

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

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| Date & Time | December 19, 2024 1:30 – 3:00 PM |
| Location | F.T. Heywood Chambers, 560 N 6th Ave, Minneapolis |
| Members | Charlie Zelle, Reva Chamblis, Bill Blonigan, Theresa Kiser, Khani Sahebjam, Suzanne Sobotka, Meg Forney, Marc Culver, Lesley Kandaras, Anjuli Cameron |
| Project Staff | Nick Thompson, Nick Landwer, 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 1:39 PM. Chair Zelle extended a warm welcome to the CMC members and members of the public. Chair Zelle invited CMC members to introduce themselves.

Chair Zelle noted that today's CMC meeting materials are available on the BLE's website at bluelineext.org. Chair Zelle mentioned that members of the public may submit their comments regarding today's meeting to Nkongo Cigolo, MetC by Friday, December 27, 2024 to be included in the minutes.

Chair Zelle began the meeting by acknowledging two departing CMC members, Jim Adams, Mayor of Crystal, and Bill Blonigan, Mayor of Robbinsdale. He expressed gratitude for their dedication, leadership, and partnership during their time as members of the CMC.

2. Approval of October 10, 2024, BLE CMC Meeting Minutes

Chair Zelle called for a motion to approve of the October 10, 2024 CMC Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Blonigan moved to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded by Meg Forney, President of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Minutes were officially approved.

3. Community and Business Advisory Committee Reports

4. Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Board Update

Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Board (ACPP), provided an update on the board's progress. Co-Chair Perez noted the importance of the Anti-Displacement timeline and



explained how it aligns with the timeline of the Blue Line Extension (BLE) project to meet certain milestone.

Co-Chair Perez shared that the ACPP recently completed the election of its Co-Chair and Vice Co-Chair. Additionally, the ACPP Board finalized and adopted its bylaws in October 2024. Co-Chair Perez highlighted that the board includes members from the Anti-Displacement Working Group (ADWG), whose historical knowledge contributes to identifying and addressing community needs.

Co-Chair Perez stated that following the legislative session in summer of 2024, the ACPP plans to onboard eight community members from across the corridor, six representatives from the business community, and four members from nonprofit organizations to join the ACPP Board. In addition, there will be seven members appointed from government agencies.

Co-Chair Perez reported that the ACPP Board holds monthly meetings and is supported by various working groups, including a community working group that provides input to the board, as well as a policy working group, a communications team, and a program and finance committee.

Co-Chair Perez stated that the application for funding will be available in the first quarter of 2025, with the ACPP Board seeking community members assistance selecting applications for funding. He also noted that the \$10 million is a matching fund, and efforts are underway to secure matches to unlock the dollars. Additionally, Co-Chair Perez shared that within the past month, the City of Minneapolis committed \$200,000 toward anti-displacement initiatives to address the impacts of the previous Blue Line Extension alignment.

Reva Chamblis, Metropolitan Council Member, inquired about how the number of ACPP Board members was determined and how representation across the corridor is ensured. Co-Chair Perez explained that this decision was made during the development of the ACPP bylaws, highlighting that the goal is to ensure representation from the entire corridor.

5. Environmental Update

Kelcie Young, MetC, stated that in the October CMC there was information on the Supplemental Final Impact Environmental Statement (SFEIS), and for this meeting Ms. Young will be providing updates context on SFEIS. Ms. Young explained that the focus on the SFEIS is on completing additional technical analysis, outreach, and design development since the Supplemental Draft Impact Environmental Statement (SDEIS) was published in summer 2024.

Ms. Young explained that the environmental mitigation commitments are one way the anti-displacement goals are being implemented within the BLE project. She noted that the project is currently in an outreach phase.



Ms. Young outlined strategies being developed to address impacts on Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. These strategies focus on mitigating construction-related business disruptions, loss of parking, changes to community character—such as those along the 21st Avenue Corridor, and indirect displacement. She noted that all strategies are subject to approval by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and require further coordination with project partners.

Ms. Young highlighted potential strategies, including funding for community programs, cultural placekeeping design groups, storefront resource centers, workforce development initiatives, and long-term business support. Ms. Young elaborated on the importance of cultural placekeeping and placemaking, referencing their background in prior studies. The goal is to preserve the rich cultural identity of the corridor while supporting local communities and businesses. The BLE project team proposes establishing cultural placekeeping design groups for each corridor city to ensure representation.

Ms. Young announced that a survey is available on the BLE project's website for those interested in participating. She also outlined the next steps for the Cultural Placekeeping Design Groups, emphasizing that the goal is to convene these groups in early 2025.

Ms. Young reported on other environmental engagements. Recently the BLE project team held workshops with the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), Community Advisory Committee (CAC), and Blue Line Coalition (BLC) members. The BLE project team held a Community Character Focus Workshop in the 21st Avenue Corridor communities. Ms. Young reviewed feedback from BAC, CAC, and BLC Workshop.

Mayor Blonigan commented that Minneapolis, as the largest city in the area, holds a unique position and suggested that it would be exciting to highlight the 45th parallel as a distinctive feature.

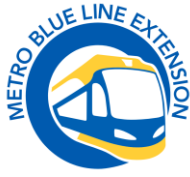
Meg Forney, President of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), suggested collaborating with Mary Altman for design placekeeping efforts. Council Member Chamblis highlighted Brooklyn Park's focus on visual arts, culture, and community interests, pointing out that cultural placekeeping can address impacts that extend beyond construction.

Cameron Anjuli, Metropolitan Council Member, advised caution regarding design elements, noting that federal guidelines impose restrictions, making it important to carefully use co-creation language.

6. Design Update

- **Lowry Avenue Station Design Update**

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, explained that during the Municipal Consent design process and the SDEIS comment period, there were requests to reassess the Lowry Station design. He noted that the original design included in the municipal consent packet was developed by a design team comprising representatives from



Robbinsdale, MPRB, Minneapolis, and the BLE Design Team. In response to the feedback, the group reconvened and re-evaluated nine alternative design options.

Mr. Landwer shared that a Lowry Station workshop was held on December 3, 2024. During the workshop, community members expressed support for the original Municipal Consent option (Option A) and also showed interest in Option H among the nine alternative designs.

Mr. Landwer presented an overview of the Nine Options Evaluation Matrix, detailing how each design option was assessed relative to the Municipal Consent Option plan. The evaluation considered criteria such as station accessibility, safety, and user experience; impacts on parks and trails; hospital traffic and access; area traffic operations and connectivity; neighborhood connectivity; effects on new bridges; constructability and construction impacts; and overall cost.

Mr. Landwer further elaborated on Option A, the Municipal Consent Design, highlighting that the station is at-grade and positioned between the existing bridges. He noted that this design preserves the new bridges, enhances station visibility, and provides additional park space.

Mr. Landwer reviewed Option B, explaining that this design places the station in a tunnel. He noted that construction would require a lot of mechanical demands and the whole area will be impacted during construction.

Mr. Landwer reviewed Option D1, noted that this design keeps the light rail and station at grade with the bridges while providing grade separation from the parkway. He mentioned that one of the bridges would need to be reconstructed to accommodate the station.

Mr. Landwer reviewed Option H, an alternative being considered that addresses most of the requested feedback. This option features the Lowry Avenue station at-grade, with the parkway running through a valley beneath the light rail and Bottineau Boulevard (Highway 81). He noted that Lowry Avenue will transition onto a bridge as it connects with Highway 81. Additionally, Mr. Landwer mentioned that this option will not include gate arm crossings, but it would result in an additional cost of \$30 to \$50 million.

Mr. Landwer stated that the BLE Team will proceed with the existing Municipal Consent design (Option A) while continuing to gather feedback. He also mentioned that an upcoming workshop is scheduled for January 2025.

President Forney thanked the BLE project team for considering MPRB's concerns and appreciated their efforts in re-evaluating alternative options. She also encouraged the design team to explore the jack tunneling design.



- **21st Avenue Community Workshop Report**

Mr. Landwer provided an update on the 21st Avenue Design, noting that the current Municipal Consent plan prioritizes routing the light rail guideway down 21st Avenue while minimizing property impacts. Mr. Landwer reviewed the process of assessing what lies beneath the ground to ensure there are no obstructions under the guideway.

Mr. Landwer walked members through the design rendering of the 21st Avenue layout, starting from 1st Avenue and extending to James Avenue Station.

Mr. Landwer reiterated that the goal is to minimize property impacts while focusing on creating amenities, greenery, and supporting cultural placekeeping.

Council Member Chamblis acknowledged the trade-offs involved in maximizing amenities but inquired about feedback regarding fencing. Mr. Landwer mentioned that there had been feedback for screening. Council Member Chamblis raised concerns about the parking areas of businesses, suggesting the addition of fencing or screening between the parking and the light rail for safety purposes.

Mr. Landwer added that there was interest in community amenities, including playgrounds, gardening spaces, more greenery, and additional stations. Council Member Chamblis inquired whether there would be more opportunities for community feedback on the station design. Mr. Landwer confirmed that there would be opportunities for community input on the station design.

7. Schedule Update

Nick Thompson, Metropolitan Council, provided an update on the BLE project's 2025 schedule, explaining that the team will continue to refine the 60% design. He mentioned that in 2025, there will be fewer CMC meetings, and highlighted the key milestones that CMC members will be updated on. Mr. Thompson also noted that the next Lowry Station workshop is scheduled for January 14, 2025.

8. Next Meeting: February 13, 2025

9. Adjourn

Mayor Blonigan thanked the CMC members and public service for their effort.

Chair Zelle thanked everyone for their time and adjourned the meeting at 3:02 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