METRO
ORANGE LINE EXTENSION STUDY

Public Involvement Plan

8/7/2017

Dakota COUNTY
Regional Railroad Authority

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Revision History

Revision Number	Date	Description
0	7/11/17	Initial draft to Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority for comment
1	7/18/2017	Dakota County comments incorporated
2	8/7/2017	TAC comments incorporated

List of Acronyms

BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
DCRRA	Dakota County Regional Rail Authority
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
MnDOT	Minnesota Department of Transportation
MVTA	Minnesota Valley Transit Authority
OLX	Orange Line Extension
PIP	Public Involvement Plan
PM	Project Manager
PMP	Project Management Plan
PMT	Project Management Team
PWG	Policy Work Group
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QR	Quality Reviewer
RP	Responsible Professional
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TPP	Transportation Policy Plan

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Introduction

Project Overview

The METRO Orange Line Phase 1 is a 17-mile highway bus rapid transit (BRT) line that will connect downtown Minneapolis to Richfield, Bloomington, and Burnsville via I-35W. Similar to the METRO Red Line, the Orange Line is a flexible transit mode that will travel in mixed traffic, on bus-only shoulders, in MnPASS lanes, or within a dedicated transit travel lane to navigate between stations.

The METRO Orange Line Extension (OLX) is a proposed extension of the METRO Orange Line Phase 1. The OLX will extend the planned service from the current southern terminus in Burnsville to the Kenrick Park & Ride in Lakeville, adding two or more stations and approximately five miles to the initial Orange Line alignment (*Figure 1*). The OLX is an important transitway for Dakota County and for the Twin Cities region because it will strengthen Dakota County's connection to the METRO system by expanding frequent, all-day BRT service that will be comparable to the Phase 1 service.
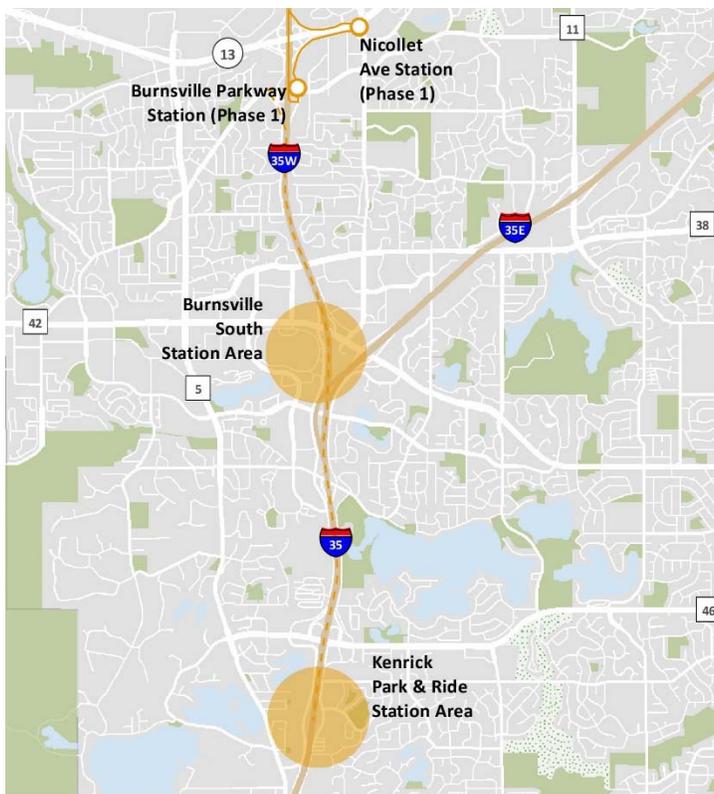

JULY 2017

Figure 1: OLX Study Area

This Orange Line Extension Study (the Study) will define key components of the OLX, including station locations, bus routing and runningway, transit operations and connections with existing and potential local buses, and operating technologies. Additionally, the Study will develop capital and operating cost estimates and recommendations for pursuing later project development tasks, including environmental review and documentation.

Purpose

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to facilitate an open, proactive, and innovative process for involving the public and stakeholder groups in study development. Created in collaboration with Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority (DCRRA), the PIP summarizes specific techniques, target audiences, key stakeholders, intended messages, and timing relative to milestones within the greater project schedule. Additionally, the PIP outlines the decision-making process as it pertains to the two study committees, namely the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Project Management Team (PMT).

Goal

The goal of public involvement efforts for the Orange Line Extension study is to engage stakeholders and the public beyond the traditional engagement process. Specifically, the PIP aims to identify:

- ► **WHO** has specific interest in the project and who should be involved in the process
- ► **WHAT** level of engagement is appropriate
- ► **HOW** the public will be involved and where that input is incorporated in the decision-making process
- ► **WHEN** and **WHERE** meetings will occur and how timing integrates with project decisions

Principles of Effective Public Involvement

Successful public involvement is about building trust, understanding, and a foundation for consent. This requires a process that is characterized by technical competence, honesty and integrity, and good listening. These principles will create the framework within which public involvement will occur for the METRO Orange Line Extension Study. This will require:

- ► Early and continuous participation of stakeholders
- ► Reasonable availability of technical and other project information
- ► Collaborative input on the study and evaluation process
- ► Open access to the decision-making process
- ► Proactive efforts to engage the public in the process, particularly those groups that are often underrepresented in public policy processes, such as people of color, seniors, youth, the disabled, or those with lower income levels

Project Committee Structure

The Orange Line Extension is commissioned and funded by the DCRRA.

Study committees include the TAC and the PMT. The committees are comprised of staff from agencies within the Orange Line Extension study areas. Each committee will meet regularly to discuss study progress and to ensure deliverables are consistent with the study scope and supported both locally and regionally. Study staff will leverage meeting opportunities to further communicate with regional stakeholders, both to share information and to gather input.

The Orange Line Extension Study will seek advisement from the I-35W Solutions Alliance, a multi-jurisdictional Joint Powers Agreement among the cities of Bloomington, Burnsville, Elko New Market, Lakeville, Minneapolis, Richfield, Savage, and Dakota, Hennepin and Scott Counties. The I-35W Solutions Alliance includes its partner agencies Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority.

The project management and organizational structure of the I-35W Solutions Alliance is illustrated in *Figure 2*.
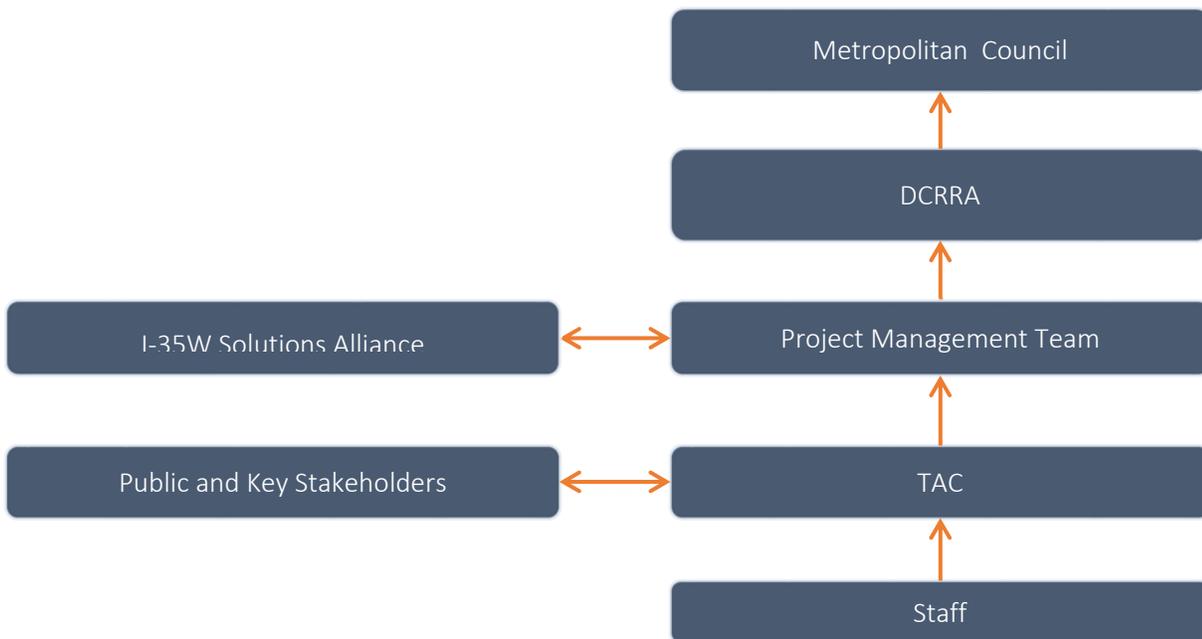

Figure 2: OLX Study Organizational Structure

Technical Advisory Committee

The TAC consists of planning and technical staff from Dakota County, the City of Burnsville, the City of Lakeville, MVTA (Minnesota Valley Transit Authority), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit. The TAC will assist with technical analysis and in confirming that the public engagement process is effective and comprehensive. Relative to the public engagement scope of the OLX, the TAC will:

- ► Assist in developing activities that ask for public opinion and understanding of the existing conditions and constraints
- ► Identify appropriate locations and dates for key engagement activities
- ► Approve and refine all engagement techniques
- ► Identify and contact additional stakeholders
- ► Review public comments and consider them in evaluation process

Information and recommendations from the TAC and study team will be brought to the PMT. TAC meetings will be held every two to four weeks throughout the project.

Project Management Team

The PMT consists of senior level staff from Dakota County, the City of Burnsville, the City of Lakeville, MVTA, MnDOT, and the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit. The PMT will be informed on the technical analysis, engagement techniques, and findings, and will be primarily responsible for study-process and policy-level guidance. PMT meetings will be held every month throughout the project.

Potential Stakeholders

One of the initial and ongoing tasks will be to identify stakeholders and ensure that these organizations and individuals are represented in the study process. A preliminary list of potential stakeholders is provided below.

Federal, State, and Regional Agencies

- ► Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- ► Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- ► Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- ► Metropolitan Council
- ► Metro Transit
- ► Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA)
- ► Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors (DARTS)
- ► I-35W Solutions Alliance

Local Agencies

- ► Dakota County Regional Rail Authority
- ► Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA)
- ► Scott County Community Development Agency (CDA)
- ► Scott County
- ► City of Lakeville
- ► City of Burnsville
- ► City of Savage

Businesses

- ► Major employers
    - ○ Fairview Ridges Hospital (Burnsville)
    - ○ Minnesota WorkForce Center (Burnsville)
    - ○ Burnsville Center Mall (Burnsville)
    - ○ Post Consumer Brands (Lakeville)
    - ○ Hearthside Food Solutions (Lakeville)
    - ○ Imperial Plastics (Lakeville)
    - ○ Target (Lakeville)
    - ○ Hy-Vee (Savage)
- ► Individual businesses in the station areas
- ► Large commercial property owners
- ► Commercial and residential developers
- ► Burnsville Chamber of Commerce
- ► Burnsville Convention and Visitors Bureau
- ► Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce
- ► Lakeville Convention and Visitors Bureau

Educational Institutions

- ► District 192 (Lakeville)
- ► District 194 (Lakeville and Burnsville)
- ► District 191 (Burnsville)

- ► Dakota County Technical College

Public Stakeholders

- ► Property owners and homeowner associations
- ► Residents (owners and renters). Higher-density housing near station areas that may be targeted for public input are:
  - ○ The higher density housing west of Burnhaven Drive near Earley Lake
  - ○ Connelly's Mobile Home Park south of Kenrick Park & Ride
- ► Students
- ► Underrepresented and underserved populations, such as low income families and non-English speakers
- ► Disabled persons
- ► Cultural and ethnic groups

Other Stakeholders

- ► Fairview Ridges Hospital in Burnsville
- ► Non-profit organizations
- ► Advocacy groups
  - ○ 360 Communities (Burnsville)
- ► Faith-based groups
  - ○ Mission Outpost (Burnsville)
- ► Emergency service providers
- ► Buck Hill Ski Area

Public Involvement Techniques

The following methods are proposed to facilitate and maintain communications throughout the course of the project.

Project Website

A project website will be live throughout the project. The website will be standalone and link to the current METRO Orange Line Phase 1 webpage. The cities, counties, and other stakeholders will be encouraged to link to the website from their own pages. This website will be ADA accessible and, if desired by staff, can be available in multiple languages. The website will be a central place for people to find information about the study, provide feedback, or access project materials.

Public Comments and Comment Database

The project website will provide a place for people to leave comments throughout the project. Comment cards will also be available at all public engagement events and combined with the feedback received online.

Online Mapping

An interactive map will be developed to actively engage residents and stakeholders throughout the project. The Google Map-based tool will allow users to provide feedback on station locations and opportunities and constraints. User input can be downloaded for further analysis.

Contact Database

A contact database will be developed and maintained for the duration of the project. The database will include contact information for people who are interested in receiving project updates. People can provide this information on the website, a comment form, telephone, or at a public engagement event. These individuals will receive notice when new project information is available or when the project is at key progress points.

Email Updates

A unique project email template will be created. Periodic email updates to corridor stakeholders will be provided.

In-Person Engagement

Open Houses

There will be two rounds of open houses (*Figure 3*). Each round will have two in-person meetings, one in Burnsville and one in Lakeville, for a total of four study open houses.

Figure 3: Engagement and Open House Timing

The purpose of the initial round of open houses (between Phase 1 and Phase 2) will be to introduce the study and to gather input on:

- ► Desired destinations near station areas
- ► Preferences to runningway type and station amenities
- ► Identify existing barriers to travel and transit

This initial round will focus on where station locations should be located, and Activities will focus on the tradeoff between travel time and destination proximity in determining station location.

The purpose of the second round of open houses (between Phase 2 and Phase 3) will be to review previously heard public input, present the evaluation process, solicit feedback on analysis and recommendations, present cost estimates, and share next steps. This second round will focus on results, and activities will be geared toward next steps and future planning.

At both open houses, community members will be able to learn about the project and provide feedback regarding whether the recommendations will address their concerns. Both open houses will be held at locations that are transit accessible and convenient for all types of users, such as Burnsville Transit Station, Burnhaven Library, and Kenrick Park & Ride. Members of the PMT suggested airing the open houses on Facebook Live or recording a virtual open house.

Notifications and Online Media

For both open houses, a general media release will be provided to Dakota County for distribution to local newspapers. Open house flyers and email notifications will be provided to each city and stakeholder group that can be posted to each entities' website and social media accounts. An email notification will be provided to the entire project contact list. The project team also will coordinate the distribution of announcements on-board and at transit stations and on Nextdoor.

Pop-Up Meetings

Pop-up meetings are a way to reach people who are unable or uninterested in coming to an open house or who have not heard about the project. The times and locations of these five pop-up meetings will focus on reaching people who are likely to ride transit in Burnsville and Lakeville. Potential locations for pop-up meetings include:

- Burnsville Center Food Court and/or transit shelter and transfer point (Burnsville)
- Burnsville Transit Station (Burnsville)
- Mission Outpost (Burnsville)
- YMCA (Burnsville)
- Burnsville Fire Muster (Burnsville)
- Goodwill (Lakeville)
- Connelly's Mobile Home Park (Lakeville)

Targeted Meetings and Focus Groups

Up to five targeted meetings or focus groups will be held with stakeholders in both Burnsville and Lakeville. These may include transit riders, business owners, community leaders, or land owners. Discussions will be specific to each group will focus on various alternatives under study.

Additional Materials

Materials that are prepared for public consumption and to engagement public stakeholders will be presented in plain language so that they are easily understood by a wide range of project stakeholders. These materials will use nontechnical, easy-to-understand language to present project information and custom graphics and figures to present information graphically where possible. This will include two project brochures or handouts that will be distributed at various meetings and events. A project business card also will be developed, which will include project contact information and a link to the project website. This business card will be distributed at various meetings and events. Outside of the Open Houses, social media notifications will be made throughout the study to direct public to the website for new information and content.

Timing

The details, timing, and frequency of the various public involvement activities are provided in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Public Involvement Techniques and Timing

Technique	Target Audience/ Participants	Purpose/Intended Message	Tools	Frequency/Timing	Roles/Responsibilities
Project website	▶ All stakeholders ▶ General public	▶ Project information and updates ▶ Notice of upcoming meetings ▶ Contact information ▶ Comment submittal	▶ Interactive mapping ▶ Meeting notices and summaries ▶ Comment submittal form ▶ Comment log	▶ Initial content and up to 12 updates	▶ Kimley-Horn: develop content, website design and maintenance ▶ Dakota County: review content
Email updates	▶ All stakeholders ▶ General public	▶ Project information and updates ▶ Notice of upcoming meetings	▶ Email template	▶ Up to eight emails	▶ Kimley-Horn: email template, develop content ▶ Dakota County: review content
Project contact database	▶ Project team ▶ Stakeholders	▶ Collect stakeholder contact information ▶ Categorize by stakeholder type	▶ Email template ▶ Collect via project website and engagement events	▶ Ongoing	▶ Kimley-Horn: compile, categorize, and maintain list
Comment database	▶ Project team ▶ Stakeholders	▶ Track comments and responses ▶ Be transparent	▶ Sortable Excel spreadsheet ▶ Document coding	▶ Ongoing	▶ Kimley-Horn: compile and code database ▶ Dakota County: review for information
Project handout	▶ All stakeholders ▶ General public	▶ Project background and goals ▶ Summary of recommendations ▶ Next steps	▶ Non-technical, easy-to-understand language ▶ Custom graphics	▶ Initial version and two updates (one prior to second open house and one at the end of the project	▶ Kimley-Horn: develop content ▶ Dakota County: review content
Public Open House #1	▶ All stakeholders ▶ General public	▶ Introduce the study purpose ▶ Discuss station locations	▶ Up to 10 display boards ▶ Project handout	▶ Two locations ▶ Anticipated in October 2017	▶ Kimley-Horn: develop content, design display boards, create meeting flyer, staff meeting, create meeting summary ▶ Dakota County: review content, distribute media release, staff meeting
Public Open House #2	▶ All stakeholders ▶ General public	▶ Solicit feedback on initial recommendations ▶ Present cost estimates ▶ Share next steps	▶ Up to 10 display boards ▶ Project handout	▶ Two locations ▶ Anticipated in April 2018	▶ Kimley-Horn: develop content, design display boards, create meeting flyer, staff meeting, create meeting summary ▶ Dakota County: review content, distribute media release, staff meeting
Pop-up Meetings	▶ Transit-dependent and traditionally underrepresented populations	▶ Introduce the study purpose ▶ Solicit feedback on station locations	▶ Project handout ▶ Display boards	▶ Up to five meetings/events	▶ Kimley-Horn: develop content, advertise event, staff event, create summary ▶ Dakota County: review content, staff event
Focus Groups	▶ Landowners ▶ Transit riders ▶ Community leaders	▶ Introduce the study purpose ▶ Solicit feedback on station locations	▶ Project handout ▶ Display boards ▶ Facilitated discussions	▶ Up to five meetings	▶ Kimley-Horn: develop content, advertise event, staff event, create summary ▶ Dakota County: review content, staff event

Evaluation of Efforts

Specific engagement techniques will be evaluated periodically by the project team to adapt and adjust activities. Evaluation of techniques will be based on the following (example) criteria:

Quantitative:

- ► How many people attended events? What was the engagement tool response rate?
- ► What was the geographic representative of attendees/responses?
- ► How many people opened email messages?
- ► Did participants sign up to be included on project updates? How many?

Qualitative:

- ► What kind of feedback was received at the open houses?
- ► What kind of feedback was received at the pop-ups?
- ► What kind of feedback was received at the focus groups?
- ► Have stakeholders expressed any particular challenges regarding their participation?
- ► Did participants understand the activities and was the feedback received as expected?

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures will be included in engagement summaries for each event.