



# METRO Blue Line Extension

## Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee Meeting

February 2, 2022

6:00PM

WebEx

**CAC Members:** Kathy Fraser, Cory Funk, Jason Greenberg, Gene Montanez, Giuseppe Marrari, Catherine Fleming, Ken Rodgers, Adam Hutchens, John Wolhaupter, Brett Buckner, Ellis Beck

**Agency Staff and Guests:** Sophia Ginis, Andrew Gillett, C Terrence Anderson, Cathy Gold, Dan Soler, Jim Voll, Joan Vanhala, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Kristine Stehly, Nick Landwer, Jason Tintes, Emilee Roschen

### Meeting Summary

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

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, welcomed the group. Jason Greenberg, City of Robbinsdale, began the meeting at 6:04 PM.

#### 2. Approve December 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Sophia Ginis shared that Catherine Fleming had made corrections to her comments from the last meeting. Ken Rodgers motioned to move the minutes. A committee member seconded. The minutes were approved.

#### 3. Appoint One New Committee Co-Chair

Sophia Ginis updated the group that Felipe Sosa stepped down as the co-chair. Gene Montanez volunteered to be the new co-chair. Ken Rodgers motioned to move, and the committee agreed to approve Gene as the new co-chair.

#### 4. Draft Report Comment Overview

Sophia Ginis shared an update on the comments received from the Draft Report comment period, which ended on January 25<sup>th</sup>. There were responses that came through the comment form, email, letters from cities along the line and Maple Grove. The interactive map also received many comments that helped capture comments from the broader public. Since December 13, the interactive map received 296 comments.

Sophia said that project staff heard an overall theme of a need for efficient transit options. There was a lot of support for a route that serves people who don't have cars and want to use transit. People are wanting efficient and well-connected transit. Sophia also mentioned that there were comments asking for more information for things like travel time and service to community destinations, just to name a couple. Jason Greenberg, City of Robbinsdale, asked if the numbers in the pie chart in the slideshow represent comments that project staff has written on post-it-notes, or just notes coming from residents at meetings. Sophia responded they did include post-it-note comments. This round was mainly answering questions, comments coming through the chat, and written comments. Ken Rodgers, TAAC, asked about how project staff are addressing issues that come up that are subjective and indicate someone may not fully understand how things work. Are project staff rephrasing the questions into a positive way? Sophia responded that they take those type of questions as a challenge and think how in the report it can speak to the issues and what's at the root of the problem. Providing facts to the community and walking them through the process. Gene Montanez, City of Robbinsdale, asked if project staff are compiling similar comments so they can provide answers to the community members about what is going to be done. Ken Rodgers suggested creating FAQ sheets. Sophia responded that with consistent themes they can explain where in the process and when things will occur. Themes help give the project staff things to continue to talk about. Project staff is working on a one-pager.

Sophia reviewed the common themes of each goal in the report. Jason Greenberg, City of Robbinsdale, shared that he attended one of the meetings at Elim Church and one of the big themes that came up was the nature of traveling to work has changed. People were asking why we are moving forward with a big transit project. This didn't seem to be included in the Robbinsdale themes for Goal 1 but should be. Sophia responded that there are a lot of people who have continued to use public transit because they physically need to go to their place of work. Gene Montanez, City of Robbinsdale, shared that providing clear information may help people better understand the concerns that they have. Dan Soler, Hennepin County, responded that a common theme from the suburban communities he heard was also the changing nature of work today and work and travel patterns changing should be mentioned somewhere. Sophia shared that goal 3 or 4 contains some feedback revolved around these types of comments.

Sophia asked the group what they would like project staff to pay attention to in the next round of reports. Gene Montanez, City of Robbinsdale, asked about the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge going over CR81. Dan Soler said it's feasible, but the grades would play a big role. A pedestrian bridge over a freeway could be difficult but it would get used because it's the only way across. If it's easy to cross the street at-grade, a pedestrian bridge to cross could make it more difficult (stairs, switchbacks), then the feasibility goes down. Project staff are looking at ways to build a usable pedestrian facility and where at West Broadway it would make the most sense. Ken Rodgers, TAAC, brought up the concern about businesses that are not close to a station may not gain foot traffic. Or a business that sits between two stations, they may take a hit. He shared he was surprised there haven't been comments around this. Ken asked if transit-oriented development, throughout the whole corridor, has it seen an uptick on light rail projects between stations or just around the stations? Sophia responded that it depends on the context of the corridor. There are different amounts of density and numbers of businesses. Project staff has prepared walkshed data to help look at goals. Ken shared that there was a lot of effort to

work with businesses to mitigate construction impact on clientele. Sophia responded that project staff has worked to identify issues and find solutions is part of their work plan. Dan shared that we have to find where station locations make sense, can't have one on every block. Also need to protect areas that don't have stations, so they don't have negative impacts.

Dan Soler shared feedback from 5 cities along the corridor. Brooklyn Park supports the route change from rail corridor to CR81. The City also identified to keep in mind how to deal with pedestrian crossings at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street and are interested in continuing to maintain development opportunities in the 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave flyover area. Crystal would like the project to consider the impacts of the lane configurations on CR81, going from 6 to 4 lanes. Concern around the end configuration of Bass Lake Road. Robbinsdale sent a resolution with a number of topics, one is to consider the city as 2A and 2B, not grouped into just Area 2. The City asked to see a no-build option to be evaluated, this would be addressed in the environmental review. Minneapolis is looking for more information to help guide the decision making between the routes. Maple Grove requested to include design options to accommodate a future BLRT spur to the city. Sophia shared the comments are put in two buckets – consistent with themes already heard and to provide additional information. Comments are being incorporated into the Route Modification Report and there will be a 30-day comment period following the release.

## **5. Anti-Displacement Working Group Update**

C Terrence Anderson, CURA, shared timeline updates for the ADWG. They are currently conducting interviews with 50 of the applicants. C Terrence thanked PeggySue and Felicia Perry who are joining the interviews. Anticipating having an orientation meeting and the first full Saturday meeting to be sometime in May. The Saturday meetings won't be the only engagement time. There are planned overall outreach and engagement on the project around the full Saturday meeting timeline. C Terrence asked the group how the ADWG is showing up in the community? People should think about how to partner with their communities to deliver digestible information about this project. Of the applicants, there's light representation from Crystal but overall seeing a lot of diversity of the candidates. The group is also looking for philanthropic representatives. Catherine Fleming, MPRB, asked if the candidates have knowledge of the Blue Line Extension. C Terrence responded that the knowledge level varies, they've had planners and people who are interested because of their community. Sophia commented that CURA is working to make sure the community will be well represented at the table. Catherine asked if any action items can be taken prior to the meeting schedule. Is the group talking to real estate reps, property owners, looking at temporary locations for businesses? C Terrence responded that yes, they are looking into these things but not sure if actions will be taken prior to the meetings. Sophia added that this is a process, building up this group to do the research and that it takes time. The team will be doing a lot once things really get going.

Sophia shared that Governor Walz include \$200 million for the project in his budget proposal, as part of an equity lens and serving the North Minneapolis and NW suburbs. Catherine Fleming said that there are things that can be done now that don't need to wait until the end of the displacement process. Sophia responded that they want to be as responsive as possible. Gene Montanez, City of Robbinsdale, asked if the interviewees have a balance of emotions and facts. C Terrence responded saying the interview process assesses how people are coming to the

table. Balancing the group across a number of factors, not just fact and emotion. Dan Soler added that it's a critical piece of the process. Hopefully identifying things early and acting early. Catherine asked if the project staff has responded to the letter from the City of Minneapolis. Dan responded that the project staff is working with the City weekly to address their comments. Catherine added that the City requested to slow down the process. Dan responded that they need to move forward at the right time.

**6. Next Meeting:**

Sophia Ginis shared that the next meeting would be in March. Planning to have the report later in March so suggesting cancelling the March meeting to have more time to get the Report together. Catherine Fleming, MPRB, asked if the ADWG would have met yet and Sophia responded that it would be a quick turn around and might not have an update.

**7. Adjourn**

Gene Montanez, City of Robbinsdale, adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.