



**METRO Blue Line Extension
Business Advisory Committee Meeting
March 7, 2017
Blue Line Project Office
5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200
Crystal, MN 55428
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

BAC Members: Denny Walsh, Randy Boushek, Staci Horwitz, Alison Pence, Charlie Jacobson, Mark Steinhauser, Matt Rentsch, Josh Cramer

Agency Staff and Guests: Juan Rangel, David Davies, Dan Pfeiffer, Nick Landwer, Alicia Vap, Caroline Miller, Jessica Laabs

1. Call to Order

New members from Robbinsdale – Matt Rentsch, DFA and Josh Cramer, Chamber of Commerce

2. Approval of Minutes

October 2016 meeting minutes were approved.

3. TAAC Workshop – Alicia Vap

Golden Valley Road station is a bit unusual – the access is off Golden Valley Road, which is higher than the station and tracks in the trench. Alicia shared a video which helps to show and explain what this change will be like.

A number of techniques were used at the TAAC meeting to help attendees who are visually impaired. Attendees supported the design progression.

4. Construction Coordination – Nick Landwer

Note: Presentation dealt mostly with Olson Memorial Highway, but team is looking at issues throughout entire corridor.

Nick showed a map with projects currently under consideration/planned for construction that may be near or affect Blue Line construction. Noted other transit projects, as well as Bassett Creek tunnel project. Bassett Creek work will occur in the fall, when we are less likely to have a heavy rainfall event. This will require a 9-day shutdown which will save time and lane shifts in BRT construction.

MCES forcemain/floodplain mitigation – before BLRT fills in floodplain, need to make sure existing infrastructure is in good repair.

Walsh: Are these projects contingent on funding? Are these independent of LRT or because of LRT?

Landwer: Bassett Creek tunnel needs to be done regardless, MnDOT was going to work on replacing it. Other elements are required because of this project. BPO wants to make sure we have bid packages ready so construction can start in the fall.

Boushek: Will the construction in the fall start before the I-94 work is done, or after?

Landwer: I-94 work slated to start in 2017, with some finishing work in 2018 (done by June 2018). Any ramp detours or closures should be done by the time for BLRT-associated work on Bassett Creek tunnel. No conflicts with BLRT schedule anticipated.

Southwest LRT is starting this year [2017] through 2020 – construction on Royalston Ave, with a 2-season construction period. Glenwood Avenue from Aldrich to 12th will maintain access to Lyndale Avenue.

C Line BRT construction planned for 2018-19 will require some work along Olson Memorial Highway.

BPO staff have met monthly with the stakeholder group since November, and will continue with construction staging meetings, with goal to develop an interagency construction communications plan.

Horowitz: How will we let people know? Make sure you're using us as community members/organizations to get the word out.

Pfeiffer: BPO will be developing a construction communications plan and will set some guidelines for when we want to get notice out. Typically, start of construction notification will go out 30-45 days in advance, and staff will start meeting with business owners and developing access plans. The goal is to get notice out to as many people as possible.

Jacobson: How will you handle staging?

Landwer: Staging will be left up to the contractor, but staff have identified some areas along the corridor that would be appropriate for staging. One of those is Sochacki Park, which has been identified in coordination with the city of Golden Valley and the park district, which is actually a mutual benefit because the contractor will be cleaning up some existing debris.

Jacobson: More often than not, that happens next to businesses vs. next to residential.

5. Olson Memorial Highway Update – Alicia Vap

Station

Plans for Penn and Van White stations were shared with the community last November. Community comments included: make station design more unique, warm up the color palettes, similar architecture of the two stations helps tie the corridor together.

Context and corridor exercises were done to identify character words for each location. Designers incorporated this input and took some inspiration from decorative bridge railings that Minneapolis has been working on with MnDOT for bridges over I-94. Also showed some inspiration of Children's Hospital on West Bank and glass panels along Green Line/U of M.

Alicia showed examples of how some of these principles could be applied to Penn and Van White – “fins” and light elements.

Other inspiration included Walker Library on Hennepin Ave and the varying shingles. Showed examples of how this could apply to Penn and Van White.

BAC provided feedback:

- Like idea of glass panels, but doesn't have warmth. Combined with wood or some other material might address comment about warmth.
- As a bus rider in N. Minneapolis, it feels very industrial. The silver example feels very harsh and the same industrial feel. This is an opportunity to create a change in that feel. There is a lot of paving out there, so having a gray or silver color just adds to that. Having warmer color might help break that up.
- Timeless designs seem to have warmer color (think St. Thomas). Stone seems warmer and more timeless.
- Incorporate pop of color/accents with the timeless feel.
- Library example works because it's a mixture of materials.
- “Fins” get a little lost – not really seen unless you're further away, and when you're further away maybe you can't see them as well.
- Like the openness of stations, being able to see through them – but how much shelter do they actually provide?
 - Vap: Wind screens, heat, glass protection help with that.

Trees

The project does have an impact on over 240 boulevard trees and 120 median trees along Olson Memorial. Team is working with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to develop a planting plan that provides an urban canopy and uses an assortment of trees for better tree health and variation. Over 50 existing median trees will be relocated to nearby parks in north Minneapolis. The park board has had luck with replanting in the past.

Floyd B Olson Memorial Statue

Floyd is a historic statue created by a master sculptor located at Penn/55 but was originally located in the median itself, and then moved to the south side. The project has indirect adverse effects on this resource. The project agreed to a mitigation plan, which includes researching the historic siting of this statue and exploring potential locations for relocating the statue. Research indicates his current location was not the original intent for Floyd's location. Team will be talking with consulting parties about identifying a more permanent location.

6. Corridor Open Houses

Open houses will be starting March 20 in each city along the corridor, generally from 4:30-7:00 (except Golden Valley). Open houses will be focused on design updates. There will be no presentation; it's intended to be a come-and-go true open house.

Walsh: What's the timing of funding?

Pfeiffer: Legislative session ends in May, but CTIB is also a factor. CTIB may disband, which would put more impetus on the counties.

Landwer: Counties could raise the sales tax to ½ cent instead of current ¼ cent under CTIB.

Walsh: Do you have to get bonds issued this year, to get the federal funding?

Pfeiffer: We have to have all local funding committed to apply for the Full Funding Grant Agreement from FTA.

Vap: CAC asked for an update once funding is more settled, which should be later this spring.

Walsh: In some sense, you want to get all of your funding commitments considering all of the changes that may be going through the legislature (reorganization of the Met Council, etc.). Getting as much locked in this summer would be good.

Pfeiffer: Yes, we want to get as much secured as soon as possible.

Vap: It is certainly a "watch and see" at the federal level as well, with the new administration and uncertainty about federal programs.

7. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum

No comments.

8. Adjourn