

## METRO Blue Line Extension Project Decision Board Meeting

Date & Time	November 20, 2024 9:00 am-10:00 am
Location	Blue Line Extension Project Office, North Conference Room, 6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 600, St Louis Park, MN 55426
Members	Charlie Zelle, Irene Fernando, Marion Greene, Ben Schweigert, Peter Hanf,
Project Staff	Nick Thompson, Shahin Khazrajafari, Dan Soler, Jer Yang

### 1. Call To Order

Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council Chair, called the METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) Project Decision Board Meeting to order at 9:14am and welcome members to the meeting.

### 2. Minutes from October 16, 2024 Meeting

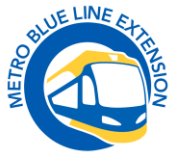
Chair Zelle called for a motion to approve the October 16, 2024, PBD Meeting Minutes. Marion Greene, Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRAA) Commissioner, moved for approval, and Irene Fernando, Hennepin County (HC) Commissioner, seconded the motion.

The minutes were officially approved.

### 3. Procurement Strategy Update

Shahin Khazrajafari from the Blue Line Extension (BLE) project reported that discussions on procurement strategies began several months ago to determine the optimal approach for packaging and procuring the BLE project. This effort evolved into a multi-phase initiative involving multiple disciplines, including Engineering, Procurement, Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO), General Counsel, and collaboration among the three agencies: Hennepin County (HC), the Metropolitan Council (MetC), and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

Mr. Khazrajafari explained that the initial phase began in April 2024 with a large workshop on delivery methods. The discussion focused on identifying the most viable procurement options for the BLE project, comparing Best Value (BV) and Low-Price Design-Bid approaches side by side. In May 2024, another workshop was conducted, focusing on contract packaging—specifically, how to best divide the construction effort and structure the contract packages. From these workshops, three distinct contract packaging strategies were identified, prompting the BLE project to initiate an industry outreach process. In August 2024, the team began engaging with contractors to gather their professional feedback.



Mr. Khazrajafari reported that by September, the BLE project had received eight written responses from subcontractors and prime consultants. On October 23, 2024, the project hosted an in-person informational session to provide further details about the process. Additionally, on October 24 and 25, 2024, the BLE project conducted one-on-one sessions at the project office.

Mr. Khazrajafari highlighted feedback themes, including a strong interest in recruiting local contractors, advancing early work, and prioritizing procurement efforts.

Mr. Khazrajafari noted that, regarding the delivery method, the BLE project received feedback and there is no interest in competing for the low-price design-bid-build approach. He explained that, given current market conditions, the focus has shifted toward other aspects of implementation and delivery, such as technical capability and quality.

Mr. Khazrajafari outlined three key strategies: identifying advanced work, combining civil track and systems for the entire corridor into a single package, and keeping the park-and-ride facilities and the operations and maintenance facility separated into their own package.

Mr. Khazrajafari provided a refresher on the concept of Best Value, explaining that it focuses on qualifications rather than solely on price. This approach facilitates deeper engagement with contractors during the proposal process, allowing the BLE project to assess their plans for addressing identified risk areas, supporting Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), and promoting workforce development while also gathering contractor feedback. The BLE project uses this information to evaluate which contract aligns best with the project's needs. While this approach may result in higher initial costs, it ensures that potential risks are accounted for early, leading to long-term benefits throughout the project lifecycle. Mr. Khazrajafari also noted that this method requires a longer procurement process, which the BLE project anticipated and began early to accommodate the extended timeline.

Mr. Khazrajafari noted that the next steps will focus on balancing technical aspects with pricing, defining qualification requirements, and establishing evaluation criteria, while continuing to monitor market conditions. Mr. Khazrajafari also shared that the BLE project is actively developing a workforce development plan for the project.

#### **4. Project Updates**

Mr. Khazrajafari provided project updates, highlighting a cultural placekeeping initiative in which community-based groups in each city are engaged to contribute input on station design elements that reflect and enhance the cultural character of the community. These meetings are scheduled to begin in the spring of 2025.

Dan Soler, Hennepin County reported that the initial submission of the Supplemental Final Impact Statement was completed at the end of October 2024.



Additionally, Mr. Khazrajafari announced two key workshops scheduled for December 2024: the Lowry Station Design workshop on December 3, 2024, and the 21st Avenue Design workshop on December 10, 2024.

**5. Next Meeting: December 18, 2024**

**6. Adjourn**

Chair Zelle concluded the meeting and adjourned it at 10:02am

Meeting Materials Provided:

Meeting Agenda, November 20, 2024

Meeting Minutes, October 16, 2024

PDB PowerPoint Presentation

Respectfully Submitted,

Jer Yang, Blue Line Ext. Administrative Lead