Committee of the Whole
METRO Blue Line Ext.

July 8, 2024

Nick Thompson
Deputy GM - Capital Programs
Project Director Blue Line Extension
Project History, Purpose, Schedule
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METRO line</th>
<th>Opened/Opening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Line</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Line</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Line</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Line</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>C Line</td>
<td>2019</td>
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<td>Orange Line</td>
<td>2021</td>
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<td>D Line</td>
<td>2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gold Line</td>
<td>2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>B Line</td>
<td>2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>E Line</td>
<td>2025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Line Ext</td>
<td>2027</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Line</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>G Line</td>
<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>H Line</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Line Ext</td>
<td>Engineering ~2030</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purple Line</td>
<td>Planning</td>
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**METRO Transitway Vision**
Blue Line EXTENSION

• 13.4 miles & 12 new stations

• Connecting Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Brooklyn Park and surrounding communities to fast, frequent, all-day service across the METRO system

• Single seat ride to existing Blue Line stops downtown, MSP Airport, and Mall of America

• Focus on building community prosperity through anti-displacement strategies before, during, and after construction

Next steps

✓ Updated post-COVID ridership and initial cost information: March 2024

✓ Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Spring 2024

• Municipal Consent: Summer 2024

• Updated 60% cost estimate: Fall 2024

• Finalize Design: 2024-2026

• Construction starts: 2026-2027

• Anticipated opening: 2030
Route Modification Process

- **2015-2020**: Alignment used railway right-of-way
- **August 2020 – March 2021**: Project transition, goal development, route study areas
- **March 2021**: Potential routes released for input
- **December 2021**: Draft Route Modification Report published for 45-day comment period
- **June 2022**: West Broadway Route selected with east of I-94 alignment
- **August 2023**: Staff recommended east of I-94 alignment to include a station at Washington Ave and Plymouth Ave and a transit mall on 10th Ave as the preferred route
Project Background

- **2014**: Bottineau Transitway Draft EIS
- **2016**: METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension Final EIS and Record of Decision
- **2020**: Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County issue a joint statement on advancing BLE without freight rail right-of-way
- **2022**: Route Modification Report, Notice of Intent to prepare supplemental draft EIS
- **2024**: BLE SDEIS Published
Purpose and Need

*Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS)*

**PROJECT PURPOSE**

To provide transit service, which will satisfy the long-term regional mobility and accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public.

**PROJECT NEED**

To effectively address long-term regional transit mobility and local accessibility needs while providing efficient, travel time-competitive transit service that supports economic development goals and objectives of local, regional, and statewide plans.
## Project Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>October 2022</strong></td>
<td>• Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement process initiated</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Analysis on route options continues</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Summer 2024</strong></td>
<td>• Municipal Consent Process</td>
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<td><strong>2025</strong></td>
<td>• SFEIS and Amended ROD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Finalize Design</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2026</strong></td>
<td>• Federal Funding/Construction Bidding</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2027-2030</strong></td>
<td>• Construction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• BLRT Opening</td>
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</table>

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**ANTI-DISPLACEMENT**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**WE’RE HERE**

1.5 – 2 YEARS

3 – 4 YEARS
## 2024 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Topics</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Safety &amp; Network Now</td>
<td>Cost &amp; Ridership</td>
<td>CMC Member Community Updates</td>
<td>SDEIS Update</td>
<td>Publish SDEIS</td>
<td>SDEIS Comment</td>
<td>Publish SDEIS</td>
<td>SDEIS Comment</td>
<td>Publish SDEIS</td>
<td>SDEIS Comment</td>
<td>Publish SDEIS</td>
<td>SDEIS Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement &amp; 4(f) Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
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<td>30% Design</td>
<td>30% Design Review</td>
<td>Design Coordination</td>
<td>60% Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost &amp; Ridership</td>
<td>Ridership/Cost Data</td>
<td>30% Cost Est. &amp; Ridership Updates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-Displacement</td>
<td>Draft CAP</td>
<td>Engage on Draft CAP</td>
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<td>Public Engagement</td>
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<td>Consult and Involve</td>
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</table>
Design Update
Brooklyn Park
Brooklyn Park Stations

- Five stations in Brooklyn Park
- Station finishes designed to complement the surrounding community
  - Color
  - Roof lines
  - Finishes
Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) at Oak Grove Parkway

- OMF is located at the northernmost portion of the project
Oak Grove Station and Park-and-Ride

- Park-and-Ride

View Looking Northwest to Plaza and Park and Ride from Station
Oak Grove Parkway Station
Brooklyn Park Stations

Site Plan

View from platform entry looking North

View from sidewalk looking Northwest
Crystal
Bass Lake Road Interchange

Existing
(at-grade intersection)

Proposed
(grade-separated interchange)

County Road 81 view north toward Bass Lake Road
Interchange Benefits

• Improves vehicle operations at Bass Lake Road compared to existing

• Provides grade-separation of County Road 81

• Provides at-grade access to trails on either side and to the park and ride

• Easier and safer pedestrian crossings
Bass Lake Road Station

Ground view of station area looking south

Ground view of station area looking east from park and ride
Robbinsdale
Downtown Robbinsdale Station

The station in downtown Robbinsdale is proposed to be located south of 40th Ave for several reasons:

- To provide better bike/pedestrian connectivity
- Serves nearby residential area and downtown Robbinsdale
- Close to proposed park-and-ride at US Bank site
Robbinsdale Park and Ride

Concept Only - view looking from station at 40th Ave toward the northwest
Robbinsdale Park and Ride
Lowry Avenue Station
Lowry Avenue Station
Minneapolis
West Broadway Reconstruction Benefits

- Improved pedestrian experience
- Utility and lighting updates
- Shade trees, greening
- Bike opportunities
- Traffic improvements
- Bus stops
- On street parking
- Outdoor seating and improved outdoor opportunities for businesses
Potential Traffic Configuration in North Loop
Minneapolis - Visualization
North Loop Access Improvements

• New potential access roads in the North Loop would be part of the project

• Evaluated existing and projected traffic patterns in the neighborhood
  - Proposing a new connection from 3rd Ave and 4th Ave
  - New sections of 8th and 9th
Design Changes based on Engagement

• Brooklyn Park
  • Streetscape design along the corridor
  • Station finishes designed to fit the surrounding community

• Crystal
  • Design of station for access and safety
  • Improved pedestrian and bike connections
    • Crystal Lake Regional Trail
    • Bass Lake Road Bikeway
Design Changes based on Engagement

• Robbinsdale
  • Focus on east/west accessibility and intersection safety across CR 81
  • Refined Lowry station design for accessible at-grade station

• Minneapolis
  • West Broadway and 21st corridor to address West Broadway impacts
  • Additional station added on 21st Ave
  • Added 21st Ave bridge across I-94 to reconnect to the river
Environmental
Project Background

- **2014**: Bottineau Transitway Draft EIS
- **2016**: METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension Final EIS and Record of Decision
- **2020**: Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County issue a joint statement on advancing BLE without freight rail right-of-way
- **2022**: Route Modification Report
- **2024**: BLE SDEIS Published
SDEIS Status

• SDEIS published on June 14, 2024
• Federal Register Notice of Availability on June 21, 2024
• Comment period through August 6, 2024
  ▪ Multiple commenting opportunities, including public hearings 7/16/24 and 7/23/24 and other events
Environmental Next Steps

• Comments received inform development of Supplemental Final EIS

• Supplemental Final EIS and Amended Record of Decision concludes environmental review
  ▪ Continue evaluation of project changes during design development
  ▪ Continue efforts to confirm impacts, explore avoidance, minimization, and mitigation for the Supplemental Final EIS
Anti-Displacement
Next steps progress

1. Create a regional group to continue conversations about corridor-wide implementation of anti-displacement strategies

2. Create local government groups to receive recommendations and begin policy making processes

3. Create dedicated regional anti-displacement fund

4. Align anti-displacement research and recommendations with Blue Line Extension federal processes like supplemental environmental impact statement

5. Develop corridor-wide anti-displacement policy agenda for 2024 state legislative session

Illustrations by Cori Nakamura Lin
2024 Minnesota Legislative Session Update

Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit Extension Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program to allocate funding for:

- Affordable housing
- Small business support
- Community ownership and commercial development
- Public realm enhancement
- Job training and placement

Proposed Appropriation:

- Beginning in fiscal year 2024 and expiration date of June 30, 2030
- $10M + local match
2024 Schedule

- **Anti-Displacement Coordinated Action Plan:**
  - City Partner Review
  - Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board Review
  - Public Feedback/Input

- **Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board:**
  - 3-Meetings Scheduled June/July/August
    - Chair/Co-Chair Assigned
    - Sub-Committee Assigned Tasks:
      - Create By-Laws
      - Create Funding/Fundraising Processes
Cost, Ridership, Federal Rating
Ridership Approach

• Project follows FTA guidance - using FTA required STOPS model

• FTA requires use of Post Pandemic ridership data to calculate ridership results (Project using 2023 data)

• FTA allows ridership in Forecast year 2045
## Estimated Ridership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>FTA Blended Forecast (Forecast Year)*</th>
<th>Overall Blue Line (w/ extension)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trips on Project</td>
<td>12,000-13,700</td>
<td>30,000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ranges based on FTA's New Starts CIG template
Cost Uncertainty by Project Phase

- Preliminary Design: 15% Design Complete, 30% Cost Uncertainty
- Municipal Consent: 30% Design Complete, 60% Cost Uncertainty
- Engineering: 60% Design Complete, 100% Cost Uncertainty
- Construction: 100% Design Complete, Project Budget
FTA Contingency Drawdown

Currently at 37.5%
## Base Cost Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Project Definition</th>
<th>37.5% Contingency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction Costs</td>
<td>$1.4 B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right-of-Way</td>
<td>$220 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicles</td>
<td>$205 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td>$480 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Charges</td>
<td>$50 M</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2.3 B</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>$900 M</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3.2 B</strong></td>
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</table>

*All costs represented in Year of Expenditure dollars*
## Operating Cost and Staffing Estimate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light Rail Cost Drivers</th>
<th>BLE O&amp;M (March 2024)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Revenue Car Miles</td>
<td>$15.5 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Revenue Train Hours</td>
<td>$17 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peak LRV in Service</td>
<td>$4.6 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRT Stations (12)</td>
<td>$1.7 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Track Miles</td>
<td>$8.7 M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Train Yards</td>
<td>$6.4 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Total (Opening Year):</strong></td>
<td><strong>$54 M</strong></td>
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Estimated new FTEs: 200 to 250

*Similar FTE levels as Green Line Extension*
FTA Rating Criteria

- Project anticipates a **Medium or higher** overall rating to be eligible for Federal funding
Existing Service

- Blue Line Extension corridor is underserved today
Station Boardings

• Lyndale Ave, James Ave, and Bass Lake Road are the most prominent stations in terms of ridership

• Northern Brooklyn Park stations (93rd Ave and 85th Ave) currently have low-density land use and low existing transit ridership

• Transfer activity greatest at Penn Ave
Key Takeaways

• Project remains a federally competitive project in the CIG program

• Forecasts have modestly increased along with regional ridership recovery from 2022 to 2023

• Nearly 50% of BLE riders are anticipated to be from 0-car households
Project Risks
Project Risk Management

- Risk and Contingency are managed in accordance with FTA’s Oversight Procedures (OP40)

- Key risk areas may include: Project Funding/CIG Program, Design, ROW, Utilities, Environmental, Communications, Anti-Displacement, Construction, Operations
Project Organization and Delivery
Project Decision Making

- **Project Team**: Integrated Agency Team, Metropolitan Council lead, Hennepin County in key roles, MnDOT staff lead Right-of-Way
- **Project Decision Board**: 3 Commissioners/2 Council Members. Approve key Project Decisions including Scope, Schedule Budget, Invitation for Bids, Change Orders
- **Corridor Management Committee**: Recommend Route and Stations, advise on key project items
- **Hennepin County**: Local funding Partner, Roadway authority for most of LRT route
- **Metropolitan Council**: Project Owner, Recipient of Federal Funds, Lead procurements, Accountable for oversight
- **Corridor Cities**: Municipal Consent, Technical Input/Requirements, Station area planning, Land use
- **FTA**: Full Funding Grant Agreement, Oversight
- **Community**: Anti-Displacement, Feedback on Project Design and Mitigation
- **Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program**: Governance body managing anti-displacement program, allocating funding
Project Delivery

• Best Value Contracting as primary procurement type
• Council's standard contract language is being updated
• Project delivery and procurement packaging decision in 2024
• Key procurement schedule milestones
  ▪ Industry input: August – November
  ▪ RFQ Q1 2025
  ▪ Shortlist Prime Contractors: Summer 2025
  ▪ Issue Final RFP for Construction: Q1 2026
  ▪ Notice to Proceed: Fall 2026
Engagement Update
Engagement Metrics: Aug 2020-Jun 2024

- **883** events resulting in nearly **37,699** points of contact with the public
- **80,000** reach on social media and **6.5 million**+ reach through newsletters and paid ads on community and cultural media
- Approximately **4,750** survey responses
- **+3,000** comments on the interactive map
- **350** comments from comment forms
- Corridor postcards mailed to **+30,000**
- Over **5,000** emails and phone calls
Schedule for Public Comment Periods

• **June – August 2024 Comment Period:** draft environmental findings in SDEIS
  - Public hearings scheduled for July 16 and July 23

• **July – October 2024 Municipal Consent Comment Period:** on the 30% design plans to decide final route
  - Joint Metropolitan Council/HCRRA public hearing
  - Public hearings in each city

• **Spring 2025 Comment Period:** finalized environmental findings and commitments in SFEIS
  - Right-of-way process can begin Spring 2025 after Record of Decision
Municipal Consent
What is Municipal Consent?

- State process that requires local approval of physical design components of the preliminary design plans (Minnesota Statutes Sec. 473.3994)
- Hennepin County and corridor cities vote to approve the physical design of the LRT facilities coordinated to-date, including location, length, termini of routes, general dimensions, and approximate station locations
- One step in the design coordination process, not the end of the process
Municipal Consent Outcomes

- Hennepin County and each city along the line vote to approve preliminary design plans

The municipal consent period is expected to be from Aug to October 2024
Design before and after Municipal Consent

- **Route Modification**
  - Route study, engagement and adoption
  - **Aug 2020 - April 2023**

- **Route Approval**
  - CMC Resolution on the preferred route
  - **Sept 2023**

- **Concept Design**
  - 30% design development of route alignment
  - **Oct 2023 - March 2024**

- **Municipal Consent**
  - Cities & County vote on alignment design
  - **Aug - Oct 2024**

- **Preliminary & Final Design**
  - Final design development
  - **2024 - 2025**
Municipal Consent Timeline

**Municipal Consent Process**

- **Minneapolis City Council**
  (First & Third Friday of Each Month)

- **Robbinsdale City Council**
  (First & Third Tuesday of Each Month)

- **Crystal City Council**
  (First & Third Tuesday of Each Month)

- **Brooklyn Park City Council**
  (First, Second and Fourth Monday of Every Month)

- **Hennepin County Board**
  (First & Third Tuesday of Each Month)

**Timeline**

- July:
  - 26: Begin Municipal Consent Review
  - 26: Issue Municipal Consent Package

- August:
  - 26: Municipal consent review prior to public hearing/open house
  - TBD: Municipal Consent Completed By

- September:
  - 26: Met Council & HCRRA Joint Open House/Public Hearing
  - 10: 45-days (up to deadline for municipal consent)

- October:
  - 26: Council/Board Action
  - 2: Public Hearing

- 17: 23: 1: Council/Board Action
Stay connected

• BlueLineExt.org
  • For the latest project updates and to sign up for our newsletter
  • Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation

• Follow us:
  • Twitter: @BlueLineExt
  • Facebook: MetroBlueLineExtension