PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

The Blue Line Extension will be a generational investment that will connect people and communities to new opportunities. With the many benefits of this project, there will also be some impacts that will require thoughtful strategies to address. Your input is needed to help inform how the project addresses certain environmental and community impacts.

TO GUIDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PROJECT IMPACTS, COMMUNITY INPUT IS REQUESTED FOR THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:	
21st Avenue Community Character	Conduct cultural placekeeping, public realm improvements, and community investment to create a stronger corridor community
Community Investment	Invest in local community organizations to strengthen and offset project impacts
Business Support During Construction	Develop commitments for the Metropolitan Council and contractors to reduce or offset challenges faced by corridor businesses during construction
Online Portal and Storefronts	Improve accessibility to resources such as relocation assistance, business support, and construction complaints
Public Realm Improvements	Create public realm improvements and modernize infrastructure along the Blue Line Extension route
Workforce Development	Improve job prospects and economic conditions through increased workforce development
Cultural Placekeeping Design Groups	Convene a group of community members from each corridor city to provide input on visual design elements such as station platforms

These topic areas are priorities for public input, but cover only a few of the many strategies the project will consider to address environmental and community impacts. Summaries of other impacts and example strategies are highlighted below.

To complement project investments in anti-displacement strategies, government and community partners are also advancing robust anti-displacement and community prosperity strategies separate from the project. ***Learn more at yourblueline.org***

Take this survey to share your feedback on the proposed strategies to address environmental and community impacts. *surveymonkey.com/r/JSSZFN3*

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Blue Line Extension strategies to address environmental and community impacts

A summary of all the impacts identified in the SDEIS are listed below as well as examples of possible strategies to address them. Final impacts, strategies and commitments will be available in the SFEIS in mid-2025. Some of these are well-defined mitigation required by local, regional, state and federal agencies. The Project Office is currently working directly with impacted properties for identifying specific mitigation on an individual basis.

TOPIC	IMPACT	EXAMPLE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS IMPACTS
Land Use Plan Compatibility	The Blue Line Extension is consistent with regional growth objectives and city/county transit and mobility goals.	N/A
Community Amenities, Character and Cohesion	Due to its dense urban environment, the City of Minneapolis would have several impacts to community amenities like schools, businesses and places of worship. Noise impacts along the proposed route may affect community character along 21st Ave in Minneapolis.	Property purchases and relocation would follow fair compensation and relocation assistance requirements. Community investment, cultural placekeeping, and public realm improvements would also be made to offset impacts to community character. Improved transit, pedestrian, and bicycle conditions would improve community cohesion and accessibility to community amenities.
Acquisitions and Relocations	There would be approximately 30* full properties with buildings purchased along the corridor, with the majority in Minneapolis due to its dense environment. *Estimate based on preliminary design as documents in the SDEIS. Actual property purchases will continue to be refined as design advances.	Property purchases and relocation would follow fair compensation and relocation assistance requirements. Project staff and consultants will support all residents and businesses needing to relocate on an individual basis to help them find the right relocation destination.
Historic Properties	Identification of properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and assessment of impacts is underway and will be listed in the SFEIS.	Adverse effects to historic properties would be avoided or offset with commitments such as design considerations (use of special materials) or interpretation signage.
Visual/ Aesthetics	Overall, visual character on most of the route would be neutral as the project is primarily built within existing roadways. Most visual impacts would occur in the northern area of the route where the Operations and Maintenance Facility would be constructed.	Cultural placekeeping and community-informed design would guide the visual character of the project.

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TOPIC	IMPACT	EXAMPLE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS IMPACTS
Economic Effects	Economic growth is expected due to improved access to housing, employment, and businesses. Transit oriented development around LRT stations could lead to increased property values and associated taxes. This could displace property and business owners and renters.	Anti-displacement measures within the project include workforce development, investment in community organizations, and cultural placekeeping. Project partners are also pursuing robust anti-displacement strategies outside the project.
Safety and Security	Public transportation is one of the safest mobility options, and additional features will be added to improve the safety of those traveling. Throughout the SDEIS comment period and other public engagement, the public identified safety and perceived safety on the light rail system as a concern for the project to address.	Actions outlined in Metro Transit's Safety & Security Action plan would be applied. New roadway design will include enhanced safety features for people, walking, biking and driving. Station design will include adequate lighting, video monitoring equipment, emergency callboxes, and accessibility features. All project designs will be based on standards of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.
Utilities	Underground and above-ground utilities would require relocation.	Utility impacts would be addressed on a case-by-case basis with relocation requirements coordinated with utility owners. Relocated/ replaced utilities will be brought up to modern standards. Any utility interruptions would be communicated in advance and in coordination with affected properties.
Floodplains	Approximately 12 acres of floodplain would be impacted.	As design advances, opportunities to minimize impact and create replacement flood storage areas would be explored.
Wetlands and Other Aquatic Resources	Approximately 9 acres of wetland and stormwater basins would be impacted.	Coordination with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Wetland Conservation Act would define wetland mitigation, likely including purchase of wetland mitigation credits.
Geology, Soils, and Typography	There would be no long-term impacts on geology, soils, and topography.	During construction, areas of poor soils may need to be modified to provide a stable base.
Hazardous Materials Contamination	Over 100 known high-risk or potentially contaminated sites were identified within 500-550 feet of the route. An additional environmental assessment will inform the SFEIS to confirm extent of soil and/or groundwater contamination.	Contaminated soils and groundwater would be managed during construction to protect public health. Highly contaminated soils in construction areas would be removed and replaced.

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Noise	Moderate noise impacts are expected at less than 25 properties in Brooklyn Park and Minneapolis. No moderate noise impacts are expected in Crystal or Robbinsdale. Severe noise impacts are expected at less than 15 properties, all in the City of Minneapolis. Noise impact levels are defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).	Track design adjustments would reduce some noise impacts. Sound insulation such as replacement windows or doors, would also be considered when necessary. Starting in 2025, coordination with impacted properties will be underway.
Vibration and Ground-Borne Noise	Two properties in Minneapolis may be impacted by vibration. Vibration impact levels are defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Special trackwork that reduces vibration would be used.
Biological Environment	About 10 acres of forested habitat and about 50 acres of meadow/prairie habitat would be impacted.	Efforts to reduce and offset these impacts are being considered, and would include tree replacement. Management practices to protect endangered species during construction would be followed and seasonal restrictions on tree clearing would be implemented.
Water Quality and Stormwater	Addition of approximately 59 acres of impervious surface.	The project would install drainage systems and extend stormwater drainpipes along impervious surfaces, improving water quality compared to existing conditions.
Air Quality/ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	There would be an overall regional reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG), carbon monoxide (CO), and mobile source air toxics (MSAT) emissions.	Contractors would be required to implement an air quality management plan to control dust during construction.
Energy	The reduction in personal vehicle miles combines with greater energy efficiency of LRT would result in a reduction of regional transportation energy use.	N/A

We Want to Hear From You!

STAY CONNECTED!

For project questions or to invite us to an event, contact:

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Visit BlueLineExt.org for more information, to sign-up for the project newsletter, and share your comments/questions on our interactive map

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