



**METRO Blue Line Extension
Business Advisory Committee Meeting #15
October 11, 2016
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

Agency Staff and Guests: Juan Rangel, David Davies, Dan Pfeiffer, Jim Toulouse, Nick Landwer, Collin Evenson, Alicia Vap, Jessica Laabs

1. Call to Order
2. July and August meeting minutes were approved
3. Environmental Update
Record of Decision signed by FTA on September 19. This completes the federal environmental process. The Adequacy Determination was also signed by Metropolitan Council on September 28, 2016, which completes the state environmental process. Next steps are to finalize environmental permitting and comply with requirements of the Section 106 (cultural resources) process. A mitigation monitoring program will also be developed.
4. Design Updates
 - a. Freight Rail Corridor Construction Sequencing – Nick Landwer
 - Space is constrained in the rail corridor, and this section is on a critical path for construction. There are several phases of construction required, as freight rail operations will be maintained while construction is happening.
 - Bike path is between tracks and
 - Stage 1 – platforms placed to prepare for relocation of Xcel towers.
 - Stage 2 – begin to construct shift in freight tracks, prepare for maintenance road
 - Stage 3 – relocation of Xcel towers
 - Stage 4 – load transfer platforms, then construct light rail track.
 - This is anticipated to be two years of solid work.

Question: Is that all-season construction or just summer months?

Landwer: We anticipate some of that work occurring in the winter months.

Walsh: How's it going with BNSF? Are they working with you?

Landwer: We are in communication with them, but freight rail coordination is always challenging.

b. Freight Rail – CP Rail Crossing – Nick Landwer

- BNSF crosses over CP rail in this location
- Shift BNSF track 15 feet west
- Construct LRT bridge over CP rail
- Maintain freight rail operations during construction

c. Plymouth Ave Station – Jim Toulouse

- Accommodates (west to east) LRT tracks, freight rail track/access road, relocated trail, and Bassett Creek itself
- MCES has an interceptor sewer through this area, about 60 years old and in need of reconstruction
- Opportunity to create more natural channel for Bassett Creek
- Bridge connecting to trail at Plymouth Avenue, per request from Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Despite bridge getting longer, this is still a very cost-effective design given there are less retaining walls required. BNSF does not allow any at-grade crossing of freight tracks, so the route to stairs up to Plymouth Avenue is a bit more circuitous.
- Primary access is elevator/stairs from Plymouth Ave bridge. Secondary access is typical for Metro Transit LRT platforms for public safety reasons. A second access was initially identified at the southern track crossing, but removed due to poor sight distances and safety concerns. Secondary access is provided via an ADA-compliant walkway down to the north end of the platform.

Question: I see that public art has been removed, but is the project open to public art if funding comes from elsewhere?

Vap: As long as it was separate and not part of the construction contract, the project office is open and would encourage stakeholders to suggest. Questions would be where is the art, who would maintain it?

d. Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) – Colin Evenson

- Located in Brooklyn Park northwest of Oak Grove Parkway station
- 10+ acres and serves as light maintenance and facility storage
- Long, low walls provide opportunity to do something with the “canvas” of the exterior
- Building itself is simple pre-cast structure. Designers tried to keep away from any linear designs, and went with vertical banding with reflective material. This will reflect some of the natural surroundings and minimize the visual aspects of the building itself, with a goal of being a good neighbor to the surrounding community.

5. Station Design Overview – Alicia Vap

- Three components – area, site, platform – are a coordinated effort with Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council for implementation and maintenance.
- Site elements – pedestrian access, bike facilities, wayfinding (signage), landscaping, storm water features, bus facilities, passenger drop-off, park-and-ride (where applicable)
- Platform elements – ticket vending, transit info, passenger amenities (heaters, speakers, trash receptacles, etc.), passenger safety (lighting, emergency phones, etc.)
- Lessons from Blue Line gave us good feedback from maintenance staff and ADA community on station design. Learning from that, Green Line stations are similar in architecture and makeup, and features are in consistent locations. Differences include colored pavement and artwork. For Blue Line Extension, have been thinking about how to respond to different context and character of each station site. Community input has been solicited. Stations in the rail corridor and Olson Memorial Highway are also subject to Secretary of Interior standards.
- Stations will be consistent, but project office is considering varying underside treatment, shape of canopy, use of glass are variations.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting (**Monday, November 7**) will be sharing station design concepts. These will also be shared at upcoming public open houses in November. The purpose of these open houses is to inform the community about the evolution of station design and receive feedback.

Denny Walsh: What's on the radar, expectations for open houses?

Dan Pfeiffer: For the stations, it's really getting it out there and being clear on the evolution of the process. Going from Blue Line where everything is unique, to a more standard design for stations. Public art will probably be a point of discussion.

Kathryn O'Brien: I think we'll also get a lot of questions about noise walls, and we have more information about height and materials.

Denny Walsh: Just good to know what the issues are that need to be addressed.

Dan Pfeiffer: In addition to station design, each city has issues which will be addressed in the open houses – Olson Memorial Highway.

Vap: Roadway design is nailed down, but now we're starting to talk more about

Denny Walsh: That is an important piece, really good point to have that out right away.

Pfeiffer: Feedback from ADA community and all of that will weigh heavily in that discussion.

Dan Soler: Business groups and chambers, we could use all the help we can get as the Legislature starts talking about this last piece of funding.