



**METRO Blue Line Extension
Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Public Hearing and
Special Committee of the Whole Minutes**

Date & Time	July 16, 2024 5:00 – 7:00 PM
Location	1256 Penn Ave N, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411
Attendees Presenter	Charlie Zelle, Reva Chamblis, Anjuli Cameron, W. Toni Carter Kelcie Young

1. Project History

Charlie Zelle, Chair of the Metropolitan Council, called the METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) Public Hearing and a special meeting of Metropolitan Council’s Committee of the Whole (COW) to order at 5:03 PM. Chair Zelle welcomed the public to the hearing and invited Council Members to introduce themselves.

Chair Zelle highlighted the significance of this public hearing as an opportunity for the public to provide their verbal testimonies on the SDEIS and explained that because a quorum of the Metropolitan Council may attend the public hearing, the SDEIS hearing serves a special meeting of the Council’s committee. Even though the committee will not be transacting business.

Chair Zelle announced that the hearing would commence with an overview of the SDEIS presented by Kelcie Young, Environmental Manager, Metropolitan Council’s BLE project office.

2. About the SDEIS

Ms. Young explained that she would provide an overview of the METRO BLE project history, information about the SDEIS, and an overview of the no-build options.

Ms. Young noted that the BLE project has undergone a decade of planning, beginning in 2014 with the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which led to the 2016 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the previous BLE alignment phase.

Ms. Young stated that in 2020, the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County decided to move the BLE project forward without using the freight rail right of way, prompting several years of studying alternative alignments for the BLE, which initiated the SDEIS



process for the current BLE. She reported that the SDEIS is available online and in print at various locations

3. **Build Alternative**

Ms. Young provided an overview of the current BLE alignment, noting that the route will extend the current Blue Line light rail from downtown Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park, serving the communities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park.

Ms. Young mentioned that the northern third of the alignment in Brooklyn Park will remain the same as the previous phase alignment, while the southern two-thirds of the new BLE alignment necessitated the SDEIS to study associated impacts along the proposed alignment.

Ms. Young stated that the study includes evaluating the light rail route, stations, pedestrian and bike facilities, and Park and Ride (P&R) facilities.

Ms. Young reviewed the SDEIS, stating that this process is part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements to qualify for federal funding. She explained that the SDEIS was necessary due to significant changes to the BLE project that were not studied in the environmental assessment of the previous alignment.

4. **How to Comment**

Chair Zelle thanked Ms. Young for the comprehensive overview of the BLE project. Chair Zelle informed the public of several options for submitting written formal comments on the SDEIS and announced that there will be another public hearing on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at the Brooklyn Park Library.

Chair Zelle also mentioned that the entire SDEIS can be read on the project's website.

5. **Public Invitation**

Chair Zelle invited members of the public to provide verbal testimony on the SDEIS. Public comments can be submitted online at BlueLineExt.org.

6. **Next Step**

Chair Zelle concluded the public hearing and adjourned the July 16 SDEIS public hearing and the special meeting of the Council's Committee of the Whole at 7:00pm.

Minutes by: Blue Line Ext. Administrative Jer Yang