

Questions & Comments for Agency Staff

**Received at Golden Valley Community Meeting
January 7, 2015 at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute**

Rezoning and Development

How can I prevent my neighborhood from being rezoned?

What is the process for re-zoning a neighborhood and other plots of land?

Properties in Golden Valley can only be rezoned through the action of the City Council. The rezoning process requires public hearings at both the Planning Commission and the City Council. Anyone from the public is welcome to speak in support of or against the rezoning proposal. In addition, the zoning must be in alignment with the City's Comprehensive Plan, which guides overall land uses and development across the City.

A use on a property that is rezoned is allowed to remain—though not expand—until the owner is ready to switch to the new zoning or until the existing use is discontinued for a period of more than one year. At that point, the use would revert to the new zoning designation.

How can we prevent the disappearance of our local church?

The Church of St. Margaret Mary, or any business or institution, would only “disappear” if it voluntarily decided to sell or redevelop its property. Eminent domain cannot be used as a part of any station area plans to redevelop private property for new uses. In fact, Minnesota law restricts eminent domain to public use or public purpose and specifically excludes economic development or expansion of tax base as a legitimate use of eminent domain. Any change in the use of a property would require three things: 1) a change to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map, 2) a willing private seller, and 3) an interested buyer. Without these things, no change will occur.

Who decides on what the final plans for development at stations areas and parking will be?

Hennepin County, with assistance from the project consultant, has been working to develop station area plans for each of the light rail stations. The final report, created with input from the City and members of the City's Planning Advisory Committee, will be submitted to the City Council in May of 2015. The City Council will be asked to adopt the plan as a Planning Study, which will provide one source of input into the Comprehensive Plan update scheduled to be completed by 2018. The City Council, with feedback from various Commissions and residents, will approve the Comprehensive Plan and the direction in which it guides the City and submit it to the Metropolitan Council for review and approval.

I would like more information about the fire station. Will it be closed or relocated? How will the square footage of land that it covers be saved if it closes? What will be the new time it takes to get to a fire?

A study will be conducted to evaluate the needs of the City's Fire Department and its facilities and, based on the findings, recommendations will be made regarding any closure of, relocation of, or reinvestment in any of the existing buildings. Details and ramifications of any recommended actions will be provided as part of the study.

Support

I am concerned that we who support the project will not be heard compared to the people who don't support the project. How can we make our voices heard?

There are a number of ways to share your opinions regarding the proposed light rail project. The first is to contact the City Council via phone or email and voice your support, or speak to the Council as a group during the Open Forum opportunity prior to all City Council meetings. Second, contact any of the City's representatives to the Community Advisory Committee, the Business Advisory Committee, or the Corridor Management Committee via the Planning Division (planning@goldenvalleymn.gov). All of these committees provide input into the decisions that will eventually be made by the Metropolitan Council. Finally, track the issues that are being discussed by signing up for email lists with the City or the Metropolitan Council.

Golden Valley PAC

How do we access Golden Valley's Planning Advisory Committee with feedback if they are supposed to be intermediaries? Will their emails be posted or will they hold meetings?

The PAC schedules monthly meetings at City Hall and these are open to the public. A schedule of the meetings can be found on the City's website or by looking at the City calendar on-line. Email communication with the PAC should be routed through the Planning Division (planning@goldenvalleymn.gov).

Station Area Plans

How and when can we see details on the Station Area Plans?

There will be a final open house in mid-May to present the plans in their entirety. The plans will be transitioned to the Cities of Golden Valley and Minneapolis to be considered for adoption. The process to adopt the plans is public as are the plan documents themselves.

Do we have dates as of today for when the next public meetings are for Station Area Plans?

The final open house for the station area planning is tentatively scheduled for mid-May. After that date, the station area planning process will transition over to the cities of Golden Valley and Minneapolis to consider adopting the plans.

When will the Station Area Plans be completed?

The station area planning process with the consultant team led by SRF Consulting Group will conclude at the end of May. The plans themselves will go through an individual process to be adopted by the cities of Golden Valley and Minneapolis. There will be continued public dialog and process throughout the adoption process.

Plans have only been developed to change the housing in the station area plan. Why hasn't there been plans developed to enhance, not change, the neighborhoods to create a more welcoming station (such as roads, paths, lighting, traffic, and green space)?

Station area planning has several main goals that include making the stations more accessible to the surrounding community (sidewalk, trail and street connections); making the area around the stations safer (lighting), making the stations more a part of the surrounding community, and exploring future development options that are supportive of the stations and the LRT service. The planning process also included a market analysis and development concept stage that was to advise the work on what the private market may determine to be potentially developable areas. This

work included the development concepts that indicated changes to the current housing areas. These changes would only happen if there was an interested developer and willing sellers and the proper market conditions. The likely outcome of the plans are enhancements to the area such as trails, sidewalks and lighting.

Even though the pastor of St. Margaret Mary has repeatedly told the powers that be that St. Margaret Mary and its surrounding properties are not for sale, we keep seeing renderings of the St. Margaret Mary property razed and replaced with townhouses. Why?

The station area planning process included a market analysis and development concept stage that was to advise the work on what the private market may determine to be potentially developable areas. St. Margaret Mary Church was included in the development concepts as an area where there could be development pressure. The church is under no threat to razed and redeveloped.

Why are you proposing a fundamental change to Golden Valley where many families have homes and a quiet functional neighborhood? These changes will have a negative impact.

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Why aren't we consulted before choices are made (like your paid consultant SRF for Station Area Planning)?

The station area planning process was advised by the Community Working Group which included all the members of the Golden Valley LRT Planning Advisory Committee who were appointed by the Golden Valley City Council. The planning process also included two meetings for members of the public to provide input and decision making. There will be a final open house in mid-May for a final presentation on the plans in their entirety. After this point, the plans will transition to the cities of Golden Valley and Minneapolis to be considered for adoption. The public will have continued opportunities to provide input and decision making regarding the plans.

Alignment Selection

West Broadway has needed attention for decades. Would it not be better City Planning to run the line down West Broadway/81 with stations at 26th, 36th, and 42nd for Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Minneapolis, and Crystal?

Why not go down Penn Avenue where it is more populated?

Given the current weather, how is the Golden Valley location a plus for the north side?

The stretch of the Blue Line planned between Robbinsdale and Golden Valley Road stations serve no one and bypass a huge public transit-dependent population in North Minneapolis. Does this route really serve those who need public transit the most? Yes, there will be bus connections, but surely West Broadway would be a route that serves those who need it.

Who made the decision to go through Golden Valley and site? Why was it chosen and how much input did the Golden Valley council have?

The study of transit improvement alternatives in the Bottineau Corridor began in 2008 and ended with the selection of the preferred alignment (locally preferred alternative or LPA), adopted into our region's transportation policy plan

in May of 2013. Details relative to the study of alternatives, including decision making, can be found in the Alternatives Analysis Summary Report available via the following link:

<http://www.hennepin.us/~media/hennepinus/residents/transportation/bottineau/bottineau-alternative-analysis-summary-report.pdf>

Environmental Impacts

What will prevent damage to and interference with wildlife corridors?

How does a proposed Golden Valley Road station affect Bassett Creek?

The study of transit improvement alternatives in the Bottineau Corridor began in 2008 and included the completion of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes study of impacts on wildlife and the Bassett Creek watershed. The DEIS is available via the following link:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension.aspx>

Parking

Will a parking lot be funded by federal dollars and built?

Will there be a parking facility if the Golden Valley Road station is chosen? What about the Chalet location?

Please address the parking for LRT workers and future riders. Why is a preferred “answer” to park on residential streets? How will the problems caused by parking on both sides of the streets be handled?

Can you assure us that efforts are being made for alternate parking rather than turning our neighborhoods into 20-hour parking lots with lessen neighborhood cohesion and safety?

The project will continue to analyze the need for parking facilities as part of the on-going design process in 2015. If we determine there is a need for parking , we will propose parking facilities for the Met Council to consider adding to the the project base scope and budget and therefore be eligible for federal funding. Metro Transit uses education and enforcement to ensure that transit customers park in designated facilities.

Eminent Domain

You claim no development will occur by eminent domain, but have offered no comment on the ways people can be enticed or coerced to sell. What protects the neighbors?

It was stated that eminent domain could not be used for an economic development project. Is the station are in GV an economic development project?

Where can eminent domain be used with respect to the Golden Valley light rail project?

The Blue Line Extension Project will most likely need to acquire property to construct the light rail project. This includes acquiring property for alignment, stations, parking facilities, trails, drainage, mitigation and other project needs. The project will continue to analyze the need for property acquisition as part of the on-going design process and property owners will be engaged about the status of their property throughout the process.

The Metropolitan Council’s property acquisition process is governed by state and federal law. More information can be found at: www.metrocouncil.org/About-Us/What-We-Do/Real-Estate-Acquisition.aspx

Station Locations

What is the process to cancel a station at the Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue station locations?

What is the current estimate of number of passengers per day at either Golden Valley Road or Plymouth Avenue stations? Are these the lowest passenger estimates?

Why are 2 stations planned in such a close proximity to each other? Are both, or either, needed?

Is Met Council Corridor Management Committee still planning to decide where to locate the station by the end of March?

Why a station at Theodore Wirth and Golden Valley Road when public transit is already underutilized?

Does Station Area Planning include planning whether or not to put a station at Golden Valley Road? How do residents have input into this decision?

Are there conditions the city must adopt (zoning, density, etc.) in order to “qualify” for a station? In other words, is there strenuous leverage being applied to City government to change the neighborhoods to generate ridership?

Station locations are determined by many factors, including, but not limited to: current and future population and employment forecasts, capital costs, ridership, access to transit service by underserved populations and connections to key destinations.

If the project adds or eliminates stations along the corridor, the public will have opportunities to provide input at future public meetings including: testimony at Municipal Consent public hearings in late 2015 or early 2016.

Property Values

Have past property value studies accounted for loss of parkland and green space?

The University of Minnesota’s Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) has conducted studies of light rail transit and impacts to land use, housing and commercial and industrial property values. Copies of these reports can be found at the CTS website: cts.umn.edu/Publications/researchsummaries.

Traffic

We are trying to minimize traffic in the area, not increase or speed it up. How can LRT help?

If this goes forward, what is the estimated increase in traffic to the area? And what plans are being considered to handle this?

Access to and from the transit stations will be analyzed as part of the on-going design process. The project will identify the various ways riders will access the stations via walking, biking, bus connections and driving. Should there be adverse traffic impacts due to light rail service, measures will be identified through the environmental process to avoid, minimize or mitigate.

Noise

What measures will be taken to reduce and deaden electronic beeps and dinging as trains enter and exit stations?

Do trains ring as they approach/depart the station? How far from the stations and at what time of day?

Will sound barriers be built? Where will they be built?

What will be the decibel noise level with trains and bells coming into stations? Daytime vs. nighttime hours?

Noise impact from LRT projects are assessed by comparing the existing (ambient) noise with the noise predicted to be generated by the project. The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) noise criteria take into account the noise sensitivity of the receiver by land use category. If noise from LRT operations are above the FTA noise criteria, then measures to mitigate noise will be considered to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts. Through the on-going design process, the volume of train bells will be determined to promote safety around stations and minimize potential impacts to residents.

Public Meetings

Why are meetings about local issues like specifics of stations not always held in the zone that the stations are planned for?

Metropolitan Council strives to provide access to all residents regarding project issues. This means our public meetings need to be held in locations that comply with the American Disabilities Act, near transit services and can also meet the audio/visual needs of the meeting. Neighborhood groups and residents are encouraged to contact project staff to set-up smaller neighborhood meetings or one-to-one meetings to discuss project details. Please contact the Blue Line Extension Project Office at 612.373.5301 for more information.

Map Information

Is there a more detailed satellite image map available? It would provide answers pertaining to green space impact.

Can you please share a more detailed and zoomed in map of the LRT and stations in Golden Valley with more streets so we can truly see where it will go and where all the stations will be?

For a closer look at the station locations, meeting materials from the February 26, 2015 meeting have been posted on the project's website at BlueLineExt.org under the "Public Involvement" tab. As design progresses, additional maps and station information will be posted on the website.

Construction

Can Golden Valley pass an ordinance to ban night time construction, say between 7:00pm and 6:00am?

Will construction traffic be allowed on the 1800 block of York Avenue?

What are the construction hours?

Metropolitan Council complies with city ordinances regarding construction, including noise ordinances. A construction plan will be developed as part of the project that identifies the parameters for when and where construction activities can take place. While most construction will occur during daytime hours, there may be times when we'll need to do construction activities at night to minimize impacts. For example, utility work may be done overnight to minimize the impacts of utility shut off. We will also develop a construction communication plan and communicate construction activities to area residents and businesses.

Timeline

Studies now in the 25th year – is there anything preventing Golden Valley from spearheading this to completion while I can still use it? I will be 63 in March 2015.

Is the beginning of the construction of the blue line dependent on development of the southwest line? In other words, if the southwest line is delayed, will this process be set back?

Construction is expected to begin in 2018 and service in 2021. This amount of time is needed to complete the required environmental documentation, construction and testing. Construction of the Blue Line Extension is not dependent on the construction of the Green Line Extension (Southwest Line).

Safety

Will light rail travelers be hesitant to travel via light rail because of unsavory characters hanging around light rail stations?

Will there be any changes to local policing needed with stations in these areas of Golden Valley?

Safety is a top priority of Metro Transit. Metro Transit employs many measures to ensure transit customers are safe using light rail. Station platforms are equipped with security cameras, emergency phones and patrolled by Metro Transit Police Officers. Policing activities are coordinated with local jurisdictions.

Funding, Costs, and Taxes

Why hasn't there been a referendum about having a line and station in Golden Valley?

Are there tax breaks or other monetary benefits for Golden Valley?

How is this being funded? We just heard federal money is not going to be there. One billion is a lot of money.

Is Congressman Sabo correct when he says the anticipated 50% federal share of the cost has been reduced to only 40%?

How much taxpayer money has been spent so far on consultants, studies, charettes, concept sketches, etc. when there is still not a spike in the ground?

The METRO Blue Line LRT Extension project is estimated to cost \$1 billion in year 2017 dollars. At this time, it is anticipated that funds for capital costs will come from four sources: Counties Transit Improvement Board's transit sales tax in the metro area (31%); Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (10%); State of Minnesota (10%); and Federal Transit Administration (49%).

The Metropolitan Council, as the regional governmental agency charged with designing, building and operating the line, will be the grantee of federal funds

Miscellaneous

What will be the hours of operation for the light rail?

If in 2016, Golden Valley decides the benefits of LRT do not outweigh everything else, what happens? Does Golden Valley get skipped and there are no stops?

How do citizens get information for all committees working on the Blue Line Extension?

Do you have data on how light rail has economically affected commuters (such as Hiawatha area)?

Is it true that there will be 3 sets of tracks in this corridor? Is it true one of them hauls from Monticello?

We have a lot of roads and bridges that require attention and we do not need this tax payer boondoggle tearing through our neighborhood, so how do we cancel this misguided plan?

Why was the CMC meeting cancelled since you said there is so much work to do at the 2nd meeting?

Not answered at this time.