

Metropolitan Council

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee
Wednesday, June 5 10:00 a.m., St. Louis Park City Hall

Members/Alternates Present:	Chair Charlie Zelle Dr. Tyronne Carter Dan Duffy Debbie Goettel	James Hovland Lesley Kandaras Robert Lilligren Brad Wiersum	Khani Sahebjam Elie Farhart (Alt) Tim Brausen (Alt) Suzanne Sobotka (Alt)
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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Zelle called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. Introductions were made.

Chair Zelle reported the Metro Transit's 20-year anniversary for Blue Line and 10-year anniversary for Green Line will hold a joint celebration on June 18 at Target Field. All are welcome to attend.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Zelle presented the February 7, 2024, Corridor Management Committee minutes.

Commissioner Goettel made a motion to approve the minutes and Mayor Hovland seconded the motion. Following a vote, the minutes were approved.

3. METRO TRANSIT UPDATE – Lesley Kandaras

Lesley Kandaras, Metro Transit General Manager, provided an update on Metro Transit. Ridership continues to grow, and it is 16% higher in 2023 than 2022, and so far this year ridership is up 12% over 2023. As we continue to hire operators, the service will be increased to help build back ridership. LRT frequency will also be increased.

Public Safety. Kandaras reported that as ridership has increased, we have been seeing a decrease in crime. We are focusing on increasing presence on the system and in addition to MTPD, there are supplemental security officers and fare inspectors on board. At the end of February, Transit Rider Investment Program (TRIP) agents were introduced to the system. We currently have 20 on board with 22 more to be hired.

Council Member Brausen asked what will drive the additional financing for hiring? Kandaras responded that Metro Transit has been struggling to fill positions these last few years, like many companies. Recently ATU and Met Council have ratified a new contract that raised wages, and we now are seeing an uptick in applications. We are currently hiring to fill existing lines as well as the filling for the three new BLRT lines that will soon be opening.

Mayor Wiersum said that residents continue to be concerned about crime, and it is good that the trends show it going down. He agrees with the programs Metro Transit has in place and the presence of the officers is very helpful. He stated that perception drives behavior. Also, when showing the trends, context is important to show the high point on the trend. Kandaras agrees that perception is key.

Chair Zelle started that we continue to recruit police officers and TRIP agents. Presence on the lines have been very helpful.

4. PROJECT UPDATE

Jim Alexander, Green Line Extension Project Director provided a project update. We continue to track the number of construction workers on the Project, with 70 of the 87 counties in Minnesota being represented by residents working on the Project.

Trails. The trail work is progressing. The trail sections from Excelsior Boulevard to Blake Road in Hopkins and from Shady Oak station to 11th Avenue South in Hopkins will be open once fencing is

completed. We continue to forecast Minneapolis trails to be open toward the latter end of the construction season in 2025.

Photos were shown of the construction, and Alexander went over the work these photos shown.

Photos were shown of the Kenilworth LRT tunnel. Alexander explained the work that is currently occurring in this area. Currently the tunnel structure in 19 of the 30 cells have been completed. The diver work continues and will be completed later this summer. The divers inspect the seams of the sheet piles and seal any gaps that are observed. Images were shown of the tunnel work, along with a video of the overview work on the Kenilworth LRT tunnel work.

Dan Duffy asked if there are any passageway openings in the tunnel? Alexander responded there are three passageways in the tunnel.

Khani Sahebjam asked about ventilation in the tunnel. Is there adequate ventilation in case of smoke? Alexander responded that the tunnel will include fans near both ends of the structure. The Council's consultants conducted studies during design to ensure the tunnel is designed to code.

The stations that will have vertical circulation are West Lake Street Station, Bryn Mawr Station and Basset Valley Creek Station. Photos were shown of these areas.

Alexander reviewed the Systems work and shared photos of the work. The contractor has installed a number of Traction Power Substations and Signal Houses. Overhead contact wiring is also being installed.

Commissioner Goettel said with some of the Civil work scheduled to be done by 7/4; what is the timing for the Kenilworth tunnel work? Alexander said the Civil work from SouthWest Station to just short of West Lake Street Station is scheduled to be complete by 7/4. We are then looking to have Civil work completed from Target Field Station up to 21st later this year. The Civil construction for the Kenilworth LRT tunnel is expected to be completed by first quarter of 2025.

Mayor Wierson commented on the Kenilworth tunnel tour he was on yesterday and encouraged CMC members to take the tour, as this makes the project more understandable.

Council member Lilligren stated he recently went on a tour that included area residents. Overall positive comments were received from the residents, and they are anxious for the bike trails to be restored.

5. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT UPDATE

David Davies, Manager of Public Involvement, provided the public involvement update. A recap of the first half of 2024 was provided. Davies stated that the May public walking tours had over 60 participants. There was one tour held per city and two for the Kenilworth LRT tunnel, which all filled up quickly. Additional public walking tours will be held in July and September. Outreach staff will continue to offer other opportunities for tours – please reach out to David.

Davies provided a look ahead, which will be focused on what is to come with the opening of the line in 2027 for revenue service. Commemorating project milestones will also be shared, and we plan to highlight what already exists along the corridor. Outreach staff will attend community events and be visible and to have folks be kept up to date on Metro Transit initiatives, along with the Green Line Extension project. Outreach will bring topic areas that the cities want to see, both now and for future years.

Dan Duffy asked if media has been reached out to. Not sure of the timing for this, but there is a story to tell behind this project, as it has been going on a long time. Davies said there is a wealth of information along the line and we do need to lay the foundation to start to build the excitement.

Council Member Brausen said most inquiries are on the trail openings and asked for a tentative date for this. Alexander responded that we are forecasting the end of June for some of these trails openings.

Council Member Dr. Carter suggested at some point interviewing some of the divers. This would make an interesting story and would be a good human interest piece.

6. DBE UPDATE

Jon Tao from the Met Council's Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity reviewed and shared the DBE achievement numbers. The OEO intern was introduced, Samantha Lee, who will be helping gather the DBE information.

Achievements were shown since the March timeframe. Staff are starting to close out the process with some of the Civil DBE subcontractors who are finishing up their work.

The Systems contractor has put in a good faith effort to get more DBE firms on board, which has been working well.

At this time, Tao mentioned that we are working with the MN Dept. of Human Rights to resolve the reporting of the workforce data.

Council member Lilligren asked about the tone of the progress of the workforce numbers. Tao mentioned we are on par with the region and other construction projects. We are under the goal, but contractors are putting in good faith efforts. The Building Stronger Communities cohort is also helpful. MDHR does monitor the workforce and works with the contractors on the data.

7. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM. The next meeting will be later in the summer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary