

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

Date & Time	June 13, 2024 1:30 – 3:00 PM
Location	F.T. Heywood Chambers, 560 N 6th Ave, Minneapolis
Members	Charlie Zelle, Reva Chamblis, Ingrid Kubisa, Bill Blonigan, Aaron Wagner, Khani Sahebjam, Jeremiah Ellison, Jacob Frey, Suzanne Sobotka, Jonathan Hansen, Karla Arredondo Payan, Candy Bakion, Dan Doerrer, Leslie Kandaras, XP Lee, Jim Adams, Irene Fernando, Cameron Anjuli
Presenters/Project Staff	Eric Gustafson, Erik Hansen, Paul Mogush, Charles Rucker, Carrie Christensen, Jer Yang

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council, Chair called the METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) Corridor Management Committee (CMC) meeting to order at 1:31 pm. Chair Zelle extended a warm welcome to CMC members and members of the public. Chair Zelle allowed members to introduce themselves.

Chair Zelle noted that today's meeting materials are available on the project's website at bluelineext.org. Chair Zelle informed that members of the public may submit their comments to Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council by Friday, June 21, 2024.

Chair Zelle announced that during today's meeting, members will receive updates on anti-displacement. He noted that both today's meeting and the July CMC meeting will not include public testimony to allow sufficient time for discussions. However, the public is still welcome to submit written comments. Chair Zelle also mentioned that there are no updates from the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) because their meetings have been rescheduled for later in June.

Chair Zelle shared good news about a significant milestone for the BLE project: the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) has been signed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Starting tomorrow, June 14, 2024, the BLE project will enter an official public commenting period for the SDEIS. Chair Zelle emphasized that this marks the beginning of the countdown for documenting public comments on the SDEIS and encouraged the public to submit their feedback. He also noted that there will be opportunities for public engagement throughout the SDEIS process.

2. Approval of May 9, 2024, BLE CMC Meeting Minutes



Chair Zelle asked for a motion to approve the May 9, 2024, CMC Meeting Minutes. Mayor Bill Blonigan, City of Robbinsdale, motioned to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Mayor Jim Adams, City of Crystal. The minutes were officially approved.

3. Anti-Displacement Updates

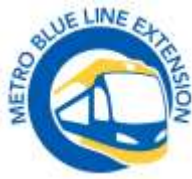
Chair Zelle shared that the Anti-Displacement Working Group (ADWG) has launched the Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program Board. The Working Group was established prior to the legislation and developed the Anti-Displacement recommendations. With the passing of legislation allocating \$10 million match to advance Anti-Displacement efforts, the group convened and held their kickoff board meeting. One of the action items was to elect the Board chair and vice-chair, resulting in Ricardo Perez being elected as Chair and Elizabeth Coco as Vice-Chair. Chair Zelle also mentioned that two different working groups of the board were going to be formed: one to focus on developing the bylaws and the other to develop protocols for approving expenditures as required by the Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity (ACPP) legislation.

Minneapolis Anti-Displacement Updates

Mayor Jacob Frey, City of Minneapolis, stated that he is present to support the Minneapolis Anti-Displacement plan alongside Erik Hansen from the city. Mayor Frey noted that while Municipal Consent typically focuses on lanes, traffic patterns, and station placements, there is a significant concern about anti-displacement. Mayor Frey expressed appreciation for the collaboration that secured \$10 million at capital, which requires a local match, and highlighted the importance of creating a comprehensive Anti-Displacement plan. He emphasized that Minneapolis officials need access to the draft Anti-Displacement plan to provide input and be part of the process.

Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, City of Minneapolis, agreed with Mayor Frey and added that the anti-displacement efforts should add value to the corridor rather than just mitigate harm. He affirmed the city's commitment to supporting anti-displacement initiatives but emphasized that the financial burden should not fall solely on the city. Leadership and funding for anti-displacement must come from the county and the project. CM Ellison stressed the need to maintain high credibility and understanding regarding who will finance these efforts.

Erik Hansen, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) for Minneapolis, expressed that public investments of this scale will bring significant changes to communities, and it's crucial to be honest about the impact on people. He noted that those involved in the planning of major public infrastructure projects often do not remain to reap the benefits. Mr. Hansen stated that community development should focus on people by centering their needs in the decision-making process.



Mr. Hansen stated that the City of Minneapolis has an ever-evolving approach to community development. He shared that Mayor Frey and the City Council have developed a Racial Equity Action Plan and set inclusive economic development expectations for city enterprises. Mr. Hansen highlighted that CPED has created an engagement framework and has enhanced its learning through participation in the Anti-Displacement Policy Network with 10 other cities nationwide. Through this participation, the city has learned to demonstrate equitable outcomes, supporting people's needs in affordable housing and providing essential goods and services.

Mr. Hansen emphasized that the BLE light rail project from Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park brings billions of dollars in investment to a historically underinvested region. He stressed the importance of understanding how this investment impacts communities and the city corridor by enhancing mobility and market demands. Mr. Hansen reiterated Minneapolis's full commitment to Anti-Displacement but acknowledged that the city cannot achieve this alone. He called on the committee to lead and set expectations, referencing a letter sent to the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and Hennepin County a year ago.

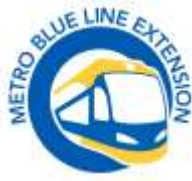
Mr. Hansen expressed interest in reading the Anti-Displacement Coordinated Action Plan and its strategies, noting that he currently has more questions than answers. He hopes that the responsibility of matching the anti-displacement funding will not fall solely on the cities.

Council Members (CM) Reva Chamblis, Metropolitan Council, expressed her personal support for the anti-displacement efforts. She acknowledged that both Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park have communities still facing poverty and emphasized that the anti-displacement initiative is a crucial step toward helping these communities.

Brooklyn Park Anti-Displacement Updates

Paul Mogush, Planning Director with City of Brooklyn Park, discussed Brooklyn Park's initiatives regarding anti-displacement. He mentioned reviewing the recommendations from the Anti-Displacement report and expressed satisfaction in sharing that Brooklyn Park has already implemented several of these recommendations. Additionally, city staff in Brooklyn Park have been exploring strategies that were not included in the Anti-Displacement report that might be helpful for the city.

Mr. Mogush emphasized several of these initiatives, including efforts to support small businesses through investments in affordable spaces. The city has also implemented a workforce development program that currently offers three programs serving residents of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center. Additionally, Brooklyn Park is engaged in business micro-lending, preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing, and the rehabilitation of single-family homes.



Council Member XP Lee, Brooklyn Park emphasized the importance of prioritizing small businesses, noting that this is a critical component to kick-starting anti-displacement efforts. CM Lee mentioned that one request from Brooklyn Park to Metro Transit and the County is support for expanding and developing additional transit options from east to west within the city. This expansion would provide greater support for the BLE light rail and the surrounding communities.

CM Chamblis noted that she and other Metropolitan Council CM are working on developing a plan for how the Council can support all transit connections.

Robbinsdale Anti-Displacement Updates

CM Aaron Wagner, City of Robbinsdale, provided updates on anti-displacement efforts for the city of Robbinsdale, and noted that the city has been actively involved since the beginning of the ADWG initiatives with several groups since 2022.

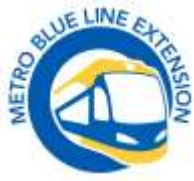
CM Wagner stated that while the city fully supports Anti-Displacement efforts, its success depends on leadership from a larger government entity. He noted that the city lacks the capacity to implement some of the anti-displacement recommendations that fall outside its jurisdiction. CM Wagner emphasized that Robbinsdale has prioritized collaborating with other corridor cities.

CM Wagner shared recent priorities the city has addressed, including mitigating indirect construction impacts, improving infrastructure around the BLE project, and supporting the development and preservation of safe, affordable housing. CM Wagner also mentioned recent policy updates and noted that the City Council has updated city codes. Additionally, the city has advised the BLE project office that they prefer the Robbinsdale downtown station to be located south of 40th Avenue to better benefit residents. CM Wagner highlighted that Robbinsdale has proactively been engaged by reducing parking in the downtown area by 50% in anticipation of the transit service around the Hubbard Transit Station.

CM Wagner provided an overview of Robbinsdale's future efforts on Anti-Displacement and reiterated their anticipation of leadership from the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County in leading the Anti-Displacement initiatives.

Bill Blonigan, Mayor of Robbinsdale, expressed his appreciation for the updates on Anti-Displacement efforts from other corridor cities. He acknowledged that Minneapolis is the economic and cultural center of the Twin Cities and pointed out that if Minneapolis lacks the resources to develop or implement Anti-Displacement initiatives, other corridor cities might also struggle with resources.

Mayor Blonigan stated that Robbinsdale has apartments along the corridor that could benefit from supplemental redevelopment to prevent community displacement. He



emphasized the importance of ensuring that small businesses along the corridor are also not displaced.

Mayor Blonigan expressed his opinion that Robbinsdale needs an elevated light rail for pedestrian safety, allowing safe crossings. He highlighted the preferred stop at 42nd Avenue, which is proposed to have the largest parking ramp, and noted future developments involving Elim Lutheran Church and US Bank. He encouraged Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council to engage with and influence these future developments.

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Anti-Displacement Updates

Carrie Christensen, Senior Planner at MPRB, provided updates on the MPRB's anti-displacement efforts and outlined their planning process, goals, and strategies. She noted that the MPRB comprehensive plan includes guidance on MPRB's role in Anti-Displacement. Ms. Christensen emphasized that public and regional transportation are incredibly important for park access.

Ms. Christensen explained that the MPRB comprehensive plan addresses the complex challenges of gentrification and displacement, raising the question of what role parks play in these issues. This question helped shape the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Christensen highlighted provided details on key aspects of their intervention plan, noting that MPRB has a robust land disposition policy requiring Hennepin County Court approval, supports small businesses, offers a workforce program, and plays a crucial role in cultural placemaking before, during and after construction.

Ms. Christensen noted that parks are a significant part of the North Side touchstone festivals and acknowledged that North Minneapolis lacks sufficient parkland within walking distance. She expressed that the BLE project might present an opportunity to bring these benefits to the parks and communities.

Crystal Updates

Mayor Jim Adam, City of Crystal, shared that he has been attending these meetings for over 12 years. He noted that Crystal consists mainly of affordable residential housing and its community is a big part of the workforce in the BLE corridor. Mayor Adams reported that approximately 15 years ago, Crystal completed the reconstruction of Highway 81, which was a long process. As residents in Crystal have already experienced displacement, anti-displacement policies will look different for his city. Mayor Adams stated that the city has already spent over \$5 million on land acquisition for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) purposes, but nothing materialized—no bus ever arrived. This situation was the start of a trust issue.



Mayor Adams shared that Crystal is facing challenges with vehicle displacement, particularly at Highway 81, where projected vehicle volumes for 2040 are a concern. He emphasized that this issue is not a priority at these meetings.

Mayor Adams revisited the proposed alignment in Crystal and expressed concerns about the permanent fixture the proposed interchange alignment would create in the city and expressed lack of faith in the BLE project.

Mayor Adams explained why his staff is not present at this meeting to discuss anti-displacement. It is not because they do not have concerns about Anti-Displacement, but rather due to the feedback received from the letter Crystal submitted to the BLE project a year ago. He noted that Anti-Displacement solutions are not one-size-fits-all.

Mayor Adams expressed a desire to rebuild trust with the BLE project office and Hennepin County. He emphasized that Crystal has been devoid of adequate public transportation, which has been frustrating for his city.

Hennepin County Anti-Displacement

Eric Gustafson, Anti-Displacement lead for Hennepin County, thanked the cities and MPRB for sharing their anti-displacement plans. Mr. Gustafson provided an update on the Coordinated Action Plan for Anti-Displacement, noting that it will be available for commenting after the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) comment period ends.

CM Chamblis appreciates the variety of perspectives shared, as they contribute to inform decision-making for the county and Council Members. CM Chamblis also acknowledged the importance of east-to-west transit in the northwest corridor and emphasized that the BLE project marks a beginning in addressing this need.

Candy Bakion, Blue Line Coalition (BLC) member asked if the SDEIS public comment period could be extended to August 6, 2024. Chair Zelle replied that the BLE project will review and address the request.

4. Next Meeting: July 18, 2024

5. Adjourn

Chair Zelle stated that members will receive updates on the SDEIS process at the July CMC meeting. Chair Zelle concluded the meeting and adjourned at 2:54 pm.

Meeting Materials Provided:

Meeting Agenda, June 13, 2024

CMC PowerPoint Presentation, May 9 CMC Minutes, Letter from James Cegla

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