



# Appendix H

## Section 106 Supporting Materials

### H.3 Section 106 Consultation Meeting Notes

1. Proposed BLRT Extension project Section 106 Consultation meeting notes, June 5, 2015
2. Proposed BLRT Extension project Section 106 Consultation meeting notes, July 10, 2015
3. Proposed BLRT Extension project Section 106 Consultation meeting notes, July 16, 2015
4. Proposed BLRT Extension project Section 106 Consultation meeting notes, February 4, 2016
5. Proposed BLRT Extension project Section 106 Consultation meeting notes, March 10, 2016
6. Proposed BLRT Extension project Section 106 Consultation meeting notes, March 24, 2016



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## METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLRT)

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### Meeting Title: Section 106 Consultation – Meeting No. # 1

**Date:** June 5, 2015      **Time:** 9:00am      **Duration:** 1.5 hours

**Location:** Blue Line Project Office (BPO) - 5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Crystal, MN 55428

Conference Room 2

**Meeting called by:**

Greg Mathis – MnDOT CRU

**Attendees:**

SHPO: Sarah Beimers  
USACE: Melissa Jenny  
Hennepin County: Dave Jaeger  
City of Brooklyn Park: Todd Larson  
City of Golden Valley: Emily Goellner  
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board: Adam Arvidson  
City of Robbinsdale: Marcia Glick  
Metro Transit, BPO: Kathryn O'Brien, Caroline Miller, Scott Reed, Janet Kennison, Jenny Bring, Tom Harrington, Sophia Ginis, David Davies, Miranda Adams

## Discussion Notes

### 1) Welcome and Introductions

Kathryn O'Brien, BPO Assistant Director, welcomed consulting parties and explained that the Blue Line LRT Extension Project (BLRT) has transitioned to a point in the planning process where discussion is needed around impacts to historic properties from design of the Project.

### 2) Section 106 Process

Greg Mathis, Minnesota Department of Transportation Cultural Resources Unit (MnDOT CRU) explained that this is the first of several meetings related to the Section 106 process for the Project. The emphasis of the meeting today is on the Section 106 process, the findings published in the March 2014 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) on what impacts the Project could potentially have to historic properties, and the process moving forward. Greg then led participants through the basics of the Section 106 process:

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their “undertakings” on historic properties. An undertaking can be something the agency is funding, permitting, or constructing on its own.
- The process is independent from, but completed in coordination with, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. Discussions at these consultation meetings will inform what goes into the NEPA and Section 4(f) documentation.



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Greg explained some of the terminology used in the Section 106 process, including and clarified certain points associated with each:

- Area of Potential Effect (APE) – The geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist. The APE is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking.
- Historic property – Any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
  - Properties that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (but not yet listed on it) are given equal consideration to already-listed properties during the Section 106 process and review.
- National Register of Historic Places – The Nation’s official list of properties worthy of preservation
- Integrity – The ability of a property to convey its significance
- Effect – Alteration to the characteristics of a historic property qualifying it for inclusion in or eligibility for the NRHP.
  - Effects are assessed differently depending on which type of historic property is being impacted – impacts to archaeological resources are generally considered adverse only if direct, while direct and indirect impacts to historic structures can be considered adverse.
  - It is important to note that not all effects are adverse. Whether an effect rises to the level of being adverse depends on why a property is significant. For example, noise may not be as big of an impact to a structure eligible for its architecture while it could have a larger effect to a building used for meditation.

Greg and Kathryn then briefly explained the Section 106 process and the status of each step for the project:

- Initiate the 106 Process – Completed in 2011.
- Identify Historic Properties – Completed in 2014.
- Assess Adverse Effects – The assessment of adverse effects will be ongoing through 2015.
- Resolve Adverse Effects – If any adverse effects are identified, consultation would continue into early 2016 and avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, would be documented in the Section 106 agreement, a legally binding agreement. Kathryn noted that Federal Transit Administration (FTA) takes those obligations seriously and asks for regular updates on meeting mitigation stipulations in agreement documents.

### a) Consulting party roles and responsibilities

Greg then explained the roles and responsibilities of the various parties in the Section 106 process including:

- FTA is the lead Federal agency responsible for meeting the requirements of Section 106. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – from whom the Project requires a permit – has deferred to FTA as the lead federal agency pursuant to Section 106. If there is a Section 106 agreement, USACE will be a signatory.
- MnDOT CRU has been delegated authority by FTA to act on its behalf for portions of the Section 106 process, including defining the APE and assessing whether historic properties are subject to potential adverse effects.



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- The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) oversees the work of Federal agencies in carrying out their responsibilities under Section 106.
- The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is a key partner, representing the state's interests in consulting with Federal agencies about the effect of their undertakings on historic properties.
- Indian Tribes and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) are another key partner, and consultation has been initiated with the appropriate Tribes.
- The Metropolitan Council is the local project sponsor and Federal grantee, responsible for certain parts of the Section 106 process including implementation of mitigation measures.
- Other consulting parties provide input to FTA and MnDOT CRU during consultation regarding effects. They have the option to sign a Section 106 agreement but no responsibility for its implementation. They include:
  - Local governments
  - Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)
  - Heritage preservation commissions (HPCs)
  - Other parties with a demonstrated interest in the Project's effects on historic properties.

In addition, the public has opportunities to comment during the Section 106 process. Open houses took place on May 28, 2015 in Crystal and June 4, 2015 in Minneapolis, and two more are upcoming on June 11, 2015 in Robbinsdale and June 17, 2015 in Brooklyn Park. There will be additional opportunities to comment prior to the publication of the Final EIS in April/May 2016. Kathryn and BPO Environmental Consultant Project Manager Scott Reed clarified that under Federal Highway Administration MAP-21 guidance, the Final EIS is released together with the Record of Decision (ROD), so the Section 106 effects determinations and agreement measures would be concluded and released for comment earlier to inform finalizing the documentation prior to issuing the joint Final EIS/ROD. A similar process is required for the Section 4(f) evaluation and USACE Section 404 permitting.

### **b) NRHP Criteria for eligibility and assessing effects**

Greg explained the process and criteria used to evaluate properties for the NRHP. A property must meet at least one of four criteria:

- Criterion A – association with significant events, activities, or broad patterns of history.
- Criterion B – association with a significant person.
  - Criterion C – characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; or have high artistic value.
- There are several Criterion C properties in the Project's APE.
- Criterion D – have the potential to yield important information about the past.
  - These are typically archaeological sites, and there are none identified within the APE.

Greg explained that a property must be at least 50 years, unless it possesses exceptional significance. In addition to possessing significance, a property must also retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance. Seven aspects of integrity that must be considered:

- Location: The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
  - Relevant to this process because two properties within the APE have been moved from their original location – Labor Lyceum and the Floyd Olson Statue.



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- Design: The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
  - This aspect is particularly important for properties of architecture significance.
- Setting: The physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials: The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship: The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling: A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
  - This is more intrinsic and builds upon all the other aspects of integrity to determine if the property conveys what it was historically.
- Association: The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.
  - This is also based on all other aspects, which combine to contribute to this aspect.

### c) Section 106 and Overall Project Schedule

Greg oriented participants to where Section 106 fits within the overall project schedule. The process of assessing adverse effects will involve consultation meetings likely once or twice a month until December, and final determinations of effect will probably be made later this year. If any adverse effects are identified, these meetings would be used to move to resolve those effects. If analysis indicates there may be the potential for adverse effects, then the process for resolving the adverse effects would likely start later this summer/early fall.

Kathryn added that many of the consulting parties are already very informed through their involvement in the Issues Resolution Team (IRT) process and through following the evolution of the design. She highlighted that this process offers an opportunity to start focusing on historic properties and the Project's effects on those properties.

Greg explained that the next meeting will get into more detail on Project effects on individual properties. Kathryn presented the overall project timeline, noting that the environmental process is scheduled to conclude in August 2016, and Kathryn pointed out that while the seven-year overall timeline between project development and passenger operations is tight, it was done for the Green Line (Central Corridor) LRT.

### 3) Draft EIS Findings

Greg shared that the Draft EIS identified 14 historic properties within the APE; no archaeological resources were identified. He then provided further detail about how determinations of effects are made. The type of significance and integrity of a historic property are considered, as are both indirect (e.g., noise, vibration, visual) and direct (e.g., property alterations/acquisitions) effects, and both temporary and permanent effects. FTA makes the final determination of effect on historic properties. Greg clarified that just because there may be an effect, it may not be adverse.

### 4) BLRT Section 106 Consultation Meetings

The BLRT Section 106 Consultation meetings discussion was covered in items 2c and 6a.



### 5) Final EIS Project and Historic Properties Overview

Greg gave an overview of historic properties within the APE, presenting them roughly east to west along the project corridor:

- Minneapolis – Historic Properties
  - Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District (HD)
  - St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway (Rwy.) HD
  - Northwestern Knitting Company (International Market Square building)
  - Sumner Branch Library
  - Wayman A.M.E. Church
  - Labor Lyceum
  - Floyd B. Olson Memorial Statue
  - Homewood HD
  - Osseo Branch of the St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Rwy. HD
  - Grand Rounds HD – Theodore Wirth Segment
    - Adam Arvidson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) asked if the Chalet is part of the historic district or considered on its own. Greg responded that the entire Grand Rounds have been surveyed independently from this Project and found to be eligible, so it was accepted that the district is eligible and the Project did not look into individual eligibility of the resources within the district. He clarified that the Bridge L9327 is called out separately because it was previously determined to be individually eligible. Sarah Beimers from SHPO clarified that because they are in the district, they are eligible as part of the district, so it is not necessary to go to that extra level of analysis at the individual resource level.
    - Emily Goellner, City of Golden Valley, asked if all of Theodore Wirth Park is part of the GRHD, and Greg confirmed it is. Kathryn mentioned that a study is being conducted to respond to some comments received related to Theodore Wirth Park, specifically looking at critical viewsheds and identifying park resources within them. It will be shared later this summer.
- Golden Valley – Historic Properties
  - Grand Rounds HD – Theodore Wirth Segment
  - Osseo Branch of the St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Rwy. HD
- Robbinsdale – Historic Properties
  - Sacred Heart Catholic Church
  - Robbinsdale Waterworks
  - Hennepin County Library, Robbinsdale Branch
  - Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale, noted that the library is currently an art gallery/museum and is NRHP listed.
  - West Broadway Residential HD
  - Marcia asked what this is and where it is located. Greg responded that it is a group of residences, generally extending along West Broadway, from just north of downtown Robbinsdale to Highway 100. He noted that the location is illustrated in the second to last page of the handout.
  - Jones-Osterhus Barn



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- Marcia added that this is now a printing company. She also indicated that the Osterhus family still owns it.
- Osseo Branch, St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Rwy. HD
- Crystal – Historic Properties
  - Osseo Branch of the St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Rwy. HD
- Brooklyn Park – Historic Properties
  - Osseo Branch of the St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Rwy. HD
    - Kathryn/Scott clarified that a small portion of the Osseo Branch in Brooklyn Park is within the project APE.

A flyover video of the project corridor from east to west was shown. Greg identified historic properties along the line and their significance and Tom Harrington, BPO, provided a summary of project elements at key locations including those that may impact historic properties are located.

- Minneapolis Warehouse HD – Greg explained that effects of the project on this district are not being evaluated as part of this project because effects from combined LRT projects were examined under the Interchange Project. Tom indicated that at the Target Station the other currently active light rail project, Southwest Light Rail Transit, will stay up high over 7th Street and then land at grade at the Royalston Station. The BLRT project drops down from Target Field Station and crosses Olson Memorial Highway/7<sup>th</sup> Street intersection at grade. Kathryn shared that there have been many discussions with MnDOT regarding the daunting pedestrian at-grade crossings. Tom added that along Olson Memorial the LRT will be center running.
- Northwestern Knitting Company – Located (275 Market St) a couple of blocks near 7<sup>th</sup> Street. No effects are expected to this property.
- Sumner Branch Library – Eligible under Criterion A (611 Emerson Ave N) and is located in the northwest corner of the intersection at Emerson. Van White Station center platform will be on the east side of intersection with a train running down the center of Olson Memorial Highway – the goal is to not significantly change the existing look. The Limits of Disturbance (LOD) do not go much beyond the existing footprint of the present highway and definitely not outside the Right of Way (ROW), which includes the sidewalks and frontage roads in front of the library.
- Wayman A.M.E Church – Eligible under Criterion C (1221 7<sup>th</sup> Ave N), the mid-century modern church has a “witches hat” spire, and the property includes only the circular church in the center, not the surrounding structures. There are modified five and six lane concepts for this area, possibly involving two lanes westbound and three lanes eastbound (as today). In the six-lane concept would be converted to LRT use, but generally remain in the same location. With the six lane concept, there would be some level of impact to the frontage road in front of the church that is currently used for church parking. With the modified five lane concept, it may be possible to avoid impacting the parking. Improvements would still be within existing ROW and the Project will work to preserve as much as possible and limit impacts to within existing ROW throughout Olson Memorial Highway.



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Labor Lyceum –Eligible under Criterion A (1800 Olson Memorial Highway) for its association with the Jewish community in Minneapolis. The existing ROW includes the two frontage roads, and the LOD would stay relatively the same as the ROW limit, though some sidewalks may be rebuilt.

- Floyd B. Olson Statue – Eligible under Criteria C and B (TH 55 at Penn Avenue North), and was originally in the median of the highway but was moved and the setting of the statue was reconstructed in relatively the same way, just turned 90 degrees. The IRT process has focused on a safer road for neighborhood development, what the speeds will be, etc. Through the station area planning process, project stakeholders (primarily the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County) have evaluated the potential for developing excess property that MnDOT owns around the statue (excess ROW). The City has requested that the area be looked at for potential future redevelopment, though not as part of this project. She also shared that MnDOT ownership of the property has been confirmed. LRT is a catalyst to think about what this station area can become. Sarah Beimers from SHPO asked if the boundaries of the statute were known (e.g. the statute itself, or the plaza surrounding the statute). Greg responded that he did not know off the top of his head but would look into it and follow up.
- The Penn Station, which will be near the statue. It has a center platform, Located on the east side of the intersection, similar to the Van White Station.
- The transition from center running LRT on Olson to running in the BNSF rail corridor will begin set of Penn. To enable this transition to occur, some work will take place on the TH 55 bridges – the westbound bridge will be reconstructed further north to allow the LRT to descend to the rail corridor, although the eastbound bridge will remain.
- Grand Rounds Historic District: Theodore Wirth (segment of Grand Rounds Historic District)
- Bridge L9327 (Theodore Wirth Parkway over Bassett Creek)
- Homewood Historic District (bounded by Penn, Oak Park, Xerxes, and Plymouth Avenues).
- LRT will be constructed along east edge of Theodore Wirth Park in the railroad ROW, with stations at Plymouth and Golden Valley Road. Tom explained the reconstructed rail corridor and the need to move freight. Tom also noted issues related to poor soils and floodplain and wetland impacts BNSF has requested that the BLRT project provide a future access road adjacent to their relocated freight rail track. Kathryn added that the Draft EIS included analysis of an aggregate access road, reconstructed freight, and two lines of LRT. At that time, SHPO found no adverse effects on the rail line (Osseo Branch, St. Paul Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway Historic District), but the Project will continue discussions moving forward to confirm any impacts to the railway historic district.
  - Adam asked if BNSF is truly planning for an access road or another line. Scott explained that the Project will not preclude BNSF from future improvements. Emily Goellner, City of Golden Valley, asked about the turn at Olson and whether it may be a noisier area in the future (e.g. due to wheel squeal on the turn). Kathryn indicated that this is a possibility, and the Draft EIS analyzed that noise issue. The Final EIS will update that analysis and disclose expected noise impacts and mitigation options. Emily also asked about the possibility of increased BNSF traffic, and associated noise impacts. Kathryn responded that the freight line has talked about more trains but that Lance Meister, the noise expert for the Project and author of FTA noise guidance, has



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- advised that it is better to assume what the conditions are today (quieter) to focus the analysis on what the actual noise increase is from the LRT. If you assume more trains in the future, then the baseline noise is already higher.
- Some of the Xcel Energy overhead transmission lines will need to be relocated.
  - At the Plymouth Avenue Station, the Plymouth Avenue Bridge needs to be reconstructed to have fewer columns and wider spans to fit LRT underneath and accommodate trail connectivity, so the project is looking at potentially shifting the creek to the east. The area contains Soo Line and MPRB property, and the station would have an elevator/stairs to get down to station at the tracks. Emily asked about impacts of the vertical circulation to the park, and Greg explained that it is still being looked at and will be part of future discussions. Tom confirmed that visual impacts will be considered as design is moved forward.
  - On Theodore Wirth Parkway, the bridge can likely stay, along with the Golden Valley Road bridge. The station on the south side of Golden Valley Road is the only split platform-a configuration proposed to preserve the two existing bridges. The vertical circulation is on the south side of bridge.
  - North of the Golden Valley Road station is where BNSF put in fill pre-Clean Water Act. This was a major wetland, and retaining walls would be needed to retain the fill (floodplain impacts). The project is looking at structural options to minimize the floodplain impacts, including whether they could use the bridge to remove embankments as mitigation for floodplain and wetland impacts.
  - Adam noted that Theodore Wirth Park ends at Golden Valley Road, but that part of the Grand Rounds Historic District extends to the east. Tom indicated that LRT stays in the east side of the corridor.
- Robbinsdale Waterworks – Eligible under Criterion A (4127 Hubbard Ave N) includes the portion of the property on the north side of the black fence, the period of significance for the property is from 1930, and includes the water tower (part of the WPA work) and storage tanks.
  - Sacred Heart Catholic Church – Eligible under Criterion C (4087 West Broadway).
  - Hennepin County Library, Robbinsdale Branch Eligible under Criterion A.
  - The main effect on these properties is from the Robbinsdale Station. The Draft EIS examined the potential parking ramp, and the project continues to work with the city on park and ride design opportunities.
  - Will also need to consider noise for the church and library.
  - Marcia asked about the resources to the east of the West Broadway Residential Historic District, and Greg indicated that they were examined and found to be not eligible. Adam clarified that the Hennepin County Library, Robbinsdale Branch (4915 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave N) is listed, and Kathryn confirmed but reiterated that eligible and listed are considered the same in the Section 106 and effects process. Tom and Kathryn then explained that crossing improvements are happening at every roadway crossing, incorporating better pedestrian crossings, gates, etc. Other options for at-grade crossings are being considered through the design process undertaken by the IRT, but the solution is still being determined for the library location.



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- West Broadway Residential District – Abuts the rail corridor up to Highway 100, with the boundary roughly paralleling the alley on the west. There will be noise and visual effects from a retaining wall and other project elements in this area.
- Jones-Osterhus Barn – Eligible under Criterion C since it (4510 Scott Avenue N) is one of first and last of its type. There may be minor visual effects from project elements. Marcia noted that the Osterhus family still owns the barn.
- Minneapolis and Pacific Railway (Soo Line) HD – Crosses the project in Crystal, just north of Corvallis Avenue. Per the DEIS, the Project would be elevated in this location, while the BNSF continues at grade. Emily asked if that meant the LRT would go overhead, and Kathryn said yes, that freight lines will not allow at-grade crossings with LRT for safety reasons. Tom noted that LRT can accommodate steeper grades and lower clearances than freight.
- Osseo Branch Line, St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba/ Great Northern Railway HD – Eligible under Criterion A, the historic district is a 13-mile segment from Minneapolis to Osseo. The LRT alignment will extend from TH 55 northwest to Brooklyn Park, where the LRT alignment diverts from the railroad at 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North. The project will be constructing new stations, overhead catenary wires, support poles, lighting, TPSS and light rail vehicles within the historic district.
- 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Station Park and Ride– This is where there is an existing underutilized ramp. It currently accommodates 565 cars and express bus service. The Project team is looking at moving bus operations to 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and building a surface lot to the north, and possibly adding a third level at this ramp depending on the final outcomes of the park and ride projections. This was included in Draft EIS. Janet relayed a request by the City to keep the third level option. The project is considering adding a pedestrian crossing and access to the north end of the platform, similar to the Northstar freight crossings at Ramsey, Coon Rapids and Anoka stations, which are very tall to meet required freight clearances. This was not part of the Draft EIS scope and budget and effects on the NRHP eligible railroad would need to be considered.
- The alignment then leaves the BNSF corridor, crosses over 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Highway 81 at-grade and becomes center-running on West Broadway. Kathryn concluded by saying that from here to end of the line, there are no historic properties. The remaining stations are on the south side of Brooklyn Boulevard, the south side of 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the south side of 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, and just west of the West Broadway/Oak Grove Parkway intersection. Kathryn noted that the reconstruction of West Broadway Avenue between Candlewood Parkway and 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is a separate project from the BLRT; this roadway reconstruction project has been in Hennepin County's plans since the early 2000s. North of Highway 610, they are looking at options for the Oak Grove Station and an operations and maintenance facility (OMF) on the north end of the line.

## 6) Schedule Upcoming Meetings

### a) Regularly scheduled meetings through Q3 2015

Greg explained that they are finalizing the schedule for the next meeting, but it will likely be the first week of July (a notice will be sent in the next week or so). Kathryn explained that they will want to set up recurring meetings on everyone's schedule and can cancel if one is not needed. Caroline added that the Project may also be able to focus these meetings by city, and that they will lay out the agenda in advance. Adam weighed in that this would be very helpful.



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Kathryn closed the meeting by expressing that she is looking forward to getting good work done together and that meeting notes will be provided to the group.



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### Meeting Title: Section 106 Consultation – Meeting No. 2A

**Date:** July 10, 2015    **Time:** 12:30pm    **Duration:** 2 hours

**Location:** Blue Line Project Office (BPO) - 5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Crystal, MN 55428

Conference Room 2

**Meeting called by:** Greg Mathis – MnDOT CRU

**Invitees:** SHPO: Sarah Beimers  
Hennepin County: Dave Jaeger  
City of Robbinsdale: Marcia Glick  
City of Crystal: John Sutter  
Metro Transit, BPO: Kathryn O'Brien, Caroline Miller, Scott Reed, Janet Kennison, Lisa Rasmussen, Jenny Bring, David Davies, Miranda Adams, Parisa Ford, Kelly Wilder  
MnDOT CRU: Greg Mathis, Jon Vimr

### Discussion Notes

Greg Mathis, MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit (CRU), opened the meeting and led introductions.

- He explained that the first consulting parties meeting on June 5, 2015 introduced the Project and identified historic properties.
- The next steps are to consult on potential Project effects on historic properties in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and reach agreement on whether different effects have the potential to result in an adverse effect. There are two meetings scheduled for this round of consultation – this meeting and one on July 16, 2015. This meeting covers properties in Crystal and Robbinsdale, while the second meeting will cover properties in Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board owned property, Golden Valley, and Brooklyn Park including the Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD). Both meetings include discussions of the Osseo Branch Line and the Theodore Wirth Park Cultural Landscape Study, and consulting parties are welcome to attend both meetings.
- Greg explained that U.S. Department of Transportation MAP-21 legislation calls for an expedited process. The goal of these meetings is to focus on properties where there is the potential for adverse effects, and consult on other properties as needed.

Greg described the meeting packet, which was sent to consulting parties via an emailed link to e-Builder (an on-line document management site being used for communications and transmittal of documents with consulting parties) and printed out for the meeting.

- The cover letter and packet constitute a formal submittal from MnDOT CRU to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and open a 30-day comment period. Comments can be sent to Greg at the address on the letter.



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- Following the cover letter are figures illustrating the Project APE and locations of all historic properties within the APE. The green and black dashed line is the Architecture/History APE, and the red and black dashed line is the Archaeology APE. The Archaeology APE is smaller because it encompasses only the potential for direct effects, while the Architecture/History APE must account for potential indirect effects such as noise and vibration.
- Also included in the packet is a handout explaining National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation and aspects of integrity, as well as summary handouts describing potential effects, if any, to each historic property. These summary handouts describe preliminary effects from the Project identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and updates based on the Project moving into design during development of the Final EIS. Each historic property is highlighted yellow on the plan sheet map accompanying its respective summary handout.

Kathryn O'Brien, Metro Transit Blue Line Project Office (BPO), introduced Lisa Rasmussen, also with BPO, who attended from the engineering team to assist in describing the current design of the Project. To orient attendees to the location of each historic property and show each property in greater detail, Lisa displayed detailed engineering roll plot maps throughout the discussions.

### 1) City of Crystal

Greg indicated that the discussion would now shift to a discussion of properties in Crystal.

#### **Soo Line/Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway Historic District (HE-CRC-199)**

- Eligible under NRHP Criterion A for its association with the statewide development of railroads and agriculture, it was the primary main line into the western portion of the state.
- The CP rail line currently runs through BNSF freight corridor, and the freight line crosses at grade. As part of the Project, freight will shift to the west side of the existing freight corridor. The freight crossing will shift west but will remain at grade, and LRT will be elevated on a bridge or retaining wall structure as it passes through the crossing.
- Greg explained that the historic district includes the entire right-of-way (ROW), not just the tracks. Since the LRT will clear span over the line, it will not have direct effects to the historic railroad corridor. The at-grade crossing will be shifted 10-15 feet, but it is not anticipated that will have adverse effects to the line's historic character.
- Elements of the LRT, such as the catenary wires, will be visible but only along a small portion of this linear resource and, therefore, the visual character of the corridor will not be adversely impacted.
- The line is not a noise sensitive receptor per FTA's criteria, and the existing freight rail is louder than LRT.
- Greg indicated that they do not anticipate an adverse effect and asked for any feedback. No additional comments were made.

### 2) Osseo Branch

#### **Osseo Branch Line/Great Northern Railway Historic District (HE-RRD-002)**

- Greg explained that the LRT corridor follows approximately eight miles of the Osseo Branch Line, passing through Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis. The entire eligible line is



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approximately 13 miles long. It is eligible under NRHP Criterion A for its role in expanding potato farming in northern Hennepin County and for creating a new connection from the region to Minneapolis.

- Greg said that based on preliminary plans in the Draft EIS, the previous SHPO had expressed support for adaptive reuse of the corridor by LRT, rather than using the corridor for a rails-to-trails project, for example.
  - Sarah asked if project plans have changed since SHPO previously reviewed them. Kathryn explained that current project plans are essentially the same as when SHPO previously reviewed them in the Draft EIS, except that the freight rail line is now located next to the LRT line, and the access road is located to the west of the freight rail line (other revisions/updates are discussed in the next section).
- Greg explained that while design has yet to be finalized, various project elements such as overhead lines, new bridges, and corridor protection treatments, which are discussed further in the freight rail update, will be present within the historic district. Noise and vibration will also be present within the district, but the Osseo Line has historically experienced both of these and is not a noise sensitive receptor. In addition, operation of the LRT may spur development in nearby parcels, which could impact the integrity of the rail line.
- Based on the above potential effects, some additional analysis and consultation will be needed on this property.

### 3) Freight Rail Update

Kathryn began an update on freight rail related to the Project by explaining that as Project development has progressed, BPO has stepped up its coordination with BNSF, which operates in the historic Osseo Branch Line Railway Historic District.

- Lisa explained that BPO has been meeting with BNSF regularly and has received feedback that the railroad intends to own and operate freight trains on the approximate western 50 feet, and that they need to retain the ability to make future freight track or capacity improvements within that western 50 feet. They recommend shifting freight tracks closer to LRT tracks and designing and building an appropriate physical barrier to ensure safe operations.
- Engineering has incorporated changes based on this feedback including moving the access road from between freight and LRT (as proposed in the Draft EIS) to outside the BNSF tracks, so that freight maintenance needs do not conflict with LRT operations. Freight and LRT will each occupy 50 feet of the corridor in all concepts.
- Three “corridor protection treatments” for physically separating freight and LRT in case of derailment or a crash have been proposed, based on the physical character of the corridor.
  - Derailment ditch
  - Crash wall – Likely about six feet tall, although the height is not confirmed.
  - Retained embankment
- Various treatments could be implemented in different parts of the corridor. BPO is currently evaluating where each option will work best and is hoping to get feedback soon from BNSF representatives.
- Electronic intrusion detection devices may also be implemented, similar to those used where the METRO Blue Line (Hiawatha) LRT enters tunnels into Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport.

Kathryn and Lisa then discussed additional items that have been a part of BPO and BNSF discussions.



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- Safety and logistics related to shared freight and LRT crossing have been points of discussion.
- “Pinch points” exist where there is less than 100 feet of ROW available, where the railroad previously sold land. All corridor protection treatments assume having 100 feet available, so unique solutions will have to be developed or land will have to be purchased back.

Kathryn concluded by discussing next steps in the discussions with BNSF.

- BPO and BSNF will continue to coordinate and seek consensus on LRT Project development, and the goal will be to ensure that any proposals are incorporated into the Final EIS.
- Kathryn pointed out that in reality there is little design flexibility, given that railroads generally have strict design and safety requirements.
  - Sarah asked if this means that, if one or more options have an adverse effect, there is no recourse for FTA. Kathryn replied that if the railroad has a safety concern, the opportunity to influence design will be very limited. This is similar to MnDOT finding safety issues with a historic bridge – the safety concerns would likely take precedence over an adverse effect finding.

#### 4) City of Robbinsdale

Greg led a discussion of each historic property within the APE in Robbinsdale.

##### **Jones-Osterhaus Barn (HE-RBC-264)**

- The barn is eligible under NRHP Criterion C, in the area of agriculture and architecture, as a rare example of a barn from first period of agricultural development in Minnesota.
- Greg explained that the property line is a half block from the Project limits and that no acquisition or physical alternations have been proposed. In addition, the property is not anticipated to experience vibration from operations. No potential direct effects have been identified.
- BPO is in the process of designing the signalized crossing, which along with the catenary wires may have the potential to cause minor visual effects.
- Greg displayed photos of the property, including a view looking back toward the current railroad tracks, to illustrate that elements visible from the property might include passing trains, catenary poles, and wires. These elements would have only minor visual effects and would be unlikely to adversely affect the property.
- The barn is located in an area of moderate noise impacts but is not noise sensitive, so there is no adverse effect from noise.
  - Kathryn clarified that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) noise analysis assesses the type of receptor, not just the surrounding geography. So while there may be residences nearby that are noise sensitive, the barn is not.
  - Sarah Beimers, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), asked about the barn’s current use, and Kathryn and Greg said their understanding is that it is used as storage for the printing business in an adjacent building. Sarah asked if access to the barn would change, and Kathryn explained that there would be no change in the access.
- Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale, asked if BPO has spoken with the Osterhaus family. Kathryn said she did not know but would check with others in her office.



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- Greg provided a brief recap of the discussion from earlier in the meeting. He indicated that the property is in a noise sensitive zone but is not classified as a noise sensitive receptor, and that MnDOT CRU anticipates no direct effects, minor visual effects, and no adverse effect overall. Therefore, MnDOT CRU and BPO are hoping not to consult further on this property unless there is a change in the project.
  - Marcia asked about any changes to access, and Greg clarified again that access will not change. Marcia also noted that the printing company on the site is now providing garbage stickers to residents free of charge, which the city appreciates.
- Greg asked if anyone else would like to bring up any additional potential effects or if there was general agreement with the assessment that there is no potential for adverse effects. He also welcomed any additional questions. No other comments were received.

### West Broadway Avenue Residential Historic District (HE-RBC-158)

- Greg explained that the district is eligible under NRHP Criterion C, in the area of architecture. Project elements will not be built within the boundaries of the district, so they will not physically impact or alter the property. Therefore, it is anticipated that there will be no direct effects.
- Some project elements will be visible, however. The tracks passing nearby will be elevated, so some residences will have views of retaining walls, which Lisa clarified will be an average of 10 feet tall and closer to 17 feet tall closer to the Highway 100 bridge. At Highway 100, freight will stay on the existing bridge structure, and LRT will be built between the freight bridge and the existing West Broadway Avenue bridge.
  - Kathryn asked if Marcia has heard from residents, and Marcia said their biggest concern is that LRT passengers will be looking at them from above, bringing up privacy concerns. Noise and vibration are concerns as well. Marcia asked if LRT will be elevated with a privacy fence along the top of the wall, and Lisa said that level of detail has not yet been discussed in the issues resolution team meetings but that it could be feasible.
  - Sarah asked if a graphic of the elevation is available, and Lisa said there is not yet. Marcia pointed out that it becomes narrower as you approach Highway 100, so there is more of an opportunity for the train to be passing nearly on top of houses, raising greater concerns among residents.
- Greg said that because this resource is a Category 2 noise receptor, additional analysis will be required, as will vibration analysis.
  - Marcia pointed out that some residents use the alleys for access, and the train will be right above the alleys.
- Greg also indicated that potential effects from redevelopment will be assessed.
- Kathryn asked if there are any additional concerns, and Greg explained that this is a property on which MnDOT CRU plans to continue to consult.

### Hennepin County Library, Robbinsdale Branch (HE-RBC-024)

- Greg explained that the property is eligible under NRHP Criterion A, in the area of education. Project elements will not physically impact or alter the property since it is across the street from the project, therefore it is anticipated that there will be no direct effects.



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- There may be indirect visual effects from overhead wires, support poles, and substations, and the proposed Robbinsdale Station may be visible from the property.
- The property is located within an area that will experience moderate noise impacts and is categorized as a Category 3 noise receptor, so effects will need to be fully analyzed before a final determination can be made.
- Because operation of the BLRT may spur development in nearby parcels, the potential effects of this will need to be examined once economic analysis is available.
  - Marcia indicated that it is helpful that the freight train will now be located farther away from the property (since the freight rail will be located adjacent to the LRT and the access road will be on the west closer to the property), because existing vibration already makes things teeter on the walls in the museum (current use of the library). Lisa said the LRT tracks will move some from their original location but not as much as originally planned, and Marcia said the concern is more with freight moving closer to the outside edge (closer to the property) than LRT moving.

### Robbinsdale Waterworks (HE-RBC-286)

- Greg explained that the property is eligible under NRHP Criterion A, for its association with federal relief projects resulting from the Great Depression. More specifically, it is one of the remaining WPA public utility projects in Minnesota.
- While yet to be finalized, Project elements such as overhead wires, support poles, substations, and the proposed Robbinsdale Station may be visible from the property. Consultation will continue on these elements when more information is available, specifically on the park and ride lot.
  - Marcia said it is likely the park and ride lot will be located well away from the property, on the extreme opposite northern edge of the parcel.
- Kathryn asked for any additional concerns, and none were raised.

### Sacred Heart Catholic Church (HE-RBC-1462)

- Greg explained that the church building, not including the rest of the property, is eligible under NRHP Criterion C, in the area of architecture. Project elements will not physically impact or alter the property since the project is at least a quarter to half block away; therefore, it is anticipated that there will be no direct effects.
- Project elements such as overhead wires, support poles, substations, and the proposed Robbinsdale Station may be visible from the property, but because it is eligible under Criterion C, these visual effects are not anticipated to be adverse. Proximity to the Robbinsdale Station may spur development in nearby parcels, which could lead to additional effects.
- The property is located within an area that will experience moderate noise impacts and is categorized as a Category 3 noise receptor, so additional analysis will be required before a final determination of effect.
  - Greg emphasized that noise would be primary concern to this historic property, and Kathryn said the noise analysis would likely be done later this summer.
- Marcia pointed out that the Robbinsdale City Council is discussing a potential pedestrian overpass or underpass at 41st Avenue.
  - Kathryn pointed out that there is the potential for a pedestrian overpass/underpass to affect Triangle Park. If so, it would need to undergo a 4(f) evaluation, separate from this process.



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- Marcia brought up grade separation, pointing out that if freight stays at grade and LRT goes under or over, it could have impacts to the West Broadway Residential historic district. Greg said that all current assessment is based on the current design, and Marcia pointed out that these are questions to keep in mind in case design changes.
- Lisa indicated that the engineering team had only looked so far at the underpass idea, and Marcia agreed that is likelier because an overpass requires more distance.
- Sarah asked if there is an existing crossing at 42nd Avenue, and Marcia said yes but that they are concerned additional capacity will be needed since the area is already so congested with school buses and other uses. Adding trains could bring circulation to a standstill, so they are looking into grade separation now before it becomes a problem and they are stuck with a configuration.
- Kathryn shared that visioning efforts are underway to discuss incorporating the station into the community, so they are proceeding under the assumption that grade separation is a realistic option. Marcia indicated that certain city council members would give up an at-grade station and put it underground if it means they could get grade separation. Kathryn emphasized that they will need to get to a politically and technically feasible option that will hopefully minimize environmental effects.
- Marcia pointed out that the city has been required to get approval every time it proposes to make improvements because of considerations about the church's design. Sarah explained various funding considerations that could drive why that is.

Greg concluded the agenda item by pointing out that all historic properties are included in the meeting packets but that only the properties in Crystal and Robbinsdale are being discussed today.

### **5) Overview/Discussion of Theodore Wirth Park Cultural Landscape Study**

Kathryn segued into the final agenda item, a cultural landscape study of Theodore Wirth Regional Park (TWRP) undertaken in response to comments from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) on the Draft EIS. She explained that the goal of the study is to provide additional information pertaining to the elements of the cultural landscape within the park to inform analysis of effects.

Greg introduced Parisa Ford, Metro Transit BPO consultant team, principal investigator of the study.

- Parisa explained that the purpose of the study is to provide a historic context for the park and document its developmental history, as well as identify viewsheds and vantage points within TWRP where the BLRT project may be visible. The study identifies the physical characteristics to TWRP and, thereby, to the Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD), and contributing elements within the area of potential effect (APE) and areas where the project may be visible.
- Landscape features were identified through a high-level reconnaissance review across the park, and contributing features were identified through historical research and more intensive field survey within the Architecture/History APE and viewsheds
- TWRP is a contributing element within the Theodore Wirth Segment of the GRHD, which is eligible for the National Register under:
  - Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation, as a nationally-significant example of late-19th and early-20th century park development.
  - Criterion C for Landscape Architecture, significant for its design and as the work of nationally-significant landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland and park superintendent Theodore Wirth.



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- The GRHD's Period of Significance is 1884 to 1942, but it is currently under review to determine if it should be extended to c. 1975.
  - Kathryn clarified that the possible extension of Period of Significance is a larger effort not related to the BLRT Project.
  - Sarah explained that federal law provides that if such an effort is underway, the extended period should be considered in determining any effects.
- Parisa continued with an overview of the park's developmental history. Land was acquired incrementally from 1889 through 1952, and the original design follows the Country Park model established by Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.
- Key plans that informed the design and development of TWRP:
  - Wirth's General Plan for the Improvement of Glenwood [Theodore Wirth] Park (1914) laid the overall framework of the park.
  - Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams' Minneapolis Parkway System Concepts for the Future (1971) is the next significant planning development, focusing on transportation and circulation and retaining the recreational value of the entire parkway system but making specific recommendations for TWRP. Recommendations by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams were implemented in the early-1970s, related to transportation, signage, lighting, the park's functioning for recreational values, and the bicycle grand rounds concept linking the lakes.
    - Kathryn asked if bike and pedestrian improvements were made, and Parisa indicated that a focus was indeed to maintain both recreational and commuting access.
- Parisa discussed other important points in the park's development history: streetcar service was extended by 1916; by 1922 the Chalet, Theodore Wirth Parkway, and Theodore Wirth Golf Course were present; and by 1942, the WPA and CCC federal relief programs completed Bassett Creek Lagoons and other improvements. A streetcar structure remains on Glenwood Ave, which was historically an important access route to the park.
- Parisa continued into a discussion of the major landscape features in the park, emphasizing that it is a historic designed landscape. The primary components of the landscape include the grounds (topography, land use, and landscaping features) and bodies of water/water features (lakes, lagoons, and creeks).
- Other landscape features include circulation networks (roads, railroads, paths and trails); view and vistas; vegetation (oak woodlands, wet prairies); buildings and structures (Theodore Wirth Chalet, bridges); and small scale elements (fences and bollards, benches, picnic tables and other furnishings, memorials). The PowerPoint presentation contains images of many of these features, which Parisa described to consulting parties.
- Lisa asked about the bridges pictured, and Parisa clarified that only Bridge L9327 is historic. Kathryn indicated that Bridge 6247 was recently reconstructed so could not be historic, and Lisa agreed, saying that it will be reconstructed again as part of the Project.
- Greg asked if there were any questions on the report and explained that it would be presented again at next week's meeting because the park is located in Minneapolis and Golden Valley. He said that once the report is released, it will have its own 30 day comment period.



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### 6) Next Steps

Kathryn informed consulting parties that after the meeting next week, which is a continuation of this meeting; meetings will continue in late August once all comments have been received and the project has a better sense for what properties will have adverse effects.

- Information on noise and vibration analyses will be presented later in the summer or early in the fall.
- A final determination of effect will be made near the end of 2015, which will inform mitigation commitments that need to be documented in the Final EIS in early 2016.

Caroline Miller, Metro Transit BPO, explained that meeting materials will be posted to e-Builder along with previous meeting materials.

Sarah asked about the status of design, and Kathryn replied that engineering will be at about 15% design for the FEIS, which will include retaining wall heights, station locations, at grade versus elevated, and similar determinations.

- Items like the final placements of catenary poles, station finishing, and architectural elements will not be known at that point.
- Kathryn pointed out that, because the design will not be as far along, if there are Section 106 related concerns, they will need to be included in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement.
- Greg pointed out that they have asked engineering to advance certain elements of the design faster near historic properties.

Kathryn thanked participants and adjourned the meeting.



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### Meeting Title: Section 106 Consultation – Meeting No. 2B

**Date:** July 16, 2015      **Time:** 12:30pm      **Duration:** 2 hours

**Location:** Blue Line Project Office (BPO) – 5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Crystal, MN 55428

Conference Room 2

**Meeting called by:** Greg Mathis – MnDOT CRU

**Invitees:** SHPO: Sarah Beimers  
Hennepin County: Dave Jaeger  
City of Brooklyn Park: Todd Larson  
City of Golden Valley: Emily Goellner  
City of Minneapolis: Jim Voll  
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board: Adam Arvidson  
Metro Transit, BPO: Kathryn O'Brien, Caroline Miller, Scott Reed, Jenny Bring, Tom Harrington, Miranda Adams, Parisa Ford, Kelly Wilder  
MnDOT CRU: Greg Mathis, Jon Vimr

### Discussion Notes

Greg Mathis, MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit (CRU), opened the meeting and led introductions.

- He explained that this is the second of two meetings to begin to discuss effects and find agreement on which properties could potentially be affected by the METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLRT) Project. The meeting on July 10 covered properties in Crystal and Robbinsdale, while this meeting will cover properties in Minneapolis, in Golden Valley, and in Brooklyn Park, including the Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD). Both meetings include discussions of the Osseo Branch Line and the Theodore Wirth Park Cultural Landscape Study.
- Greg described the meeting packet, which was sent to consulting parties via an emailed link to e-Builder (on-line document management site being used for communications and transmittal of documents with consulting parties) and printed out for the meeting. Primarily, the packets contain one-page summaries of each historic property within the Area of Potential Effect (APE), describing the NRHP eligibility of the historic property, project elements in the vicinity of the property, and potential effects on the property. Included with the summaries is a one-page key that describes aspects of integrity and the criteria of adverse effect (36 CFR 800.5). Additional drawings of the corridor are included as well.

Kathryn O'Brien, Metro Transit Blue Line Project Office (BPO), explained that the packet is meant to facilitate consulting parties offering feedback to MnDOT CRU today at the meeting and during the 30-day comment period.



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- By providing a preliminary determination of effect, it should help expedite deciding which properties do not have the potential to be affected by the Project and focus ongoing discussions on those properties that may have the potential to be affected.
- A formal determination of effects report will be released at the end of 2015 that summarizes the consultation process and FTA/MnDOT CRU's findings of effect.
- If it is determined that the Project could have adverse effects to any properties, there would be meetings with the consulting parties to review the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement and discuss mitigation.

Greg asked that comments be returned within 30 days of his July 10, 2015 letter to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), on which all consulting parties were copied.

### 1) City of Minneapolis

Greg introduced a discussion of properties in Minneapolis

#### **St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Historic District (StPM&M) (XX-RRD-010)**

- Greg explained that the district is eligible under NRHP Criterion A for its significance in the development of Minneapolis and St. Paul and importance as a component in the Great Northern railway's route west. The BLRT will connect to an existing LRT bridge at Target Field Station, which is where this rail line is located.
- The district is not noise sensitive under FTA criteria, and the railroad historic district itself will not be physically impacted or altered by BLRT project elements. Therefore, it is anticipated there will be no direct effects to this property. Indirect effects could result from visible Project elements along a small portion of the resource and potential redevelopment; however none of the direct or indirect effects are anticipated to have an adverse effect on the historic district.
- Kathryn noted that the Northstar Commuter Rail Line currently operates on the segment of the StPM&M line in this location.
- Greg explained that most effects were assessed during the Interchange Project, so they do not anticipate the need to consult further unless there are additional issues or questions.
  - Jim Voll, City of Minneapolis, asked for clarification. Greg clarified that the Interchange Project had a large APE to account for the effects of all future LRT projects in the vicinity. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be any effects identified in addition to those already identified and consulted on during the Interchange Project.

#### **Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District (HE-MPC-0441)**

- The district is eligible under NRHP Criterion A, in the area of commerce, and Criterion C, in the area of architecture.
- Similar to the StPM&M Historic District, indirect effects could result from visible Project elements, but effects were assessed during the Interchange Project, so they do not anticipate the need to consult further unless there are additional issues or questions.



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### Northwestern Knitting Company Factory (HE-MPC-8125)

- Eligible under NRHP Criterion A, in the areas of commerce, engineering, industry, and invention, the factory housed the nation's leading producer and distributor of underwear ("Munsingwear").
- The building is at the far edge of the quarter-mile APE, almost three blocks away, so no direct physical effects are anticipated. Indirect effects could result from the potential development of parking lots and other vacant parcels surrounding the property; that development could occur before or after the BLRT is operational.
- The building is too far from the Project for assessment for noise and vibration impacts to be necessary. Currently, it houses International Market Square.
- Sarah Beimers, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), asked if redevelopment discussions had begun, pointing out that FTA regulations require that redevelopment is considered throughout a reasonable timeline into the future. Greg indicated that these conversations had not begun, and Kathryn added that the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County have begun station area planning. Jim said that the City is looking at redevelopment opportunities in the area around the building but that they want to preserve a historic structure.
- Kathryn said that any effects in this location will have to be considered in the context of all improvements currently being proposed for Highway 55.

### Sumner Branch Library (HE-MPC-8081)

- The library is listed under Criterion A in the areas of education and social history and Criterion B for association with a significant person.
- The property itself will not be physically impacted or altered by BLRT Project elements – the line and catenary wires will run down the median of Olson Memorial Highway, and the station will be located across the street. Therefore, it is anticipated there will be no direct effects to this property.
- Greg and Tom Harrington, BPO, explained that on the figures the proposed sidewalk locations are depicted by white lines, and the property lines are depicted in black, illustrating that the Project will not intrude upon the property and is 15-20 feet from the edge of the sidewalk.
- Other Project elements such as minor curb line reconstruction, new paths, lighting, and overhead catenary wires, as well as potentially signal bungalows and substations, the locations of which are yet to be finalized, may also be visible from the property.
- The property is categorized by the FTA as a Category 3 noise receptor, and additional analysis is being completed to determine potential auditory impacts.
- Jim indicated that he will initiate further discussions but does not currently think there are any impacts.

### Wayman A.M.E. Church (HE-MPC-8290)

- The property is eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture. BLRT Project elements will not physically impact or alter the property, which includes only the building and yard, therefore it is anticipated that there will be no direct effects.
- Non-related buildings including a school physically surrounding the property to the south, east, and west greatly hinder visibility of the BLRT Project, located along Highway 55, from this property and it is, therefore, anticipated that there will be no visual effects on the property.



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- The property is categorized by the FTA as a Category 3 noise receptor, so additional analysis is being completed to determine potential auditory impacts. The building separating the property from the Project will likely screen noise. Kathryn shared that the noise and vibration analysis will likely be completed and ready to share in late summer/early fall.
- Sarah asked if Highway 55 will remain six lanes, and Kathryn said that is very likely but that speed will likely be reduced. Jim added that the issues resolution teams have discussed reducing speeds and slowing traffic.
- Greg and Tom explained that they are still determining potential impacts to the on-street parking (located on a frontage road), but that is within MnDOT right-of-way, so it will not intrude on the property.

### Labor Lyceum (HE-MPC-7553)

- The building is eligible under NRHP Criterion A, in the areas of social history and politics/government, for its association with early Jewish settlers in this part of Minneapolis.
- Project elements will not physically impact or alter the property; therefore, it is anticipated that there will be no direct effects. However, there is the potential for indirect effects from Project elements on Highway 55 that will be visible from the property, including catenary wires, signage, and potentially signal bungalows. No stations are in the vicinity; the Penn Avenue Station is three blocks away.
- The property is located in an area that will experience moderate auditory impacts, but is not categorized by the FTA as a noise sensitive receptor, given its current use.
- Greg explained that there will be a slight reconstruction of the curb lines along Highway 55 as well as the addition of a multi-use path running parallel to the curb, referencing the roll plot maps.
  - Sarah asked if the north-south running sidewalk would be obliterated. Kathryn explained that residents have requested the ability to cross the highway and that BPO has more detailed plans visualizing the pedestrian crossing experience.
  - Tom added that at Logan Avenue and Highway 55, the sidewalk will be removed. There are currently sidewalks running through the landscaped median, but they will all be moved to signalized crossings or a few better-defined midblock crossings. There will not be the continuation of local streets for crossing as before, for safety reasons.
  - Sarah noted that this would impact circulation.
  - Jim referenced the roll plot to point out that there is no sidewalk currently under the white dashed line in front of this historic property.

### Floyd B. Olson Memorial Statue (HE-MPC-9013)

- The statute is eligible under Criterion C as the work of a master sculptor, Carlo Brioschi. It was moved to its current location from the center median of Highway 55.
- Although the statue itself will not be physically altered or impacted, the plaza in which it is located may undergo sidewalk and landscaping changes depending on whether the road is reconstructed as four or six lanes. Efforts are currently underway to clarify the memorial's boundaries to determine whether they include the plaza or only the statue, which will inform the determination of effect.



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- Kathryn said that as part of these efforts, she will be following up to get more information from Katie Roth, Metropolitan Council Project Manager, and from Summit Enviroolutions, the firm that is supporting the Section 106 review for the C Line (Penn Avenue Bus Rapid Transit [BRT]).
  - Sarah explained that the C Line APE will be submitted soon.
- Greg continued in stating that the BLRT station will occupy the center median, while the BRT stations will be located on the outside of the roadway. Once design and boundaries of the property are clarified, they will have a better idea of how much consultation will be required.
- Tom indicated that there are not true sidewalks currently but that changes from the projects will include constructing new sidewalks and incorporating some current pavement into the boulevard. Greg pointed out that the area around the statue that will potentially be impacted is not a park, rather it is MnDOT right-of-way.
- Greg concluded by noting that the property is not categorized by the FTA as a noise sensitive receptor.

### Homewood Historic District (HE-MPC-12101)

- The district is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of community planning and social history. On the plans provided, Greg explained that the blue line is the BLRT alignment and the orange line is the freight line, and pointed out the Plymouth Avenue Station.
- He explained that the district is located on a bluff, 10-15 feet above the rail corridor, separated by heavy vegetation. Given the distance between the district and the Project, Project elements will not physically impact or alter the district; therefore, it is anticipated that there will be no direct effects.
- As currently proposed, the BLRT will run along existing BNSF right-of-way immediately west of the district, with the Plymouth Avenue Station and associated elements, including vertical circulation, being constructed directly northwest of the district. Additional elements including substations, signal bungalows, and corridor protection treatments yet to be finalized may extend vertically and be visible from the district, but overall effects will be minimal. In addition, some vegetation will be cleared.
- The district (comprised of residential properties) is categorized by the FTA as a Category 2 noise receptor, and several sites within the district are located in an area that will experience moderate noise impacts. Additional analysis and further consultation will be required to determine how to minimize and mitigate effects.
- Sarah asked whether the Plymouth Avenue Bridge will be reconstructed as explained on the overview sheet. Kathryn said it will be replaced to accommodate more elements underneath it, but that it will look very similar.
- Kathryn noted that various station locations were considered within Minneapolis, all of which would have had impacts to Theodore Wirth Regional Park, so there was not a clear answer whether to locate the station on the north or south side of Plymouth Avenue.
- Adam Arvidson, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB), said the decision was based largely on impacts to adjacent residences. There is a steeper slope on the north, and it is more vegetated, but the south location would have felt more like it was in people's yards. He explained that it was a hard decision but that the northern location was ultimately chosen.
- Tom explained various elements on the roll plot map – the white lines are secondary access for safety reasons, the blue lines represent retaining walls or abutments as indicated by preliminary engineering, and approaching the bridge, the map shows vertical circulation, new sidewalks, and a bus pull off.



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### **2) Osseo Branch of the St. Paul Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Historic District (HE-RRD-002; HE-BPC-0084; HE-CRC-0238; HE-RBC-0304; HE-MPC-16389)**

Greg introduced a discussion of the Osseo Branch Line/Great Northern Railway Historic District.

- The district is eligible under Criterion A for its role in expanding potato farming in northern Hennepin County and for creating a new connection from the region to Minneapolis. It begins in Minneapolis south of Target Field, continues into Osseo, and extends 1.5 miles past downtown Osseo. The Project will use approximately eight of the 13 miles of corridor constituting the historic district.
- Greg continued that the corridor is 100 feet wide, BLRT will occupy the eastern 50 feet of the corridor, the freight tracks now in the center of the corridor will shift to the west, and an access road will be built outside the freight rail tracks.
- Project elements within or visible from the district will include tracks, catenary wires, substations, signal bungalows, and corridor protection treatments yet to be finalized. In addition, near the 63<sup>rd</sup> Street Station at the north end of the corridor, an overhead crossing would connect the station to the park-and-ride lot.
- Noise and vibrations will be present within the district, but the Osseo Line has historically experienced both of these and is not a noise sensitive receptor. In addition, operation of the BLRT may spur development in nearby parcels, which could impact the integrity of the rail line.
- Jim asked if the effects discussed would be direct effects, and Greg said they would, but that SHPO has indicated that introduction of LRT into the corridor would not necessarily result in an adverse effect. However, there have been some design changes since SHPO provided feedback on the plans in the Draft EIS. Jim clarified that a direct effect does not necessarily mean an adverse effect, and Kathryn and Greg confirmed this.

### **Freight Rail Update**

Kathryn continued that although SHPO indicated there would not be adverse effects based on the Draft EIS plans, the potential changes are based on discussions with BNSF, which operates in the historic Osseo Branch Line Railway Historic District, and their decision to implement corridor protection measures for safety reasons.

- Based on discussions with BNSF, three types of physical barriers have been proposed for corridor protection, and the decision about which measures to implement where along the corridor will depend on soil assessment, locations of certain Project elements such as at-grade crossings, and ongoing discussions with the railroad.
- Tom presented a typical section portrayed in the Draft EIS to illustrate how freight will now be built in the western portion of the corridor. He then displayed illustrations of the potential corridor protection measures:
  - Derailment ditch
  - Crash wall – Likely about 6-8 feet tall, although the height is not confirmed, with 2-2.5 foot thick walls.
  - Retained embankment
    - Emily Goellner, Golden Valley, asked if the crash walls would be cement, Tom clarified they would likely be concrete.
    - Jim asked how long the treatment would run, and Kathryn answered that the exact length still needs to be decided. Tom clarified also that the treatment will change along



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the corridor. Kathryn said BNSF has indicated it might be possible to decide by the end of the year which treatments will be implemented where.

- Greg closed the update on freight rail by explaining that a final understanding of how freight and BLRT will operate will not be finalized until later in engineering. Tom emphasized it is safe to say that there will be some kind of crash deterrent device in the corridor. Greg then displayed some photos of the corridor.

### **3) Grand Rounds Historic District – Overview of Theodore Wirth Park Cultural Landscape Study and Discussion**

Greg introduced a discussion on the GRHD and Theodore Wirth Regional Park (TWRP).

#### **Grand Rounds Historic District: Theodore Wirth Segment (XX-PRK-0001)**

- The Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD) is eligible under Criterion A in the areas of community planning and entertainment/recreation, and under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture.
- Assorted project elements, including overhead wires, lighting, support poles, stations, corridor protection treatments, the reconstructed Plymouth Avenue Bridge, and a new bridge at TH 55, which may be visible from the district.
- In addition, the Theodore Wirth Segment is in proximity to several parcels of land that may be developed as a result of the BLRT, and additional analysis is being completed for the Final EIS to determine potential auditory impacts.

#### **Bridge No. L9327 (Theodore Wirth Parkway) (HE-GVC-0050)**

- This bridge is individually eligible under Criterion C as a concrete highway bridge displaying notable aesthetics and as a contributing resource within the GRHD. It is located east of the Chalet on Theodore Wirth Parkway, and its significance stems from its walls and railings.
- Greg explained that the bridge is a few hundred feet from any Project elements, so the BLRT Project will not physically impact or alter the district, so it is anticipated that there will be no direct effects.
- The bridge itself is not noise sensitive, but additional analysis is being completed to determine potential auditory impacts on the GRHD.

#### **Theodore Wirth Park Cultural Landscape Study**

Greg introduced Parisa Ford, BPO consultant team, principal investigator of a cultural landscape study of TWRP.

- Kathryn explained that the study was undertaken in response to comments from the MPRB on the Draft EIS, with the goal of providing additional information pertaining to the elements of the cultural landscape within the park to inform analysis of effects.
- Parisa explained that the purpose of the study is to provide a historic context for the park and document its developmental history, as well as identify viewsheds and vantage points within TWRP where the BLRT Project may be visible. The study identifies the physical characteristics contributing to TWRP and, thereby, to the GRHD, and contributing elements within the APE and areas where the Project may be visible.



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- Landscape features were identified through a high-level reconnaissance review across the park, and contributing features were identified through historical research and more intensive field survey within the Architecture/History APE and viewsheds
- TWRP is a contributing element within the Theodore Wirth Segment of the GRHD, which is eligible for the National Register under:
  - Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation, as a nationally-significant example of late-19th and early-20th century park development.
  - Criterion C for Landscape Architecture, significant for its design and as the work of nationally-significant landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland and park superintendant Theodore Wirth.
- The GRHD's Period of Significance is 1884 to 1942, but it is currently under review to determine if it should be extended to c. 1975.
- Parisa continued by providing an overview of the park's developmental history. Land was acquired incrementally from 1889 through 1952, and the original design follows the Country Park model established by Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.
- Two key plans informed the design and development of TWRP:
  - Wirth's General Plan for the Improvement of Glenwood [Theodore Wirth] Park (1914) laid the overall framework of the park.
  - Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams' Minneapolis Parkway System Concepts for the Future (1971) is the next significant planning development, focusing on transportation and circulation and retaining the recreational value of the entire parkway system but making specific recommendations for TWRP. Recommendations by Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams were implemented in the early-1970s, related to transportation, signage, lighting, the park's functioning for recreational values, and the bicycle grand rounds concept linking the lakes.
- Parisa discussed other important points in the park's development history: streetcar service was extended by 1916; by 1922 the Chalet, Theodore Wirth Parkway, and Theodore Wirth Golf Course were present; and by 1942, federal relief programs completed Bassett Creek Lagoons and other improvements.
- Parisa continued into a discussion of the major landscape features in the park, emphasizing that it is a historic designed landscape. Categories of landscape features are defined by the National Park Service. The primary components of the landscape include the grounds – topography, land use, and landscaping features – and bodies of water/water features – lakes, lagoons, and creeks.
- Other landscape features include circulation networks (roads, railroads, paths and trails); historic and design-intended views and vistas; vegetation (oak woodlands, wet prairies); buildings and structures (Theodore Wirth Chalet, bridges); and small scale elements (fences and bollards, benches, picnic tables and other furnishings, memorials). The PowerPoint presentation contains images of many of these features, which Parisa described to consulting parties.
  - Jim noted he was impressed that the WPA picnic tables have lasted as long as they have. Adam said yes, they are made out of metal and cement, and that there are actually quite a few of them in the park system.
- Greg concluded the presentation by emphasizing that the report will help inform the assessment of effects for the TWRP cultural landscape.



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- Scott Reed, BPO, asked if paper copies would be printed for all parties. Kathryn indicated that it is a large file, so while they will send a hard copy to SHPO, all other consulting parties will be provided a link via e-Builder unless they request a hard copy.
- Jim asked if meeting materials are posted, and Kathryn said yes, they are on e-Builder as well. Caroline Miller, BPO, can be contacted with any technical difficulties.
- Adam asked if, during the discussion about potential impacts to the GRHD, floodplain and wetland mitigation will be discussed. Greg replied that it will be.

#### 4) Next Steps

Greg welcomed any questions and reminded consulting parties that written comments will be accounted for as the process moves forward.

- The next consultation meeting will be held in late August so that all comments can be received and inform the discussion at that meeting, and further meetings will follow throughout the fall.
- Greg explained that U.S. Department of Transportation MAP-21 legislation calls for an expedited process, so the goal of these meetings is to focus on properties where there is the potential for adverse effects, and consult on other properties, as needed.
- Sarah asked if resources associated with the GRHD can continue to be commented on in the 30 days following release of the landscape report. Greg clarified that the purpose of eliciting comments on the material presented in this meeting is to ensure all issues regarding potential effects have been identified. Sarah and Greg discussed that consulting parties are not being asked at this point to concur with a final determination of effect on any resources. Greg also clarified that the landscape report will have its own 30-day review period.
- Greg pointed out that they have asked engineering to advance certain elements of the design faster near historic properties to inform future discussions and the effect analysis.



## METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLRT)

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### Meeting Title: Section 106 Consultation – Meeting No. 3

**Date:** Feb 4, 2016      **Time:** 1:30pm      **Duration:** 3 hours

**Location:** Blue Line Project Office (BPO) - 5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Crystal, MN 55428

Conference Room 2

**Meeting called by:** Greg Mathis – MnDOT CRU

**Invitees:** FTA: Reggie Arkell, Maya Sarna  
SHPO: Sarah Beimers  
Hennepin County: Dave Jaeger, Brent Rusco  
City of Brooklyn Park: Todd Larson  
City of Golden Valley: Emily Goellner  
City of Minneapolis: Jim Voll  
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board: Adam Arvidson  
City of Robbinsdale: Marcia Glick  
Metro Transit, BPO: Kathryn O'Brien, Caroline Miller, Scott Reed, Jenny Bring, Paul Danielson, Sophia Ginis, David Davies, Shelley Miller, Kelly Wilder  
MnDOT CRU: Greg Mathis, Jon Vimr

## Discussion Notes

### 1) Welcome and Introductions

Greg Mathis, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Cultural Resources Unit (CRU), opened the meeting, described the agenda, and led introductions.

- The primary goal of the meeting is to review the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) findings of effect on historic properties and the overall determination of effect for the METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) Extension Project (Project). This will help to identify which properties have effects that may be easily resolved during the meeting so that future meetings can focus on the remaining properties requiring further discussion with consulting parties.
- Greg reminded consulting parties that MnDOT CRU is overseeing many aspects of the Section 106 process for the Project on behalf of the FTA.

### 2) Project Updates

Kathryn O'Brien, Metro Transit Blue Line Project Office (BPO), explained that the Project anticipates completing the Project Development phase of the FTA New Starts program in August of 2016.

- The Project is in the midst of the Municipal Consent process and anticipates its completion in March or April of 2016.
- The Project then anticipates issuance of the National Environmental Policy Act Record of Decision (ROD) in August of 2016.

### 3) Section 106 Process

FTA issued its Final Determination of Effect (DOE) on historic properties and submitted it to the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office (MnHPO) on January 20, 2016. The Section 106 Assessment of Effects and Final Determination of Effect for Historic Properties (Assessment of Effects) report assesses effects on historic properties in the Area of Potential Effect (APE), provides a finding of effect for each property, and an overall determination of effects on historic properties for the Project.

- Since the last consulting parties meeting in July 2015, MnDOT CRU identified and assessed effects, which are accounted for in the Assessment of Effects report. The findings are based on 15 percent to 30 percent design plans. It is a challenge to consult on effects while design is continuing to advance; however, certain aspects of the design were advanced so that MnDOT CRU could assess effects.
- FTA found the Project will have an adverse effect on six properties, no adverse effect on six properties, and no adverse effect on five properties with implementation of measures in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).
- Since the Project will have an adverse effect on six properties, it will have an overall adverse effect on historic properties.
- Jim Voll, City of Minneapolis, asked Greg to clarify the effect of consulting parties' comments on the findings in the Assessment of Effects report, since the report is entitled "Final."
  - Greg explained that they are eliciting feedback from consulting parties and hoping for agreement.
  - Further, the MOA will include provisions for continuing consultation as the Project design advances. Sarah Beimers, MnHPO, added that this will include developing minimization and mitigation strategies.
  - Kathryn pointed out that since the Project is at 15 percent to 30 percent design, FTA conservatively made calls of adverse effect for properties that were in question.
  - Jim pointed out that there are properties for which the City of Minneapolis may agree with the adverse effect finding but disagree with the proposed mitigation, in addition to properties for which they disagree there is an adverse effect.

Greg segued into a review of the Project's progress through the Section 106 process.

- Initiation of the Section 106 process was completed in 2011.
- Identification of historic properties was completed in 2014.
- With publication of the Assessment of Effects report, the assessment of adverse effects was completed in January 2016, which included applying the criteria of adverse effect.
- Resolving adverse effects will continue through the first and second quarters of 2016.
- Section 106 does not require projects to avoid adverse effects; some are unavoidable.
- If there is an adverse effect, consultation must consider measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate the adverse effect(s), and consulting parties and the public remain involved to inform the development of these measures for inclusion in an MOA.
- An MOA is a legally binding agreement that includes stipulations recording agreed-upon avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. An execution-ready version of the MOA is included in the final environmental impact statement (EIS).
  - Three types of parties can be involved in executing an MOA:
    - A signatory has obligations under Section 106 and authority to execute, amend, or terminate the MOA. Signatories for the Project will include FTA, MnHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), if it chooses to participate.

- An invited signatory has obligations for implementing stipulations of the MOA and authority to execute, amend, or terminate the MOA. Invited signatories include Metropolitan Council and MnDOT.
  - A concurring party has no authority to execute, amend, or terminate the MOA, and their signature is not required to execute the MOA. This includes cities, heritage preservation commissions (HPCs), the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), etc.
- The Project should know if the ACHP has elected to participate by late February or early March.
- Greg described that concurring party status allows for a level of involvement by parties that may need to participate in continued consultation.
  - Sarah clarified that concurring parties can continue to be involved if mitigation or interpretation is being discussed for a property they have an interest in, but they do not have the authority to amend or terminate the MOA, and they do not have to sign it for the MOA to be valid.

#### 4) Effects Findings

##### **Historic Properties: No Adverse Effect**

- Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District (Minneapolis)
  - Given its proximity to the Target Field Station, effects to this property were previously accounted for during development of a programmatic agreement (PA) for the Intermodal Station (the previous name for the Target Field Station) during the Interchange Project.
  - No further consultation on this property is needed unless consulting parties have additional concerns.
  - Jim indicated that the city does not disagree with this; however, he has not consulted all appropriate management so cannot say that is the final word.
  - Sarah noted that MnHPO has not completed its review either.
- St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad / Great Northern Railway Historic District (Minneapolis)
  - The LRT alignment will pass over this property on an elevated structure so it will only have minimal visual effects.
  - Effects to this property were also previously accounted for during the Interchange Project; therefore, no further consultation on this property is needed on this property.
- Northwestern Knitting Company (Minneapolis)
  - This property is just under a quarter mile from the Project alignment, so it is possible that some Project elements could be visible from the upper levels of the building. There is also the potential for redevelopment around the station that could change the property's setting. However, since the property was developed in an urban setting, these potential effects will not interfere with the property's ability to convey its significance.
  - Jim repeated that as with the prior two properties, he does not disagree with this assessment but needs to discuss it with others at the city.
- Bridge No. L9327 (Golden Valley)
  - Theodore Wirth Parkway crosses Basset Creek over Bridge No. L9327, a few hundred feet north of Wirth Chalet.
  - The bridge is a contributing element to the Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD), but effects on it were assessed separately since it is also individually eligible under Criterion C for Engineering.
  - The introduction of Project elements into the view from the bridge to the Project will have a minimal impact, but since the bridge derives its significance from its design, it will not interfere with the ability of the property to convey its significance.

- Adam Arvidson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), indicated that he likely concurs with this finding.
- Jones-Osterhus Barn (Robbinsdale)
  - There will be no direct effects to the property, but some Project elements may be visible from the property. However, the Project is approximately 190 feet away and visibility of the Project is limited. Therefore, a finding of no adverse effect has been made.
- Minneapolis & Pacific Railway / Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway Historic District (Crystal)
  - The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway alignment will be shifted and reconstructed at-grade, and the LRT bridge will clear span this historic railroad district. Since there are no physical effects and limited visual effects (to less than 1 percent of this long linear rail corridor), there will be no adverse effect from the Project.

### **Historic Properties: No Adverse Effect with Implementation of Measures in the MOA**

- Sumner Branch Library (Minneapolis)
  - The Project will be constructed within the adjacent Olson Memorial Highway roadway. The construction limits border but do not impinge on the historic property, and as long as a historic bench near the property's limits is protected, the Project will not have direct effects on the property.
  - The Van White Station is located kitty-corner to the library, approximately 320 feet away, so the property will experience visual effects. To avoid a potential adverse effect, the Project proposes to design all Project elements within the vicinity (potentially one block on either side) consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (SOI's Standards).
  - A construction protection plan will also be developed prior to construction to ensure there is no damage to the property, including installing fencing to protect the property and assessing the need for vibration monitoring.
  - With implementation of a construction protection plan and designing Project elements to the SOI's Standards, a finding of No Adverse Effect has been made for the Sumner Branch Library.
  - Sarah pointed out that the MOA will need to be clear about what is meant by "in the vicinity" – whether it is some distance around each station or between certain mileposts.
  - Jim asked how these stipulations will apply for properties on which the Project will have an adverse effect.
    - Kathryn reiterated the goal that if consulting parties can agree that a certain number of properties have no adverse effect and another number have no adverse effect with implementation of MOA measures, they can then focus on discussing properties with adverse effects that will need more specific mitigation measures.
  - Jim pointed out that the city had commented on construction concerns, and design to the SOI's Standards seems reasonable. However, he said that designing to the SOI's Standards needs to be balanced with other concerns. For example, the city is concerned about pedestrian access and safety, and Jim asked how those concerns will be balanced in order to work toward the overall best interest.
    - Greg agreed that the Project has to balance a lot of goals. This is similar to how the Southwest LRT project is handling effects to the historic Minikahda Club in Minneapolis. The Southwest LRT project originally proposed substantial changes to the property's entry and addition of retaining walls; however, they worked with Minneapolis Public Works on a revised design that met public safety standards while avoiding an adverse effect to the property.

- An administrative stipulation in the BLRT MOA will outline dispute resolution options in case effects are not ultimately resolved through consultation.
- Labor Lyceum (Minneapolis)
  - Visual effects on the historic property (eligible under Criterion A) are possible from construction taking place across the access road, and from Project elements including the alignment and the overhead power systems. Proposed MOA measures include designing Project elements in accordance with the SOI's Standards so as not to introduce incompatible visual elements.
  - Per FTA criteria, the Labor Lyceum is a Category 3 noise receptor; however, LRT operation will not result in a noise impact so no noise mitigation is required.
  - With Project infrastructure in the vicinity of the Labor Lyceum designed in accordance with the SOI's Standards, a finding of no adverse effect has been made for the Labor Lyceum.
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church (Robbinsdale)
  - The property includes the church only, which is eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. The church is located 300 feet from the alignment, and the closest Project elements (road improvements) are 130 feet from the property, so there are no direct effects anticipated.
  - The Project alignment, a park and ride structure, and other Project elements will be visible from the property but will not affect its ability to convey its significance.
  - The church is a Category 3 noise receptor that would experience severe auditory effects without mitigation, but the Project is implementing a quiet zone that will avoid the adverse effect.
- Robbinsdale Waterworks (Robbinsdale)
  - Various Project elements, including the Robbinsdale Station and a park and ride, will be highly visible in the vicinity of the iconic waterworks, so all Project elements will be designed in accordance with the SOI's Standards so as not to have adverse visual effects on the property.
  - Although the Project wraps around two sides of the property, it will not physically infringe upon it. However, a construction protection plan will be implemented to ensure that there are no direct effects to the property and to identify any other measures necessary to protect the property during construction.
  - With implementation of a construction protection plan and design in accordance with the SOI's Standards, a finding of no adverse effect has been made for the waterworks.
- Hennepin County Library, Robbinsdale Branch (Robbinsdale)
  - Similar to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Robbinsdale Waterworks, Project elements extend along the boundary of the property but will not physically infringe upon it. A construction protection plan will be implemented to ensure that there is no physical harm to the property.
  - The view of the park and ride located directly across the Project alignment from the property will be fairly prominent, so Project elements in the vicinity will be designed in accordance with the SOI's Standards.
  - There will be a change in access to the property from westbound on 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, but westbound traffic can still access the alley to get to the property so there are no traffic-related adverse effects.
  - The library is a Category 3 noise receptor that would experience severe auditory effects without mitigation, but the Project is implementing a quiet zone that will avoid the adverse effect.
  - Sarah asked for clarification on what constitutes a "quiet zone." Kathryn explained that in a quiet zone, neither freight nor LRT will sound horns; however, LRT trains could potentially use their bells. Alternatively, the Project is looking at potentially using fixed wayside devices at quiet zone intersections so that the sound would remain at the crossing rather than on the trains affecting a larger area as the train moves through the crossing.

## Historic Properties: Adverse Effect

- Wayman A.M.E. Church (Minneapolis)
  - The property is eligible under Criterion C for Architecture and is buffered from any potential direct visual or noise effects from the Project by other buildings that wrap around it.
  - Planning studies call for up-zoning property around Van White Station to redevelop the area as a commercial center with higher density, mixed use buildings. An adverse effect has been found since this is a specific parcel targeted in plans for redevelopment related to the Project, rather than general market forces.
  - Jim countered that the city does not view this property as a redevelopment opportunity. Their planning maps call for mixed use, and if it were not a church at some point, they would encourage another use. However, it is already zoned R5 for high density with or without the BLRT Project, so he disagrees that their planning efforts target this parcel for redevelopment. In addition, city plans account for preserving historic properties. Jim stated that they will have to agree to disagree on this finding.
    - Kathryn asked about the Project potentially developing a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination as mitigation, and Jim responded that the property is already noted as being historic in city planning efforts. The city previously stated that they would support nomination efforts but do not want to be responsible for funding or completing it themselves.
    - Greg clarified that the Project can commit to funding the preparation of a nomination but cannot guarantee it will be successful, that is up to the Keeper of the National Register to decide.
    - Sarah added that NRHP-listed churches can utilize state Legacy Grant funding for repairs.
  - Jim concluded by calling for further discussion between the Project and the city.
- Floyd B. Olson Memorial Statue (Minneapolis)
  - The Project will use a portion of the memorial's sodded yard and sidewalk adjacent to Olson Memorial Highway located within the NRHP-eligible property for a new sidewalk needed due to reconstruction of Olson Memorial Highway.
  - The property's visual connection to the highway is an important historic characteristic. Introduction of the Penn Avenue Station will interrupt this visual connection, as will redevelopment in the vicinity called for in station area plans.
  - Therefore, the Project will cause both direct and indirect effects on the property.
  - Kathryn pointed out that unlike the adverse effect finding for Wayman A.M.E. Church, which does not result from any physical incorporation of the historic property, a portion of the land included in the boundaries identified for the memorial will be used by the Project. This, coupled with the indirect effects, results in an adverse effect finding. This direct impact also triggers Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, under which DOT agencies cannot approve the use of land from historical sites (among other locations) unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land. The Project is currently exploring all alternatives to the use, and if an avoidance alternative is identified, that may become the preferred alternative, which would change this conversation significantly.
    - Jim asked if this could include eliminating a travel lane from Olson Memorial Highway, and Kathryn said it could not.
    - Jim shared concerns from the city that any change in design that would narrow the sidewalk to avoid use of this property will cause snow to pile up on the sidewalk and impede pedestrian access in this highly car-free, transit-reliant neighborhood. The city

- will put in writing that it disagrees with any proposed alternatives that would impede pedestrian access to the LRT and bus rapid transit (BRT) stations.
- Jim also noted that the argument that redevelopment could contribute to the adverse effect is interesting and nuanced. The city's plans call for development on this MnDOT-owned parcel anyway, so it seems like a stretch to say that LRT would cause the redevelopment.
  - Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale, asked if the statue could be moved as it was only moved to its current location in 1984.
    - Greg explained that the statue was originally located in the median. The statue is the historic feature, but the plaza space is an important aspect of its setting and, thus, is part of the historic property.
  - Kathryn referred back to the Section 4(f) discussion, noting that if an avoidance alternative is developed that avoids the adverse effect to the historic property and is practicable, the Project must adopt it.
    - Sarah explained further that while Section 106 stipulates the Project should try to avoid adverse effects, Section 4(f) requires avoidance.
    - Todd Larson, City of Brooklyn Park, asked if the City of Minneapolis or another entity wanted to install a sidewalk there would they encounter the same issue, and Kathryn answered that if they proposed to use federal funds, they would run up against the same requirements.
  - Paul Danielson, BPO, pointed out that the challenge is that the historic property's boundary extends to the curb. If it only extended to the back of the sidewalk, there would be no use of the historic property. Effectively, the Project is reconstructing the sidewalk in place, and since they have already narrowed lanes and pushed the road out, placing the sidewalk near the curb is the only way to avoid the historic property.
    - Jim said that the whole site is considered a historic property due to a subjective, professional decision, which now necessitates the Project avoid it. His view is that this original decision was an error; he does not see in the historical record that someone designed this plaza as a park. This is an important corner for pedestrians, and the city worked with the Project so that they would not have snow piled up on the corner.
    - Paul asked if there is flexibility to say that snow and pedestrian access is a greater impact than effects to the historic property. Sarah replied that FTA could bring the question to the ACHP, but MnHPO has already concurred on the boundaries identified by FTA as part of the Project. Greg added that after the boundaries were established in a previous wayside study, the property was examined as part of this Project to confirm it retains sufficient integrity.
    - Jim said that he does not recall there being a map with exact boundaries in the determination that the statue is eligible. The city would have raised an issue, knowing that redevelopment is being encouraged and that tree-lined boulevards and snow-free sidewalks are good for pedestrians and for North Minneapolis.
  - Marcia described that access to the statue on Victory Memorial Parkway is much easier and wondered if similar improvements could be made here.
  - Sarah said access is also better to the Leif Erikson statue along the METRO Green Line LRT. However, she again noted that Section 4(f) issues are more difficult to work through than Section 106 issues.
  - Scott Reed, BPO, suggested it might be worth having an offline conversation with FTA to confirm if 4(f) applies. This is a unique situation where the Project is using a portion of a historic property by slightly reconstructing the existing sidewalk, but the property is already within MnDOT right-

of-way (ROW) so it is not clear whether this would be considered converting the property to a transportation use per Section 4(f).

- Greg explained that since Section 4(f) is more stringent, the Project has to complete the analysis before effects can be resolved under Section 106.
- Sarah noted that the right design could avoid an adverse effect under Section 106.
- Greg explained that decisions are being made based on early designs to account for all possible effects. Jon Vimr, MnDOT CRU, noted that although the sidewalk is the Section 4(f) issue, the adverse effect finding is also based on additional visual effects.
- Jim reiterated that compliance with these requirements should not mean you get to a worse outcome.
- Greg indicated that the Project would resolve the Section 4(f) issues/questions and they could then return to the Section 106 discussion at the next consulting parties meeting.
- Scott said the Project has all the required information and will be having the conversation with FTA likely in the next week.
- Osseo Branch of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad / Great Northern Railway Historic District (Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Brooklyn Park, Osseo)
  - The Project will be constructed within the BNSF-owned ROW along an approximately eight mile-long segment of the district, from TH 55 northwest to 73rd Avenue North in Brooklyn Park. The Draft EIS found no adverse effect, but design has since advanced, and BNSF has notified the Project that it will require physical separation between LRT and freight along the entirety of the segment. Project infrastructure and actions within the historic ROW will now include removal of historic track, a new alignment, two new LRT tracks, bridges, vertical circulation, fencing, the new corridor protection measures required by BNSF, and changes to the high voltage transmission lines (HVTLS). Therefore, an adverse effect determination has been made.
  - Todd said that when he tells people that this is the only historic property in Brooklyn Park affected by the Project, they are surprised since only the alignment is intact and no historic rail materials remain.
  - Greg briefly reviewed that in order to qualify for inclusion in the NRHP a property must possess significance under at least one of four criteria. The Osseo Branch is part of a historic district that is significant under Criterion A for Transportation for its association with the development of the potato farming industry in Osseo and surrounding areas. It established a connection that did not previously exist that allowed potato growers to access the national rail network, resulting in a significant expansion of the potato-growing industry.
    - Todd said this was a weak argument for historic significance.
    - Sarah and Jon countered that rail lines and associated agricultural industries were the primary reason for the development of communities like Brooklyn Park. Although the materials within the corridor have changed, historic railroads retain their integrity if their alignment and termini are intact.
    - Marcia mentioned the potential for mitigation measures such as interpretative train rides, and Sarah agreed, explaining that historic designation does not mean it has to be kept pristine but rather that effects must be minimized and mitigated.
    - Emily Goellner, City of Golden Valley, emphasized that the experience of approaching the track in Golden Valley will be totally different once the Project is in place (vegetation will be gone, etc.), but Todd pointed out that in Brooklyn Park, the highway dominates views and there is little vegetation.
    - Sarah said that in some states, railroads cannot be historic, while in other states all railroads are considered historic. MnHPO deals with this question all the time in their work on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) projects related to wetlands.

- Jim asked how adding a train to a railroad corridor harms the historic property. Sarah said that previously MnHPO did not think it would since it follows relatively the same alignment; however, the more elaborate corridor protection measures with walls and ditches, and overhead elements, completely changes the setting.
  - Jim said that he could understand the historic designation if there were historic trestles or Works Progress Administration retaining walls. Since the track is modern, he asked if the adverse effect stems just from the scale of the intrusions.
  - Todd asked if BNSF would have the same constraints if they wanted to build a new track. Sarah replied that the railroad would not have to comply with the federal review process unless they sought federal money or a federal permit (like a USACE permit).
  - Greg emphasized that introduction of walls and grade separation will impact the naturalized setting, and Jon encouraged consulting parties to refer to the rendered cross sections to understand these impacts.
  - Referring to an image in the meeting presentation, Emily again explained that this view does not exist within three miles of any other major metropolitan area in the nation. Jim acknowledged that but pointed out that there is no historic infrastructure involved; it is just the introduction of new elements.
- Paul clarified that the Project has more definition since the Draft EIS. More advanced engineering shows the alignment moving 15 feet not 10 feet, larger retaining walls than previously assumed, more infrastructure in addition to the tree removal that would have had to happen regardless from property line to property line, and the introduction of corridor protection measures.
  - Greg pointed out that the rendered sections show this greater detail – larger scale structures, additional infrastructure in addition to the three parallel lines and vegetation clearing previously identified, physical separation of LRT and freight, and in particular more infrastructure south of N. 36<sup>th</sup> Ave. Paul pointed out that in the Brooklyn Park area, there will be a more significant bend in the line than previously thought.
- Todd asked if the adverse effect finding would stop the Project, and Sarah and Greg clarified that Section 106 does not stop projects, it simply requires consideration of minimization and mitigation measures.
- Sarah asked if Section 4(f) applies to this property too.
  - Scott said the Project looked at various alternatives as a part of a Section 4(f) analysis; while alternatives were found that were technically feasible, none were prudent options as they required the taking of numerous homes and were far more environmentally damaging.
- Grand Rounds Historic District, Theodore Wirth Segment (Minneapolis, Golden Valley)
  - An adverse effect finding has been made for this property due to alterations to two park entrances, numerous alterations to viewsheds and vistas, replacement of a bridge, and incorporation of two acres of the park into the Project.
  - Emily said that the City of Golden Valley agrees with the adverse effect finding and supporting rationale but has additional comments about mitigation. The city proposes interpretative signage in the park and at stations; vertical circulation using building materials common during the period of significance to reduce their impact; increasing vegetation at a more than one-to-one ratio; renaming Golden Valley Station to Theodore Wirth Station; and incorporating recreational considerations into the station design, for example through elevators that would accommodate bikes and skis.
  - Adam said he supports these proposals and in particular encourages station design that supports recreational access. The Grand Rounds has always been meant to be a recreational

corridor, so augmenting that recreational availability strengthens the historical link. Since the Grand Rounds is a complete bikeway, Adam emphasized that everything should be bike accessible, including access to the park and ride facilities. He echoes the mitigation ideas that focus on recreation, and said MPRB would have been surprised if this had not been an adverse effect call.

- Sarah cited two examples of related projects: MnHPO participated in developing a plan as part of the Southwest LRT project for managing the Kenilworth Lagoon, and with MPRB planners on the USACE permit for Basset Creek. It was difficult to come up with a plan for implementing quasi-natural elements like a creek or lagoon, and she assumes erosion control and ecological issues will come up during the BLRT Project as well.
  - Adam said that he has already discussed these issues with Michael Schroeder from MPRB.
- Paul said that since the elevators are designed with the capability to fit gurneys, he would assume skis would already fit.
- Adam emphasized that in addition to ensuring, for example, that skis physically fit, Project elements should be used to interpret the historical significance of recreational opportunities in the park.
- Homewood Residential Historic District (Minneapolis)
  - The Project will have minor direct physical effects on the district where an existing railroad crossing will be reconstructed and a retaining wall installed.
  - In addition, the visibility of Project elements and noise from Project operations will impact the district's setting.
  - Direct effects should be able to be addressed through design in accordance with the SOI's Standards, and noise mitigation could include interior testing and, if needed, retrofitting homes as has been done in order to mitigate airport noise.
  - Jim confirmed that this overview is consistent with the city's comments on the Draft EIS related to noise.
- West Broadway Ave. Residential Historic District (Robbinsdale)
  - The Project will run directly adjacent to the district on an elevated roadbed and approach structure for the bridge over Highway 100. Trains and associated infrastructure will be highly visible from the district, and viewsheds across the existing freight track will be blocked.
  - Operation of the Project and potential changes in traffic patterns in the district will also introduce noise. Implementation of quiet zones will eliminate severe auditory impacts on the district, but two residences would still have moderate impacts, so Project noise will adversely affect the historic district.
  - Marcia said that she is surprised views across the freight tracks are part of the assessment since the dense vegetation makes it difficult to see across the tracks currently. Greg explained that freight becomes more visible due to grade changes as you progress south. Marcia noted, however, that it seems likely the freight and LRT lines would merge together in the view.
  - Marcia also said that she thought the noise studies concluded that with noise barriers and wayside bells, no properties had remaining noise impacts except those impacted by the noise from Highway 100 near the north end of the district. Greg explained that the quiet zone elements address the severe auditory effects but that the Project still needs to minimize and mitigate moderate effects to two properties.
  - Greg added that the analysis of the views also takes into account the barriers that will add a vertical element, in addition to the tracks. Marcia pointed out that a lot of these elements are blocked by garages, and that the treatment along the alleys portrayed in renderings looks nice.

She asked whether BPO has done outreach on this topic, noting that the city has only heard from a few residents with large backyards.

- David Davies, BPO, responded that the Project has flyer for open houses but has not done outreach based on these specific details, which they plan to do after the municipal consent process is complete.

## 5) Next Steps

- Marcia asked when MnDOT CRU will finalize the placeholder appointments on consulting parties' calendars.
  - Greg said that once they receive comments following this meeting, they will finalize the schedule for the next consulting parties meeting, likely in late February or early March. Meetings will likely occur every two to four weeks after that point, and MnDOT CRU will inform consulting parties once those dates are finalized.
- Marcia asked for clarification on whether MnDOT CRU is requesting just broad comments or more detailed feedback.
  - Greg said that a phone call might work best for very minor comments on small details. In written comments, he is seeking feedback on FTA's findings of effect and on proposed mitigation measures.
- Jim asked whether the City of Minneapolis should comment on the GRHD, noting that they will have comments on the Plymouth Avenue Station but may defer to MPRB's comments on the GRHD.
  - Greg said that the city can comment on a topic they have an interest in.
  - Sarah said the city could note that since most impacts are in Golden Valley and within Theodore Wirth Regional Park, they are deferring to the City of Golden Valley and the MPRB.
  - Jim said he does not have strong opinions and would generally defer to the MPRB, but he will check with other staff.
- Greg asked for feedback on the proposal that for the residential historic districts with auditory impacts, the Project will install noise walls or implement quiet zones, and if auditory impacts remain, it will conduct testing and implement needed mitigation measures consistent with the SOI's Standards.
  - Consulting parties expressed general agreement that this is an acceptable approach.
  - Marcia asked if air conditioning can be installed in historic properties, and Sarah confirmed that this is done to mitigate airport noise around Lake Nokomis, in addition to retrofitting historic window frames.
- Greg also asked for feedback on stipulating design in accordance with the SOI's Standards and design review as minimization measures for Homewood Residential Historic District and GRHD.
- Marcia pointed out that for a few blocks along West Broadway Ave., the makeup of houses is quite variable. There are instances where LRT will pass five feet from a garage, and the home is across the alley from the district but identical to a historic home within the district.
  - Greg clarified that the district is the eligible property and that it contains both contributing and non-contributing properties. The ACHP encourages that a historic district be a cohesive unit with a tight boundary and no gerrymandering intrusions.
  - Sarah said there are volumes of surveys that detail each property, and in some cases there are small pieces of information that differentiate properties so that mitigation is required on one but not the other.
- Greg requested that consulting parties return comments on the Assessment of Effects report by February 19, 2016, preferably by email.
- Moving forward, he asked attendees to look forward to more regular consultation meetings as the draft MOA is developed over the coming months, noting that their input will allow for development of stipulations for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation.



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### Meeting Title: Section 106 Consultation – Meeting No. 4

**Date:** Mar 10, 2016    **Time:** 1:30pm    **Duration:** 2 hours

**Location:** Blue Line Project Office (BPO) – 5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Crystal, MN 55428

Conference Room 2

**Meeting called by:** Greg Mathis – MnDOT CRU

**Invitees:** FTA: Reggie Arkell, Maya Sarna  
MnHPO: Sarah Beimers  
MnDOT CRU: Jon Vimr  
Hennepin County: Dave Jaeger, Brent Rusco  
City of Brooklyn Park: Emily Carr  
City of Golden Valley: Emily Goellner  
City of Minneapolis: Jim Voll  
City of Robbinsdale: Marcia Glick  
Metro Transit, BPO: Kathryn O’Brien, Caroline Miller, Jenny Bring, Paul Danielson, Sophia Ginis, David Davies, Alicia Vap, Kelly Wilder

## Discussion Notes

### 1) Welcome and Introductions

Jon Vimr, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Cultural Resources Unit (CRU), opened the meeting, led introductions, and described the agenda.

### 2) Project Updates

Jon provided a summary of comments received on the final determination of effect and related Project updates:

- The Minnesota Historic Preservation Office (MnHPO) concurred with all of FTA’s findings presented at the February 4, 2016 consultation meeting.
- Comments received from other consulting parties since that meeting contained helpful minimization and mitigation recommendations that are assisting FTA and MnDOT CRU with their ongoing analyses concerning resolution of effects.
- MnDOT CRU and the Metro Transit Blue Line Project Office (BPO) also met with a neighborhood group in the Homewood neighborhood as part of public participation efforts under Section 106. The City is currently leading an effort to prepare a local landmark designation for the Homewood Residential Historic District.
  - Jim Voll, City of Minneapolis, shared that the meeting went well and that people generally agreed with the anticipated effects to the Homewood Residential Historic District.



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Jon then reviewed the steps in the Section 106 process, explaining that initiating the Section 106 process, identifying historic properties, and assessing adverse effects have been completed. FTA/MnDOT CRU are now in the process of resolving adverse effects, and they will soon move into development of a Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

- The regulations for implementing Section 106 require continued consultation to resolve adverse effects on historic properties, through consideration of measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse effects. These measures will be fulfilled under the MOA.
- Jon and Kathryn O'Brien, BPO, explained that the MOA is a legally binding agreement. An execution-ready version will be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the executed version will be included in the Record of Decision (ROD), anticipated to be published in August.
- Jon described the goals of the meeting as reviewing previously committed-to measures to minimize effects – and when possible avoid adverse effects – as well as considering alternatives for resolving unresolved adverse effects.

### 3) Resolved Properties

#### a) No adverse effect properties requiring implementation of MOA measures

Jon explained that the Section 106 Assessment of Effects and Final Determination of Effect for Historic Properties report (determination of effect report) committed to avoidance measures for five properties: Sumner Branch Library, Labor Lyceum, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Robbinsdale Water Works, and Hennepin County Library, Robbinsdale Branch.

#### b) Avoidance measures included in MOA to avoid adverse effects

Jon described measures to be included in the MOA to avoid adverse effects to the five properties above and to avoid and/or minimize effects to the remaining properties. These include designing project elements to the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI's) Standards, construction protection measures, and noise mitigation (under the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA]) and noise minimization/avoidance (under Section 106).

#### ***Project Design***

- Portions of the Project within and near historic properties will be designed in accordance with the SOI's Standards to minimize effects and help to avoid adverse effects.
- Design review will occur as Project design advances through 30%, 60%, 90%, and 100% plans. This review will ensure design is complying with the SOI's Standards and will identify substantive changes that could result in a chance of effect.
- Jon pointed out that at the last meeting, Sarah Beimers, MnHPO, asked for clarification on what it means to say that measures will be implemented "within the vicinity of a historic property," i.e., within what distance of historic properties will Project elements be subject to designing to the SOI's Standards.
  - Jon explained that one option would be to define a distance, and any Project elements within that distance to a historic property would be reviewed. However, FTA/MnDOT CRU instead proposes that this vicinity covers larger portions of the corridor encompassing relevant historic properties.
  - For example, in Minneapolis and Golden Valley, Project elements that would be designed to the SOI's Standards include those roughly from Bryant Avenue North just west of I-94 to just north of Theodore Wirth Regional Park (TWRP).



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- In Robbinsdale, Project elements would be designed to the SOI's Standards within the portion of the corridor from south of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church to just north of the bridge over Highway 100.
- Kathryn and Caroline Miller, BPO, asked for clarification regarding the extent of the corridor within these areas where designing to the SOI's Standards would be required, and Greg Mathis, MnDOT CRU, clarified that they would include the extent of the construction limits.
- Jon explained that the SOI's Standards when applied for something like this generally do not require major changes and that Project needs will still be able to be met.
- Caroline asked for clarification about which properties these requirements would apply to, and Greg responded that the SOI's Standards would be required to avoid and minimize visual effects to Sumner Branch Library, Labor Lyceum, Floyd B. Olson Memorial, and the Theodore Wirth Segment of the Grand Rounds Historic District.
- Jim asked if all Project elements would be reviewed to the SOI's Standards.
  - Greg described that the SOI's Standards require compatibility with historic properties but are very broad in order to encompass all property types. They require considerations of scale, patterns, and use of compatible materials to avoid diminishing the character of historic properties. For example, the Sumner Branch Library is a Tudor Revival style building, so flashing neon lights and 80-foot tall Project elements would not be allowed. For TWRP, Project elements should be compatible with its character but different enough so that it is clear they are not mimicking the characteristics of the historic property.
- Kathryn asked how the SOI's Standards accommodate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, safety, and security.
  - Greg responded that the SOI's Standards call for holistic design that can accommodate these Project needs, and Sarah further clarified that they allow for modifications to account for ADA accessibility, safety, and security, for example those that were necessary near churches and in downtown St. Paul during development of the METRO Green Line LRT project.
- Jim pointed out that it makes sense to adopt the SOI's Standards comprehensively along the Project alignment in Minneapolis and near TWRP. Although the Golden Valley Road Station is not in Minneapolis, their neighborhoods still have concerns. Jim continued that trees and landscaping are important to residents, and the city does not want trees removed and not replaced because they are not historically accurate (as happened in the Minneapolis Warehouse District).
  - Greg indicated that more conversation would occur about how the SOI's Standards are implemented specific to each property.
- Paul Danielson, BPO, asked what the SOI's Standards mean for the bridges north of Golden Valley Road, for example over Golden Valley Pond, or the Highway 100 crossing where the Project is planning to match the current bridges.
  - Jon replied that since those bridges are not historic, they do not need to meet the SOI's Standards. Paul asked whether what MnDOT CRU has seen so far of Project design in this area would meet the SOI's Standards, and Greg and Jon clarified it would.

### ***Construction Protection Plan***

- Jon described that construction protection measures are needed for properties in close proximity to the Project, or for properties that share a border with or are infringed upon by the Project.



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- Vibration monitoring and remediation measures (VMRMs) may be applicable to some properties. These measures will likely dictate monitoring thresholds, property owner notification, and damage remediation. However, vibration damage is unlikely, as evidenced by results of the Noise and Vibration Effects on Historic and Cultural Resources technical memorandum prepared by the Project.
- Caroline pointed out that the Project did not identify any vibration-sensitive properties per FTA noise and vibration guidelines.
  - Greg clarified that these measures address vibration from construction rather than Project operations as analyzed during the studies for the Project. He referred attendees to a handout listing avoidance/minimization/mitigation measures for inclusion in the MOA to determine for which properties VMRMs are applicable.
  - Jon said that utilization of these measures is similar to that of the Southwest LRT project.
- Greg continued that as Project design advances, development of construction protection plans will allow the Project to determine vibration thresholds, plan fencing locations, and consider other protections for historic properties.
- Jon concluded by pointing out that ground-disturbing activities always hold the risk for unexpected archaeological discoveries. Depending on the find, construction would halt, and consultation would resume among relevant parties as defined in the MOA.

#### 4) Proposals for Addressing Unresolved Effects

Jon explained that adverse effects to six properties remain unresolved. The discussion today will focus on resolving effects to Wayman A.M.E. Church, Homewood Residential Historic District, West Broadway Avenue Residential Historic District, and Osseo Branch. The two remaining properties – Floyd B. Olson Memorial and Grand Rounds Historic District – will be discussed at upcoming meetings.

##### a) Wayman A.M.E. Church

- Jon described that the church is located in an area that Station Area Planning (SAP) identifies for a mixed-use commercial node with medium- to high-density development.
- Jon acknowledged comments by the City of Minneapolis that they already recognize the property as historic and identify the area for redevelopment even without the Project; however, based on the fact that the Project is early in the design process and that SAP completed for the project indicates a land use incompatible with the historic structure, FTA/MnDOT CRU made a conservative determination that the Project will have an adverse effect on the property.
- The Project is proposing to prepare nominations for this property for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and as a local landmark. Jon clarified that the Project cannot guarantee successful listing on the NRHP, but can commit to preparing the nominations to appropriate standards.
  - Kathryn asked if the City must be a signatory for the Project to prepare a local designation. Greg responded that they do not and that the two forms the Project would prepare are very similar.
  - Jim confirmed that the City supports preparation of an NRHP nomination form and he will confirm if local designation is desired as well. He said the City could fund or complete any additional work it would take to prepare the local form, if needed.
  - Kathryn responded that since it is not much extra work, the Project can prepare both forms. If the City is not certain whether they want both forms prepared, the MOA could state that the Project will prepare the NRHP form and work with the City to determine how to handle the local designation.



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- Jon pointed out that NRHP designation requires property owner consent. Sophia Ginis, BPO, said she would have to confirm the property owner's stance since she did not specifically ask during previous communications, but it is likely they would be agreeable to NRHP designation. Jim clarified that local designation does not require property owner consent, although he would certainly prefer to have it.
- Sarah said that she is hopeful that these strategies will successfully avoid or minimize the Project's effects on this property, since that is the ultimate goal of the Section 106 process.

### b) **Homewood Residential Historic District**

- Jon explained that a small portion of the district will be directly impacted by the Project reconstructing less than 500 feet of street at Xerxes Avenue and Oak Park Avenue. Indirect effects considered include the following.
  - Visual effects from Project infrastructure:
    - Tracks, catenary, TPSS, etc. from LRT and freight bridge alignment.
    - New Plymouth Avenue bridge and associated station and vertical circulation tower.
    - High voltage transmission line replacement.
    - Vegetation removal.
  - Auditory effects from operations of light rail vehicles and Plymouth Station.
  - Effects from potential future redevelopment were considered but found to be negligible.
- The adverse effect finding for the district is due to a moderate noise impact on three residences at the southwest corner of the district.
- Jon clarified that the vertical circulation elements are only visible from a few properties, and Kathryn reiterated that the noise impacts are moderate rather than severe.
- Jon described the measures proposed to minimize effects and avoid non-auditory adverse effects, including designing Project elements in accordance with the SOI's Standards and implementing a construction protection plan.
- To mitigate the auditory adverse effect, the Project proposes interior testing for the three affected properties and installation of sound insulation if there are impacts. Any insulation efforts would meet the SOI's Standards and be reviewed by MnHPO.
- Kathryn said that these commitments are consistent with Metropolitan Council noise policies and similar to commitments the Project is making to other properties that will experience moderate noise effects.
- Jon said that a noise wall would have visual effects, so these measures are preferable from a Section 106 perspective.
- Sophia said that during a meeting with neighborhood residents on March 7, 2016, residents informed the Project that illegal track crossings take place currently. Jim said the City is aware of this, which is why they worked with the Project to include a sidewalk on the Highway 55 bridge to encourage people to cross safely.
  - Jon added that at the meeting residents indicated an interest in being involved in developing the design of the Project elements, particularly a fence at the intersection of Xerxes and Oak Park Avenues.
  - Kathryn pointed out that residents will continue to be involved as the design moves forward, particularly as details for the fence, which will be located within Project right of way to keep people off the tracks, are further developed in the 30% and 60% design plans.



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- Paul said that there are some Construction Code standards that dictate specific design features of the fence, such as height, etc.
- Greg asked Jim if the City would prefer consultation meetings be scheduled in order to conduct benchmark reviews.
  - Jim said the City is comfortable with noise testing, although residents around the Plymouth Avenue Station are concerned about being left behind if Golden Valley residents and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board have more say.
  - Greg asked if the design review benchmarks would present an opportunity to re-engage the neighborhoods. Sophia clarified that similarly to past meetings, the Project will include Section 106 information on meeting agendas and invite Greg to attend as a resource.
    - Alicia Vap, BPO, said the Project will need to engage residents as part of the Golden Valley permitting process, but they generally have not been as concerned as Minneapolis residents, since the majority of residents in the vicinity are located in Minneapolis.
  - Greg and Jon clarified that this outreach would take place in addition to implementation of the SOI's Standards. Jim described that the residents interested in the historic district are distinct from the main neighborhood organization, so the City will need to do additional outreach outside of Section 106.
    - Sophia explained that residents also become involved through their block clubs, but are not all within one neighborhood group.

### c) West Broadway Avenue Residential Historic District

- Jon explained that no direct effects were considered for this property; however, indirect effects considered include the following.
  - Visual effects from Project infrastructure:
    - Elevated guideway, tracks, catenary, new bridge over Highway 100, etc. from LRT and freight rail alignment.
    - Vegetation removal.
  - Auditory effects from operations of light rail vehicles and crossings.
  - Potential future redevelopment catalyzed by the Project.
- With implementation of a quiet zone, the adverse effect finding for the district is due to a moderate noise impact on two residences.
- Jon described the measures proposed to minimize effects and avoid non-auditory adverse effects, including designing Project elements in accordance with the SOI's Standards and implementing a construction protection plan.
- To mitigate the auditory adverse effect, the Project proposes implementation of a quiet zone at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North crossing as well as interior testing for the two properties with potential moderate impacts and installation of sound insulation if there are impacts. As with Homewood, any insulation efforts would meet the SOI's Standards and be reviewed by MnHPO.
- Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale, asked whether there will be a noise wall. Kathryn explained that based on preliminary plans, a noise wall would not meet the cost effective criteria, so the decision was made to do interior testing instead.



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- Marcia noted that it is questionable to have a noise wall along the rest of the alignment through Robbinsdale but not at historic properties. In addition, residents are concerned that riders will be passing by on the elevated LRT line and looking into their homes from above.
- Kathryn said that the design consultant will continue to consider the noise wall but that currently, the Project does not think it is the best choice. If that changes, the noise wall would be subject to design review to the SOI's Standards, like other Project elements in the vicinity.
- Marcia said that other types of visual screens should be considered to address the need to block views from the passing trains, although residents should be consulted on their perspectives.
- Greg asked if the City of Robbinsdale would conduct that outreach or whether the Project should.
  - Marcia said the City would have to do its own outreach at some point.
  - Alicia noted that this area is not unique in Robbinsdale. There are many areas where the Project is very close to homes, and outreach will continue with these residents as Project development moves forward.

### **d) Osseo Branch Line of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad / Great Northern Railway Historic District**

- The Project uses an approximately eight-mile segment of the 13-mile corridor.
- Jon explained that although there are differing opinions, FTA/MnDOT CRU contends – and the Project agrees – that this property will no longer retain its historic integrity so will no longer be an historic property with implementation of the Project. There is little that could be done to avoid or minimize the adverse effect, so instead, the Project is proposing mitigation through documenting other historic railroads.
  - Phase II documentation will be conducted of other railroads that are either not yet documented or documented in insufficient detail. This will include making an eligibility recommendation as well as defining boundaries for the historic property. The goal will be to provide a greater level of detail than simply indicating an entire railroad line, which may be hundreds of miles long, is eligible.
  - Kathryn explained that this is analogous to what was done for the METRO Green Line LRT project when a demolition was necessary. Greg agreed, confirming that detailed recordation would not contribute to a greater understanding of the resource since its story, rather than its engineering or other physical aspects, is what is significant and already well documented.
  - Sarah pointed out that this type of documentation may be useful for the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba main line, which often overlaps with other projects.
  - Sarah added, however, that interpretation may also be beneficial to creatively tell the story of the Osseo Branch Line's role in the potato industry, noting that at a previous meeting, Todd Larson at City of Brooklyn Park remarked that even his city's residents do not understand the significance of the resource.
  - Kathryn asked consulting parties whether the MOA stipulation regarding interpretation can remain broad or whether it needs to be more specifically defined. Sarah recommended including parameters in the MOA for development of an interpretive plan that will be prepared later, but include enough specifics that everyone generally understands the scope or type of interpretation.



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- Alicia recommended including that community involvement will be incorporated into the interpretive planning.
- Kathryn similarly noted that involvement from internal Metropolitan Council stakeholders will be important to ensure any built structures align with the Project.
- Marcia said that for the City of Robbinsdale, the story is more about the founders of the city using the rail line and deciding to build the city based on the area's lakes. The historical depot was located where the Robbinsdale Station will be located, which first served the railroad and later the streetcar.
- Greg asked attendees whether they favor physical interpretation, development of information for publication, or other interpretation options.
  - Alicia noted that the plaza planned for between the station and the park and ride in Robbinsdale would provide an opportunity for some form of interpretation.
  - Paul cautioned that on-train interpretation would likely not be feasible since Metro Transit uses light rail vehicles across the entire system, not specific to each line.
  - Paul suggested that some of the five stations located along the Osseo Branch Line may be more conducive than others to hosting interpretation, and Alicia suggested that the 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Robbinsdale Avenue stations may be good options.
- Greg and Jon noted that consulting parties seem to be in general agreement with this mitigation strategy and invited further comments to inform parameters in the MOA.

### 5) **Next Steps**

Jon described that the two remaining properties – Floyd B. Olson Memorial and Grand Rounds Historic District – will be discussed at upcoming meetings.

- The Cities of Minneapolis and Golden Valley should participate in those discussions, but all interested parties are welcome, and MnDOT CRU can then decide whether additional meetings are necessary.
- Greg confirmed that consulting parties are generally in agreement with the proposals for resolving effects for properties presented to date, so MnDOT CRU will begin drafting the MOA based on the discussion.
- Marcia requested that placeholders and invitations for future meetings contain a general agenda so that participants can assess whether they need to attend.
- Jim said that Jack Byers from the City of Minneapolis would like to attend the meeting when Floyd B. Olson Memorial is discussed, so he requested that MnDOT CRU call ahead to check his schedule.



## METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLRT)

5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Crystal, MN 55428 [www.bluelineext.org](http://www.bluelineext.org)

### Meeting Title: Section 106 Consultation – Meeting No. 5

**Date:** Mar 24, 2016    **Time:** 1:30pm    **Duration:** 2 hours

**Location:** Blue Line Project Office (BPO) – 5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Crystal, MN 55428

Conference Room 2

**Meeting called by:** Greg Mathis – MnDOT CRU

**Invitees:** FTA: Reggie Arkell, Maya Sarna  
MnHPO: Sarah Beimers  
MnDOT CRU: Jon Vimr  
Hennepin County: Brent Rusco  
City of Golden Valley: Emily Goellner  
City of Minneapolis: Jim Voll, Jack Byers  
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board: Adam Arvidson  
Metro Transit, BPO: Kathryn O'Brien, Caroline Miller, Shelley Miller, Tom Harrington, Paul Danielson, Sophia Ginis, David Davies, Alicia Vap, Lee Williams, Kelly Wilder

## Discussion Notes

### 1) Welcome and Introductions

Greg Mathis (Minnesota Department of Transportation [MnDOT] Cultural Resources Unit [CRU]), opened the meeting and led introductions.

### 2) Project Updates

Greg reminded consulting parties that FTA issued its Final Determination of Effect (DOE) on historic properties and submitted it to the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office (MnHPO) in January 2016.

- FTA found the METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (Project) will have an adverse effect on six properties, no adverse effect on six properties, and no adverse effect on five properties with implementation of measures in the Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).
- At the March 10, 2016 consultation meeting, parties reviewed various MOA stipulations and developed mitigation ideas to resolve adverse effects on all but two historic properties affected by the Project. Finer details and language on these ideas is currently being developed.
- Adverse effects to the two remaining properties – Floyd B. Olson Memorial and Grand Rounds Historic District – are the focus of this meeting.
- Greg reviewed the Section 106 process, explaining that initiating the Section 106 process, identifying historic properties, and assessing adverse effects have been completed. FTA/MnDOT CRU are now in the process of resolving adverse effects and developing the MOA.



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### 3) Grand Rounds Historic District, Theodore Wirth Segment

#### a) Measures to resolve adverse effects

Greg reminded attendees of the Project's location within Theodore Wirth Regional Park and its direct and visual effects as described in the Section 106 Assessment of Effects and Final Determination of Effect for Historic Properties report.

Greg noted that consulting parties have previously discussed designing Project elements in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI's) Standards as well as developing construction protection plans for work in the vicinity of historic properties. He asked for feedback from consulting parties on what measures should be implemented for the portion of the Project within the park. Emily Goellner (City of Golden Valley) reiterated the requests contained in her letter dated February 19, 2016. Emily, Greg, Adam Arvidson (Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board [MPRB]), Jim Voll (City of Minneapolis), and BPO staff discussed various options summarized below:

#### ***Preservation/Treatment Plans***

- Adam also suggests a preservation plan and treatment plan/standards/guidelines similar to what is stipulated in the Southwest LRT project MOA for the Kenilworth Segment of the Grand Rounds Historic District (GRHD).
  - Greg, Sarah Beimers (MnHPO), and Kathryn O'Brien (BPO) discussed details of these planning efforts. A preservation plan would guide policy and master planning decisions, while a treatment plan would identify historic features and outline day-to-day maintenance and treatment activities. It is logical to prepare these plans for separate segments of the GRHD since their National Register nomination forms focus on each segment's individual themes. The plans will be developed collaboratively so will benefit MPRB, Metropolitan Council, and MnHPO, and they will serve as a model for future federal projects that impact MPRB resources.

#### ***Project Design and Consultation***

- Adam emphasized the importance of a trailhead facility at the Golden Valley Station park-and-ride. The vegetated buffer between the park-and-ride and the parkway and trail facilitates is important mitigation.
  - Emily asked if this vegetation can be replaced at a greater than one-to-one ratio, to maintain viewsheds as defined in the landscape study. Kathryn and Alicia Vap (SPO) said that vegetation must be cleared along the 100-foot BNSF corridor for safety but that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) reflects the Project's commitment to replacing impacted vegetation, and that plantings may be able to be focused to screen key views toward the Project.
  - Alicia noted that if the park-and-ride does not advance through Project design, the trailhead will not advance, and Kathryn asked that the MOA make this clear.
- Emily asked that the material and finish of the retaining and crash walls reflect the surrounding historical features, and Adam emphasized the importance of the design of walls that face the park. Kathryn and Paul Danielson (BPO) discussed the safety requirements necessitating the use of concrete walls and glass vertical circulation facilities. Sarah explained that the SOI's Standards accommodate merging Project needs with historical considerations, and Tom Harrington (BPO) explained the Project is looking into these options.



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- Kathryn, Alicia, and Sarah noted that the MOA will simply stipulate design in accordance with the SOI's Standards. However, ongoing design resolution team (DRT) meetings can offer a venue for continuing these conversations, including involvement by MnHPO's historical architect.
- Emily and Adam discussed the importance of recreational amenities connecting to the Project, and Sarah agreed that recreation is a historically significant facet of the park. Project staff explained that station design should accommodate recreational needs (e.g., elevators tall enough to fit skis, ski racks, bike runnels, etc.).

### ***Interpretation***

- Jim is not opposed to renaming Plymouth Avenue Station but would like to remain involved in the decision-making.
- Emily and Adam described that wayfinding and signage should highlight the history of the park and Theodore Wirth himself. It should sufficiently highlight these important stories while not interfering with the park's resources and the visitor experience. The MOA should leave flexibility for further development of these plans.
- Adam encouraged interpretation of the 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel Boulder, since the 45<sup>th</sup> parallel bisects the station. This is something that has been discussed at DRT meetings.

Greg summarized that the MOA will contain language to enable the above topics to be addressed through the DRT process, rather than including any specifics that could force the Project to implement a solution that turns out not to be advisable. In addition, the MOA will mirror the Southwest LRT project MOA for consistency among segments of the GRHD. Adam and Emily confirmed this is an acceptable approach and requested a DRT schedule to plan for who should attend relevant meetings.

## **4) Floyd B. Olson Memorial Statue**

### **a) Boundaries**

Greg explained that as the property owner, MnDOT reviewed its documentation of the statue's original site before it was moved in 1984 and found that the current site is much larger and does not reflect the original site design. Therefore, they have recommended the National Register boundaries be revised to include only the statue and its pedestal.

- Greg explained that Project elements no longer infringe on the historic property so there is no direct adverse effect. However, FTA's adverse effect finding remains in effect due to the potential for indirect effects from visually prominent Project elements and redevelopment anticipated by Station Area Planning (SAP).
- Sarah received MnDOT's request to reevaluate the resource's boundaries and confirmed she concurs with the revised boundaries and that there are no direct effects. Written concurrence is forthcoming.
- Greg, Sarah, and Kathryn will discuss what documentation among FTA/MnDOT CRU and MnHPO will be necessary to account for the revised boundaries in Project planning. Kathryn noted that FTA is planning to issue an amended Section 4(f) evaluation in the coming weeks based on the revised boundary.

### **b) Measures to resolve adverse effects**

Greg asked City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County staff if the revised boundaries resolve their previous concerns. Jim and Brent Rusco (Hennepin County) confirmed it resolves concerns related to pedestrian access;



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however, Jim said it does not resolve the fact that the city disagrees with the assessment that redevelopment could adversely affect the statue.

- Greg and Jon Vimr (MnDOT CRU) reiterated that FTA/MnDOT CRU based the adverse effects finding on the reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects from redevelopment anticipated by SAP efforts.
- Jack Byers (City of Minneapolis) and Jim reiterated their perspective that there can be no adverse effect finding since the statue has been moved so does not retain its intended location, feeling, or setting. In addition, SAP incorporates open space that could accommodate the statue.
- City staff discussed with Sarah that National Register Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties could allow for development of a plan to move the statue to a more historically appropriate site. The plan could delineate appropriate boundaries and inform orientation, landscaping, and site design to preserve the statue's remaining integrity.
- Greg agreed that a treatment plan for the property is a promising idea for mitigation; however, he and Sarah discussed the need to confirm an approach with FTA to ensure the Project will not inadvertently exacerbate the current adverse effect through moving the property again. In addition, they discussed the benefits of preparing a National Register nomination for the property.
- Paul confirmed that there is adequate time to determine a plan for the site before landscaping is finalized in the 60% designs in 2017.
- Greg will follow up internally at MnDOT, the current property owner, on whether the agency would support preparation of a National Register nomination.

### 5) **Next Steps**

Greg summarized that FTA/MnDOT CRU will draft the MOA in the coming weeks and circulate it for review by consulting parties. There will then be another meeting to review the draft, and it will be finalized in time for inclusion in the Final EIS, anticipated to be published in June. Kathryn explained that consulting parties wishing to sign the MOA will do so between its publication in the Final EIS and release of the Record of Decision in August.