



## BOARD OF HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

300 SOUTH 6<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
A240 GOVERNMENT CENTER  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55487-0240

August 26, 2014

Dear Bottineau LRT Stakeholders:

It has been a while since the last update from Hennepin County about Bottineau light rail transit (LRT), but we are excited to share the latest project news with you: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has just given approval for the project, now called the METRO Blue Line Extension, to enter into its New Starts project development phase! (Approval received on August 22, 2014)

During this phase, preliminary engineering work begins and environmental review comes to a close with publication of the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The Blue Line Extension joins an exclusive list of 12 transitway projects across the country that are part of the FTA New Starts program, all of which have the same goal of securing federal funding. In order to make the Blue Line Extension a reality, the Metropolitan Council must move forward with engineering while continuing to engage stakeholders, obtain municipal approvals, and secure our local and state funding. As the project moves into this next phase, the Metropolitan Council will become the lead local agency for engineering and construction of the Blue Line Extension, and you can find information on this aspect of the project at the Metropolitan Council's website, [BlueLineExt.org](http://BlueLineExt.org).

Hennepin County will remain active in the project, leading station area planning efforts in close collaboration with our city partners. In preparing communities for a major transitway investment like the Blue Line Extension, station area planning fosters a dialogue with cities, neighborhoods and residents along the route about their needs, desires and concerns for how the station will fit into their community. Station area plans also identify the investments needed to integrate the line into neighborhoods by opening day. This process is underway as part of the county's Bottineau Corridor Community Works program and will be completed by April 2016. For more information and updates on station area planning, please visit the county's website, [hennepin.us/bottineau](http://hennepin.us/bottineau).

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We hope you continue to engage in the Blue Line Extension project. We will share our Hennepin County project email list with the Metropolitan Council so that you continue to receive project updates – as well as details on community engagement activities and other ways to offer your input – from both agencies. In addition, look for a county email about subscribing to email updates for specific station areas.

Thank you for your continued interest in the METRO Blue Line Extension!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Opat". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Mike Opat, Chair  
Hennepin County Board of Commissioners  
District 1

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Linda Higgins  
Hennepin County Board of Commissioners  
District 2