



METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee (CMC) Meeting Summary

Date & Time	June 8, 2023 1:30 – 3:00 PM
Location	F.T Heywood Chambers, 560 N 6 th Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55412
CMC Members	Charlie Zelle, Reva Chamblis, Karla Arredondo Payan, Jeff Lunde, Bill Blonigan, Gillian Rosenquist, Jeremiah Ellison, Suzanne Sobotka, Sarah Ghandour, Meg Forney, Therese Kiser, John Pacheco, Tara Watson, Dan Doerrer, Aaron Wagner, Jacob Frey, Hollies Winston
Project Staff	Chris Beckwith, Nick Thompson, Nick Landwer, Jer Yang, Dan Soler, Cathy Gold

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council, called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm.

Chair Zelle welcomed the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) members and allowed members to introduce themselves.

Chair Zelle emphasized that the meeting material for today can be accessed on the official website of the Blue Line Extension project at bluelineext.org. Additionally, Chair Zelle informed the public that written comments can be submitted to Nkongo Cigolo, a representative of the Metropolitan Council, until June 16, 2023. These comments will be included as attachments to the meeting notes for the next session.

In today's meeting, Chair Zelle announced that members will receive updates regarding the project and, more importantly, continue the discussion on Anti-Displacement, building upon the previous month's conversations.

Chair Zelle informed the attendees that this meeting marks the first gathering following the conclusion of the legislative session for transportation in the state of Minnesota.

2. Public Invitation

Chair Zelle conveyed to the attendees that the meeting will commence with a 15-minute public comment period, allowing each speaker a designated time of 3 minutes to express their thoughts.

During the public comment period, Kathy Neitzke, a resident from Lyn Park, and Eva Young, a member of the public, were among the individuals who had the opportunity to



speak and share their perspectives. The complete video recordings of their comments, in their own words, can be accessed on the bluelineext.org website under the "Committees" section, specifically the link to today's meeting.

3. Approval of May 11, 2023, BLRT CMC Meeting Summary

Commissioner Jeff Lunde from Hennepin County made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 11 CMC Meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Bill Blonigan from the City of Robbinsdale. Subsequently, the meeting minutes were approved by the attendees.

4. Community and Business Advisory Committee Reports

During the meeting, Co-Chair Dan Doerrer, representing the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), shared an update on the recent BAC meeting held on June 6, 2023. He reported that businesses and communities expressed a desire to see improved communication and transparency regarding project updates from the project staff.

Co-Chair Doerrer further expressed his own opinion, which was also shared during the recent meeting. He highlighted the lack of communication related to alternatives or improvements to the Lyndale route options. He explained that this lack of information might contribute to the opposition from communities towards the light rail project.

5. Project Update

Chris Beckwith, with Metropolitan Council, gave an update on the advancement of the Blue Line Extension project. In her presentation, Ms. Beckwith informed the audience that the project received \$50 million in funding during the Legislative session. Currently, \$10 million of that amount is available specifically for design purposes. The remaining \$40 million will be accessible once the project obtains the Full Funding Grant Agreement from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

During the Legislative sessions, certain requirements emerged, and Ms. Beckwith highlighted one of them, namely the Community Engagement Meeting. This requirement necessitates conducting quarterly meetings in collaboration with community groups. These meetings will be documented and shared with the CMC. Ms. Beckwith explained that the attendees of these meetings will include representatives from the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, MnDOT, and all the cities along the corridor.

Furthermore, it is essential that the coordination of these meetings be completed by July 1st, 2023, in order to establish a framework for community engagement sessions. Ms. Beckwith emphasized that the Legislation also demands an evaluation of routes on East of I-94 in Minneapolis. Additionally, she stated that all cities have the opportunity to present their concerns and proposals to the CMC.



Ms. Beckwith emphasized the importance of Engagement Principles and confirmed that the Legislation aligns with these principles. She specifically discussed a few of these principles, including the customization of engagement practices to cater to the unique requirements of individual communities. This involves taking into account the community's goals, priorities, and growth criteria when making decisions and adjusting the strategies of the project.

Ms. Beckwith provided an update on the timeline of the Blue Line Extension project. She stated that from January to April, the project has been systematically reviewing and improving the design decisions in each city along the corridor. In the previous month of May, the project introduced measures to address Anti-Displacement concerns. Additionally, Ms. Beckwith mentioned that in the present month and the following one, the project will continue its collaboration with Minneapolis to further advance design decision.

Ricardo Perez from the Blue Line Coalition inquired about Anti-Displacement and why it was not included in the legislative process. Mr. Perez also sought clarification on the topics that would be covered in the upcoming Community Engagement Meeting. In response, Ms. Beckwith assured Mr. Perez that Anti-Displacement would be incorporated into these meetings and addressed. The upcoming Community Engagement Meeting will encompass discussions on various subjects, including Anti-Displacement.

Meg Forney from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board inquired about the involvement of the board in the Community Engagement Meetings. In response, Ms. Beckwith acknowledged the importance of including the Minneapolis Park Board and Recreation Board in the engagement process. She assured Ms. Forney that the project would review the group and take necessary steps to ensure the participation of the board members in the Community Engagement Meetings.

Nick Landwer from the Metropolitan Council introduced two new project staff members, Bojan Misic and Kaja Vang. Bojan Misic, from Hennepin County, joined as the Civil Engineering Manager, bringing his expertise to the team. Kaja Vang, a new Outreach Coordinator, has previous experience in community outreach with the Three Rivers Park Districts, which will greatly contribute to the project's engagement efforts.

6. Minneapolis Design Update

Mr. Landwer shared the design principles that have been guiding the project's decision-making process regarding the alignment. He explained that the project team had previously examined multiple options in Minneapolis, with a primary focus on determining the best route for the light rail from Target Field Station to West Broadway Avenue. This consideration led to the exploration of different route options.



Additionally, the team conducted further studies to determine whether the light rail should be located on West Broadway Avenue or 21st Avenue. The team also focused on the design aspect of whether there should be one or two stations between Knox Avenue and Lyndale Avenue. Lastly, the project team placed emphasis on refining the design of the Penn Avenue station, ensuring it meets the project's objectives.

Mr. Landwer provided an update on the project's progress, mentioning that in October 2022, the project team presented route recommendations for the stretch between Target Field Station and West Broadway Avenue or 21st Avenue. The first option involved the light rail running from Target Field Station to Olson Memorial Highway, then proceeding along North 7th Street to Lyndale Avenue. The second option considered a route where North 7th Street would go south to 10th Avenue N, running alongside the east side of I-94 parallel to Washington Avenue. Both route options were designed to connect with either 21st Avenue N and/or West Broadway Avenue.

Mr. Landwer emphasized that based on the input and recommendations received from the communities and the members of the Corridor Management Committee (CMC), the project team will explore alternative route options on the eastern side of I-94. He underscored the importance of finding a solution where the light rail would inevitably cross through I-94 at some point along the alignment, regardless of which specific route option is ultimately selected. This consideration ensures the project's alignment remains feasible and functional.

Vice-Chair Reva Chamblis from Metropolitan Council posed a query regarding option green presented on the map (utilizing 10th Avenue N to Washington Avenue N) and inquired about the various options and alternatives that were taken into account. Mr. Landwer responded by stating that the project collaborates with the city to investigate and devise innovative solutions to assess the feasibility of this option, including analyzing the traffic volume and examining its potential for accommodating bus, commercial, and redirecting vehicular traffic to alternate routes.

Mayor Jacob Frey, representing the City of Minneapolis, expressed gratitude to the project team for presenting additional route options. However, he highlighted concerns raised by city staff regarding fire truck access, bicycle safety, and pedestrian considerations associated with the new routes. Mayor Frey emphasized the importance of addressing these safety issues and urged the project to prioritize them. In response, Mr. Landwer assured that the project team maintains an ongoing collaboration with city staff on a weekly basis, and these concerns will be a subject of continued discussion and engagement with the fire station. Mayor Frey requested that the project team hold a meeting with the fire station to assess impacts and seek resolution. Dan Soler from Hennepin County further emphasized the need to consider priorities and ensure that every option chosen by the project allows for fire truck accessibility while determining what elements can be preserved and what needs to be modified. Ms. Beckwith added



that the project still needs to conduct community outreach regarding the proposed new alignment option.

Council Member Jeremiah Ellison of the City of Minneapolis expressed appreciation for the project's endeavors in exploring additional route alignments. However, he conveyed a keen interest in understanding the outcomes of the Anti-Displacement recommendations. Council Member Ellison believes that incorporating these recommendations can address community concerns and facilitate a smoother decision-making process regarding the route options and their feasibility.

Mayor Blonigan highlighted the importance of minimizing travel time as one of the design principles. He expressed curiosity about the travel times associated with the additional route options being considered.

Commissioner Irene Fernando from Hennepin County acknowledged the inclusion of letters in the CMC material packets from the City of Brooklyn Park and City of Minneapolis. She stated her appreciation of the valuable feedback provided in those letters, considering it to be of high quality.

Vice-Chair Chamblis emphasized the significance of gathering feedback from the cities along the corridor. She expressed a desire to delve into the details of the support for a project of this magnitude and how it aims to safeguard communities from displacement while providing them with protection. Vice-Chair Chamblis expressed curiosity about the perspectives of all cities regarding the benefits they anticipate from such a large-scale project, which will have an impact on numerous areas along the alignment corridor. She stressed the importance of ensuring benefits for businesses, communities, residents, parks, and trails. Vice-Chair Chamblis acknowledged that it is easy to focus on potential negative aspects but also stressed the importance of highlighting the positive outcomes that can be achieved through the Blue Line Extension project.

Council Member Gillian Rosenquist of Golden Valley mentioned that although Golden Valley is no longer part of the route, she continues to attend these meetings. She explained that this is because earlier population studies were conducted to analyze transit connectivity and the most effective means of supporting the Blue Line Extension project is by considering ways to connect communities along the line. Council Member Rosenquist noted ongoing discussions regarding the potential for a bus rapid transit system on Highway 55 and emphasized the importance of identifying transfer connections to significant destinations in neighboring communities. She highlighted the opportunity to move away from the traditional model of riders needing to travel to downtown areas to transfer to other regions of the area and systems.

Commissioner Jeff Lunde of Hennepin County expressed the need for assurances that the letters received by the project will be included in the public record. In response,



Chair Zelle reassured that the project team will ensure that all comments and letters are recorded and documented for the public record.

Council Member Ellison emphasized the importance of distinguishing between the benefits to the region as a whole and the benefits to the people within the region. He pointed out that North Minneapolis, in particular, has the highest ridership in the region. However, if individuals are displaced as a result of the very amenity that is being provided, they will not be able to enjoy its benefits. Council Member Ellison stated that constructing the train may be relatively straightforward but ensuring that people are not displaced is a challenging task. He noted that while people have seen the trains, they have not yet witnessed how displacement issues are addressed and handled.

Mayor Hollies Winston of Brooklyn Park emphasized the immense significance of the light rail project from the City of Brooklyn Park's perspective. He pointed out that the northwest suburb is currently under-invested and highlighted the demographic makeup, with 55-62% of the population being people of color. Mayor Winston stressed that when addressing disparities, the city is focused on creating opportunities for employment, jobs, and new developments that bring about positive prospects. The city is actively exploring transportation options to enhance east-west and north-south connectivity. Mayor Winston expressed the city's desire for increased public transportation and recognized that the light rail would facilitate the connection of the city and unlock future opportunities. Furthermore, the implementation of the light rail is expected to improve a significant portion of the city and contribute to closing the commercial disparity gap.

Chair Zelle expressed gratitude to the members for their feedback.

7. Anti-Displacement Discussion

Commissioner Lunde highlighted the significance of recognizing, embracing, and executing the Anti-Displacement resolution. He emphasized that the need to address challenges related to displacement will persist even if the Blue Line Extension project were to cease. Commissioner Lunde acknowledged that the implementation of these displacement policies will require financial resources. He noted that each city may need to review its funding allocations in order to support these initiatives. Commissioner Lunde highlighted that there are numerous funding options available, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recognizes the value of the Anti-Displacement efforts being undertaken. He emphasized that this is just the beginning and there is more work to be done in this regard.

Commissioner Fernando inquired about the completion status of the Anti-Displacement Working Group (ADWG). She expressed an interest in providing updates to the ADWG on the progress made by the jurisdiction and expressed a desire to engage with the group to fulfill the purpose of the resolution. Cathy Gold from Hennepin County responded by stating that the intention is to keep the ADWG members in place to



ensure ongoing conversations with the communities, which is an essential aspect of maintaining transparency throughout the process. Ms. Gold emphasized that the ADWG's goal is to proceed in a manner that ensures the communities benefit from the project.

Council Member Ellison expressed satisfaction with the commitment made by the project to explore Anti-Displacement measures and appreciated how the process is progressing. However, he noted that if the responsibility for implementing Anti-Displacement recommendations is left to the discretion of each municipality without additional support, it suggests a lack of seriousness about the issue. Council Member Ellison emphasized the need for more than just a volunteer group, as the implementation of Anti-Displacement requires a professional team dedicated to tracking progress and facilitating the adoption of recommended policies. He stressed the importance of having a comprehensive guide that outlines the process and directs people to necessary resources. Council Member Ellison emphasized that no city should bear the funding burden alone and called for a collaborative approach to monetary policy that involves all stakeholders.

Mayor Frey inquired about the intention to reinforce the strength of the Anti-Displacement resolution. He proposed a modified resolution that emphasizes the completion of Anti-Displacement work in advance and underscores the significance of making progress in parallel with other project developments.

According to Mr. Perez, the Blue Line Coalition is dedicated to supporting Anti-Displacement efforts. He inquired about how the project could engage with internal working groups in each city and their respective city council members, who might not be aware of the Anti-Displacement resolution or its expected timeline. Furthermore, he asked how immediate action could be taken to initiate discussions with the City Council today. The main question is how to activate the Anti-Displacement resolution in each city. Council Member Ellison expressed his willingness to initiate these discussions regarding the Anti-Displacement recommendations and encouraged other cities to do the same, offering his support to them.

Chair Zelle requested a motion to endorse the draft of the Anti-Displacement Resolutions and the proposed amended language. The Anti-Displacement Recommendation report, with the necessary modifications, was unanimously approved during the current CMC meeting.

Mr. Perez inquired about the possibility of having a timeline attached to the framework. Commissioner Lunde responded by stating that there won't be any funds or timeline established until after municipal consent has been obtained.

8. Next Meeting: July 13, 2023



Chair Zelle announced that the upcoming CMC meeting on July 13, 2023, will focus on continuing the discussion regarding the Minneapolis Design Decision.

9. Adjourn

Chair Zelle concluded the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 2:53pm.