



METRO Blue Line Extension Project Decision Board Meeting

Date & Time	September 24, 2024 10:00 – 11:00 am
Location	560 N 6th Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55411
Members	Charles Zelle, Lisa Cerney, Reva Chamblis, Anjuli Cameron, Irene Fernando, Jeff Lunde, Marion Greene, Peter Hanf, Ben Schweigert
Project Staff	Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Joleen Ketterling, Kyle Mianulli, Dan Soler, Nick Thompson

Action Required

1. Call To Order

Chair Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

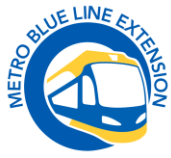
2. Minutes from August 21 Meeting

Chair Zelle asked for a motion to approve the August 21, 2024 Project Decision Board (PDB) minutes. Commissioner Jeff Lunde, Hennepin County, motioned to approve the August 21 minutes, which was seconded by Commissioner Irene Fernando, Hennepin County. The minutes were officially approved.

3. Municipal Consent

Nick Thompson from the Metropolitan Council provided an update on the municipal consent timeline. Mr. Thompson shared that each of the Cities have been hosting open houses and that Crystal and Robbinsdale have deferred their action until next week. The Blue Line Extension (BLE) project team has been providing additional information requested by both cities. In addition, Robbinsdale added a workshop before their official council meeting.

The BLE project team plans to attend the Robbinsdale workshop to answer questions. All voting is planned to be completed by October 2, 2024. Mr. Thompson shared the project team is looking forward to yes votes from the project partners, however, if there is a disapprove vote with specific plan amendments listed, the project team will develop a plan for this.



Commissioner Fernando asked if the corridor cities were aware of the actions that would happen after the vote. Commissioner Fernando indicated there are many questions regarding the hearing. Mr. Thompson replied that the BLE project team was waiting for the voting process to complete before officially communicating this to the Cities. Mr. Thompson shared that if there is a case where not all of the Cities approve, a hearing must be held within 60 days and the Metropolitan Council must make a decision about the actions within 60 days of the hearing. Mr. Thompson stated a hearing would be anticipated some time in November but has not been scheduled yet. If this scenario happened, guidance would be provided to the city to make them aware of the process. Mr. Thompson shared the Metropolitan Council has policies on public hearings and would follow those policies as guidance and design the process.

Commissioner Fernando encouraged that the process be shared verbally with each of the Cities to ensure accuracy of the information. Mr. Thompson indicated the Metropolitan Council advised each city on what in their draft resolution letters is and is not considered as a municipal consent item. Mr. Thompson added that communication has occurred with the city of Robbinsdale regarding the timeline of the hearing and that the city will be given the opportunity to present at the hearing.

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, also shared there are parts of the corridor where work can continue with the 60% design plans and a timeline is being developed. Commissioner Fernando asked if there could potentially be a situation where municipal consent goes back to the Cities and Hennepin County for another vote. Mr. Thompson answered that if there is a substantial design change such as adding a station or a change in the alignment, the BLE project team will go back to the Cities in which the change occurred, and Hennepin County for a vote to approve the change to the final design, not the whole project. Mr. Soler added the only time there is another municipal consent vote is if the entire project issues a new set of preliminary design plans, which is highly unlikely.

Chair Zelle wondered if at the hearing an opportunity would be given to municipalities to discuss the amendments being requested. Mr. Thompson replied that the BLE project team would provide a very detailed analysis of the request and available options at the hearing. Mr. Thompson stated the hearing is not a decision point. There would be an



action to vote on by the Metropolitan Council within 60 days of the hearing which would conclude the findings and indicate whether the change(s) would be added to the project or not.

Ben Schweigert, Hennepin County Attorney, suggested that a more accurate answer to these questions requires further legal analysis and interpretation of the statute.

Commissioner Lunde shared that the city of Robbinsdale would like to be included in the discussions on the Lowry Station. Mr. Thompson replied that there is a team currently working on the options for this station and Robbinsdale staff is part of that team.

Mr. Thompson provided background regarding the resolution to approve an additional station at Washington and West Broadway Avenues. Mr. Thompson shared that the city of Minneapolis voiced the importance of this station last year and the project's municipal consent preliminary design plans show this area as "station ready". This included identifying where the station would go and working through how the design would fit from an environmental standpoint. Mr. Thompson indicated the city has a strong plan for development and redevelopment in this area for both housing and jobs. The benefits of adding this station were reviewed. The station is in an area that is anticipated to be developed according to city plans. New housing is expected in this area and the proposed station is close to the North Loop amenities. Mr. Thompson stated this station would fill a gap and provide an additional walkshed area. In reviewing the models that estimate cost and ridership, no impact on the FTA rating is seen by adding this station and the BLE remains a strong project.

In conclusion, the additional station at Washington and West Broadway Avenues improves access to this developing area and provides a good connection to local bus routes. The additional station is strongly supported by the city of Minneapolis. The BLE project team is working on the design and schedule. At the end of this year, a new cost estimate will be provided that includes the cost of this new station. The city of Minneapolis will be voting to add the station to the final design plans.

Commissioner Fernando shared that she is very supportive of the resolution and feels this is a very responsive action to the feedback that Minneapolis has provided. Commissioner Fernando appreciated how this would help to extend resident vision and allow access to the river. Commissioner Greene stated this area is ripe for opportunities and



seconded what Commissioner Fernando mentioned regarding resident vision and river access.

Mr. Thompson replied that the 21st Bridge will be a safe bridge to cross and trails will continue to the river. Mr. Soler shared that Hennepin County plans to reapply for the Reconnecting Communities Grant and this is a planning grant that would help guide how to connect Minneapolis to the river. Council Member Reva Chamblis shared that community members in north Minneapolis want to see these bridge connections and the Reconnecting Communities Grant. Commissioner Lunde shared that currently West Broadway is not pedestrian friendly and is an area in need of improvements for safety.

a. Resolution 24-PDB-005 – Approval of additional station at Washington and West Broadway Avenues

Approved
09/24/2024

- **Approval of additional station at Washington and West Broadway Avenues in the final design plans.**

Commissioner Irene Fernando, Hennepin County motioned approval, and Commissioner Jeff Lunde, Hennepin County seconded the motion.

Nkongo Cigolo took a roll call. Five yes’s received.

7. Capital Grant Agreement Amendment Update

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, shared that the current capital grant agreement (CGA) will expire at the end of 2024. The recommendation is to amend the CGA to extend the termination date to December 31, 2026, and add additional funding. Dan indicated amending this agreement increases the authorized budget since federal funds are not brought into the project until 2027. Funding will cover continued design and finishing of the environmental impact statement. Dan stated this amendment will be presented to the Hennepin County Board this fall.

8. Next Meeting: October 16, 2024

9. Adjourn

Chair Zelle concluded the meeting and adjourned it at 10:42 am.

Meeting Materials Provided:

Meeting Agenda, September 24, 2024

Meeting Minutes, August 21, 2024, PDB PowerPoint Presentation





24-PDB-005 New Station Resolution

Respectfully Submitted,
Joleen Ketterling, Blue Line Ext. Administrative Assistant