







### **Today's Topics**

- Project Update
- Environmental Update
- Robbinsdale Design Decisions
- Anti-Displacement Update
- Questions



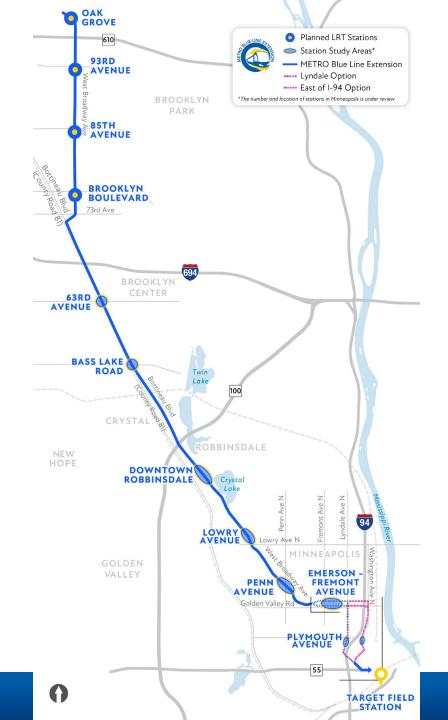


# Project Update



### **Blue Line LRT Extension**

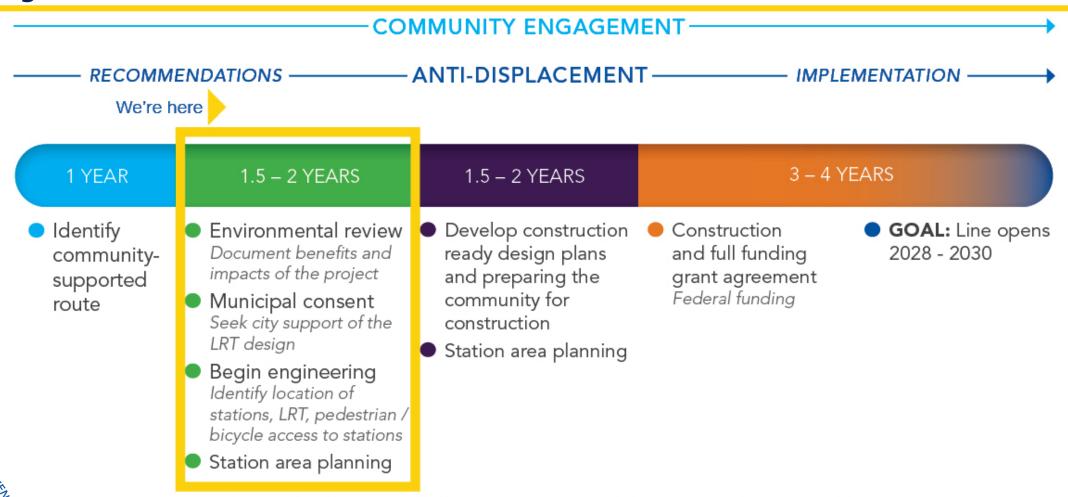
- Located in Hennepin County directly connecting downtown Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park and communities in the northwest metro
- Supplemental Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process underway for modified route adopted in June 2022
- Public engagement ongoing, including an Anti-Displacement Workgroup
- Policy recommendation in Summer 2023 for preferred route where Supplemental DEIS includes more than one option
- Advancement of Environmental and Engineering along final preferred route will inform updated cost estimate, travel time analysis and ridership



### **Project Schedule**

#### **Blue Line Extension Community Supported Route:**

- Best meets the project Principles and Goals
- Grounded in community feedback through collaboration with stakeholders
- Supported by project corridor communities and decision-makers



LRT projects are complex and unforeseen challenges arise. Schedules and timelines are subject to change.

### Design Refinements Informed by Outreach

#### Brooklyn Park:

 Additional station lighting, trail connections to/from station, uniform fence

#### Crystal:

- Evaluated 4, 5, and 6 traffic lane options with LRT from Bass Lake Road to Hwy 100
- Robbinsdale:
  - Park-and-Ride options
  - Refined station location options

#### Minneapolis:

- Re-evaluate the East of I-94 option (and remove the West of I-94 option)
- Removed the mixed LRT and traffic on 21<sup>st</sup> Ave
- Reduced property impacts, where possible
- Add a second station between Lyndale Ave and James Ave
- Explored pedestrian connections to/from Lowry Ave Station



### **Blue Line Route Recommendation**

|   | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Blue Lines Committees including Corridor Management Committee (CMC) |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Brooklyn Park   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Crystal   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Robbinsdale   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Minneapolis   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Anti-Displacement Workgroup   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)             |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

### Outreach and Engagement Plan

#### Brooklyn Park

Jan 30 - Open House

Feb 6 - City Council Update

Feb – Blue Line Committees\*

#### Crystal

Feb 9 - City Council Update

Feb 27 - Open House

Mar – Blue Line Committees\*

#### Robbinsdale

Mar 6 - Open House

Mar 14 - City Council Update

Apr – Blue Line Committees\*

#### е

Policy Recommendation

> May – Blue Line Committees\*

Anti-

Displacement

#### Minneapolis

Mar 22 & Apr 17 - Open Houses

TBD - City Council Update

June – Blue Line Committees\*

#### Policy Recommendation

July 2023 – Blue Line Committees\*

Summer 2023

— FTA\*\*
begins final
environmental
review

Other 2023 BLRT outreach & engagement includes meetings with community, key stakeholders, businesses and property owners; Anti Displacement Working Group; Community Engagement Cohort; Cultivate Arts; etc.

## **Environmental Update**



### **Environmental Schedule**

1. Selected design options studied in Supplemental Draft EIS\*

 Public comment period on the design options (Oct 18 – Nov 7, 2022)

we are here



- Public comment period on the findings
- BLRT Anti-Displacement recommendations



Original FEIS completed
July 2016

- 3. Select preferred route
- Public comment period and municipal consent



4. Prepare
Supplemental Final EIS
and mitigation
commitments

 Public comment on the mitigation commitments



### Federal Register Notice

- Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplemental EIS to be published in the Federal Register
- Parallel Federal step to Minnesota EQB Monitor Notice published October 2022
- 30-day comment period regarding the scope of the Supplemental EIS and alternatives



### SDEIS Chapter 7: Environmental Justice

- Determine presence/locations of Environmental Justice communities (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; low-income populations) using Census data and information gained through outreach
- Consider potential effects to Environmental Justice populations, including if there are disproportionately high and adverse impacts
- Determine if adverse effects could be avoided, minimized, or mitigated



# Robbinsdale Design Decisions for SDEIS



### **Project Design Principles**

Maintain BLRT Purpose and Need

Minimize travel time

Maximize ridership

Maximize community and economic development

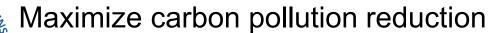
Maximize Federal Transit Administration New Starts project rating

Pursue opportunities to serve even more people and destinations

Complement existing and planned METRO transitways

Minimize residential, commercial and environmental impacts

Support safety and connections prioritizing people walking, biking, and rolling



### Review Design Decisions Document for Robbinsdale

- Decision-Making Process & Phases
- Engagement Plan
- List of key decisions
- Community input
- Environmental considerations
- Stakeholder input

Outstanding issues and questions for design

### See Handout



Robbinsdale Alignment and Station Decisions

#### Overview (DRAFT as of 2/27/2022)

Establishment of the track alignment and station locations for the METRO Blue Line Extension project is an iterative process. Exploratory alignment ideas are generated, studied, and vented to narrow the concepts down to a single process. Exploratory alignment ideas are generated, studied, and vented to narrow the concepts down to a single route of defined station locations. The process of getting to a single alignment often requires multiple rounds of planning, design, coordination, and decision making.

The purpose of this document is to introduce the primary remaining decisions required to fully define the Blue Line Extension's alignment and station locations, as well as summarize some of the primary contributing elements to that decision.

The decision-making process to get to a single track alignment and station locations involves several layers

- Issue Resolution Teams represent an organized collaboration between the project's technical team and City staff. This group represents the first level of idea generation, study, and review and is informed by the
- Tier 2 Corridor Management Committee (CMC) The CMC advises the Metropolitan Council on issues related to the design and construction of the RIPT project. The CMC is informed and advised by the project's Business Advisory Committee (BAC) and Critize Advisory Committee (CAC).
- Tier 3 Hennepin County and Met Council boards Henrepin County funds the light rail development through the Hennepin County Transportation Sales and Use Tax and the Hennepin County Regional Ball Authority. The Metropolitan Council is responsible for the development of the project and reporting to the FTA to qualify for funding in the federal New Strarts. program. Together their boards act on major project decision making and/or related policies and documents such as the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP).

- Decision-Making Phases:

  # Past The Initial Route Evaluation Report released in March 2021 laid out a process and general timeline to identify a community-supported route for the Blue Line Extension Project (BLRT). The Draft Route Modification Report released in December 2021 reflected the next step in project development and described the process, public input, and technical evaluation used to recommend a modified route for BLRT. The revised Route Modification Report released in May 2022 incorporated comments received on the draft and made a recommendation for route modification
- Present As of Fall 2022 the project has formally initiated development of the Supplemental Draft
  Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). This document supplements the prior project developed DEIS to catalog and review changes to the alignment as it has shift out of the railroad corridor. The project will publish the final SDES and summarize a single-track alignment and station location. The decisions summarized by this document represent key decisions required to complete the SDES.

  Future – Following releases of the SDES, the project will reinitiate the Minnesotra Municipal Consent process.

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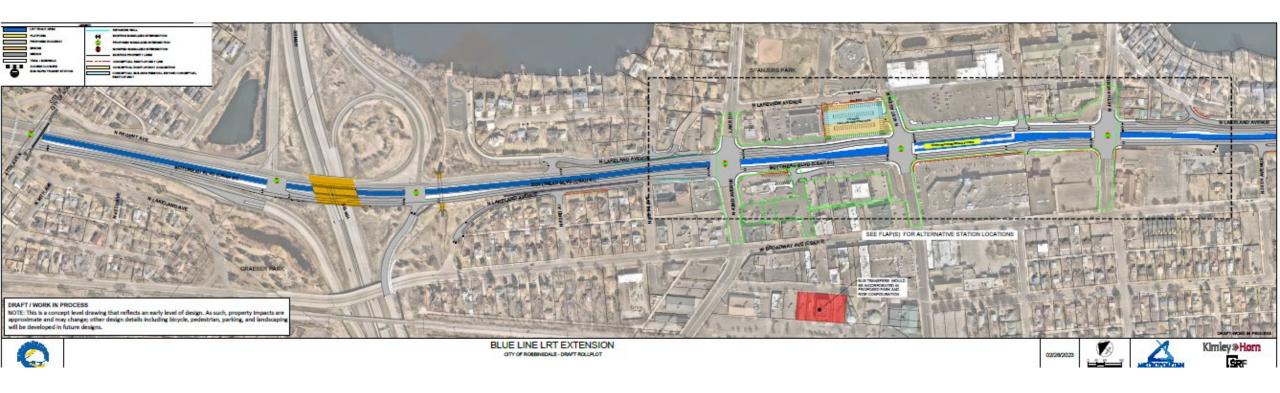
### Robbinsdale Alignment

- Route Alignment
  - Center running CR 81
    - At-grade
    - Evaluate downtown configuration for traffic operations and right of way impacts
  - Reconstruct portion of the bridge over TH 100
  - Downtown station
  - Downtown park and ride
  - Station at Lowry Ave



### Robbinsdale Alignment - North

• 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. to 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.





### Robbinsdale Alignment - South

• 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. to Lowry Avenue





### Robbinsdale Key Design Decisions

- Route Alignment
  - Configuration of guideway
- Downtown LRT Station
  - Location
- Downtown Park and Ride
  - Location
  - Transit Connections
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Station at Lowry Ave

### **Downtown Station Options Evaluated**

Example of options studied at 41st Ave and 40th Ave



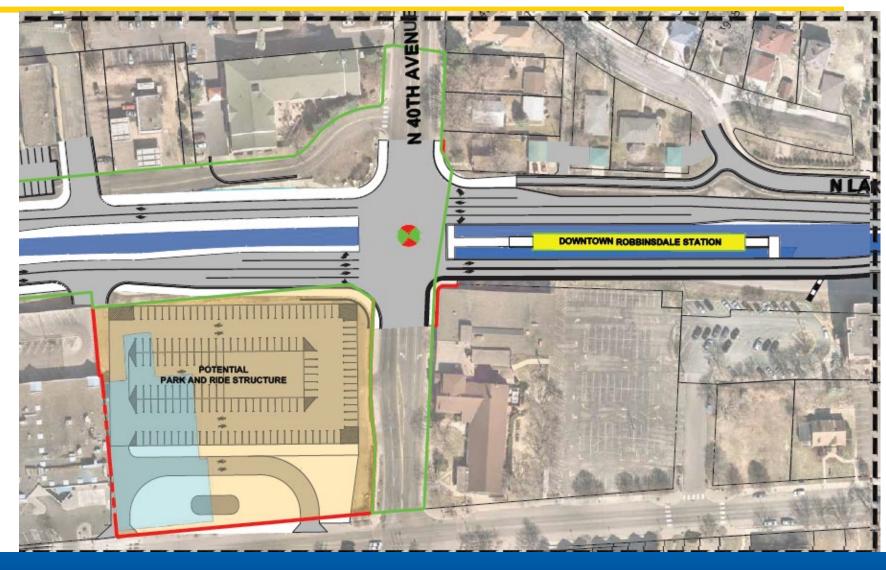
Center Platform – south of 41st Ave



Center Platform - south of 40th Ave

# Preferred Downtown Station and Park and Ride

- Station South of 40<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Park and Ride
   NW corner of
   CR 81 and 40th
   Ave





## **Robbinsdale Lowry Station**





### **Robbinsdale Lowry Station**

- Guideway on Structure
- Elevated Station
  - Access towers on both ends
- Continue collaboration and refinement with Project Partners





### **Robbinsdale Continued Coordination**

- Continue to refine Station Locations and design
  - Optimize rail operations downtown with existing traffic operations and right of way
- Downtown Park and Ride
  - Location
  - Size
  - Transit function
- Address Safety and Security
  - System Safety
  - Pedestrian and Bike Safety

### **Community Feedback**

- Feedback from March 6, Open House in Robbinsdale
  - Concerns about safety on light rail and in surrounding area
  - Concerns about light rail noise
  - Locate station near Hy-Vee, breweries and restaurants, city hall and downtown
  - Support for 40th Ave station but concerns about congestion
  - Concerned there will be low ridership
  - Dedicated bike and pedestrian access to stations needed
  - Add lighting in station area
  - Mixed support for project



Robbinsdale Open House, March 6, 2023



Robbinsdale Open House, March 6, 2023



### **Community Feedback**

- Feedback we've previously heard in Robbinsdale:
  - Need for safe pedestrian crossings
  - Questions about the history of the project and why freight rail property could not be used
  - Desire for station design to focus on safety, greenery, and access to nearby bicycle and pedestrian facilities
  - Concern about impacts to homes and businesses along and adjacent to County Road 81
  - Visual and safety concerns about LRT being grade separated
  - Concern about traffic impacts on County Road 81



Open House in Robbinsdale, October 2021



### Minneapolis Design Decisions Preview

- Route option from Target Field Station to West Broadway
- Route option for LRT on West Broadway or 21st Avenue
- Number and Location of Stations
- Penn Avenue Station Location



# Anti-Displacement Work Group Update



### **Anti-Displacement Timeline**

Anti-Displacement
Working Group Meet
to Finalize
Recommendations

April

CURA and AntiDisplacement Working
Group Members Address
Blue Line
Extension Committees

May

Anti-Displacement
Work Group Workshop
#4 Policy Prioritization

Feb. 11

Feb. 25

CURA Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Phase I Report Published

May

Phase II Begins



### 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



