



**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**  
**METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee**  
**October 15, 2015**  
**Brookview Community Center**  
**200 Brookview Parkway**  
**Golden Valley, MN 55426**

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Adam Duininck, Lona Schreiber, ~~Scott Schulte~~, Mike Opat, Meg Forney, ~~Jeffrey Lunde~~, Jim Adams, Andy Snope, ~~Betsy Hodges~~, Marika Pfefferkorn, ~~Shaun Pearce~~, Scott McBride, ~~George Selman~~, Barbara Johnson, Gary Cunningham, Peter Wagenius, ~~Denise Butler~~, Rich Gates, ~~Denny Walsh~~, Linda Higgins, Marcia Glick

**1. Call to Order:**

Chair Adam Duininck called the October 15, 2015 meeting to order at 1:10 pm.

**2. Approval of October 1, 2015 Minutes**

Council Member Linda Higgins moved to approve minutes; seconded by Council Member Schreiber. October 1, 2015 meeting minutes were approved.

**3. Traction Power Substation Location: TI #15: Jim Toulouse**

Jim Toulouse provided update on the proposed Traction Power Substations and the requirements needed that includes:

- Climate controlled environment
- Placement criteria-located within 500' of track preferred
- Spacing of approximately 5000' between substations preferred to maintain continuous power to trains
- Requires closer spacing for steeper track grades
- Located at-grade to minimize cost and provide adequate access for maintenance

Locations determined by a load flow study; 17 TPSS locations identified, and was rolled out to all cities through the IRT process. (Slides 7-10).

**Council Member Higgins** asked how many would be needed. Jim Toulouse stated 17, and that the next step for approval would be through the Municipal Consent process, after the EIS decision.

**Council Member Higgins** asked about placements along Hwy 55 and if future development would be affected, and the size of them on the slides. Jim Toulouse stated that the current placements are near industrial buildings, and confirmed sizes.

**Council Member Gates** asked about the structure and construction of the towers and Jim Toulouse stated they are prefab/precast from the manufacturer.

#### 4. **Freight Rail: TI #13: Ryan Wilson**

Ryan Wilson provided update on Freight Rail along the corridor. He broke down the plans into thirds as it relates to alignment. Issues to be resolved include:

- Location of shifted freight rail track
- Location of LRT tracks
- Design appropriate corridor protection treatments
- Bridges and other structures
- Soil stabilization
- Accommodate Xcel Transmission Line (TI#14)
- Constructability

Ryan stated this is a long process (scope and costs) and reviewed the Moat concept (slide 17) and bridge overpasses, reconstruction and bridge piers.

The recommendation is reconstruction of overpasses (4) at Plymouth Avenue, Theodore Wirth Pkwy, Golden Valley Road and 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Slides 17-19 provided visual examples of the following:

- Ditch (moat) maximizes physical separation horizontally between BNSF and LRT operations
- Retained embankment –not able to maximize horizontal separation
- Wall-option for areas constrained in space; need for a vertical structure

Ryan Wilson discussed bridge overpasses and reviewed slide 21. He stated the Plymouth site (slide) typifies all the challenges of not rebuilding the bridge. The Theodore Wirth Pkwy and Golden Valley Rd are tied together in that the piers don't line up on those bridges. Reconstruction will minimize Park Board acquisition. Dialogue regarding a trail connection has been an interest. The big picture for 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue mostly benefits BNSF. Design is still in early stages.

Grade crossings and placement of quiet zone intersections for freight and LRT will be an element of the final design. BNSF holds firm on their demands and requirements.

**Chair Duinick** asked for clarification on Grimes Pond slide-is there enough room to add another (second) track and keep existing berm. Ryan stated that the existing berm design has been part of dialogue with BNSF. There are constraints in the area, but a second track can be accomplished.

**Council Member Snope** requests consideration of a trail especially at the Golden Valley proposed site as part of the bridge reconstruction design.

**Council Member Forney** requested consideration of a vertical connection as well as trails. Ryan Wilson stated he will take these requests under consideration.

**Council Member Higgins** asked if these current reconstruction requests are in the budget; No per Dan Soler.

## 5. **Transmission Line Coordination: TI# 14 Jim Toulouse**

Jim Toulouse reviewed Transmission Line Coordination with Xcel Energy and access (slide 32) along the corridor.

Issues to be resolved are:

- Compatibility with freight rail improvements
- Compatibility with LRT improvements
- Constructability (poor soils through trench area)
- Electrical clearances (a factor of safety)
- Maintenance access in the future (Xcel has expressed future access)

Potential Xcel Energy Transmission line accommodations:

- Remain in current location (does not fit with LRT improvements)
- Steel poles east of LRT tracks (would reduce foundation size)
- Steel poles (move) to west of BNSF tracks
- Steel poles between LRT tracks (last resort-huge issue for future maintenance)

Slides 35/36 provided a visual of Transmission Line Coordination-New poles west of BNSF track and existing wood utility poles west of BNSF track.

Recommendations include:

- South of the Indiana substation-shift the existing Xcel 115kV transmission line to *new* poles west of the BNSF track (prior to LRT construction)
- North of the Indiana substation-leave the existing Xcel 115kV transmission lines in-place west of the BNSF track. No issues with leaving them where they are.

**Chair Duininck** asked how many poles are involved. Jim Toulouse stated there are approximately 38 lattice structures. Xcel will determine if they need to be replaced.

**Council Member Snopes** asked how many poles/lines at Sochacki Park and would the land beneath them need to be cleared. How does that affect the Park? Jim Toulouse stated the current plan is to keep the park as it is at present; he is not sure if the land discussed is owned by BNSF or park land.

**Council Member Snopes** asked for follow-up and clarification on this question.

## 6. **Trunk Hwy 55 Recap: TI #2 Dan Soler**

Dan Soler was asked by Chair Duininck to provide a recap of the Hwy. 55 plans. Recommendations have been received from task force, community outreach meetings, and open houses in each community. The hot topic is pedestrian crossings, pedestrian safety and environment. Dan Soler covered the following in conjunction with slides 43-48.

- Rails will be running down the middle of the street; pedestrians will cross at signals only. This is a new change. In the past, pedestrians were crossing at non-signalized streets.
- Unsignalized crossings were reviewed. Dan stated that the plan is very similar to the CCLRT University Avenue.
- The recommended plan is adding a pedestrian crossing at Thomas Avenue. The crossings are less than 1/8 mile apart along Hwy 55.

**Council Member Cunningham** asked if vehicle (car) traffic North/South would be stopped at these pedestrian crossings. Yes, per Dan Soler, and they are working with the city, leaning toward red light pedestrian signals.

**Council Member Cunningham** asked for clarification on side street access onto Hwy 55. Dan Soler said some streets with medians will close to build in pedestrian crossings; there are other locations where there are no streets at all, and pedestrian crossings will be built in.

**Council Member Cunningham** requested more specifics; Dan Soler said they have specificity, but not on hand today. Dan Soler will send Council Member Cunningham specifics as requested.

**Committee member Pfefferkorn** asked what will it look like, and is there something comparable with Green Line. Dan Soler stated that the same types of crossings with pedestrian signs, warning devices, markings will be used on Hwy 55. Dan further clarified Hwy 55 will have 3 lanes in each direction; Design attempts to slow down speeds along Hwy 55 from 45 to 35 mph. Non-street crossings will have lights (push button) more like pedestrian traffic signals.

**Committee member Pfefferkorn** asked again for clarification on allotted pedestrian crossing times, and if it was still at 38 seconds. Dan Soler said several slides cover this information. Chair Duininck responded that Carleton Street (west end of Raymond station) on the Green line is a good example of pedestrian crossing.

- Dan Soler continued to provide design plans (slide 49) regarding the curbs and platform measurements. Curbs, then 10 foot boulevards, then 6 foot sidewalks (increases in size from existing layout).
- Along the north side of Hwy 55, the potential cycle track would increase the boulevard to 24 feet (may or may not be part of plan).

Crossing lengths/distances (slide 41) comparisons were reviewed. Some lanes are narrow, median is wider in spots. Van White Blvd. is wider; Penn and Humboldt not necessarily wider.

**Committee Member Wagenius** asked if the underlying design had changed since the last meeting and Dan Soler said no. The focus today was to clarify pedestrian crossings and crossing times.

Dan Soler reviewed slide 42 and examples of crossing times. Highlighted on the slide is the current N/S Pedestrian crossings, and ADA compliance varies.

Calculations for crossing times are based on a number of factors. Based on the width of the crossing, the longer the time it takes to cross the street, speed is measured at 3 ½ feet per second (walk time).

Design speeds for the average pedestrian to get across the street is 34-48 seconds and can be adjusted.

**Chair Duininck asked to review previous slides on center platforms.** Challenges of running across the street, not looking at opposite trains coming, trying to get to center platform. Reminded of the Snelling station where two fatalities have occurred.

Most of the street intersections do not have access to center platforms, per Dan. These plans are very conceptual in nature, and what has been learned from the Green line can be incorporated into the BLRT line plans today.

Dan Soler stated that along the Green Line they continue to add more improvements to the line as problems arise, with a goal to provide a safe pedestrian environment.

**Council Member Snope** asked what the detrimental impact will be on vehicle traffic with additional stops along Hwy 55.

Dan said traffic will slow down a bit; based on lane analysis with lane capacity and other factors, this will provide an adequate level of safety but does not fully impact flow of traffic.

**Council Member Snope** stated that the design with added signals will back up Golden Valley traffic and asked why we can't move to a grade separation crossing for pedestrians?

Dan Soler stated that when the land is flat, the ability to get pedestrians to go up and then down, is more difficult. At grade vs elevated does not work.

**Committee Member Wagenius** asked about Dan Soler's use of the word "attempt" to lower speeds on Hwy 55 and the Mayor's concerns. Per Dan Soler, implementation of lower speed limit signs (35 mph) is part of plan, along with other initiatives to allow that attempt to become reality.

**Commissioner Forney** asked if 'lead pedestrian lighting' has been used on the Hiawatha or CCLRT line; currently used successfully in the Uptown area. Pedestrians get a lead on the pedestrian light before the traffic light

changes. Dan said it has not been used on those two projects but if it is being used in Minneapolis, this can be discussed with MnDOT in the planning.

**Chair Duininck** reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule (slide 49) with additional dates.

- October 29<sup>th</sup>- Presentation of recommendation on revised project scope/cost estimate. Hopefully time for discussion.
- November 12<sup>th</sup>- Final recommendation and CMC action on revised project scope/cost estimate
- December 10<sup>th</sup>- Agenda TBD
- Technical issues or any questions and concerns should be directed to the project office for review.

Dan Soler added that there will be a joint CAC/BAC meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Committee Member Pfefferkorn** stated that the next CMC meeting is in conflict with the Railvolution conference, and the Policy Link conference. It was confirmed that the Railvolution conference ends on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Duininck stated that if any members are unable to attend the CMC on the 29<sup>th</sup>, they are welcome to submit questions or concerns prior to the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Pfefferkorn asked if there will be an additional meeting if needed for those that may have questions.

Dan clarified the additional dates of November 2 and 3 for BAC/CAC members to get updated scope/cost estimates prior to the November 12 CMC meeting.

Dan discussed the Draft Resolution process that will be presented for approval at the November 12<sup>th</sup> CMC meeting.

**Council Member Cunningham** asked about his request for an assessment re: 3 stops in Minneapolis and on the Green Line in low income neighborhoods.

**Commissioner Higgins** wanted clarification as to what the process will be on November 12. Chair Duininck said the meeting will be very specific and will cover resolutions.

## 7. **CAC/BAC Committee Reports: Chris Berne/Denny Walsh**

Chris Berne, Co-chair of the CAC, presented for the CAC committee today.

Wanted to reiterate the combined CAC/BAC meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Chris Berne stated his role on the CAC committee working with officials and the public is seen as a way to vet some topics prior to CMC meetings, and that ideas and input brought forth have helped to make some changes.

The expedited schedule for CAC prompted a process to be created where members could submit input via email to meet the deadlines for submission to the Project staff.

Chris Berne stated there has been good participation from the Park Board representatives and municipal officials but he is a little disappointed with the general community participation. He suggested using the committee as a resource and conduit for presenting ideas to the CMC.

**8. Adjourn**

The CMC meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

**Next meeting:**

**Thursday, October 29, 2015**

**1:00 pm-3:00 pm**

**Brooklyn Park Community Activity Center**

**5600 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue North**

**Brooklyn Park, MN 55443**