



# Network Next Evaluation of BRT Corridors Community Engagement Summary

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Outreach and Engagement  
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## Background

The Network Next project will develop and communicate Metro Transit's vision for the 2040 bus network, which will guide the expansion of service across the spectrum of network and service quality investments. Network Next planning efforts have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the ongoing public health emergency, some changes have been made to the overall approach to this project:

- Planning for improvements to the local and express bus network is on hold. This will allow us to better understand the pandemic's effect on transit needs and incorporate changing ridership patterns into our planning efforts. We hope to restart local and express bus network in mid-2021.
- Planning for the future arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) network is continuing. This work will identify the next arterial BRT lines that will open after the METRO E Line. The goal is to recommend the next three BRT lines – the F Line, G Line, and H Line. The outreach and engagement work summarized in this document is focused around BRT planning.

Since concluding initial engagement in late 2019, the customers and communities we serve have experienced several crises that may affect transportation needs and demands over the next 20 years. This includes increased unemployment, teleworking, health concerns and shared space, and public safety.

These events have shifted many conversations in the region around equity and priorities. In 2020, Metro Transit decided to focus on the next arterial BRT routes and defer local/express bus improvement planning until 2021. Metro Transit identified 19 potential corridors. That was narrowed down to 11 in Summer 2020. In September, Metro Transit conducted engagement to get public feedback on the 11 proposed routes and the proposed priorities for prioritizing the corridors for development.

In late 2020, we developed concept plans to estimate costs, ridership, and other benefits for 10 corridors. We evaluated these using metrics based on what we heard from the public. Based on that evaluation, we grouped the corridors into three tiers for near-term, mid-term, and longer-term implementation. This document describes engagement goals and outcomes for identifying the F, G, and H lines from four near-term candidate corridors.

## Purpose and goal

The purpose of this outreach is to engage the community to assist in developing long range plans for transit improvements:

- Summarize background and process to date
- Share results from the September engagement process
- Communicate how the corridors were prioritized and the top three selected for Tier 1
  - Public input influenced weighting of principles
  - Share routes and conceptual station locations, spacing used to estimate costs and ridership
- Communicate that corridors slated for mid-term and longer term will be revisited and prioritized within the next five years
- Seek input on which corridor should be prioritized as the F Line



The goal is to engage with the community and receive at least 2,000 responses with 45% of the responses from Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC). The target audience is transit users and communities served by the core and suburban local routes.

## Methods of engagement

The targeted audience was riders, potential riders and general community. Inability to hold or unwillingness of people to attend meetings due to COVID-19 continued to be a challenge. However, Metro Transit continues to try strategies to engage a diverse set of stakeholders.

- Direct people to webpage for information with engaging visual content and easily understandable maps
- Target ethnic and local media via social media, website, print ads, and advertorials in local publications
- Emails to current transit users
- Online survey in English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong
- In-person intercept surveys as reasonable given COVID and limitations
- Posters with a QR code to the survey were put at 100 busy shelters to engage current customers

## Communications

DATE	ACTIVITY
11/30	Mshale Print Newspaper Advertorial: 28,000 paper circulation
11/30	Hmong Times Print Newspaper Advertorial
12/9	SurveyMonkey survey goes live in English, Somali, Hmong, and Spanish
12/9	metrotransit.org/network-next posted with information about Network Next, previous reports, video about Network Next and link to the survey
12/9	Star Tribune posted an article about Network Next survey
12/9	News article on metrocouncil.org website
	Article included in the Metropolitan Council's monthly e-newsletter
12/10	Posters installed in 100 shelters along the 10 routes with information about Network Next and QR code to the survey
12/10	Information packets with materials, maps, graphics, and presentation sent to cities and counties so that they could updates to their elected officials and push information out via their newsletters, social media, and websites
12/10	Interview with MPR reporter for article posted 12/10
12/11	News article on metrotransit.org website
12/11	Article included in internal newsletter Insights with promoted Network Next survey information
12/14	Email to 2019 Network Next engagement grantees with project update and packet of information if they'd like to help us get the word out
12/14	Network Next e-newsletter to 500 subscribers via GovDelivery
12/14	Published advertorial in Spokesman Recorder with link to survey as well as social media and web ads.



DATE	ACTIVITY
12/14	Interview with Pioneer Press reporter for article posted 12/14
12/15	Email to 43,000 Go-To Card users and Metro Transit App users that use at least one of the 11 routes that mimic the proposed BRT corridors
12/16	Riders Club e-newsletter with project update and link to the website, interactive map, and survey
12/17	Email to Minnesota Ethnic Councils (African Heritage, Asian Pacific, Latino Affairs & Indian Affairs Council) with information and request to help get the word out
12/15-1/20	728x90 web banner on Mshale.com Impressions = 15,123. Clicks = 3,921.
1/8/21	Connect e-newsletter sent out with update on Network Next and how to submit comments
1/12/21	Minnesota Spokesman Reporter Facebook Live event to talk about Network Next survey and how BRT will serve communities better. 345 views of the event;338 video views.
1/15	Mshale eNews Exclusive mailed to 15,282 subscribers. Opens = 7,923. Clicks = 2,929.
1/19	Mshale eNews Exclusive mailed to 15,293 subscribers. Opens = 7,971. Clicks = 3,013.
1/19-1/20	Minnesota Spokesman Recorder Rebroadcast video = 76 views, MSR sent email to 145 community organizations plus Neighborhood Executive Directors. Print impressions: 80,000. Website banner impressions: 126,000 with 36 clicks. Email marketing to 50,000 subscribers with total opens 7,224 and total clicks 1,159 MSR- amplified social media outreach (Twitter and Facebook) 12,000 people reached, 10,000 engagements.

## Social media

Social media was used to get word out about the survey. We also used it in a new way to prompt an online discussion. We posed a question and encouraged people to respond in the comment. Many of the questions received good response.

POSTED	POST DESCRIPTION	FACEBOOK	TWITTER
12/9	Video about this phase of Network Next on YouTube. 1,036 views on YouTube		
12/9	Shared proposed posts with Minneapolis, St. Paul, Ramsey Co., and Hennepin Co. social media staff		
12/10	FB and Twitter posts with a short video about Network Next, encouraging people to complete the survey	48 shares 14 comments 40 likes/hearts 6,400 views	2 comments 43 retweets 40 hearts 3,858 views
12/11	FB and Twitter posts with a map link to the survey	6 shares 2 comments	no comments 7 retweets

POSTED	POST DESCRIPTION	FACEBOOK	TWITTER
		25 likes/hearts	13 hearts
12/12	Robin Caufman posted on LinkedIn and asked networks to share; shared by Councilmembers and community organizations.		
12/15	Map of Central (Route 10) corridor and link to survey	7 shares 16 comments 25 likes/hearts	2 comments 11 retweets 24 hearts
12/22	Map of Como/Maryland (Route 3) corridor and link to survey	2 shares 8 comments 13 likes/hearts	no comments 2 retweets 7 hearts
1/5	Map of Lyndale/Johnson (Route 4) corridor and link to survey	2 shares 5 comments 10 likes/hearts	1 comment 3 retweets 8 hearts
1/12	Map of Rice/Robert (Route 62/68) corridor and link to survey	4 shares 4 comments 19 likes/hearts	no comments 2 retweets 6 hearts
1/15	Reminder to take the survey and repost video	3 shares 10 comments 13 likes/hearts	no comments 11 retweets 8 hearts
1/19	Last call post with new graphic	4 shares 2 comments 9 likes/hearts	no comments 7 retweets 6 hearts

## In-person surveys

Staff went to busy transit centers, light rail stations and bus stops to survey people in person. People who completed the survey were offered a free ride pass. In addition to the in-person surveys, we had business cards printed with the URL and QR that directed people to the survey.

DATE (2021)	LOCATION	STAFF
1/12	MPLS-West Bank Station	Robin Caufman & John Stephens
1/13	St Paul - Capitol/Rice Station	James Holt & Nasser Mussa
1/14	St Paul – Minnesota & 5th	James Holt
1/15	Columbia Heights Transit Center	Yumi Nagaoka & Joanna Hubbard-Rivera
1/16	Mall of America	Juan Rangel & Nasser Mussa
1/16	North Town Mall	Yumi Nagaoka & Joanna Hubbard-Rivera
1/19	Rosedale Mall	Cody Olson & Doug Cook

## Community and virtual meetings

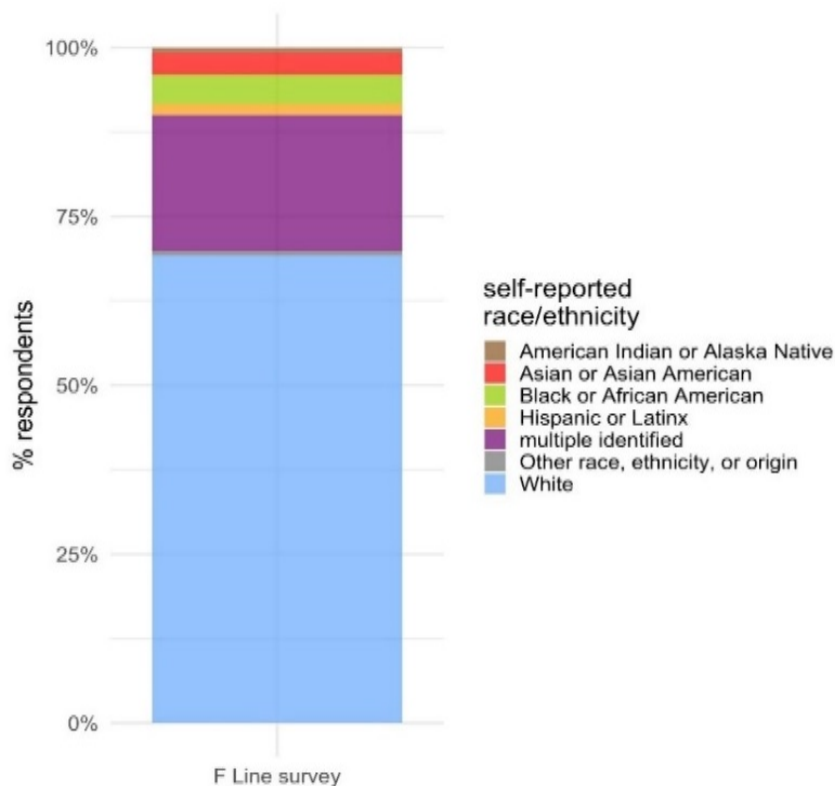
**DATE ORGANIZATION**

12/15	Robin emailed St. Paul and Minneapolis communications staff with information and request to help get the word out; Nasser emails to city managers at suburban cities.
12/15	Nasser emailed information to Arden Hills, Brooklyn Park, Bloomington, Burnsville, Columbia Heights, Coon Rapids, Crystal, Eagan, Edina, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Lilydale, Little Canada, Maplewood, Mendota Heights, Mounds View, New Brighton, New Hope, North Saint Paul, Oakdale, Richfield, Robbinsdale, Rosemount, Roseville, Spring Lake Park, St. Anthony Village, St. Paul Park, Stillwater, Vadnais heights, White Bear Lake, Woodbury
1/10	Letter of support from Como Student Community Cooperative for Como/Maryland corridor.
1/11	City of West St. Paul letter of support for Rice/Robert corridor.
1/17	City of Saint Paul letter of support expressing their top priority is Rice/Robert and secondary support for the Como/Maryland corridor.
1/19	Dakota County resolution of support for Rice/Robert corridor.
1/19	Dakota County Chamber of Commerce letter of support for Rice/Robert corridor.
1/20	Ramsey County Public Works letter of support for Rice/Robert corridor.
1/20	Rice & Larpenteur Alliance letter of support for the Rice/Robert corridor.

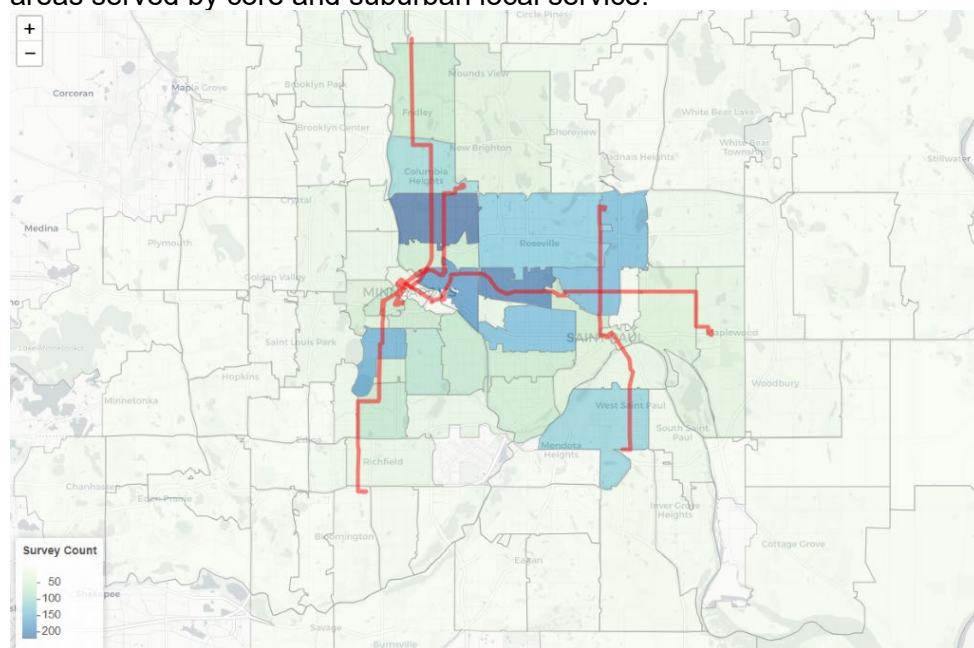
## Survey respondents

Over the course of a month, we heard from more than 4,116 people of which 119 were in person. BIPOC respondents accounted for 31% of the total surveys completed.

RACE/ETHNICITY	PERCENT
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.8%
Asian/Asian American	3.3%
Black/African American	4.3%
Hispanic/Latinx	1.6%
Multiple Identified	20.1%
Other Race/Ethnicity	0.7%
White	69.2%



Our second measurement of success was to engage communities that are served by our core and suburban local bus routes. We collected ZIP code data in our online and in-person surveys and mapped the responses that shows the respondents with highest concentration of responses were from areas served by core and suburban local service.

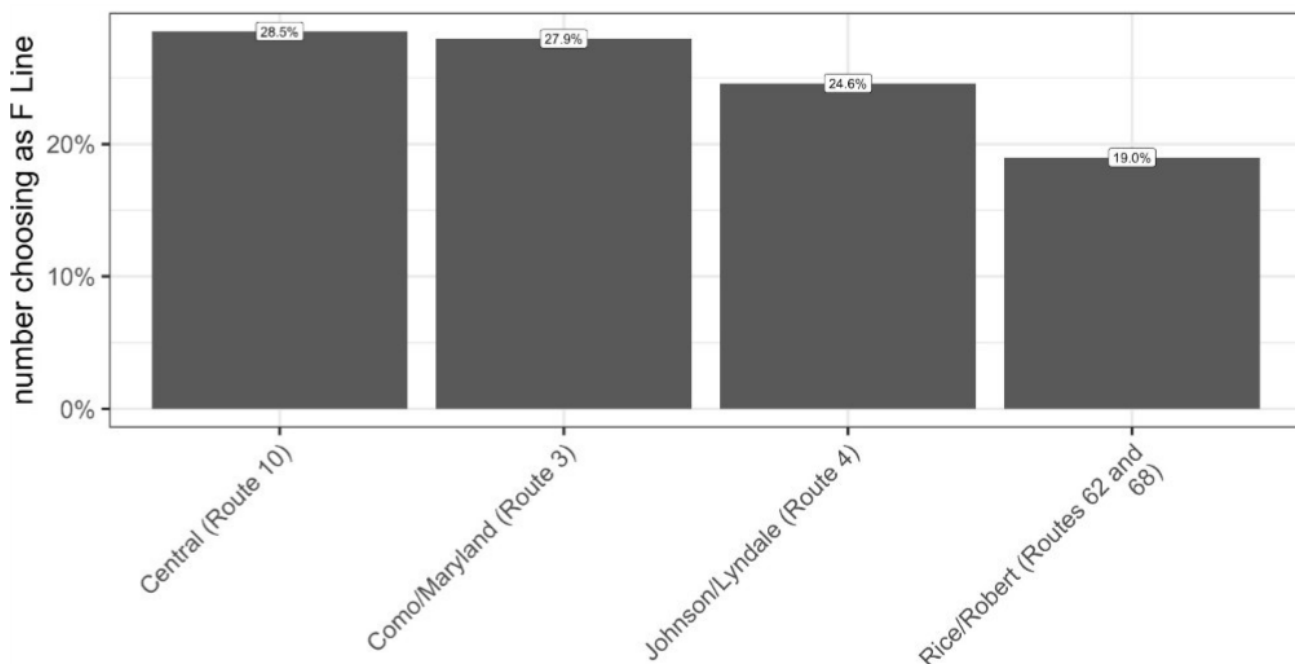


## Analysis and key themes

The survey is not a direct vote to select the METRO F Line. However, the feedback received was considered in the analysis that led to the staff recommendations.

The survey showed strong community support for each of the four corridors considered. The Central (Route 10) and Como/Maryland (Route 3) corridors were the highest priorities with 28.5 percent and 27.9 percent of respondents selecting their top priority. Common reasons cited for selecting these corridors were:

- Provide service to BIPOC communities
- Provide service to areas not currently served by bus rapid transit or light rail lines
- Connections to home, work, school, stores, and key destinations



By corridor, here are the main reasons we heard for why people selected routes as their top priority:

- Central (Route 10)
  - Serves northeast Minneapolis, northern suburbs
  - Serves BIPOC communities and provides access to places they shop and socialize
  - Dense population, high ridership
  - Close to home, work, school
  - Need more frequent, faster and reliable transportation
- Como/Maryland (Route 3)
  - East-west service between Minneapolis and St. Paul
  - Connection to neighborhoods, key destinations and UofM
  - Close to home, work, school



- Rice/Robert (62/68)
  - Serves low-income and BIPOC communities
  - Improves north-south connections, crosses major physical barriers (the river, the rail yards)
  - Connections between high density areas, apartments and retail
  - Advances equity and provides geographic balance
  - Opportunity to improve to speed and reliability
- Johnson/Lyndale (4)
  - Links south Minneapolis with northeast Minneapolis via downtown
  - Connects many neighborhoods, shopping areas, and business districts.
  - Provide high frequency transit in growing community currently underserved by transit, specifically in northeast.
  - Lyndale is highly traveled corridor where improvements could increase transit speed and reliability as well as safety

## How we are using what we heard

This report will be shared with the public by posting it online and presenting it to stakeholder groups. The data was used by the Network Next project team to recommend the F, G, and H lines. The data was shared with staff working on other transit improvement projects so that they can look for any comments and concerns as they resume planning and engagement for those initiatives.

## Appendix A: Sampling of comments

Following is a sampling of comments in respondents' own words about each of the four corridors.

### Central (Route 10)

"Northeast is not well served by transit and has poor connections to the rest of Mpls and the metro. It's the only part of the city that doesn't already have current or planned LRT or BRT. Poor transit connections and long travel times are an obstacle for anyone in NE trying to get to work or other opportunities outside the neighborhood. Advancing this route first would also be an opportunity to incorporate these plans with the current MNDOT planning process for the Central and University corridors, which will otherwise be significantly affected if BRT plans are introduced later."

"Racial equity - it has some of the most transit dependent populations - they don't have lrt - if the protests taught us anything, we need investment in our poorest neighborhoods."

"Because central is loaded with mom and pop, bipoc owned small businesses catering to a wide swath of bipoc customers. AND the surrounding area has a great many lower income households. This line will connect many services industry workers to other bus lines and speed up the time it takes to travel to multiple jobs they need to survive but are now spending hours of potential family time on travel."

"I am a property owner in Fridley. The number of rental and housing units in Fridley is growing rapidly. The commuter line is excellent for moving people who work traditional work hours, however many residents of Fridley do not work traditional hours. Having additional bus access would bring new opportunities to a community that is growing in number and diversity."

"This corridor access/reaches many blighted communities. This could help revitalize some of these communities and help businesses along Central Avenue."

"It's really the heart of mass transit for NE at least running north and south. It gets a lot of people where they need to be, even out to the suburbs/Northtown where ppl can work. Improved stations (heat in winter/shade in summer) would make it better for those who rely on the 10."

"The northern part of the Twin Cities is inadequately served by transit - especially if trying to get to St Paul. The State is one of the largest employers in Minnesota and most of the jobs are in St Paul but people living in the northeast Mpls and north eastern suburbs are completely cut off from adequate transit."

### Como/Maryland (Route 3)

"The Como/Maryland corridor is my top priority because it is a heavily used route by a wide range of passengers (commuters, students, visitors to Como Park, general passengers, etc.). The corridor is also a very socioeconomically diverse area, and more efficiently connecting those different neighborhoods is in line with the priorities for these rapid transit routes, as well as the long term priorities of the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The additional amenities

and speed of bus rapid transit along the Como/Maryland corridor would benefit all of these different riders and be a step in the right direction towards achieving these priorities.”

“Como/Maryland is a huge corridor that serves (at least close to) all 3 UMN campuses and both downtown. A huge proportion of students live in the residential areas served by this corridor, as well as thousands of non-student workers for both downtowns. Moving people through this area as effectively as possible is a must, congestion and overcrowding on busses happens very quickly.”

“The Como/Maryland corridor provides a vital east-west connection for many riders. I used to ride Route 3 myself and always thought it would be a good candidate for investment to increase frequency / capacity / and improve travel times.”

“Many people in the diverse neighborhoods of the East Side do not have cars or access to convenient mass transit. The bus routes in this area meander and do not provide quick access to downtown St Paul where many need to transfer to get to their destinations in MPLS. This route with a straight shot to jobs in the MPLS core would be a boon to East Side families.”

“The east metro area desperately needs to be better integrated into the metro with BRT or better. The equity case is also strong - the northern areas of Saint Paul are full of lower income residents and immigrant families who could benefit from not only high-speed transit to jobs and other life destinations, but also would benefit from the incremental development attention that the BRT would bring to the area. Small businesses would see more access to dollars, vacant homes would see demand from potential owner-occupants, and the a car-free life would be supported through enhanced mixed-modal transportation offerings.”

## Johnson/Lyndale (Route 4)

“The Johnson-Lyndale corridor connects low-income residential areas with both the Quarry shopping area and downtown, serving equity and transit-oriented development goals.” “The Johnson/Lyndale route will connect a number of transit ready communities and provide high frequency service in areas currently underserved by transit, most specifically in Northeast.”

“Right now there aren't many good ways to connect from South Minneapolis/ Richfield/ Bloomington to NE Minneapolis and St. Anthony without making a transfer downtown. This corridor would be great for those who live and work on opposite sides of downtown and don't want to make a transfer there. It connects lots of businesses, shops, housing, and entertainment districts that are more difficult to reach otherwise.”

“Johnson/Lyndale appeared to be the longest corridor of the listed options. It's compelling to me that it would connect Columbia Heights/St Anthony to Bloomington, through downtown Mpls. Additionally, in my work, I'm familiar with real estate development in the Minneapolis neighborhoods along this route and the increasing housing densities would be well served by BRT. Worth considering, the Minneapolis 2040 Comp plan aims to diversify incomes in all neighborhoods. That means more potential transit riders in current "car first" neighborhoods.”

“The routes to and from that area of the metro (Silver Lake Village Area in St. Anthony) are slow and there are a number of apartment complexes in that area (with a new one currently under construction).

Rapid Bus Route to and from this area would increase accessibility to Downtown Minneapolis. Also, there appears to be adequate space to accommodate whatever infrastructure will be needed.”

## **Rice/Robert (Route 62 and 68)**

“Robert Street is a vibrant area serving a large number of people, many of whom are minorities and transit users. Ramsey and Hennepin have TONS of Irt and BRT options. This corridor makes a lot of sense, especially when you look at it graphically compared to the existing network. Will serve a lot of people and help all those businesses in west St. Paul with added shoppers. There isn’t a corridor like Robert street in west St. Paul anywhere with that much retail. A lot more apartments are coming too.”

“This serves the heart of Frogtown neighborhood and the North End of St. Paul which are low income neighborhoods. Extending the BRT from downtown to Shoreview helps pull people to jobs on both ends and through St. Paul.....Equity issues, particularly the large concentration of rental residents in West Saint Paul who are currently underserved with public transit.”

“Robert Street has everything; groceries, restaurants and every type of retail. Add to that all of the senior and market rate apartments being built or in the pipeline. Transportation like this is critical for these populations and also provides access to St. Paul. All of the commercial on Robert also requires workers. These are not overly high paying jobs so transit reliant workers are abundant. It would also allow those from Rice area to come to WSP to work and shop; and vice versa,”

“This corridor is a critical North/South corridor for Saint Paul and bus rapid transit would be a huge improvement over current options. This corridor would serve transit dependent populations and also has potential for great walkable urban environment.”

“Rice/Robert bridges major gaps (the Mississippi River and I-94), and runs through areas of St. Paul that have been all-but ignored and divested from for decades. It hits diverse areas and areas of concentrated poverty. Along with the Gold and Rush Line BRT, it will significantly improve access to downtown St. Paul, which badly needs this investment, and all three lines would benefit from their shared BRT stations through downtown.”

# Appendix B: Samples of social media, news

**MPRnews**

## Met Council wants help picking next three fast transit line routes

Tim Nelson December 11, 2020 4:00 a.m.

Share story

Metro Transit says it has to pick three from four options for its next bus rapid transit lines, shown here in green. They're asking for public input through Jan. 20.

**StarTribune**

4h ago

LOCAL

## Metro Transit begins planning for region's next rapid bus lines

The agency is surveying riders to determine where to put the proposed F, G and H lines.

2h ago

### BCA says deputies not cooperating after fatally shooting 19-year-old on Iron Range

**TwinCities.com PRINCE PRESS**

Met Council to choose three routes across the metro for super-buses, 7 more to come after 2030

Coming to a street near you: Higher-speed bus routes

**Prensa DE MINNESOTA**

et directorio

## Ayude a Metro Transit a imaginar hoy el futuro del servicio de autobuses

By [La Prensa de Minnesota], on December 28, 2020 in Esta Semana...

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Vida y Sabor Magazine Yesterday at 10:42 AM

Help us decide where to build the next three (3) fast transit bus lines (BRT) by answering a short survey- <https://es.surveymonkey.com/ylfu...> See More

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**MSR FOREFRONT**

JAN. 12 5PM-6PM

SPECIAL GUEST: **NASSER MUSSA** COMMUNITY OUTREACH, METRO TRANSIT

**NetworkNEXT IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION SERVICE FOR ALL!**

POSTED BY: **STEPHENETTA HARMON**

Join us for a special popup conversation with Nasser Mussa, Community Outreach, Metro Transit, as he discusses Metro's commitment to providing enhanced service for Twin Cities communities of color and why African American participation in the new survey determining new routes is so important.

STREAMING LIVE [facebook.com/MNspokesmanRecorder](https://facebook.com/MNspokesmanRecorder)

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