



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

Tuesday, June 6, 2023

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Blue Line Project Office

6465 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 500

St. Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members: John Barobs, KB Brown, Dan Doerrler, Rita Endres, Donna Sanders, Jamar Smith

Agency Staff and Guests: Neha Damle, Catherine Gold, Nick Landwer, Bojan Mistic, Emilee Roschen, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Dan Soler, Kaja Vang, Max Wilson, Kjerstin Yager

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Co-chair Dan Doerrler called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

2. Adopt Meeting Minutes

Co-chair Dan Doerrler asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Rita Endres made a motion and Jamar Smith seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

3. Upcoming Meetings and Attendance

Chris Beckwith, Metropolitan Council, reported the next meeting for the BAC is June 27th.

4. Project Update

Chris Beckwith reported the project received \$50 million in funding from the most recent legislative session. The project has access to \$10 million to continue the design and will have access to the \$40 million after the project receives the Full-Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA). Chris discussed two things that came out of legislation: regular meetings with community groups and route alignment consultation. The project would need to have quarterly meetings in consultation with community groups and these would need to be documented and provided to the Corridor Management Committee (CMC). Representatives at these meetings would include Met Council, Hennepin County, MnDOT, and all corridor cities. The project team would need to coordinate with community groups and establish a framework for these engagement meetings by July 1st, 2023. Another item that came out of the legislation was a route alignment consultation, which is mostly focused in Minneapolis. There is a requirement to evaluate an East of I-94 option. All cities will have the opportunity to present concerns and proposals to the CMC.

Co-chair Dan Doerrler asked if the legislation calls upon a shift in the way which engagement is happening. Dan also asked what sort of changes are called for by July 1st. Chris responded that the project team will ask community if there are other ways that they want the project team to engage. Jamar Smith asked what the \$40 million is earmarked towards. Chris responded for construction. Jamar asked if the meetings will be



corridor wide or done by individual cities. Chris responded that in the short term the project team is not planning for a full corridor wide engagement. In the near term, Minneapolis and the sub option is the focus. Jamar asked if the last engagement meetings were reported to the CMC. Chris responded that the project team provided feedback to the CMC in the presentation. Based off the legislative requirements, meeting notes will be attached to the CMC meeting packet to provide more details.

Chris reported that July will be all Minneapolis Design Decisions and there will hopefully be a staff recommendation. Chris shared that August will be a review of all cities and an opportunity to get feedback from the CMC.

Donna Sanders asked if the project team will publish the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) in July. Chris responded that the project team is still working on the SDEIS and it won't be published until early next year. The FTA has four rounds of review.

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, introduced new project staff – Bojan Misic with Hennepin County, Kaja Vang with Metro Transit, and Max Wilson with Hennepin County.

5. Minneapolis Design Update

Nick Landwer shared the Minneapolis design decisions, which include the routing options from Target Field Station to 21st Avenue or West Broadway Avenue, the route along 21st Avenue or West Broadway Avenue, the number of stations (1 or 2) between Knox Avenue and Lyndale Avenue, and the refinement of the Penn Avenue station. Nick reviewed the different routes that have been studied, connecting to West Broadway and 21st Avenue from Target Field Station. He then discussed the East of I-94 option and the new sub-option. The sub-option would follow 10th Avenue to Washington Avenue, have a station on Washington Avenue south of Plymouth Avenue, utilize existing infrastructure, and maintain at-grade LRT operation until the I-94 crossing. Nick noted that 10th Avenue has a narrow right-of-way and presents challenges for all roadway uses.

Dan Doerrer asked how the project team anticipates one route having higher ridership than another. Nick responded that the project team has conducted a high-level analysis on ridership. The model suggests that between Lyndale Avenue and east of I-94, ridership is roughly the same, but the impact on other stations along the alignment needs to be considered. Nick added that there still needs to be an evaluation of the Washington Avenue station.

Donna Sanders commented that on the Green Line, there were large maps showing how the LRT would run along the road, including buses and parking. Donna asked if this kind of information is included in the anti-displacement report or will be provided in the future. Nick responded that those drawings would be provided in the future. He explained that the project is currently in the planning stage, and that level of detail is not available yet. Catherine Gold from Hennepin County asked when the project would expect to have that level of detail. Nick responded that once the options are narrowed down, the 30% design plans would have more detailed information. Donna inquired if the drawings would be presented in the SDEIS. Nick clarified that the SDEIS focuses on impacts rather than detailed drawings. Donna expressed that more detail would be helpful and asked when the designs would reach that level of detail. Nick responded that it would be within the next six months. Chris Beckwith added that the 30% design would come before municipal consent. Donna then asked about the estimated start of construction. Nick responded that construction is expected to begin in



2023, and the final SDEIS would be completed before construction. Dan commended the project staff for exploring other options.

6. **Anti-Displacement Discussion** Chris Beckwith stated that the goal of the CMC is to hear from its members regarding the report. Chris added that a draft resolution was sent out based on their recommendation. Donna Sanders commented that the project team providing more information would be beneficial. Jamar Smith asked if the anti-displacement work cannot progress until the design is finalized. Nick Landwer responded that the anti-displacement work is an ongoing process that is happening alongside the project. Catherine Gold added that they are working on an implementation plan and preparing to engage with the community.

Dan Doerrer asked if it was possible to have visuals similar to the ones shown for Crystal and Robbinsdale. Nick responded that there are visualizations available for the West Broadway and 21st Avenue options. Donna expressed concern about the LRT going down West Broadway and having only one lane of traffic on each side, questioning how the project will accommodate the traffic, buses, and emergency vehicles. Nick responded that the drawings show the impacts, and the project team has been meeting with property owners to inform them. Donna mentioned that she has spoken to impacted individuals who claim they were unaware. KB Brown stated that the people he has spoken to are unaware of their options and available resources. KB added that there is frustration with the project team due to a lack of answers received. He emphasized that there should be answers before the project progresses any further. Chris stated that once the project narrows down to one option, they can delve into greater detail and have discussions with businesses. Chris also mentioned that they have conveyed to elected officials that the uncertainty is challenging for businesses. KB commented that the listening sessions solely serve as listening sessions, with no answers provided, leaving the community feeling unseen. Nick stated that there are programs outlined in the anti-displacement report. He added that from an engineering standpoint, he can share the impacts associated with each option. Nick mentioned that the project team is actively listening to the community, which is why there is a 21st Avenue option and why they are considering an east of I-94 option.

Chris stated that the project team believes they have sufficient information to make a recommendation. Chris added that answers regarding funding and resources can be found in the anti-displacement report. KB stated that the anti-displacement work should have been completed before anything else was undertaken.

7. Discussion and Members Feedback

8. Next Meeting: June 27, 2023.

9. Adjourn

Donna Sanders made a motion to adjourn the meeting. KB Brown seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.