

## Transportation Committee

Meeting date: February 28, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of March 9, 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Release E Line Recommended Corridor Plan for Public Comment
<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District 5 (Cummings), District 6 (Vacant), District 7 (Lilligren), District 8 (Muse), District 14 (Fredson)
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	PIC 2-2 - Accountability to the Public Policy
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510 Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507 Katie Roth, Director, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7772 Kyle O'Donnell Burrows, Senior Planner, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7749
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Metro Transit / Arterial BRT

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Authorize release of the METRO E Line Recommended Corridor Plan for public review and comment
- Direct staff to collect public comments through Friday, April 8, 2022, summarize comments, and report the findings to the Metropolitan Council

### Background

The E Line Recommended Corridor Plan identifies station locations for the E Line bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor. Recommended station locations result from planning activities throughout 2020-2021, including public outreach and engagement, interagency coordination, and transit analysis within the corridor. The Council previously adopted the E Line alignment in January 2020 (Business Item 2020-14) following a 2018-2019 corridor study.

A draft version of the Corridor Plan was published on September 20, 2021. Comments on the E Line Draft Corridor Plan were accepted through October 31, 2021, with a variety of communications and outreach activities conducted throughout the comment period. Metro Transit received 561 comments and emails on the plan, in addition to two letters.

Based on public and agency feedback, staff have completed additional analysis of alternative platform locations at several station locations and is recommending changes to three stations from the draft plan. Additional analysis and recommended changes are reflected in the Recommended Corridor Plan.

Following the release of the Recommended Corridor Plan, staff will continue outreach and communications to engage community members around the plan. Staff will bring a final corridor plan for Council approval following the recommended plan comment period. Upon completion and approval, the plan will identify the final planned locations for E Line stations in advance of project engineering.

### Rationale

The proposed comment period continues transparent and meaningful discussion with the public about the E Line ahead of finalizing station locations.

## **Thrive Lens Analysis**

The E Line will upgrade the Route 6, one of Metro Transit's highest ridership bus routes. Investment in high-quality transit options in the Route 6 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 E Line project advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by improving transit access for communities of color and for workers at low wage jobs. Investment in the E Line will provide riders with faster service and a more comfortable waiting and riding experience.

The proposed action also advances the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by planning for E Line corridor improvements efficiently with regional partnership from Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Edina, the University of Minnesota, MnDOT, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

## **Funding**

While there is no direct funding attached to this action, eventual approval of the Final Corridor Plan will establish the scope of the E Line project to include defined number of stations in determined locations, a necessary step to delivering the project within budget. Full funding for delivery of the E Line project has been secured through a combination of federal, state, and Metro Transit sources.

## **Small Business Inclusion**

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

## **Known Support / Opposition**

Public engagement on the draft plan has identified strong overall support for the E Line and transit improvements in the Route 6 corridor. Local agency partners support the project and will continue to be closely involved as the project transitions into engineering.

Some station locations have been subject to a high degree of interest, both in support and opposition or expressing concerns about aspects of the proposed station location. Based on feedback received on the draft plan, staff have completed additional analysis of alternative platform locations at multiple station locations and are recommending changes at some locations. Staff continue to engage directly with key stakeholders and station neighbors at proposed platform locations.