



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

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October 25, 2016

Brian Lamb, General Manager
Metro Transit
560 Sixth Avenue North
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411-4398

Re: Metropolitan Council, Metro C Line Project, Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center,
Minnesota - Environmental Review Approval

Dear Mr. Lamb:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has evaluated environmental review documents submitted by the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit (Metro Transit) for the proposed C Line Project (Project) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. FTA finds that the proposed Project meets the criteria for a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) categorical exclusion in accordance with 23 C.F.R. § 771.118(d), *Additional actions which meet the criteria for a CE in the CEQ regulations (40 CFR § 1508.4) and paragraph (a) of this section may be designated as CEs only after FTA approval.*

The proposed undertaking is an 8.4-mile corridor bus improvement project to existing Route 19 in Brooklyn Center, north Minneapolis, and downtown Minneapolis. The C Line will travel primarily on Osseo Road/Brooklyn Boulevard, Penn Avenue, Olson Memorial Highway (Trunk Highway 55), and 7th & 8th Streets in downtown Minneapolis. Buses will travel using existing lanes in a mixed traffic operation, making limited stops at 23 stations roughly every quarter- to half-mile. These stations will receive upgrades, which vary by location and may include new curb bump-outs, shelters, platforms, lighting, pylon markers, signage, heating, fare collection equipment, security cameras, emergency call boxes, waste receptacles, and bicycle racks.

On July 9, 2015, in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800 – Protection of Historic Properties and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), FTA provided the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MnHPO) with the following determination: the Area of Potential Effect (APE) is limited to the proposed Project construction site locations and nearby properties as delineated on site maps. The MnHPO concurred with this determination on August 13, 2015. On August 2, 2016, FTA provided MnHPO with the following determinations: there are 11 resources on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) within the APE, and the Project will result in no adverse effects to those resources.

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The MnHPO provided its concurrence with these determinations on September 2, 2016. FTA finds, in accordance with 36 C.F.R. § 800, that the Section 106 coordination and consultation requirements for the proposed Project have been fulfilled.

The proposed Project requires temporary construction activities on the Twin Lakes Regional Trail for the Xerxes & 56th station in the City of Brooklyn Center. In February 2016, the City of Brooklyn Center and Three Rivers Park District provided written agreement with Metro Transit's proposal for an FTA *de minimis* finding under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (23 C.F.R. § 774.17(2)). Metro Transit did not receive any other input on this feature of the proposed Project after holding a 30-day public comment period. With this letter, FTA finds that Metro Transit's use of the Twin Lakes Regional Trail is *de minimis* under Section 4(f) because the proposed Project will not adversely affect or otherwise restrict the features, attributes, or activities of the resource qualifying the property for protection under Section 4(f).

The environmental records reviewed by FTA also consisted of a Categorical Exclusion checklist (with supporting attachments) that was updated pursuant to FTA comments and finalized on October 25, 2016. After reviewing this documentation, FTA finds, pursuant to 23 C.F.R. § 771.118(d) that the proposed Project will have no significant adverse impact on the environment. The record provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that a categorical exclusion classification is proper.

The use of any Federal funds for this proposed Project is contingent upon the following conditions:

- Prior to beginning construction, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit shall be obtained for stormwater discharge from the site, and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be completed.
- Any potential hazardous materials discovered that may be dangerous to human health and/or the environment shall be mitigated in accordance with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regulations. Any such threat shall be alleviated prior to further excavation and/or construction.
- Connections for the Twin Lakes Regional Trail will be maintained during construction. The trail will be restored to its previous condition.

This determination applies only to the proposed Project as described in the aforementioned correspondence and supporting materials. Any changes to the proposed Project which would result in significant environmental impacts not outlined in this documentation, including the disclosure of new information or previously unidentified environmental concerns, will require re-evaluation of this action.

This confirmation of a categorical exclusion does not provide FTA commitment that future Federal funds will be approved for this proposed Project.

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Any costs incurred under FTA pre-award authority must meet all Federal requirements prior to those costs being incurred in order to retain eligibility of those costs for future FTA grant assistance.

If you have further questions regarding this determination, please contact Reggie Arkell, Community Planner, at (312) 886-3704 or reginald.arkell@dot.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay M. Ciavarella". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "C".

Jay M. Ciavarella

Director, Office of Planning and Program Development

cc: Reggie Arkell, FTA
Kay Hong, Metro Transit
Scott Janowiak, Metro Transit
Katie Roth, Metro Transit