

METRO Blue Line Extension

Minneapolis, Minnesota

New Starts Project Development

Information Prepared August 2014

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and Metropolitan Council (MC) propose to construct a 13-mile light rail transit (LRT) extension from the existing Target Field LRT station in downtown Minneapolis to the northwest suburb of Brooklyn Park. The project would also serve neighborhoods in north Minneapolis and the suburban communities of Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, and Crystal. The project includes ten to 11 stations, three of which would have park-and-ride facilities, an operation and maintenance facility, and the purchase of 26 light rail vehicles. The current estimated capital cost of the project is \$1.002 billion. HCRRA and MC expect to seek 50 percent from the New Starts program.

HCRRA and MC believe that the project will mitigate traffic congestion and support population growth in the corridor, improve transit access to employment nodes around the northern end of the corridor, and improve transportation options for zero-car households, which account for up to half of the population in areas along and near the corridor. As an extension of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region's light rail network, the line would provide convenient connections to employment concentrations in downtown Minneapolis, in downtown Saint Paul, and on the University of Minnesota campus.

HCRRA and MC identified a locally preferred alternative (LPA) and adopted it into the region's fiscally constrained long range plan in May 2013. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published in April 2014. The project entered New Starts Project Development in August 2014. HCRRA and MC anticipate completing the environmental review process with receipt of a Record of Decision in August 2016, gaining entry into Engineering in late 2016, receiving a Full Funding Grant Agreement in 2018, and starting revenue service in 2021.