

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting date: January 03, 2024

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- Chair, David Fenley, at large
- Vice Chair, Darrell Paulsen, Precinct F
- Sam Jasmine, Precinct A
- Christopher Bates, Precinct B
- Patsy Murphy, Precinct C
- Ken Rodgers, Precinct D
- Jeffrey Dains, Precinct E
- Kari Sheldon, Precinct G

- Trevor Turner, MCD
- Erik Henriksen, MCD
- Diane Graham-Raff, MAAA
- Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- Heidi Myhre, MCCD
- Claudia Fuglie, MCCD
- Richard Rowen, AARP MN

Excused
Jeffrey Dains

Ex-officio:

- Phillip Sterner, Council Member Liaison
 - Andy Streasick, Metro Mobility
 - Douglas Cook, Metro Transit Customer Advocate
 - Guthrie Byard, ADA & Title VI Administrator
- = present, E = excused

Public

Attending from Home

Christopher Bates, Ken Rodgers,
Kari Sheldon, Doug Cook

Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:35 p.m.

Chair Fenley announced that Andy Streasick would not be presenting the Metro Mobility Operating Statistics Update – Reporting Preferences due to his absence from work.

Agenda approved

It was moved by Patsy Murphy, seconded by Patty Thoreson to approve the agenda. Committee members noted the removal of the Metro Mobility update from the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Patty Thoreson, seconded by Patsy Murphy to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2023, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Business and information items

1. Blue line Extension LRT Update (Christine Beckwith, P.E., MBA, Project Director, Blue Line and Nick Landwer, Director, Transportation Systems Development – Metro Transit) Chris Beckwith, Project Director provided an introduction and informed the committee that Nick Landwer, Director Design and Engineering, would be presenting during the second half of the presentation noting that he has been with the project since the beginning. Beckwith initiated the update with a project overview highlighting attributes of the new proposed alignment, project schedule items and what the project team is currently working on. The document

PPT_BLE_TAAC_20240103_Draft.pdf, Blue Line Extension Project Update TAAC was displayed for review. The 31.4-mile, twelve-station Blue Line Extension project was defined noting it will be an extension of the existing Blue Line and a fast, frequent all-day service from Target Field to the northwest suburbs. The project team is focused on building community prosperity through anti-displacement strategies which is a different approach to anticipate anti-displacement and how to address it throughout the project – before, during and after construction.

Next steps and the project timeline were reviewed highlighting that the project team is currently working on a supplemental draft environmental impact statement process with feedback expected during the spring of 2024. Municipal consent from city and county councils and boards is being built as they go through the project adapting alignment, changing the scope and responding to community feedback. It was noted that the final design will be completed later this year or into 2025 followed by three to four years of construction and is anticipated to open in 2030. Engagement activities in the community and through various types of partnerships were reviewed noting the various community partnerships with entities such as Hennepin County and that community cohorts get information out to their communities reaching community members better than the project team.

The committee was informed of the Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Executive Summary that is available online on the Metro Transit website. This summary includes Anti-displacement community feedback, strategies that are important to the community; safety, accessibility and strategies of priority were reviewed. It was noted that safety and accessibility were common themes in this feedback. Strategies of priority were highlighted: affordable housing preservation/development, limiting investor purchasing/corporate ownership, and small business support. The Anti-Displacement Corridor Management Committee resolution was reviewed. This resolution is the next step in anti-displacement work. The committee was informed that there is no funding source, but potential funding sources will arise through the process from private and philanthropic investors. The next steps were reviewed noting the project team has developed a corridor-wide anti-displacement policy agenda to present to the 2024 legislative session.

Beckwith prefaced the project scope/alignment overview reiterating that Landwer would be providing the update and underscored that the information presented is currently being studied in the supplemental draft Environmental Impact Statement and is not the final alignment. Following an introduction, Landwer informed the committee of the highlights of each station along the Blue Line Extension with emphasis on at-grade accessibility, connections to bus transit and Park and Rides, proximity to community gathering places, and safety including maintenance and security. Landwer concluded underscoring that the project team has been out in the community on a regular basis and feedback from community outreach gets implemented into design. They make project adjustments based on community feedback.

Fuglie opened the discussion questioning if they will be adding turn cycles and whether they will offer easy access and if so, where would they be installed. Beckwith clarified that Fuglie was referring to turn styles defining them as containment to force payment prior to entering a station and stated turn styles are not being designed for the Blue Line right now. The project team is waiting on Metro Transit to complete studies and evaluations on them and would consult with the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee if they decided to look at them as there would be a new set of problems to study. Chair Fenley asked if this would be a system-wide decision to be implemented across the entire system or starting with new construction. Beckwith responded that a few pilot studies might be done to see how well it works and shared that there would be difficulty in retrofitting and likely not a lot of benefit as pedestrians could get around them. Vice Chair, Paulsen, added that turn styles could potentially inhibit travel.

Myhre asked what the cleaning and safety plan will look like as there are serious issues in both areas. Beckwith concurred that this was a very good question and recommended



looking at the safety plans from Metro Transit as a resource for knowing what is being done to address those issues noting snow and ice removal is considered in design planning and will be coordinated with Engineering & Facilities. Graham-Raff questioned if planned traffic signals such as those found at pedestrian crossings that alert oncoming traffic of pedestrians crossing are part of the design. Landwer provided several examples of how they design track crossings to be safe for pedestrians emphasizing that they will look at crossings on an individual basis with operations and safety personnel. Graham-Raff clarified that these signals alert oncoming traffic including cyclists that pedestrians are approaching crossings.

Baines questioned what is being done to cover potential budget overrun. Beckwith informed the committee that the Blue Line does not have a current project cost estimate; it will come out this year. The cost estimate is higher than the previous estimate noting a cost contingency of up to forty percent is added, Risk Management looks at things that could go wrong. This project will stay closer to the budget than the Southwest Light Rail project.

Hendricksen asked if station locations will be incorporated into other BRT stations. Landwer responded that they looked at getting as close to the D Line as possible; however, getting a third station put in would be difficult but still it's still under evaluation noting that the Penn Avenue station was put in as close to the C Line as possible. Hendricksen also questioned if there will be wayfinding signage at key stops. Landwer responded that they would look at it to ensure riders know how to get to various stations.

Chair Fenley requested clarification that there will be no elevators at the stations. Landwer informed the committee that Lowry was considered a possibility for an elevated station but was brought down to at-grade adding that two or three locations might have split platforms, but elevated and split platforms are low in priority. Beckwith added that Robbinsdale would like the project team to look at evaluated track noting it is not included in the design, however feedback from the committee would be helpful. Fuglie stated that elevators need to be easy to access and emphasized that elevators malfunction too often. Myhre requested consideration of the environment and accessibility to the platform in the project design. Rodgers reiterated how often elevators go down and that only one being down creates access issues so an extra set of elevators would be essential to retain accessibility. Bates pointed out the prevalence of senior living in the Robbinsdale area and therefore how elevators could cause more accessibility problems than expected. Myhre concluded the discussion requesting that access to connections be as simple as possible.

2. Metro Mobility Operating Statistics Update – Reporting Preferences (Andy Streasick, Manager, Metro Mobility Customer Service)

This information item was cancelled as the presenter was not available.

3. 2024 Workplan Update (TAAC Chair, David Fenley)

The committee was informed that the 2024 Workplan is ninety percent complete and will go out to them in approximately one week. The vote will be held at the February 7, 2024, TAAC meeting. The committee was thanked for their responses to 2024 Workplan e-mail that was sent out in December. The committee was asked to think about re-occurring workplan topics and what, when and where to include the re-occurring topics in the 2024 Workplan. Vice Chair Paulsen requested clarification on re-occurring versus monthly updates and the definition of quarterly. Chair Fenley cited a few examples of how re-occurring updates might happen:

Re-Occurring Topics:

Monthly:	Legislative updates
Quarterly:	Metro Mobility update
	Project updates



Six Months:	Policy updates (e.g., ADA, Equity Plans)
Annually:	State Fair updates Driver Recognition

Vice Chair, Paulsen provided clarification on the frequency of updates and re-occurring versus annual and one-time project updates and requested that they are distinguished on the workplan update spreadsheet. Chair Fenley concurred that this would be useful and could be done. The committee was informed that they will receive a spreadsheet with a tab for time frames. Graham-Rolf suggested having the State Fair committee update on the previous year providing what worked and did not work so the committee can provide feedback prior to the State Fair. Vice chair Paulsen stated this should be possible as it would be better to know what they are going to do ahead of time rather than afterwards noting they should get in front of TAAC early enough to allow time to make changes. Chair Fenley stated that this update should possibly be held semi-annually; Vice Chair stated it should happen in June or July. Murphy agreed that they should present during their planning stage so the committee can provide feedback and then recap what was done, the highlights and challenges after the State Fair. Myhre expressed concern over recommendations not being heard and considered for implementation. Chair Fenley assured the committee that TAAC can make recommendations to the State Fair noting that they are not a Metropolitan Council entity and reminded that the State Fair and Metro Transit value TAAC feedback. Vice Chair, Paulsen added that TAAC can make suggestions noting that both entities want to hear from TAAC.

Vice Chair Paulsen requested sending the 2024 Workplan spreadsheet separate from other documents.

Reports

Subcommittee

1. Blue Line – Ken Rodgers
No report given the presentation Add recap of reports discussion.
2. Green Line – Christopher Bates
Ano report.
3. Gold Line – Darrell Paulsen
Report should've gone out.
4. Purple Line – Darrell Paulsen
White Bear Avenue will change from four lanes to three lanes. A canopy will be placed over the trail. Chair Fenley announced that the report will be sent out to the committee.

Bus Priority Seating TAAC Work Group

No report.

Chair

Government Relations will be here in February and again in March and then subsequently each month during session. Hannah will be presenting again. Vice Chair Paulsen pointed out that Hannah is a transit rider.

Public invitation

No report.

Member comment

Add Myhre's comments on Metro Mobility and Vice Chair Paulsen's responses.

Chair Fenley reminded the committee that member comments should focus on topics from the

current agenda.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of January 3, 2024.

**January 3, 2024 minutes completed by outgoing TAAC Recording Secretary, Rhoda Chaffe.*

Approved this 07 day of February 2024.

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