Committee Report

Transportation Committee

Committee meeting date: November 23, 2026 **For the Metropolitan Council:** December 2, 2026

Business Item: 2026-205

METRO H Line – Adopt METRO H Line Final Corridor Plan

Proposed action

That the Council approve the METRO H Line Final Corridor Plan to establish the number and location of stations included in the project; and direct staff to complete a supplemental analysis of the H Line alignment between Lexington Avenue and E Como Boulevard considering two options: (1) the adopted alignment via Van Slyke Avenue, Chatsworth Street, and Como Avenue, and (2) an alternative alignment via Nagasaki Road; and report findings and recommendations to the Metropolitan Council through an H Line Corridor Plan addendum for future approval.

Summary of Transportation Committee discussion/questions

Metro Transit Arterial BRT Acting Director Kyle O'Donnell Burrows and Senior Planner Jordan Kocak presented this item.

Council members acknowledged the concerns raised by the community, the importance of continued engagement to help mitigate those community concerns, and how engagement will continue past this point. O'Donnell Burrows stated there has been outreach in the community, that this action sets the station locations and allows the project to continue into design phase. Project staff will continue engagement with station neighbors during the forthcoming design phase; this more targeted engagement will be focused on the placement of amenities within the station platform to mitigate concerns.

Cameron emphasized that there are always challenges across the network when making these types of amenities changes; and that having gone through this process on past arterial BRT projects with station locations with many of the same challenges, staff is as accommodating as they can be with making it work for the neighbors.

Committee Chair Chamblis asked what stop consolidation would look like. O'Donnell Burrows explained that BRT stations are placed farther apart than local service and in cases where BRT is replacing a local route, if the stops in between the BRT stations are no longer needed, Metro Transit will vacate those bus stops and the municipal partners have the decision on what the curb space becomes, whether on-street parking or another use. This opportunity exists at several locations along the H Line but these decisions from municipal partners do not happen at this point in the process.

Committee Chair Chamblis asked for clarification on the supplemental analysis for the potential alignment change. O'Donnell Burrows stated that when feedback is received during the corridor planning process regarding specific station locations, staff complete additional analysis of alternatives. This is an established process and has been used many times in past projects. As the supplemental analysis for the alignment change is not part of the typical process, and so requires additional time and definition.

Carter, Tyronne asked what the deadline is. O'Donnell Burrows that the design phase is a 12-18 month process, working towards construction starting in 2028. Any delays in finalizing the planning

process will start to impact the construction start date. Staff continue to work with local partners and stakeholders throughout the design phase. The motivation for the arterial BRT program is to improve the highest ridership routes, which are often in constrained urban corridors. Part of why these are high-ridership routes is because they serve important commercial and dense residential areas that people use transit to get to and from. Staff take seriously the concerns raised by station neighbors and try to minimize the footprint of station platforms as much as possible.

Johnson and Obisakin expressed concerns for the neighbors and business owners and that even though the agency has improved engagement compared to the past, questions still linger about the impact to the community.

Motion by Carter, Toni, seconded by Carter, Tyronne. Barber recused. Motion carried with Johnson voting against.

Business Item

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District(s), member(s):	District 7 (Osman), District 10 (Lindstrom), District 13 (Lee), District 14 (Carter)
Policy/legal reference:	PIC 2-2 - Accountability to the Public Policy
Staff prepared/presented:	Lesley Kandaras, General Manager, 612-349-7513
	Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507
	Katie Roth, Assistant General Manager, 612-349-7772
	Kyle O'Donnell Burrows, Acting Director, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7749
	Jake Knight, Acting Planning Manager, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7546
	Jordan Kocak, Sr. Planner, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7927
Division/department:	Metro Transit / Arterial BRT

Proposed action

That the Council approve the METRO H Line Final Corridor Plan to establish the number and location of stations included in the project; and direct staff to complete a supplemental analysis of the H Line alignment between Lexington Avenue and E Como Boulevard considering two options: (1) the adopted alignment via Van Slyke Avenue, Chatsworth Street, and Como Avenue, and (2) an alternative alignment via Nagasaki Road; and report findings and recommendations to the Metropolitan Council through an H Line Corridor Plan addendum for future approval.

Background

The METRO H Line is a planned bus rapid transit (BRT) line that will provide faster and more reliable transit service in the Route 3 corridor between downtown Minneapolis and Sun Ray Transit Center along Washington, Como, Maryland, and White Bear avenues.

The Council previously adopted the H Line alignment in March 2021 (Business Item 2021-52) that resulted from the Network Next plan (2019-2021). The H Line Final Corridor Plan identifies station locations for the H Line BRT corridor. Station locations result from planning activities throughout 2025-2026, including public outreach and engagement, interagency coordination, and transit analysis within the corridor.

The H Line Draft Corridor Plan was published for public review on March 23, 2026. Comments on the Draft Corridor Plan were accepted through May 4, 2026, with communications and outreach activities conducted throughout the comment period. Metro Transit received 1,122 comments on the plan (via online survey, email, phone) in addition to a petition letter sent by organized neighbors and four comment letters from agency partners.

The Council authorized the release of the H Line Recommended Corridor Plan, incorporating revisions from the draft, on August 24, 2026 (Business Item 2026-150). Comments on the

Recommended Corridor Plan were accepted through October 7, 2026, with communications and outreach activities conducted throughout the comment period. Metro Transit received 1,339 comments on the plan (via online survey, email, phone) in addition to 10 letters from agency partners, district councils, and organized groups.

Staff read and categorized each of the comments received during the Draft and Recommended Corridor Plan public comment periods, as well as those submitted by agency partners. Staff have completed additional analysis of alternatives at multiple station locations and have developed the H Line Final Corridor Plan. All feedback received, along with additional analysis and recommendations, are included in the Final Corridor Plan document.

The Final Corridor Plan defers decisions on stations in the vicinity of Como Lake. Based on feedback on the Draft and Recommended Corridor Plans, and in response to a letter from the City of Saint Paul, this action would direct staff to perform a supplemental analysis of the H Line alignment in the Como Park area between Lexington Avenue and E Como Boulevard considering two options: (1) the adopted alignment via Van Slyke Avenue, Chatsworth Street, and Como Avenue, and (2) an alternative alignment via Nagasaki Road. Staff would report findings and recommendations from this supplemental analysis to the Metropolitan Council through an addendum to H Line Corridor Plan, anticipated in early 2027.

Rationale

The H Line Final Corridor Plan is the result of transparent and meaningful discussion with the public about the H Line ahead of finalizing station locations. Approval of the H Line Final Corridor Plan will establish station and platform locations on the H Line corridor, providing direction and supporting project advancement through detailed design and engineering.

Thrive lens analysis

The H Line will upgrade Route 3, one of Metro Transit's highest ridership bus routes. It will enhance transit in the Como Avenue/Maryland Avenue corridor, currently served primarily by Route 3, as well as portions of Routes 54, 64, and 80.

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Using the Thrive lens, investment in high-quality transit options in the corridor will advance the Thrive outcomes of Prosperity, Equity, and Stewardship.

The H Line advances 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 H Line advances Equity by improving transit access to jobs, parks, and opportunities for people with low incomes and communities of color. About half of Route 3 customers live in low-income households, and about 45 percent of Route 3 customers are people of color.

The H Line advances Stewardship by coordinating and designing project improvements efficiently with regional partnerships from MnDOT, Hennepin and Ramsey counties, the cities of Minneapolis, Lauderdale, Falcon Heights, and Saint Paul, the University of Minnesota, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Funding

There is no funding attached to this action. Adoption of the H Line Final Corridor Plan will establish the station count and scope of the H Line project.

Small business inclusion

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