

Metropolitan Council

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee
Wednesday, December 6 10:00 a.m., St. Louis Park City Hall

Members/Alternates	Chair Charlie Zelle	Patrick Hanlon	Will Roach
Present:	Dr. Tyronne Carter	Lesley Kandaras	Brad Wiersum
	Dan Duffy	Jake Spano	Brad Larsen (Alt)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Zelle called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Introductions were made.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Zelle presented the October 4, 2023, Corridor Management Committee minutes. Mayor Spano made a motion to approve the minutes, Dan Duffy seconded the motion. Following a vote, the minutes were approved.

Chair Zelle mentioned that the new MnDOT CMC rep will be Sheila Kauppi, replacing Mike Barnes who retired. Sheila was unable to attend today, so today's MnDOT CMC Alternate is Brad Larsen.

Mayor Spano was recognized for his many years of service as Mayor and his years on CMC and supporting this project. Chair Zelle presented Mayor Spano with a plaque of all the Green Line Extension St. Louis Park station designs. Mayor Spano thanked the committee and all those past officials who helped and were advocates for this project. Mayor Spano appreciates all of the work on this committee. Mayor Hanlon and others thanked Mayor Spano for everything he has done for this project and for the region.

2. METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER LESLEY KANDARAS

Chair Zelle introduced Lesley Kandaras, Metro Transit General Manager. Ms. Kandaras became General Manager of Metro Transit in July of 2023. Prior to that she worked at Metro Transit and Met Council. Ms. Kandaras appreciates the opportunity to be here today and provided some Metro Transit updates.

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, Metro Transit is seeing positive aspects on many fronts. One area is ridership. Ridership dropped during the pandemic when Metro Transit cut back service because of the pandemic. We are not quite where we were pre pandemic but continue to see ridership increasing. In 2023 ridership was up about 15% over 2022. Metro Transit also experienced a workforce shortage, like many employers experienced. Looking ahead to 2024, we anticipate hiring levels to increase and for Metro Transit to then be able to restore additional service along with increasing frequency on light rail.

Metro Transit's primary focus is public safety on transit. The last two quarters, we have seen a decline in crime compared to the first quarter this year. There is still a lot of work to do, as we need people to feel safe on our system. The Safety and Security Action Plan includes a variety of projects and initiatives all focused on security on our transit system. Along with the Metro Transit Police, we will also have additional layers for security presence on transit. We have 171 full-time officers budgeted, with currently 109 of them hired, so we will continue to hire. We are also launching a Transit Service Intervention Project, in which we currently have ten different contracts with community-based organizations that are helping connect our riders with social service agencies and outreach when needed.

Metro Transit is also launching a new Transit Rider Investment Program (TRIP). This program allows us to better address fare enforcement. We can now use more than just police officers for inspecting fares and issuing citations. Community Service officers can now do this; and will soon be TRIP agents to help with this.

Looking ahead to 2024, Ms. Kandaras is committed to be out on the routes and meeting with the

community on their needs. Ms. Kandaras thanked the committee for allowing her to speak today and looks forward to working with this committee.

Mayor Hanlon appreciates this update and supports the added security interaction along with the Metro Transit Police presence and hopes to have it continue as the Green Line Extension opens. Ms. Kandaras appreciates the comment and confirms that these new layers of presence in addition to our Metro Transit police officers will continue.

Mayor Wiersum commented on safety on the line and transit in general and asked if there is data available on where the challenges are? Also, it is about providing stories along with the data; the stories with real people will strengthen our position. This line is important to our community for future years. Chair Zelle agrees, and mentioned there was an article in the press yesterday with a photo of our new officers checking fares. The message needs to get out on our new security efforts.

Mayor Spano mentioned our cities are always working together. We also need to deepen our relationships between Metro Transit police and the City police forces, especially as it gets closer to the line opening up.

3. PROJECT UPDATE

Jim Alexander, Green Line Extension Project Director provided a project update. Mr. Alexander reported that the revised project schedule and scope are currently being finalized. We will have our FTA risk workshop next week, which will help establish the revised budget and schedule. This has been a good year for construction with the warmer weather, and we continue to forecast 2027 for revenue service.

Trails: Mr. Alexander reported the trail from Beltline Boulevard in St. Louis Park to Blake Road in Hopkins is now open. The segment from Beltline Boulevard to France Avenue in Minneapolis is scheduled to open later in December. 2025 is programmed for a number of trail openings within Minneapolis.

Mayor Spano asked if the scheduled opening of South Cedar Lake Trail from Blake Road to Excelsior Boulevard is mid or late 2024? Mr. Alexander responded that this segment is anticipated to be open mid-summer 2024. The Minnesota River Bluffs Trail from 11th Avenue South to the new 17th Avenue South extension is expected to be open mid-summer or fall 2024. Mayor Spano asked if the trail will then be opened all the way to Kenilworth after this? Mr. Alexander responded yes, that is the plan.

Mayor Hanlon thanked the staff for pushing to make these trails open. It is appreciated.

Photos were shown of the development along the corridor. The number for development dollars along the corridor is now over \$2.8B in permitted and constructed development, with over 8,000 residential units. There also is \$780M of development in planning stages. In the Opus area, there are over 2,000 housing units near the station. Mr. Alexander reviewed the development of the other areas.

Dan Duffy asked if there is any kind of aerial view of the line going back about 20 years to show it before the development. Mr. Alexander stated that there may be some aerial of the present time, not sure of historical views. This will be looked into.

Photos were shown of the construction. Mr. Alexander went through the areas of construction progress. The current Kenilworth LRT tunnel work was explained. Approximately six weeks of work was lost with the recent underwater work in the tunnel. Overall, we are about 60% complete with tunnel structure work, and currently working in the most difficult part of the tunnel. Out of the 30 tunnel cells being worked on, 17 have completed tunnel structure. We are looking at having the tunnel completed in 2025.

Mr. Alexander noted that work on West 21st Street has advanced. Also, the Corridor Protection Barrier work is now complete, along with new bridge structures. The Glenwood Avenue bridge work is complete, as well as Hennepin County's work in this area. We are working with BNSF on the property closing that is required before the roadway can be opened to vehicle traffic and staff are working to get this done as soon as possible.

Photos of the Systems work were shown, which is progressing well. The Overhead Catenary System cabling is now complete from SouthWest Station to City West Station. There are now eight Traction Power Substations (TPSS) installed.

Public Involvement.

David Davies, Manager of Public Involvement, reported the Project Office continues tours and events as needed. University of St. Thomas students recently toured the City West Station area. Construction, Safety and Design staff were on hand to talk with the students on the work in this area.

Mr. Davies reported we continue to provide tours and information to communities who request them. One recent tour was with the Bryn Mawr neighborhood, who requested a tour for their community. We continue to connect these communities with our work.

Next year we will shift our messaging from how we build the line to how the community will interact with the line once opened.

4. DBE/WORKFORCE UPDATE

Jon Tao from the Met Council's Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity reviewed and shared the DBE achievement numbers. Mr. Tao reviewed DBE participation since September 30, 2023, on the Civil and System work. The number is a healthy 22.3% overall to DBE firms.

Overall workforce participation numbers were shared, which are tracked by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. A chart showing the certified payroll as to what was completed to date was shown. The six construction trades that had the highest number of hours will be looked into for their demographics and see how they achieved these high numbers. This will help for future projects.

Mayor Spano asked if there is something that breaks them down by union groups. Mr. Tao responded he believes this can be broken down.

Mr. Tao reviewed the demographic charts for the various areas. On the laborers' demographics, the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) participation is good. Mr. Tao said that the contractors all have different ways to recruit their trades. Of the contractors who had the largest contributor of hours for BIPOC and women is LMJV.

Mayor Spano asked about the DBE percentage to date and workforce hours. DBE achievement is above the 15% goal, but workforce hours are below the goals. Mr. Tao responded that DBE and workforce are separate and measured differently. DBE small businesses are measured by dollars paid out as a percentage of the construction contract amount. The workforce is the number of hours worked by the construction trades.

Mayor Wiersum asked if recruiting tactics are different for professions where BIPOC is underrepresented. He suggested ideas such as signs in apartments, going to places where BIPOC are located. Mr. Tao agrees, you need to go to the people. Also, to work with the employers doing the hiring and keeping workers retained. We work with the contractors to diversify their workforce.

Mayor Hanlon asked if we are working with the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department, as they are collaborating a lot with the trades around the region. Mr. Tao said we currently are coordinating with Hennepin County. For the upcoming Blue Line Extension project, we are looking to put the foundation in place to better coordinate with Minneapolis. We also partner with Summit Academy on various training, safety and job preparation. Also, our Systems contractor APJV is doing outreach work to build connections with high schools.

Mr. Tao stated we continue to meet monthly with the DBE Workforce Advisory Committee. This committee reviews the workforce numbers and brings folks together to look at opportunities to increase participation.

5. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am

The next meeting is scheduled for February 7, where the 2024 schedule will be discussed. CMC may begin to meet quarterly, rather than bi-monthly.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary