



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

CAC Members: Kathy Fraser, Jason Greenberg, Adam Hutchens, Brett Buckner, Catherine Fleming, John Wolhaupter, Scott Booher

Agency Staff and Guests: Sophia Ginis, Andrew Gillett, Jason Tintes, Cathy Gold, Dan Soler, Jim Voll, Joan Vanhala, Nick Landwer, Sam O'Connell, Trevor Roy, Amber Turnquest, Liz Morice, Kerri Pearce Ruch

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order/Welcome and Introductions

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, welcomed the group. Jason Greenberg called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes.

Jason asked for a move to approve the minutes. Brett Buckner motioned to approve the minutes. Catherine Fleming seconded, and the minutes were approved.

3. Potential Station Study Areas

Dan shared the purpose and timeline for the potential station study areas. He shared that the project team is expecting ongoing discussion for the next several months to refine these station options. The project determined station study areas by previously planned stations, community input, key destinations, transit connections, spacing and the overall number of stations. Stations in Brooklyn Park include the four station that were already planned during the development of the past alignment.

Dan shared potential station locations at 63rd and Bass Lake Road in Crystal. Jason Greenberg asked about the connection to the station over the BNSF at 63rd. Dan confirmed that there would be a vertical connection there to get to the station. Crystal is interested in a ped bridge for at 63rd. The project is considering a variety of options. Scott Booher asked about the work happening near North Memorial at the Lowry bridge. Dan said that Hennepin County is designing both projects. The bridges there are in terrible shape and from a safety standpoint needed replacement. They had to decide whether or not to postpone that project for the Blue Line development. Now they are determining what details can change to help move along the project in coordination with that project, however the bridge is not going to be BRT ready due to the advanced design and funding that were already in progress for the bridge project.



In Minneapolis, there are considerations for transit connections at Penn and Emerson/Fremont Avenues on both Lowry and West Broadway. On Lowry there are three additional potential routes at Lowry and Washington. On Washington there could be station study areas at West Broadway and at 10th Avenue. An additional study area is at Lyndale and Plymouth Avenue.

Kathy Fraser asked a few questions regarding the station study areas. She clarified whether there would no longer be a park and ride at 93rd. Dan confirmed that they did not consider this in the past and would continue to not plan on that. Kathy asked about transit service connections in Brooklyn Park. Dan said that East/West transit connections would be studied at a later date. Kathy Fraser confirmed there is no station on 73rd so these businesses will be served by the Brooklyn Boulevard station which is a mile away. Dan said that the Brooklyn Blvd station was purposed because of the business connections and other destinations there. It would serve the 73rd businesses. Catherine Fleming asked about traffic studies for Lowry and West Broadway, particularly with the turn from Washington to West Broadway. Dan confirmed that with both that turn and Washington to Lowry, the train could not turn at an angle and would not go through the intersection that way. That movement would be much more curved in the design.

Adam Hutchens asked about the main grocery stores in the corridor, the Hy-Vee on Bottineau or the Cub at West Broadway. Dan said that the closest to the Hy-Vee is the North Memorial and that needs to be determined. The Emerson-Fremont station study area on West Broadway is meant to include the connection to the Cub Foods. Adam Hutchens asked about making the stations closer than a quarter mile. Dan confirmed that less than that would be too little space between. Brett Buckner asked about the proposed run time for the train between Brooklyn Center Oak Grove Parkway to Target field. Dan said on the previous alignment they were at 31 minutes. They were projecting ridership of 27 thousand per day. Since the new route runs in the street, there will be more run time, but ridership will likely be the same. Brett asked about the schedule. Dan confirmed it would be around 10 minutes between for most of the day. Catherine asked about a parking facility between West Broadway and Lowry for the businesses along either one of those corridors. Dan confirmed that they are looking at some areas. There will not be park and rides in Minneapolis because they are not wanting people to drive as far as Minneapolis and then ride. They want some connections that are not for cars to the stations. Catherine said she is in favor of that.

4. LRT Visualizations

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, provided background for the visualizations and highlighted that they are meant to be mid-block renderings that need crossings and connections included. In Brooklyn Park the plans are at 90%. He shared a visual of the 85th Avenue station site in Brooklyn Park. He highlighted some improvements at this location including placemaking and enhanced crossings.

Nick reviewed design considerations for Crystal. Crystal considerations included center-running light rail that fits within the existing roadway leaving four lanes of traffic after. He showed visualization for the existing condition and center-running light rail in at S. bass Lake Road and 48th Avenue. Robbinsdale design considerations included maintaining existing intersections and safety for pedestrians. He showed existing condition and future conditions for Robbinsdale at 40th Avenue and near North Memorial. He pointed out that the design at 40th remains in right of way although it takes some parking. Catherine Fleming asked about the sounds of the train and the issues of silent trains. By the time a person hears the whistle they can already see the train. Nick said they will make designs that encourage pedestrians crossing at signalized intersection but also including appropriate crossings outside of intersections. There will be



signage and other features for safety. Catherine asked as well about placemaking. Nick shared that there are opportunities for there to be changes in design and styles of the stations based on community input. They will develop multiple concepts for community input. Catherine asked about West Broadway and Emerson and shared that there is not signal at Emerson currently, will that continue? Nick shared that that will be designed in this process.

Nick shared design considerations for Minneapolis including METRO transit connections and the links to connect the main route options. He shared some details about Lowry Avenue and showed a visualization at Lowry and Newton Avenue. Center-running light rail at this location would expand the roadway into the current right of way and could continue to have bike accommodation. Adam Hutchens asked if the city would like to separate bikes from vehicles. Nick confirmed that this was still under study. Scott Booher said that sharrows would not be useful to bikes. Adam confirmed it would not be something people wanted to bike down. Nick shared a visualization on Washington Avenue at 18th Avenue. It showed center-running light rail. Nick showed light rail on West Broadway at Queen Avenue and at Emerson Avenue. There is one lane of traffic on both sides and no parking. Adam Hutchens asked if this design of center-running could expand walking space. Nick confirmed the design they are showing would expand the sidewalks but there is much more to consider. Adam asked how frequently you would be able to cross. Nick said that they still need to determine the frequency. At least every block there will be a crossing. Adam pointed out that crossings will be needed for business access if parking is loss. Dan said that it may not be every block, but every 600 feet was what exists on University. Pedestrian movements must be more frequent than vehicular movements. Catherine asked about access to alleys and unsignalized intersections. Nick said that if it is crossing the guideway it must have a signal. Some intersections that are through today but not signalized will be improved by the design. Dan said that alleys behind businesses could be improved with the contract. They helped fix the alleys and reorganize space to create parking in some cases. Catherine also identified deliveries were a concern. Brett asked about the potential impacts to flow for the rest of the street network. Nick said that how traffic flows through the other parts of the network will be analyzed. Dan pointed out that when they closed Washington Avenue, they analyzed how traffic would flow to nearby streets. They added signals and other mitigation to address that. Brett pointed out that Plymouth and 26th will get a significant increase in traffic. They will need to look at shuttles and district parking to support the flow. Brett asked about the right of way at Emerson. He shared that some of the buildings in that area that are older and might be acquired for additional space and amenities. Dan said that where there are stations there will need to be widening. They will look at spots because widening might be easier. There are spaces where it is wider and there might be more space to accommodate and opportunities to redevelop or acquire some sites. There are sacred spaces that can't be moved or impacted, and others that might be opportunities for the neighborhood.

Nick showed a rendering of how elevated light rail would look on West Broadway. He pointed out that elevated does not necessarily saving space because it's a large structure and needs to accommodate turn lanes. Adam asked if there could be parking and bike lanes underneath. Adam said that he sees a lot of potential with this. Nick pointed out that people with different needs have accessibility concerns. It creates a lot of shadows. Green space would be difficult due to shadows. Adam said that the decking could have some open areas if it were made of another material. Dan pointed out that this is about what we lose and what we get back from each option. This might be too big of a scale for this setting. Adam asked about the maintenance costs for Southwest. He does not like that its affordable there and not here. Sophia pointed out that there were reasons and tradeoffs which each structure on Southwest. Adam feels that elevated could potentially solve concerns about dividing this neighborhood and mitigate their



neighborhood concerns. Scott Booher said that the visualizations show curb to curb, but he is thinking about the connections that are happening outside of that. There are tributaries to the stations. Dan said that yes, it doesn't matter if it fits if no one can get to it.

Catherine Fleming said that some of the negative feedback she's heard is about the traffic impacts from taking this space away from cars. Dan said yes, this might require some special designs and elevated intersections. Brett Buckner pointed out that some of these businesses won't exist here. He pointed out that some of the Northwest suburbs will have to use 100 to 94. There may be less traffic and a chance to reimagine this area for the neighborhood. Scott Booher pointed out that having more renderings for one station location that includes the network around the station would help. Catherine agreed that having this be more geared to the audience would be an improvement. Nick shared how side running would impact access points along the route on each side of the road. Catherine had question about whether there would be a mix of side and center running. Nick said yes, on Washington Avenue for example there is a side-running section.

5. Updates: RFP & Engagement Report

Sophia Ginis shared that the RFP is out, and the staff is ready for questions. She highlighted a number of community events, open houses and tabling events planned.

6. Adjournment

Brett Buckner adjourned the meeting at 8:02 PM.

Chat:

- from Ginis, Sophia to everyone: 6:02 PM
<https://www.startribune.com/new-coalition-boosts-activities-to-keep-north-side-kids-safe-and-active-in-minneapolis/600074606/>
- from O'Connell, Sam to everyone: 6:03 PM
Awesome!!
- from Jason Greenberg to everyone: 6:30 PM
I have to drop off. Thanks for all your efforts CAC!
- from Ginis, Sophia to everyone: 6:30 PM
See ya Jason
- from Ginis, Sophia to everyone: 6:42 PM
@Catherine example of LRT making a corner:
<https://www.google.com/maps/@44.9515972,-93.0980766,227m/data=!3m1!1e3>
- from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 7:06 PM
Looks great Nick!
- from H Ellis Beck to everyone: 7:06 PM
Totally helpful, thank you
- from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:15 PM
Question. Didn't the city want to separate bikes from vehicles? This takes a step back.
- from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:18 PM
Where will all the run down campers and tractor trailers go if this happens on Washington
- from Brett Buckner to everyone: 7:19 PM
So True!



from Scott Booher to everyone: 7:22 PM

Should bike boulevards, or lack thereof, be a part of the top-down route enderings going forward

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:29 PM

Plenty of bike lane /green space and parking space on an elevated train.

from Scott Booher to everyone: 7:35 PM

I'm wondering how GV residents get here. Potentially too close for a bus ride, but beyond walkability. Potentially perfect for a short bike ride, if protected...

from H Ellis Beck to everyone: 7:37 PM

Re: Scott's comment, have we considered bike lockers at the station sites?

from H Ellis Beck to everyone: 7:37 PM

Especially in res. areas where we could potentially increase the areas we are "pulling from"