

Abstract

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the lead federal agency, and the Metropolitan Council (Council), the Project sponsor, prepared this Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Supplemental Draft Section 4(f) and 6(f) Evaluation for the METRO Blue Line Light Rail Extension Project (Project) in Hennepin County, Minnesota. The Project would extend generally northwest for a distance of approximately 13.5 miles from Target Field Station in Downtown Minneapolis, ending north of Trunk Highway 610 in the City of Brooklyn Park to enhance regional mobility and accessibility needs. Nearly 500 trains pass through Target Field Station each day, serving riders on the METRO Green and Blue Lines and Northstar Commuter Rail with connections to existing and planned light rail transit, bus rapid transit, and express bus routes. The Project and its 12 light rail transit stations would connect the Cities of Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis providing access to jobs, education, healthcare, culture, and recreation and a one-seat ride to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, the Mall of America, and many other key destinations along the way. Additionally, the Project includes park-and-rides, ancillary facilities, and an operations and maintenance facility. By coordinating this generational transit investment with strong strategies to build community prosperity and minimize displacement, the Project would help to reduce regional disparities and bring transformative benefits to current Project area residents and future generations.

The Supplemental Draft EIS includes the Project's Purpose and Need Statement and a description of the alternatives considered. The following environmental categories are addressed in this Supplemental Draft EIS, including related methods and regulations, agency coordination (where applicable), anticipated direct long-term (operating) and short-term (construction) impacts, indirect impacts and cumulative effects, and potential mitigation measures: freight rail conditions; vehicular traffic; pedestrians and bicyclists; parking; aviation; land use plan compatibility; community facilities/community character and cohesion; property acquisition and relocation of residents and businesses; cultural resources; visual/aesthetics; economic effects; safety and security; utilities; floodplains; wetlands and other aquatic resources; geology, soils, and topography; hazardous materials contamination; noise; vibration; biological environment (wildlife habitat and endangered species); water quality and stormwater; air quality; and energy. This Supplemental Draft EIS also addresses the following: environmental justice; Supplemental Section 4(f) and 6(f) evaluation; finance; evaluation of alternatives; public involvement; and agency coordination.