



**METRO Blue Line Extension
Business Advisory Committee Meeting #4
August 4, 2015
Blue Line Project Office
5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200
Crystal, MN 55428
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

BAC Members: Randy Boushek, Ben Colglazier, Tim Geisler, Alison Pence, John Slama, Mark Steinhauser, Jeff Washburne, Denny Walsh, Stella Whitney-West, Jim White

Agency Staff and Guests: Dan Pfeiffer, David Davies, Jessica Laabs, Juan Rangel, Nick Landwer, Jim Toulouse, Paul Danielson, Alicia Vap, Janet Kennison, Erik Hansen, Jeff Geisler, Sophia Ginis, MarySue Abel

1. Welcome and Introductions

Denny Walsh is filling the role of committee chair.

2. Outreach Update: Community Open Houses

Wrapped up round of open houses:

July 27 – Crystal – one of the big issues was looking at the W. Broadway crossing

July 28 – Robbinsdale

July 29 – Minneapolis

Next week: Brooklyn Park on August 11, Golden Valley on August 12

Walsh: Were there any big issues, any surprises in Crystal or anywhere else?

Pfeiffer: No particular issues that stood out.

CAC meeting was held last night, and the CMC meeting will be held next week.

3. Olson Memorial Highway

Technical Issue #2: Olson Memorial Highway

Nick Landwer showed a diagram of how lanes are proposed to be configured. All crossings will be fit with a new signal system and pedestrian crossings. There would be three mid-block crossings in addition to signalized intersections.

Olson Memorial Highway is a MnDOT highway. There is concern about traffic speeds, poor condition of pedestrian crossings, lack of bike facilities, wide lanes, and is a reliever to I-394.

The current proposal includes 3 lanes in each direction, a reduction in posted speeds, accommodate 2-way cycle track, pedestrian connections and safety provisions, reduction in lane widths, introduction of lane shifts, and enhanced lighting. The roadway would continue to function as a principal arterial and reliever. Several drawings were shared to illustrate proposed signalized and mid-block crossings.

Recommendation:

- Advance design for 6-lane principal arterial
- Center running LRT
- 10' boulevards
- 6 sidewalk on south side
- 3 mid-block pedestrian crossings
- Accommodate for 12' cycle track and 6' sidewalk on north side
- Continue design coordination with MnDOT, Hennepin County, and Minneapolis

Technical Issue #3: Olson Memorial Highway crossing

Various views and perspectives were shown to illustrate the crossing and the relationship of LRT to freight rail.

Recommendation:

- Center running LRT
- Reconstruct westbound Olson Memorial Highway span
- Eastbound Olson Memorial Highway span remains in place
- Connect freight rail corridor north of Olson Memorial Highway bridge
- Continue design coordination with MnDOT, Hennepin County, and Minneapolis

4. Bass Lake Road Station

Alicia Vap shared that staff heard from residents during public meetings that this station should be looked at for a park and ride. There were also requests to take another look at traffic operations on Bass Lake Road.

Staff is considering a parcel on the east side of the freight tracks. A surface lot is proposed with about 170 spaces, and would require some property impacts and business relocations. This design was brought to the public meeting last week and was well-received.

Traffic on CSAH 81 and Bass Lake Road is functioning pretty well right now. In 2040 with or without LRT, traffic delays are not substantially increased.

Recommendation:

- Advance park and ride of 167 spaces
- Property acquisition and construction costs not included in DEIS cost estimate
- Keep the at-grade intersection at Bass Lake Road

5. Transmission Line

Jim Toulouse explained this issue. Xcel Energy has shared that it intends to own and maintain a transmission line in this corridor, and they need to be able to access transmission line structures for this purpose. If structures are not replaced at this time, Xcel also needs to retain its ability to replace structures in the future.

Staff has come up with 4 options to accommodate Xcel transmission lines:

- Remain in current location
- Move poles east of LRT tracks
- Move poles west of BNSF tracks
- Move poles between LRT tracks

BPO will continue to coordinate with Xcel and ensure that any improvements are covered in the FEIS and are compatible with BNSF freight rail improvements.

Colglazier: What kind of risks to transmission and distribution to residents?

Toulouse: Xcel feels that their infrastructure is designed to accommodate storms, and had no transmission line issues with the north Minneapolis tornado four years ago.

Colglazier: As a resident, he will watch this closely - he loses power for 24 hours a couple of times per year.

6. Systems Introduction

Jim Toulouse also showed examples from the Green Line of LRT infrastructure including Traction Power Substations (TPSS) signal bungalows, Overhead Contact System (OCS) poles and assembly, and rail signals (interlocking and bar); and described typical features.

White: Where would you cut that line if you had to move something that was taller than the OCS wires?

Toulouse: We've heard that CSAH 81 is a house-moving route, so we're looking to see what other systems have done in that situation. Still evaluating, but would look at options such as a removable section.

7. Municipal Consent Process Overview and Roadmap

Mary Sue Abel walked through the municipal consent process, which is unique to Minnesota. This process provides local jurisdictions review and approval of physical design component of preliminary design plans. The plans submitted for approval will show basic physical design components (locations, footprints, high-level concepts, etc.) and not extensive design detail.

The Project Office will submit plans to cities and Hennepin County to start the municipal consent process. Plans will also be made accessible to the public. A joint open house/public hearing will be held on the municipal consent plans at least 30 days after the plans are released. Cities are also

required to hold public hearings. Within 45 days of the joint open house/public hearing, the cities and the county will vote to approve plans.

If cities or county don't vote to approve the plans, there are steps outlined in statute, including a requirement that the jurisdiction provide what changes they would like to see in order to approve.

Pence: When does Golden Valley select station locations?

Abel: Recommendation was already made to study both stations. At the end of the year, when the whole scope package is presented to the CMC, staff will have a recommendation for what the package will look like (1 station or 2 stations in Golden Valley) and costs, and policymakers will decide.

Boushek: Does MC include a commitment to providing any municipal funding for the project?

Abel: No funding commitments, just an approval of the design through their community.

Boushek: Is there any municipal funding?

Abel: Not at this point. We'll have to see where we end up and if there are any gaps in funding that need to be covered. We don't anticipate this at this time – funding is coming from CTIB, HCRRA, Met Council, State, and FTA.

CMC recommendation on project scope will occur in November 2015. A joint public hearing would be in January, with local hearings in February/March. Municipal consent would be completed in March 2016. Next steps after municipal consent will be to further the design details.

Although the schedule shows publication of the FEIS/ROD in the 3rd quarter of 2016, the review process with FTA will start in February 2016, so this will be happening concurrently with municipal consent process.

8. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum

No comments.

9. Adjourn: Next scheduled BAC meeting: Tuesday, September 8.