



## METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee (CMC) Meeting Minutes

Date & Time	October 10, 2024 1:30 – 3:00 PM
Location	F.T. Heywood Chambers, 560 N 6th Ave, Minneapolis
Members	Charlie Zelle, Irene Fernando, Marion Greene, Jeremiah Ellison, Marc Culver, Jeff Lunde, Candi Baikon, Karla Arredondo Payan, Meg Forney, Suzanne Sobotka, Khani Sahebjam, Bill Blonigan, Jonathan Hansen, Theresa Kiser, Reva Chamblis, Tara Watson, Lesley Kandaras, Dan Doerrer
Project Staff	Nick Thompson, Kelcie Young, Jer Yang

### 1. Call to Order and Welcome

Charlie Zelle, Chair of the Metropolitan Council (MetC), called the METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) Corridor Management Committee (CMC) meeting to order at 1:32 PM. Chair Zelle warmly welcomed the CMC members and the public, then invited the CMC members to introduce themselves.

Chair Zelle noted that today's CMC meeting materials are available on the BLE's website at [bluelineext.org](http://bluelineext.org). He also mentioned that members of the public are welcome to submit their comments regarding today's discussions to Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council by October 16, 2024, to be included in the meeting minutes.

Chair Zelle announced that today's meeting will include updates on the outcomes of Municipal Consent, environmental updates, and a review of the project schedule.

Chair Zelle also reminded everyone that there will be no public testimonies during this meeting.

### 2. Approval of August 8, 2024, BLE CMC Meeting Minutes

Chair Zelle called for a motion to approve the August 8, 2024, CMC meeting minutes.

Jeff Lunde, Hennepin County Commissioner, motioned to approve, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Irene Fernando, also from Hennepin County. The minutes were officially approved.

### 3. Community and Business Advisory Committee Reports

Jonathan Hansen, a member of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), provided an update on the discussions from the recent CAC meeting held on October 9, 2024. He noted



some confusion regarding the municipal consent process, as many communities believed there were still opportunities to change the route or change the transit mode to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). During the meeting, members discussed how the BLE alignment has evolved based on community input, emphasizing the importance of highlighting these changes so that communities can see how their feedback has been incorporated. Mr. Hansen noted that it was encouraging to see the outcomes of the votes in Robbinsdale, as they demonstrate the commitment of both policymakers and project staff. He also mentioned that CAC members discussed the next steps for mitigation efforts.

Chair Zelle noted that as the CMC continues to receive updates from the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) and the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), future CMC meetings will also include updates from the Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board.

Karla Arredondo Payan, a member of the Blue Line Coalition and the Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program (ACPP), provided an update on the board's progress. Ms. Payan reported that the board has been meeting monthly to discuss updates and learning opportunities. They have also engaged with corridor cities, the Metropolitan Council, and Hennepin County. Additionally, the board has developed bylaws to guide the funding and programs needed to address displacement before, during, and after construction.

Nick Thompson, Metropolitan Council acknowledged the work of the ACPP and added that anti-displacement efforts are being incorporated within the project's elements, with a focus on minimizing property impacts through the Environmental Study.

Commissioner Fernando clarified that while Hennepin County is involved in the anti-displacement efforts through staff placement and technical support, the ACPP Board operates as an independent community board.

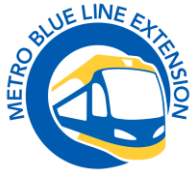
#### **4. Outcomes of Municipal Consent**

Council Member Theresa Kiser and Mayor Bill Blonigan of Robbinsdale expressed their gratification that municipal consent was granted, noting that the vote in Robbinsdale was evenly split.

Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, city of Minneapolis emphasized the importance of acknowledging the city staff for their excellent work collaborating with the BLE project team to support resolutions regarding specific design elements.

Commissioner Fernando expressed her eagerness to tackle the specific elements of the BLE alignment that remain unresolved by the communities, acknowledging that it has taken a considerable amount of time to reach this milestone for the project.

Mr. Thompson thanked all the corridor cities for their votes on municipal consent and acknowledged the conditions each city submitted to secure their approval. Mr. Thompson shared that the project received 33 out of 38 "yes" votes.



Mr. Thompson reviewed several design changes resulting from the municipal consent process. He noted that a new station will be added in Minneapolis at Washington Avenue and West Broadway Avenue, Downtown Station at 40th Avenue Station in Robbinsdale will be relocated to the north side of the intersection, and the design for the Lowry Station will continue to be evaluated.

Mr. Thompson noted that there are still many priorities identified by each of the corridor cities and the county. He stated that in the next phase, the project will continue to collaborate with all project partners and emphasized that dedicated support and funding will be provided for city staff from the project to help advance the design plan to 60%.

## **5. Environmental Update**

Kelcie Young, Metropolitan Council, provided an update on the environmental progress for the BLE project. Ms. Young noted that in the summer of 2024, the project published the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study (SDEIS), and the team is now working towards completing the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS). Ms. Young explained that the SFEIS will finalize the understanding of the project's impacts and benefits and outline mitigation commitments, which will be formalized in an Amended Record of Decision (AROD). The AROD is a critical step that will allow the BLE project to proceed into final design and property acquisition in preparation for construction.

Ms. Young added that the Environmental team is currently completing updated analyses and continuing ongoing coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). In parallel, there will be outreach to affected communities regarding mitigation efforts, starting this fall and continuing into next spring, with the SFEIS publication anticipated in summer 2025, followed by the implementation of mitigation measures.

Ms. Young noted that the analysis includes studies on noise and vibration, as well as historical and cultural surveys. She also mentioned that the team has been collaborating with agency partners throughout this process.

Ms. Young stated that the team is developing mitigation measures that are crucial to the communities. In addressing Environmental Justice (EJ) concerns, the mitigation efforts funded by the project, subject to FTA approval, include addressing business impacts during construction, loss of parking, community character, and indirect displacement.

Metropolitan Councilmember Reva Chamblis asked how corridor cities that haven't yet addressed the community character aspect can engage with their communities to do so. Councilmember Chamblis also requested clarification on what indirect displacement might look like.

Ms. Young responded that when the study refers to "community character," it relates to the appearance and atmosphere of a community, particularly regarding the 21st Avenue



corridor, where significant changes are expected, including those tied to noise and vibration. She added that mitigation strategies are available for all corridor cities.

Regarding indirect displacement, Ms. Young explained that this refers to concerns about residents or businesses being priced out of their neighborhoods. This issue is also a key focus in the EJ studies.

Ms. Young outlined the key categories of mitigation being focused on in the EJ studies, emphasizing that these areas still require outreach and collaboration with affected communities to be fully defined. The mitigation development includes funding for community programs, cultural placekeeping, storefront and virtual resources, workforce development, business support during construction, and parking solutions near the Penn and West Broadway Avenue area.

Tara Watson, Co-Chair of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), inquired about the storefront strategies and whether there will be someone available to assist businesses affected by the BLE Project, especially since city staff are already occupied. She asked how the needs of these businesses can be met in a practical manner so they can continue operating during construction.

Mr. Thompson responded that this concern is part of the outreach efforts. He emphasized that if this type of support is requested, it is valuable input and could lead to the creation of a navigator who connects businesses with the appropriate coordinator in their city.

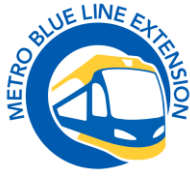
Mr. Hansen then followed up with a question regarding project funding for a city staff person to address these concerns. Mr. Thompson clarified that the staff funding through the BLE Project would be designated for a representative from the city, noting that while the BLE Project would provide funding, it would be up to the city to determine the position.

Ms. Young shared the timeline for the mitigation development outreach, indicating that the Environmental team is currently working on the Mitigation Outreach Framework this fall. They will begin Mitigation Outreach coordination from November 2024 through summer 2025, followed by the implementation of mitigation measures starting in summer 2025 and continuing it into construction.

Mr. Thompson reminded members of the significance of this phase, emphasizing the need for commitment and input to ensure it is included in the Environmental document, making it eligible for funding from the FTA.

## **6. Schedule Update**

Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the BLE project schedule, stating that the project is currently focused on achieving 60% design while continuing community engagement. Alongside the Municipal Consent process, the ACPP has released the draft Coordinated Action Plan (CAP), and he noted that comments are still being accepted.



Mr. Thompson reported that the BLE project is presently in the early procurement phases for construction and mentioned that the first meeting with the contracting community is scheduled for the next couple of weeks. This process will help shape the procurement strategy and ensure competitive bidding for the project.

Mr. Thompson also emphasized that there are several steps to complete in 2025 before the project can apply for federal funding.

**7. Next Meeting: November 14, 2024**

**8. Adjourn**

Chair Zelle announced that the next CMC meeting will be held on November 14, 2024, before concluding and adjourning the meeting at 2:46 PM.

Meeting Materials Provided: Meeting Agenda, October 10, 2024  
CMC Presentation, and August 8, 2024 CMC Minutes

Respectfully submitted, Jer Yang, Blue Line Ext. Administrative Lead