



# METRO Blue Line Extension Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

6:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

**CAC Members:** Ellis Beck, Brett Buckner, Thomia Brown, John Chambers Dunn, Kathy Fraser, Andrew Gillett, Jason Greenberg, Jeff Guertin, Jonathan Hansen, Jericho Huggar, Ken Rodgers

**Agency Staff and Guests:** Thomia Brown, Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Andrew Gillett, Cathy Gold, Bojan Mistic, Tran Pham, Ken Rodgers, Menno Schukking, Josie Shardlow, Koehl Simmons, Kaja Vang, Joan Vanhala, Kjerstin Yager

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Co-chair John Chambers Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Nkongo took attendance. John asked if on the attendance, the project team would be able to note who gave prior notice before absences different than those who did not give notice. Nkongo stated they will look into that.

### 2. Adopt Meeting Minutes

Co-chair Jason Greenberg asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Co-chair John seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

### 3. Project Update

Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, provided the project update. Nkongo discussed changes to the calendar look ahead which included the FTA reviews and Municipal Consent. John asked Nkongo to give a recap of what has happened so far regarding the previous route and where the project is at now. Nkongo provide this recap, including engagement efforts that have occurred to date. John thanked Nkongo for his summary and asked Jason Greenberg if he had anything to add. Jason stated that that not wanting light rail on County Road 81 is becoming more noticeable with various yard signs that have been posted by community members and stated it was a valid opinion as people are realizing that at this point there are no viable alternatives to having LRT on County Road 81. Jonathan Hansen noted that much of the "No on Highway 81" is comprised of people who do not want the light rail at all. Ken asked if the project is vulnerable to those groups. Nkongo stated that the project will continue to receive input and will make adjustments as appropriate. Neha stated that the environmental team will continue to accept and evaluate comments, which will be published in the SDEIS. Ken stated he believes the public engagement done by the project is reported to the CAC globally but may be summarized too much. He asked the project team to report to the CAC more robustly. Nkongo stated that the challenge the project is facing right now is choosing a preferred alternative and selecting an alternative that is supported by the community. Jeff Guertin stated that he would like more clarity on where the project is and would like to make sure the project is not derailed. Bojan Mistic stated that the recommendations will go through the Corridor Management Committee and that will be a major milestone in the project. Jason

Greenberg stated that there were never signs against the project in Robbinsdale during the previous alignment although the project was at 90% completed so there must be something different this time around for there to be such a large community reaction. Nkongo stated the project team has received communications from Robbinsdale and the project team needs to elevate those voices. Jonathan Hansen stated that he heard a lot of concerns about light rail from people living along the BNSF corridor during the previous phase of the project. Cathy Gold, Hennepin County stated that the engagement efforts will be transparent in the way they are framed, and the ways feedback is implemented. Nkongo thanked John for the discussion.

Nkongo presented a timeline to publish the SDEIS and shared where the project is at regarding the anti-displacement work. John stated that he has seen that the project is being recognized for the anti-displacement work outside of this group and thanked Nkongo for that.

#### **4. Outreach and Community Engagement Update**

Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, reviewed the statutory requirements from the state legislature that were related to this project. Nkongo stated that the project had received a \$50 million grant that comes along with engagement requirements, especially in Minneapolis. Nkongo reported the project posted the draft engagement framework and it was open for public comment. John Chambers Dunn asked how the requirements would change engagement activities to the groups engaged by the project. Nkongo stated that the project had already been engaging these various groups and even beyond groups listed in the transportation bill. Nkongo stated they received comments on the document related to accessibility that were incorporated into the document. Nkongo provided an update on upcoming Minneapolis meetings.

#### **5. Minneapolis Design Update**

Bojan Mistic, Metropolitan Council 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 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue North or Lyndale Avenue. Bojan noted that if the light rail was on 21<sup>st</sup>, it would become a transitway and West Broadway might be reconstructed. John emphasized that members can provide input into the design process during the CAC. Bojan reviewed the Penn Avenue station location. Jason asked what community input was considered to inform the station location choice. Bojan stated that impacts to properties were considered. Ken Rodgers asked where the CAC will be involved on station design. Bojan stated that as design advances, the project team will be able to consider potential pedestrian crossing locations, and specific access points. Ken emphasized that input from those with disabilities needs to be considered at all stages of the project, rather than only after the station location is chosen. Jason Greenberg asked about parking. Nkongo stated the project team is working with property owners nearby to find locations to accommodate parking. Bojan reviewed the 21<sup>st</sup>/West Broadway design options for two stations. Brett Buckner stated that there may be safety challenges along 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Bojan stated that a similar comment was made at BAC yesterday, and Nkongo added that this would be a good thing for the co-chairs to share out at CMC. Thomia Brown asked is the Plymouth Avenue bridge construction has anything to do with the BLRT. Jason and Nkongo confirmed the projects are unrelated.

#### **6. Next Meeting: August 9, 2023.**

Jason asked if any members had an issue with rescheduling the next meeting to August 9. There was no issue with this schedule change, and the meeting was rescheduled.

7. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.