



METRO Blue Line Extension
Community Advisory Committee Meeting
January 11, 2016
Blue Line Project Office
5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200
Crystal, MN 55428
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Meeting Summary

CAC Members: Vicki Moore, George Selman, Kate Catron, Ken Rodgers, Carol Vosberg, Catherine Fleming, Giuseppe Marrari, Chris Berne, La Shella Sims

Agency Staff and Guests: Sam O'Connell, Caroline Miller, Andrew Gillett, David Davies, Paul Danielson, Sophia Ginis, Dan Pfeiffer, Nick Landwer, Juan Rangel, Alicia Vap, Emily Carr, Rachel Dammel

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kate Catron asked if there were any comments on the minutes from the previous two CAC meetings. Chris Berne noted that on the joint BAC/CAC minutes Kate's last name is missing.

2. Regional METRO System Overview

Alicia Vap presented. The Blue Line and Green Line are currently open, with planned extensions for both. There is one bus rapid transit line currently open (Red Line) and two planned (Orange Line and Gold Line).

Ridership on Green Line is currently exceeding the 2030 forecast. Over \$3 billion in private development has occurred along the Green Line since 2010.

Sixteen Fortune 500 companies are located in the Twin Cities, 11 of which are located on an existing or planned regional transitway. Multiple sports venues are also located along the regional transitways, including Target Field, Target Center, US Bank Stadium, TCF Bank Stadium, Xcel Energy Center, and CHS Field. Other regional attractions include the Mall of America, MSP Airport, VA Hospital, University of Minnesota, and the state capitol.

Catherine Fleming asked why Cargill isn't included on the maps. Dan Pfeiffer said because they aren't a public company.

Vicki Moore asked if they could make a map for smaller businesses as well. Alicia Vap replied that they don't currently have a map showing other businesses but could make one.

3. 2016 Project Overview: Key Activities and Milestones

Nick Landwer presented.

Project Timeline:

- 2014-2016: Project Development
- 2016: Environmental/Municipal Consent
- 2017: Engineering
- 2018: Full Funding Grant Agreement
- 2018-2020: Heavy Construction
- 2021: Passenger Operations

Major Project Milestones:

- FTA grants entry to Project Development: August 22, 2014
- Technical Issues (1-16) Resolution: October 29, 2015
- Met Council approves Municipal Consent Scope: December 9, 2015
- Municipal Consent starts: December 15, 2015
- Municipal Consent concludes: March 4, 2016
- Publication of Final EIS Notice of Availability: June 2016
- Record of Decision: August 2016
- Complete 30% design: Q3 2016
- FTA grants entry to Engineering: Q4 2016
- Complete 100% design: Q4 2017
- Full Funding Grant Agreement: Q4 2017
- Heavy construction: 2018-2020
- Revenue service: 2021

2016 Activities:

- Project Development: January – August
- Municipal Consent: January – March
- Notice of Intent to enter Engineering: February
- Final EIS/Record of Decision: June – August
- Project Development Continuance: August – December
- Entry to Engineering: December

Ken Rodgers asked if there were any major issues pending that could stall the project, like the issues with Kenilworth Corridor for Southwest LRT. Nick Landwer replied that there are issues to resolve, but they don't anticipate anything major coming up. Freight rail issues are the largest items to be worked through.

Municipal Consent Schedule:

City/County	Open House/Public Hearing	Committee/Council/Board Action
Brooklyn Park (published)	January 25	February 22
Crystal (published)	January 14: Open House February 2: Public Hearing	February 16
Robbinsdale	February 16	March 2
Golden Valley (published)	February 2	February 16
Minneapolis (Transportation & Public Works) (published)	February 2 (public hearing only)	February 2
Minneapolis (Council)	N/A	February 12
Hennepin County	January 19	TBD
Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority	January 19	N/A

Sam O'Connell encouraged committee members to attend the meetings in their communities. George Selman added that it is beneficial for members of the public and council members to hear that there is ongoing public input and that it has been occurring for a long time.

Design Resolution Schedule:

Resolution to design issues is needed by June. The following schedule was developed to meet that timeline.

- January
 - Municipal Consent Check-In
 - Preliminary Engineering Plans/Schedule
 - BNSF Update
 - Utilities
 - Bridge Design
 - Noise Walls
 - Pedestrian Facilities
 - Grade Crossings
 - Secondary Platform Access
 - Minneapolis
 - Olson Memorial Highway Corridor Design
 - Brooklyn Park
 - Xylon Ave
 - 63rd Ave pedestrian overpass
 - Oak Grove Pkwy roadway network
 - Target campus parking
 - Parking ramp/site plan
 - Golden Valley
 - Golden Valley Road/Theodore Wirth Pkwy intersection

- Golden Valley Road Station
- Crystal
 - Bass Lake Road pedestrian overpass
- Robbinsdale
 - 45 ½ Ave at-grade crossing

Catherine Fleming asked if the locations of the bridges had been decided. Nick Landwer said all the rail and road bridges are in the municipal consent plans. BPO staff is evaluating two pedestrian bridges – one at Bass Lake Road and one at 63rd Ave.

Kate Catron asked what the issue is at 45 ½ Ave. Nick Landwer replied that they need to look at how to make sure it a safe crossing and that cars don't get backed up on the tracks.

- February
 - Signal/communication house locations
 - Water resources
 - Bus stops/passenger drop-off
 - Station design
 - Will not yet include landscaping plans, colors, other details
 - Minneapolis
 - Bassett Creek tunnel
 - Pedestrian facilities
 - Brooklyn Park
 - West Broadway corridor design
 - Lakeland Ave access at 73rd Ave
 - OMF site plan
 - Golden Valley
 - Bassett Creek channel realignment
 - Crystal
 - West Broadway at-grade crossing
 - Robbinsdale
 - Parking ramp/site plan
- March
 - Noise walls
 - TPSS number and locations
 - Bicycle facilities
 - Fencing
 - Bridge design
 - Minneapolis
 - 7th Street/Olson Memorial Highway intersection
 - Xcel transmission line
 - Olson Memorial Highway median treatments

- Brooklyn Park
 - Trail facilities
- April/May
 - Utilities
 - BNSF update
 - Landscape/vegetation
 - Lighting
 - Retaining wall design
 - Traffic
 - Station/platform design
 - Station site plans

Catherine Fleming asked when rider/pedestrian/bicycle safety would be addressed given the recent accidents. Nick Landwer said Metro Transit is currently working on a plan to check the current safety equipment to make sure it is working and in the correct place. There is also an educational component that needs to occur. Catherine Fleming said she had heard from community members that the lights on the trains weren't bright enough. Nick Landwer said that their operations staff is also looking at having a peer review conducted by other agencies (e.g., Denver) to help identify potential issues.

George Selman said it would be helpful to have some information on incidents per mile per year to compare our system to different cities since the recent events have brought safety to the forefront of people's minds.

Vicki Moore said that when transit lines are being designed, there is a lot of input from nearby residents who want it to be quiet and not intrusive, but the people that interact with the train but don't live near it may not be getting their input heard.

Ken Rodgers said that just because we have a low accident rate does not necessarily mean we have safe stations and safe lines. There are issues with existing stations that we can learn from and correct. When is the appropriate time to bring those up? Nick Landwer replied that this is a good forum for those concerns. Chris Berne said safety can be item that is discussed for future CAC topics in the following agenda item.

Chris Berne asked how the project schedule is dovetailing with the Hennepin County project on West Broadway. Nick Landwer said they are working closely with Hennepin County on design and schedule coordination. Chris said he talked with Alene Tchourumoff about property acquisitions and was told that offers will be made Q3 of this year, but if construction doesn't start until 2018 why do they need to be purchased in 2016? Nick Landwer replied that he believes they are focusing on properties that would need to be purchased regardless of whether the LRT project moves forward or not. Paul Danielson added that first offers cannot be made until after the Record of Decision, so while offers may be made this year the process of acquiring property can take time. Both projects are on the same timeline for making offers in Q3 or Q4 of this year to start the process. Sam

O'Connell suggested that a more detailed schedule can be an item of discussion for the next meeting.

4. Hennepin County Community Works Update

Andrew Gillett presented on the Crystal Station Area Planning process.

A design workshop was held the week of November 5, 2015. The next community meeting is January 25, 2016.

They had workshop members identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, and the areas identified for each lined up.

The issue of safely crossing Bottineau Blvd came up often. Ideas to improve the crossing included:

- Improving crosswalks – make them wider, use different paint colors, add stop bars, add bollards in medians, add walk signal push buttons, rapid flashing beacons
- Build pedestrian bridges – could be very large

How to connect the station to the downtown area was also discussed. Ideas included:

- Creating a promenade with a more direct walkway
- Adding parking on north edge of Bass Lake Road
- Façade and edge of roadway improvements to make the area more inviting, but that don't disrupt existing businesses

Ideas for Becker Park were also discussed:

- Option 1 – add parking but mostly leave the park alone; spruce up existing facilities
- Option 2 – keep the existing uses but rearrange them; create a new park feature; potentially add commercial use (e.g., park restaurant)
- Option 3 – develop in the park itself; lose park area but add commercial space

Transit-oriented development strategies can be implemented over time. Some of the strategies include parking ratios, building coverage, and permitted uses.

The full presentation is posted on Hennepin County's website.

5. Discussion: Future CAC Topics

Ken Rodgers discussed safety issues at platforms and when crossing to sidewalks. Platforms are designed with accessibility in mind, but there doesn't seem to be the same level of concern for how people get off the platform and safely onto the sidewalk. With center platforms, visually impaired people don't know when they get to the bottom of the ramp and need to turn and can end up walking into the intersection. Some sort of landmark is needed to prevent people from walking into traffic.

Ken also stated that crossing the LRT tracks in downtown Minneapolis is very difficult with both the Blue Line and Green Line trains running because it's difficult to judge if another train is coming, even if one just left the station. Some sort of cue is needed, such as beacons that flash and announce that trains are approaching. A safe way to get from the platform across the tracks to the sidewalks is also needed.

George Selman asked if there is a particular station that is the best example of what Ken described. Ken said Government Plaza is a great example of trains coming and going without a pattern. Listening to traffic or train horns, which can be heard blocks away, is not a good indication of whether not it is safe to cross. At the Hennepin station, sometimes there are trains coming into the station even when there is a green light for pedestrians to cross the street, and you can't be sure the train will stop. These are issues for people not paying attention in addition to people that are visually impaired.

Vicki Moore suggested that overhead signs be included that indicate when the train will arrive, similar to overhead signs on the interstate that say how long it is to certain destinations.

Carol Vosberg asked if we could see what other cities are doing and research best practices. Nick Landwer said that they do have team members that have worked on transit systems in other cities, and they are looking at other cities to see what improvements could be made. Alicia Vap added that they have a lot of images from other systems that they can get ideas from, and they can research other systems related to some of the issues that have been raised tonight.

Ken Rodgers said that the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee will be putting on a "beyond ADA" event for anyone designing pedestrian pathways where they blindfold participants and let them experience what the issues are. When the dates are set Ken will share with the group; it will likely be this spring.

Sam O'Connell said she was hearing two major themes: safety and security and how technology can be used in transit systems.

Catherine Fleming said she would also add economic development, green space (including the Park Board's greening space guidelines), and driverless cars (related to parking facilities).

La Shella Sims said she would like to discuss safety in north Minneapolis. There is an elementary school, a library, and housing developments – what is being planned in those areas to keep people from crossing directly to the stations? Nick Landwer said that is a big topic going into the 30% plans. Sam O'Connell suggested discussing what is programmed and already embedded in design for safety and discussing what else we can do.

Catherine Fleming asked if there could be special trains or storage facilities for skis for people traveling to Theodore Wirth Park.

Kate Catron said she is interested in making rain gardens, including plants species for pollinators, where the park-and-rides are built.

Catherine Fleming added that parking facilities should be multi-purpose in case demand goes down. Ken Rodgers added that there should be designated spaces for car sharing services. George Selman said there should be electric car charging stations.

George Selman said he would also like to discuss visual screening in Robbinsdale where the West Broadway residential area begins (just south of Hwy 100) where the trains are at a higher elevation than the houses.

Carol Vosberg would like to discuss features to accommodate aging populations.

Chris Berne asked if the Final EIS noise analysis overview that is on the CMC agenda for this week would be shared with CAC. Nick Landwer replied that that information was shared with the CAC (when the noise consultant gave the noise workshops). As they get more specific noise wall locations and information, that will be shared with all the committees.

6. 2016 Meeting Schedule

Mondays from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

February 8, March 7, April 11, May 9, June 6, July 11, August 8, September 6 (moved to Tuesday), October 10, November 7, December 5

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm. The next CAC meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2016.