



Date: November 6, 2015

To: Adam Duininck, Chair
Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

From: Mark Fuhrmann, Program Director
Dan Soler, Project Director

Subject: Response to October 29, 2015 BLRT CMC Meeting Questions

This memorandum responds to questions and information requests that were raised at the October 29, 2015 BLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting.

Question 1: What is the cost estimate for the Golden Valley Road station park and ride lot, the Golden Valley Road/Theodore Wirth Parkway intersection, and trail connections near the Golden Valley Road station?

From Golden Valley City Councilmember Andy Snope and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Commissioner Meg Forney

Answer: The cost estimate for the surface park and ride and trail head, intersection improvements, and trail connections is \$8 million. This includes design, engineering and construction cost in year of expenditure. This cost estimate is based on the design concept as shown most recently at the October 28 BLRT Golden Valley public meeting.

Question 2: Can you provide additional data as to “Advanced Engineering” on slide 52 of the 10/29/15 CMC presentation?

From Crystal Mayor Jim Adams

Answer: Additional Advanced Engineering costs are a result of knowing more about the project as the design was refined from 1% at DEIS to the current 15% design. This includes cost increases in the following areas:

- Poor soils mitigation
- Retaining walls
- Two additional light rail vehicles
- Additional trackwork including special trackwork at stations and non-revenue tracks to Operations and Maintenance Facility
- Additional park and ride at Bass Lake Road

Final Resolution 2015-331

Whereas, The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is the steward of the Minneapolis parks;

Whereas, The proposed Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension, also known as the Bottineau Line, will pass through and close to Theodore Wirth Regional Park, which is owned and managed by the MPRB;

Whereas, Regional transportation systems like the light rail network are designed to connect the places where people live, work, and play, and that MPRB is committed to being a constructive participant in the vitality of the region through operation of regional parks;

Whereas, A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MPRB and the Metropolitan Council is in place that allows MPRB the ability to take an official stance on the Bottineau Line's project scope and budget prior to a vote on such by the Corridor Management Committee (CMC);

Whereas, MPRB staff have been involved in ongoing design discussions on various aspects of the Bottineau Line and have found the working relationship with the Bottineau Project Office (BPO) to be a positive one;

Whereas, The BPO has stated that it will need to encumber park land temporarily and permanently in order to construct the Bottineau Line, and such encumbrance will require MPRB and possibly district court approval; and

Whereas, This resolution is supported by the MPRB 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan, which envisions "Dynamic parks shape city character and meet diverse community needs";

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners support the BPO's general design direction related to floodplain impacts, existing trails in Wirth Park, potential reconstruction of bridges near and within Wirth Park, and the Olson Memorial Highway trees, provided MPRB staff continue to be directly involved in the design process for these considerations;

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners request continued collaboration between MPRB and BPO staff related to right-of-way impacts and compensation, wetlands and water quality, and a park and ride at the proposed Golden Valley Road Station, with recognition that these considerations require further design exploration, negotiation, and/or due diligence;

RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners recommend that the Plymouth Avenue Station, the Golden Valley Road Station, connections to area parks and trails near the Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue stations, and the reconstruction of the intersection of Golden

Valley Road and Theodore Wirth Parkway be included in the final project scope and budget, with the understanding that these four considerations are critical elements of the project that connect the regional transportation system with the regional park system;

RESOLVED, That the BPO shall use all practical methods to achieve safe co-location of freight and light rail;

RESOLVED, That nothing in this resolution shall be understood to abdicate MPRB's interest in nor responsibility for aspects of the project that affect, impact, or benefit the Minneapolis park system; and

RESOLVED, That the President of the Board and Secretary to the Board are authorized to take all necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

Member introduced the following resolution and moved its adoption:

**RESOLUTION AFFIRMING CITY POSITIONS
REGARDING THE METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION**

WHEREAS, the METRO Blue Line Extension is a proposed project to provide transit service which will help satisfy long-term regional mobility and accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public in the heavily traveled northwest area of the Twin Cities; and,

WHEREAS, the METRO Blue Line Extension is located in Hennepin County, Minnesota, extending approximately 13 miles from downtown Minneapolis to the northwest serving north Minneapolis and the suburbs of Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park; and,

WHEREAS, the staff of the Blue Line Extension Project Office has completed a project scope recommendation that encompasses the elements proposed to be incorporated into the light rail project, including right of way acquisitions, LRT vehicles, freight and LRT tracks, LRT bridges, roadway bridge reconstructions, traffic signals, station platforms and vertical circulation, park and ride facilities, poor soils mitigation, and other system elements; and,

WHEREAS, the Issue Resolution Team, Technical Project Advisory Committee, Community Advisory Committee, Business Advisory Committee, and Corridor Management Committee, each involving representatives of the City of Golden Valley, have provided input into and assisted with the evaluation of the proposed scope recommendation; and,

WHEREAS, a number of open houses and public forums have been held within the City of Golden Valley and along the corridor to discuss and debate the elements of the METRO Blue Line Extension project; and,

WHEREAS, the METRO Blue Line Extension project is approaching Municipal Consent, the conclusion of Project Development, and the publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Golden Valley supports the work that has been completed thus far and looks to advance the METRO Blue Line Extension project into the next phase of final design and engineering.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Golden Valley holds that additional local transit enhancements, including but not limited to an increase in bus service along targeted existing routes, the expansion of routes in support of new areas of residential and commercial development, and the potential for future highway bus rapid transit along Highway 55, should continue to be explored by Metro Transit as a way to support the success of the METRO Blue Line Extension and the mass transit system in the metropolitan area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Golden Valley affirms the following positions regarding the METRO Blue Line Extension project and will use them to provide guidance on votes to be taken with respect to the recommended scope and cost of the project as well as Municipal Consent:

1. The City supports the location of a light rail station at the proposed Golden Valley Road site, as it provides the greatest opportunity for residents and employees to take advantage of mass transit. The City supports the location of a light rail station at the proposed Plymouth Avenue site, as it serves as a gateway to Theodore Wirth Park and enhances regional access to nature and recreation.
2. In order to protect the surrounding single family neighborhoods from congestion, public parking must be provided as part of the project for riders who arrive at the Golden Valley Road station by automobile. The City continues to support collaboration with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Blue Line Project Office on the design exploration of infrastructure at the station that accommodates parking while also serving as a trailhead for the many local and regional trails that converge in the area.
3. Improvements to the Golden Valley Road and Theodore Wirth Parkway intersection should be included in the scope of the project in order to address anticipated traffic and safety concerns resulting from a Golden Valley Road station.
4. Any impacts to Sochacki Park and to the surrounding neighborhoods during construction of the light rail project shall be mitigated as part of the project to the extent possible. Sochacki Park must be restored and enhanced at the conclusion of the project.
5. New or improved pedestrian and bicycle connections shall be incorporated into the design of bridges reconstructed over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line as part of the light rail project.
6. Mitigation efforts shall be conducted as part of the project to reduce the impacts to Theodore Wirth Park, to Sochacki Park, and to surrounding neighborhoods of noise, vibration, lighting, aesthetics, and safety associated with stations and the operation of light rail vehicles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution adopted by the City of Golden Valley be forwarded to the Blue Line Extension Project Office, to Hennepin County, and to the Metropolitan Council for their consideration.

Adopted by the City Council this 4th day of November, 2015.

/s/Shepard M. Harris
Shepard M. Harris, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/Kristine A. Luedke
Kristine A. Luedke, City Clerk

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing resolution was seconded by Member and upon a vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof: and the following voted against the same: whereupon said resolution was declared duly passed and adopted, signed by the Mayor and his signature attested by the City Clerk.

METRO Blue Line Extension Business Advisory Committee Position Statement

The members of the Blue Line Extension LRT Business Advisory Committee (BAC) note the accomplishments of the BLRT project office staff in working with cities, community members and other stakeholders to bring forward a project that has value to the region, and especially to the business community along the proposed BLRT corridor. The BLRT project will positively contribute to the economic health of the region with increased access to jobs and housing as well as providing an environment that will encourage further economic development opportunities for business, residents and property owners.

As members of the business community along the BLRT corridor, the BAC has brought forward a number of points for the BLRT project office, the BLRT Corridor Management Committee, and the Metropolitan Council to consider as project development moves forward.

- The BLRT project will be a major benefit for employees and customers of existing businesses and institutions. It is important for the project office to continue to design station areas that are accessible and safe for patrons of area businesses. Additionally, it is important for the project office to engage with municipalities to foster safe pedestrian and bike connections between stations and local institutions.
- The BAC expects transparency between the project office and both existing and potential businesses along the corridor in terms of how they may be impacted by the construction and operation of the BLRT project. All due diligence should be performed to minimize impacts to businesses along the corridor during the construction phase of the project. Additionally, it is important for the project office to support dialogue between community businesses and local governments regarding how the business community can benefit from the BLRT project.
- The BAC remains cautious about the financial cost burden of the project to local taxpayers and small business owners. It is important for the project office to provide updates to the community about potential future cost increases and to explain how those increases have impacts on local funding mechanisms.

Overall, the BAC supports the BLRT project as it is detailed in the revised scope and cost estimate as of November 3, 2015, and look forward to further collaboration with the project office and other stakeholders in the realization of this valuable regional asset.

Blue Line Extension CAC Position Statement

The Blue Line Extension CAC has played an important role in the development of the Revised Project Scope of Blue Line Extension LRT. Coupled with input from the Community Engagement initiatives that resulted in many Community Meetings, Work Sessions, and Open Houses, numerous changes have been proposed over the last year and have been incorporated in the Revised Project Scope.

We support the Revised Project Scope as proposed and encourage the adoption of a Recommendation that incorporates all of these changes into the Revised Project Scope and Cost Estimate.

As a committee, we will continue to support ways to make further improvements to best serve the needs of both current and future residents within the corridor, as well as the Greater Community as a whole.

The BLE CAC will continue to support positive resolution to several as-yet unresolved issues, such as:

- Improvements to trail connections throughout the corridor
- A satisfactory resolution by Hennepin County of right-of-way acquisition and compensation for individual homeowners in the Maplebrook Townhouse Association in Brooklyn Park

In addition, the BLE CAC supports the following statements:

- Final design shall meet and where possible exceed ADA standards for a safe path of travel to and from station platforms
- Where locally supported, we look forward to the transit-oriented development opportunities that LRT brings to the corridor
- Providing connectivity to underserved areas near the corridor is critical to maximizing the investment of LRT in the corridor

Resolution of the Blue Line Coalition regarding the scope and cost estimate of the Bottineau LRT

Whereas, The Blue Line Coalition consists of 17 member organizations serving and representing low-moderate income people and various communities of color along the METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor;

Whereas, It is the purpose of the Blue Line Coalition to ensure the METRO Blue Line Extension advances local and regional equity, improves community health through clear and tangible benefits to community, and supports the creation of wealth and well-being of historic communities of color, immigrant/refugees, migrants, people living with disabilities and low-income communities along the Blue Line Corridor;

Whereas, Significant racial and economic inequities exist along the METRO Blue Line Corridor. The consequences of these inequities is reflected in the documented disparities in the areas of employment status, household income, housing cost burden, education attainment, chronic illness and more;

Whereas, The Metropolitan Council has publicly stated their commitment to regional equity;

Whereas, These inequities threaten the overall health, well-being and competitiveness of our region. The Blue Line Coalition agrees with the MN Tomorrow Report that Equity is the Superior Growth Model for our country and state. The Blue Line Coalition further agrees that “equity is the path to shared prosperity. In an equitable economy, low-income people and people of color would have real pathways to escape poverty, enter the middle class, and contribute to growth and democracy.”

Be it resolved, That the Blue Line Coalition supports the general direction the design for the Light Rail Transit Line and the potential of the corridor to connect low and moderate income populations and communities of color to regional opportunities, expand access to needed services, and potential to spur development and economic growth that reduces disparities along the corridor;

Be it resolved, That the Metropolitan Council and other coordinating agencies develop and coordinate with community based organizations and partners to maximize the economic benefits to low and moderate income people and people of color in the development, construction and maintenance of the line. These opportunities should be in the form of business opportunities, supportive business services, construction jobs, and maintenance of the line and LRT vehicles;

Be it resolved, That the Metropolitan Council and coordinating agencies proactively partner with community based organizations and partners along the METRO Blue Line Extension to maximize and leverage benefits beyond construction to advance our shared goals of regional equity.

November 12, 2015

METRO Blue Line Extension LRT Corridor Management Committee Resolution (DRAFT)

WHEREAS:

1. The Governor has designated the Metropolitan Council (Council) as the responsible authority for the METRO Blue Line Extension LRT (BLRT) Project;
2. The Federal Transit Administration granted approval for the METRO Blue Line Extension to start Project Development in August 2014;
3. The Council established the BLRT Corridor Management Committee (CMC) to advise the Council in the design and construction of the BLRT Project;
4. The Council established the METRO Blue Line Extension LRT Project Office (BPO) to advance the design, manage construction and complete overall delivery of the BLRT Project;
5. The BPO developed a list of technical issues and an issue resolution process to seek input from project stakeholders on the design of the BLRT Project, holding over 105 issue resolution team meetings with project stakeholder and agency technical staff;
6. The BPO sought public input on technical issues on the BLRT project by holding 14 public open houses, which were attended by over 1,600 people, receiving over 530 comments;
7. The BPO presented designs to the CMC that were developed through the issue resolution process;
8. The CMC discussed the designs and provided input to the BPO throughout the design process.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the CMC recommends that the Metropolitan Council adopt the METRO Blue Line Extension LRT Project Scope (Attachment A) and direct the BPO to proceed with advancing the design and submit Municipal Consent Plans in December 2015 to Hennepin County and the five host cities for their approval;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CMC recommends that the Council adopt a project cost estimate of \$1.488 billion consistent with the adopted project scope;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the BPO continue to work with project stakeholders to provide updates on the design and cost of the BLRT project and to seek their input as the design advances; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the parties represented in the CMC agree to continue to work cooperatively as the BPO advances the design of the BLRT and support all necessary actions with the Federal Transit Administration to complete Project Development by August 2016 followed by application to enter the New Starts Engineering Phase.

METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Light Rail Transit) Project Scope

The revised METRO Blue Line Extension project scope includes:

- 13.5 miles of ballasted double track from Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis to northwestern Brooklyn Park
- 11 new center platform stations
- 28 new Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs)
- Rail signal and communication system
- Traction Power Substations
- 10 at-grade freight/LRT crossings of roadways
- Reconstruction of eight miles of ballasted single freight track and freight corridor protection treatments

Target Field Connection

Construction of a bridge connection on the south side of 6th Avenue North from the existing Target Field Station to the center of Olson Memorial Highway (OMH) and 7th Street intersection. Planned roadway improvements include reconstruction of the signalized intersection of 7th Street and OMH.

Olson Memorial Highway (Trunk Highway 55)

Modification of the existing I-94 Interchange Bridge to accommodate light rail tracks between the westbound and eastbound vehicle traffic lanes.

Reconstruction of Olson Memorial Highway as a 6-lane principal arterial highway from I-94 to the BNSF freight rail corridor with light rail tracks between the westbound and eastbound lanes.

Reconstruction of Olson Memorial Highway would also include 10' boulevards, 6' sidewalks, 7 signalized intersections and 3 mid-block crossings. The design also leaves space for a future cycle track on the north side of TH 55.

Center platform stations at Van White Boulevard and Penn Avenue.

Olson Memorial Highway Crossing

Reconstruction of the westbound TH 55 Bridge to accommodate light rail tracks running at-grade between the westbound and eastbound bridges. Tracks turn northwest and go under the reconstructed westbound bridge and connect to the BNSF freight rail corridor.

Plymouth Avenue/Golden Valley Road Station

Center platform stations at Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road, including vertical circulation (elevator and stair tower) at both locations.

Golden Valley Alignment

Construct new LRT bridges over both Grimes and Golden Valley ponds, and maintain freight rail on existing embankment across the ponds.

Reconstruct Theodore Wirth Parkway, Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road roadway bridges over rail corridor to accommodate both freight and light rail tracks.

Robbinsdale Station

Center platform station south of 42nd Avenue and a 550 stall Park & Ride structure in downtown Robbinsdale. The Park & Ride structure would include a bus transit center and accommodate future transit oriented development (TOD).

Reconstruct 36th Avenue bridge over rail corridor to accommodate both freight and light rail tracks and construct new LRT bridge over Trunk Highway 100.

Bass Lake Road Station

West Broadway rail crossing would be constructed to be quiet-zone ready and include a roundabout on the east side and full access to 48th Avenue / Welcome Avenue.

Center platform station south of Bass Lake Road with an adjacent 170 space surface Park & Ride.

63rd Avenue Station/Park & Ride

Center platform station north of 63rd Avenue. Pedestrian bridge over freight rail to station platform with vertical circulation from the existing 565 space Park & Ride structure.

Brooklyn Boulevard Station

New LRT bridge over County Road 81 north of 73rd Avenue N.

Center platform station south of Brooklyn Boulevard with pedestrian access points at both north and south ends of the platform.

Reconstruction of Brooklyn Boulevard from 73rd Avenue to Candlewood Drive to accommodate LRT.

West Broadway Reconstruction

Continue coordination with Hennepin County West Broadway (CSAH 103) reconstruction project, which includes roadway reconstruction from Candlewood Drive to 93rd Avenue.

Construction of light rail tracks between northbound and southbound lanes.

Center platform station south of 85th Avenue with pedestrian access points at both north and south ends of the platform.

93rd Avenue/Oak Grove Parkway Stations

Center platform station south of 93rd Avenue with pedestrian access points at both north and south ends of the platform.

Center platform station on west side of West Broadway at Oak Grove Parkway, with an adjacent 850 space Park & Ride structure.

Construction of roadway network north of TH 610 to accommodate light rail, access to the park and ride and the operations and maintenance facility.

Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) Location

Construction of an Operations and Maintenance facility, storage bays, loop track, employee parking lot and stormwater retention pond on a 10.8 acre site at 101st Avenue N and Xylon Avenue.

Transmission Lines

Shift Xcel transmission lines to the west side of the BNSF corridor.