



METRO Blue Line Extension
Joint Community and Business Advisory Committees
January 8, 2018
Blue Line Project Office
5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200
Crystal, MN 55428
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Meeting Summary

CAC Members: Justin Youngbluth, Catherine Fleming, Sten Pearson, Stefan Watkins, Vicki Moore, Giuseppe Marrari, Chris Berne, Tonja West-Hafner, Ken Rodgers, La Shella Sims

BAC Members: Matt Rentsch, Charlie Jacobson, Candace Oathout, Mark Steinhauser, Craig Gottschalk, Staci Horwitz

Agency Staff and Guests: Nick Landwer, Alicia Vap, David Davies, Andrew Gillett, Caroline Miller, Jennifer Jordan, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Sophia Ginis, Dan Pfeiffer, Rachel Dammel, Juan Rangel

1. Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of Meeting Summaries

September and December BAC minutes were approved with no edits.

December CAC minutes were approved with no edits.

3. Hennepin County Corridor Activities

Kerri Pearce Ruch and Andrew Gillett presented. The work Hennepin County is doing is “beyond the rails,” meaning it is outside the scope of what the LRT project will construct. They are focusing on land use planning and economic development around station areas and throughout the corridor.

In 2018, Bottineau Community Works will focus on work in the following categories: community engagement, housing and development, infrastructure planning, placemaking, small business and entrepreneur support, and tying theory to practice.

Bottineau Community Works is guided by a steering committee comprised of cities and organizations along the corridor. They also have a technical implementation committee and plan to continue interacting with the BAC and CAC. Other community partners include the Blue Line Coalition and the Health Equity Engagement Cohort. They also have a grant from the McKnight Foundation, which has its own coordination committee.

The following is a summary of each of the 2018 work categories:

- Community engagement
 - Recognizes corridor cities are in the lead as the land use authority

- Leverages existing partnerships with communities, cities, and stakeholders that reflect the corridor's diversity
- Utilizes the corridor's assets in government, organizations, businesses, programs, and people
- Continues to develop Hennepin County best practices in community engagement
- Housing and development
 - Work started in 2017
 - Creating a housing inventory and gap analysis
 - Housing inventory is available on Bottineau Community Works' website
 - Gap analysis will be available early this year
 - Commercial market feasibility site analysis
 - Transit oriented development (TOD) zoning districts
 - Corridor Development Initiative: site specific study
 - Working with LISC, it's a way to look at specific piece of land and come up with a potential future use with a number of stakeholders
- Infrastructure
 - Bike/ped demonstration projects
 - Have a list of about 20 projects, want to work with communities to identify the best ones
 - E.g., temporarily replaced a few on-street parking spaces with bike parking in Robbinsdale
 - Station area circulation and connectivity assessment
 - E.g., bus circulators to General Mills campus
 - Bicycle and pedestrian connections implementation plan
 - Shared mobility feasibility study
 - Shared mobility refers to anything other than automobiles
 - Wayfinding plan
 - Will follow bike/ped work; not yet well defined
- Placemaking
 - Idea is to generate excitement and celebrate spaces in advance of the opening of the LRT line
 - Building on best practices and lessons learned from Central Corridor
 - Working with cities to build connections between local businesses and artists and station areas
 - Still fleshing out specific activities but hope to start having events this spring and summer
- Small business and entrepreneur support
 - Again building off lessons learned from Central Corridor
 - Support a thriving local economic through targeted technical assistance and access resources

- Corridor communications and marketing activities/support
- Specific activities to be determined; planning is underway
- Goal is to engage businesses in the corridor and help them prepare for any impacts they might see from construction as well as help them think about how they can take advantage of LRT once it is open
- Tying theory to practice
 - Targeted at policy makers and city staff
 - Drawing on technical assistance and best practices from local and national experts
 - In July 2017 had half-day density workshop
 - October 2017 bus tours of metro area TOD
 - Planning multi-day Technical Assistance Panel in Q2 2018

Staci Horwitz asked why the focus is on suburban cities for some of the work. Andrew Gillett said that Minneapolis was not a party to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) TOD grant application so those funds will not be spent in Minneapolis and will instead focus on the other corridor cities. Alicia Vap added that Minneapolis has spent a lot of time planning in the corridor through other means and already has a TOD policy, for instance.

Ken Rodgers noted that bike and ped pilot projects are all over. There are no legal requirements to have bike paths, but there are legal requirements to have an accessible path of travel for people with disabilities. In his experience, little attention has been paid to where pedestrians have to cross bike paths, which creates a barrier. For the demonstration projects, he would like particular attention to be paid to locations where bike and ped paths cross to make sure they meet ADA requirements. Ken also asked if there can be some awareness provided to business owners regarding barriers to entering their facilities (i.e., ADA requirements). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recently issued guidance for pedestrians and bike path intersections, and he urged Hennepin County to look at that.

Candace Oathout said that in Crystal they will have six lanes of traffic plus LRT tracks that people will need to cross to get to the Bass Lake Road Station – this is the busiest intersection in Crystal. It is a congested area, and emergency vehicles can't always get through and get delayed. She thinks it is a bad location for a station, and noted that safety needs to be top priority.

La Shella Sims said that if Minneapolis is not party to the FTA TOD grant someone should be here to represent the work they are doing in the corridor. Kerri Pearce Ruch said they are part of the steering committee directing the work, they just won't receive any of the FTA funds. Chris Berne asked that a request be put into city staff to have someone attend a future CAC meeting.

Catherine Fleming asked if they were doing a commercial inventory or just a housing inventory. Kerri Pearce Ruch said that a commercial inventory is included in the commercial market feasibility and site analysis.

Sten Pearson asked what the goal of the housing inventory and gaps analysis was. Andrew Gillett replied that it is a data gathering exercise to see what housing is available and to provide that

information to cities. Hennepin County will not be making any policy with it, but it can inform city comprehensive plans.

Stefan Watkins asked if Hennepin County had explored options for getting people to General Mills or Honeywell from the LRT station. Andrew Gillett said the work has not yet started on the shared mobility analysis but that will be included in that work. Stefan asked if they would be pushing for businesses to help with funding. Andrew said they will explore a number of options, but they can't require businesses to contribute funding.

La Shella Sims noted that last month the CAC had talked about transportation from the station to the Courage Kenny Center. Has there been any talk at Hennepin County about facilitating movement at that location? Andrew Gillett said the shared mobility could specifically talk about that issue. Nick Landwer added that they do have a representative from Courage Kenny on the BAC but she wasn't able to be here tonight.

La Shella Sims asked if hard copies of the housing inventory could be provided at the next meeting.

Related to the housing topic, Chris Berne provided an update on property acquisition due to the West Broadway project. There are six houses on West Broadway that will be acquired as part of the roadway reconstruction. As of September, the County has started working with those homeowners on acquisition issues. He is happy they are making progress with those families who were stuck and not able to sell their homes.

4. Oak Grove Parkway Station Area Overview

Nick Landwer and Alicia Vap presented.

Station Area

There are 355 acres north of Hwy 610 where the City's master plan calls for corporate office, retail, housing, parks, trails, and LRT. The proposed infrastructure changes accommodating the master plan include:

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

In the area north of Hwy 610, proposed roadways included in the BLRT project (with County and City cost participation) include:

- West Broadway realigned from 610 to Rush Creek
- Oak Grove Parkway and 101st Ave combined and realigned
- Additional roads required to serve station area and OMF
 - Rhode Island Ave
 - 99th Ave N
 - Xylon Ave
 - Accommodations for future road network

Catherine Fleming asked how close this area is to the Target corporate campus. Nick Landwer said it is directly to the east within walking distance (about ½ mile). Catherine asked if there would also be a bus depot or if LRT and cars were the only options for Target employees. Alicia Vap said there will be bus service, but service planning occurs closer to the LRT opening date.

Future city street/interchange improvements will include a roadway grid that is accommodated by project and a new interchange at Hwy 169 and 101st Ave N.

LRT Design Elements

The OMF is a location to store vehicles and perform light maintenance. The design incorporates lots of greenery and tries to screen from roadway. The main entrance is on south side, and north side will have employee parking and deliveries. The building will be clad in gray and white precast panels; the white portion is the employee area.

La Shella Sims asked what permits would be required for the OMF site. Nick Landwer said they will have a stormwater permit that covers the whole project, including the OMF, and for the building itself they will have a building permit with the City. Alicia Vap said they will also have a permit for the HVAC system and other equipment through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Sophia Ginis added that because LRT is electric they don't have to worry about diesel fumes. Ken Rodgers said that the wheel trimming does emit a fine dust, and he imagines that particulate matter needs to be regulated.

Matt Rentsch said it looks like there is some sort of glazing on the building, and he would encourage making it bird safe since it is right next to parkland.

For the park and ride, next steps include:

- Finalize site plan of park and ride block
- Advance design of park and ride to 90%
- Continue to work with city, county, and internal stakeholders on park and ride exterior

The parking structure is located on west side of Rhode Island Ave to accommodate new development. The project will continue to work on pedestrian access as design advances.

Catherine Fleming asked if there would be any environmental initiatives for this site. Alicia Vap said Metro Transit is exploring having solar panels on the facility.

The station platform design is set, but the roof treatments, including color and materials, may change to complement the final park and ride exterior. Station access is via 99th Ave from the south or the sidewalk leading to Oak Grove Parkway on the north. The park and ride will provide access to the station and accommodate 850 vehicles for transit riders.

Future Development Opportunities

Jennifer Jordan with the City of Brooklyn Park presented.

Southeast of the station is the existing Target campus. The campus is planned to expand to the north and west. South of the Target campus and Oak Grove Parkway is envisioned to be a mixed-use area/commercial main street with four to five story buildings and high density housing. The City envisions the area west of the station area filling in with office uses more intense than typical in

suburban environment and higher density housing. They also set aside space on the west side of the development area for one or two corporate campuses. The area to the northwest is envisioned as a neighborhood.

The City did a regional stormwater plan for the area, which includes a green spine that would run through the office area as a path/park rather than being underground. They hope to tie the development together with green space and make it comfortable to walk.

On the park and ride block, they envision three buildings of higher density housing. The parking structure will be able to accommodate future access to private parking for housing rather than needing to build another parking ramp. The current plan has about 320 total residential units among the three buildings.

Alicia Vap noted that what is challenging for the project is to figure out what to build with the project, not knowing the timing of any development.

Vicki Moore said she would be concerned about hearing both the trains and the people walking to the park and ride in Building 2.

Candance Oathout asked how the air circulation and sunlight availability would be on the park and ride block. Jennifer Jordan said they hope to have outdoor amenities between the residential buildings and park and ride.

La Shella Sims asked who would maintain these buildings and the stations to make sure they continue to look nice. Alicia Vap said Metro Transit maintains the stations, OMF, and parking structure. Amenities beyond the stations will be maintained by the County and City.

Catherine Fleming asked what the rationale for Building 2 is. Jennifer Jordan said they wanted to maximize the site, make it pedestrian oriented, and emphasize that it is where people live, rather than just being focused on the cars in the park and ride. Commercial development is going to be focused on the main street spine, but there could be some commercial on the main level of Building 2. The idea is still conceptual – they do not have a contractual agreement with any developer at this point. Vicki Moore added that she can see Building 2 being viable for small businesses if they face the platform but not so much for residential because of the noise.

Craig Gottschalk asked for more explanation of the green space/plaza around the buildings. Jennifer Jordan said it will primarily be an access point for Metro Transit but they want it to be landscaped, and that will be worked out with the developer.

Tonja West-Hafner noted that one of the things Target wants in this area is more dense housing and TOD, similar to downtown. A developer will come in and figure out what they can do based on the vision of what Brooklyn Park wants.

Vicki Moore asked if any outside space for kids is planned. Jennifer Jordan said that is still being figured out. Tonja West-Hafner added that the planned park is directly north of this site and Oak Grove Park is connected by a trail.

Craig Gottschalk asked if there had been considerations of hazardous materials and accidental spills at the OMF and how it might impact the park and the residential development. Nick Landwer said there are not lots of hazardous materials since it is a light maintenance facility, mostly cleaning supplies and some dust that is contained in the building from the wheel truing. Alicia Vap added that they have had a lot of coordination with the parks department on the OMF site, and they are planning to accommodate park programming and parking accordingly.

5. Section 106 Draft Interpretive Plan Overview

Caroline Miller presented.

Two historic resources will have adverse impacts from the BLRT project and require mitigation:

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

Mitigation will be through interpretive media, including graphic panels and integrated interpretive elements.

The process and timeline to develop the interpretive plan included:

- Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in 2016
- Interpretive concept plan (August 2016 to March 2017)
- Draft interpretive plan submitted to FTA Dec 2017 (April 2017 to January 2018)
- Final interpretive plan (January 2018 to May 2018)

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
 - 63rd Avenue Station
- For the Grand Rounds Historic District:
 - Plymouth Avenue Station
 - Golden Valley Road Station

The framework for the draft interpretive plan includes:

- Help visitors understand the historic resources
- Content considerate of all potential visitors and diverse ridership demographics
- Accessible to multiple learning styles
- Encourage visitors to feel like part of a larger community
- Provide engaging and relevant experiences

Themes for each resource include:

- Osseo Branch
 - Development of railroad
 - Technological advancements in rail
 - Development of towns
 - Old transportation corridor
 - Minnesota agricultural industry
- Grand Rounds Historic District
 - Wirth's park design contributions to the Minneapolis community
 - Significance of district
 - Eras of development
 - Wirth's legacy

Ken Rodgers asked what the plan is for making the content accessible by everyone. Caroline Miller said the current plan is to include the information on a website. Ken said he doesn't believe that meets accessibility guidelines – it needs to be fully accessible on site. Catherine Fleming said they should have options in Braille or the ability to pick different languages.

Mark Steinhauer said the designs are hard to read and there are too many words on the graphic panels. Caroline Miller said they have been working with the National Association of Interpretive Planners to design the panels and they do follow accessibility guidelines.

Candace Oathout said these flat panels will immediately be covered with graffiti. Alicia Vap said Metro Transit has a lot of experience with graffiti and will make sure what is planned can be taken care of.

Sophia Ginis noted that while there is a lot of text on the panels, they need to balance the design with the need to have enough information to interpret the resource. The panels are designed to give people an option to just look at the photos/graphics or to stay longer and read the text.

The integrated elements from the draft interpretive plan highlight the interpretive message, complement the graphic panels, and include a quote or meaningful statement. For example, there will be seat bench at the Golden Valley Station that says, "We must never forget that parks are intended for the masses and not the classes." Integrated elements related to the Grand Rounds Historic District will be located at the Plymouth Avenue and Golden Valley Road Stations, and integrated elements related to the Osseo Branch will be located at the Robbinsdale, Bass Lake Road, and 63rd Avenue Stations.

Next steps in the Section 106 process include:

- Section 106 consulting party review of the draft interpretive plan
- Prepare the final interpretive plan
- Final graphic panel content and integrated elements incorporated into 100% design plans

La Shella Sims noted that we need to make sure we don't take accessibility and inclusion lightly.

6. Adjourn

The CMC meeting is currently scheduled for January 18th but may be canceled due to conflicts and instead meet in February. If that happens, the February BAC and CAC meetings may be canceled.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm. The next CAC meeting is currently scheduled for February 5, 2018, and the next BAC meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2018.