



Metropolitan Council

Brooklyn Center Community Center, 6301 Shingle Creek Parkway, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430

Meeting of the METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

December 17, 2014

Members Present

Chair Susan Haigh	Gary Cunningham	Marika Pfefferkorn	Scott McBride
Aasim Shabazz	George Selman	Meg Forney	Scott Schulte
Andy Snope	Jeffrey Lunde	Mike Opat	Shauen Pearce
Barb Johnson	Jim Adams	Pat Bursaw	Shep Harris
Betsy Hodges	Jon Olson	Peter McLaughlin	
Brian Lamb	Linda Higgins	Regan Murphy	
Denise Butler	Lona Schreiber	Rich Gates	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Susan Haigh called the December 17, 2014, as the second meeting of the METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee, to order at 12:30 p.m. at the Brooklyn Center Community Center. Chair Haigh thanked those who were able to attend today and asked those in attendance to go around with brief introductions.

2. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Haigh asked those in attendance if they could remember who asked the question on the 5th page of the minutes. Although Mayor Harris was not present, those in attendance thought it was he who had asked. The minutes will be updated to reflect that addition.

Chair Haigh asked for a motion to approve the minutes, with the change. Councilmember Andy Snope motioned, Comm. Mike Opat seconded the motion. Minutes were passed unanimously. Motion carried.

3. TECHNICAL ISSUES/ISSUE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Chair Haigh introduced Dan Soler, Project Director of BLRT. Mr. Soler introduced himself and presented the PowerPoint slides that outlined the Issue Resolution Process. Mr. Soler advised the need in the first two year Project Development phase to get through the environmental process, receive the Record of Decision with the approval of the FEIS and achieve Municipal Consent with Hennepin County and the five municipalities. The better part of 2015 will be spent working through a slate of technical issues along the entire corridor and each of the municipalities. Six Issue Resolution Teams (IRTs) have been set up to address each city and their issues. Mr. Soler reviewed the issues within each the Segments and the scheduled completion date.



Mayor Lunde asked about the site selection for the maintenance facility. Mayor Lunde noted it is one of the cities sites for future development and asked if there a way to located it somewhere else along the line?

Mr. Soler noted that the DEIS identified possible location of a maintenance facility at two sites, both in Brooklyn Park. One of the sites, at 93rd Avenue, is currently being developed. So we are left with the site on the north end of the alignment. We'll work with the city on the design of the operations and maintenance facility so that it can co-exist with future development.

Commissioner Opat asked about the LRT going over CP tracks in Crystal and asked Mr. Soler to talk about where bridges are generally acceptable and where they are not. Is that just a function of anytime there are two rail lines crossing, one goes over the other or how does that work?

Mr. Soler responded that today the bridge crosses two rails lines, BNSF and CP. With the frequency of freight trains and LRT service, it leads pretty much to the fact that there really has to be a grade separated crossing.

Mr. Soler continued the presentation by talking about freight rail. The issue with freight rail is that we are talking about purchasing 50% of the BNSF corridor, 50' of a 100' right of way Eight of the 13 mile alignment is along BNSF right of way. Also on the BNSF Right of Way are several Xcel transmission towers.

Shauen Pearce asked Mr. Soler to talk a little more about the pedestrian crossing in the Minneapolis segment and the Right of Way pinch point.

Mr. Soler responded by noting his experience on designing pedestrian crossings on University Avenue as part of the Central Corridor LRT project. University Avenue had unofficial pedestrian crossing locations at every single inch of the alignment. People crossing wherever busses stopped. We spent a lot of time talking about signalization, locations, spacing and destinations. We will work on this issue with city staff and engineering on where and how those get treated. With regard to the pinch point, this is an area along the railroad right of way where two railroads come together and between Park Board property; we have a lot of property owners that we need to work with on design.

Commissioner Higgins asked if the project office envisions the pedestrian crossings to be at grade or a bridge over Highway 55.

Mr. Soler responded that the current plans do not include pedestrian bridges over Highway 55. We have talked with several communities about the possibility. There are pros and cons, for example, people don't like to go up and come down.

Ms. Pearce noted for the record that this has been a major point of conversation for the neighborhood groups. They've had the conversation with Heritage Park and again in near north. Their board members and community members participated in a meeting with SRF and were told that a bridge was not being looked at. She asked the project



office to investigate a pedestrian bridge over and note that it is a community request, given the elderly populations, deaths we've had on Olson Highway and the concerns around crossing time.

Commissioner Higgins recalled a time when the County was talking about the Van White Boulevard crossing and thought that there was a pedestrian bridge envisioned there, which never happened. She expressed concern about getting across Highway 55.

Mr. Soler –noted that there has been a lot of advanced work through Hennepin Counties Community Works Stationary Planning. The project office is working with Hennepin County, but noted that they are a couple of steps ahead of the design and engineering work; we are working to catch up.

Mayor Hodges stated that she appreciates what Ms. Pearce and the Commissioner have said. I think it speaks to the larger question of what do we need to see all along Olson, in terms of what is the future growth going to be there, how do we want that road to function, what do we want it to feel like, how are we going to make it friendly for pedestrians, and how do we make it really good for the kind of development that we want to see there. That includes stationary development, but a bigger picture question about what is happening along the line, which is what I think is what is indicated by these questions and this conversation is part of that larger conversation as well.

Mr. Soler responded that's exactly what this issue is around. What does the project need in terms of Olson Memorial Highway. We see the level of change that is going to occur with LRV as we did on University Avenue. What does that mean and how are we going to fix it.

Mr. Soler continued with his presentation of the Issues Resolution Teams. He advises that although some issues are very simple, some may be very difficult, with long, tough discussions. Issue Resolution Teams meetings have begun and include BPO designers, engineering, environmental developers, outreach, agency, consultant and partners. We look to the cities to help us with the appropriate staff for each of the individual topics. Community engagement will begin as we get moving through the Issues. We will work with our Technical Advisory, Community Advisory, and Business Advisory Committees, and will present options to the various committees for discussion prior to pulling it all together to present to the CMC. We have an aggressive schedule and we will be meeting weekly with staff and other groups at your communities to get to the decisions.

Chair Haigh states the IRTs are beginning to look at the technical engineering considerations but there are a lot of citizens input and policy makers input in the process as well. It's not like it goes to the Issues Resolution Team and it gets decided there. Chair Haigh states the last slide shows the various input points that are very important to get citizen and policy maker input into this project. Eventually solution will come here, as well as the advisory committees, the technical committee and issue resolution team.



Councilmember Snope stated that it is imperative that we communicate with our community. Some of our community felt unaware and unnotified that this meeting was happening and now they are really paying attention to getting to those meetings. The City of Golden Valley has put together some things to notify people. This committee, as well as Hennepin County, need to step it up and make sure we are touching the community at large.

Chair Haigh noted that we have a whole outreach and community engagement office. So you get informed so you can make sure we are using the right channels at the right times that are important in your community. Other questions or comments about this process?

Councilmember Johnson asked how many watershed districts are involved in this project.

Mr. Soler responded that a good portion of the alignment is covered by Basset Creek, in the areas along Highway 55 and the Golden Valley area. There are a few that have some small roles, but the other major is the Shingle Creek Watershed.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT CONTRACT UPDATE

Chair Haigh invited Kathryn O'Brien to talk about environmental consultant contract update and environments process.

Ms. O'Brien gave a brief update saying we are half way through the DEIS process. The draft DEIS was published earlier this year and many comments were received on that document. We will be spending a great deal of time in 2015 and 2016 preparing the Final DEIS and responding to the comments addressing the environmental issues that need to be addressed, identifying mitigations that are required for the project and publishing that document for review.

Three proposals were received for the Environmental Contract. The Environmental Consultant – HDR, was selected with the Metropolitan Council approving them on December 10th. Scott Reed is the local project manager for HDR, located in Golden Valley. HDR, however, has offices all over the country. HDR will be working closely with FTA to seek their guidance on the final document with completion by 2016.

Chair Haigh asked if there were any questions for Ms. O'Brien. No questions asked.

5. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Chair Haigh introduced Sam O'Connell, Manager of Public Involvement.

Ms. O'Connell reviewed the role of advisory committees that will also support the Hennepin County Community Works efforts. Advisory committees will tap into folks that have history on projects and bring their ideas and passion. Ms. O'Connell noted that Commissioner Forney served as a Community Advisory Committee member for Southwest LRT. You will see elements we will be talking about. Technical Issues list will be presented to the CAC and BAC for that layering of community input?



Issues will be brought to the Business Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee for input. Our open houses usually happen right after the BAC and CAC meetings.

We are going to work staff hard and Business Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee as well. We need a two year commitment for these positions. We want to make sure all the communications and activities are known to everybody.

Ms. O'Connell explained the role of the advisory committee co-chairs, stating the co-chair manages the work of the committees as they move forward and identify topics of concern. Ms. O'Connell reviewed the role of the advisory committees and asked the cities to help fill the roster.

Ms. O'Connell asks for questions.

Councilmember Johnson asked how we reached out to the group to determine those who would be on the Corridors of Opportunity engagement?

Ms. O'Connell responded that the list of organizations are those that received Corridors of Opportunity Engagement grants. Some of their work is to engage members of their communities to talk about Blue Line. We'd like to bring them into the fold and be able to tap those resources at the CAC. Some of the grantees received a grant in 2011 or 2012.

Councilmember Johnson asked if these grantees in the Corridors of Opportunity really got going with the Green Line? Is this a combination of those groups?

Ms. O'Connell responded that some of these grantees specifically applied for just grants for communications on the Blue Line, some also sought grants to do communications on the Green Line as well. The majority of grantees here are pretty much focused on the Blue Line.

Commissioner Forney asked if we would consider someone from the Park Board or the Park community and how the environmental consultant is feeding into the communication advisory committees.

Ms. O'Connell responded that the city can definitely appoint a community representative from the Park Board. We have an opportunity to take a look at once all the communities have submitted their nominees for this to fill up and make sure we are hearing all of those voices.

As far as the environmental consultant, it will be very similar to Southwest; if we have environmental issues we will discuss at the CAC and BAC.

Major Lunde asked if North Hennepin College would be considered for the Business or community advisory.



Ms. O'Connell responded that we will have a Business Advisory Committee where we would seek representatives from the communities, and would also ask for a representative as well. We do have the appointment flexibility of three additional where we would, if we don't see any of our large employers – which would include the technical schools – we would like to see them as well.

Ms. O'Connell continued by reviewing next steps. We will continue to work with city staff on invites and hold a joint CAC and BAC kick-off meeting.

In addition, we have Communication Steering Committees (CSC) primarily populated with your outreach folks from your communities, as well as the Council, MetroTransit, and the County to help us with global communications. We generally meet quarterly, possibly more often as needed. We also identify community events where we can table to share information.

Please make sure to go to the web site and sign up for GovDelivery. Gives you the ability to go back and look at meeting materials if you happen to miss a meeting.

Chair Haigh asked if there were any questions for Ms. O'Connell. Chair Haigh encouraged folks to serve on the CAC. It is an important part of the project. It is important get some good cross fertilization.

6. ADJOURN

Chair Haigh adjourned the meeting with a Happy Holidays to everyone, thanking everyone for taking time to do this. Meeting adjourned at 1:28pm.

Chair Haigh also announced that this is her last meeting. There may be a new Chair in place by the next meeting. She wishes everyone the very very best in the work and states it is an exciting and wonderful project.