



**METRO Blue Line Extension
Community Advisory Committee Meeting
May 4, 2015
Blue Line Project Office
5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200
Crystal, MN 55428
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Meeting Summary

CAC Members: Steven Schmidt, Carol Vosberg, Chris Berne, Justin Youngbluth, Gene Bakke, George Selman, Gillian Rosenquist, Giuseppe Marrari, Manysavanh Phothisane, Carol LaFleur

Agency Staff and Guests: Sam O'Connell, Dan Pfeiffer, Sophia Ginis, Rachel Haase, Paul Danielson, Scott Reed, Dan Soler, Nick Landwer, Jim Toulouse, Emily Goellner, Laura Baenan, David Davies, Juan Rangel, Kathryn O'Brien, Emily Carr

1. Welcome and Introductions

Dan Soler welcomed the CAC members. Sam O'Connell recapped the April 15th kick-off meeting and presented the results of the survey regarding what topics members wanted to hear more about. The most common responses were:

- Station location and station area planning
- Trails, parks, and bike impacts
- Mutli-model connections, safety (tied for #3)
- Station and platform design
- Transit-oriented development
- Other
 - Environmental process
 - Housing
 - Outreach to traditionally underserved/underrepresented groups

George Selman asked how many members responded. Dan Pfeiffer said that 9 or 10 out of 15 members replied to the survey. Sam O'Connell stated that this survey will be repeated as the process moves forward. Carol LaFleur commented that she thinks that outreach to traditionally underserved/underrepresented groups should be a high priority.

Sam O'Connell directed CAC members to the copy of the draft charter provided in the materials packet and asked for any last feedback. Based on survey results from CAC members, meetings will be held on the first Monday of every month starting at 6:00 pm. September 7th is Labor Day so rescheduling of that meeting will be discussed in August.

The CAC roster was also provided to the committee. There are still some remaining seats to fill, and the outreach team is working with organizations in the corridor to make sure those underserved/underrepresented groups are at the table. When the roster is more complete, the CAC will appoint co-chairs and CMC and Hennepin County Steering Committee representatives. Gillian Rosenquist suggested reaching out to Courage Kenny for CAC member suggestions. A representative from Courage Kenny sits on the BAC, but additional appointments can be made. Input will also be provided by the Met Council's Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee.

The CAC did not have any comments on the charter and agreed it could be considered final.

2. Introduction of Outreach Coordinators

Sam O'Connell introduced the community outreach coordinators:

- Juan Rangel, Community Outreach Coordinator for Brooklyn Park
- David Davies, Community Outreach Coordinator for Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Golden Valley
- Sophia Ginis, Community Outreach Coordinator for Minneapolis
- Dan Pfeiffer, Assistant Public Involvement Manager

The outreach coordinators serve as the communities' first point of contact. They attend technical and advisory committee meetings so they are familiar with all the project elements. They will also attend station area planning meetings to bring that information back to the project office design and environmental teams.

The outreach coordinators will work with city staff to be introduced at upcoming city council meetings, and they will help identify appointments for the remaining CAC members.

Chris Berne asked about the neighborhood organization spots remaining on the committee. Since the neighborhoods are in Minneapolis, what function do they serve that the Minneapolis representatives don't? Sam O'Connell responded that organizations that have received Corridors of Opportunity grants to do outreach on the Blue Line are also able to appoint members to the CAC and have existing networks that we can utilize as the project continues. The groups also bring a wider perspective beyond their neighborhood due to their previous outreach activities.

3. Community Works Update

Darlene Walser was not able to attend tonight's meeting but plans to attend next month to give an update on the station area planning process.

4. Design Update/Discussion

Olson Memorial Highway (Technical Issues #2 and 3)

Nick Landwer presented on the technical issues in the Olson Memorial Highway segment of the project.

Technical Issue #2: Olson Memorial Highway

- Located at or near the intersection of 7th Street and Olson Memorial Highway is the Heywood bus garage, Target Field Station, and future SWLRT tracks (grade separated). BLRT would need to cross through the intersection at grade and with a signal. There are some issues with pedestrian and bike safety so we are working to minimize conflicts with traffic

and freight tracks and are looking at different lane configurations in this area. Dan Soler noted that the proposed design is a smaller intersection than existing, but capacity needs to be maintained. The double right onto 7th Street to get into downtown is the largest movement at this intersection.

- Chris Berne noted that he doesn't see a crossing on the southwest quadrant of the intersection. Nick Landwer replied that one is planned, but it is hard to see on the exhibit.
- Steven Schmidt asked what the roadway speed is in this area. Nick Landwer replied that it is 30 or 35 mph by 7th Street and 40 mph after the bridge over I-94.
- Continuing to the west of 7th Street, the engineering team is figuring out how to get the train through the middle of the bridge and how signaling will work. Project office staff are working Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, and MnDOT staff in a smaller working group to determine what the road section will look like. There have been requests to reduce the number of lanes, speeds, and lane widths and introduce traffic calming measures to increase pedestrian safety. Since Olson Memorial Highway is a reliever to I-394, we are also trying to accommodate capacity.
- LRT will be center running from the 7th Street intersection to the BNSF corridor. The design team has looked at different station configurations for the two stations in the segment (at Van White Memorial Boulevard and Penn Avenue) and is currently considering center platform configurations for both. Dan Soler noted that access for all modes to stations is a major focus of the working group, and they are working on having more than one access point for each platform. There are seven or eight existing mid-block crossings (no signal or cross walk identified), which are not very safe.
- Dan Soler said that the project team would like feedback from the CAC on what would be positive measures to build along the guideway in non-station areas to improve safety (e.g., barriers between sidewalks and guideway). The two segments where this is key are Olson Memorial Highway and West Broadway.
- Giuseppe Marrari asked what type of lighting or other markings there will be since it is difficult to see people crossing the highway when it is dark or raining. Nick replied that intersections will be designed to have adequate lighting (the existing design is older and may not meet the current standards), and the design team will work with MnDOT to determine future paths/walkways. Mid-block crossings are a big concern, and we want to make sure both drivers and pedestrians know where the crossings are. Giuseppe also asked what the likelihood of a raised walkway is. Nick stated that a pedestrian overpass is unlikely in this area since the grades are flat, and people don't often use overpasses when they are rushing to catch a train. Dan Soler noted that if pedestrian crossings are well lit then the rest of the street needs to be also so there aren't dark areas where people cross. The project team will work with the City on this issue. Giuseppe asked if there will be pedestrian push buttons at signals. Nick replied that push buttons will be installed.

- George Selman noted that earlier in the planning process when it was under consideration to have the alignment down Bottineau Boulevard instead of the rail corridor, platform locations were discussed and they also landed on center platforms at that time. It is fair for pedestrian activities and development opportunities. In terms of a barrier, one could be put on the outside of the highway to force pedestrians to marked crossings. Dan Soler replied that that would be difficult for snow plows.
- Nick Landwer identified the issues to be resolved associated with vehicles (number of lanes, turn lanes, (-94 interchange), LRT (station configuration, pedestrian access), buses (coordination with C-Line BRT and local routes), pedestrians (crossings, safety), and bicycles (crossings, bicycle facilities). Next steps include traffic analysis, working with MnDOT and the City on design, getting input from the CAC/BAC, holding community meeting in June, and providing an update to the CMC.

Technical Issue #3 – Olson Memorial Highway Crossing

- As soon as the LRT tracks pass Thomas Avenue, they can start dropping, but in order to do that westbound bridge over the freight tracks needs to be moved to the north.
- Justin Youngbluth asked what grade can the rail climb? Nick Landwer replied that about five percent is the maximum, and Paul Danielson added that it is close to four percent in this area.

Floodplain Impacts (Technical Issue #5)

Jim Toulouse presented. The project will require filling of a floodplain, which requires mitigation (1:1 replacement in the reach where the impact occurs).

A floodway is the area needed to convey water, and a floodplain is an area where water is expected to go when there is a 100 year flood.

South of Golden Valley Road is the Bassett Creek Main Stem by Theodore Wirth Park. Mitigation has been tentatively identified in this area and is being discussed with the park board.

North of Golden Valley Road are the Grimes, North Rice, and South Rice Ponds. This is an area of poor soils, and at this point we don't know how the LRT tracks will cross it. There are design options varying from complete fill to a bridge structure, so the mitigation amount is not yet known. This area is closer to homes and parks compared to the Bassett Creek Main Stem floodplain south of Golden Valley Road. The environmental team is working with park agencies on this issue.

Gillian Rosenquist is on the open space and recreation committee for Golden Valley and offered to arrange a time to talk with them if desired. Kathryn O'Brien replied that after they have some design solution proposals they will present the designs to stakeholders.

Dan Soler said that if there are improvements that the community is looking for that can be done at same time as mitigation, we would be happy to work on joint projects.

Jim Toulouse identified the next steps as refining floodplain impacts, identifying potential mitigation locations, and working with agency staff to select mitigation measures and locations.

Gillian Rosenquist referred the design team to Golden Valley's comments on the Draft EIS as they raised a lot of questions on the floodplain issue.

George Selman asked what has been budgeted for in this segment. Dan Soler stated that the project budget is currently based on the Draft EIS assumptions and a certain level of engineering with a contingency built in. Paul Danielson added that we did not budget for the worst case scenario, but the budget is not the best case scenario either. It does consider issues that need to be addressed.

West Broadway Roadway/LRT Design

Dan Soler presented. The Draft EIS identified LRT turning off of freight corridor and onto West Broadway starting at 75th (center running). In middle of that segment (Candlewood to 93rd), Hennepin County had programmed a roadway improvement project that was brought to Brooklyn Park for review/approval in mid-2014 and identified a space in the middle for a future LRT project. The City tabled the project to minimize right-of-way acquisition and identify what would be happening with LRT and how the projects impact each other. The LRT and roadway projects are now on similar timeframes so BPO has joined with Hennepin County and Brooklyn Park staff to get input on what this segment of roadway should look like. Teams of City, County, and BPO staff have been formed to look at engineering/design aspects and outreach. Three open houses were held at North Hennepin Community College, there were meetings with Maplebrook and other stakeholders along corridor, and workshops with the city council. BPO, the City, and the County looked at impacts and the input received and came up with a recommendation for design.

The maximum width has been significantly reduced (from 176' to 141.3' according to March 2015 design concept). The projects will be built together to minimize impacts to the community.

The LRT design includes the following elements:

- Center running from 75th to 94th
- Transition to west side running at 94th
- Stations at Brooklyn Blvd, 85th and 93rd

The roadway design includes the following elements:

- Four lanes
- Left-turn lanes at intersections only
- Eight foot boulevards
- Ten foot trail on each side
- Curb, gutter, and linear stormwater system
- Minor adjustments to be made in final design

Next steps:

- Share with CAC/BAC/CMC at May meetings
- BPO and Hennepin County continue to refine design
- BPO will incorporate design concepts to advance LRT engineering and Final EIS
- HC will incorporate design concepts to advance roadway engineering and EAW
- Hennepin County Community Works will continue station area planning activities

Chris Berne noted that there is an issue with the acquisition process at Maplebrook. There is land owned by the association, not individual property owners, so property owners that may be impacted would not receive compensation based on current policy and the association structure. Dan Soler stated that the project would only acquire common property but affects nearby owners, so they are working with the County to come up with a methodology to compensate both the association and individual owners.

George Selman stated that he attended both the 2014 open houses and the ones this year and observed that Maplebrook residents seemed much happier with the design. This is a good example that community input does make a difference.

Steven Schmidt said that the concerns related to property impacts and noise issues don't seem insurmountable. He has heard that the general consensus seems to be that LRT is coming so now we can look at ways to mitigate impacts. Dan Soler replied that individual impacts and mitigation will be looked at as part of the environmental process.

Carol LaFleur stated that we have missed large parts of the population and need additional outreach beyond open houses. Dan Soler replied that the open houses were focused more on those near the West Broadway segment, and we are now starting to reach out community wide to engage more groups. Kathryn O'Brien added that it is important to provide opportunities for all voices to be heard, and those opportunities will be included as part of the environmental justice process.

5. Environmental Update

Kathryn O'Brien presented. Noise and vibration workshops will be held next Tuesday and Wednesday at BPO with our noise and vibration consultant for committee members and elected officials. He'll go over how impacts are determined, when mitigation occurs, and what mitigation options exist. The Wednesday meeting will focus a little more on Brooklyn Park because it includes a roadway component, but there will be crossover between sessions. RSVP by May 11th to David Davies (David.Davies@metrotransit.org).

George Selman asked if the sessions will be recorded Kathryn O'Brien said that we can look into it. Sam O'Connell added that at minimum, workshop materials will be posted on the project website.

Steven Schmidt asked if there will be discussion about what was done through the University of Minnesota for the Green Line to address vibration concerns. Kathryn O'Brien said that can be discussed.

Chris Berne asked how much will be duplicated at the sessions. Kathryn O'Brien stated that the slides/materials will be exactly the same. The sessions were divided by city because they anticipate that questions will be different for Brooklyn Park residents due to the roadway improvements.

6. Other

Sam O'Connell noted that the April 15th meeting summary was included in the materials for this meeting and asked that any edits be provided at the June 1st meeting.

7. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum

Chris Berne stated that regarding the Green Line issues in the news last week, he thought it was unfortunate that comments made by the governor were critical of the staff working on these projects while expressing complete confidence in the appointed officials making decisions.

Steven Schmidt added that there was an interesting op-ed in Sunday's paper regarding LRT written by Adam Platt.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.