

METRO Blue Line Extension

Minneapolis, Minnesota

New Starts Project Development

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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. 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.

The project is anticipated to include ten to 11 stations, three of which would have park-and-ride facilities. The project is also anticipated to include an operations and maintenance facility and 26 light rail vehicles. The current estimated cost of the project is \$1.002 billion, of which HCRRA and MC expect to seek 50 percent from the New Starts program.

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. HCRRA and MC anticipate completing the environmental review process with receipt of a Record of Decision in early 2016, gaining entry into the Engineering phase in August 2016, receiving a Full Funding Grant Agreement in mid-2017, and beginning revenue service in 2020.