



METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee (CMC) Meeting Summary

Date & Time	July 13, 2023 1:30 – 3:00 PM
Location	F.T Heywood Chambers, 560 N 6 th Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55412
CMC Members	Charlie Zelle, Reva Chamblis, Robert Lilligren, Bill Blonigan, Jeff Lunde, Jim Adams, Mike Barnes, Suzanne Sobotka, Therese Kiser, Meg Forney, Karla Arredondo Payan, Jason Greenberg, Tara Watson, Dan Doerrer, Irene Fernando, Jeremiah Ellison, Jacob Frey
Project Staff	Nick Thompson, Chris Beckwith, Cathy Gold, Nick Landwer, Jer Yang

1. Call to Order and Welcome

At 1:34pm, Chair Charlie Zelle with Metropolitan Council called the meeting to order.

Chair Zelle extended a warm welcome to the members of the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) and introduced himself. He then provided an opportunity for the remaining members to introduce themselves.

Chair Zelle would like to address a notable occurrence, namely the re-districting that takes place every 10 years. This has resulted in a shift of Met Council Members to different districts. Chair Zelle would like to express appreciation to Council Member Robert Lilligren and Council Member John Pacheco for their support and contributions to the Blue Line Corridor Management Committees. He bids them farewell as this will be their last meeting with the CMC, wishing them the best in their new districts.

Chair Zelle mentioned that the meeting materials for today's session are available on the project's website at bluelineext.org. Furthermore, Chair Zelle informed the public that they can submit their comments or questions regarding this meeting to Nkongo Cigolo by July 21, 2023. These comments will be included in the meeting notes for the next CMC Meeting.

Chair Zelle informed the members that today's agenda includes several project updates, covering engagements, outreach efforts, and the Minneapolis Design Decision. The meeting will begin with a 15-minute public comment period, allowing individuals to share their thoughts and feedback.



2. Public Invitation

During the public comment session, several individuals had the opportunity to share their thoughts in the following order: Donna Sanders, the Business Specialist of the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition; Kathy Neitzke, a resident of Lyn Park Neighborhood; Eva Young, also from Lyn Park Neighborhood; John Jamison, the Board Chairman of the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC); and Crystal Porter, the Executive Director of the West Business and Area Coalition. The complete video recording of their comments, in their own words, can be access on the project's website at www.bluelineext.org .

3. Approval of June 8, 2023, BLRT CMC Meeting Summary

Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Lunde proposed a motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 8, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mayor Jim Adams, City of Crystal. As a result, the meeting minutes were successfully approved.

Chair Zelle made an announcement regarding the upcoming CMC meetings, stating that there will be two new members joining next month. These new members are Metropolitan Council Member Yassin Osman and Metropolitan Council Member Anjuli Cameron.

4. Community and Business Advisory Committee Reports

Business Advisory Committee (BAC) Co-Chair Tara Watson provided an update on the discussions and concerns raised during the recent BAC Meeting held on July 11, 2023. She emphasized the necessity of making a decision regarding the route alignment, as this project is impeding the availability of non-funding opportunities for small businesses operating along West Broadway. These businesses could potentially benefit from the federal funding provided by Triple R, specifically designated for the development of West Broadway businesses, including improvements in electrical systems and safety measures. It is crucial to note that this funding must be utilized by the end of 2023. However, due to the uncertainty surrounding the decision on whether the Light rail would be implemented on West Broadway, some businesses have been unable to take advantage of this funding. Businesses located in this corridor are experiencing fear, and it is essential for the CMC to understand that the delay in deciding on the light rail project could result in the loss of millions of dollars for these businesses.

Co-Chair Watson mentioned that the current project work does not impose any tax assessment burden. However, it is important to note that there will be other infrastructure developments taking place alongside the light rail, which will have an impact on businesses in terms of tax assessments. These businesses require assistance, and they are requesting that the tax assessment issue be included in the Anti-Displacement efforts. Their aim is to address this matter in a targeted manner to provide necessary support to the affected businesses.



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Co-Chair Jason Greenberg, provided an update on the CAC Meeting held on July 12, 2023. The main concern with furthering alternative route option studies is the need for synchronized communication. Some communities interpreted the term "Options" as an alternative to the Blue Line Extension, deviating from Highway 81. However, it was clarified that the term "Options" refers to the refinement of alignment within Minneapolis.

Co-Chair Greenberg expressed concern that some communities felt their concerns were not being adequately addressed. The CAC also shared feedback received from the communities regarding the options around Minneapolis, particularly expressing concerns about safety and security related to the proposed route option on 21st Ave N.

Co-Chair Greenberg also mentioned an important event in Robbinsdale called Whizbang Day, which recently took place. The community was delighted to see the participation of METRO Transit in the parade using a full-size city bus. It was particularly great to have a representative from the Blue Line Extension project present at the event, showcasing the project's involvement and engagement with the community.

Chair Zelle expressed gratitude to both the BAC and CAC Co-Chairs for their comprehensive updates.

Hennepin County Commissioner, Irene Fernando, raised a question in response to BAC Co-Chair Watson's concern regarding tax assessment along West Broadway. Commissioner Fernando inquired about any action items that should be addressed in response to this issue. BAC Co-Chair Watson responded by stating that businesses are seeking written clarification regarding the language used in tax assessments related to the project in the Anti-Displacement Policies.

Mayor Adams requested that members of the CMC be provided with a copy of a report on how the tax assessment concerns will be addressed.

5. Project Update

Chris Beckwith, Blue Line Project Director at Metropolitan Council, began by sharing comment and feedback received from the project staff and METRO Transit Operators. The operator expressed that the Robbinsdale Whizbang Day was a delightful and enjoyable event, and they felt a tremendous amount of support from the Robbinsdale communities. Ms. Beckwith extended gratitude to the CAC members for their valuable suggestions, which led to the project's participation in Whizbang Day.

Ms. Beckwith proceeded to provide an update on project's schedule update, stating that there are no changes to the route alignment, and overall project schedule. However, Ms. Beckwith would like to elaborate on the schedule up to Municipal Consent (Summer 2024). Ms. Beckwith reframed the first half of 2023, sharing that the project has been working through city by city design decision updates, and Anti-Displacement. In June



2023 the project introduced a new sub-option in Minneapolis and will continue to do more study and community engagements through August, will bring forth feedback back to CMC in September 2023 for a recommendation on design decision in the Minneapolis alignment.

Ms. Beckwith provided an update on the schedule concerning the Federal Transportation Administration's (FTA) review of the Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). She explained that there are three FTA reviews that need to be conducted prior to the publication of the SDEIS. Emphasizing the significance of the matter, she highlighted that the project requires a recommendation from this group to proceed with the first SDEIS for FTA Review.

Ms. Beckwith underscored the importance of obtaining a recommendation from the CMC Members in order to proceed with the publication of the SDEIS before seeking municipal consent. She acknowledged that the project has experienced some delays, which could potentially impact the overall project schedule.

Commissioner Fernando provided additional clarification, stating that the intention and commitment behind publishing the SDEIS is to allow for a dedicated period for comments and feedback in preparation for municipal consent. Commissioner Fernando expressed appreciation for the project's responsiveness to the municipality's desire for informed decision-making.

Ms. Beckwith further added that the Anti-Displacement efforts would need to run parallel to the project timeline.

Cathy Gold, representing Hennepin County, reported that the Anti-Displacement team has made several resources available on the project's website, yourbluelineext.org. These include the Recommendation Report, the Executive Summary of the Anti-Displacement efforts, and a concise one-page document highlighting key takeaways.

Furthermore, Ms. Gold highlighted that the project is actively seeking feedback from the communities regarding Anti-Displacement measures. In addition, the Anti-Displacement team is in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Government representative from the Anti-Displacement Working Group (ADWG). The purpose of this meeting is to review the Resolution Report and commence the development of a proposed framework that aligns with the communities' requests for the Anti-Displacement Resolution. Ms. Gold emphasized that the ADWG will engage with city and community partners in order to foster collaboration and participation.



Ms. Gold emphasized that Hennepin County has recently announced a community investment initiative called the Five Hundred Thousand Program, specifically targeted towards development projects along the Blue Line Extension corridor. This program aims to facilitate the creation of affordable spaces for local businesses to either rent or own. Starting on July 20th, applications for the program will be open. Additionally, Hennepin County will be focusing on providing businesses along the corridor with information and resources related to "Elevate Hennepin" a program dedicated to supporting local businesses.

Commissioner Fernando highlighted that part of Ms. Gold's update was in direct response to the inquiries raised by the Blue Line Coalition (BLC). The BLC provided feedback regarding the implementation of the Anti-Displacement Resolution and expressed concerns about jurisdictional coordination. In light of these concerns, Hennepin County is taking proactive steps to address them and ensure effective coordination among the jurisdictions involved. Commissioner Fernando confirmed that the Anti-Displacement presentation has been shared with the entire Hennepin County Board, demonstrating the commitment to transparency and accountability in addressing these matters.

Metropolitan Council Member, Reva Chamblis, expressed appreciation to Ms. Beckwith and Ms. Gold for their informative presentation and update on the project schedule and Anti-Displacement information. Council Member Chamblis acknowledged the historical context that has led to a lack of trust in development within the communities. In light of this, she stressed the significance of the Anti-Displacement program, which was established to address the concerns of businesses and communities impacted by displacement.

Commissioner Lunde echoed Commissioner Fernando's comment and further emphasized that the available funding for addressing displacement concerns should be utilized. He encouraged the communities to take advantage of these opportunities and submit applications for funding.

6. Outreach and Engagement Update

a. Feedback on Community Engagement Framework

Nkongo Cigolo, representing the Metropolitan Council, delivered an update on the Legislative request for Community Engagement Frameworks. He explained that the goal is to conduct quarterly meetings in consultation with community groups situated along the alignment. The purpose of these meetings is to foster engagement and gather valuable input. Cigolo emphasized the importance of documenting these engagement efforts and reporting the findings and outcomes to the CMC members.

Mr. Cigolo provided insight into the development of the community engagement framework, highlighting the analysis conducted to ensure effective community engagement. Some considerations included engaging with community cohort members



to enhance awareness, utilizing art as a means of conveying the framework's messaging, and creating an engagement document to share with the communities. This engagement document, which is included in today's meeting materials, was published on June 12, 2023, to gather feedback from the communities.

Mr. Cigolo informed the attendees that the project had received multiple comments in response to the engagement documents. These comments specifically addressed concerns regarding engaging seniors in the framework engagement process, the need for document translation into different languages, and the utilization of social media platforms, and including Environmental Justice communities. He noted that general comment that are not relevant to the community engagement framework document would be carefully considered, responded to and incorporated into the Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) document.

Mr. Cigolo shared a schedule of upcoming Community Engagement meetings and events in Minneapolis. He mentioned that the project will be organizing an Outdoor Summer Block Party, as well as three Community Engagement meetings to delve into the route options east of I94 on Washington Ave N. The engagement process will culminate with a Quarterly meeting scheduled for August 23, 2023.

Mayor Jacob Frey of the City of Minneapolis expressed his concerns regarding the open house-style community meetings conducted in the past by the project. He mentioned that this format sometimes made it challenging for individuals to interpret the information uniformly. Mayor Frey suggested that the project should explore alternative methods of communication, such as facilitated concepts, to ensure that everyone receives the same information simultaneously and in a consistent manner. Mr. Cigolo responded that the project is adjusting the format of the upcoming community meetings to include an open-house, a presentation and providing community members to the opportunity to ask questions.

Karla Arredondo Payan from the Blue Line Coalition expressed appreciation for the project staff's flexibility and their willingness to adapt. She acknowledged that there is still much work to be done in building a cohesive community engagement framework.

7. Minneapolis Design Update

Nick Landwer, representing the Metropolitan Council, delivered an update on the Design Decision in Minneapolis. He shared the design principles that have guided the decision-making process. Mr. Landwer highlighted that the focus of today's discussion is to further refine the route options in Minneapolis, with the aim of reaching an optimal design solution.

Mr. Landwer covered the Penn Ave Station and the evaluation of its placement and stated that the project is now recommending a station location north of Penn Ave on West Broadway Avenue. This recommendation takes into account multiple factors,



including the provision of a center platform station that offers convenient access and eliminates confusion. As the project proceeds into the design phase and advances in alignment, efforts will be made to refine the station's accessibility.

Suzanne Sobotka, Senior Policy Aide with the City of Minneapolis, sought clarification on the matter of property impacts. Mayor Frey further inquired whether the project had reached out to the property owner who would be affected by such impacts. Mr. Landwer addressed their concerns by confirming that the project staff has been actively communicating with both the affected tenants and the property owner to address the potential impacts.

Mayor Bill Blonigan of the City of Robbinsdale made a request to have pictures of the impacted properties displayed on the project's website. He believed that visual representation of the affected parcels would be beneficial for understanding the specific locations impacted by the project. The BAC Co-Chair echoed this comment, emphasizing that visual aids, such as pictures, would greatly assist people in comprehending the impact on businesses along the corridor.

Commissioner Fernando added to the discussion by highlighting the importance of considering how to provide assistance and support to tenants or property owners affected by the project as it progresses. When presenting maps that outline the alignment and potential property impacts, it is crucial to connect the visual representation with the services and resources available to help those impacted properties. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the situation and underscores the commitment to supporting affected tenants and owners throughout the project.

Mayor Frey expressed the desire for clear identification of each impacted parcel and its relationship to the surrounding communities. He emphasized the importance of providing a user-friendly way for people to understand the impact by avoiding the use of complex parcel numbers that may be difficult to connect with the actual business or resident locations. Mayor Frey stressed the need for a straightforward and accessible method of presenting the information, ensuring that individuals can easily grasp how the project affects specific parcels and their respective communities.

Mr. Landwer progressed the discussion to the next design focus in Minneapolis, specifically between Knox Ave North and Lyndale Avenue North. He informed the attendees that, based on feedback from the communities requesting an additional station, the project has evaluated two potential station locations. The first station is proposed to be at James Ave North on West Broadway Avenue, while the second station would be situated between Bryant Avenue North and Aldrich Avenue North.

Ms. Nietzke raised a question regarding property impacts, seeking clarification on the matter. In response, Mr. Landwer explained that there are indeed a few property impacts associated with the two-station placement. Chair Zelle then informed the



members that a presentation illustrating the property impacts is accessible on the project's website, providing a resource for further information on the subject.

Council Member Jeremiah Ellison from the City of Minneapolis expressed his satisfaction with the addition of another station and how it addresses the conversation of building light rail for the communities. This acknowledgment reflects the positive impact that the new station brings to the local communities and their transportation needs.

Mr. Landwer provided reassurance to the attendees, emphasizing the project's commitment to reach out to all individuals and entities along the alignment. He emphasized that ongoing communication with communities and businesses within the corridor is a top priority. This ensures that their concerns, needs, and feedback are acknowledged and addressed throughout the project's development and implementation.

Commissioner Lunde expressed appreciation for the efforts made and highlighted that even property impacts can be managed by informing the City of Minneapolis or Hennepin County. He suggested that such information could be utilized for Anti-Displacement considerations, as these properties hold value and can be controlled to support the communities in need. Commissioner Lunde recognized the potential for leveraging these properties as assets to provide assistance and benefit to the affected communities.

CAC Co-Chair Greenberg provided an update on a recent discussion held during the CAC meeting, focusing on 21st Avenue North. He sought clarification regarding the nature of the light rail options on 21st Avenue North, questioning whether it would be solely a transit way. In response, Mr. Landwer confirmed that the understanding was correct, and if the light rail were to be implemented on 21st Avenue North, it would indeed serve as a transit way only.

Mr. Landwer proceeded with the design update, shifting the focus to Target Field Station. He explained that the main aspect under study was determining the route for the light rail from Target Field Station to the intersection at North 7th Street and Olson Memorial Hwy, specifically considering whether it should follow the alignment of 10th Avenue or Lyndale Avenue North. Various options were reviewed, including reconfiguring the roadway to allow for a grade-separated light rail track, which would then merge at grade on North 7th Street. This evaluation aimed to find the most suitable design solution for this particular section of the light rail route.

Chair Zelle announced that the ongoing conversation regarding the design updates and considerations discussed would be continued at the next CMC Meeting scheduled for August. This ensures that further progress and deliberations on the topic can take place, providing an opportunity for continued engagement and decision-making.



8. Next Meeting: August 10, 2023

9. Adjourn

Chair Zelle, concluded the meeting and adjourned it at 2:59pm.