

Rapid Transit corridors throughout the metro

Written by

Tuesday, 05 March 2013 10:04

The Metropolitan Council is taking public comments on amending the region's long-range Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) to include light rail transit (LRT) for the Bottineau Transitway in Hennepin County. Also, on including additional Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors throughout the metro area to provide faster, more reliable trips on arterial streets. The Council approved a public meeting date on these two issues for March 7 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Robbinsdale City Hall in Robbinsdale, and a public hearing for March 11 at 5:00 p.m. at the Metro Transit F.T. Heywood Office Building Chambers in Minneapolis.

Bottineau Transitway

The Bottineau Transitway is a proposed high-capacity transit improvement connecting Brooklyn Park and downtown Minneapolis. The recommended Bottineau route is within existing transportation corridors in the cities of Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park. It would be an extension of the METRO Blue (Hiawatha) line and connect to the METRO Green (Central and proposed Southwest) LRT line and Northstar commuter rail line at the Interchange at Target Field in Minneapolis.

The Bottineau Transitway would provide access to regional destinations in the corridor including the Target North Campus and North Hennepin Community College in Brooklyn Park, North Memorial Hospital and Clinics in Robbinsdale, as well as destinations on other major transit corridors including the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, Mall of America, the State Capitol and downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The Council will take comments on light rail along the West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park – Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Corridor – Olson Memorial Highway/Trunk Highway 55 (B-C-D1) alignment, which is the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Bottineau Transitway. The alignment was recommended by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and the cities in which the route is proposed.

The Council must select the LPA and amend it into the region's transportation plan for the project to advance into the next stages of study.

"This is an important next step for the Bottineau Corridor and the metro area," said Council Chair Susan Haigh. "This public comment period begins the process of transitioning the project to the Metropolitan Council and positioning Bottineau for federal funding. This corridor will help in achieving a 21st century transportation system for the metro and further make the Twin Cities a region that can compete on a national and global scale. "

"We have planned for a long time and we are clearly ready to move forward in the process," agreed Hennepin County Commissioner Mike Opat, who, as Chair of the Hennepin County Board and Chair of the Bottineau Policy Advisory Committee, played a key leadership role in getting the project to this point in the process.

"The Bottineau Corridor is the obvious next line in the system," said Opat. "All of our cities are ready to refine the planning and prepare for greatly improved LRT transit and the redevelopment opportunities that will come with it."

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Arterial BRT

The proposed TPP Amendment also increases the potential reach of Arterial Bus Rapid Transit in the region's plans. BRT service on arterial streets uses technology and facility improvements to provide a faster, more reliable trip with fewer stops in highly traveled corridors.

The previous Transportation Policy Plan identified nine potential Arterial BRT corridors. Since then, Metro Transit has conducted the Arterial Transitway Corridor Study to further develop the concept, including examining new potential corridors. Completed in 2012, the study suggested Arterial BRT would do well on Hennepin Avenue and Lake Street.

As the Bottineau Transitway Locally Preferred Alternative advanced through county planning, Arterial BRT was also examined on Penn Avenue North, and Fremont and Emerson Avenues North – which would be an extension of the Chicago Avenue corridor served by existing Route 5– to provide greater transit access to residents of north Minneapolis.

The proposed amendment changes add these new corridors and note that several of the corridors are also being studied for other transportation modes, such as streetcar.

Public Comment

The Council has scheduled a public meeting for:

5:00-7:00 p.m., Thursday, March 7, 2013
Robbinsdale City Hall,
4100 Lakeview Ave. North, Robbinsdale, MN

The public hearing is scheduled for:

5:00 p.m., Monday, March 11, 2013
Metro Transit, F.T. Heywood Office Building Chambers,
570 6th Ave. North, Minneapolis, MN

The full Council will vote on the TPP amendments at a Council meeting on April 24.

The public comment period closes at the end of the day March 21. To comment on the TPP amendments members of the public may:

- Write to Public Information at 390 Robert St. N., St. Paul, MN 55101
- Email to Public Information at public.info@metc.state.mn.us
- Record a comment on the Public Comment Line at 651.602.1500 (TTY 651.291.0904)
- Fax to Public Information at 651.602.1464.

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The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Council runs the regional bus and light rail system and Northstar commuter rail, collects and treats wastewater, coordinates regional water resources, plans regional parks and administers funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families. The Council board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor.