



Tracking the Blue Line Extension

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More design details for LRT project to emerge at open houses



Left: 30 percent design aerial of the Golden Valley Road Station. Right: 60 percent design rendering of the Golden Valley Station with additional design details including landscaping.

Planting patterns for shrubbery, trees and turf, what station platforms and canopies will look like and the locations and heights of noise walls are among new design details available for public feedback at five open houses this month.

[Click here for open house flyer. https://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Publications-And-Resources/Events/2017/BLRT-60-design-update-flier-\(English\)-Spring-2017.aspx](https://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Publications-And-Resources/Events/2017/BLRT-60-design-update-flier-(English)-Spring-2017.aspx)

Staff is showing their 60 percent level of design detail for the project as promised following open houses last year on the 30 percent design plans. The 30 percent level of detail showed where double track would be built from Target Field Station in Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park as well as the location of bridges and the 11 stations.

With the latest round of open houses, staff will show the limits of disturbance or how far construction will extend, in other words. They'll also show where stormwater

ponds will be located and how much water they will hold once the LRT line is built.

Other details include where station light fixtures will go. What the light fixtures will look like will be developed and shown later this year when the designs reach a 90 percent level of detail. That's when we'll know the plant species and the look of the station platform walls and noise walls.

For now, the 60 percent designs show the location of other elements such as the traction power substations, which resemble intermodal transport containers and contain equipment to convert AC power from Xcel Energy to DC current that can be used to operate the light rail trains. The plans at this stage also show where fences will go around these TPSS units. Details on what the fences will look like and the screening or plant material around them comes later at the 90 percent level of detail.

"All traction power substations will be fenced. We're going to try to treat them in the context of their environment," said Nick Landwer, project director of design and engineering.

How driving lanes are configured and striped and where pedestrian amenities such as ramps, crosswalks and signal-push buttons are located are in the 60 percent plans.

In addition to showing what will be constructed, the 60 percent plans also show what will be removed such as buildings, both overhead and underground utilities and the trees that have voluntarily sprung up along the BNSF corridor that the LRT tracks will be built in for eight miles.

Following the five public open houses, designers will use the feedback to inform and refine their designs to a 90 percent level of detail later this year.

The Blue Line Extension LRT Project achieved a big milestone in January when the Federal Transit Administration approved the project to enter the engineering phase. The engineering work is necessary for project staff to finalize designs in preparation for the start of construction in 2018. For details, see: <http://bit.ly/2ntkemW>

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES: STATION DESIGN

The public is invited to review station design concepts for the METRO Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit (LRT) project and learn about the station design process.

Robbinsdale **Monday, March 20**
4:30-7 PM

Robbinsdale City Hall, 4100 Lakeview Ave N
<https://goo.gl/maps/AdpijwChkGq>

Golden Valley **Tuesday, March 21**
4-6:30 PM

Golden Valley City Hall, 7800 Golden Valley Road
<https://goo.gl/maps/gfMnoJeZYs22>

Crystal **Thursday, March 23**
4:30-7 PM

Crystal City Hall, 4841 Douglas Dr. N. <https://goo.gl/maps/7K4KjHrxYM2>

Minneapolis **Wednesday, March 29**
4:30-7 PM

Harrison Recreation Center, 503 N Irving Ave
<https://goo.gl/maps/4zJLSiiBJ9L2>

Brooklyn Park **Thursday, April 23**
4:30-7 PM

Brooklyn Park Library, Mississippi Room. 8500 West Broadway Ave.
<https://goo.gl/maps/EDpR7qPbjy62>

These open houses will provide opportunities for the public to learn about recent progress and the current status of the Blue Line Extension Project, and to review the recently completed 60 percent design plans. Other project information will also be available, including updates on LRT design issues in each community. Feel free to come and go at any time. Staff will be available to answer your questions and receive your comments.

The METRO Blue Line Extension project has prepared a narrated flyover visualization of the Blue Line Extension route.



The flyover begins at Oak Grove Parkway Station in Brooklyn Park, the northern end of the Blue Line Extension, and follows the light rail route through Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis.

Along the way, the narration describes the station locations, points of interest and design features of the line, including bridges and street intersections.

Closed captioning is provided.

To watch the flyover, visit:

<http://bit.ly/2norCDe>

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee previews new designs



Left: Project staff Shelley Miller and TAAC member Ken Rodgers, who has low vision, uses a tactile enhanced map to preview new designs for the Blue Line Extension Project.

Right: TAAC members sit in a mockup of a proposed redesign of the middle car of the light rail vehicles to be used on the Blue Line Extension Project. The redesigned seating allows for more room and accessibility for those with walkers and wheelchairs.



For more information on the work of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee, go to: <http://bit.ly/2nttzuP>

Schools partner with engineers, others working on Blue Line Extension

Engineering firm Kimley-Horn and 12 other professional groups working on the METRO Blue Line Extension LRT Project have created Blue University or Blue U, an education outreach program.

Over 20 public elementary, middle and high schools and colleges are within one mile of the Blue Line Extension. Blue U partners with those schools and invests in education to encourage students to pursue studies that would prepare them for careers as transit engineers, architects and construction workers. For students, this is an opportunity to see how their studies in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) impact the real world.

“Our team realized that this project could be more than just delivering the technical requirements to construct a new LRT line. We recognized an opportunity to help address the education gap

in science technology, engineering and math (STEM) Subjects in local schools,” said Jennifer Swenson, Blue U program coordinator for Kimley-Horn.

Just last year, 35 volunteers spent over 1,000 hours devoted to Blue U. They established partnerships with schools, developed classroom resources and hosted events for students and community members. Some of these events included hosting booths at school STEM fairs, career presentations, mock interviews and even a construction site visit. Students spoke with professionals working on the Blue Line Extension LRT Project and learned about what it takes to begin a career in transportation infrastructure.

Instructors at the schools were impressed by the caliber and breadth of the presentations.

“The presentation was spot on in the material it covered,” said Tracy Boyle, who is an architectural technology faculty member at Minneapolis Community & Technical College.

“For students to be able to hear from real professionals in the industry and see relevant projects makes things seem much more attainable. I look forward to continuing our relationship,” Boyle said.

Swenson, the Blue U program coordinator, is also looking forward to continuing the relationships.

“Blue U will continue to work with local communities through project construction, carrying out the commitment of investing in the future workforce to build a larger, more diverse group of STEM professionals in Minnesota,” Swenson said.

About the project

The planned METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau) light rail transit project will operate about 13 miles northwest from downtown Minneapolis through north Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park, drawing riders northwest of Brooklyn Park. The proposed alignment will have 11 new stations in addition to Target Field Station where it will continue as the METRO Blue Line, providing one-seat rides to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. It will connect Minneapolis and the region’s northwest communities with existing LRT on the METRO Green Line, future LRT on the METRO Green Line Extension (Southwest LRT), bus rapid transit on the METRO Red Line, the Northstar commuter rail line and local and express bus routes.

The Metropolitan Council will be the grantee of federal funds and is charged with building the line in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee, which includes local officials from Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Brooklyn Park and Minneapolis, provides advice and oversight. Funding is provided by the Federal Transit Administration, Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), state of Minnesota and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA).

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