

City of Minneapolis
Request for Committee Action

To: Transportation & Public Works
Date: 2/2/2016
From: Public Works Department
Prepared by: Donald Pflaum, Transportation Planner - PW TPP; Rebecca Hughes,
Transportation Planner - PW TPP and Jim Voll, Planner - CPED
Presented by: Dan Soler, Blue Line LRT Project Director
File type: Resolution
Subcategory: Transit Project

Subject:

Public Hearing on the City's approval or disapproval of the Preliminary Design Plans for the route of the Blue Line LRT Extension

Description:

Approving the Preliminary Design Plans for the route of the Blue Line LRT Extension (Bottineau Corridor) pursuant to Minnesota Statute 473.3994 Subd. 3

Previous Actions:

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

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

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.

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.

January 5, 2016 – Set the public hearing for the Blue Line LRT Extension Municipal Consent drawings for February 2, 2016, at the 9:30 AM Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting.

Ward/Neighborhood/Address:

Ward 5
Sumner-Glenwood, Harrison, Willard-Hay, Near North

Background/Analysis:

The 13-mile Blue Line LRT Extension (Bottineau Corridor) is a regional light-rail transit corridor that serves Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park (Attachment #1) that will interline with the existing Blue Line LRT, which serves the Hiawatha Corridor, the airport, and the Mall of America. The Blue Line Extension will directly connect to the Green Line and the Northstar Commuter Rail Line in Downtown Minneapolis.

On December 9, 2015, the Metropolitan Council approved the project scope, set the budget at \$1.498 billion, and directed staff to release the Municipal Consent Plans, which were distributed to the affected cities on December 15, 2015. Pursuant to Minnesota state statute 473.3994, the Metropolitan Council, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority held a public open house on January 19, 2016, with a joint public hearing. The City of Minneapolis public hearing will occur at the February 2, 2016, Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting.

Through the project development phase of the Blue Line Extension, City staff worked with the Bottineau Project Office (BPO) and governmental partners to address technical issues through the Issue Resolution Team (IRT). In addition to technical issues, staff analyzed the corridor designs considering conformance with adopted plans, development opportunities, pedestrian accessibility, bicycle connections, bus connections, and urban design, to inform the development of the final layout that is provided in the Municipal Consent package.

Minneapolis Public Works and CPED staff reviewed both the Minneapolis and Golden Valley municipal consent drawings for consistency with the previous layouts presented through the IRT process and to the public during community meetings. The Golden Valley municipal consent drawings were reviewed given their proximity to the City of Minneapolis boundary, as the stations in Golden Valley will serve Minneapolis residents. The Municipal Consent drawings reflect the design that was developed and discussed at the IRT meetings and presented to the public and should be approved. Also, the documents were reviewed for consistency with the following:

- The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth
- The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan
- Minneapolis Near Northside Master Plan
- North Loop Plan Small Area Plan
- Draft Blue Line Extension Station Area Plans
- Minneapolis City Council LPA Resolution
- Minneapolis City Council DEIS Comments

Below are several highlighted comments regarding the plans that represent a number of topics:

- Retaining wall treatments near Target Field Station need further attention so that the pedestrian realm can be optimized.
- The BLRT Project Office needs to continue to work with the city and county to advance the proposed 10-foot cycle-track between the bridge over the BNSF RR and Van White Memorial Boulevard in addition to the 6-foot sidewalk. The maintenance of the cycle-track also needs to be addressed.
- Midblock crossings need to be shown on the plans with full traffic signals.
- Stormwater treatments need to be identified and placed in a manner that will not conflict with future development areas.
- The BLRT Project Office needs to continue to work with the city on water and sewer pipe relocations/improvements in addition to stormwater permitting.
- The BLRT Project Office needs to continue to work with the city on station design, station safety/security issues, and improving the pedestrian realm.
- Landscaping, trees, and tree boulevards in the corridor and in locations between ballasted track and Olson Memorial Highway median curbs should be a future design discussion.
- A note in the plans stating that the speed limit on Olson Memorial Highway will be reduced to 35 mph would be helpful.
- Reinforce the need to implement stations at both Plymouth Avenue and at Golden Valley Road as shown in the plans. Both stations serve much of North Minneapolis where there are high numbers of transit dependent riders.

Detailed technical comments can be found in Attachment #2. These comments will be forwarded to the BLRT Project Office for further consideration. Once the Municipal Consent process has been completed, the BLRT Project Office will finish the 30% plan set. The 30% plans will be completed by August 2016 and will be the next opportunity for the city to comment on the progress of the project.

Financial Review:

No additional appropriation required, amount included in current budget.

Attachments:

1. Attachment #1 - Map
2. Attachment #2 – Detailed technical comments
3. Attachment #3 - Presentation