Committee Report

Transportation Committee

Committee meeting date: November 9, 2026 **For the Metropolitan Council:** November 18, 2026

Business Item: 2026-185

METRO F Line Corridor Plan Amendment #1

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council approve Amendment #1 to the F Line Corridor Plan, adjusting one platform location at Central & 49th Avenue and changing the planned alignment in downtown Minneapolis to Marquette Avenue and 2nd Avenue.

Summary of Transportation Committee discussion/questions

Metro Transit Arterial BRT Acting Director Kyle O'Donnell Burrows presented this item. O'Donnell Burrows presented the rationale for timing of the amendment and the proposed changes.

Council Members discussed safety at the planned roundabout at Central & 49th Avenue. O'Donnell Burrows shared that safety improvements for pedestrians and vehicles are the primary driver for the proposed change, and that design was being coordinated with MnDOT.

Council Members discussed the planned operation of the F Line on Marquette and 2nd avenues, how it would interact with the existing service, and if any other changes to local service were included. O'Donnell Burrows confirmed that this proposed action only applies to the F Line and that it would operate using the double bus lanes on the one-way pair as the corridor operates today. The F Line and Orange Line would share station locations.

Council Members discussed the importance of mitigating the anticipated drawbacks to future F Line riders. O'Donnell Burrows confirmed that Metro Transit remains in close coordination with the city on these items and the overall project.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Obisakin. Motion carried.

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METRO F Line Corridor Plan Amendment #1

District(s), member(s):	District 2 (Chamblis), District 7 (Osman), District 10 (Lindstrom)
Policy/legal reference:	PIC 2-2 - Accountability to the Public Policy
Staff prepared/presented:	Lesley Kandaras, General Manager, 612-349-7513
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	Kyle O'Donnell Burrows, Acting Director, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7749
Division/department:	Metro Transit / Arterial Bus Rapid Transit

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council approve Amendment #1 to the F Line Corridor Plan, adjusting one platform location at Central & 49th Avenue and changing the planned alignment in downtown Minneapolis to Marquette Avenue and 2nd Avenue.

Background

The METRO F Line is a planned BRT service along the Route 10 corridor from downtown Minneapolis to the Northtown Transit Center, serving Nicollet Mall, Central Avenue, 53rd Avenue, and University Avenue. It is designed to provide faster, more reliable transit on Metro Transit's busiest bus routes through bus priority infrastructure, signal preemption, and dedicated bus lanes.

Metro Transit is seeking approximately $50 million in federal funding for the F Line through the FTA Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program as a Small Starts project. The total project cost is currently estimated at approximately $98 million.

In July 2023, the Metropolitan Council adopted the F Line Corridor Plan, identifying station and platform locations for the F Line. When adopted, the corridor plan noted potential changes to F Line station locations that could result from ongoing coordination with the City of Minneapolis-led project to re-envision the future of Nicollet Mall, and the MnDOT-led Highway 47 (University Avenue) and Highway 65 (Central Avenue) roadway reconstruction projects.

This amendment reflects developments in those city- and MnDOT-led projects since the corridor plan was adopted. These developments necessitate changes to the F Line corridor alignment and stations as previously adopted.

Central & 49th Avenue Station

MnDOT is leading a reconstruction project on Central Avenue that will include construction of the F Line stations along the corridor. As design of the roadway project advanced, MnDOT proposed a roundabout on Central Avenue at 49th Avenue to improve pedestrian and traffic safety. Metro Transit and MnDOT coordinated on the implications of this intersection design change and

determined that, with the new roundabout and at-grade pedestrian crossings, a farside northbound platform would be safer for pedestrians and for transit operations. This design will also add an at-grade pedestrian crossing, improving the overall pedestrian accessibility at this intersection.

Alignment in downtown Minneapolis

The City of Minneapolis has prioritized converting Nicollet Mall into a pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized public plaza, which would require transit move off Nicollet Mall to an alternative north-south transit spine.

The city's priority is informed by existing city transportation policy and recent recommendations for downtown revitalization strategies. In 2023, the Vibrant Downtown Storefronts Workgroup recommended that the city evaluate the future of Nicollet Mall as a pedestrian-only zone and explore alternative options for transit service. In 2024, the city published the Downtown Action Plan, which further developed the concept of Nicollet Mall as a pedestrianized space.

In addition to the potential for fully closing the street to transit, Nicollet Mall has increasingly become a priority location to host events downtown, resulting in frequent transit detours and slowdowns due to event-driven street closures. It is anticipated that additional events will continue to occur as programming for Nicollet Mall is a priority for city-led downtown revitalization efforts.

A key feature of bus rapid transit lines like the F Line is a predictable and consistent customer experience using fixed infrastructure, including permanent stations with heated and lit shelters, real-time information, and ticket machines. The changing context on Nicollet Mall driven by the city's long-term vision for the mall and the ongoing and increasing prioritization of Nicollet Mall for events downtown means that Nicollet Mall no longer supports the consistent, permanent transit experience needed for BRT investment.

Coordination between the City of Minneapolis and Metro Transit on the overall approach to an alternative to Nicollet Mall is ongoing. This amendment applies exclusively to the METRO F Line alignment and does not specify changes to other existing or planned transit service on Nicollet Mall.

The revised F Line alignment assumes a separate city-led project on Marq2 is completed before the F Line is planned to open. If this project is not completed by the planned F Line opening date, Hennepin Avenue can accommodate the F Line on detour until the city-led project is complete.

Rationale

Approval of the amendment will establish F Line alignment and station locations, needed to finalize the project scope for submitting a federal Small Starts funding application in spring 2027.

Thrive lens analysis

The F Line will upgrade Route 10, one of Metro Transit's highest ridership bus routes, serving nearly 5,000 rides per day. There are approximately 68,000 people and 158,000 jobs within the F Line corridor.

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, this action will advance the Thrive outcome of Stewardship, Prosperity, and Equity.

This action will advance Stewardship by enabling effective planning and coordination between the F Line project and partner led projects and initiatives, including MnDOT's Central Avenue roadway project and the City of Minneapolis's broader vision for Nicollet Mall and downtown revitalization. Further, this action enables the F Line project to proceed through the FTA CIG program, minimizing risk to receiving federal funding required to advance the F Line.

Investment in high-quality transit options in the Route 10 corridor will advance the Thrive outcome of Prosperity by making the region more economically competitive through increased workers' access to employment and support to employers by increasing available workforce with affordable, convenient transportation.

The F Line project advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by improving transit access for people with low incomes and communities of color. About 40 percent of Route 10 customers live in low-income households, and over half of Route 10 customers are people of color. Investment in the F Line will provide riders with faster and more reliable service and a more comfortable waiting and riding experience.

Funding

There is no funding attached to this action. This action will support the timely submittal of the F Line Small Starts Grant Agreement application.

Small business inclusion

There is no contracting, and therefore no small business inclusion, associated with this action.