

## Metropolitan Council

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Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee  
Wednesday, October 4, 10:00 a.m., St. Louis Park City Hall

Members/Alternates Present:	Chair Charlie Zelle Dr. Tyrone Carter James Hovland	Robert Lilligren Nick Thompson Brad Wiersum	Nat Gorham (Alt) Lisa Toomey (Alt)
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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Zelle called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Introductions were made. Eden Prairie Council Member Lisa Toomey will be the new alternate for the City of Eden Prairie.

Chair Zelle provided an update on funding. The Metropolitan Council approved a resolution expressing the Met Council's commitment to a funding framework for the Green Line Extension, whereas the Council will be responsible for 45% for the capital funding, up to \$150M additional funding and Hennepin County will be responsible for 55% of the capital funding, up to \$190M. Any costs beyond these amounts would be split 50/50 between the Council and Hennepin County, with the Council also funding startup costs. We are pleased to have this in place and have shared this news with FTA. Chair Zelle also reported that the 2023 legislature authorized a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -cent sales tax for metropolitan transit starting October 1.

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Zelle presented the August 2, 2023, Corridor Management Committee minutes. Council Member Lilligren made a motion to approve the minutes, Mayor Hovland seconded the motion. Following a vote, the minutes were approved.

### 3. PROJECT UPDATE

Jim Alexander, Green Line Extension Project Director reported on the project schedule and cost. Mr. Alexander reported the risk workshop with FTA will take place later this fall, that outcome of which will establish a revised budget.

Mr. Alexander reported that we continue final negotiations with the Civil contractor, LMJV on issues raised related to the settlement agreement. With the Systems contractor, APJV, there has been approval to issue a part one change order for \$20M for the extension of time required due to the delays to Civil construction. This is an initial step in resolving costs associated with the extension of time. Staff continue to work to address delays associated with the secant wall construction in 2022 and 2023 with both contractors.

Mr. Alexander reported that currently there are 70 of the 87 Minnesota counties that have workers on our project.

Trails. Mr. Alexander reported that the South Cedar Lake Trail is open from Beltline Boulevard to Blake Road. The trail from Beltline Boulevard to France Avenue has been paved but not yet fenced so is not yet open for public use. In the Opus area, the trail system is officially opened with a few punch list items remaining. Kenilworth trail is projected to be opened in 2025, along with the Cedar Lake Trail in Minneapolis.

Mr. Alexander shared some photos of the construction. The Civil contractor is finalizing stations on the west end of the project. The Kenilworth tunnel work was shown. On the east heading of the tunnel, the contractor has completed structure work below the groundwater. Overall, tunnel structure for 12 of the 30 working segments are now complete. The work in the tunnel area will slow down in the winter, but we are still looking at completion of the tunnel work in 2025.

Cedar Lake Parkway is now open, with the tunnel in place underneath the roadway. The Cedar Lake

Channel also opened in August, along with completion of the Works Progress Administration walls that line portions of the Channel.

The vertical circulation work near the Bryn Mawr and Basset Creek Valley stations was shown. For the work on the Glenwood Avenue Bridges, we are coordinating our remaining work with Hennepin County, who also has work in this area.

Mr. Alexander reported that staff continue to plan for testing once the Systems work is completed. Testing will initially begin at SouthWest Station to just east of Beltline Station with the second phase from the main operating line to just west of Bryn Mawr Station. It will help the schedule to test these areas ahead of time while work continues on the Kenilworth LRT tunnel.

#### Systems.

Mr. Alexander reported that our Systems contractor, Alridge Parsons Joint Venture (APJV), continues their work primarily on the west end of the project. They are installing poles and wiring for the overhead catenary system, along with Traction Power Substations (TPSS). To date, seven of the nineteen TPSSs have been installed. We are looking to get number eight installed near Opus Station later this month. Photos of the Systems work were shown.

Public Outreach. David Davies, Public Involvement Manager, provided an update on public involvement. So far in 2023, there have been 180 meetings and outreach events held. The weekly update continues to be sent and has a list of over 20,000 subscribers. This update will change to bi-weekly starting in the fall, as there will be fewer construction impacts in the winter. In 2024, we will communicate more on what to expect as the line opens.

Mr. Davies reported we held 15 public walking tours this year, which were organized with city partners. Great feedback was received from community members on these tours. We will continue outreach in the winter and will come out to talk with communities as they request. Chair Zelle reported that our outreach team is doing a great job, and the community and residents really appreciated the tours offered.

#### **4. DBE/WORKFORCE UPDATE**

Jon Tao from the Met Council's Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity reviewed and shared the DBE achievement numbers. Mr. Tao went over DBE participation since July 31, 2023, on the Civil and System contracts. We are still exceeding the goals in these areas. Civil is near 80% complete; and staff continue to work with the contractor, including site visits. DBE participation is very healthy on this project, which is a good sign to have now rather than at the end of the project, as it is hard to catch up with DBE numbers at the end.

DBE contracts were shown as disaggregated. POC women participation is at approximately \$5 million, which is less than half percent of the overall project. Part of the challenge is with low bid contracts and also the DBE program doesn't differentiate between POC women, non POC women and minorities. It just shows that the company is DBE. The prime contractor is in charge of who gets to be on their DBE team. For future contracts there is opportunity to change this.

Mayor Hovland asked if there are ideas on how either the USDOT or FTA can improve the DBE program, especially getting more DBE participation and training for DBEs. Mr. Tao responded that in the past, Met Council and State have created different ways to develop this area. FTA has recommended having prime contractors mentor smaller DBE firms to help them develop into their field of work. This is being done and has been helpful. We also encourage this training with our partners in the metro area that have DBE programs, as we want to build out support for these businesses as they grow. Another program is Hennepin County's Elevate program, which was developed to help small businesses. Met Council also has an upcoming contract for a consultant firm to provide training and help coach small businesses. These are some of the ways we are trying to help small businesses in the DBE program.

Council Member Lilligren said at the policy level, Met Council is very interested in responding and helping the DBE program. We work with several internal departments such as HR, Procurement, and OEEO on strategies and ways for expanding these strategies Jon mentioned for moving the numbers.

Tyler Bishop, MN Department of Human Rights provided an update on the workforce numbers. Mr. Bishop also is the co-chair for the DBE/Workforce committee. For the Civil contract, the July numbers were close to 66,000 hours. For the month of July, 6.72% of these numbers were completed by women. The goal for women is 20%. For the POC in July, it was at 23.96%, compared with the goal of 32%. This is about what we have been seeing throughout the length of the project. Since the Systems work is just ramping up, the numbers don't have much to compare to yet. A breakdown of the Systems participation was shown.

Chair Zelle said for the workforce we are behind our goal, but asked how this project compares with other large projects in our area, such as MnDOT projects? Mr. Bishop said this project is on par with the other large projects in the area. Numbers won't move as the project gets closer to completion, as opportunities for work are much smaller as work gets completed. The goals and expectations of contractors remain the same, and we still need to uphold the goals, even if they come up short. With LMJV having only about 20% of their work remaining, this is a big project and there is still opportunity to increase participation. There are a lot of items that have come out of the project that can be extremely valuable when brought to other projects, such as the Blue Line Extension. Chair Zelle mentioned it is a great idea to use as "lessons learned" for other projects.

Nick Thompson said that since we are about three years from construction on the Blue Line Extension project, what are some things we should be doing in 2024 to help improve the numbers and meet the goals. Mr. Bishop responded that the best thing would be to identify the top three trades needed - will it mirror SWLRT or be different? It's best to find what you need in advance so you can help recruit and help them get certified.

Council Member Carter asked what our long-term strategy is to reduce some of the barriers, such as strategies to find workers from other states to come in. Mr. Bishop said recruitment strategy really falls on the contractors. MDHR does ask for good faith efforts from them on how they increase their numbers for women and POC, but for the execution of each activity it relies on each contractor to do. We do see what has been effective and not in the past and can share that with the contractors. Each contractor has to answer to their workers and retainage of the workers.

Mayor Hovland said that through his experience, he has learned that it is really hard for some of these smaller DBE companies to get going. A lot of this is due to the pricing these smaller companies have to use when bidding with general contractors, which is high compared to the larger companies. There isn't a safety net for these small DBE companies. Should be some kind of guarantee if they are able to do the work.

Mayor Wiersum said that DBEs tend to be small businesses, and they have a higher hill to climb. It's hard to be low price bidder when you don't have the scale. Perhaps to secure DBE goals, one way would be to look at things other than a low bid environment.

Council Member Lilligren said Met Council has been looking at things like unbundling contracts, so the scale isn't so large. At the local level - counties, Met Council, cities, we may control some tools to build up the level of applicants for fulfilling our DBE goals.

Council Member Carter mentioned the idea of subcontracting a piece of the work. Perhaps give contractors an incentive to do this. Since the pandemic, a lot of small businesses have not made it. We don't want our goals going down because we haven't been aggressive enough to get the DBE firms.

Jon Tao mentioned Hennepin County is doing best value contracting, adding on small business participation as a factor in consideration. Small business participation increased by 20% after they implemented this

method. This is a positive practice to have. In regards to the workforce, Met Council has been looking at how recruitment across the country is being done, along with looking at areas of disparities. If the Met Council does include local hiring preferences, we can support moving towards this goal. The outcome has the potential of carrying on into future projects as well.

Nick Thompson mentioned that the Met Council now has the authority to not just do low bid but also value bid. Also, the new sales tax funding the Council is on the cusp of new opportunities that we did not have with the beginning of Green Line Extension.

Mayor Wiersum and Chair Zelle commented on their recent participation in the Intercity leadership visit to Philadelphia. The roundtable sessions were very good, including one on how Philadelphia is working on gun violence in their city and also one on poverty issues and homelessness on transit.

Chair Zelle mentioned that the city of Baltimore representatives are coming to the Twin Cities soon for a visit. Sam O'Connell will provide the agenda for this visit to Mayor Hovland and Mayor Wiersum.

## **5. ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 6.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary