



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

CAC Members: Thomia Brown, Brett Buckner, Jason Greenberg, Andrew Gillet, Ellis Beck, Kathy Fraser, Jeff Guertin, Jonathan Hansen, Jericho Huggar, Mary Limbeck, Kenneth Rodgers,

Agency Staff and Guests: Chris Beckwith, Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Cathy Gold, Nick Landwer, Kyle Mianulli, Bojan Mistic, Joanna Ocasio-Maisonet, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Koehl Simmons, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Kaja Vang, Maxwell Wilson, Kjerstin Yager

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Jason Greenberg, began the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Nkongo Cigolo took attendance.

2. Adopt Meeting Minutes

Jason Greenberg made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from last month's meeting, Jonathan Hansen seconded the motion, the motion was approved.

3. Project Update

Nkongo Cigolo, Metro Transit, shared a brief update about the timeline to publish the SDEIS. Nick Landwer, Metro Transit, stated that the project team is hoping for a resolution in September for all the discussions held since February 2023. Jason stated it feels like the steps are dependent on each other and asked if the changes to the project schedule impacted the projected opening date of the project. Nick stated that we are in the environmental phase and the projected is still anticipated to open in 2028-2030, although some of the timeline pushbacks may have taken away some flexibility in the project schedule.

4. Minneapolis Design Update

Nick Landwer shared the project staff's route recommendation for Minneapolis. He stated that the project is recommending light rail tracks on 21st Avenue and improvements to West Broadway as part of the project. Thomia Brown asked where the Plymouth Avenue Station would be located, Nick briefly described the location, also stating they will get to this later in the presentation.

Nick began to walk through the different focus areas. Nick talked about how the Penn Avenue Station Area has always been considered a mobility hub, serving existing transit routes as well as destinations. Thomia asked if the station would impact the gas station at 26th and Penn, Nick stated that part of the decision for the location of the Penn Avenue station was to avoid property impacts. Ken Rodgers and Jason asked for more detail on where the station would be located. Nick elaborated on the location of the station.



Nkongo Cigolo shared that various meetings with businesses were held in the Penn Avenue area. Feedback heard was about parking concerns, resources for businesses during and after construction, safety and security, and the vision for West Broadway.

Nick shared that the project team has started to look at 21st and West Broadway as operating together. Nick shared a map of West Broadway and 21st Avenue connections; the team is looking at ways to better connect the neighborhood through bicycle connections, pedestrian connections, as well as existing transit. Nick also shared a list of potential infrastructure improvements to West Broadway. Jeff Guertin asked when the project team would know which improvements are being implemented. Nick stated that the West Broadway reconstruction is going to happen and there is no reason the project couldn't implement most of the improvements they have identified. They will continue to work with the City of Minneapolis and the public to get feedback. Brett Buckner asked when development will begin and asked for more information about public safety. Nick stated that that development is ongoing work with station area planning and the City of Minneapolis, he also stated that safety and security has been a priority of the Metropolitan Council and that work will continue. Kenneth asked if the 21st Avenue alignment had less property impacts than West Broadway, Nick confirmed this is the case as the project is working to limit displacement. Jonathan Hansen asked if 21st Avenue would be a one way. Nick stated that there would be no vehicle traffic on 21st Avenue. Jason thanked everyone for all the questions and feedback. Jason stated that the stations are far away from the bus line but close together. Nick stated this was a tradeoff for improving access to businesses and residents.

Nick shared information on the James Avenue station and Lyndale Avenue station. He listed some destinations near each of these stations. Nkongo shared the outcomes of some of the engagement that has been done surrounding 21st Avenue and West Broadway decision.

Nick shared that the project is looking at an extension of 21st Avenue to get across I-94 to Washington Avenue. Nick shared a plan to extend across I-94 to Washington Avenue. By building a new bridge across I-94, better pedestrian and bicycle connections can be made to get across I-94. He stated there would be a new intersection at the I-94 off ramp and 21st Avenue that can safely stop traffic and make pedestrian and bicycle connections and shared a rendering of this intersection.

Nick talked about how the Plymouth Station on Washington Avenue would be center running with at-grade operations, which operate well with the general traffic and shared a rendering of this. Nkongo shared that the project team held various in-person and virtual meetings held for the sub-option. The team talked to property and business owners and collected feedback from the online map and online survey. Nkongo shared that people liked the 10th Avenue option but had concerns about parking and safety/security.

Nick discussed the transitway along 10th Avenue. He talked about the stretch of 10th Avenue that has a narrow right-of-way, making it challenging to get the light rail through. Nick shared that one option to get through is to make a portion of 10th Avenue a transit mall. This option would accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, light rail, emergency vehicles, as well as additional landscaping. There would be no general traffic allowed on this portion. The project team would need to focus on access to the properties along here. Nick noted that there's a fire station on 7th Avenue and they deploy east on 10th Avenue and their preferred option would be the transit mall. Another option would be to have a one-way street going northbound.



5. Anti-Displacement Update

Cathy Gold, Hennepin County, shared statistics on visits to the project website and the number of downloads of the report. Cathy shared some feedback that was gathered through a survey. Cathy walked through the timeline, adding that they are wanting the anti-displacement work to align with the project's timeline. Cathy shared that they will be working toward a framework and having regular reports for the committees on the progress of policies and programs. A community engagement plan is also being developed. Cathy shared that the anti-displacement group is being transitioned into a community prosperity advisory committee, to provide conversations for their input. The first official meeting is targeted for August 29th, to understand what's going on in each of the governments along the corridor. Cathy highlighted artwork that has been done and will be used to amplify the work and demonstrate that they will be in the community. Jeff Guertin asked where funding for programs outside of the project will come from. Cathy stated that some of the programs are in place and listed various other funding sources.

6. Discussion and Members' Feedback

Nick Landwer explained the next CMC meeting is tomorrow and explained ways for CAC members to stay connected to the project. Jonathan Hansen asked if the group had any questions or comments. Jeff Guertin asked when there will be a price tag. Nick stated that the scope and budget will be set at municipal consent point sometime around next summer, the project will have local, state, and federal funding sources. Brett Buckner asked if there is money available for businesses now to help mitigate the impacts they are facing. Cathy stated this will be around the municipal consent timeframe. She stated private organizations will be key partners as well as local government.

Brett also asked about the decision around 21st Avenue and West Broadway. He stated that he is skeptical of the decision to run the LRT on 21st over West Broadway in relation to public safety and development. Jeff stated in his opinion, 21st Avenue brings more people in without impacting businesses and asked Brett what he perceives as the negatives of the 21st Avenue decision. Brett stated that 21st Avenue is taking the alley instead of the main street and he had concerns with public safety and stated that 21st Avenue has less development opportunity than West Broadway.

7. Next Meeting: September 6, 2023.

Nkongo Cigolo proposed to move the next meeting to September 13, 2023.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.