



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Public Works

Date: March 3, 2015

To: Honorable Kevin Reich, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: Blue Line LRT Extension Update (Bottineau Corridor LRT)

Recommendation:

Receive and File an update regarding the Blue Line Light Rail Extension (Bottineau Corridor LRT).

Previous Directives:

May 13, 2014 – Approve the proposed comments on the DEIS for the Blue Line LRT Extension (Bottineau Corridor) and direct the Public Works Department to submit the comments to Hennepin County.

February 15, 2012 – City Council Resolution to accept the invitation to become a participating agency for the Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement process.

February 15, 2012 – City Council Resolution to approve and submit comments on the scope of issues to be studied in the Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

February 15, 2012 – City Council Resolution to endorse the D1 alignment for the Bottineau Transitway, subject to an executed Memorandum of Understanding with Hennepin County and Metro Transit to pursue an arterial transitway project and transit-oriented development initiatives in North Minneapolis, separate from the Bottineau Transitway project.

February 14, 2012 – T&PW Committee received and filed presentation by Hennepin County on the Bottineau Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement process.

September 22, 2009 – T&PW Committee Receive and File presentation on the Bottineau Transitway Alternatives Analysis Study.

Department Information

Prepared by: Donald Pflaum, P.E. PTOE, Transportation Planner 612-673-2129

Approved by: _____
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee: Donald Pflaum, Transportation Planner
Dan Soler, Project Director - Blue Line Extension

Financial Impact

No financial impact

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification – Public meeting held on February 26, 2015.

City Goals – This project supports the following city goals:

A hub of economic activity and innovation: Businesses – big and small – start, move, stay and grow here. Infrastructure, public services and community assets support businesses and commerce.

Living well: Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life.

High-quality and convenient transportation options connect every corner of the city.

Comprehensive Plan - Supports Comprehensive Plan Goals

Project Information

The 13-mile Blue Line LRT Extension (BLRT) is a regional light-rail transit corridor that serves Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park (Attachment #1). This line will make direct connections to both the Blue and Green Lines and to the Northstar Commuter Rail Line at Target Field Station in Downtown Minneapolis. Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) connections to the BLRT are planned along Penn Avenue North and Emerson/Fremont Avenue North.

The BLRT project is expected to serve an estimated 27,000 riders per weekday and is proposed to have up to 11 new stations, including 2 new stations in Minneapolis. The project will interline with the Blue Line, allowing for a one-seat ride between Brooklyn Park, Downtown Minneapolis, and the Mall of America. The BLRT project has been estimated to cost \$1 billion in 2017 dollars. The Federal Transit Administration's New Starts Program is anticipated to cover 49% of the project budget. 10% percent of the project budget is expected from the State of Minnesota, 10% from the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA), and 31% from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB).

Project Status

After the DEIS comment period ended, Hennepin County turned the project over to the Metropolitan Council. The Metropolitan Council will oversee project development, engineering, construction, and operation/maintenance of the Blue Line Extension and has created a project office to lead this effort. Kimley Horn has been hired to be the design consultant for the project. HDR has been hired to work on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) document.

At the beginning of 2015, the project office began meeting with each of the cities along the line to address comments raised in the DEIS process. Issue Resolution Team (IRT) meetings are held weekly to address a number of technical topics including street/roadway impacts, station placement, pedestrian/bicycle connections, intersection configurations, utilities, and environmental issues. It is intended that most of the DEIS issues will be resolved by the end of 2015 to allow for a municipal consent package in 2016. Work on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has also begun and will continue throughout 2015.

Monthly Corridor Management Committee meetings are underway with Mayor Hodges representing the City of Minneapolis. A corridor Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Business Advisory Committee (BAC) will also be established in the near future with Minneapolis representation. The first community meeting hosted by the Blue Line Extension Project Office occurred on February 26, 2015 with a focus on the Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Ave stations. It is important to note that there is close collaboration between the Blue Line Extension Preliminary Engineering work and the Hennepin County led Station Area Planning process. There have been several well attended public meetings to date hosted by Hennepin County to solicit comments regarding potential land use changes around the proposed station areas, to allow community members to ask specific questions about the LRT line, and to allow members of the public to raise concerns about the LRT project.

Project Schedule

Below is the projected schedule for this project:

2014-2016 – Project development (preliminary engineering)

2016 – Environmental work/municipal consent process

2017 – Final engineering

2018 – Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) secured/utility work begins

2018-2020 – Heavy construction

2021 – Construction concludes, passenger operations begin

The Project Office will present this information and will be available for questions.

Attachment #1 – Map of Corridor

Attachment #2 – BLRT Presentation

cc: Council Member Barbara Johnson
Council Member Blong Yang