



# METRO Blue Line Extension Municipal Consent Public Hearing Minutes

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| Date & Time            | August 26, 2024      Begins at 6:00pm   |
| Location               | 1256 Penn Ave N, Suite 5200, Minneapolis, MN 55411  |
| Members/ Project Staff | Reva Chamblis, Jeff Lunde, Deb Barber, Judy Johnson, John Pacheco, Kevin Anderson, Irene Fernando, Marion Greene, Nick Thompson |

## 1. Call to Order and Welcome

Reva Chamblis, Vice-Chair of the Metropolitan Council (MetC), called to order the joint Municipal Consent Public Hearing for the METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) Project, the special Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole meeting, and the special Blue Line Extension Project Decisions Board meeting, at 6:05 p.m. The hearing was conducted by Hennepin County (HC), the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and the Metropolitan Council.

Vice-Chair Chamblis welcomed members of the public to the hearing and allowed MetC Council Members (CM) and HC Commissioners to introduce themselves.

Vice-Chair Chamblis noted that, since a quorum of both the MetC's Committee of the Whole (COW) and the BLE Project Decisions Board (PDB) may be present, the hearing was also noticed as a special meeting of the COW and PDB, although they will not be transacting business.

Vice-Chair Chamblis explained that the public hearing offered an opportunity for verbal testimonies regarding Municipal Consent for the BLE Project.

## 2. Presentation

### a. Project Overview

Nick Thompson, MetC, provided a brief overview of the BLE project and then explained he would delve into more detail about the Municipal Consent process.

Mr. Thompson outlined that the BLE will span 13.4 miles, with 12 new stations, connecting four cities in Hennepin County: Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. He explained that the BLE is an extension of the existing Blue Line Light Rail Transit (LRT), beginning at Target Field and extending north to Brooklyn Park. Once completed, the BLE will offer a single seat ride from the Mall of America through downtown Minneapolis to the northern metro area.



Mr. Thompson highlighted that the project aims to build community prosperity, and this includes an Anti-Displacement program designed to minimize displacement.

He also explained that the BLE project is currently in the Municipal Consent phase and that, upon the completion of this process, the project will advance to 60% design, with an anticipated opening date in 2030.

Mr. Thompson reported that 30% of the design for the BLE alignment has been completed and provided details on the design study at this stage. He informed that by the end of 2024, the BLE will advance to 60% design.

Mr. Thompson emphasized that this is still an early stage of the design process, serving as one step to ensure the project is moving in the right direction with the support of the communities along the corridor. He noted that if there are desired changes to the design, this phase allows room for adjustments.

**b. Municipal Consent**

Mr. Thompson outlined the Minnesota state statute regarding municipal consent, explaining the options available to corridor cities and communities when seeking consent. He noted that they have three actions to choose from: they can approve the design, take no action (which, under state law, is considered consent approval), or disapprove the design and specify the changes needed to obtain approval.

Mr. Thompson reported that the BLE project initiated the Municipal Consent process on July 26, 2024, when the 30% design packages were shared with corridor cities and HC for their input. This was followed by a required 30-day period for public comment, culminating in tonight's public hearing.

**c. Design Plans**

Mr. Thompson outlined the design plans for the BLE alignment and mentioned that the Design team is available to explain any aerial design elements if there are any questions.

**3. Public Hearing**

Vice-Chair Chamblis invited members of the public to share their verbal comments, explaining that each speaker is allotted up to three minutes.

**4. Adjourn**

Vice-Chair Chamblis concluded the hearing and adjourned it at 7:53 pm.

Minutes recorded by: Blue Line Ext. Administrative Lead, Jer Yang