



CITY of CRYSTAL

Memorandum

To: Mayor and Council

CC: Anne Norris, City Manager

From: John Sutter, Community Development Director

Date: July 1, 2022

Subject: Proposed resolution requesting alternatives to be included in the environmental review for the Blue Line Extension

On June 21 and 22, respectively, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners and the Metropolitan Council approved the Route Modification Report for the Blue Line Extension to run in the median of Bottineau Boulevard through Crystal, with a station at Bass Lake Road. Prior to this, the city's elected officials, staff and community members have provided feedback through multiple channels and venues. The two dominant concerns are the vehicular mobility impacts of reducing Bottineau Boulevard from six lanes to four, and public safety concerns in and around the Bass Lake Road station including the proposed interchange.

With approval of the Route Modification Report, the project now moves into the Environmental Review and Municipal Consent phases. A Municipal Consent vote is anticipated 9-12 months from now. Staff opinion is that the city should formally request that certain alternatives be included in the environmental review:

1. No Build alternative reflecting maintenance of existing conditions.
2. Six Lanes, At-Grade alternative maintaining three travel lanes in each direction from the Trunk Highway 100 ramps through a reconstructed at-grade Bass Lake Road intersection to the vicinity of Airport Road.
3. Six Lanes, Interchange alternative maintaining three travel lanes in each direction from the Trunk Highway 100 ramps to the southerly ramps of a new interchange at Bass Lake Road.

For each of these alternatives, the environmental review process would identify impacts and potential mitigation measures. It is important to note that the impacts and mitigation may or may not support a particular alternative, and there will be trade-offs. For example, either of the six lane alternatives would presumably have less impact on vehicular mobility than the project's preferred four lane alternative, but would require widening the roadway footprint which in turn may require mitigation measures.

Ultimately it will be up to the City Council to decide which alternative (if any) receives an affirmative municipal consent vote. Staff recognizes that there is a mix of opinions about the project in general and design options in particular. Our goal is to ensure that the Council has the information it needs to take an informed municipal consent vote in 2023.

To that end, staff will place the attached resolution on the July 19 City Council agenda. If you have questions or would like to request that this be added to an upcoming work session agenda for Council discussion, please Anne know. Thank you.

CITY OF CRYSTAL

RESOLUTION NO. 2022 - 63

**REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF ALTERNATIVES
IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
FOR THE METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION**

WHEREAS, the City of Crystal (“City”) has long been underserved by the regional public transit system, with limited access to jobs and services in adjacent communities; and

WHEREAS, the City desires improved and expanded transportation options and connections for its residents, businesses, institutions and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the City has actively participated in efforts to bring high-frequency transit service to the northwest suburbs, including the proposed Metro Blue Line Extension (“the Project”); and

WHEREAS, the Project has developed conceptual layouts for the Project, specifically, at grade in the median of Bottineau Boulevard, and city staff, the Mayor and City Council, and community members have provided input as requested by Metro Transit and Hennepin County; and

WHEREAS, on December 13, 2021, Metro Transit and Hennepin County released the Draft Route Modification Report; and

WHEREAS, on January 18, 2022, the Crystal City Council adopted Resolution 2022-12 commenting on the draft Route Modification Report, including the planned reduction of the number of traffic lanes in the Crystal segment from six to four and replacement of the intersection of Bottineau Boulevard and Bass Lake Road with a grade-separated interchange; and

WHEREAS, on June 21 and 22, respectively, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners and the Metropolitan Council approved the Route Modification Report; and

WHEREAS, with this approval, the Project now moves into the Environmental Review and Municipal Consent phases; and

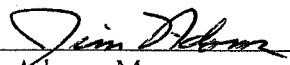
WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the City to formally request inclusion of certain alternatives in the Environmental Review to inform the City Council’s anticipated Municipal Consent vote in 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, in addition to the alternatives shown in the conceptual layouts previously provided to the City and described in the Route Modification Report, the City Council requests inclusion and analysis of the following alternatives in the Environmental Review for the Project:

1. No Build alternative reflecting maintenance of existing conditions.
2. Six Lanes, At-Grade alternative maintaining three travel lanes in each direction from the Trunk Highway 100 ramps through a reconstructed at-grade Bass Lake Road intersection to the vicinity of Airport Road.
3. Six Lanes, Interchange alternative maintaining three travel lanes in each direction from the Trunk Highway 100 ramps to the southerly ramps of a new interchange at Bass Lake Road.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that inclusion of these alternatives in the Environmental Review is essential for the City Council to consider an affirmative Municipal Consent vote on the Project.

Adopted by the Crystal City Council this 19th day of July, 2022.



Jim Adams, Mayor

ATTEST:



Christina Serres, City Clerk