



# Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

## Minutes of the September 14, 2017 Meeting

**Present:** Alene Tchourumoff, Chris Berne, Rich Gates, Tim Willson, Lona Schreiber, George Selman, Denise Butler, Marika Pfefferkorn, Mike Opat, Peter Wagenius, Barbara Johnson

**Not in attendance:** Aasim Shabazz, Andy Snope, Betsy Hodges, Brian Lamb, Denny Walsh, Gary Cunningham, Jeff Kolb, Jeffrey Lunde, Jim Adams, Jon Olson, Linda Higgins, Meg Forney, Olga Parsons, Peter McLaughlin, Regan Murphy, Scott McBride, Scott Schulte, Shauen Pearce, Shep Harris

### 1. Call to Order

Chair Tchourumoff convened the meeting at 1:34 pm and stated that she is excited to be working on this project. She asked all the committee members to introduce themselves.

Chair Tchourumoff said she welcomes Chris Berne and Catherine Fleming's service as co-chairs of the CAC. The BAC will formally select their co-chairs at the next meeting, but she also wanted to thank Denny Walsh for serving as the BAC chair.

### 2. Approval of June 15, 2017 Minutes

Chair Tchourumoff asked the committee to review the meeting minutes from the June 15, 2017 meeting. George Selman motioned approval of the minutes; Mike Opat seconded. Minutes were approved.

### 3. Chair's Update

Chair Tchourumoff noted that Council staff is working on wrapping up SWLRT negotiations with the railroads and once those are complete they will reach out to begin negotiations for BLRT.

Second, the Council recommended rejecting the civil construction bids for SWLRT earlier this week due to responsiveness and price. This will cause about a four-month delay, and they are hoping to get the civil bids back out in October. They are looking for opportunities to reduce price in the bids. The Council will be taking action on that recommendation next Wednesday.

The Chair recently met with the FTA to discuss where we are as a region and looking to develop multiple projects at the same time, and FTA expressed confidence in the region's ability to deliver on the capital investment projects. Other regions have faced similar issues and re-bid civil construction packages in order to reduce cost, which was heartening to hear we are not unique in that.

Chair Tchourumoff asked if there were questions.

Mike Opat noted that he was in Washington DC last week to meet with Minnesota's delegation and the FTA. He was heartened by their responsiveness to the work on the project to date even though they are in limbo while the federal budget is being discussed. He thinks it would be beneficial to have a delegation from this project out to DC to visit with them, and he will be speaking with others on the CMC about doing this in the next three to four weeks.



Tim Willson stated that some mayors have banded together and sent a letter to the federal government. Secretary Chao's staff has responded and discussed a three-step process to get funding from the federal government. They state that if you have not been funded yet, you will not be and will instead need to be funded locally.

Rich Gates followed up on Mayor Lunde's comments from the last meeting that Brooklyn Park does not want to wait on this project because of delays with SWLRT. He reaffirmed that sentiment and that the City needs this project to move forward so they can complete other needed infrastructure projects like West Broadway.

Tim Willson agrees with Brooklyn Park and asked why the northwest region has to wait for SWLRT to be done for BLRT to move forward. He has a number of residents who feel forgotten in this process.

Chair Tchourumoff thanked the committee members for their feedback. The Council is looking to develop the entire regional system and advance the system as a whole.

#### **4. New Starts Update**

MarySue Abel presented. Part of the federal process is to submit a New Starts application to establish a rating for the project. If the project is rated as a medium or above, they can apply for their FFGA. In the FY 2018 FTA New Starts Annual Report, the project received a medium-high rating. The project submitted an updated application on September 7, 2017, which will be published in the FY 2019 report. A medium-high score is still anticipated.

There are two primary components of the New Starts rating: the financial rating and the project justification rating. Changes in this New Starts application from last year included:

- Land use and economic development – advances since 2016
- Financial management plan – CTIB dissolution and full local funding commitment
- Revised project schedule – shift FFGA application from September 2017 to May 2018 to finalize railroad negotiations and receive congressional appropriation
- Ridership adjustment for reduction of Robbinsdale park-and-ride – reduced from 550 spaces to 400 spaces

Mike Opat noted that the entire to-do list for this project is captured in the third bullet on the revised schedule. In speaking with FTA and the Minnesota delegation, it seems that Congress will work to keep the New Starts program regardless of the president's proposed budget. The sooner we can begin the railroad negotiations, the sooner we can finalize it so we can be on track to submit by May.

#### **5. Environmental Update**

Caroline Miller presented. As a reminder of where we are in the environmental process, the FEIS was completed in July 2016 and the Record of Decision was published in September 2016. Since then, they have been working on mitigation commitments that were committed to in the Record of Decision.



### Section 106 MOA Implementation

The Metropolitan Council entered into an agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office, FTA, and the consulting parties to work on the mitigation commitments for historic resources.

One of the mitigations is the draft interpretative plan for the two historic resources that will be adversely affected (the Ground Rounds Historic District and the Osseo Branch of the railroad). Interpretive panels will be included for these resources on five on the platforms. Details on the plan will be presented at a future CMC meeting.

They are also conducting additional architecture/history fieldwork in areas that weren't previously covered and working with consulting parties on project elements to make sure they are compatible with the historic resources. For instance, they are working to ensure the design of the Plymouth Station is compatible with the Grand Rounds Historic District.

### Phase II Environmental Site Assessment

The environmental site assessment process is the due diligence for soil and groundwater contamination in the corridor. The Phase I ESA was completed in 2015. The Phase II has been conducted over the last two years, and they are now moving into the Response Action Plan (RAP) phase.

The Phase II ESA included testing for soil and groundwater contamination. The information is used for design considerations and protecting human health and the environment during construction. The fieldwork for the Phase II ESA included 382 borings and test pits.

Caroline Miller discussed the results from four key areas:

- Highway 55/HERC – found lots of debris along Highway 55, historic foundations, and petroleum contamination
- Floodplain mitigation site in Theodore Wirth Park – historic roundhouse, found contamination associated with railroad use (e.g., glass, wood scraps, lead)
- Robbinsdale – had mixed contamination areas, one was a used oil drop-off site near the existing Robbinsdale Public Works building that has petroleum contamination, downtown Robbinsdale and Sochacki Park also had some mixed contamination
- Crystal – contamination in County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road area from petroleum and trace debris

The RAP will discuss how to address contamination during construction. A RAP for advanced construction projects was completed and approved by the MPCA in May 2017. A corridor-wide RAP is anticipated to be complete in Q4 2017. When the project is under construction, an environmental professional will be in the field to monitor implementation of the RAP.

Lona Schreiber asked at what point does the environmental work become stale or is there a time when it needs to be rereviewed. Caroline Miller said it depends on the discipline area. The Phase I and II ESAs have a shelf life of a few years, whereas the evaluation of historic resources is more dependent on changes in project design.



Tim Willson noted that the data will not go stale but some sections may need to be updated as time goes on.

## **6. Bassett Creek Storm Sewer Update**

Dan Soler introduced Peter DeMuth, who is going to be the Council-authorized representative overseeing the Bassett Creek storm sewer work. He was involved on Central Corridor and A Line and is now working on Blue Line.

### Construction Overview

Peter DeMuth presented. The Bassett Creek tunnel is located between Van White and Bryant under TH 55. They will be replacing the old brick structure with a new box culvert structure that will be out of the way of station construction.

The construction procurement was broken up into two bid packages, material procurement and tunnel construction.

On July 31, 2017, the material procurement contract was awarded to Max Steininger, Inc. They will be constructing the box culvert and delivering it to the site.

On August 25, 2017, the tunnel construction contract was awarded to Minger Construction Companies, Inc.

Construction will entail replacing the brick structure with a box culvert, and they will add two 42-inch MCES conveyance pipes. This work will require a 12-day closure of Olson Memorial Highway that will start after October 27, 2017 to allow completion of MnDOT's I-94 work. This closure has been coordinated with MnDOT, Hennepin County, and Minneapolis. Work is anticipated 24 hours a day for all 12 days of the closure.

The regional detours during the closure will include Hwy 100 S to I-394 to I-94 from the west and I-394 to Hwy 100 from the east.

A local detour will also be set up on Penn to I-394 and to I-94. They have also coordinated bus detours and worked closely with schools in area.

During the winter of 2017-2018, cast in place concrete and in place lining of MCES sewer work will be conducted. In the spring of 2018 there will be cleanup and restoration work.

### Outreach and Communications

Sam O'Connell presented. The Council understands that this construction will impact both local folks in the neighborhood and regional commuters. They want to make sure people are aware and not surprised when construction starts.

Key outreach and communication messages include project description, duration of construction, detours for vehicles/trail users/transit users, where to get more info, and who to contact if you have any questions.

They are in the process of setting up coordination meetings with project partners (MnDOT, Metro Transit, County, and cities). They will work with media partners including TV, radio, and social media. They will also be developing a short construction video that can be easily shared.



Neighborhood/community communications will also include neighborhood and community briefings, a community open house in early October, a leave behind poster/one pager, project website and newsletter, variable message signs, and GovDelivery.

## 7. West Broadway Stations

Alicia Vap presented on the three stations along West Broadway.

Station design was established in the 30% plans, including:

- Center platforms consistent on all BLRT station platforms
- Consistent layout of shelters, ticket equipment, and signage on all platforms

The station design is advancing towards 90% plans, which includes finalizing:

- Material choices, including color
- Details such as lighting or other unique design elements
- The station area, including access

The three stations on West Broadway are considered sister stations – they have a similar look and feel but have differences.

At the 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Station, the primary access is at a signalized intersection and secondary access will be on the south end of platform with a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB). The City of Brooklyn Park has been working diligently on what they want the corridor to look like and is adding some streetscape elements to the project. The canopy will be made of expanded metal material and the ends of the canopy will be lit. There will be light spires along the roadway that tie in with the station architecture. On the platform, there will be between-car barriers to provide a cue to those who are visually impaired where the gap between cars is located.

Rich Gates noted that the bar for cars to stop at the RRFB on the south end of the platform is in the intersection so they may want to move it to the south side so as not to block cross traffic.

At the 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station, primary access is from the traffic signal on the north end of the platform, and secondary access will be provided with a RRFB on the south end. The architecture will take a cue from nearby buildings such as the college and the library. The panels on the canopy may be backlit on the edges and side. Light spires along the roadway will tie in with the station architecture, and between the car barriers will be located on the platform.

At the Brooklyn Boulevard Station, the canopy will be made of metal panels with a wave pattern, and the end panels will be lit. Light spires along the roadway will tie in with the station architecture, and both station accesses are from traffic signals. The platforms will include between the car barriers.

Denise Butler asked why the 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Station was not included and who was involved with the station design conversations. Alicia Vap said the conversations are being had with the architects, and information is starting to be shared with city staff then it will be taken to city councils. At the beginning of the process, they spent a lot of time getting information on the context and character from the community, now the architects are picking materials based on those descriptors. The design of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Station will be presented later; today, they are focusing on the three



stations along West Broadway. Denise Butler encouraged having further conversations with Ebenezer Church on station design.

**8. Adjournment**

Chair Tchourumoff asked if there were any further questions or comments. Peter Wagenius asked that the notes from the last meeting be changed to reflect that he was able to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:24 pm.

**Next CMC Meeting: Thursday, October 12, 2017**

**Hennepin County Rockford Road Library**

**6401 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North**

**Crystal, MN 55427**