



METRO Blue Line Extension
Joint Community and Businesses Advisory Committees Meeting
August 8, 2016
Crystal Community Center
4800 Douglas Drive North
Crystal, MN 55428
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Meeting Summary

CAC Members: George Selman, Steve Schmidt, Rich Baker, Justin Youngbluth, Giuseppe Marrari, Kate Catron, Ken Rogers, Chris Berne, LaShella Sims

BAC Members: Jim White, Mark Steinhauser, Brad Clift

Agency Staff and Guests: Sam O’Connell, Shelley Miller, Sophia Ginis, Andrea Arnoldi, Paul Schroedl, David Davies, Mary Norton, Erika Shephard, Tom Harrington, Rachel Dammel, Dan Pfeiffer, Alicia Vap, Daniela Lorenz, Scott Reed, Greg Mathis

1. Approval of July 2016 Meeting Minutes

There were no comments on either the BAC or CAC July meeting minutes.

2. Meeting Overview and Outcomes

The purpose of tonight’s meeting is to solicit the thoughts of the BAC and CAC on station design.

Alicia Vap opened, stating that the project office wants information from the committees to help inform the design as they start focusing on the details of what makes the stations unique.

3. Station Design Consistency

Shelley Miller presented. The station area planning process looked at the larger area around the stations; tonight we will zoom in and look at what is within the construction limits and on the platform.

Station site elements include pedestrian access, bike facilities, wayfinding, landscape, stormwater, bus facilities, passenger drop-off, and park-and-rides.

The station platform includes ticket vending/validation, transit information, passenger amenities, and passenger safety elements.

Items on existing station platforms include:

- Real time departure information
- Security cameras
- Destination information
- Emergency phone

- Platform tactile edge
- Station name
- Platform shelter
- Benches
- Shelter roof
- Railings
- Rider alert sign
- Center platform station access
- Prohibited behavior sign
- Information kiosk
- Waste receptacle
- Card validators
- Lighting
- Speakers
- Heaters
- Ticket vending machine

All stations on the Blue Line Extension will have center platforms.

4. How Context and Character Informs Design

Tom Harrington presented on how the design team will work to incorporate information that is shared at the CAC/BAC meeting into the station design. A previous example of how this was done in a planning process was the design of the entrance to MSP airport. At MSP airport, native plantings and walls that resemble limestone/rock outcroppings were used to represent features that are unique to Minnesota.

LaShella Sims asked how this was different from the previous conversations with the communities. Tom Harrington said that the meetings before were about the area within ½ mile of the stations, and this exercise is focusing on what the station itself might look or feel like. Sophia Ginis added that the designers have pulled out things they heard at the station area planning meetings, and tonight they are asking the community representatives to build on that previous input.

Rich Baker said people keep using the word place, but what is the place they are referring to? Is it just what's within the project limits? Tom Harrington said that place does go beyond the platform, but the comments they receive tonight will influence the design within the construction limits.

Ken Rogers said on Central Corridor it was a complete rebuild from building line to building line and asked if that was the case for this project. Shelley Miller said it depends on where in the corridor, but usually what is within the right-of-way will be rebuilt.

Paul Schroedl said that Metro Transit has a number of needs that require some station platform elements to be a certain way, but they've come up with a list of items with potential variability. The elements that may vary at each station are:

- Soffit and fascia treatments
- Glass panel sizes

- Column paint color
- Concrete platform surface treatment

These features can vary while still meeting all the other goals and requirements of Metro Transit.

Alicia Vap discussed the design on the other LRT lines. On the existing Blue Line, they worked with a different artist on each station design so each has a very different feel and look. While the stations uniquely reflect each community they are in, they learned that a more consistent platform layout would work better, both from a customer experience perspective and a maintenance perspective. On the Green Line, the stations are more consistent from the canopy down but have a unique look and feel due to the different colors and treatments used. One lesson learned from the existing Green Line is that more seating is needed at stations. On Southwest LRT, from the canopy down things on the platform will be located consistently (similar to Green Line) but will the canopy look and feel, treatments, and colors will vary.

Section 106 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their “undertakings” on historic properties. Two historic districts, the Osseo Branch Line/Great Northern Railway Historic District (BNSF corridor) and the Grand Rounds Historic District (Theodore Wirth segment), contain stations that will include interpretive elements:

- 63rd Ave (Osseo Branch)
- Bass Lake Rd (Osseo Branch)
- Robbinsdale (Osseo Branch)
- Golden Valley Rd (Osseo Branch and Grand Rounds)
- Plymouth Ave (Osseo Branch and Grand Rounds)

Interpretive elements are designed to tell a story and for the community to discover the meaning and significance associated with the historic resources.

Alicia Vap added that public art is no longer an eligible expense for federal funding, but if other funds are available Metro Transit would be happy to work with funders on incorporating public art. Chris Berne asked if public art was included in the cost estimate. Alicia Vap said it was not.

The committee members separated into groups by community and the design team asked everyone to describe their community.

5. Community Context and Facilitated Design Conversation

A spokesperson from each breakout group shared key themes and discussion items.

Minneapolis/Golden Valley

Giuseppe Marrari presented.

- Van White Station
 - First station out of downtown – lots of activity and a connection between downtown and the community
 - Alive/active
 - Library, education centers, schools
 - Incorporate and respect community uses

- Transition station from downtown to community
- Penn Ave Station
 - Connection point – BRT to SWLRT and BLRT
 - Lots of activity
 - Urban/city environment
 - Inviting – want people to get off the train and explore
 - Green space
 - Calming (should be slowing down from Hwy 55 by then)
- Plymouth Ave Station
 - Near historic district and in park
 - Want people to see the park and other destinations and feel invited to stop
 - Framed view of park
 - Will have an elevator – want it to be safe and visible but respect the area it is in
 - Rustic feel, blend in with park and historic district
 - Park is a hidden jewel – want people to explore
- Golden Valley Road Station
 - Want to be highly visible but blend in with the park
 - Want people to explore Theodore Wirth Park and Sochaki Park
 - Inviting access to parks
 - Properly serve people in the station area

Crystal/Robbinsdale

Kate Catron presented.

- 63rd Ave Station
 - Not much going on currently – pass-through area, car-oriented, sad
 - Would love if it were a place for gathering
- Bass Lake Road Station
 - Becker Park – can't see it from road so people often don't know it is there, but could be a great connector for the station
 - Potential for shops/main street
 - Industrial feel to design
 - Seeking identity
- Robbinsdale Station
 - Historic feel
 - Connecting stop to downtown – provide an inviting corridor into town
 - Incorporate Robbinsdale city logo
 - Small, quaint, authentic feeling
 - Integrate with brick of main street, rather than lighter brick/art deco style of adjacent building

Brooklyn Park

Chris Berne presented.

- Oak Grove Station
 - It's a clean slate
 - Entrance point to city of Brooklyn Park for people coming from the north – provide wayfinding – where do we go from here?
 - Development
 - Community history – what Brooklyn Park was and has become
- 93rd Ave Station
 - Employment destination – key element
 - Big buildings and footprints – lots of space between places
 - Cultural aspects – diversity in community
- 85th Ave Station
 - Education center – college and library
 - Entrance to the future for young people – develop opportunities
 - Corridor/spine/thoroughfare/major pathway for city of Brooklyn Park
- Brooklyn Blvd Station
 - Retail
 - Existing transit
 - History of area – what was there before and what is there now – transition zone for city – crossroads
 - Diversity of community

6. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Sam O'Connell thanked the committee members for their input. The design team will go through the feedback and look for common themes and incorporate them into their design. Draft designs will be shared with the BAC and CAC in the next couple of months, and then in October they will be shared with the general public at open houses.

Chris Berne said he wanted to mention the decision of the CMC to no longer include the pedestrian bridge in Crystal. There was a lot of disappointment expressed by the mayor of Crystal and he seemed to feel that decision came out of the blue. Justin Youngbluth added that the City would like someone from the project management team to sit down and discuss how that decision was made. He personally understands why it was taken out due to cost and maintenance issues but thinks it would be good for those who were personally involved to discuss the process. Chris Berne said his personal opinion was that it was a stealth action only brought up at that meeting. He felt that the CAC thought the direction would be that the bridge was included. With the municipal consent process, the bridge was the City's main concern, and they were led to believe something that didn't pan out. Chris Berne believes the way that decision was made was poorly done, but he doesn't have any fault with the project office and understands it came down to financial concerns. Justin

Youngbluth agreed and said the City would appreciate knowing more about why the decision went that way and what is next.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm.

CAC/BAC: Community Context and Facilitated Design Conversation Minneapolis and Golden Valley

August 8, 2016

Community Context Summaries:

Observations made by both the group and BPO are displayed in red. Observations that rose to the top are underlined.

Van White

- Open/visible
- Lots of traffic
- Visible institutions
 - o School/education
- Historic library
- Lots of people moving in region
- Lots of foot traffic
- Many different types of people
- Safety important
 - o Ped safety
- Consider residential uses
- Bold/bright
 - o Not too bright
 - o Bold (not garish)
 - o Noticed
 - o Nice aesthetics
- Green/trees
- The corridor together
- Unique
 - o Close to Target Station
 - o Close to highway
 - o School
 - o Major housing developments
- Alive
- Active
- Transition connection(ness)
 - o Access station/transitional station
- People traveling too fast
- High density housing spot
 - o Bring them together
 - o Highway divides/opportunity to combine
- Historic area
 - o Cut through a neighborhood
- Bikes
- Reflect the community/people
- Connection to downtown
 - o Bridge the “no man’s land”
- Destination – future and current
- Transition downtown to community

Penn Avenue

- More homes
 - o Density
 - o More dense (negative connotation)
- Historic
 - o Floyd
- Connecting station
 - o C Line, SWLRT, etc.
- Busy
 - o Not as busy as Van White
- Transition from neighborhood to downtown
- No parking – all transit: bus, walk, bike
- Urban beauty
- “Neighborhood Station”
- Drop-off needs
- Green
 - o Trees, place to rest
- Gateway to what North has to offer
- Reflect beauty
- Be inviting
 - o Cozy
 - o Slow you down
 - o Bold
 - o Urban respite
- Transitioning
 - o Sense of arrival
- Calming
 - o Slow people down
 - o Highway to city stop to a neighborhood
- Connectivity
- Transit dependent: on foot
 - o More people that need this station

CAC/BAC: Community Context and Facilitated Design Conversation Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park

August 8, 2016

Community Context Summaries:

Observations made by both the group and BPO are displayed in red. Observations that rose to the top are underlined.

63rd Avenue

- Pierre Bottineau
- Wells Fargo
- Park & Ride (transit need)
- **Pass-through**
- Sad
- **Car-oriented**
- Can't see from road
- Need for gathering places (connections)
- Businesses
- Shopping
- Past: restaurants
- Residential
- Spread-out
- East Side: opportunities for development

Bass Lake Road

- Access/shopping
- Retail
- Becker Park
 - o Needs to be visible
- Concerns re: ped access across 81 (ped bridge)
- Foot traffic
- 50 mph
- BLR shops have potential
 - o "Old School"
 - o **Main Street**
- Mixed use
- Industrial feel
 - o Steel, glass
- Cell tower
- Some greenery
- Connection to park
- Park & ride
- Crystal airport
- Crystal Frolics
- Seeking identity?

Robbinsdale Station

- Downtown
- Inspiration for station
 - o Brick
 - o Stucco
- **Historic**
- Linear
- Grid-like structure
- Potential **connections** to commercial
- 41 ½ promenade
- Wicked Wort
- Pedestrian environment
- Attractive
- Wayfinding
- Walkways/lighting
- Hidden
- Older, **small, downtown feel**
- Neighborhood proximity to station
 - o Screening
- Hubbard Transit
 - o Art Deco
- **Water tower** – symbol
- **Restaurants**
- Park & Ride 2/ retail wrap
 - o Benefit for business
- **Main St** – W Broadway
- 2nd Main St—Hubbard
- **Birdtown**
 - o Distinctive city logo
 - o Brand retention
- Business backsides face station
- Plaza
- Parking needs?
- Bus connections
- Garage = “roadblock”
- Green space?
- Charming
- Authentic
- **Quaint**

Plymouth Avenue

- Open views to park
 - o Framed view
- Recreation
- Color should be darker
 - o Don't draw attention to station
 - o Don't be dark & gloomy
- Safety/lighting
 - o Accessible
- Write up on neighborhood/park
 - o As interpretive signage
- Hidden jewel
- Blending
- Park
- Wild
- Isolated (natural)
- Color:
 - o Natural
 - o Prairie
 - o Bassett Creek
 - o Rustic
- "The Park's Station"
- Recreating year-round
- Historic

Golden Valley Road

- "Up lights"
 - o Let people know the station is below
 - o Visible
 - o Safely lit/attractively
- Wayfinding
- Feel: in nature
- Not well connected to park
- Opposite of bright/visible
- Destination to many parks
- Access to parks and trails/Grand Rounds
- Comfortable
- Subtle
 - o Station should be outward looking
- Pass through
- Inviting (from afar)
- Access from multiple neighborhoods
 - o Connecting neighborhood to other places
- Origin (coming home)
- Hiking/biking/walking
- Place to discover
- Invisible (currently)
 - o Not a place to gather/stay
- Create a profile

CAC/BAC: Community Context and Facilitated Design Conversation Brooklyn Park

August 8, 2016

Community Context Summaries:

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Brooklyn Boulevard

- Retail
- Transit dependent
- Diverse
- Hide & Ride
- Auto business
- Drive In
- Change
- Crossover (old to new)
- Crossroads

85th Avenue

- Education
- Plaza/area of interest (NE corner)
- Vibrant/active
- Spine (85th)
- Change people's lives
- Launch
- Starting point
- Entrance to the future
- Conflict Hide & Ride
- W Broadway/Roadway
- Separation of W Broadway from residential
 - o Fencing, railing, etc.
 - o Open
 - o Green space
 - o Corridor

93rd Avenue

- Flyover
- No personality
- Industrial
- Employment destination
- Connections needed
- Diversity
- Cultural aspect (Iberian church)
- Distance (far)
- Home/work
- Purposeful

Oak Grove Parkway

- Development
 - o Turkeys
- Field
- Park like
- Special events area
- Station to represent cultural communities
- City Center
- Commuter
- In and Out
- Park & Ride (Robbinsdale design, TOD)
- Urban design
- Wayfinding
 - o Ease of access to P&R
- Educational
 - o Community history
- Opportunity for history
 - o What is BP
- Entrance point