



METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION PROJECT

Project Decision Board

Proposed Board Action
25-PDB-007
For the PDB Meeting: February 19, 2025

Item Description

Direction to modify the Lowry Avenue Station area to include grade separation of Theodore Wirth Parkway and Lowry Avenue from the Light Rail Transit (LRT) infrastructure, and to analyze the modified concept in the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS).

Resolution

BE IT RESOLVED, that the PDB hereby directs Project staff to modify the Lowry Avenue Station area to include a grade separation of Theodore Wirth Parkway and Lowry Avenue from the Light Rail Transit infrastructure, and to analyze the modified concept in the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Background

Section 6.01(D)(3) of the Capital Grant Agreement for Engineering and Construction of the Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit Project requires that the Project Decision Board “approve the scope, schedule, and budget of the [Blue Line Extension] Project and any changes thereto.”

Through the Municipal Consent coordination and comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS, corridor stakeholders requested that the project team explore alternative design concepts for the Lowry Avenue Station area, to improve Parkway continuity and traffic flow at Lowry Avenue. In response to this request, the project team evaluated numerous alternatives in collaboration with the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the City of Robbinsdale, North Memorial Hospital, and the community. This collaborative effort resulted in the development of a concept that grade separates the Parkway and Lowry Avenue from the LRT infrastructure, while maintaining an at-grade LRT station at this location.

This alternative satisfies the concerns raised by project stakeholders but requires further analysis and inclusion in the SFEIS in order to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 4(f). A decision regarding the design concept reflected in the SFEIS is critical to achieving the project’s schedule requirements.

Due to its higher complexity in construction, and greater impact to existing bridge infrastructure, Project staff anticipate that this alternative will add approximately \$50 million to the Project’s cost estimate, and an additional year to construction at the Lowry Avenue Station location. The Project team continues to assess whether the additional construction time has any impacts on the overall project schedule.

This Resolution provides the direction from the PDB to replace the current Lowry Avenue Station area design concept analyzed in the SFEIS with the new grade-separated concept.