

Date: December 9, 2019
To: Union Park District Council (UPDC)
From: UPDC Transportation Committee
Re: Committee recommendation regarding funding for the B-Line

Overview

At the UPDC Transportation Committee meeting on December 9th, Cody Olson from Metro Transit gave a presentation about the proposed new B-Line bus service. The presentation followed a major round of community engagement which resulted in a more refined plan. See <https://www.metrotransit.org/b-line-project>.

The B-Line would be Metro Transit's 4th bus rapid transit line. The project is a 12.6-mile route from Uptown in Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul (previous end point on the east was the Midway area in Saint Paul). The B-Line would substantially replace Route 21, a high ridership route with slow service.

Service frequency in St Paul would significantly increase with the B-Line. The B-Line would have stops spaced about every half mile, real-time signage, transit stations with heat and lights – amenities like the A Line service on Snelling.

Proposed B-Line routing is a major change from the #21 bus which makes a northbound horseshoe routing through the Midway area (Snelling to University Avenue to Hamline). The B-line bus would travel on Lake and Marshall Avenue to Selby and not route through the Midway. The 21D bus would be eliminated (not start/stop at Cretin/Summit). No changes are proposed to Express Route #53.

B Line opening could be in 2023, pending project funding. MT needs approx. \$60 million for full implementation; have about \$25 million to date. Is this a state bonding priority for the City of Saint Paul? Olson notes that other Rapid Bus projects, use local funds, county funds, Met Council funds, federal funds. In the past, used state GO bond funding to close the gap.

Metro Transit encourages people to participate in the on-line survey open until January 31, 2020 and provide feedback about: length of the route, the routing itself, station locations, future of route #21 bus. See www.Metrotransit.org/b-line-comments

Recommendation to the UPDC Board

After hearing Metro Transit's presentation, and after significant discussion, the Transportation Committee passed a motion (made by Parker, 2nd by Warren) to ask the Union Park District Council to write letters requesting that our municipal, county and state elected officials make funding for the B Line a top priority for the upcoming bonding bill.

The letter should also summarize our history with B-Line planning and the reasons for our support for the B-Line.