Surface Water Waste Regulation Environmental Initiatives

Office of Planning

Operations Management Facilities Management Fleet Management Parks

> Transportation Highways Surveyor's Office Transit Office

Susan Haigh, Chair Metropolitan Council 390 Robert Street North St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Dear Chair Haigh,

On behalf of Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority (DCRRA), I am pleased to provide comments on the METRO Orange Line Draft Project Plan Update. The DCRRA strongly supports the Orange Line as a project that will provide enhanced access to job centers, housing options and key destinations within the region. The improved access to 162,000 jobs and 64,000 residents, including 30,000 jobs and 40,000 residents outside of downtown Minneapolis, will provide new connections, benefits and opportunities for residents, workers and employers in Dakota County.

To date the project focus has been on Phase 1, from downtown Minneapolis to Burnsville. The DCRRA strongly encourages the Metropolitan Council to actively lead planning of future phases of the Orange Line extension into Lakeville concurrently with the development of Phase 1. The Cities of Burnsville and Lakeville along with the other areas of the region and project partners, such as CTIB, will benefit from early phased planning for the extension of the Orange Line.

The DCRRA supports the ongoing work to explore new options for the Phase 1, temporary end of the line station location as these activities are crucial to implementing efficient travel times for Phase 2. The DCRRA feels strongly that the location of the Phase 1 end of the line station needs to provide the best efficiencies for transit riders for both Phases. Planning of future phases now also provides other benefits including the ability for station area and transit supportive land use planning and financial planning. If the Burnsville Transit Station (BTS) is selected for the Phase 1 station location, the improvements necessary to accommodate the Orange Line and provide for overall efficiency in operation of the station should be included as part of the Phase 1 project. It is important to recognize the existing and future needs at the BTS, understanding that expansion and operational improvements may be required to serve the Orange Line at this location. The BTS serves several different transit services and customers, these needs should be recognized during planning and analysis of the existing and future station needs.

The DCRRA recognizes the challenges at the 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station that include transfer needs and pedestrian safety. However, the DCRRA has concerns about the routing for the 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station in the southbound direction. The routing is circuitous and adds time and travel delay for riders traveling southbound that do not require a stop or transfer at 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station. At the American Boulevard and 76<sup>th</sup> Street Stations we recognize the benefits of access to riders and access with the proposed routing. However, it is essential that all efforts be made to minimize travel time to provide fast and reliable service for riders outside of this area.

Ms. Susan Haigh Metropolitan Council Page 2 of 2

The DCRRA supports improvements for the I-35W and Lake Street Station as this is a critical element of the successful implementation of the Orange Line and improvements to I-35W to provide a more seamless and reliable connection to the downtown Minneapolis local street network. The DCRRA also recognizes the ability to efficiently circulate in downtown Minneapolis is important to the overall transit experience and travel time for strong ridership and support roadway and technology projects which improve circulation in downtown Minneapolis.

The I-35W Minnesota River Bridge is to be replaced in the several years. The DCRRA supports preservation and enhancement of transit advantages for all transit routes using this bridge.

Currently, the park and ride lots in Dakota County are at or near capacity; future capacity should be analyzed to establish needs and funds as part of the overall project plan.

The DCRRA does not have funds established in the current 2014 – 2018 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for this project and has not been asked to participate in funding of the improvements although page 38 of the project plan update identifies Dakota County as an anticipated source of capital project funding. We are currently developing the 2015 – 2019 CIP and could consider cost participation for some elements of the project after more information is provided to the DCRRA.

The DCRRA encourages the Metropolitan Council to develop stronger coordination with the cities and counties located along the Orange Line and other regional transitways. Coordination of transit oriented development, land use, zoning, and transit planning could be a new opportunity for the BRT Small Starts Project Office or the new land used planning functions recently established by Metropolitan Council. Enhanced coordination will promote land use decisions that support efficient access to the corridor, create destinations along the Orange Line, and promote ridership.

The DCRRA looks forward to working with the Metropolitan Council to continue to develop the Orange Line. Please contact me or Kristine Elwood, Transit Office Manager, at 952-891-7104 if you need further information.

Sincerely.

Paul J. Krause, Chair Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority

c: Arlene McCarthy, Metropolitan Council Christina Morrison, Metro Transit



# I-494/I-35W Interchange Project Open House Summary

# **Meeting Overview**

An open house for the I-494/I-35W Interchange Project was held on Monday, April 28, 2014 from 4:30 – 6:30 pm in St. Richards Catholic Church at 7540 Penn Avenue South in Richfield. Meeting attendance included representatives from the Cities of Bloomington and Richfield, Metro Transit, MnDOT, and the project consultant team. The meeting was also attended by members of the Metropolitan Council and elected officials from the Cities of Bloomington and Richfield. A total of 66 people that signed in on the meeting attendance sheet and there was an estimated 80+ public citizens that were in attendance overall. Both residential and commercial representatives attended the event.

The meeting was conducted in an open house format with display boards and maps with no formal presentations. The purpose of this open house was to provide the public with an overview of the project, describe the planned interchange and transit, present drainage pond locations, and to answer questions regarding project. Additional information was provided through a project fact sheet packet that was available to those who attended the open house.

# **Participant Input**

In addition to verbal discussions, all attendees were provided with a comment form to provide the project team with written input. There were no specific questions to be answered on the comment form. In total, seven written comment forms were collected at the meeting. Comment forms can also be mailed at a later date to April Crockett (Project Manager) of the MnDot Metro District. The following is a summary of the comments received, both verbal and written.

# **General Comment Summary**

In total, seven written comment forms were turned in at the meeting. In addition, project staff collected verbal comments from participants. The following is a summary of the general comments received:

- Many supported the interchange project, noting the safety and congestion issues that currently exist in this area.
- Many expressed support for the proposed Orange Line alignment and station areas.
- Some expressed concern over the proposed access modifications at Penn Avenue (no direct access from NB I-35W).
- Several participants inquired as to the project schedule and estimated timing for implementation.

## Written Comments

Copied below are transcripts of the written comments submitted at the meeting:

The No Turn on Red light on the 76<sup>th</sup> Street exit ramp from I-35W southbound should not be removed so traffic from Humboldt onto 76<sup>th</sup> can enter on 76<sup>th</sup> so they can get a traffic break on the flow of westbound traffic. Currently the only way to get to eastbound 76<sup>th</sup> from Humboldt is to enter westbound 76<sup>th</sup> and do a U-turn at Kmart. Taking away a 'No Turn on Red' sign would make it impossible to cross 3 lanes of traffic to go eastbound on 76<sup>th</sup>.

We really need a Penn Ave. exit from the NB 35 to WB 494 turbine movement. Otherwise, all of the traffic from Dakota County to Best Buy HQ will have to exit 35W at 82<sup>nd</sup> street and travel through the Penn/American intersection, which is already at a low level for service.

Looks Positive! Please Proceed!

- 1. Duplicate the existing "CD"/buffer lane on Northbound 35W on the southbound side of 35W.
- 2. Leave the NB>>>WB cloverleaf as a "Penn Ave" exit, only similar to the HOV cloverleaf at Cedar Ave and 494.

Benefits:

- 1. Eliminates cost to tear out the cloverleaf.
- 2. Eliminates adding Penn Ave. traffic to 82<sup>nd</sup> street.

I would suggest closing or eliminating the northbound entrance to 35W from 82<sup>nd</sup> street and eliminate the southbound entrance from 35W to 82<sup>nd</sup> street. They are too close to 494 and American blvd. Not enough lane to get up to speed. Clearly a cost that is not needed from my view. This configuration would mirror 76<sup>th</sup> street. An exit northbound to American blvd. and southbound from American blvd. to 35W would make more sense and close or remove the 82<sup>nd</sup> street bridge altogether would be the best option. Thank you!

Penn Ave. by bridge needs steps/sidewalk, so you don't have to walk downhill on a dirt path. Why not keep bus the same like routes have now instead of color lines (like red, blue, green, orange) so people know where the bus goes by the route # (EX. Richfield 500#'s)

## Concerns:

- 1. Additional traffic on 82<sup>nd</sup>/Penn for Northbound 35W to Penn Ave.
- 2. Please continue to update neighborhoods going past construction (those most affected)
  - a. An annual open house would be nice
- 3. Drainage from 494 low spots and impact on new area
- 4. Access for apartments and businesses on the NE corner of 35w and 494 >>> frontage road, etc. helps with traffic on Fremont Ave. South
- 5. The only way for updates is to provide email address???
- 6. Please post online for all to access. Metro transit and others



# **OPEN HOUSE #3 SUMMARY**

## **Meeting Purpose**

The goal of the open house was to reinforce what was heard at the previous open houses, share project developments, solicit input on design alternatives, and provide an updated schedule and next steps for the project.

Meeting Date	May 1, 2014
Location	Wood Lake Nature Center
People Signed In	133
Surveys Completed	49
Comment Sheets	15
Completed	

## **Materials Available**

• <u>Context Boards</u> explaining schedule and budget, guiding principles, what we've learned, what we've done, and conflict points

**Quick Summary** 

- <u>Process Boards</u> showing project problem statement and project goals
- <u>Design Concept Boards</u> showing preferred options for different roadway cross sections (2, 4A, and 4B) and concepts not advanced (1 and 3)
- <u>Intersection Concept Boards</u> showing preferred intersection concepts with safety benefits and tradeoffs (closed raise median, roundabout, and full access median)
- <u>Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) Information</u> for attendees to reference
- Corridor Plots with an opportunity to provide post-it comments
- <u>Survey</u> to collect feedback on direction and preference of design alternatives
- <u>Comment Cards</u> to provide general feedback on the project
- Metro Transit information including Orange Line BRT on I-35W with station at 66<sup>th</sup>

## **Survey Results**

Attendees were asked to provide feedback on the project process and proposed design concepts:

- All but two respondents thought that common themes from previous open houses were accurately captured or were unsure because they weren't at the previous open houses
- 73% agreed the written problem statement captures the overall concerns of the community
- 86% or respondents agreed that reducing speed and conflict points would improve safety

Attendees were also asked to rank three design concepts, from most to least likely to foster the vision of the community as reflected in the Guiding Principles:

- No single concept emerged as a unanimously preferred option for the corridor
- Design concept #4B performed best in this exercise with the most first-choice rankings (16)

Nanking of Design concept	.5		
Count by Ranking	#2	#4A	#4B
COUNT - 1st	11	8	16
COUNT - 2nd	9	14	7
COUNT - 3rd	11	9	10

## Ranking of Design Concepts

Half of all survey respondents indicated that they would support an alternative that impacts property if it was necessary to successfully address the existing problems within the corridors. Of the remaining respondents, half were against property impacts and half were unsure.

When asked about intersection concepts, people generally agreed that raised medians would improve safety along 66<sup>th</sup> Street. Full access medians were also viewed positively for safety benefits. Most respondents agreed that roundabouts would improve safety. The response to rectangular rapid flashing beacons was mixed on whether or not this tool would improve safety.

# **County Road Reconstruction Project - 66th Street**



Intersection Concepts (Would these to	ols improve	safety?)	
Intersection Concept	Vac	No	Ī

Intersection Concept	Yes	No	Maybe
Raised Median	17	5	3
Roundabout	21	10	2
Full Access Median	14	6	5
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon	9	10	3

## **Public Comments – Common Themes**

The summary below includes feedback from comment sheets and surveys. Specific comments are available in the detailed comment log.

## General

- Some respondents requested three lanes of traffic and others requested five lanes of traffic
- Comments were received that provided general support for the project and process
- Slower speeds and enforced speed limits along 66<sup>th</sup> Street were requested
- Concerns were expressed regarding the cost of the project

## Impacts

- Right of way impacts were a concern of many respondents
- Concern was expressed for traffic impacts associated with reducing traffic lanes
- Other concerns expressed included noise impacts and buried utilities

## <u>Multimodal</u>

- Many respondents commented on proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The need for bicycles lanes was questioned by some; whereas, others expressed support for bicycle lanes
- Comments were received to keep bicyclists separate from vehicles, put bicyclists on the road, and separate bicyclists from pedestrians
- While support for Orange Line BRT was received, concerns were expressed regarding traffic impacts of buses making stops

## Intersection Concepts

- Comments were received in favor of and in opposition to roundabouts
- Support was shown for single-lane roundabouts over multiple lanes
- Some respondents showed support for RRFB, while others said the improvement is unnecessary
- A desire was expressed to maintain left turn access along 66<sup>th</sup> Street
- Comments were received in support of boulevards and corridor beautification; others felt boulevards are unnecessary

## <u>Other</u>

- A desire was expressed to address parking near Lyndale
- Comments were received to consider maintenance impacts of snow removal
- Some respondents requested a crosswalk be added at 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue\*
- A request was made to address drainage at Newton

# **County Road Reconstruction Project - 66th Street**

## Public Comments – Post-It Note Summary

The Summary below includes feedback from corridor plots.

## Traffic Operations (17 comments)

- Reduce to three lanes, less impacts (4 comments)
- Reduced lanes will add more traffic to side streets
- Keep five lanes to reduce congestion (4 comments)
- Add more grass medians (2 comments)
- Close/restrict a few entrances along 66th Street (5 comments)
- Convert roundabouts to one lane

#### Pedestrian Safety (10 comments)

- Safer crossings (at roundabouts (3 comments) and a few other locations)
- Slow down traffic

## Transit Stops

- Bus pull-off SE of 66<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> blocks view of drivers
- Drivers unable to get around buses at bus stops
- Build better bus shelters

## **On-Street Parking**

• Want on-street parking on east end

#### <u>Bikes</u>

- Bike lanes yes
- Bike lanes no

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# #OrangeLineBRT Tweet Chat -05/20/2014

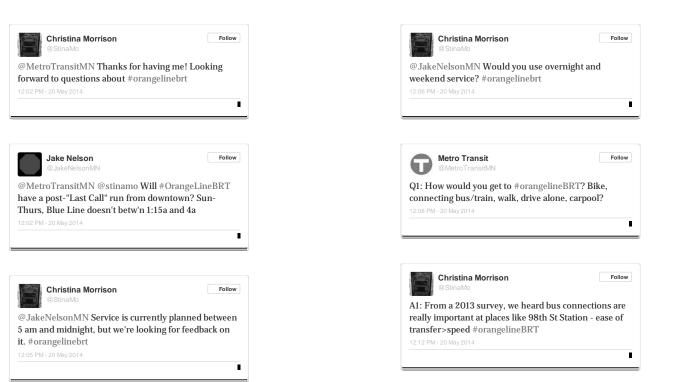
The discussion was hosted by Metro Transit (@MetroTransitMN) and featured special guest, Orange Line Project Manager Christina Morrison (@stinamo). Participants asked and answered questions about the project, and provided input on the project plan.

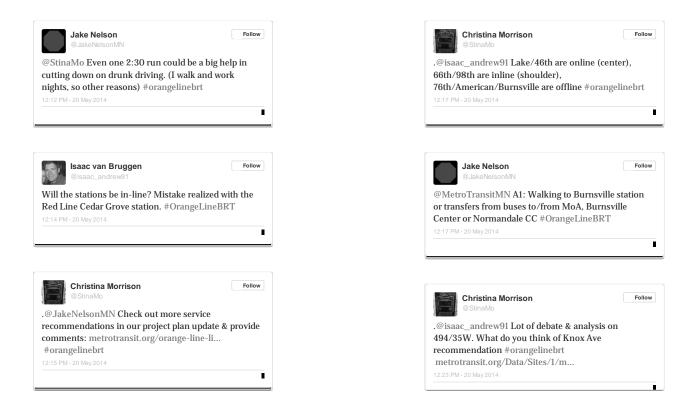
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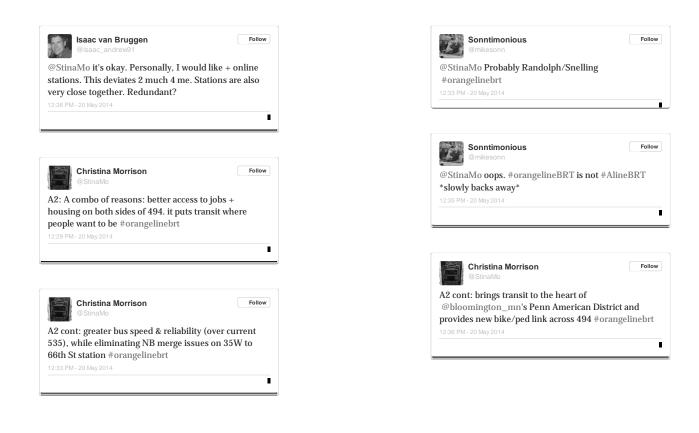




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