

AGENDA

1. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION CALLED TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL: Parisian, Murphy, Blonigan, Mayor Pro Tem Wagner
3. DISCUSSION
 - A. 2025 Budget Discussion
 - B. Assessment Policy Discussion
 - C. LRT Municipal Consent Process
4. STAFF UPDATES
 - A. Other
5. COUNCIL UPDATES
 - A. Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant - Letter of Support (Blonigan)
 - B. Community Garden Concern (Blonigan)
6. ADJOURNMENT

TO: Mayor and City Council
PREPARED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
APPROVED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
DATE: August 14, 2024
RE: 2025 Budget Discussion

Background:

As required by the City Charter, the 2025 Proposed annual budget for the City is being submitted for your consideration. Note, this version remains a draft, and the City Council will be required to approve a Not-to-exceed, preliminary budget by the end of September, 2024. Then, in December of 2024, Council will formally approve the budget, that will be recorded with the Hennepin County.

Analysis:

Department Heads spent the spring and summer working with their staff to align the needs of the department with the goals of the Council. In July, Department Heads met with the Finance Director and City Manager to review each fund, line by line, to ensure requests were properly recorded. Ultimately, the proposed budget includes a 12% increase of \$1,056,106 to the General Fund Levy, which includes a deficit of (\$373,821). As Council will recall, 2024 included a 6% increase (from 2023).

Outside influences - Tax Capacity increased 0.53% in the last year, primarily in residential properties. Unfortunately, Fiscal Disparities decreased \$895,571 and Local Government Aid (LGA) was reduced by \$6,006. Bringing all projections together, Reserves would be at 49%.

At current, 2024 has an estimated surplus of over \$800,000; however, it is important to recall the 2024 budget included a \$240,785 deficit. Per review, budget line items were reviewed and reduced to align with the year to date spending. That said, we are unable to fully predict overtime through the end of the year, including RPD Patrol and Public Works (including snow plowing). As we near the end of the year, we can better forecast 2024 actuals, and potentially use a surplus to reduce tax burden in 2025.

Currently included as a part of a 12% increase, estimates have been adjusted for special revenues (outside the levy, Fiscal Disparities, and LGA) by inflating 3.3%. In calculating the proposed budget, staff observed the average valued home increased 2.1% which will contribute to the tax rate. The 2024 tax rate was 47.94% and the estimated 2025 budget would increase to 57.28%. Note, this rate falls in line with our neighbors (example tax capacity rates for 2024 - MPLS 57.65%, New Hope 58.34%, and Brooklyn Center 56.77%).

A primary driver of increased expenditures is related to personnel. Due to scheduled COLAs for organized labor groups, and proposed COLAs for non-union groups, the current estimate is an increase of \$334,781 from 2024. Staff have also been working with our insurance carriers to

provide additional options for employees - some of which will include cost savings for employees and the City. Beyond the increase for current employees, staff is also recommending the addition of a GIS Technician (Engineering), Facilitates Maintenance (Parks), and an Administrative Assistant (Public Safety). Staff intends to finalize a proposal on wage adjustments, to Council this fall, as the Class and Compensation study is finalized. Other, general updates have included increased budgets for training/conferences, software updates, and IT updates (including increased demands from outside agencies). Finally, RPD has also proposed adding a new K9 unit.

In 2025, no significant Capital requests were made. It should also be noted that the Internal Service funds recognize a near balance. These numbers include Central Services increased 2% (\$44,926), Central Garage decreased 2.7% (-\$63,399) and an increase in Risk Management of 44.9% (\$15,611) - All totaling a reduction of \$2,862. LMCIT recommends a 5-10% increase for all insurance (auto, property, and liability), and 10-15% for Workers Compensation (except Police which is recommended at 30-30%).

Finally, the Debt Service portion of the levy is estimated at \$1,195,724, reflecting an increase of \$427,389 from 2024 which is attributed to the bond issuance in 2023.

Recommendation:

Staff will walk through the initially proposed budget, and will be happy to respond to questions, comments, or concerns.

Attachments:

1. Tax Rate Example 2025 vs 2024 8.14.24

City of Robbinsdale

2025 Property Tax Levy Options

Estimated Tax Rate Calculation for 2025

See Table Below for Option Explanations

Exhibit 2

	Compare 2024 Actual to 2025 Option 4 Increase (Decrease)	Actual 2024	Option 1 No Change City Levy Full Debt Service 2025	Option 2 8% Increase \$704,071 on 2024 City GF Levy 2025	Option 3 10% Increase \$880,088 on 2024 City GF Levy 2025	Proposed Levy Option 4 12% Increase \$1,056,106 on 2024 City GF Levy 2025	Option 5 14% Increase \$1,232,124 on 2024 City GF Levy 2025	Option 6 16% Increase \$1,408,141 on 2024 City GF Levy 2025
General Fund	1,232,124	\$8,800,883	\$8,800,883	\$9,504,954	\$9,680,971	\$9,856,989	\$10,033,007	\$10,209,024
Debt service	427,389	767,885	1,195,274	1,195,274	1,195,274	1,195,274	1,195,274	1,195,274
Net tax capacity levy	1,659,513	9,568,768	9,996,157	10,700,228	10,876,245	11,052,263	11,228,281	11,404,298
Market value debt service levy	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Certified Levy - City	1,959,254	9,269,027	9,996,157	10,700,228	10,876,245	11,052,263	11,228,281	11,404,298
HRA Levy	11,703	323,129	334,832	334,832	334,832	334,832	334,832	334,832
Total Levy	\$1,970,957	\$9,592,156	\$10,330,989	\$11,035,060	\$11,211,077	\$11,387,095	\$11,563,113	\$11,739,130
Net Change	1,970,957							
Percent Levy change from 2024			7.70%	15.04%	16.88%	18.71%	20.55%	22.38%
Fiscal Disparity Increase	171,414		-1.79%	-1.79%	-1.79%	-1.79%	-1.79%	-1.79%
Percent Total Levy change from 2024			5.92%	13.26%	15.09%	16.93%	18.76%	20.60%
Net Change after Fiscal Disparities	1,799,543							
Estimated Tax Burden on Average Home		1,393.38	1,501.29	1,622.55	1,652.87	1,683.18	1,713.50	1,743.81
2025 = \$296,100, 2024 = 290,000 Increase = 2.10%)								
Estimated Change in Tax			107.91	229.17	259.48	289.80	320.11	350.43
Estimated Change in Tax Amount per Month			8.99	19.10	21.62	24.15	26.68	29.20
Change in Tax per \$100,000 is approximately =	-							
General Fund Deficit \Use of Reserves			(1,429,927)	(725,856)	(549,839)	(373,821)	(197,803)	(21,786)
Estimated City Tax Rate		47.935%	50.91%	55.16%	56.22%	57.28%	58.34%	59.41%

Option 1 = General Fund Tax levy stays the same as 2024, includes all debt service levies.

Option 2 = General Fund tax levy increases by 8% of GF 2024 levy in the amount of \$704,071

Option 3 = General Fund tax levy increases by 10% of GF 2024 levy in the amount of \$880,088

Option 4 = General Fund tax levy increases by 12% of GF 2024 levy in the amount of \$1,056,106

Option 5 = General Fund tax levy increases by 14% of GF 2024 levy in the amount of \$1,232,124

Option 6= General Fund tax levy increases by 16% of total 2024 levy in the amount of \$1,408,141

TO: Mayor and City Council
PREPARED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
APPROVED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
DATE: August 14, 2024
RE: Assessment Policy Discussion

Background:

On April 2, 2024, City staff presented the 2024 Street Improvement Program Feasibility Report for the 41st Ave Project and Council approved by Resolution . As the process continued, staff then presented the Improvement and Assessment Hearing for the project at the May 7th, 2024 Council Meeting. At that time, Council did not provide enough votes to advance the process - specifically, the work was not ordered; therefore, there was no required vote on the assessment process. Following, the Council directed staff to bring the work back for approval at the June 4th, 2024 meeting, and Council would later address concerns related to the Special Assessment Policy.

Analysis:

The City of Robbinsdale Special Assessment Policy is attached to this item. This Policy has been used for several years to guide the City's authority under MN Stats 429 related to work eligible for special assessments. Public improves that may use the efforts of special assessments include:

- Street, Alley, and Curb & Gutter
- Sidewalks and Trails
- Storm Sewer Systems
- Sanitary Sewer Systems
- Watermain Systems
- Street Lights
- Acquisition and construction of public parking lots
- Construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of retaining walls

Statute also allows the City to recover funds through special assessment, for things like emergency repairs of certain infrastructure, abatement related to nuisance/code violations, and delinquent utility billing.

Specific to Project 44123 (the improvement of 41st Ave between Railroad Ave and Regent Ave), staff recommended the long-standing use the Special Assessment Policy. The Assessment roll indicated a range from \$3,882.52 to \$12,584.71. The proposed assessments would have the option of repayment over 10 years, at 6.65% (based on the current bond rate +2% which has long been standard). Recommendation also included that residents had until November 15th, 2024 to pay any or all of the assessments, before being certified to the County.

At that meeting, Council had three main areas of discussion:

- Total Cost of Assessments to individual residents and Percentage rates for those electing the repayment option
- Lack of communication (including timing of notice) to residents
- The Special Assessment Policy in General

Total Cost of Assessments to Individual Residents and Percentage rates for those electing the repayment option

The Special Assessment Policy, in this circumstance, uses a measure of lineal feet multiplied by a construction based index. For these assessments, there were two unusual (but not unheard of) circumstances. Properties were corner lots, and they were being assessed for the longer of the two dimensions of the property. However, per the special assessment policy, corner lots are assessed at a rate of 50% to promote an equitable practice. That said, if a block is made up of 50 foot by 150 foot lots, when it comes time to assess the "long" side of the property, this would be 1.5 times the assessment of a 50 foot section on its own. $((150 \text{ feet} \times \$1 \text{ per foot})/2) = \75 compared to $(50 \text{ feet} \times \$1) = \$50$.

And, while Council is used to seeing smaller assessments based on lineal footage, the index has also continued to increase. The following show the cost of average costs of assessments since 2017:

Project Year	Interest Rate	Avg Assessment
(Proposed 2024)	6.65%	\$9,712.36
28222, 45022, 38222 (FY 2022, 2023)	6%	\$5,831.28
43922 (FY 2022)	5%	\$6,275.07
38318 (2020, 2021)	4.50%	\$6,596.22
38121 (2021)	4%	\$6,165.84
46318 (2019)	4.5%	\$4,072.54
38917 (2018)	4.75	\$7,202.17
31817 (2017)	5.25	\$4,454.73

Lack of communication (including timing of notice) to residents

With the 2024 project being smaller than some years, City staff felt comfortable waiting into the spring season to start this process. An adverse affect of this, was an approval of Special Assessments in May vs an approval of Special Assessments in March, meant two fewer months to pay any or all of assessments before they were reported to Council. Statute requires cities to allow property owners 30 days to pay these assessments penalty free; however, the City of Robbinsdale has a long standing practice of allowing any or all payments to be made before assessments are recorded by Hennepin County, and then accepted through property tax payments.

The Special Assessment Policy in General

As the conversation continued, Council discussed the possibility of moving away from Special Assessments all together. Staff does not support this effort at this time for a number of reasons.

Changing the policy after work has been ordered. Additionally, there is a consideration as to "what's fair". Staff would not support immediately going away from the long-standing approach as it would be to the detriment of those who continue on a repayment plan from the last several years. The high-level chart below shows assessments from recent (and projected future) years by percentage of the 2024 levy - in other words, how much would the levy need to be increased to make up for these costs. If Council would like to reconsider the Special Assessment Policy in the future, staff would recommend a phased out approach.

Project Year	Total Assessed	Percent of 2024 Levy
Initial Estimates 2026	\$670,000	7.1%
Initial Estimates 2025	\$460,000	4.9%
(Proposed 2024)	\$106,836.24	1.13%
28222, 45022, 38222 (FY 2022, 2023)	\$546,518.66	5.79%
43922 (FY 2022)	\$144,326.56	1.53%
38318 (2020, 2021)	\$398,398.40	4.22%
38121 (2021)	\$255,531.76	2.71%
46318 (2019)	\$99,238.10	1.05%
38917 (2018)	\$252,249.58	2.67%
31817 (2017)	\$619,207.44	6.56%

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that Council agree upon terms for dollars per lineal foot and an interest rate, and direct staff to hold the special assessment hearing in the coming weeks. Note, unless work continues past November 15th, the assessment role will be required to be sent to Hennepin County in November. A creative solution to remedy the lack of time would be to certify to the County that balances maintain an interest rate of 0% through 2025, and the set interest rate start November 15, 2025. This would require a 4/5ths vote for approval, so consensus making is required. Staff will guide the conversation, and respond to questions, comments, or concerns.

Attachments:

1. City of Robbinsdale - Special Assessment Policy



City of Robbinsdale

Special Assessment Policy

Adopted by Resolution 7839, August 18th, 2020

Section I

General Policy Statement

The purpose of this Assessment Policy is to establish a fair and equitable manner of recovering and distributing the cost of public improvements. The procedures used by the City of Robbinsdale for levying special assessments are those specified by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429, which provide that all or a part of the cost of improvements may be assessed against benefiting properties.

Three basic criteria must be satisfied before a particular parcel can be assessed. They are:

1. The land must have received special benefit from the improvement.
2. The amount of the assessment must not exceed the special benefit.
3. The assessment must be uniform in relation to the same class of property within the assessment area.

It is important to recognize that the actual cost of extending an improvement past a particular parcel is not the determining factor in determining the amount to be assessed. However, in most cases the method for determining the value of the benefit received by the improvement, and therefore the amount to be assessed, shall be the cost of providing the improvement. This holds true as long as the cost does not exceed the increase in market value due to the project, for the property being assessed. The entire project shall be considered as a whole for the purpose of calculating and computing an assessment rate. In the event City staff has doubt as to whether or not the costs of the project may exceed the special benefits of the property, the City Council may obtain such appraisals as may be necessary to support the proposed assessment.

The City must recover the expense of installing public improvements undertaken, while ensuring that each parcel pays its fair share of the project cost in accordance with this assessment policy. While there is no perfect assessment policy, it is important that assessments be implemented in a reasonable, consistent and fair manner. There may be exceptions to the policy or unique circumstances or situations, which may require special consideration and discretion by the City Council.

The policy also identifies situations and outlines the process in times where property owners require assistance to pay for certain emergency works, or when actions are required to bring a property into compliance with City Ordinances.

This assessment policy is intended to serve as a guide for the systematic assessment process in the City of Robbinsdale.

Section II

Improvements Eligible for Special Assessment

The following public improvements, as authorized by Minnesota Statute 429.021 are eligible for special assessments in the City of Robbinsdale:

1. Street, Alley and Curb & Gutter.
2. Sidewalks and trails.
3. Storm sewer systems.
4. Sanitary Sewer systems.
5. Watermain systems.
6. Street Lights.
7. Acquisition and construction of public parking lots.
8. Construction, reconstruction and maintenance of retaining walls.

The City of Robbinsdale also retains authority to recover, through special assessment, maintenance direct costs associated with certain property owner initiated emergency situations or to remedy City initiated ordinance violations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Emergency Water / Sewer service repairs.
2. Tree Removals as a consequence of storm damage.
3. Retaining Wall Repair / Replacement.
4. Snow and ice removal.
5. Abatement of nuisances including but not limited to removal of trash and rubbish, weed elimination, and correction of violations of the Housing maintenance code.
6. Tree trimming and removal of diseased or unsound trees.
7. Removal of obstructions from sight triangles at intersections.
8. Sump pump provision or rectification.
9. Delinquent utility billings.

Section III

Initiation of Public Improvements

Public improvements may be initiated in any of the following ways:

1. Public improvements may be initiated by petition of at least 35% of the affected property owners. Affected property owners are those who will be assessed for the improvement, not necessarily those adjacent to the improvement (as is the case with an area wide assessment). Petitions for improvements will be considered by the City Council, but simply petitioning for a project does not ensure it will proceed to construction. A simple majority of the City Council is required to order improvements that are petitioned for.
2. Public improvements may be initiated by the City Council. A resolution ordering the improvements requires a supermajority of the Council rather than a simple majority.
3. A developer, in conjunction with a development or redevelopment project may petition for improvements. No petition for improvements will be considered by the City Council without a waiver from the developers stating that they waive all right to appeal the assessments for improvements for which they have petitioned.
4. Improvement works may be initiated by the City Engineer as part of an asset replacement strategy, to ensure that City infrastructure is maintained in a condition suitable to serve its purpose to the community.

Section IV

Public Improvement Procedures

The following is a general procedure that will be followed by the City Council for all public improvement projects from initiation to certification of the assessment roll to the County Auditor. Formats for the various reports and resolutions referenced in this section follow those recommended in the Local Improvement Guide published by the League of Minnesota Cities

Preliminary Design:

Submission of petition for improvements to the City Council, or initiation of a project by the City Council or City Engineer. Projects approved in the Capital Improvements Plan are considered to be City initiated unless accompanied by resident petition.

City Council accepts or rejects petition. If accepted, council adopts a resolution Declaring Adequacy of Petition and Ordering Preparation of Report. For projects initiated by the City the City Council will adopt a Resolution Ordering Preparation of Report on Improvement. Improvements for which a petition is not accepted by the City Council will not be able to be petitioned again for a six month time period.

City staff or designated Consultant prepares feasibility report for the improvements. The feasibility report must evaluate whether the improvement is necessary, feasible and cost effective. The feasibility report must also include a proposed assessment roll showing which parcels would be assessed for the project and the estimated assessment amount for each parcel.

City Council reviews feasibility report and either accepts or rejects the report. If accepted, the City Council adopts a resolution Receiving the Report and scheduling the Public Hearing.

Staff publishes notice of the Public Hearing and mails notices to affected property owners. This notice must be published twice in the official City newspaper. The two publications must be a week apart and at least three days prior to the date of the public hearing. Notices must be mailed to the owner of record not less than 10 days prior to the date of the public hearing.

City Council conducts Public Hearing and accepts public testimony. At the conclusion of the Public Hearing the Council may approve the project by adopting a Resolution ordering the improvement and the preparation of plans and specifications. At this point the estimated assessment amounts become pending assessments, and are reported to the Finance Department for tracking.

Final Design:

Staff or the designated Consultant prepares plans and specifications for the improvement. Plans may be presented to the City Council for approval. The City Council may adopt a Resolution Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids.

Staff solicits bids for the project. Bid solicitations for assessed projects less than \$350,000 must be published in the official newspaper and in a trade journal for at least two weeks. Assessed projects exceeding \$350,000 must be advertised for three weeks in the official paper and in a trade journal. Bids will be opened, checked for mathematical accuracy and tabulated. Staff will consider the qualifications of the bidder to determine the lowest responsible bidder.

From time to time, alternate methods of bidding projects (Best Value) will be allowed as State law permits.

Bids are presented to the City Council for review and approval. City Council awards the contract by adopting a Resolution Accepting Bid.

Levying Assessments:

City staff calculates the total project costs, the City share of the costs and the proposed assessment amounts, and presents them to the City Council. The City Council sets a date for a public hearing on the assessments by adopting a Resolution Declaring Cost to be Assessed and Calling Hearing on Proposed Assessment.

City staff publishes notice of the assessment hearing in the official newspaper. This notice must be published one or more times at least two weeks prior to the hearing date.

City Council conducts the assessment hearing and accepts public testimony. At the conclusion of the hearing the City Council may adopt a Resolution Adopting Assessments. This resolution sets the assessment amount, the repayment term and interest rate to be applied to the assessment for each parcel to be assessed. At this point the pending assessments become levied assessments. The City may accept prepayment of levied assessments as specified in the Resolution Adopting Assessments.

City staff certifies to the County Auditor those assessments not paid in full for inclusion with the property tax statement for each parcel being assessed.

In situations where the final assessment amount to be levied is not dependent on the final project cost, the Assessment Hearing may be held at the same meeting as the Improvement Hearing subject to the notification requirements as outlined above.

Section V

Assessment Methods

Assessments are calculated using different methods of measurement; per lot, adjusted front foot and area. For any particular project one of these methods will more adequately reflect the true benefits received than the others. The City Engineer will recommend in the feasibility report, which assessment methods are to be used for a particular project. In general, the assessment methods specified below will be used unless extenuating circumstances or justification exist to warrant changing to another method.

For purposes of calculating assessments, the following methods may be used:

Per Lot (or unit)

A per lot assessment will apply equally to all parcels of land within the assessment area. This assessment is typically used in areas where the parcels are of a similar shape and size, or in cases where the benefit received by a parcel is the same for parcels of varying shapes and sizes.

Commercial, industrial or multifamily parcels may be converted into an equivalent number of residential parcels by dividing the area of the parcel by 6000 square feet (the average size of a single family lot 120'x50'). In this way land use types of differing intensity can be assessed on a standard basis using the same assessment rate as single family properties.

Adjusted Front Footage

The actual physical dimensions of a lot shall be carefully considered, especially the frontage length to streets. The number of frontages and the length of these frontages shall form the basis of calculating assessments. The following procedures will be used to calculate the adjusted front footage for a lot. Adjusted front footages will be calculated to the nearest foot. The assessment process needs to consider certain roads such as County Roads, which the City does not construct or maintain, but does have cost participation and therefore assesses at a lower rate. A flow chart of the process is attached in Appendix 1 of this document to clarify the steps involved.

1. Lots with one frontage

Generally, for lots with one frontage, the adjusted front footage is the actual frontage of the lot.

2. Lots with more than one frontage

For corner lots with two or more street frontages, the adjusted front footage is defined as 50% of each frontage being improved.

Area

When it has been determined to assess by the “area” method the actual area of a parcel, either in square feet or acres lying within the project area shall be used. The following features will be deducted from the area of a parcel for purposes of assessments: public right of ways, natural waterways and lakes and wetlands designated by the Department of Natural Resources.

Direct Cost

In the cases of the property owner initiated emergency situations or the City initiated ordinance violations, the costs assessed shall be the direct costs for the work / abatement as provided by an appropriate Contractor plus reasonable administrative costs. Assessments for delinquent utilities shall also be determined based on the direct cost method and shall include outstanding balances, accrued fees and charges plus reasonable administrative costs

Section VI

Assessment Computations

Street and Curb and Gutter Improvements

New Construction:

All new streets will be assessed 100% to the abutting benefited properties. Street and curb and gutter assessments are typically calculated on an adjusted front foot basis, however a per lot basis may be used if all parcels are of a similar size.

Cost of construction of streets shall be based on the proposed width of the street to be constructed.

Reconstruction:

Street reconstruction assessments will apply for those parcels with an existing constructed street adjacent to the lot. This policy assumes that 100% of the original street construction cost was assessed to the adjacent benefiting properties. Street reconstruction shall include replacement of the roadway surface, existing curb and gutter, storm sewer and sidewalks as necessary. Addition of new curb and gutter and/or sidewalks in areas that did not previously have those improvements shall be assessed in addition to the reconstruction assessment.

Reconstruction assessments for single family parcels shall be made using one of the methods outlined in Section V of this document. The unit assessment rate per front foot is based on the proposed width of the street. Current rates are attached in Appendix 2. The rates shall be adjusted based on the most recent "Construction Cost Index" relative to the date of the assessment hearing. This Index is published in the American City and County magazine, with the 2001 base index being 162.7. Assessment rates used for a project shall be the rate in effect at the time of the public hearing to consider the improvements (Section IV step 6), regardless of the rate in effect at the time of assessment.

The proposed street widths shown in Appendix 2 are typical widths constructed within the City. Any proposed street widths that are not specifically noted in Appendix 2 shall have assessment rates calculated individually using the same approach as those listed. Street widths used to compute assessments shall be inclusive of any center medians.

In order to maintain relativity between assessment amount and property valuation, the maximum amount assessable shall be capped at 8% of the property valuation.

Overlay and Sealcoating:

Overlays and sealcoating may be assessed in accordance with rates attached in Appendix 2.

Curb and Gutter Only:

New concrete curb and gutter in areas that did not previously have concrete curb and gutter will be assessed 100% on an adjusted front foot basis. Replacement of existing concrete curb and gutter only will not be assessed.

Alleys

Upgrading existing gravel alleys and replacement of alleys will be assessed as follows –

The City will contribute 25% of the paving work of the alley along with any City utility work. The remaining portion of the project cost will be assessed to adjacent properties on a per lot basis.

All adjacent properties will be subject to an equal assessment amount regardless of whether there is meaningful access to the property or not.

Sidewalks and Trails

New construction:

Construction of new sidewalks in areas that did not previously have sidewalk will be assessed 100% to the adjacent properties, on an adjusted front foot basis. Construction of new bituminous trails shall not be assessed.

Reconstruction/Replacement:

Replacement of existing concrete sidewalks shall be included in the street reconstruction assessment in those areas where street reconstruction is taking place. In other areas, sidewalk replacement costs will not be directly assessed, but will be covered by a future street reconstruction assessment.

Storm Sewer Improvements

Construction of new storm sewers and replacement of existing storm sewer facilities shall be funded from the Storm Sewer Utility fund and not assessed. This shall include, but are not limited to property acquisition, construction and maintenance of storm water ponding areas and stormwater conveyance systems.

Sanitary Sewer Improvements

New Construction:

Construction of new sanitary sewer mains, lift stations and other facilities needed to serve properties not currently served by City sewer will be assessed to the benefiting properties 100% on an area basis. Assessable items shall include but are not limited to conveyance systems, manholes and lift stations. Assessments shall be based on a standard 8 inch sewer main, constructed at a depth of no more than 14 feet. Costs for oversizing or excessive depth will not be assessed, but rather funded by the Sanitary Sewer Utility fund.

Reconstruction:

Reconstruction of sanitary sewer facilities shall be funded from the Sanitary Sewer Utility fund, and not assessed.

Sanitary Sewer Services:

In the City of Robbinsdale sanitary sewer service lines are defined as being owned by the property owner from the main to the home, including the wye at the main. Repairs made to service lines will be assessed 100% to the benefiting property owner. Property owners may petition the City to assess the costs of sanitary sewer service repairs.

Water System Improvements

New Construction:

Construction of new watermains to serve properties not currently served by City water will be assessed to the benefiting properties 100% on an area basis. Assessments shall be based on the installation of an appropriately sized ductile iron watermain. Costs for oversizing will not be assessed but rather funded by the Water Utility Fund.

Reconstruction:

Reconstruction of watermains shall be funded from the Water Utility fund, and not assessed.

Water Services:

In the City of Robbinsdale water service lines are defined as being owned by the property owner from the main to the home, including the corporation stop and curb box shut off. Repairs made to service lines will be assessed 100% to the benefiting property owner. Property owners may petition the City to assess the costs of water service repairs.

Treatment Plants, Wells and Water Towers:

Construction and reconstruction of treatment plants, wells and water towers will be funded from the Water Utility Fund, and not assessed.

Trees

Removal of privately owned trees damaged as a result of a storm may be assessed if petitioned for by the property owner. The costs to remove storm damaged private trees will be assessed 100% to the property owner.

Street Lights

Street lights may be petitioned for in accordance with the City of Robbinsdale Mid-Block Lighting Policy. The costs of installing these lights will be assessed to the block on a per lot basis. Monthly costs for operation of the additional lights will be charged to the property owners as specified in the Mid-Block Lighting Policy.

The City maintains the right to introduce a Street Light Utility Fund that would pay for the addition, replacement and operation of all streetlights in the public realm within the City.

Retaining Walls

The City may reconstruct retaining walls on private property if petitioned for by the property owner. The costs to replace private retaining walls will be assessed 100% to the property owner. Replacement of retaining walls on public property will not be assessed.

Other Assessable Items

The City of Robbinsdale incurs costs in the abatement of public nuisances such as weeds, trash pickup, snow/ice removal, removal of obstacles in sight triangles at intersections and removal of diseased trees. Works necessary to provide a new sump pump system, or to bring an existing system into Code compliance may be eligible for special assessment. Delinquent utility bills are also assessable under State Statute.

Costs to perform works for these items will be assessed 100% to the property owner.

Section VII

Policy on Reassessment

The City of Robbinsdale in constructing or reconstructing any public improvement shall design such improvements to last for a definite period. The life expectancy, or service life shall be as stated below. When such project needs renewing or replacement, the amount to be assessed shall be limited to the to an amount determined by dividing the actual life of the improvement by the service life of the original improvement, multiplied by the assessment amount as prescribed in Section V.

The following are hereby established as “life expectancies” or “service lives” of public improvements unless otherwise stated in the resolution ordering the improvement and preparation of plans and specifications, in which case the life set forth in resolution shall govern.

1. Sidewalks – 20 years
2. Streets (reconstruction, curb & gutter) – 20 years
3. Streets (mill and overlay / reclaim) – 10 years
4. Alleys – 30 years
5. Watermains – 30 years
6. Sanitary sewers – 30 years
7. Storm sewers – 30 years

Section VIII

Policy Relating to State Aid Routes

The State of Minnesota provides funding for the construction, reconstruction and maintenance of streets established and designated as State Aid routes. Approximately 20% of the streets in Robbinsdale are State Aid routes. State Aid funds are available for most improvements, but not all costs associated with street construction qualify for funding.

Assessments for State Aid streets within the City of Robbinsdale will be the same as those for regular local streets. State Aid funding provided for reconstruction of a particular segment of street will be used by the City to fund non-assessed costs, and will not be used to reduce assessments to the properties adjacent to these facilities. In this way assessments for reconstruction are consistent throughout the City, and the taxpayers in general benefit from the State Aid funding because it helps to defray costs that would otherwise be City costs.

Section IX

Policy Relating to County Roads

Assessments for County Roads within the City of Robbinsdale will be at a rate slightly reduced from that for normal residential streets and State Aid Roads. The County has a cost participation policy that shares the overall cost of reconstruction. Because the cost to the City is reduced, the associated assessment rate to adjoining residents is reduced.

This approach provides a degree of equity because cost to residents to restore / replace utilities under County Roads is often higher than normal residential streets.

Frontage roads parallel to County Roads will be treated like normal residential streets for the purpose of this assessment policy.

Section X

Deferral of Assessments

The City of Robbinsdale has established a policy on deferring special assessments for senior citizens for whom it would be a hardship to make payments. Deferral of special assessments is available for project related assessments, but may not be applied to assessments for abatement of nuisances or for delinquent utility bills. Special assessments may be deferred, for those that qualify, until such time as:

1. The property or any part thereof is sold, transferred, or subdivided.
2. Death of the owner and the spouse not otherwise eligible for deferment.
3. The property loses its homestead status.
4. The owner is no longer determined to be in a hardship category.

Eligibility requirements are that the owner must be 65 years of age or older on January 1st of the payment year, that the property to be assessed is homesteaded and that the annual principle and interest on the assessment is in excess of 1½ percent of the owner's annual income. For example if the principle and interest is \$100 annually, then an owner whose income is less than \$6,667 would qualify to have the assessments deferred (i.e. $\$6,667 \times 0.015 = \100). Interest would be added annually to the deferred amount based on the interest rate specified in the resolution approving the assessments.

Applicants who wish to apply for deferment of assessments for next year must submit the following information no later than October 15th to the City Clerks office, 4100 Lakeview Avenue North.

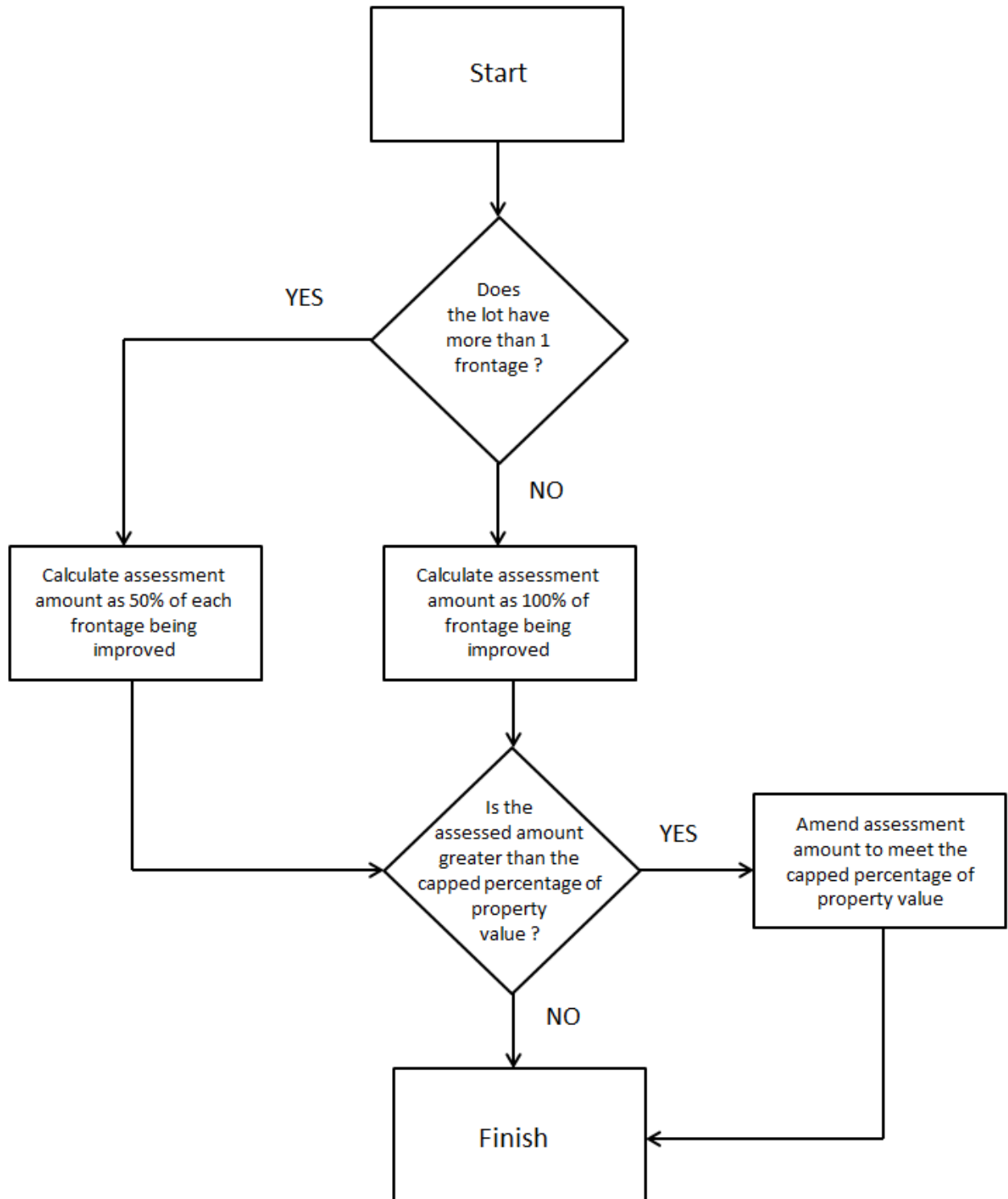
1. Financial disclosure Statement, including a copy of your proof of income.
2. A copy of your birth certificate.
3. Four notarized copies of form HC 227 – Application for deferral of Special Assessments.

After an application had been received and reviewed, the request will be forwarded to the City Council for approval. After council approval the City Clerk will authorize the deferral and forward the request to the Hennepin County Auditor and recorded in the Registrar of Deeds Office.

Appendicies

Appendix 1	Special Assessment Front Footage Flow Chart for Street Reconstruction Projects
Appendix 2	Reconstruction Rates Pavement Overlay and Resurfacing Rates
Appendix 3	Special Assessment Term and Rate Flowchart

Appendix 1 - Special Assessment Front Footage Flow Chart for Street Reconstruction Projects



Appendix 2 - Reconstruction Assessment Rates as at November 2020

	Proposed Street Width (ft)	30	32	36	40	44	48
Local Roads and State Aid Streets	Construction Rate per lineal ft	\$355.41	\$359.27	\$379.77	\$394.36	\$408.94	\$423.52
	Adjusted rate allowing for unassessable portion	\$549.43	\$555.58	\$587.60	\$610.42	\$633.21	\$655.97
	Assessment Rate (per adjusted foot)	\$109.89	\$111.12	\$117.52	\$122.08	\$126.64	\$131.19

* This rate is independent of street width

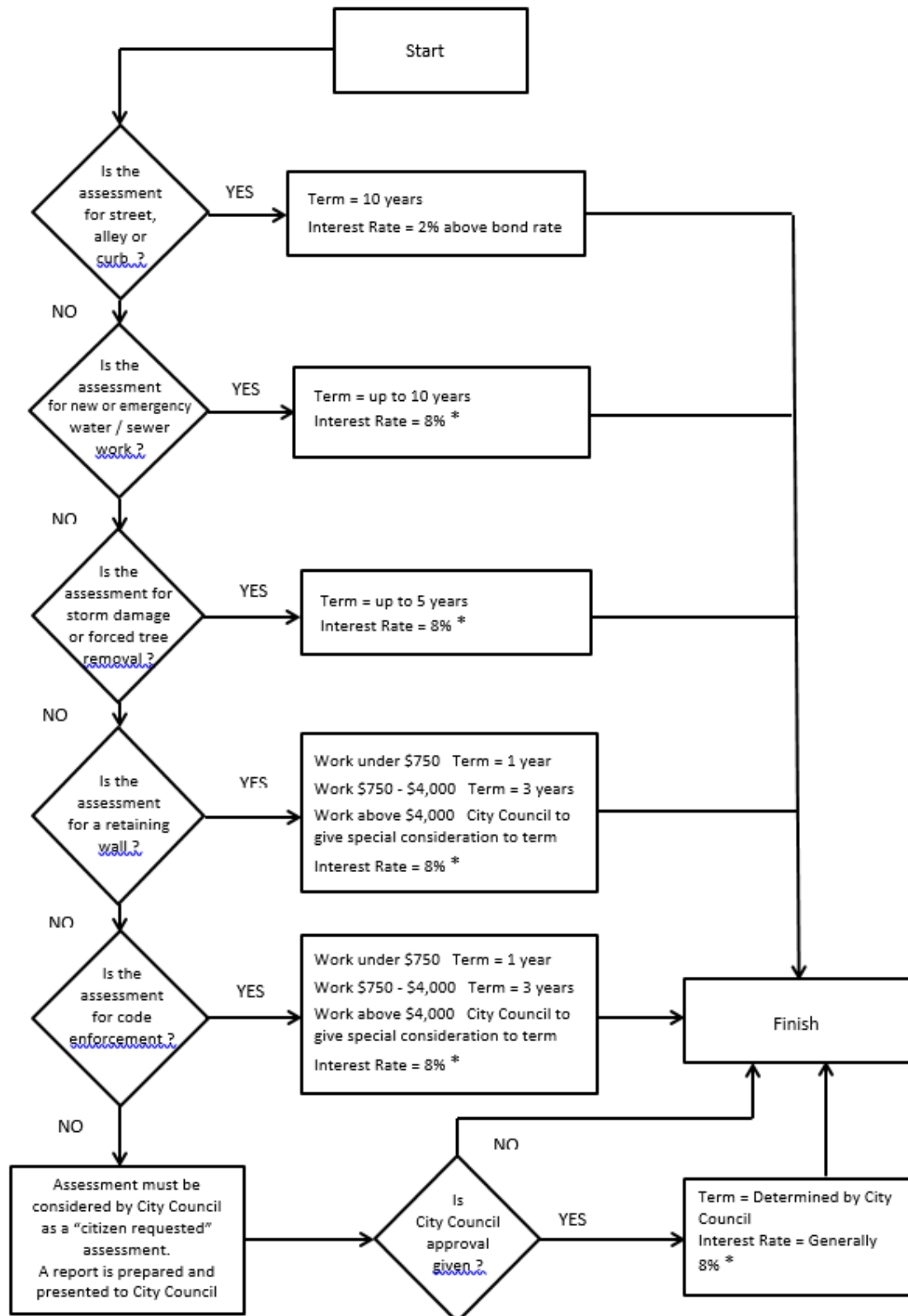
County Roads	Assessment Rate (per adjusted foot)	\$52.65 *
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Appendix 2 - Pavement Overlay and Resurfacing Rates as at November 2020

Street Width (ft)	30		32		36		40		44		48
Overlays											
Overlay Rate per lineal ft	\$21.99		\$23.45		\$26.38		\$29.31		\$32.24		\$35.18
Adjusted rate allowing for unassessable portion	\$42.98		\$45.94		\$51.68		\$57.49		\$63.29		\$69.09
Assessment Rate (per adjusted foot)	\$21.49		\$22.97		\$25.84		\$28.74		\$31.64		\$34.55
Resurfacing											
Resurfacing Rate per lineal ft	\$57.71		\$61.56		\$69.25		\$76.95		\$84.64		\$92.34
Adjusted rate allowing for unassessable portion	\$112.82		\$120.59		\$135.67		\$150.90		\$166.13		\$181.37
Assessment Rate (per adjusted foot)	\$56.41		\$60.30		\$67.83		\$75.45		\$83.07		\$90.68

	Proposed Street Width (ft)	30	32	36	40	44	48
Local Roads and State Aid Streets	Construction Rate per lineal ft	\$355.41	\$359.27	\$379.77	\$394.36	\$408.94	\$423.52
	Adjusted rate allowing for unassessable portion	\$549.43	\$555.58	\$587.60	\$610.42	\$633.21	\$655.97
	Assessment Rate (per adjusted foot)	\$109.89	\$111.12	\$117.52	\$122.08	\$126.64	\$131.19

Appendix 3 – Special Assessment Term and Rate Flow Chart



***Rate is reviewed annually**

TO: Mayor and City Council
PREPARED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
APPROVED BY: Tim Sandvik, City Manager
DATE: August 14, 2024
RE: LRT Municipal Consent Process

Background:

Council and staff have been discussing Municipal Consent related to the Blue Line Light Rail Extension for the past several months. At the July 9, 2024 City Council Work Session, staff presented what they understood to be concerns and/or areas of requested clarification to consider Municipal Consent. The first two attachments provide a reminder as to the lead up of that conversation. First, a letter from the City to the project office from spring of 2023, and second, a list of items the City sent to the project office this past spring (and was used as a basis for the July Work Session Discussion).

Analysis:

From Public Safety

Both Chief Dorholt and Chief Foley have been in contact with their peers in Minneapolis, Bloomington, and Hopkins to better understand the undertakings RPD and RFD will need to do to be prepared for Light Rail. Hopkins has the closest version of our Fire Department, and Chief Dorholt shared that the Met Council and Hennepin County have offered little to no assistance in training or updated apparatus/equipment to prepare. As both Chiefs continued staff's concerns related to general, public safety, Council requested specifics (to potentially include data). Unfortunately, there is no additional information to provide beyond what the Project Office has shared at recent Coordinator Management Committee meetings.

Attachments

Staff will walk through the following attachments to guide conversation with Council:

- A legal opinion regarding Municipal Consent from Jared Shepard at Campbell Knutson
- Formal Feedback from North Memorial
- Updated Ridership Numbers

Staff will guide conversation to better understand what Council might need to prepare for the August 21, 2024 Open House. Further, staff will request direction on what type of materials to prepare for the September 17, 2024 Public Hearing where Council will take Action.

Recommendation:

Staff is requesting confirmation on next steps, including the setting of the Public Hearing schedule.

Attachments:

1. City of Robbinsdale - Letter to CMC 3.30.23
2. CC Considedrations - LRT DRAFT
3. BLE Municipal Consent - Legal Opinion from Jared Shepherd, Campbell Knutson
4. North Memorial - LRT Letter
5. North Memorial - Comments for the Supplemental Draft EIS
6. BLRT_TravelTime_RidershipForecast_Robbinsdale_20240711 RK



City of Robbinsdale

4100 Lakeview Avenue North • Robbinsdale • Minnesota • 55422-2280
Phone (763)537-4534 • Fax (763)537-7344
Website www.robbinsdalemn.com

March 30, 2023

Christine Beckwith
Project Director
METRO Blue Line Extension
6465 Wayzata Blvd #500
St Louis Park, MN 55426

Re: City of Robbinsdale – Design Comments on the METRO Blue Line Extension

Ms. Beckwith

The City of Robbinsdale appreciates the opportunity to express feedback regarding preliminary design concepts for the proposed METRO Blue Line Extension light rail project. Further, the City appreciates the work of, and continued partnership with the project office. The City is eager to continue conversations with the Robbinsdale City Council, residents, businesses, visitors, community stakeholders, and City staff to advocate for the interests of the City. Recognizing the project continues on a timeline with significant milestones, the City has created this letter to document serious concerns as we move towards the request for Municipal Consent.

The City Council has established that top priorities need to be addressed. They include:

1. **Public Safety** – The City Council shares the concerns of residents related to Public Safety. This includes addressing station area planning, any potential parking structure, pedestrian access (those going to-from transit and those near the system), and what appears to be (a lack of) enforcement issues. A part of this concern is that the City has observed significant behavioral issues at the existing bus-hub in Robbinsdale, and wants assurances these are addressed along with future mitigation efforts. Complaints throughout the metro have noted that riders on transit do not feel safe - **we are requesting a formal response** from the Metropolitan Council as to their plan on how to mitigate existing issues, and further enhance future experiences.
2. **Updated Data/Data Justification** – The City Council recognizes concerns from the community in regard to data and projections that the project office have used. This includes critical information like projected ridership and estimated trips-generated used for the original FTA application. Council is again **requesting formal notice of any upcoming adjustments to ridership projections**, and an explanation/justification for the use of any “pre-Covid” data/projections being used. A major concern causing the desire for updated information, is that the project office has stated the downtown Robbinsdale stop will potentially host more boardings than other stops along the line.
3. **Anti-Displacement Programs and Policies** – The City Council supports community concerns related to potential displacement of residents and businesses along the Blue Line LRT corridor. To start, the City Council **formally requests the project office commit a significant amount of resources** to communicate the project generally,

but also anti-displacement efforts. Further, the City requests that jurisdictional authorities covering the entire corridor (to include Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council, and State of Minnesota) support Anti-Displacement policies and procedures, with programming and resources, both during and after rail construction.

4. **Engineering/Planning Concerns** – The City Council and City staff have continued to engage with residents and the project office to identify concerns, generally. This includes:

- Recognition that a center-running, at grade line requires space such that alterations to the existing corridor would be detrimental. These include potential loss of access to frontage roads, loss of pedestrian facilities, loss of (water treating) landscaping, parking in commercial areas, and turning lanes.
- Potential that the LRT will promote development/redevelopment that is heavily weighted towards high density residential over commercial, and further burden resident property taxes due to a lack commercial/industrial.

5. **Requesting Full Disclosure of Intended Takings** – The City Council, along with the community, has seen a variety of images that reflect different amount(s) of takings along the corridor. This may include private property, and **Council is requesting a formal description in its entirety.**

6. **The City Expects Continued Conversation on General Planning to Enhance Immediate and Residual to the Corridor** – The Robbinsdale City Council understands the desire of the project office to engage with the City as further details are considered. However, the City desires assurances that the City will have a role in engineering and architectural design. This may also include transfer of resources, including potential properties.

7. **North Memorial/South Station** – The most recent round of conversations with the project office included station area planning for the downtown area, but not the proposed “North Memorial” stop. Council has heard concerns about the bridge design that is required to elevate a stop at North Memorial. Further, Council requests the project office continue conversations with North Memorial and neighbors of the south area of Robbinsdale.

Station Location

The City Council considered two vicinities for a station location in the downtown area – near 41st Avenue and near 40th Avenue. After considerable discussion about the benefits and concerns of each, the City Council supports a station nearer 40th Ave (with a preference south of 40th Ave). Understanding a station closer to 41st Ave would benefit the downtown area more, Council supports an option that better serves Robbinsdale residents, including an abundance of naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), including transit dependent population(s). Finally, South 40th Ave includes more than 450 units of NOAH, many of which would be included in the project office’s projected ridership.

Park and Ride / Transit Station Location

Robbinsdale City Council considered several options when discussing a Park and Ride/Transit Station Location. Included in conversation were a parking facility providing additional parking for downtown during transit off-peak hours, the impact of traffic trip generation on local roads (not Hwy 81 or County Road 9), the potential size of the structure (relative to surrounding areas), and the incorporation of relocated (and potentially additional) bus routes/stops. Again, projected

daily boardings include (roughly) 2,200 out of 3,500 will be coming from buses. This projection is met with skepticism without further data.

During conversation, it was understood that some sites may not be available due to potential redevelopment. Further, Council as acknowledged, several questions remain about the need for a parking/park and ride facility at all (as noted, Council is requesting further information to justify the need for a park and ride). Ultimately, the City Council expressed favor that the project office consider the “US Bank” site (northwest corner of Hwy 81 and 40th Ave N) as the preferred site for any parking structure.

Park and Ride size – The project office has shared information that a parking structure could be justified at a level of 500-600 vehicles. While that number has fluctuated, concern remains about the justification generally, and updated modeling is sought by the City Council. However, the City Council does see some benefit in some parking, as it will help mitigate park and riders from taking street parking in adjoining neighborhoods. Again, it was recognized that a multi-story structure with excessive size, would not fit with the nature of the neighborhood.

Based on discussions and review of available information, the City Council feels that a right-sized parking structure is preferred. Finally, further design and detail will require community and Council review to minimize adverse impacts caused by additional traffic trips and the placement of bus stops (to better understand bus traffic concerns, including planning that limits congestion as Council will not support extended layovers or long-term queueing of buses).

Grade Separation

A part of the HNTB review investigated whether a grade separation (an elevated track) along the “downtown” portion of the corridor was feasible. The primary focus was grade separation at the intersections of 41st Ave and 42nd Ave. This correlates with identified concerns relating to potential impacts on adjoining commercial properties. A grade separation will mitigate takings required for a grade running line, and will also mitigate traffic and pedestrian (to include bicyclists) movements across those intersections. Based on Council discussion, Council preference is a grade separation of the Light Rail Line over 41st Ave and 42nd Ave. Finally, grade separation will mitigate some public safety concerns as it will reduce the response times of public safety vehicles.

Alignment

The City Council gained consensus that the alignment of the line should be center running.

In closing - The Robbinsdale City Council appreciates the ongoing relationship with the project office and Corridor Management Committee. As continued conversations consider priorities for a parking structure, priorities for station planning, (Who does the LRT serve – residents or visitors?), the City Council wants to ensure the positives outweigh the negatives. With that, the City Council fully recognizes that the LRT project will provide transit options, especially for those who are transit dependent and may ultimately reduce dependency and cost of owning automobiles and theoretically reduce vehicle congestion. Again, thank you for the opportunity to formally address the project office and Corridor Management Committee.

Best,



Tim Sandvik
City of Robbinsdale – City Manager



Specific to the Route – South to North

1. Lowry Ave Station – City of Robbinsdale is requesting:
 - a. Project Office formally document feedback from North Memorial Hospital
 - b. Project Office commit to a safety plan – as the station would be operated by the Metropolitan Council (Metro Transit), it rests on a Hennepin Council Facility (CR 81), as planned it sits in the City of Robbinsdale AND City of Minneapolis within Minneapolis Parks Board property.
 - c. Project Office commit to a controlled/secure platform
 - d. Project Office should consider bus hub provisions at this location
2. In tandem with the project, add curb and gutter on York Ave between Lowry and Parkview.
3. Current plans indicate a two-way frontage road access near North Memorial. While the City sees value in this consideration, the City requires that project office receive formal feedback from North Memorial.
 - a. If reconstruction includes work on the retaining wall between York and Abbott with precast concrete walls, City logo should be imprinted and colored.
4. The City would like to consider the reduction in France Ave behind Citizen's Bank during project construction.
5. The City would support the removal of the existing pergola at the NW corner of 36th & CR 81 – this could be relocated to a different area.
6. The City continues to support the left turn lane into Lake View Terrace Park boat launch (southbound on CR 81). Staff have seen multiple iterations.
7. The City may consider the elimination of impervious surface at the “turnaround” north of the access to LVT (near 37th Ave N).
8. The City does not support the loss of Ash trees by Hidden Shores on Lakeland Ave.
9. There needs to be a right turn lane for the semis exiting southbound CR 81 for the Lakeland Ave. N. frontage road. Semis depend on this section of frontage road in addition to moving vans for Birdtown Flats, etc...
 - a. The City would request that a sidewalk be installed on 39th Ave between CR 81 and West Broadway.
10. The City supports the placement of the “Downtown Station”, south of 40th Ave N.

11. The City does not support negative impacts at the Southeast corner of 40th Ave. N. and CR 81 (particularly 4227 40th Ave. N). This house will suffer from the adjacent traffic impacts.
12. Size and placement of parking facility – Most recent iterations have included a three hundred (300) stall ramp, which exceeds the number of spaces desired by the City Council. Additionally, the most recent version that staff has seen includes bus access on West Broadway and/or 40th Ave N. The City does not support additional traffic on side streets (including West Broadway, 40th Ave N, and Hubbard Ave). The City would like to see primary access come from CR 81. Further, the most recent iteration includes a location north and west of the intersection of 40th Ave and CR 81 – if this site is not chosen, the City must be presented with alternatives.
13. Elim church site should be considered an alternate for the Bus center-Parking ramp site. If US Bank is pre-emptively redeveloped, alternate plans should be developed. The funeral home site would provide a reasonable Plan C.
14. The City is requesting concrete streets be installed around the bus hub.
15. The City is requesting that there are not stops within 600 feet of the bus hub.
16. Turning movements on 42nd, near McDonald's access, needs further study. Current plans suggest potentially limiting egress/ingress to right turns only – the City is concerned this will limit access to McDonald's and other businesses, as well as City parking. Further, without proper engineering and design, people will continue to turn left (westbound on 42nd Ave N, OR exiting the parking lot on to 42nd Ave N).
17. The City does not support the loss of approximately 30% of parking for Robin Center, CVS, and any impacts of the retaining wall at Town Center.
18. In order to support at-grade structure, between 40th Ave N and (at least) 42nd Ave N, the City is requiring engineering and design elements be explicitly produced and shared with City officials. In December, Dan Soler and Christie Beckwith sat with the City Manager to discuss what the project office could share to ease concerns the Council has raised. At the January 9, 2024 City Council meeting, no plans were shared/discussed by the project office.
19. The City supports maintaining the left turn lane (southbound CR 81) to Twin Lakes/Three Rivers boat launch.
20. The City does not support 90-degree parking at Robin Center. This would require a variance and would not normally be permitted. **City Code Section 510.17 Subd. 3(b):** *Ninety degrees (90°) head in parking, directly off of and adjacent to a public street or alley, with each stall having its own direct access to the public street or alley, shall be prohibited. However, the city council may approve sixty degree (60°) head in angle parking, directly off and adjacent to a public street or alley, with each stall having its*



own direct access to a public street or alley, as a conditional use as regulated by subsection [535.01](#).

21. The Lakeland Ave. N. frontage road should not be disconnected between CVS and the gas station.
22. The City does not support the loss of the right turn lane from north bound CR 81 to 47th Ave. N. This will create conflicts with traffic turning into the neighborhood on the east side. This access point is almost exclusive and turning vehicles will conflict with accelerating northbound traffic. Further, any alterations to that intersection must consider neighbor traffic. The City requests a turn lane is shown.
23. The City requests that the new wall along the path near the water tower would be concrete panels and include a stamp of the Robbinsdale logo in blue (eg: Maple Grove along 94)
24. The City is requesting that area marked “Curb, Median, & Truck Apron” as indicated by red, be plantings.
25. The City is requesting that where beneficial (City’s discretion), re-platting take place
26. The City is requesting all overhead line that cross/run parallel to construction be undergrounded.

General Considerations, Observations

1. The City continues to patiently wait for the following data:
 - a. Ridership breakdown by stops. The project office received numbers in 2023, and has since shared projections for the entire LRT extension, but refuses to share individual stop projections. Since this includes justification for a parking structure, the City is requesting this data immediately.
 - b. Trip Time data.
2. The City has requested a response to the following:
 - a. In the event of a derailment at 40th Ave. N., 41st Ave. N., or 42nd Ave. N. what provisions will be available for emergency services to cross CR 81?
 - b. How will public safety officials acquire training related to LRT operations?
 - c. What apparatus will the project provide/provide reimbursement for? Does this include the creation/addition of a Public Safety substation?
3. The City is requesting that Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council explicitly state where they support Anti Displacement policy (including what they will enact). Further, the City is requesting that both entities explicitly declare what amount of

resources (including personnel and dollars) will be dedicated to Anti Displacement efforts.

4. The City requests that Metro Transit continue to address public safety concerns at stations and on Light Rail.
5. The City does not support the reduction of speed on CR 81 if it shifts vehicle traffic on to side streets/residential neighborhoods. The City formally requests a traffic study indicating what a reduction in corridor speed, if proposed, does to local traffic.
6. The City is requiring a formal plan and commitment from Hennepin County and Metro Transit regarding snow plowing, snow storage, and snow removal on the rail corridor, roads, any parking structure, and walkways/paths.
7. The City supports updates to the intersection of 42nd Ave N and West Broadway.
8. The City is requesting the project office consider stormwater management infrastructure needs, including correlated costs, in tandem with construction.
9. The City is requesting the project office commit to a “no net loss” of vegetation, including but not limited to, plantings related to water quality treatment AND beautification.
10. The City is requiring formal notification of TPSS location(s)
11. The City is requesting that the project office show the need to continue the Rte 32 (to potentially be a BRT route in the future), north of the Lowry Station (as this seems redundant).
12. The City is requesting all lighting installed use LEDs with Dark Sky Compliance
13. The City is requesting clarification on Platform Security – eg: who provides proactive efforts, and who responds to emergency calls.
14. The City is requesting that the LRT (Met Council and/or Hennepin County) commit to paying utility fees for signals and street lights (including maintenance and replacement).
15. The City is requesting that storm water retention enhancements be a shared expense – prior agreements related to CR 81 would be null/void
16. The City requests access for conduit for Fiber along any construction.
17. The City will compile specific requests for areas outside the immediate corridor – those include, but are not limited to:
 - a. reconstruct the bridge on 36th near June and Halifax.



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- b. reconstruct the pedestrian facilities downtown, including ADA compliance and consider utilities in tandem.
 - c. Parks investments, including sidewalks and trails system
 - d. Consider engineering that promotes safety at 42nd Ave N and West Broadway
 - e. CR 9 from CR 81 to TH 100
18. Request that Met Council pay taxes on land used for Parking Ramp
19. Met Council/Hennepin County responsible for all maintenance of landscaping, fencing, retaining walls, crosswalks, and signage along the corridor
20. Reimburse the City for all ROW that was purchased as a part of CR 81 reconstruction in 2005-2008
21. Follow direction from the City relating to streetscaping. Now would be the time to create a plan for execution...
22. Council needs to determine whether or not a set of demands related to municipal consent are agreeable. "Municipal consent by the City of Robbinsdale is dependent on..."

MEMORANDUM

TO: ROBBINSDALE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JARED SHEPHERD, JACK BROOKSBANK
DATE: AUGUST 7, 2024
RE: BLUE LINE EXTENSION MUNICIPAL CONSENT



CAMPBELL KNUTSON
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

The City has engaged our firm to navigate the Municipal Consent process for the potential Metro Blue Line expansion. This memorandum explains the overall Municipal Consent process, and provides potential paths forward. If you have any questions not addressed in this memorandum, please feel free to reach out for additional information.

The Met Council is pursuing an extension of the Blue Line light rail system from its current western end, at Target Stadium in Minneapolis. The potential extension route passes through the cities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and finally Brooklyn Park. Like all major infrastructure projects, there are several opportunities for public input on the proposed design. Currently, the project is going through the Municipal Consent process.

Municipal Consent

Municipal Consent is a procedure specific to light rail projects, governed by Minnesota Statutes Sections 473.3993 and 473.3994. Under this process, the Met Council must put together “preliminary design plans.” The Met Council must then submit the “physical design component” of the preliminary design plans to each city on the proposed route. The city council of each city must then review the plans, hold a public hearing, and approve or reject the proposal. Minn. Stat. § 473.3994, subd. 3. While the cities complete their review, the Met Council is also accepting direct public comment from any party wishing to make itself heard. The Met Council and each city along the route must all hold public hearings to discuss the preliminary design plans.

The City’s deadline to complete the municipal consent process is set in relation to when the Met Council will finish its public comment process. For the currently proposed plans, the City’s deadline to act is October 10, 2024. If the City does not act by October 10, this inaction legally constitutes an approval of the plan. Minn. Stat. § 473.3994, subd. 3. If the City chooses to act, it may either approve or disapprove of the physical component of the preliminary design plans by passing a resolution to that effect. In summary, there are really two potential courses of action related to municipal consent the City: 1) Approve (by express approval or inaction); and 2) Disapproval. There also remain other avenues to address City concerns outside the more narrow concerns with preliminary design plans.

Approval

If the City approves the plans, either expressly or indirectly, the project will continue to the next phases of design and review, including finalizing the engineering plans and the environmental review process. There is no process for expressing approval with conditions. In other words, a resolution approving the plans could also express general concerns with the project,

but including those concerns would have no legal effect and the Met Council would not be obligated to respond as part of the municipal consent process.

Disapproval

If the City does not approve of the proposed design, it may disapprove the plans by resolution. The resolution disapproving of the plans must include “the specific amendments to the plans that, if adopted, would cause [the city] to withdraw its disapproval.” Minn. Stat. § 473.3994, subd. 4. If the city council would only support the proposed design after changes, a resolution disapproving of the plans is the mechanism to express that. If one or more cities along the route disapprove of the preliminary design plans, the Met Council will conduct further study, hold a public hearing on any objections, and may engage the city in mediation or amend the plans. Minn. Stat. § 473.3994, subd. 4.

If this process results in a “substantial change” relating to the “location, length, or termini of routes; general dimension, elevation, or alignment of routes and crossings; location of tracks above ground, below ground, or at ground level; or station locations,” the Met Council must re-submit the plans to each city on the route for another round of municipal consent. Any second round would follow the same procedure as the first round, except that the city must approve or disapprove of the amended plans on a faster schedule for the second round. The Met Council must also re-submit the plans for municipal consent each time there is a substantial change for any reason—whether that is to address a city’s concerns or based on engineering decisions during construction. Based upon the history of light rail construction in the Twin Cities, it appears likely that the project will go through several rounds of municipal consent as the construction progresses. *See Lakes & Parks All. of Minneapolis v. Metro. Council*, 120 F. Supp. 3d 959, 975 (D. Minn. 2015).

Note that although the Met Council must provide additional process to try to resolve the city’s concerns, it is not obligated to amend its plans. That is, a city may disapprove, and the Met Council, after holding a hearing and conducting additional study, could still decide that the objections do not warrant changing the plans.

Other Methods of Input

There are also less formal methods to resolve disagreements with the draft plans other than the municipal consent process. In prior light rail construction projects, the Met Council has also negotiated with cities to address concerns. The Met Council then prepared a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). To give the parties time to reach an agreement, the Met Council can also agree to grant the City additional time to complete the municipal consent process. Minn. Stat. § 473.3994, subd. 3. The City could also raise its other non-design related concerns in a Resolution Approving or Disapproving the Preliminary Design Plans.

Summary

In sum, the City must hold a public hearing on the physical design component of the preliminary plans, after which it has three options:

1. **Approve**

The City may approve the plans as submitted by either:

- a. Taking no action, in which case the City will be deemed to have approved the designs as submitted as of October 10, 2024; or
- b. Passing a resolution approving the preliminary design plans as submitted (which resolution could also state the City's non-design related concerns);

or

2. **Disapprove**

Pass a resolution disapproving of the preliminary plans and stating exactly what would need to change for the city to approve the plans;

And/or

Raise other Concerns:

3. Attempt to engage the Met Council in negotiations to obtain an MOU addressing the City's non-design plan related concerns.

Our office is here to help answer any questions that remain about this process. Please feel free to reach out with any additional concerns.

August 5, 2024

Mr. Nick Thompson
Project Director, Blue Line Extension LRT
Park Place West Building, Suite 600
6465 Wayzata Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Submitted Electronically

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I am pleased to submit the attached comments on behalf of North Memorial Health concerning the latest design proposal of the Blue Line Extension LRT project. These comments are submitted ahead of the deadline and will also be shared with the relevant local jurisdictions participating in the Municipal Consent process this fall.

At North Memorial Health, we strongly support public transit and have consistently backed the Blue Line Extension LRT project. However, Robbinsdale Hospital is a busy and critical institution, serving patients whose lives often depend on swift access to our Emergency Department. Ensuring safe, clear, and easy access to the hospital is essential to our mission of serving our communities.

Our team is committed to collaborating with the Project Team to convey our interests and contribute to developing the safest and most effective design for all stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the planning process. I look forward to the next steps.

Sincerely,



Trevor Sawallish
Chief Executive Officer

Attachment

Cc: Irene Fernando, Hennepin County Commissioner
Jeff Lunde, Hennepin County Commissioner
Bill Blonigan, Robbinsdale Mayor
Latrisha Vetaw, Minneapolis City Council Member
Michael Rainville, Minneapolis City Council Member
Tim Sandvik, Robbinsdale City Manager

Comments for the Supplemental Draft EIS – North Memorial Health – Robbinsdale Hospital August 6, 2024

Background – North Memorial Health - Robbinsdale Hospital is a Level I Trauma Center located immediately adjacent to the Lowry/Victory Memorial Drive intersection. North Memorial Health (North) has operated in that location for more than 70 years and has grown in both size and scope, serving as one of only three Level I Trauma Centers in the entire metro area.

North is a vital provider of emergency care through Robbinsdale Hospital's Level I Trauma Center, serving approximately 60,000 patients annually in the Emergency Department. Over the past 25+ years, the Level I Trauma Center has served nearly 20,000 patients holding a 97 percent survival rate. Patients arrive by their own means, or by ambulance services, including North's EMS-- one of the largest non-profit, hospital-based air and ground services in the country. Many patients are critically ill, and their lives truly depend on how soon they can receive care. Very frequently, life or death of the patient can be determined by seconds or minutes.

This nature of North's mission and the essential care that we provide informs our comments on the most recent Blue Line Extension (BLRT) design described below. In general, our concerns are in four areas:

1. Delays to emergency care is a critical risk to patient survival
2. Protecting Safety and Accessibility
3. Neighborhood safety and accountability for maintaining it
4. Ensuring Safe Coexistence of BLRT and Air Care Operations

Details are included below.

1. Delays to emergency care is a critical risk to patient survival

The most recent design shows at-grade crossings at both Lowry and the Victory Memorial Parkway. There will be controlled crossings on the tracks and a new, controlled intersection on Lowry. While EMS vehicles will be equipped with signal pre-emption, there will remain delays that are not present now.

Of more concern are patients being transported in their own vehicles. Of the 60,000 annual visits, 20,000 arrive in private vehicles. Of those, 10% arrive in critical or life-threatening conditions. Any delay in their arrival hurts the chances for survival. The most optimistic anticipated delay of more than one minute is of great concern to our providers.

We appreciate the potential for eastbound Lowry EMS traffic routing to the Abbott intersection, however, there remain concerns about the Lowry at-grade crossing and undue delays for the many private vehicles coming in emergencies. It should be noted that both the 55411 and 55412 zip codes are in the top three for patient visits to the ED. It stands to reason that Lowry would be the primary route to take when coming to Robbinsdale Hospital.

Abbott Intersection – Tracks will also cross at-grade at Abbott. Signal pre-emption for EMS exists there now. Enhancing that operation to account for trains appears sufficient. We appreciated the Project Team's work on that crossing.

Frontage Road Slip Ramp – The Project Office provided several designs for this change. None look to be of great concern. But we want to better understand the provisions made for left (eastbound) turns there.

2. Protecting Safety and Accessibility

Locating the station between the extended bridges, below the Bottineau Boulevard roadway is of concern to North. The elevations we have been shown have been insufficient to determine access and egress from all directions. Our tantamount concern is for the safety of our Team Members and visitors who might choose to ride LRT. Lighting and security for riders and pedestrians must be guaranteed. The open station design that has proven troublesome at other MetroTransit stations is shown in plans to-date. North would like to review and understand how restricting access, as is being planned at other stations, might serve our neighborhood better.

Robbinsdale Hospital is a 24-hour operation. Hence, team members arrive and leave work at all hours. And while only approximately 5% of team members currently use transit, the LRT line may be more popular. To increase ridership to/from Robbinsdale Hospital, lighting, camera surveillance, platform safety and regular MetroTransit Police visits should be included in the design and operating plan.

3. Neighborhood Safety and Accountability for Maintaining It

A Lowry Blue Line station will introduce greatly increased activity. There can be no argument that an increase in demand for public safety will accompany increased activity. The station is on the border of Minneapolis and Robbinsdale. The Robbinsdale Police Department and Fourth Precinct of the Minneapolis Police Department are very busy agencies. MetroTransit police are in motion, rather than posted at transit stations.

North is concerned that law enforcement and security resources are robust and not diluted such that response times increase or preventive efforts wane.

4. Ensuring Safe Coexistence of BLRT and Air Care Operations

Throughout the past few years of BLRT discussions with North, a consistent concern has been how LRT will co-exist with AirCare operations. The North helipad is atop the parking ramp closest to the Bottineau Boulevard alignment. Given noise and other considerations, there has been a long-standing agreement with the City of Robbinsdale that flights travel along the Bottineau corridor. Under that agreement, the required emergency landing area has been on the roadway. After construction of the catenary system, the roadway will be eliminated as an option for emergency landings.

Although North has expressed concerns about the potential for detrimental LRT vibration and electromagnetic effects, there has been little response. There has been no provision for evaluating potential effects as it has been completed on other lines with other entities (Green Line and

Minnesota Public Radio, for example.) North must be convinced that the proximity of the LRT operating system will not affect helicopter navigating systems or any other component of flight operations.

North's position remains that there must be mitigation for the emergency landing changes and insulation from any other impediment to Air Care operations. We believe that relocating the helipad across the street atop the Emergency Department, at project expense, is the best solution to maintaining safe, secure and perhaps improved operations. This would also involve working with the City of Robbinsdale to revise flight path and emergency landing agreements.

Conclusion

Robbinsdale Hospital is an essential lifeline for the communities we serve across the Twin Cities and the entire state of Minnesota. Access to its Level I Trauma Center is truly a matter of life and death for many. Mitigating the issues noted above is crucial; without these measures, LRT will significantly and adversely impact Robbinsdale Hospital's operations.

In that spirit, we submit these remarks and look forward to further discussion with the Project Team.



Ridership Update

07/29/2024



BROOKLYN PARK | CRYSTAL | ROBBINSDALE | MINNEAPOLIS



Ridership Forecast Timeline

- September 2023: Preliminary 2019 model
- January-February 2024: Refined 2019 model and 2022 model
 - Included in-depth changes to BLE supporting service
 - Relocated Robbinsdale Station to south of 40th Avenue N
 - Incorporated 2022 onboard survey data
 - Forecasts made public
- Ongoing: 2023 model (in refinement)
 - Incorporated 2023 transit usage data
 - Updated existing LRT service plan (August 2024 service increase from 15- to 12-minute)*
 - Updates to population and employment forecasts (year 2050)*
 - Model to be submitted to FTA for review*



*update underway, not included in today's forecasts

Ridership Trends 2019 to 2023

- Ridership has declined 45%
- The transfer rate has declined system-wide by about 30%



Ridership Trends 2019 to 2023

- Park-and-ride use is down about 75%, in 2024 use has stabilized
- Ridership has declined near Robbinsdale
 - Route 32 ridership down 40%
 - Route 717 ridership down 85%



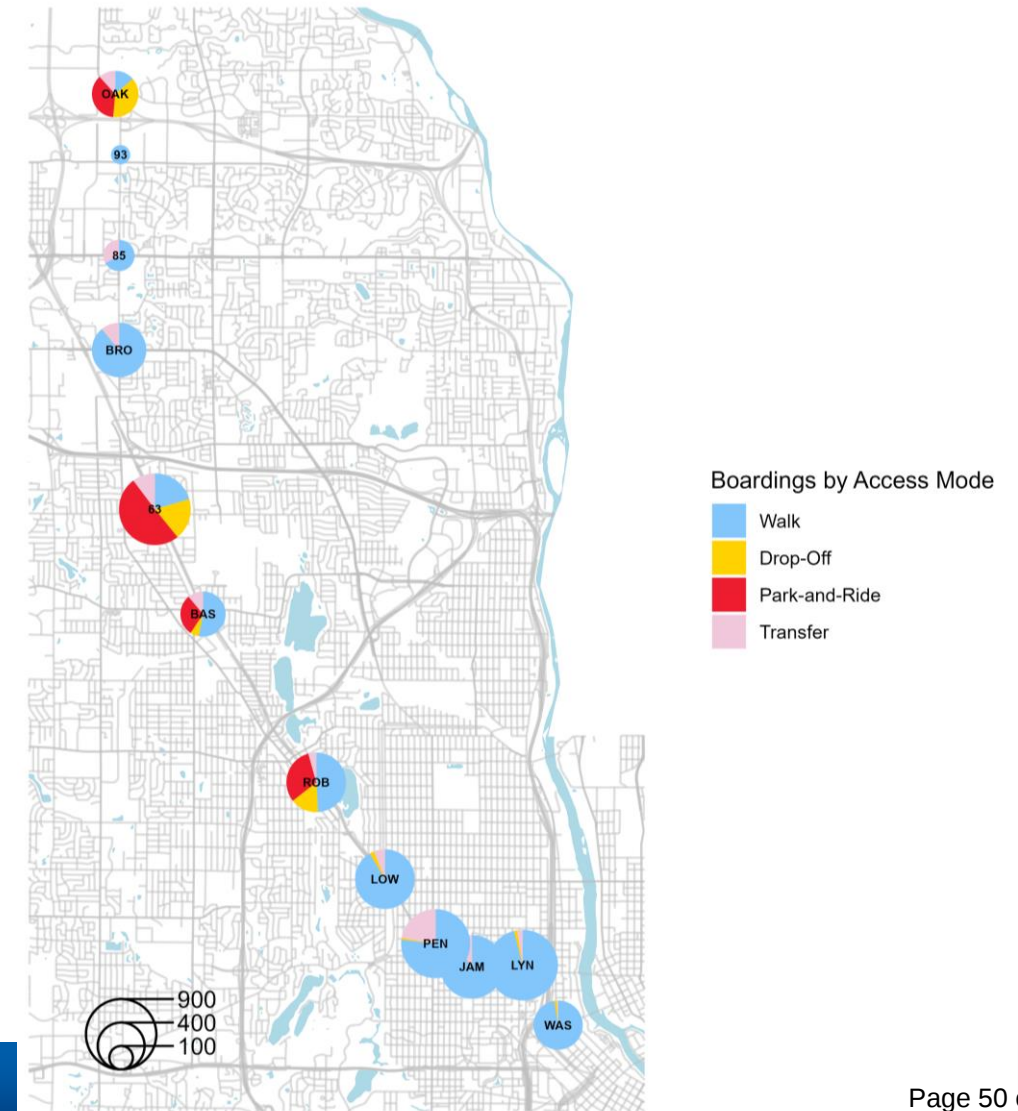
Total Daily Boardings at Robbinsdale Station

- January/February 2024 model
 - Blended Pre-Pandemic (2019) & Post-Pandemic (2022) model results
 - Horizon year boardings: 900-950
 - Includes 500 park-and-ride spaces at Robbinsdale Station
- Current model
 - 2023 Post-Pandemic model results
 - Horizon year boardings: 800-825
 - Includes 300 park-and-ride spaces at Robbinsdale Station



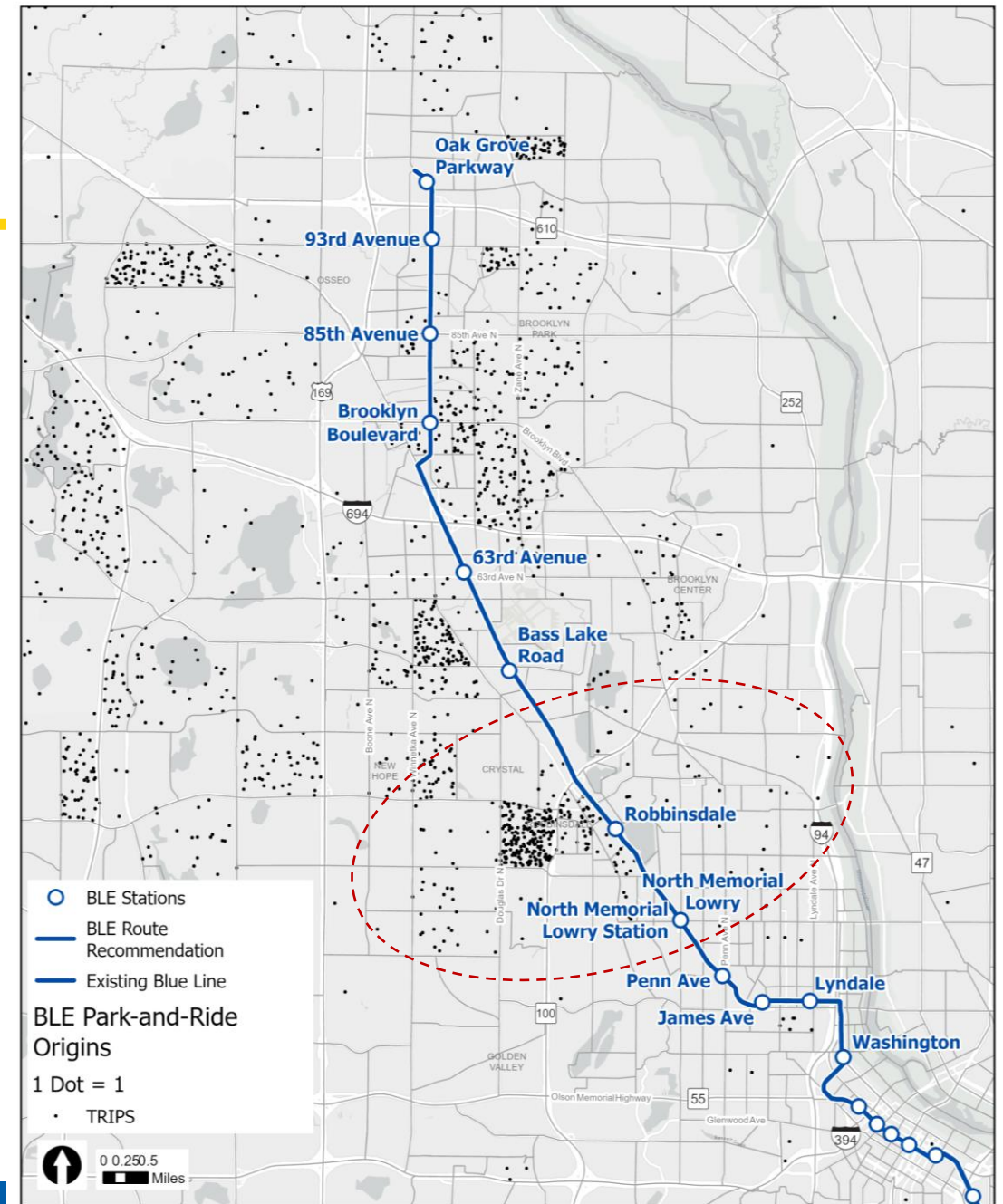
Downtown Robbinsdale Station Riders

- Current model forecasts show that of BLE riders forecast to board at the Downtown Robbinsdale Station 800-825 riders per day:
 - 39% park-and-ride trips
 - 38% walk access trips
 - 18% drop-off and bike trips
 - 5% transfers from bus and other transit services



Park-and-Ride Origins

- Map shows all park-and-ride trip origins using Blue Line Extension
- Robbinsdale park-and-ride users are limited to a 6-mile radius of the station
 - Oak Grove Parkway and 63rd Avenue allow longer access distances



Next Steps for Ridership Forecasts

- Updated forecasts for SFEIS anticipated September 2024
- SFEIS forecasts will only include post-pandemic data only
- Model changes anticipated to include:
 - Modifications to 2050 population and employment forecast allocations
 - August 2024 service plan from Metro Transit (includes 20-minute Route 32 service and 12-minute light rail service)
 - Horizon year network changes based on Network Now preliminary recommendations



[On Organization's Letterhead]

Date

U.S. Department of Transportation
FHWA, Office of Planning, Environment and Realty (HEP)
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Pete Buttigieg:

[Your Organization Name] is pleased to express its strong support for the Metropolitan Council's application to the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program. We believe that expanding access to Level 2 charging infrastructure is essential to accelerating the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the Twin Cities region and achieving our shared climate goals. The Council is well-suited to run a competitive solicitation process to fund charging stations, modeled after the highly successful and data-driven [Regional Solicitation](#).

[Your Organization's Mission Statement or Brief Overview]

Our community has identified a critical need for increased EV charging accessibility to support the growing number of EV owners and to encourage the transition to cleaner transportation. We believe that strategically placed Level 2 chargers can significantly contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.

Potential locations for Level 2 chargers in our community include:

- **Neighborhoods and multi-family dwellings:** [Describe specific locations or areas, e.g., apartment complexes, condominium buildings, or areas with high residential density].
- **Multi-modal hubs:** [Describe specific locations or areas, e.g., transit stations, park-and-ride facilities, or intermodal transportation centers].
- **Shared-use fleets and services:** [Describe specific locations or areas, e.g., car-sharing services, bike-sharing stations, or ride-sharing hubs].
- **Multi-purpose workplaces and destinations:** [Describe specific locations or areas, e.g., office buildings, retail centers, hospitals, or educational institutions].

We are eager to partner with the Council to identify and implement EV charging solutions that meet our community's needs. This grant program represents a significant opportunity to advance our region's electrification goals and improve air quality.

[Reference to Local Climate or Electrification Plans]

Thank you for considering our letter of support. We look forward to working with the Council to create a more sustainable future for our community.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Organization Name]

[Contact Information]