

## Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 9, 2015

**Subject:** METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Light Rail Transit) Revised Scope and Cost Estimate; Municipal Consent Plans and Public Hearing.

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Approve the revised project scope and cost estimate of \$1.496 billion as recommended by the Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee at their November 12, 2015 meeting;
- Direct staff to prepare Blue Line Extension Municipal Consent Plans consistent with the project revised scope, and submit to Hennepin County and the cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley and Minneapolis; and
- Authorize scheduling and conducting a joint public hearing with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council on the revised plans on January 19, 2016 at Hennepin County's Minneapolis Central Library.

### Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Item presented by Dan Soler.

Question by Letofsky:

Are the ridership figures reflecting new rides only or is the original Blue Line data included; and how will we pay for this? Soler indicated that the ridership number of 27,000 is for new rides only generated by the Blue Line Extension. Soler also explained the funding breakdown of 49% - FTA, 31% - CTIB, 10% - HCRRA and 10% - State.

Question by Barber:

What is the status of the BNSF negotiations regarding the BNSF costs and contract. Soler responded that we are in active discussions with BNSF regarding Right of Way costs and engineering elements. We have included costs for these items that we believe will meet BNSF's requirements.

Question by Rodriguez:

Ridership estimates nationally are overestimated, are we determining correctly? Soler responded actual ridership numbers are higher than estimated for the Green Line project, however, we need to work within a model approved by FTA. As we continue to incorporate existing ridership into future travel demand calculations, the model may be adjusted to better project future ridership.

Question by Munt:

Is there a way that we can do a better job of managing public expectations about cost of rail projects when we make it very public what the 1% cost is? We know that once we have the chance to discover the cost drivers that the project is going to go up.

Lamb responded we are working on our message to better educate the public of what cost estimates are versus project budget.

Question by McCarthy:

Why don't we keep the 34% contingency vs. dropping it to 30%? Soler stated we feel our current project understanding of risks and requirements allows us to go to a 30% contingency.

Motion by Munt, second by Rodriguez, motion carried. **Non-consent to Council.**

## Transportation Committee

Meeting date: November 23, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 9, 2015

**Subject:** METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Light Rail Transit) Revised Scope and Cost Estimate; Municipal Consent Plans and Public Hearing

District(s), Member(s): All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Minnesota Statutes: 473.3994

**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510  
Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager, 612-373-3810  
Christine Beckwith, Asst. General Manager, 612-373-5370  
Dan Soler, BLRT Project Director, 612-373-5371  
MarySue Abel, BLRT Deputy Project Director, 612-373-5376

**Division/Department:** Metro Transit/Blue Line Extension Project Office

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Approve the revised project scope and cost estimate of \$1.496 billion as recommended by the Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee at their November 12, 2015 meeting;
- Direct staff to prepare Blue Line Extension Municipal Consent Plans consistent with the project revised scope, and submit to Hennepin County and the cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley and Minneapolis; and
- Authorize scheduling and conducting a joint public hearing with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council on the revised plans on January 19, 2016 at Hennepin County's Minneapolis Central Library.

### Background

In March 2014, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) published the Bottineau Light Rail Transit (Blue Line Extension) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and held three public hearings.

In August 2014, the FTA granted approval for the Blue Line Extension to start Project Development.

In October 2014, the Metropolitan Council hired the Engineering Services Consultant and Environmental Consultant to support Project Development activities and to complete the environmental process.

In November 2014, the Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee held its first meeting.

In January 2015, the Metropolitan Council opened the Blue Line Extension Project Office (BPO) and identified 16 technical issues.

Throughout 2015, the BPO staff sought input on the technical issues via Issue Resolution Team meetings, Technical Project Advisory Committee, 13 Corridor Management Committee and Community and Business Advisory Committees. Public input on

the project was sought by holding 14 public open houses, which were attended by over 1,600 people, receiving over 530 comments.

In September and October 2015, the BPO presented potential changes to the project scope to seek feedback.

On November 12, 2015, the Corridor Management Committee recommended revised project scope and cost estimate as reflected in Attachment A.

### **Rationale**

Approval of the Project scope is necessary to advance the project and to obtain municipal consent.

### **Funding**

The cost of the recommended project scope is estimated at \$1.496 billion in year of expenditure dollars.

### **Known Support / Opposition**

The Blue Line Extension Community Advisory Committee and Business Advisory Committee support the revised project scope.

The Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee, which includes representatives from funding partners, Hennepin County and the five host cities along the line, recommended the revised scope.

## **METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Light Rail Transit) Project Scope**

The revised METRO Blue Line Extension project scope includes:

- 13.5 miles of ballasted double track from Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis to northwestern Brooklyn Park
- 11 new center platform stations
- 28 new Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs)
- Rail signal and communication system
- Traction Power Substations
- 10 at-grade freight/LRT crossings of roadways
- Reconstruction of eight miles of ballasted single freight track and freight corridor protection treatments

### **Target Field Connection**

Construction of a bridge connection on the south side of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue North from the existing Target Field Station to the center of Olson Memorial Highway (OMH) and 7<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. Planned roadway improvements include reconstruction of the signalized intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and OMH.

### **Olson Memorial Highway (Trunk Highway 55)**

Modification of the existing I-94 Interchange Bridge to accommodate light rail tracks between the westbound and eastbound vehicle traffic lanes.

Reconstruction of Olson Memorial Highway as a 6-lane principal arterial highway from I-94 to the BNSF freight rail corridor with light rail tracks between the westbound and eastbound lanes.

Reconstruction of Olson Memorial Highway would also include 10' boulevards, 6' sidewalks, 7 signalized intersections and 3 mid-block crossings. The design also leaves space for a future cycle track on the north side of TH 55.

Center platform stations at Van White Boulevard and Penn Avenue.

### **Olson Memorial Highway Crossing**

Reconstruction of the westbound TH 55 Bridge to accommodate light rail tracks running at-grade between the westbound and eastbound bridges. Tracks turn northwest and go under the reconstructed westbound bridge and connect to the BNSF freight rail corridor.

### **Plymouth Avenue Station**

Center platform stations at Plymouth Avenue, including vertical circulation (elevator and stair tower).

### **Golden Valley Road Station**

Center platform station at Golden Valley Road, including vertical circulation (elevator and stair tower), park-and-ride, Golden Valley Road and Theodore Wirth Parkway intersection reconstruction and trail connections.

### **Golden Valley Alignment**

Construct new LRT bridges over both Grimes and Golden Valley ponds, and maintain freight rail on existing embankment across the ponds.

Reconstruct Theodore Wirth Parkway, Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road roadway bridges over rail corridor to accommodate both freight and light rail tracks.

### **Robbinsdale Station**

Center platform station south of 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and a 550 stall Park & Ride structure in downtown Robbinsdale. The Park & Ride structure would include a bus transit center and accommodate future transit oriented development (TOD).

Reconstruct 36th Avenue bridge over rail corridor to accommodate both freight and light rail tracks and construct new LRT bridge over Trunk Highway 100.

### **Bass Lake Road Station**

West Broadway rail crossing would be constructed to be quiet-zone ready and include a roundabout on the east side and full access to 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue / Welcome Avenue.

Center platform station south of Bass Lake Road with an adjacent 170 space surface Park & Ride.

### **63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Station/Park & Ride**

Center platform station north of 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Pedestrian bridge over freight rail to station platform with vertical circulation from the existing 565 space Park & Ride structure.

### **Brooklyn Boulevard Station**

New LRT bridge over County Road 81 north of 73rd Avenue N.

Center platform station south of Brooklyn Boulevard with pedestrian access points at both north and south ends of the platform.

Reconstruction of West Broadway from 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to Candlewood Drive to accommodate LRT.

### **West Broadway Reconstruction**

Continue coordination with Hennepin County West Broadway (CSAH 103) reconstruction project, which includes roadway reconstruction from Candlewood Drive to 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

Construction of light rail tracks between northbound and southbound lanes.

Center platform station south of 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue with pedestrian access points at both north and south ends of the platform.

**93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue/Oak Grove Parkway Stations**

Center platform station south of 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue with pedestrian access points at both north and south ends of the platform.

Center platform station on west side of West Broadway at Oak Grove Parkway, with an adjacent 850 space Park & Ride structure.

Construction of roadway network north of TH 610 to accommodate light rail, access to the park and ride and the operations and maintenance facility.

**Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) Location**

Construction of an Operations and Maintenance facility, storage bays, loop track, employee parking lot and stormwater retention pond on a 10.8 acre site at 101<sup>st</sup> Avenue N and Xylon Avenue.

**Transmission Lines**

Shift Xcel transmission lines to the west side of the BNSF corridor.