Minneapolis Update: November 15, 2021
Today’s Topics

• Project Background & Schedule

• Minneapolis Design Update

• Anti-Displacement Working Group
View Design Online: BlueLineExt.org
Blue Line Extension

• Connecting communities to fast, frequent, reliable transportation

• Will provide single seat trips to downtown Minneapolis, Minneapolis – St. Paul International Airport, and Mall of America
March Route Options

• Project route options
  - Confirmation of route options for Areas 1 & 2
  - Preliminary options for Area 3

• Options based on:
  - Adopted Project Principles
  - Conceptual review of LRT right of way and operational needs
  - Applicable previous work
  - Community feedback on key destinations and connections
Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council issued a joint statement on advancing the project without using 8 miles of railroad right-of-way.

Release of the Initial Route Evaluation Report that identified potential route options.

Release of potential station study areas and visualizations of light rail.

Release of preliminary design options of how LRT could fit into each community.
Project Schedule

We’re here

1 year
1.5 to 2 years
1.5 to 2 years
3 to 4 years

- Identify community supported route
  - 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

- Environmental review
  - Document benefits and impacts of the project

- Municipal Consent
  - Seek city support of the LRT design

- Engineering
  - Develop construction ready design plans

- Construction and Full Funding Grant Agreement
  - Federal funding

- Goal — Line opens in 2028

Light Rail Transit projects are complex and unforeseen challenges arise. Schedules and timelines are subject to change.
Evaluation Framework

ROUTE PRINCIPLES
- Meet FTA New Starts criteria
- Maintain existing alignment (route) as much as possible
- Mitigate negative impacts

ENAGEMENT PRINCIPLES
- Meaningfully engage stakeholders
- Engage, inform, and consult diverse communities to co-create project solutions that reduce disparities

Project Principles

PROJECT GOALS
1. Improve transit access and connections to jobs and regional destinations.
2. Improve frequency and reliability of transit service to communities in the corridor.
3. Provide transit improvements that maximize transit benefits, while being cost competitive and economically viable.
4. Support communities’ development goals.
5. Promote healthy communities and sound environmental practices including efforts to address climate change.
6. Advance local regional equity and work towards reducing regional economic disparities.
Minneapolis Design Update
November Community Workshops

• The purpose of the November workshops is to show how LRT could fit into and serve the community with basic design details and potential station locations

• Feedback received from the workshops and subsequent community conversations will inform:
  ▪ Draft Route Modification Report (December 2021)
  ▪ Final recommendation for a community supported alignment (March 2022)
Minneapolis Routes

• Sections are used to help organize designs and alternatives

• Sections 1-4: W. Broadway

• Sections 5-7: Lowry/Washington
Highlights

• Simplified links area going into Downtown

• Route options along 21st Avenue for West Broadway

• Two options for West Broadway near North Memorial
Minneapolis Sections

- Each section has multiple alternatives
- The alternative show different challenges and opportunities
- After route selection alternatives can carry into design
All LRT Concepts Available Online

- Layouts for each section can be found by clicking the number
- Community members can comment directly on the design options or place icons with issues and opportunities
- Also available in PDF format at BlueLineExt.org
Seeking Community Feedback

• This information is being shown to help the community evaluate and then decide whether a West Broadway or a Lowry route advances

• Multiple options for a section of West Broadway or Lowry can be evaluated further as the project advances

• Details and refinement of the designs will be the focus of the environmental and engineering work over the next couple years for the single, community supported alignment

• The project team will capture community feedback through the end of November to include in the draft report
  - Draft report: 45-day comment period
  - Final report: 30-day comment period
Example Options

• Review of Lowry Avenue Section 7
• Review of West Broadway Section 3
Design Drawings

• How to read the design drawings
Section 7

• Design challenges include currently unsignalized intersections, mostly residential land use and property impacts

• Potential for more building impacts as pedestrian crossings are added

• Options in this section focus on geometry adjustments
7A-a

• View of the Section 7A-a

• More design detail can be seen on zoomed in sections

• Example between James Avenue and Lyndale Avenue
7A-b

- View of the Section 7A-b
- More design detail can be seen on zoomed in sections
- Example between Knox Avenue and 3rd Street
NOTE: Final designs will be refined based on community feedback and will be updated to include more details on bicycle, pedestrian, and landscape accommodations. This drawing represents one option for adding light rail to this section of roadway. It is conceptual and intended to provide a frame of reference for community members to see how light rail could work in their neighborhood.
LOWRY AVE AT NEWTON AVE, MINNEAPOLIS: CONCEPT

This visualization represents how light rail could fit in North Minneapolis along Lowry Avenue.

NOTE: Proposed trees and other landscape material omitted for visual clarity. These elements will be added as the design progresses.

DRAFT: CONCEPT IN DEVELOPMENT
Section 3

• Many concepts designed to avoid building impacts

• Design challenges include curves, necessary turn lanes and overall tight right of way

• Alternatives focus on geometry as well as roadway and LRT operational adjustments
SECTION 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS
WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE
SECTION 3: 3A-b

WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE

This option shows center-running light rail and two lanes of traffic on West Broadway. The addition of required stations and turn lanes create significant property impacts with this option.

This visualization shows an option without the addition of required stations and turn lanes.
NOTE: Final designs will be refined based on community feedback and will be updated to include more details on bicycle, pedestrian, and landscape accommodations. This drawing represents one option for adding light rail to this section of roadway. It is conceptual and intended to provide a frame of reference for community members to see how light rail could work in their neighborhood.
SECTION 3: 3D-a

WEST BROADWAY AVE FROM LYNDALE TO IRVING AVE

This option shows light rail only on 21st Ave N and four lanes of traffic on West Broadway (as it exists today).
Update on Anti-Displacement Working Group
Community Wealth Building Through Investment

• Forming an Anti-Displacement Working Group
  ▪ To develop and implement a comprehensive, innovative set of strategies:
    o To ensure this investment builds on, supports, and protects existing community assets
    o Benefit existing corridor residents
    o Provide more opportunities for equitable housing, employment, business development, cultural experiences, and other activities of daily life
Anti-Displacement Working Group Update

- Currently onboarding with project team
- Connecting with community and stakeholders
- Developing the proposal to form the anti-displacement table
- Organizing for research and engagement work
Stay Connected!

• Project website: BlueLineExt.org
  ▪ Project news, maps, surveys, what we’re hearing
  ▪ Committee meeting materials: agenda, handouts, presentations, meeting minutes
  ▪ Sign-up for GovDelivery project updates
  ▪ Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation

• Follow us:
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