



BLUE LINE EXTENSION CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CMC) MEETING

July 15, 2021 | 1:30 p.m.

Present: Abdi Salah, Alicia Vickerman, Tim Baylor, Jeffrey Lunde, Jeremiah Ellison, Jim Adams, Kathi Hemken, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Mike Elliot, Mike Steinhauser, Nichole Buhler, Nick Landwer, Qannani Omar, Reva Chamblis, Ricardo Perez, Robert Lilligren, Shep Harris, Jon Solberg, Tonja West-Hafner, Undrea Patterson, William Blonigan, Mike Barnes, Bridget Rief, Charlie Zelle, Chris Meyer, Phillipe Cunningham, Dani Hans, Denise Butler, Elie Farhat, Felicia Perry, George Selman, Gillian Rosenquist, Irene Fernando, Jason Greenberg , Wes Kooistra

Not in attendance: Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, Marion Greene, Jacob Frey, Mark Steffenson, Angela Conley, Olga Parsons, Susan Pha, Felipe Sosa, Kirk McDonald

1. Call to Order

Chair Charlie Zelle, Met Council, welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 1:32 PM.

2. Approval of June 10, 2021 BLRT CMC Meeting Summary

Chair Zelle asked the committee to review the meeting minutes from the June 10, 2021 meeting. With no corrections heard, Mayor Bill Blonigan, City of Robbinsdale, made the motion to approve the minutes; Mayor Pro Tem Tonja West-Hafner, City of Brooklyn Park, seconded the motion. Meeting minutes were approved.

3. Committee Reports

Felicia Perry, BAC, reported that the committee looked over potential station locations and visualizations in Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Minneapolis. The committee saw need for discussion around turn lanes, traffic impacts, and loss of parking. There were also concerns about how businesses and community would respond to visuals. Tim Baylor, BAC, added that the concerns were based in Minneapolis.

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, shared an update from the CAC. The co-chairs were not able to attend but expressed that it was important for the project team to think about the biking and walking connections in how station locations are selected. There was a robust discussion based on the visualizations about site-specific location elements and how the whole package will come together.

4. Potential Station Study Areas



Dan Soler, Hennepin County, shared an update on the purpose and schedule of the station study areas. He described how the station study areas were determined including considerations for previously planned stations, stakeholder and community input, key destinations, transit connections, station spacing and the overall number of stations.

Brooklyn Park has planned stations that will remain from the previous alignment. The project would look to continue with these four planned stations. Dan Soler described the potential station study areas in Brooklyn Park, Crystal and Robbinsdale. He described some features being considered including a pedestrian bridge in Crystal, a park and ride near Downtown Robbinsdale. These three stations are similar to the station locations of the previous alignment. Near North Memorial is a station study area that would be new. Stations at Penn and at Emerson/Fremont Avenues are study areas for both the West Broadway and Lowry Routes. These would provide transit connections to the METRO C and D lines. Dan shared that the Minneapolis Parks Board is putting a significant investment into North Commons Park and that should be a consideration. The Washington and Lowry station would serve the Upper Harbor Terminal development. Washington and West Broadway would serve West Broadway connections from the Orange/Lowry Route. A station location at Washington and 10th would serve the North Loop. At Lyndale and Plymouth there are important service areas and potential developments.

Dan shared next steps regarding how these will be studied including consideration for the project goals and principles, public feedback, engineering requirements, available right of way, existing and future land use, and other considerations.

Tim Baylor asked about zoning and the priorities of cities along the line. At the last meeting where it was discussed, it was not settled who would have voting on the Corridor Management Committee. He noted that the highest population and most people affected are in Minneapolis. Is the City of Minneapolis planning department involved? Dan Soler shared that the project meets with the Minneapolis staff weekly. There are representatives in those meetings from Public Works and CPED. They coordinate as well with the mayor's office and city council's office. In the past there was a lot of work on zoning in the station area planning process. This work would occur again with these routes. Sam O'Connell, Metropolitan Council, shared that this process also uses municipal consent. Tim said that although he represents the Robbinsdale Chamber of Commerce, most of his work happens in Minneapolis. He said there seems to be a disconnect between the members of these committees and the City of Minneapolis staff. Chair Zelle said offline they will make sure they connect. Abdi Salah, Mayor's Office added there is the staff level group, and there is also a policymaker level of these discussions; he is happy to answer any questions offline as well.

Nichole Buehler said that the staff version of this group used to have community members on them. The Southwest version of this group has community seats. Chair Zelle said that they would take that under consideration. Sam asked Nichole to clarify. Nichole said that the Bottineau Community Works used to have Blue Line Coalition seats at that table. Nichole said this does not have to be the Blue Line Coalition; she is more concerned about community being represented in those seats at



that table. Chair Zelle said that they will investigate that. Irene Fernando, Hennepin County Commissioner, agreed that could be investigated. She said that Bottineau Community Works represents the work that happens outside of the rail. The Bottineau Community Works Steering Committee was inactive for three years. During that time there were staff meetings. When that steering committee was reestablished, the route had changed. She said that when they made the selection for the new steering committee, they prioritized a table for policymakers. She said that Community Works still has many advisory committees with community.

5. LRT Visualizations

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, provided an overview of the visualizations and the design considerations for each area. He shared that Brooklyn Park has four of five stations at the 90% level of engineering. There continues to be analysis on 63rd Avenue. He shared some of the renderings for the plans at 85th.

Nick shared design considerations for Crystal was maintaining four lanes, assuring pedestrian access, and creating center-running at grade light rail. He showed renderings South of Bass Lake Road and at 48th Avenue. Robbinsdale design considerations included center running at-grade light rail on County Road 81 which maintained existing intersections and prioritized safe pedestrian crossings. There still needs to be more details on landscaping and streetscaping. He showed visualizations at 40th in Downtown Robbinsdale and near North Memorial Hospital.

Minneapolis design considerations include both routes at Lowry Avenue and West Broadway. Parking analysis is underway. Also links to the main route options are still under study. Intersection operations will be important and are still under review. He showed visualizations on Lowry at Newton where there is a narrow right of way and roadway that would be expanded. Bike accommodation is still under study. He showed Washington Avenue along 94. He showed visualizations on West Broadway at Queen Avenue and Emerson.

Nick shared considerations for other designs including side-running and elevated rail. He showed potential closures due to a side running design on West Broadway and Lowry.

Dan Soler answered a question from Mike Opatz in the chat regarding bus connections and transfers at the stations. Dan said that they don't have examples of accessing buses directly, but there would be considerations for this in the planning.

Jeffrey Lunde, Hennepin County Commissioner, commended the staff for the work on visualizations and striking the right balance between design considerations and details. He said it helped with engagement.



6. Updates: RFP & Engagement Report

Sam O'Connell provided a quick update on the RFP being out and thanked the group for working to share it broadly. There are several community events with both in-person and virtual opportunities in July.

7. Next Meeting

Chair Zelle, asked the group about a change to the timing of the meeting to be the second week in July because of the holiday.

8. Closing

Chair Zelle, adjourned the meeting at 3:06 PM.