



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

8:00 AM –9:30 AM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

BAC Members: Alex Burns, Candace Oathout, Chris Webley, John Hacker, J. Kevin Croston, Jackson George, Ian Alexander, Jennifer Cutter, Jimmy Loyd, Kenya McKnight-Ahad, Matthew Kenning, Mike Steinhauer, Ryan Borne, Timothy Baylor, Felicia Perry, Lucien Moldovan, Steph Hanna

Agency Staff and Guests: Sophia Ginis, Jesse Struve, Jim Voll, Joan Vanhala, Kristine Stehly, Kyle Mianulli, Nick Landwer, Trevor Roy, Sam O'Connell, Rebecca Hughes, Andrew G Gillett, Daniel Soler, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Liz Morice

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, called the meeting to order at 8:06. She shared an overview of the agenda and what to expect with the meeting. Dan Soler, Hennepin County, welcomed the group.

2. Adopt March 2 & 22 Meeting Minutes

The meeting summaries were adopted.

3. Community Engagement Activities, Community Feedback on Initial Route Options

The group has been receiving ongoing community feedback through advisory committees, townhalls (150 participants), check-ins with community and business members, interactive map comments (200+ comments), survey responses (700+), general comments from the online form and email (20+) and many more questions and phone calls.

Emerging themes and questions: there is support for LRT in the area. There have been a lot of questions about impacts and people looking for more information. There is a lot of desire for more information about stations and how structures are conceived of and designed. The two main questions in the survey are about the route options (55% prefer West Broadway, 22% prefer Lowry and 23% need more information) and input on project goals. 60% of the respondents shared that improving access to regional jobs and destinations is their main goal and the other is advance local and regional equity.

Joan Vanhala, Hennepin County, shared an update on the Community Engagement Cohort Contractors. These are trusted community partners with expertise on cultures and geographies of the corridor. There are organizations that focus on each area (Area 1: 4 orgs, Area 2: 2 community orgs, and Area 3: 13 community organizations). There is a good mix of cultural groups. There are groups that support small businesses.



Mike Steinhauser asked whether there would be another survey as there hasn't been a lot of community awareness yet. Sophia responded that as more details and feedback is gathered, there will be another survey so that questions can be updated and asked in different ways. Also, we're just scratching the surface of engagement and that there needs to be a lot more work done.

Mike asked if there has been any outreach to the press in area 1, 2 and 3 and if they've been invited to these calls so they can be involved and report back to the community. Sophia responded that no, the press hasn't been asked to come to these meetings. The communications team has not pushed these meetings specifically. The media is an important piece and with the initial route released; they did push out press release that targeted media of all three areas of the project. Kyle Mianulli (Hennepin County) and Trevor Roy (Metropolitan Council) followed up with the prominent media. Kyle was working with many media sources to meet where people are listening. There are on-going media efforts.

4. Supporting Communities in Place

Dan shared some overview of this topic, and the pieces that are directly related to this project. This topic has been voiced as very important to the communities impacted by the project. While the project is about designing light rail, it is an impetus for important conversations about supporting equity and communities in place. There needs to be a parallel discussion about the communities impacted by this project. That is why this project is supporting the policy work that goes into this. Sam O'Connell, Metropolitan Council, shared that they are hearing this very loudly from communities. There is work done with the development of the Blue and Green Line, but there will also be new work that is intentional to address these concerns. The project team is still learning, and this will be evolving as discussions happen next week.

Sophia shared some buckets of work that are anticipated in the next year. In the next month, the project wants to focus on community feedback. Initial feedback revealed that the community was very concerned about gentrification and displacement. They also heard that new development needs to reflect community desires. They also heard about both negative and positive hopes brought with the old project. They also heard about community's aspirations, how the project and community assets can be leveraged, and what are the tangible solutions to concerns. Dan Soler shared that a lot of these concerns are bigger now since the project has moved from the BNSF railway to street level.

Sophia shared that Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council understands that they are pieces of the puzzle, not the whole picture, but this work takes the roles of communities and other entities. There are people who have concerns about the presence of the project partners and issues regarding trust. The Project partners recognize that there are roles for partners in this. There needs to be short- and long-term goals, and there needs to be tangible commitments that come out of this process. The project team recognizes that this is not just the project but has to happen over the long term, and with a multi-dimensional approach.

Some of the goals are the needs to come to a shared understanding of the terms, displacement, gentrification, and community benefits. Are there other questions? Are they in the community's plans? Do they have existing definitions? Mike asked about the role of the project in satisfying everyone in the project. Dan Soler said that it is important to address the needs of everyone realizing



that in some cases the greater public benefit will include purchasing businesses or acquiring properties that make some people unhappy. Mike just wanted to put that question out there because he knows not everyone will be happy.

Tim Baylor asked if they could provide some perspective on other lines. What have been the disruption? What has been the impact? And from a community perspective, has it been worth it? Sam said that is exactly what we want to bring forward and share. Sophia said that is a good action item in terms of data to bring forth following the meeting.

Sophia shared the project partner commitment. Some of these commitments included recognizing the roles of different private partners, address short and long-term needs, identify resources to address these issues and take actions that are tangible and measurable. The project wants to come to a shared understanding of displacement, gentrification, and community benefits. Mike asked if there are other definitions from past work. Sophia shared that there are definitions Mike named businesses, construction and home displacement. Dan said that there might be direct displacement where property acquisition happened. There is also indirect displacement of customers due to traffic or construction for example. Then there are also property changes that might make the area unaffordable. Felicia Perry shared that this could be a difficult discussion to enter into without seeing what the Met Council's definition to react to. Mike said good point Felicia, I need more education on it to make a decision on it or on how to define it. Dan said this is the introduction of it, and we can pull together what we've seen from other agencies and other groups.

Sam said that we don't have a definition already. Our hope is to craft what works for the Blue Line extension. We can work together to modify and improve those definitions. Sophia said that we will be coming back to this conversation in the following meetings. Felicia asked to clarify we are tabling just the discussion of the definition for today. She thought that the work group did not have to wait until May or June. Sophia wanted to clarify that there are people currently working on this. She described what building the table for this work would look like. Goal would be to establish an anti-displacement working group to create implementable recommendations. This would be building a team that has support, expertise and resources to deliver measurable outcomes.

Tim asked if it was too soon to start this work without a route chosen. Sophia shared that there are a lot of people who feel that it would be good to have these mechanisms in place for when a route is chosen. Dan shared that there will be specifics on specific routes, but even just announcing the routes has started changes in the areas and could put pressure that leads to displacement. This is not a route selection topic specifically; it is something that will happen until opening day. We think it's good to start it early. Sophia emphasized that we heard from community do it better this time, so they want to be deliberate about addressing this challenge.

Sophia asked the group for input on who would be a trusted facilitator and the names of private groups and public agencies that should be included. Who would be helpful to have at the core working group? Mike said that this table has to include people who will address multiple forms of displacement and that becomes a big table and maybe ineffective group. Various members were named by the group including The Alliance, The Blue Line Coalition and CURA. Sam O'Connell asked who the group has worked with that could represent the business community. Felicia Perry pointed out a concern with the idea of expertise. She asked who in Minnesota has had success preventing



gentrification. She said there are a lot of people who have been working on it. Felicia said that it is good to have a group like these resources. Tim said that I don't know how we talk about displacement without locations. It would look different in front of the McDonald's versus Mike's shopping area. There should be more discussion about the alignment and the proposed stops before getting into details about displacement. Sophia shared that there are multiple facets to this. There is direct displacement and indirect displacement. Even requests for data are steps we can take right away. Sam O'Connell shared there are also people who can't take an alignment seriously, until the issue of displacement is addressed. We are hearing from community members that it is important to start this work before they weigh in on route options.

Kenya McKnight-Ahad said that she's worked with the Alliance since 2007. They really do have experience with anti-displacement. The communities impacted have to be in front of this. There is experience from around the country as well. We need a multi-pronged strategy. We also need to be open to people who have more experience in community.

Sophia shared some of the next steps to develop an approach to form and support the working group and begin to identify members. What are the initial actions needed? How would success be defined? Mike said he wants to have a discussion with people who did this before. Kenya said that the closest thing I can think of to this is the Equity council with the Met Council with this experience. I do not want to define success but want the communities to define that. Being open as a council and committee to understand the community's interest will help define success. Alex Burns said that Move Minneapolis and the Chamber is thinking about now is that the people who are in the community now are able to enjoy the benefits of the investment. Alex said that he wants to make sure this project works for people who rely on transit rather than choice riders. This is a big investment in climate action and that should be a consideration.

5. Adjourn

Next meeting: Tuesday May 4th. Mike Steinhauser asked for more comments and questions. Felicia said that in the next co-chair meeting she would like to have more discussion about the input process. Mike closed the meeting at 9:26 AM.

Chat

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 8:38 AM

Agreed Tim.

from Alex Burns to everyone: 8:38 AM

Robust engagement improves the project outcome. The idea that we can't make everyone happy shouldn't hold that process back

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 8:39 AM

Agreed Alex

from mike Steinhauser to everyone: 8:40 AM

On Tim's comment, where did the other lines make mistakes and how can we learn and not repeat their mistakes.

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 8:55 AM

Traditionally anti displacement has been addressed after routes have been selected. That has not worked for underserved communities unfortunately, Tim. I recommend we start now.

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 8:55 AM



It's already happened in Harrison after the routes were announced. And there are several issues in that area that need to be addressed.

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 8:56 AM

And the concerns around displacement vary even by corridor. There are different factors at play on Lowry than there are on West Broadway. Both are in Area 3.

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 8:56 AM

*And

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 9:00 AM

I think workgroup include BAC, CAC and CMC members? And they all meet collectively and not separate anti displacement workgroups.

from DASO002 to everyone: 9:00 AM

I have to move to another meeting. Thanks to all of you for engaging on this important topic. Getting this right will be key to advancing the project.

from Alex Burns to everyone: 9:01 AM

The Alliance?

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 9:01 AM

CURA

from Alex Burns to everyone: 9:01 AM

CURA is great!

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 9:01 AM

Same with The Alliance

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 9:01 AM

The Alliance is already doing work on the BLRT

from Kenya to everyone: 9:01 AM

The Alliance is most grounded

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 9:01 AM

Yes to the Blue Line Coalition

from Kenya to everyone: 9:03 AM

The Alliance pioneered transit/transportation work with BIPOC communities since 2007

from Alex Burns to everyone: 9:09 AM

That's helpful context Sam

from Felicia Perry WBC to everyone: 9:23 AM

Thank you for raising those points Alex.

from Alex Burns to everyone: 9:25 AM

Thank you! I appreciate this discussion.