



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee Meeting

November 10, 2021

6:00 PM

WebEx

CAC Members: Adam Hutchens, Brett Buckner, Catherine Fleming, Jason Greenberg, Ken Rodgers, Scott Booher, Ellis Beck, PeggySue Imihy Bean

Agency Staff and Guests: Sophia Ginis, Sam O'Connell, Andrew Gillett, C Terrence Anderson, Cathy Gold, Joan Vanhala, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Kristine Stehly, Nick Landwer, Jim Voll, Trevor Roy, Sarah Abe, Jason Tintes, Amber Turnquest, Liz Morice

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, welcomed the group. Jason Greenberg, Committee Chair, began the meeting at 6:04 PM.

2. Adopt July 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes:

Jason Greenberg asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ken Rodgers made a motion to approve the minutes and Catherine Fleming seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

3. Update on Anti-Displacement Working Group

C Terrence Anderson, CURA, shared that they are beginning their work. They have been onboarding on the project. C Terrence is having coffee with members of the community. They are developing their research plan. He will be reaching out to more people as they prepare this. The next thing is the creation of the anti-displacement table; they want it to be representative of the corridor and include people at risk of displacement. They want to get to a 15–20-member table together. There will be broad communication about that application process. They are organizing for their research and engagement work.

Catherine Fleming, asked what the goal is for the table and if it doesn't already exist in another organization. What is the goal of this table versus other organizations such as the Blue Line Coalition and others? C Terrence shared that this table will be explicitly making policy recommendations regarding anti-displacement. Catherine shared that she would prefer to see community members in place of the representatives of formal groups.

4. Minneapolis Design Update

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, shared an overview of the November Workshops. He shared the timeline regarding the Draft Route Modification Report (December 2021) and the final report in March. Both will have review periods and will reflect community feedback.

Nick provided an overview of how the information is organized based on the two routes with sections 1-4 as West Broadway and 5-7 are the Lowry Route. Nick highlighted some changes to the route map which include simplifying the links near downtown and the option on 21st added to the West Broadway route. Catherine Fleming asked how these alternatives relate to station locations. Nick confirmed that the alternatives show different station locations and how that impacts opportunities and challenges for each area. Catherine asked how these affect the Cost Effectiveness Index. Nick said that this is early and going forward they will start to look at that as there is more design and environmental work.

Ken Rodgers asked if the visual tools that are being described in this presentation have been made accessible for people who are visually impaired. Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, said maps are the most difficult. The website has some features. Ken and Sophia discussed a small group meeting or other options for the visually impaired to provide feedback.

Nick reviewed the timeline and process for incorporating public feedback. He described some challenges with Section 7 including the potential for more building impacts as pedestrian crossings are added. Catherine Fleming asked about traffic and one-ways in this area. Catherine asked how the project team was taking the one-ways between Lyndale and Fremont into account into the particular design. Nick said case-by-case. Signals are going in now at Emerson and Fremont but with the BRT project. Smaller streets would have right out capability or right in. Nick said they would be looking at spacing to have adequate spacing. They would also be looking at pedestrian impacts. Can't go too far without pedestrian crossings. Nick shared that the designs are not showing a lot of pedestrian crossings now but those will come further in design. Nick pointed out on the traffic arrows on the drawings.

PeggySue Imihy Bean, asked what the hierarchy of decisions is for these alternatives. Nick shared that public input and property impacts are huge priorities. Nick showed an option that would have a station at Lyndale Avenue and has fewer impacts. Sophia Ginis underlined that the public input is the most important and they take it very seriously.

Jason Greenberg asked what type of buildings these would be and how the impacts would be communicated. Sophia shared they sent letters to property owners and tenants. They also door knocked the area. Catherine asked if the property owner or tenant would be the decision maker.

Sophia said that the Met Council and Hennepin County will decide. Catherine asked about station spacing. Nick described the balance between spacing and ridership. Jason asked what people have said so far. Sophia said they've had hundreds of conversations. It depends on where people are, and they will continue to have more.

Nick Landwer reviewed the options for Section 3 on West Broadway. Sophia shared that there are more options online. Catherine Fleming asked about the business's perspective of this. Sophia shared that a lot of businesses said they prefer the split option because they preserve vehicle traffic on West Broadway while still bringing light rail. Catherine commented that it looks like it has fewer building impacts. Adam Hutchens, asked about the station options. Adam asked if this brings the revitalization of West Broadway. Sophia said that it could be since the road may be redesigned. Adam asked about the strip mall that is at Dupont and how they feel about the station behind there. Adam commented that the Cub Foods would be a block further which would be a lot. PeggySue Imihy Bean asked what the feedback from the BAC has been. Nick said that they did the same presentation with them. There was not a strong opinion one way or the other. They were mostly processing this information. Sophia said that more information has created more questions. She said that people do not want us to take options of the table yet. PeggySue pointed out that there has been a lot of development along this area. Sam O'Connell, Metropolitan Council, said that on PublicCoordinate, a lot of messages are being left, and it is a good way to see how others are reacting to this.

Brett Buckner, asked if there has been some thought about widening Broadway on the north side (except at the Davis Center). There is some room to widen. Is that something that could be put on the table as well? This would be to increase the flow of traffic and room for the train. Brett asked because there could be some opportunity in that, to re-envision the area. Catherine Fleming, , asked if there is an option for traffic rerouted to 21st. She asked if it was split ownership between the County and City. Nick showed that option and confirmed that it is split ownership. Jason Greenberg, asked about why in some options the Walgreens is impacted. Nick said this depends on the left turn lane there. Sophia highlighted that the pink shows building impacts, but further design might refine that and prevent it. Jason Greenberg asked if Sophia could send the info about the workshops to the group. Nick answered Adam's question from the chat. Elevated is not completely off the table, but project partners and some stakeholders have minimized that option. Ken Rodgers said that any time there is a vertical circulation that is going to be a challenge for people with disabilities. Adam pointed out that there is elevated as an option at North Memorial and 21st, adds distance for riders. Sophia confirmed that they prefer not having elevated but there is a grade change in Robbinsdale that makes it necessary. Adam asked about Robbinsdale's position. Sophia said they are working toward solutions there. Catherine pointed out they are leveraging federal connections with Connect Blue Line Now. Jason said that at the last open house there were a lot of people. The City Council and city manager are asking a lot of questions. In Robbinsdale, there hasn't been a big outcry in support of elevated. There are more questions about pedestrian crossings and connectivity for elderly residents. Catherine said that if West Broadway is selected it seems like more business-focused versus Lowry is more resident-focused.

5. Project Evaluation Criteria

Sam O'Connell, Metropolitan Council, provided an overview of the report that describes the evaluation of the routes. She confirmed that this will be the focus of the December advisory committees. She said they will be seeking more comments on the draft report in December. There will be another review period in March after the final report.

6. Next Meeting: December 1, 2021

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, asked the group about moving the meeting to December 15th.

7. Adjourn

Jason Greenberg highlighted that the website has a lot of detailed information and reviewing that info will help the group form opinions. Catherine Fleming mentioned that there is new funding for reuniting communities impacted by freeway projects and would like to know if that could apply to this project. Jason Greenberg ended the meeting at 8:00 PM.