



# light rail UPDATE

## Light Rail Transit In Golden Valley

### METRO Blue Line Part Of Region's Long-Term Transportation Plan

Because moving people and goods efficiently supports a healthy economy, a well-functioning transportation system is essential to a prosperous regional future.

In the Twin Cities metro area, the **Metropolitan Council** is charged under state and federal law with overall planning for the seven-county region's transportation system. This includes highways, mass transit, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian connections.

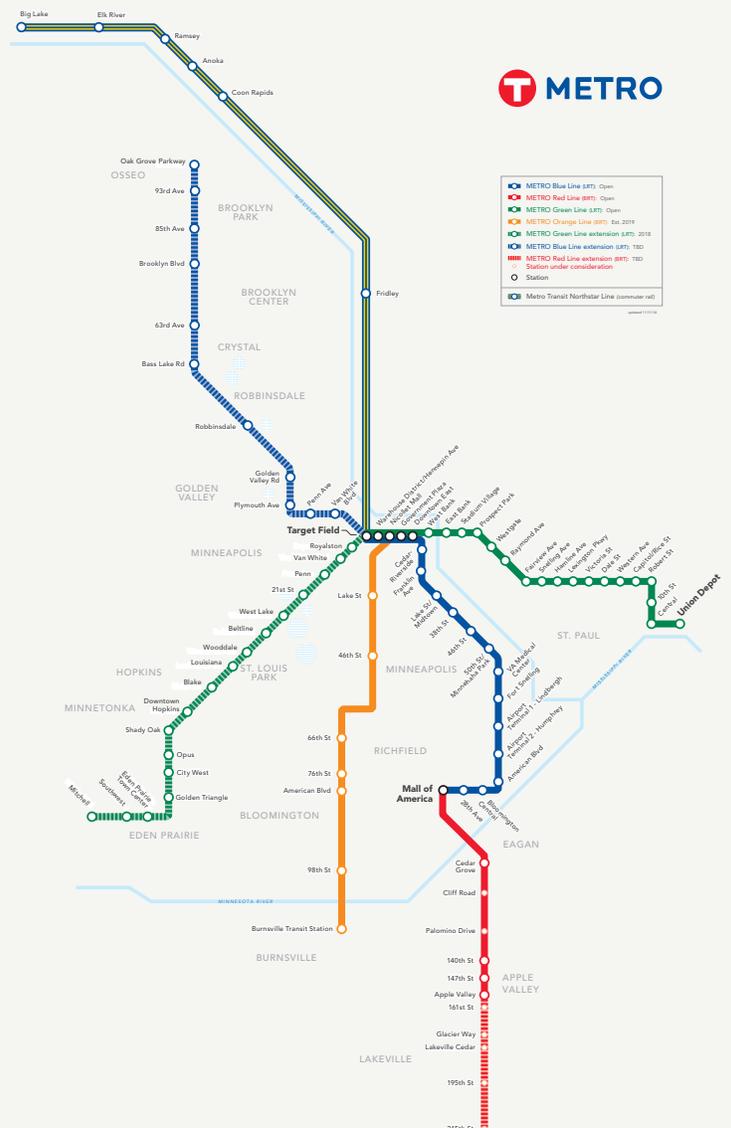
Transportation and land use studies along the Bottineau Corridor date back to the late 1980s, and the Bottineau Corridor has consistently been included in regional transportation system plans. Many different alignments and modes, including bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail transit (LRT), and commuter rail, have been considered and evaluated in corridor-specific plans and studies.

In early 2013, the Met Council amended its 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) to include the METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Transitway), a dedicated light rail transit (LRT) corridor proposed to extend the Blue Line (Hiawatha LRT) into the north-west suburbs. The METRO Blue line will travel from downtown Minneapolis to Golden Valley, then head north along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad corridor past Theodore Wirth Park and into Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park, where it will end north of Hwy 610.

### County And City Partnerships

**Hennepin County** is an important partner in the METRO Blue Line Extension and is involved in station area planning through its Community Works program, which was created in 1994. The mission of the program is to enhance how communities work together to build long-term value by improving existing systems and by investing in infrastructure, public works, parks, and the natural environment.

*(continued on page 4)*



# Planning For An LRT Station

**Station Area**—The area that surrounds a proposed transit station—typically a half-mile around the station, or about a 10-minute walk from the platform where people board the train.

**Station Area Plan**—A plan that outlines the look, feel, and fit of the transit station into the surrounding community.

Each station area plan must align with community goals and feature strong community engagement. Because every station area is different, the plans will vary by what is appropriate for each station. It is an opportunity for community dialogue about needs, desires, and concerns regarding the station area. It helps communities prepare for this major transit investment and will inform future decision-making on the LRT project.

A station area plan:

- is community based

- focuses on fostering great neighborhoods and high-quality transit-oriented development

- supports transit by looking at:

- transportation and circulation (bike, walk, car, bus)

- urban design and “placemaking” elements (lighting, benches, signage, art)

- public infrastructure (streets, trails, surface water management)

- does not include the station platform

- does not address engineering of the LRT line, although it may inform where certain station elements go (such as the platform, electric substations, street crossings)

LRT project decisions will be made by regional policy makers during the engineering phase of LRT planning; these decisions are not expected to be made until late 2016 or early 2017.

**Technical Advisory Committee**—Includes staff from the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metro Transit, the Three Rivers Park District, the Cities of Golden Valley and Minneapolis, and others.

**Community Working Groups**—Residents chosen by the Cities along the LRT line to represent them in the process.

Early in 2014, Hennepin County hired a team of planning consultants to help develop station area plans for the first four proposed LRT stations in Minneapolis and Golden Valley. In coordination with the Technical Advisory Committee and the Community Work-

ing Groups, the consultants created and revised preliminary concept plans over a period of months. First drafts of the concepts were reviewed in September and October and revised before an open house Nov 12. They can be seen at [www.hennepin.us/bottineau](http://www.hennepin.us/bottineau).

A second open house is planned for Jan 29. The consultant will show revised concept plans and solicit additional feedback. Final concepts are expected to be displayed at a third open house April 30.

## Station Area Concept Plans

**Station area concept plans** are intended to lay out, in a very general way, a picture of a possible future for an area. The preliminary concept plans shown at the Nov 12 open house, which had specific building footprints and site layouts, were intended to be representative options for public review. Final concept plans will be generalized to show areas where the land uses may change in the future and will use descriptive categories such as “medium density residential” or “neighborhood level retail” to provide context and offer guidance for possible Comprehensive Plan and zoning changes at the City level.

The final station area plans should be ready in May 2015. The Golden Valley City Council will be asked to approve them as concept plans, which means they are not legally binding but do provide important input for the update to the Comprehensive Plan. The process of updating the City’s Comprehensive Plan will begin in 2015 with extensive community engagement. For more information about the City’s Comprehensive Plan, go to [www.goldenvalleymn.gov/planning/comprehensiveplan/index.php](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/planning/comprehensiveplan/index.php).

At some point in the future, either as part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan update or at a later date, the land uses around the station areas could be reguided within the Comprehensive Plan to reflect land uses similar to those in the concept plans. This would be followed by changes to the Zoning Map in order to align the City’s land use regulations with the “vision” for the area. At that point, change could happen at any time on a parcel-by-parcel basis if there were willing private sellers and interested buyers. 

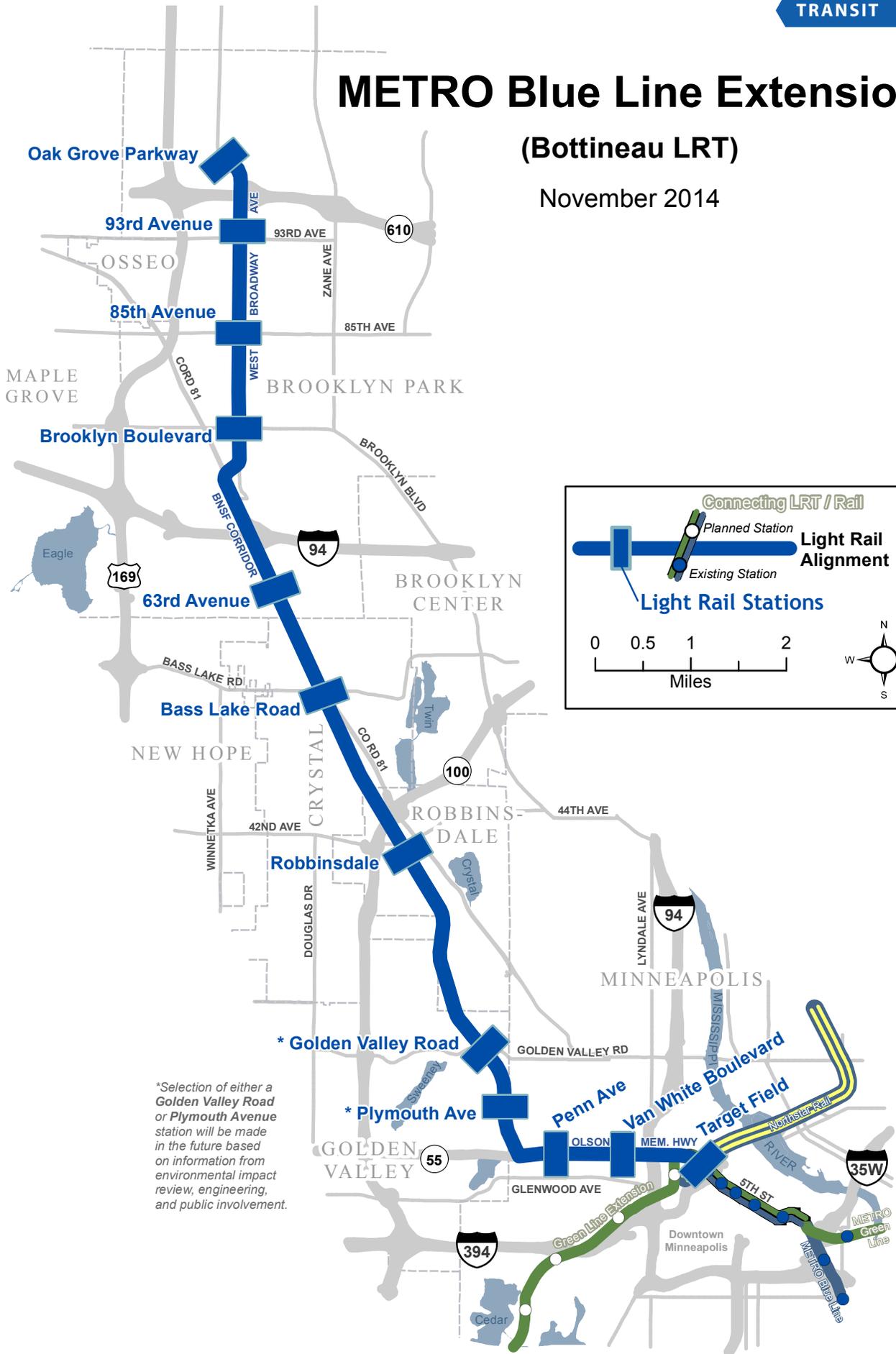
## Redevelopment Of Private Property

Eminent domain will not 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 its use for economic development or expansion of tax base. 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.

# METRO Blue Line Extension

(Bottineau LRT)

November 2014



*\*Selection of either a Golden Valley Road or Plymouth Avenue station will be made in the future based on information from environmental impact review, engineering, and public involvement.*

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Golden Valley, MN 55427

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[www.goldenvalleymn.gov](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov)

## Light Rail Transit In Golden Valley (continued)

The Bottineau Community Works initiative seeks to bring together Hennepin County and cities along the light rail line to plan for and take advantage of opportunities that will arise with construction of the METRO Blue Line Extension. While engineering and construction of the line stop with the basic infrastructure, station area planning will work to create bicycle and pedestrian connections, promote neighborhood development, and support business and retail opportunities.

Last fall the **Golden Valley City Council** created the Bottineau Light Rail Transit Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) to facilitate the City's participation in the station area planning process. The Bottineau PAC members act as a conduit between Golden Valley residents and decision-makers by communicating resident concerns to staff at the City, Hennepin County, and Metropolitan Council. They also review plans to identify impacts and effects on Golden Valley residents and infrastructure. The PAC's monthly meetings are open to the public. To receive meeting agendas and minutes, visit the City website.

### What's Next?

There are multiple opportunities to get involved in the station area planning process and share your opinions. Contact staff or elected officials, attend upcoming meetings, or peruse the resources available from the Met Council, Hennepin County, and the City of Golden Valley.

Public comments from the Nov 12 open house are being compiled and will be incorporated into revised materials that will be available online before the Jan 29 open house.

Between workshops, the consultants and County and City staff will be out in the community sharing information and gathering input.

The County will review final plans in April 2015 and then hand them over to the City. After station area planning concludes in May 2015, residents will still have opportunity for dialogue through Golden Valley's city-wide Comprehensive Planning process beginning in 2015 and ending in 2018. 

### Contact Information

- **Hennepin County staff:**  
bottineau@hennepin.us.
- **Golden Valley City staff:**  
planning@goldenvalleymn.gov.
- **Golden Valley City Council:** go to  
[www.goldenvalleymn.gov/council/members](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/council/members).
- **Hennepin County Commissioner  
Linda Higgins:** linda.higgins@hennepin.us.

### Resources

- [www.goldenvalleymn.gov/planning/bottineau](http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/planning/bottineau)
- [www.hennepin.us/bottineau](http://www.hennepin.us/bottineau)
- [www.bluelineext.org](http://www.bluelineext.org)

### Meetings

#### METRO Blue Line Extension

- **Corridor Management Committee:** Typically meets second Wednesday of the month; find agendas at [www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/SWLRT-Committees](http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/SWLRT-Committees).

#### Station Area Planning

- **Wednesday, Jan 7, 6–8 pm:** Neighborhood Meeting, Courage Kenney Rehabilitation Institute, 3915 Golden Valley Rd. Parking will be in the south lot.
- **Thursday, Jan 29, 5:30–8 pm:** Open House #2, University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center, 2001 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis
- **Thursday, April 30:** Open House #3, University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center, 2001 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis