



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

4/19/2022

8:00 AM

WebEx

BAC Members: John Hacker, Mike Opat, Kenya McKnight-Ahad, Jimmy Lloyd, Chris Webley, Tim Baylor, Alex Burns, Felicia Perry, Ian Alexander, John Barobs

Agency Staff and Guests: Sophia Ginis, Jason Tintes, Amber Turnquest, Andrew Gillett, Becca Hughes, Cathy Gold, Colin Cox, Dan Soler, Jesse Struve, Jim Voll, Joan Vanhala, John Hacker, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Kristine Stehly, Nick Landwer, Marcia Glick, Nimisha, Pa Nhue Vue, Trevor Roy, Kjerstin Yager, Shay Woods

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Felicia Perry called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM.

2. Approve February Meeting Summary

Felicia moved to approve the minutes, and John Hacker seconded. The minutes were approved.

3. Route Modification Report

a. Staff Recommendation

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, shared an overview of the process to find a new route, including general areas along the route. Brooklyn Park is staying much the same and exploring options in Crystal, Robbinsdale and Minneapolis. She reviewed the timeline since they began finding the route recommendation, including early engagement, the Draft Report in December which did not include a recommendation and finally the recommendation. She reviewed the types of engagement and results, which included 300 meetings, social media, and paid ads as well as other sources. She reviewed the work of the cohort. The community cohort is made up of paid contracted community and cultural organizations and is a model that they will continue to use going forward. She reviewed the committee decision-making process which includes TPAC, CAC & BAC, CMC and the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County Board. They received hundreds of comments on the draft report.

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, shared information on the Route Modification Report, which was published yesterday. Dan shared the route that they would like to move through the process, which includes the West Broadway route option. The route extends from Target Field, has a few options for how to get out of



downtown (which will be at-grade at 7th street/6th avenue, unlike Southwest) and will either head west on Olson Memorial Highway or go up 7th and in both cases, across I-94 on a bridge. The line would move north-south on Lyndale Avenue, then for the West Broadway segment that will go from Lyndale to Irving will use some combination of West Broadway and 21st. This would include a station in the Emerson/Fremont Area. After this, the line will follow West Broadway to Robbinsdale (with a station at Penn Avenue) then continue on to CR81. There are a few options at North Memorial for a station. They would propose to propose to run in Downtown Robbinsdale and over Highway 100. Then in Crystal there are a few options at Bass Lake Road, including a proposal to run above Bass Lake Road with an interchange. There would be another station at 63rd, and the line would cross over to West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park where it would begin to follow the former (2013) alignment.

Dan explained that there was a need for a new route to avoid use of the BNSF right-of-way. They pursued a number of different possibilities, they had two good options in Lowry and West Broadway routes. The evaluation showed that they were no “poor” ratings in any of these routes. Since the Draft Report was released, they did change some of the rating based on feedback and further review. Dan shared some of the new information that they included in the latest report. They took a close look at walksheds. I-94 creates many barriers for the Washington Avenue section of the Lowry route. There are not many good north-south connections to Lowry because of the space available in right-of-way. There are only so many places that you can cross I-94, and the residents on the west side of I-94 would have issues access the route. The West Broadway route shows that there is a lot of access for residents around West Broadway. Regional destinations were also a factor in this assessment. There are destinations for both, but more for West Broadway. The next step is to begin with the environmental process. They are not starting from scratch; the former project had a DEIS and an FEIS. There is a lot that is new in this process. There is work to do in station area planning later this summer and further engineering. These pieces will all meld together. In a year the design will be approved, and the project will move into final design. The line will hopefully open in 2028.

b. Discussion

Sophia opened up the discussion. Felicia emphasized the length of the report and the option to review the executive summary as well online. Felicia emphasized the need for ongoing, robust (without pausing), engagement on this route. Felicia shared that she likes how the team has taken in feedback. However, there needs to be ongoing work to receive that feedback. She is happy to see there are meetings that are already planned and is looking forward to more from the cohort. Felicia said that she is very concerned about the route going down 21st. She is concerned that her neighbors are unaware of this, and she is personally at risk of displacement because she lives on that street. She is disappointed with the timing of the anti-displacement working group and this route recommendation; she was hoping for recommendations from the working group before the route announcement. For example, many of the BIPOC business owners, don't own their buildings, and are renting their space. The project needs to be working with the Partnership and Property Commercial Land Trust to purchase properties so that these renters continue to have affordable options. These residents need to have options. There is a lot of opportunity when you look at what's happening with rental properties. It is going to be super important. To achieve something that looks equitable or reparative in North Minneapolis, there needs to be work to make that happen- for example, promising jobs to people in the



neighborhood- there needs to be work to make sure those people can access those jobs. If it's from outside the neighborhood, its completely extractive.

KB Brown shared that as a business owner on West Broadway he was disappointed there weren't solutions to support property ownership for businesses along the corridor before the route announcement. He is concerned with the timing and recommendations not being completed by the anti-displacement group. Sophia understood that concern and emphasized they are looking for those solutions with the process. She also acknowledged Mike Opat's comment in the chat.

Chris Weebly said that in regard to the option to go down 21st, there is pushback from a personal perspective, since he has a building there. Although he will support what is best for the community, he struggles to see how this would be a good option for the community. He is on this call for the people who can't be and is most concerned about those who are not able to be on the call. The biggest concern is displacement for these neighbors. He would almost have preferred leading with the Anti-Displacement recommendations (as opposed to the route recommendation first). His biggest concern is for people who have for-profit businesses on the corridor, such as Kenya, who will be impacted by construction. He thinks these are challenges we can figure out the answers to, so he is excited to continue this conversation.

Kenya McKnight-Ahad said she is excited for the opportunity of the West Broadway route, although she knows it will bring some pain. She is very much interested in how the displacement will be mitigated. She is very interested in how this will build up the Northside, outside of the route. She said it is important to look at in terms of how federal money will be spent in what is called an environmental justice community by the federal government. 29 or 30 African Americans do own business properties on West Broadway. She said they may not have as much time to be in these meetings, but she just wanted to make sure that it's clear that they [we] are there. They should be intentionally engaged. Often times the community and social groups, don't share their perspective, they are also important, but they don't always represent the same economic realities. She said we are a minority in the narrative. She said that is her opinion as someone who has been in the business for 20 years. Kenya shared that she also has residential property on 21st. She is concerned about the 21st Avenue option. She said we have to be involved in leading and sharing the narrative. She also said people should know, we are not all poor, we have property here. We also need to fully compensate any property owners for property that will be taken. Dan Soler added that he really appreciated these things that have been said. The work that is being done with the Anti-Displacement group will work to fully resolve these issues. We are attempting to make sure that displacement and impacts to businesses will be remedied. They are committed to making sure this is part of the discussion in every step.

Tim Baylor has a question about the process moving forward. He said he was surprised this recommendation was announced when they did not have last month's meeting. He wanted to know how this moves forward in terms of municipal votes. This is the staff recommendation now. Sophia confirmed this, and there is a 30-day comment period. She said they will categorize the comments, summarize those comments and post that memo. That information will be shared with the BAC and CAC. The conversation we've had today will be shared with the CMC by Felicia. The CMC will recommend a path forward to the Met Council. The CMC represents each municipality. The Met Council and Hennepin County will then vote on this recommendation.



This is not the municipal consent process. That will be sought in 2023, after more design and environmental work has happened. This is a proposed project until we have the municipal consent and environmental process complete. Sophia emphasized that door-knocking is a part of the engagement plan. Selecting a route gives the project the option to move forward and work on the details. Tim confirmed that the Met Council and Hennepin County will be voting but asked for clarity on the municipalities. Sophia confirmed there are two places where municipalities have input. There are representatives to the CMC who will vote on the route. After that is the municipal consent process. Each municipality has one vote. Brooklyn Center would have the same number of votes as Minneapolis? Sophia said that Brooklyn Center would not have municipal consent but would still have a vote on the CMC, like Minneapolis. Sophia confirmed she would share the CMC charter so he can take a look at that. Kenya asked if there is a document that outlines the remaining steps of the process. Sophia confirmed that there is a timeline she can show that describes big areas of work. There is also a next step document. Felicia also recommended the executive summary. Sophia said the next steps document includes the next steps for the city votes and municipal consent. Kenya confirmed that anytime the community can weigh in. This is not a one and done. Sophia emphasized this is the beginning of the process not the end.

4. Anti-Displacement Working Group Update

Sophia reviewed the process that built the anti-displacement table. She emphasized that the group was intended to create implementable recommendations. She emphasized the work that was done to develop the RFP and the input included from the advisory committees and others. Because of that effort, CURA was able to do the work they are leading now. The CURA group is really listening, and everyone at the table will allow for the differences to be hashed out and the community's opinion to be centered. The group is just starting to do that; they have met twice. KB sits on that group and is on this committee, as well as others that committee members may know. There is more to come from this group as they continue to meet and develop recommendations.

Cathy answered Kenya's question about engagement. The engagement will be two-fold, the project has its own engagement, and CURA's group will be doing their own engagement. She was not sure about the question of if commercial property owners are on the committee. Kenya did want follow-up because having commercial property owners being on the committee is equitable representation for her. Cathy shared a link in the chat that has the materials regarding anti-displacement. Kenya said that everyday people don't have a ton of time to keep following everything that is done. Cathy confirmed that they will continue to develop concise summaries of what is happening. KB is on the committee as well.

5. In-Person vs. Virtual Meeting Poll

This item was not discussed.

6. Next Meeting: May 3, 2022

Sophia shared that they would cancel this meeting, unless this group would like to keep it. In June they will review the comments received. Felicia also suggested an update from the Anti-Displacement work group since they will be meeting before that.



7. Adjourn

Felicia adjourned the meeting at 9:33 AM.