



METRO Blue Line Light Rail Extension

Civil, Track, Structures, Systems, and Stations Contract Best Value Procurement Update

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1 Executive Summary

The METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) light rail project is proposed to operate on 13.4-mile of light rail track connecting downtown Minneapolis to the communities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. This BLE project aims to improve transit in the northwest Twin Cities metro region, providing a one-seat ride from Brooklyn Park to Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. The BLE project will be delivered via multiple contract packages, with the Design-Bid-Build (DBB) Best Value (BV) procurement method selected for a single civil, track, structures, systems, and stations package. The DBB BV procurement for that package is discussed in this memo and will be a two-step procurement process involving a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and a Request for Proposals (RFP), with procurement starting in Early 2026 and ending in Late 2027.

2 Introduction

The BLE project will connect with the existing METRO Blue Line at Target Field Station and include 13 new stations, as shown in Figure 1. The project scope includes new light rail infrastructure, bridges, park and ride facilities, an Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF), and Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs). The geographical characteristics of the municipalities vary, presenting unique challenges such as right-of-way constraints and dense utility networks in Minneapolis.

2.1 Civil, Track, Structures, Systems, and Stations Contract Best Value Procurement Update Purpose

The purpose of this document is to present an overview of BV procurement, and to detail the implementation of DBB BV procurement as the preferred method for the major construction package.

2.2 Project Goals

The BLE project aims to:

- Connect people to new opportunities and destinations.
- Link people more efficiently to educational and employment opportunities.
- Improve public health and reduce pollution.

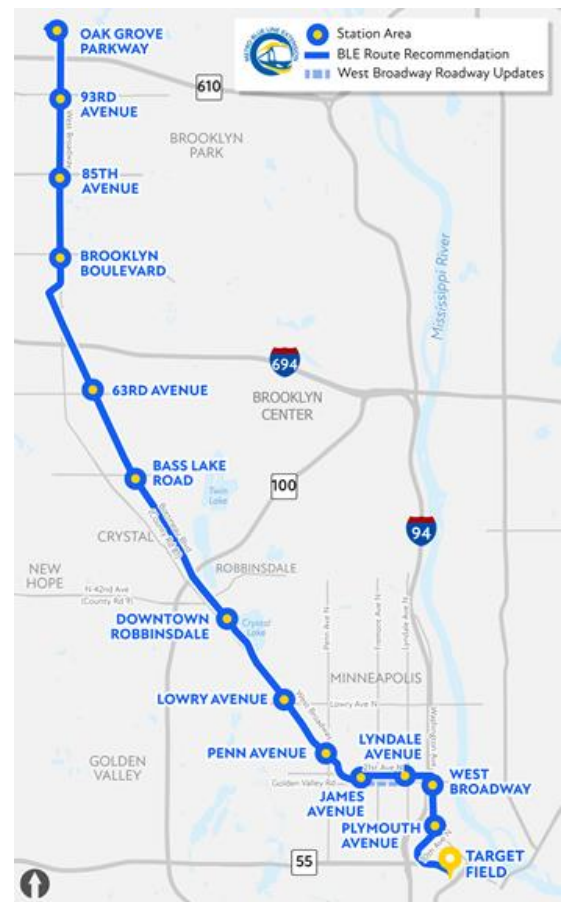


Figure 1 - Blue Line Extension Map

- Make a generational transit investment in a corridor with a high percentage of zero-car households.

2.3 Selected Packaging and Delivery Method Strategy

The Metropolitan Council (Met Council) conducted meetings and workshops to strategize on contracting approaches and facilitated outreach sessions with the contracting community. These efforts resulted in selection of DBB BV as the procurement strategy and delivery method for the civil, track, structures, systems and stations package. The project scope elements of this package are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Project Scope Elements

Element	Description
Civil	Clearing/grubbing, grading, utility relocations (public and private), ground improvements, drainage, retaining walls, roadway reconstruction, traffic signals, striping and signing, duct bank / infrastructure for LRT systems, and subgrade for 13.4 miles of light rail alignment and roadway.
Structures	New LRT bridges and roadway bridges. The structures element also includes retaining walls and potential ground improvements due to unsuitable soils.
Track	Ballast, subballast, ties, fasteners, special trackwork, cast-in-place concrete (for embedded track), and rail.
Systems	Electrical and communications conduits, overhead contact system (foundations, poles, headgear, wire), train control signals, traction power (substations and feeders), communications (fiber backbone, station communications equipment such as variable message signs, and wayside equipment connections to traction power substations, signal houses, park-and-ride facilities, and other elements), emergency telephones, and cameras.
Stations	Site clearing/grubbing, grading, drainage, foundations, platforms, structural canopy and shelter, ramps, stairs, railings, fencing, and platform elements (benches, trash cans, signs and systems maps) for 13 stations.

2.4 Overview of Best Value Procurement Process

A DBB BV procurement follows a procurement method with the contractor selected based on providing the best value relative to price and a technical proposal. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) defines best value as “a procurement process where price and other key factors can be considered in the evaluation and selection process to minimize impacts and enhance the long-term performance and value of construction.” The technical proposal defines the contractor’s understanding of the project and planned execution of work measured by appraising qualifications, experience, quality, schedule, and proposed approaches to project objectives and challenges.. Evaluating proposers on their qualifications during procurement can yield a higher quality product at a lower total project cost.

Contractor selection may be completed using a one-step (RFP) or two-step process (RFQ and RFP). Met Council selected a two-step process for the Best Value package.

Implementing a two-step process will be used to establish a qualified shortlist for the RFP phase by creating a list of qualified contractors, which is anticipated to promote competition among the most qualified contractors and streamline the procurement process.

3 Procurement Schedule

The projected procurement schedule includes key dates from the release of the RFQ to Notice to Proceed. The critical steps in the procurement process are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - High-Level Procurement Schedule

Activity	Projected Date
Release RFQ	Early 2026
Statement of Qualifications (SOQs) Due	Mid 2026
Draft RFP Posted to Shortlisted Proposers	Mid 2026
Final RFP Posted to Shortlisted Proposers	Early 2027
Technical Proposals Due	Early 2027
Technical Proposals Scored	Mid 2027
Price Proposals Due and Apparent Best Value	Mid 2027
Execution and Notice to Proceed	Late 2027

4 Summary of RFQ and RFP Content

The RFQ and RFP include evaluation criteria focusing on the respondent's expertise, qualifications, and approach to delivering the project.

The RFQ evaluation criteria include:

- **Relevant contractor qualifications, experience, and past performance (Small Business Enterprises - SBE and safety):** required qualifications to perform the project, relevant experience, and past performance related to safety and SBE inclusion achievement record.
- **Approach to quality:** plan to ensure delivery of highest level of quality, including description of past successes.
- **Organization structure and management approach:** management approach, including an organizational chart, project team structure, staffing roles, and a preliminary approach to engaging workforce and subcontracting.
- **Preliminary approach to risk management:** understanding and management of preliminary project risks, including identifying risks and mitigation strategies, and describing approach to coordinating with Met Council and project Stakeholders to address these risks.

- **Project understanding and innovative approaches:** understanding of the project's unique requirements, innovative approaches to critical tasks, and strategies for achieving small business participation throughout the project's duration.

The RFP evaluation criteria include:

- **Technical project understanding and approach:** an understanding of key risks, challenges, and opportunities related to the project, approach to risk management and lessons learned from past projects, and technical approach to achieving critical project requirements, including construction, coordination, traffic maintenance, and systems integration.
- **Key personnel qualifications, experience, and past performance:** key personnel experience, qualifications, licenses, and availability for the project.
- **Construction management approach:** strategies for optimal site utilization, materials delivery management, coordination with utilities, compliance inspections, environmental mitigation, change management, communication with stakeholders, safety policies, and systems integration testing.
- **Project management approach:** approach to developing and maintaining the project schedule, managing the project budget, coordinating with Met Council and third parties, minimizing service interruptions, and ensuring effective team organization and communication.
- **Quality management plan:** approach to ensuring construction quality.
- **Approach to community outreach:** innovative strategies for community outreach, including managing outreach to affected businesses, stakeholder touchpoints, complaints, and traffic impact outreach.
- **Workforce participation plan:** approach to engaging and utilizing local workforce and subcontracting.
- **Small business inclusion plan:** partnering strategies with small businesses.

5 Shortlisting and Scoring Process

The evaluation process involves an Evaluation Panel (EP), Technical Advisers, and an RFP Administrator. The EP conducts evaluations and develops technical scores, while Technical Advisers provide support and input to the selection process. The shortlisting process advances the most highly qualified proposers to the RFP phase. Shortlisted firms will be invited to respond to the RFP and submit a technical proposal and price proposal. The apparent best value DBB BV Proposer is determined by combining the Technical Proposal Score and the Price Proposal Score. The Proposer with the highest Total Score is identified as the successful DBB BV Proposer.

5.1 Technical Proposal Versus Price Proposal Weight Ratio

Met Council evaluated different technical and price weighting ratios, selecting a 40:60 ratio (technical proposal worth 40 points and price proposal worth 60 points) as the most

balanced approach. This ratio ensures that Met Council receives proposals from firms with the highest technical capacity at a reasonable and fair price.