



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Blue Line Project Office

6465 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 600

St. Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members: John Barobs, KB Brown, Dan Doerrer, Jamar Smith, Dr. Tara Watson

Agency Staff and Guests: Chris Beckwith, Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Kelsey Fogt, Catherine Gold, Nick Landwer, Bojan Mistic, Emilee Roschen, Kaja Vang, Maxwell Wilson, Kjerstin Yager

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Co-chair Dr. Tara Watson called the meeting to order at 8:14 a.m.

2. Adopt Meeting Minutes

Co-chair Dr. Tara Watson asked for a motion to approve the minutes. KB Brown made a motion and Co-chair Dan Doerrer seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

3. Upcoming Meetings and Attendance

4. Project Update

Chris Beckwith, Metropolitan Council, provided the project update. Chris discussed changes to the calendar look ahead which included the FTA reviews and Municipal Consent. KB Brown asked about the significance of the colors. Chris responded the colors just represent each city. Chris asked if there were any upcoming anti-displacement meetings. Catherine Gold, Hennepin County, stated that the next steps are to work with city partners and organize how to achieve outcomes, figure out the larger financing piece, and figure out how to support agencies along the corridor. Then have a larger meeting to focus on a corridor-wide approach. Co-chair Dr. Tara Watson asked how anti-displacement is affected by timeframes, adding that the work depends on the momentum of the project – how likely is it to move along at the same pace as the project? Catherine responded that it is the goal to move at the same pace as the project.

5. Outreach and Community Engagement Update

Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, reviewed the statutory requirements from the state legislature that were related to this project. KB Brown asked what information would be presented at these meetings. KB noted there is an issue of a lack of information shared and a lack of answers to questions. KB added that these groups may view these meetings as a checked box. Chris asked what kind of questions should be asked. KB said there are a lot of unknowns for people along the corridor and work has been paused because of the



unknown impacts. He added that there's funding available to beautify West Broadway but they cannot do anything yet. Chris stated that this would be good to bring to the corridor management committee's meeting.

Nkongo reported the project posted the engagement framework and it was open for public comment. Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, added that the project is always accepting comments even though the comment period ended. KB Brown asked if the route decision is changing. Nick responded that the route is from Target Field Station to West Broadway to County Road 81. Nick added that even if the route goes on 21st, there would still be work done on West Broadway. John Barobs asked if there's been work planned for West Broadway if the route is on 21st. Nick responded no, but the work would be done within the right-of-way. Chris added clarification that the work done on West Broadway would be done by the county. A question was asked about assessments. Chris responded that if it was a county project then assessments would most likely be done. KB asked if the project would be at Open Streets. Kaja Vang, Metropolitan Council, stated that they have plans to attend Open Streets and other events.

Nkongo reviewed the upcoming meetings in Minneapolis. There were comments about renaming the upcoming block party to avoid confusion about the location. Chris noted the project is trying to cover the area of the new alignment option east of I-94.

6. Minneapolis Design Update

Nick Landwer reviewed the Minneapolis design decisions. In Minneapolis for this month, the focus is on the number and location of stations; Penn Avenue station location; and route options from Target Field Station to 10th Avenue North or Lyndale Avenue. A question was asked about how the project decided on the number of stops. Nick responded the team looked at the destinations, walksheds, and transit connections. Nick noted that the 5 Points building is showing to be impacted in every design that's been looked at. The project team is recommending the station be on the north side of Penn Avenue. A question was asked about impacts. Nick responded that the project would work with the property owner with the options available.

Nick noted that if the light rail was on 21st, it would become a transitway. A comment was made about the visibility of walking on 21st versus West Broadway – 21st feels dark and has more hiding spaces. Nick stated that the project wants to activate the space but that is good feedback about 21st.

John Barobs asked if the Lyndale Avenue route was still on the table even though there was community pushback. Nick responded that it will still be evaluated however due to the legislation, the project must evaluate another alignment east of I-94. John asked how the feedback has been in the east of I-94 area. Nick responded that the project has been meeting with businesses and property owners and have received good feedback. The feedback has been fairly positive. KB Brown stated that 10th Avenue, safety-wise, seems more logical instead of being tucked away with the other east of I-94 option. John asked if there were any planned housing projects along the alignment that hugs I-94. Nick stated that the Twin Cities International School has a high enrollment and doesn't see that changing. Nick also added that there are more commercial buildings. North of Plymouth Avenue is zoned to be more industrial right now. KB asked how either alignment affects the exit ramp. Nick stated that the option has a lot of structure.

Jamar Smith asked about the timeline for when the options need to be narrowed down. Nick stated the project is aiming to have a recommendation made in August.



7. Discussion and Members Feedback

A question was asked about assessments. Nick stated the project won't have assessments. KB commented that assessments should be added to the anti-displacement work. He said if there is an assessment, it would likely be missed. Catherine Gold stated that anti-displacement talked about property taxes and that's where assessments land.

8. Next Meeting: August 8, 2023.

A motion was made and approved to reschedule the next meeting to August 8.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.