



## Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

### Minutes of the February 8, 2018 Meeting

**Present:** Alene Tchourumoff, Scott McBride, Marika Pfefferkorn, George Selman, Joanie Clausen, Lona Schreiber, Jim Adams, Rich Gates, Brian Lamb, Jacob Frey, Mike Opat, Regan Murphy, Chris Berne

**Not in attendance:** Tim Willson, Gary Cunningham, Shep Harris, Jeffrey Lunde, Linda Higgins, Kale Severson

#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Tchourumoff convened the meeting at 1:32 pm. She welcomed the new members here today, Jacob Frey and Joanie Clausen.

The role of the CMC is to advise the Metropolitan Council and identify and make recommendations about design and construction.

#### 2. Approval of December 14, 2017 Minutes

Chair Tchourumoff asked the committee to review the meeting minutes from the December 14, 2017 meeting. Marika Pfefferkorn motioned approval of the minutes; Mike Opat seconded. Minutes were approved.

#### 3. Chair's Update

Chair Tchourumoff provided a letter to CMC members that the project office received from BNSF last month. The project office has been engaged in conversations with the railroad for a number of years and recently sent a letter to reinvigorate those conversations. BNSF's response is not totally unexpected. We need to make sure we are clear on the ways in which our project affects their right-of-way and address their safety and operational concerns. We need to demonstrate to BNSF that we understand their concerns and can adequately address them. Chair Tchourumoff asked if there were any questions.

Mike Opat commented that this is consistent with what we have seen from BNSF from time to time, plus the railroad is not happy that the County thwarted their plan to connect Canadian Pacific trains on the Monticello spur a few years ago. This letter is not unexpected, and it will test the resolve of the governor and our partners in Washington to get them to the table. Chair Tchourumoff stated that she is personally committed to continuing conversations with BNSF and intends to do so in the next few days with an in-person meeting.

Chair Tchourumoff also wanted to share a few highlights. The Met Council had their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration a few weeks ago where they had a panel of previous Met Council chairs discuss challenges and the value of thinking about issues from a regional perspective. The people around this table are a good example of coming together across cities and levels of government for the prosperity of the region. Chair Tchourumoff also wanted to congratulate Brian Lamb and his staff for providing great service during the Super Bowl.



#### 4. Oak Grove Parkway Station Area Overview

##### Station Area

Nick Landwer presented. Target Corp. (who is a major landowner in this area) has a master plan in the Oak Grove Parkway station area that calls for corporate office, retail, housing, parks, trails, and LRT. Proposed infrastructure changes that accommodate the master plan, include:

- Addition of LRT, including station, park and ride, and operations and maintenance facility (OMF)
- Roadway realignment, trail and capacity enhancements consistent with the master plan
- Comprehensive regional stormwater management plan
- Proposed Hwy 169/101st Avenue N interchange (seeking funding)

North of TH 610, the existing condition includes lots of open space. Proposed roadway improvements include:

- Rerouting West Broadway north and south
- Rerouting Oak Grove Parkway and combining it with 101st Avenue
- Constructing Xylon, Rhode Island, and 99th Avenues
- Future roadway connections as part of master plan

The roadway network work includes cost participation from the County and City. They are putting infrastructure in place as part of the LRT project so disruptions can be avoided in the future.

##### LRT Design Elements

Alicia Vap presented. Project office staff has worked closely with city staff to site the OMF and shrink its footprint. There are two entrances to the OMF, one for employees and one for visitors. They are working to break up the long views of the building (the west side is 600 feet long). The property to the west is owned by Three Rivers Regional Park, and to the east the property is owned by the City and is identified as future park. The renderings show precast and metal material to break up the long expanse on western side. The main employee area is a combination of white metal and white precast with the Metro Transit logo. Looking from the east, the same materials will be used to break up the long expanse. They want the facility to look nice and to be functional to meet maintenance needs.

Project office staff is also working with city staff to finalize the park and ride location. The facility needs to accommodate about 850 parking spaces and is sited off Rhode Island to the west of the station. Part of the challenge is that city anticipates future development around the park and ride so the goal is to come up with materials to screen the facility for future use and develop lighting that will not impact future development. They are current thinking about combinations of precast and metal to provide screening.

Station design is in 90% civil plan so they are pretty well developed. Pedestrian access to the platform is from the south on 99<sup>th</sup> and from the park and ride. The project office worked with the city and county on the grand boulevard area to the east of the station in the middle of West Broadway. This boulevard breaks up the crossing and provides a refuge in the middle. They are continuing to work on sidewalk connections on the north side of the station. All stations have the



same footprint with three canopies, but the roof color and aesthetics are being used to differentiate each station. The design of this station will complement the design of the park and ride.

#### Future Development Opportunities

Kim Berggren with the City of Brooklyn Park presented. The city started working with the project office back in 2015. It has been challenging to introduce urban walkable development in a suburban undeveloped area but the city is feeling good about the plan they developed. The vision for the area was developed in coordination with Target, who owns 300 acres surrounding station. The hope for this area is that it will be a main activity hub for the city and becomes a regional destination. The plan centers around the grand boulevard, which slows traffic and creates more walkable space. The other central feature is an east-west retail area, which will be the main street area for restaurants and retail. The city will invest in the park to the east of the OMF as well.

The city is working on TOD zoning regulations with Metro Transit and Hennepin County as part of a Federal Transit Administration TOD grant, and they hope to have those regulations in place this summer. Chair Tchourumoff asked when the city hopes to have this area developed. Kim Berggren said it is a long-range vision so it will likely take 20 or more years to build out.

The development plan for the area around the park and ride includes housing that could be accessed through the park and ride. The park and ride will have underground parking that could be leased by the housing developer from Metro Transit. The city showed the plan to several developers and based on feedback received they believe this is a viable strategy to promote shared goals for TOD. Another goal of the development is to screen the park and ride structure as they do not want to prioritize cars over other types of travel.

Kim Berggren thanked the project office staff for working with the city through this visioning process.

Mike Opat also wanted to thank everyone who has been working on this evolution, especially Kim Berggren with the city and Brent Rusco with the county. This work has been happening against a fairly drastic executive group transition at Target, which means their engagement has ebbed and flowed. We get one chance to do this and we should continue to massage it to the end. Mike Opat asked Brooklyn Park if the amplified sound issue for the park still an issue or has that been resolved? Rich Gates said the amplified sound is still part of the original "C" park but the entire park may be revised in some ways with the park system plan. The community is still looking for large picnic pavilions but they do have some other interested groups on that land too.

#### **5. Section 106 Draft Interpretive Plan Overview**

Caroline Miller presented. The Draft Interpretive Plan is a mitigation commitment that came out of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for adverse effects on two historic properties:

- Osseo Branch of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad/Great Northern Railway Historic District
- Ground Rounds Historic District: Theodore Wirth Segment

The interpretive plan has two components: graphic panels and integrated interpretive elements. The process for the plan started in 2016 after the MOA was executed. The Draft Interpretive Plan has



included a broad team of stakeholders, including Section 106 consulting parties, the design team, MnDOT Cultural Resources Unit, the public outreach team, and consultants that are interpretive planners and historians.

Interpretive elements will be included at the following locations:

- For the Osseo Branch:
  - Plymouth Avenue Station
  - Golden Valley Road Station
  - Robbinsdale Station
  - Bass Lake Road Station
  - 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Station
- For the Grand Rounds Historic District:
  - Plymouth Avenue Station
  - Golden Valley Road Station

The graphic panels will have text and images to tell the story of why the historic resources are important and will be located on the station platforms. The integrated interpretive elements are more abstract (e.g., a bench with a quote on it). Chair Tchourumoff clarified that these graphic panels and interpretive elements give us the opportunity to respect the historic nature of the corridor and document it in a permanent fixture.

The framework for the plan is to honor these resources and provide an accurate story on why these resources are significant. The other part of the framework is to keep in mind the audience and serve different learning styles.

Different themes were developed for each panel. Osseo Branch themes include development of railroad, technological advancements in rail, development of towns, old transportation corridor, and the Minnesota agricultural industry. Themes for the Grand Rounds Historic District include Wirth's park design contributions to the Minneapolis community, the significance of the district, eras of development, and Wirth's legacy.

Panels will be set up so someone can spend 30 seconds or multiple minutes reading it. The panels will be integrated with the station architecture with one at each end. They will be double sided, at eye level, and include a mix of historic and contemporary photos, maps, and text.

One integrated interpretive element will be located at five different stations to complement the graphic panels. One example is the Golden Valley Road station, which will include a seat wall at the trailhead facing Theodore Wirth Parkway. The bench will be engraved with a quote from Theodore Wirth: "We must never forget that the parks are intended for the masses and not the classes."

Next steps for the interpretive plan include submitting the draft plan to the consulting parties, preparing the final plan based on feedback, and integrating it into the 100% design plans.

## 6. Adjournment



Mike Opat wanted to share his recent experience in Indonesia for an exchange program sponsored by the State Department. Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world, and the US is the third. Traffic there is indescribable; there is virtually no ability to be a pedestrian, motorcycles are the primary vehicle type, and no freight trucks allowed in central Jakarta during the day. They are constructing two rapid transit lines. The mass rapid transit line is similar to the Blue Line Extension as it is 11.5 miles for about \$1.5 billion. It has 16 stations, none of which are at grade. They are under pressure to complete the project before the president's next campaign starts. Learning about their project was a good reminder that others have complexity and pressure in their projects too, and political leadership matters in these situations and ultimately drives these projects.

Mayor Frey noted that he is very much looking forward to working with everyone here. His administration wants to make a fresh start, and his policy director, Jaime Makepeace, is open to any correspondence.

Chair Tchourumoff agrees that leadership really matters across the region both politically and on the ground in the communities to bring these projects home. They are complicated and big but having a team like this to support the project is incredibly valuable.

Chair Tchourumoff adjourned the meeting at 2:18 pm.

**Next CMC Meeting: Thursday, March 8, 2018**  
**Hennepin County Rockford Road Library**  
**6401 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North**  
**Crystal, MN 55427**