



Tracking the Blue Line Extension

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A new, narrower plan proposed for West Broadway's reconstruction with LRT

Changes made in the last year to the design of the West Broadway Avenue reconstruction project including LRT in Brooklyn Park narrow the overall width significantly, lessening the impact on adjacent properties.

The Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County are working together to reconstruct the road itself and install a center-running light rail line that would be an extension of the METRO Blue Line in Minneapolis.

"The plan has changed dramatically," Brooklyn Park Mayor Jeff Lunde told residents at a City Council meeting on April 28, referring to the engineering work that's been done to minimize impacts.

In 2014, Hennepin County presented a redesign of West Broadway in Brooklyn Park that would have required taking many residences along the road. The city asked engineers to modify the design to minimize impacts to residences and businesses.

Earlier this year, Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County engineers began working together on a design for West Broadway that includes both a redesigned roadway and the proposed Blue Line Extension LRT Project. The Blue Line Extension would run from Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis



Top: A METRO Blue Line light rail train passes through a residential area near the Veterans Administration Medical Center in south Minneapolis.

Above: An artist's rendering shows what light rail service would look like at the proposed 85th Avenue station along West Broadway Avenue.

NEW PLAN continued on next page

NEW PLAN continued from first page



to a station near the Target North campus in Brooklyn Park.

Public feedback led to changes

In response to concerns voiced by residents and the city, the maximum width of the right-of-way for the West Broadway Project was reduced from 176 feet to 142 feet. The reduction became possible with the elimination of right-turn lanes, reduced lane, gutter and boulevard widths, trails located closer to property lines and a reduced width needed for the LRT.

In March and April, staff from the Metropolitan Council's Blue Line Extension Project Office, Hennepin County and the city of Brooklyn Park sponsored public meetings at North Hennepin Community College. The meetings drew large crowds and provided the public a chance to learn about and give feedback on both the West Broadway project and the light rail project.

At the April 28 Brooklyn Park City Council meeting, Mayor Lunde said that the project's redesign and narrower profile reflects the changes the city wanted made to the 2014 plan. The Brooklyn Park City Council would anticipate a vote on municipal con-

Above left: Blue Line Extension project director Dan Soler speaks at a meeting in Brooklyn Park.

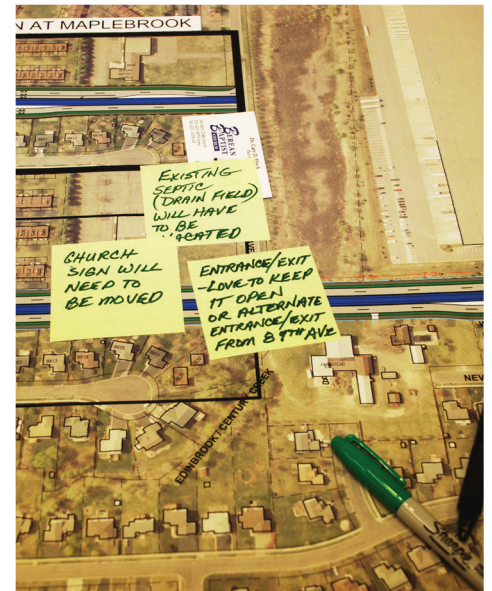
Above right: Project staff were on hand to discuss design options.

Right: Meeting attendees gave feedback on design drawings.

sent of the West Broadway and light rail projects a year from now, he said.

The public meetings at North Hennepin Community College featured both roundtable discussions of the project, one to one conversations with the engineering staff over maps, and opportunity to ask questions in a public forum. Concerns were expressed about:

- Current road conditions and needed repairs
- A preference for a four-lane roadway design compared to a two-lane design
- Better access and traffic signals at Maplebrook Parkway
- Noise and vibration from the LRT line
- Property impacts, including valuation and acquisition



Engineers from Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council, as well as environmental staff, will consider those comments and other issues raised by the public as they continue work on the project.

Work underway to minimize number, size of property acquisitions along West Broadway

Along West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park, partners in the Blue Line Extension Project are working to minimize the number and size of needed property acquisitions.

At public meetings in March and April, area property owners received first-hand information about the scope of the project, how it's changed since 2014 and what's ahead.

The Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County and the city of Brooklyn Park are the three government units involved in the West Broadway project. When Hennepin County unveiled the stand-alone road reconstruction project for West Broadway last summer, numerous homes were identified as potential acquisitions.

In recent months, that plan has changed. The Blue Line Extension is now incorporated into West Broadway's reconstruction, and the redesign of the construction plan is intended to impact fewer properties.

Engineers narrowed the LRT and road reconstruction projects to avoid impacting more structures. The maximum width of the project was reduced from 176 feet to 142 feet. Engineers accomplished that in several ways, including eliminating right-turn lanes; reducing lane, gutter and boulevard widths; and reducing the width of the land needed for the Blue Line Extension.

Final decisions on which properties will be acquired will be determined as engineering plans become more detailed in 2016.

Here's what happens when property acquisitions are needed

If property acquisitions are needed, the Metropolitan Council would acquire property south of Candlewood and north of 93rd Avenue. Hennepin County would acquire property between Candlewood and 93rd Avenue.

At the community meetings along West Broadway, property owners asked questions about how project staff determines if their property could be a complete or partial acquisition.

If a partial land acquisition is required, the owner typically retains the rest of the property.

The acquisitions can include either permanent easements on a property, such as an easement for drainage, a trail or a storm water pond. Or, work may require a temporary easement, such as allowing workers to use property during a construction period. Full ownership then reverts back to the owner after the project is complete.



Property owners learn about the acquisitions process at an informational meeting in Brooklyn Park.

After a preliminary design is completed, the Metropolitan Council will seek municipal consent to the project from the cities and county. Once the environmental review is complete, with the issuance of the Record of Decision, property offers can begin. Offers and negotiations for needed land begin before construction starts but construction may proceed before the negotiations are complete.

Property owners can expect compensation for their property that's defined as fair market value. A settlement amount is negotiated. If relocation is necessary, reimbursement of eligible costs would be available based on federal or state law.

Owners may acquire their own appraisal, but state laws set maximums. For most cases, \$1,500 is the maximum reimbursement amount for an appraisal.

For details, see the Council's information for property owners and renters about real estate acquisition and relocation assistance: <http://bit.ly/1AAu3OW>

Keep Plymouth Avenue, Golden Valley Road LRT stations in the mix for now, panel says

As the Metropolitan Council considers including one or two LRT stations in Golden Valley in the METRO Blue Line Extension plans, project staff are weighing engineering issues, cost and community benefits.

While the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Blue Line Extension analyzed stations at both Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue, only one station is in the current project budget.

At a Corridor Management Committee meeting in April, members asked project staff to continue the design and environmental review and development for both stations. The scope and budget for the entire Blue Line Extension Project is being reviewed, and the full Metropolitan Council is expected to make a decision this fall on whether to build one or two LRT stations in Golden Valley.

What's similar, different about the two station locations

Each station would be located in an area below the Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road bridges.

Both station sites are on right-of-way currently owned by BNSF Railway, which is located immediately east of the eastern edge of Theodore Wirth Park.

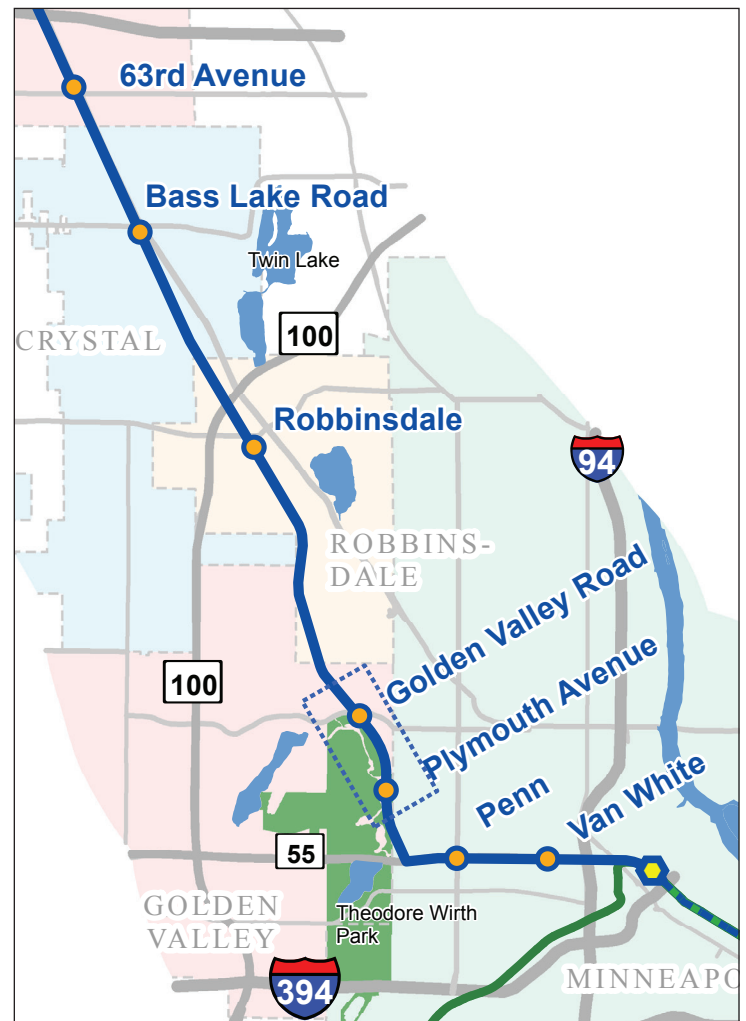
The stations are seven-tenths of a mile apart but would serve different neighborhoods. The Plymouth Avenue station site is technically in Golden Valley, but is adjacent to north Minneapolis and the Willard-Hay neighborhood. The Golden Valley Road station site is close to Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute and Golden Valley neighborhoods to the north and west.

Community members have had several chances to weigh in on the locations of both stations. Those included community meetings held earlier this year in Golden Valley at Courage Kenny and at the Church of St. Margaret Mary, as well as station area planning meetings hosted by Hennepin County last year and this year. At the meetings, residents received information about the project's route and timeline, and provided

feedback on the station locations and potential impacts to the surrounding areas.

Engineers are working on a technical analysis of both stations. The analysis will look at ridership, access for underserved populations, accessibility, connections to key destinations and access to regional parks.

The work also includes identifying the cost of construction and evaluating floodplain and wetland impacts near the station sites.



The Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue stations would be located immediately east of Theodore Wirth Park.

Meet the Blue Line Extension Community Outreach Coordinators

A former Peace Corps volunteer in Mozambique and an outreach coordinator for Hennepin Technical College are the new community outreach coordinators for the planned METRO Blue Line Extension LRT Project. They join outreach coordinator Sophia Ginis, who also will continue as outreach coordinator on the Minneapolis portion of the planned METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest LRT Project), where she has worked since 2013.

Outreach coordinators are the public's first point of contact about anything project related, answering questions and concerns. They represent the Blue Line Extension LRT Project at community meetings, public events and project committee meetings and work with community groups, businesses and the general public to build understanding and support. They share the public's input with technical staff to inform the engineers' work and address concerns.

Brooklyn Park



Juan Rangel (pronounced RON-hel), who is bilingual in Spanish and English, is a former outreach coordinator for Hennepin Technical College. Rangel shared admissions presentations and provided campus tours for prospective students of all ages and backgrounds. He also helped develop a marketing and recruitment plan to provide enrollment and academic support for Latino students. He received his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Minnesota.

Contact Juan:

612-373-5338

Juan.Rangel@metrotransit.org

Crystal, Golden Valley and Robbinsdale



David Davies was most recently a planner for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Davies previously created educational courses for international public health professionals at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Communication Programs. In the Peace Corps, Davies coordinated youth groups in Mozambique focused on health and communications skills development. He received his master's degree from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. A former Eagle Scout, he speaks Portuguese.

Contact David:

612-373-5336

David.Davies@metrotransit.org

Minneapolis



Sophia Ginis, in addition to serving the Minneapolis portion of the Blue Line Extension, remains the outreach coordinator for the Minneapolis stations on the planned Southwest LRT line (METRO Green Line Extension.) She is formerly outreach manager for the Center for Science, Technology & Public Policy at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs where she earned a master's degree. Ginis also has been a community organizer in the Cedar-Riverside area of Minneapolis. She speaks some Spanish in addition to English.

Contact Sophia:

612-373-3895

Sophia.Ginis@metrotransit.org

Learn about LRT plans at public open houses

The public are invited to attend an open house in their area to learn about the METRO Blue Line Extension light rail project, hear about land use planning activities and provide feedback.

The goals for the open houses are to:

- Provide the latest information about the Blue Line Extension project
- Discuss station area land use planning activities
- Receive input from the community on ongoing LRT design and station area plans

The Blue Line Extension Project Office will also present information on the next steps in the LRT development process going forward.

Anyone who requires assistance to participate in these meetings should contact Blue Line Extension Community Outreach Coordinator David Davies: David.Davies@metrotransit.org or 612-373-5336. Requests for special assistance should be made at least five business days in advance of the scheduled open house.

OPEN HOUSE DATES AND LOCATIONS

Crystal: Thursday, May 28

Crystal Community Center
4800 Douglas Drive N., Crystal 55429

Minneapolis and Golden Valley: Thursday, June 4

Harrison Neighborhood Park and Community Center
503 Irving Ave. N., Minneapolis 55405

Robbinsdale: Thursday, June 11

Robbinsdale Middle School
3730 Toledo Ave. N., Robbinsdale 55422

Brooklyn Park: Wednesday, June 17

Brooklyn Park Community Activity Center
5600 85th Ave. N., Brooklyn Park 55443

MEETING AGENDA

Open House	5:30–6:00 p.m.
Presentation and Facilitated Discussion	6:00–7:00 p.m.
Open House	7:00–8:00 p.m.

About the project

The planned METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau) light rail transit project will operate about 13 miles northwest from downtown Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park, drawing riders northwest of Brooklyn Park. The proposed alignment will have 10 or 11 new stations in addition to Target Field Station where it will continue as the METRO Blue Line, providing one-seat rides to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. It will connect Minneapolis and the region's northwest communities with existing LRT on the METRO Green Line, future LRT on the METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest LRT), bus rapid transit on the METRO Red Line, the Northstar commuter rail line and local and express bus routes.

The Metropolitan Council will be the grantee of federal funds and is charged with building the line in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee, which includes local officials from Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Brooklyn Park and Minneapolis, provides advice and oversight. Funding is provided by the Federal Transit Administration, Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), state of Minnesota and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA).

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