



METRO Blue Line Extension Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Blue Line Project Office
6465 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members: Ian Alexander, John Barobs, KB Brown, Dan Doerrler, John Hacker, Jamar Smith, Jamez Staples, Dr. Tara Watson.

Agency Staff and Guests: Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Cathy Gold, Nick Landwer, Koehl Simmons, Kjerstin Yager, Jer Yang

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

The meeting was called to order and started at 8:13 a.m.

Dr. Tara Watson made a motion to approve agenda with the addition of last month's meeting minutes. Dan Doerrler seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

2. Upcoming Meetings and Attendance

Nkongo Cigolo shared that there are a couple of upcoming open houses, and an open house was held in Brooklyn Park last week. He stated that the project team will be hosting 2 meetings for the Minneapolis design elements.

3. Project Updates

Nick Landwer gave the project update, explained the project schedule, and where we are at right now in the project. Nick explained project goals, the outreach and engagement plan, and the 2023 work plan.

Nkongo Cigolo gave the engagement update, he explained that the project team is available and willing to explore new engagement methods. Dr. Tara Watson stated she knows there is a concern about whether community voices are being heard. She asked if there is a way to show community members that their voices are being heard. Nkongo proposed creating a tracker where we can keep a list of things we are hearing from the community and addressing these comments.

KB Brown stated that at these meetings there are a lot of questions being asked but these questions are not being answered. Nick Landwer stated that the project team is creating a tracker of community concerns. Tara asked if there can be a platform where the project team can address the community concerns in a realistic



way. Nick stated that what the project team needs to do is categorize comments by common themes and then reply to those common themes.

KB Brown stated that not dealing with small businesses, dealing with microbusinesses at this time of year, these businesses are doing strategic planning. These businesses cannot do strategic planning because they do not know what the next 2-3 years look like. Tara stated that grants have been put on hold along West Broadway because they do not know if these businesses will be impacted by the project. Nick stated the project team is always available for one-on-one meetings with specific property owners to discuss impacts. Nick stated it is a good point KB made that planning is difficult when business owners do not know what their impacts are.

KB said telling business owners to wait until July or August to know their impacts is irresponsible because that is several months. KB stated that there are several businesses looking to move outside of the city or state for more stability. Nkongo Cigolo said that the two Minneapolis meetings will be used to understand impacts and benefits of the alignments along West Broadway.

KB stated that a lot of the business owners he spoke with about the meeting at the Capri theater felt that they were not given answers to questions or an ability to provide feedback, they were just told things. Nick responded that this meeting was meant to be a workshop to gather community information and the project team feels they received a lot of good information from that meeting, but the project team is open to ideas that make residents feel heard.

Dan Doerrer said he assumes there will be a similar thing in Robbinsdale and Nick confirmed there will be. Jamar Smith asked something tangible for the public to look at to show how their voices are being heard. KB stated the West Broadway Business Coalition should be taken off the community cohort list. Cathy Gold stated they have a current contract.

4. Environmental Updates

Neha Damle gave the environmental update. Neha shared that Chapter 1 focuses on project purpose and need, Chapter 2 explains design alternatives, and Chapter 3 will focus on analysis of several topics. John Hacker asked if social impacts were part of the environmental impacts. Neha responded yes. Ian Alexander asked how the team is measuring the economic impact. Neha responded that the project team will be more specific when they get there.

Cathy Gold stated as the project goes on the project team will review the chapters with the BAC as they are written. Dan Doerrer asked Nick to clarify whether this is to make sure the public is curious and concerned about the same things the project team is curious and concerned about. KB stated they are passed curious.

5. Brooklyn Park Design Elements

Nick Landwer explained the design decisions document for Brooklyn Park. KB Brown asked if the project is doing the same thing for Minneapolis. Nick stated the project team will be creating a similar document for each city. John asked if this is available. Nick responded the project team can send a draft out to everyone on the BAC. All of the reconstruction of West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park will be a part of the project. John asked if that includes the entire 93rd Avenue re-do. Nick responded yes.



KB asked if the irrelevant information can be taken out of the information to the public, such as the funding information. KB stated the public only needs to know what the stops are, where the alignment is, and impacts to businesses. Jamar agreed with KB, stating that all this information is the “teacher workbook” and the public only needs the “student workbook”.

Nkongo Cigolo gave a summary of feedback that was received from the January 30th Brooklyn Park open house. He said the project team can organize tours of existing LRT infrastructure. John stated he did a tour of the SWLRT at some time and while we can look at the alignment on maps, it is very different on the ground. He stated he thinks it would be a good idea to do a tour. KB asked if MnDOT was aware of the CMC and asked if MnDOT knows they will be removing the newly built bridge. Cathy Gold stated MnDOT is on the CMC and that the bridge shown is not in the location of the newly built bridge.

Nick went over next steps, Dr. Tara Watson asked for direct financial impacts including potential assessments and tax increases for the project. Nick stated that there will be no assessments, it is federal funding if we do not take it, it will go somewhere else.

KB asked if right-of-way can be determined at 30% design. Nick said that it can. KB asked if 30% design could be called something else because 30% sounds risky for business owners.

6. Anti-Displacement Update

Cathy Gold went over the anti-displacement timeline. KB Brown stated that the biggest issue in North Minneapolis is the lack of information. He stated right now, the project team is asking people to make decisions based on the lowest amount of information. Nick Landwer stated they want to give accurate information and they will give whatever information they can. John stated it sounds like KB wants a 100% design and that just is not realistic right now. KB stated he doesn’t need to know 100% design, business owners just want to know what the impacts to their properties will be. KB stated the engineering work should not continue until the anti-displacement work is complete.

7. Discussion and Members Feedback

8. Next Meeting:

March 7, 2023

9. Adjourn

Dr. Tara Watson adjourned the meeting at 9:37 a.m.