



# **METRO Blue Line Extension**

## **Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee**

**Tuesday, May 9, 2023**

**8:00 AM – 9:30 AM**

Blue Line Project Office

6465 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 500

St. Louis Park, MN 55426

**BAC Members:** Ian Alexander, Terry Austin, John Barobs, KB Brown, Dan Doerrler, Rita Endres, John Hacker, Jamar Smith, Dr. Tara Watson, Chris Webley

**Agency Staff and Guests:** C Terrence Anderson, Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Catherine Gold, Nick Landwer, Bojan Mistic, Koehl Simmons, Dan Soler, Kaja Vang, Kjerstin Yager

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions**

Co-chair Dr. Tara Watson called the meeting to order at 8:08 a.m. and suggested members and staff to introduce themselves.

#### **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Tara Watson made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. There was a second motion and the minutes were approved.

#### **3. Upcoming Meetings and Attendance**

Dr. Watson asked if there were any question or concerns about attendance. There were no concerns.

#### **4. Anti-Displacement Overview and Recommendations**

Catherine Gold introduced the Anti-Displacement Recommendations Report. Catherine stated that this work has been continuing throughout the project. C Terrence Anderson, CURA, introduced himself and discussed the recommendations of the anti-displacement report. He stated that there are fifty-five core pages and a couple hundred pages of appendices. He stated that the team spent a lot of time researching previous light rail projects in the Twin Cities, including the previous Blue Line and the Green Line. He stated a key finding of the report are the seventeen policies that support recommended outcomes. He stated that these policies lay out clear recommended next steps. C Terrence shared the principals for all recommendations, including making sure recommendations are accessible to all, measurable, designed to support those most impacted by construction, and targets existing residents not new ones. C Terrence discussed recommended outcomes. In Brooklyn Park, these included preserving the rich culture of the corridor in place, improving the climate for business after construction, providing opportunities for existing residents and businesses to stay in place, supporting safe, affordable housing and housing choice, and ensuring youth feel safe on and around the light rail. In Crystal and Robbinsdale, these included addressing indirect construction impacts, improving the climate for businesses after construction, improve infrastructure surrounding the project and supporting development. In Minneapolis, these policies included creating opportunities for community ownership,



empowering the community to have control over decision-making, provide opportunities for existing residents and businesses to stay in place, grant reparations to the Harrison neighborhood for harm caused by the previous alignment, and creating accountability for government agencies.

## **5. Discussion and Members Feedback**

Dr. Watson said that while this sounds wonderful and it is a very robust document, it is not public-friendly. C Terrence stated that the report will not go to the public in the way that Dr. Watson is suggesting, it won't go to the general public, but it will be used as a framework by researchers.

Terry Austin stated that this work is already done so that the business owners will not receive a twenty-page document. KB Brown stated that you can't have people saying that there will be displacement help without telling them where they will be displaced too. C Terrence stated that the document discusses impacts before, during and after construction.

KB asked about funding. C Terrence stated a part of it is making sure that this makes it into the state budget. KB stated that displacement started when the alignment was announced, and the anti-displacement work should have started six months ago and that comes from the project. C Terrence stated that part of the process was creating a process for communicating with governments.

Terry asked if there would be another entity to ensure the anti-displacement policies are being implemented. Dan Soler, Hennepin County, stated that it is important for the project team to be checking in to make sure these recommendations move forward. C Terrence stated that one of the next steps is creating a regional entity that can manage the recommendations and make sure the anti-displacement strategy is implemented. Dr. Watson suggested that there should be a navigator for someone to navigate the document. Catherine stated that there should be one-on-one sessions with the businesses to walk them through the policies. Dr. Watson stated that a person on the phone is not a navigator, a navigator is someone that can condense the document to something simple and digestible.

KB stated that government does not get to say funding is not available. KB stated that government loves giving money to rich people but hates giving money to first time wealth builders. Terry replied that the project was really robust and intensive, much more than he anticipated. Terry stated that his worry is that if there isn't someone ensuring compliance then the work will not be done.

John Barobs asked what resources the project proposes to provide benefits to businesses owners. Terry stated that government entities often understand what the problems are and can quickly resolve the problem but if there's someone who's not directly impacted, the process can be long and drawn out.

Jamar Smith was worried about the train creating an exodus from the community rather than an influx of new residents. Dan asked for key highlights to present to the CMC. Dan said he heard navigation, implementation, right-fitting the strategy based on historical strategies in other contexts.

## **6. Next Steps**

## **7. Next Meeting: June 6, 2023**



**8. Adjourn**

Dr. Watson adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.