

# METRO Blue Line Extension Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

June 7, 2022

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

WebEx

**BAC Members:** KB Brown, Felicia Perry, Ian Alexander, Chris Webley, Mike Opat

**Agency Staff and Guests:** Sophia Ginis, Alana Hutka, Dan Soler, Amber Turnquest, Bill Emory, Andrew Gillett, Cathy Gold, Autumn Dobrowski, Jesse Struve, Jim Voll, Joan Vanhala, Kristine Stehly, Kyle Mianulli, Nick Landwer, Pa Nhue Vue, Trevor Roy, Tim Sandvik, Kjerstin Yager, Jason Tintes

## Meeting Summary

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

Felicia Perry called the meeting to order at 8:06AM.

### 2. Adopt Meeting Minutes

Felicia Perry asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved.

### 3. Route Modification Report

#### a. Staff Recommendation

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, provided an overview of the process to develop the route modification. She identified the milestones of deciding to change the route, reviewing the goals, and evaluating the route. The comment period was 38 days, extended to give more opportunity to comment. Sophia shared that there were emails, paper comments, meeting comments, and other electronically submitted comments from the online form. She shared a summary of comments. She identified a number of concerns and questions about design including road design and other light rail features. She also identified comments about impacts like noise, construction, or vibration. With respect to corridor-wide comments, many had voiced general support or opposition which included feedback about the new route being an improvement. There were also concerns about traffic, property impacts, and how light rail will improve transit. There were many concerns about safety and crime on transit.

Mike Opat shared there were a number of comments in Robbinsdale about opposition of the design being in the road. Mike Opat said that the presentations from the Met Council consistently downplay the opposition of the design in Robbinsdale. There is significant opposition, including with the design at North Memorial Hospital. It is significant that 40% or more of the city council oppose the design. Sophia thanked him for his feedback.



Felicia Perry shared that hearing that there will be thousands of pages once the Environmental report is included sounds overwhelming to think about. How are we planning to help folks digest the information for clarity and understanding? She said she personally has been asked about this part of the process, so I know folks are interested. She would love if we can find ways to ensure the information is accessible and digestible. Sophia agreed that there needed to be ways to share the environmental document in a way that is more accessible. Some of this is sharing what the document is and what it does. She identified that its purpose is to identify where there are impacts, if possible, to avoid them, and if not determine mitigation measures. It is a legally binding document.

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, confirmed that the staff recommendation is for the West Broadway Route. This includes using West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park and County Road 81. County Road 81 in Robbinsdale and Crystal, then West Broadway in Minneapolis. They are still determining the alignment around West Broadway between Lyndale and Irvine. There is also some work to determine the best connection between downtown and West Broadway. They will reevaluate options for the route between downtown and West Broadway. They will be conducting anti-displacement work and the environmental documentation at the same time. The staff believes that timing is correct and more advanced than what happens in other projects, if at all. Mike Opat asked about the Robbinsdale resolution and if it will be shared with this committee. Sophia confirmed that in the BAC packet she shared the resolution and response in the addendum. Trevor Roy shared the link to the comments that are posted online.

Dan Soler shared the major areas of the project schedule including what happens in the next phase of the environmental review. This will take around 1.5 years and will include advancing design and there are several areas that are part of next steps.

## **b. Discussion & Committee Recommendation**

Felicia Perry, BAC, shared that the language in the draft of the recommendation was formulated based on the comments heard in the last meeting. She is hoping that people who are not available today can add their feedback so that the recommendation is truly reflective of the feedback of the committee. Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, said that this does not get filled with complete agreement. The idea is to give the CMC feedback on what is wanted going forward. Felicia identified that people from the neighborhood have shared concerns about impacts of the route on the neighborhood. Chris Webley, BAC, asked what they are looking at in this recommendation. Felicia said this is a document that should include input on the committee regarding the recommendation. The CMC will then take a vote to recommend the recommendation. Chris asked for clarity around the 21<sup>st</sup> option. Sophia identified that they did originally hear the 21<sup>st</sup> option from Ian Alexander. There needs to be more design work for this option and more environment review. Chris asked if they've made a comparison between impacts of options there. He shared his understanding is that 21<sup>st</sup> is no longer favored by Ian Alexander. Felicia shared in the chat that residents along 21<sup>st</sup> were not engaged. She said that as someone on the committee and a resident there, that recommendation did not come from us. Dan Soler, Hennepin County, confirmed that the assessment of the options there have not been thoroughly studied. That is why there was not a confirmation of the design in the route. Dan said that they will need to look at what should fit where, and it will come down to a matter of space. This is in regard to the road, sidewalk, etc. Felicia also shared that this assessment should include residents in addition to businesses. Dan Soler said yes, and we do not want to pit businesses and residents against each other. Chris asked if this is about space or community feedback, or a balance of the two? He said that he is sure the residents have not



been engaged. Dan identified that they have talked to some, but they need to get out there and talk more. They have talked to some tenants as well but need to do more in this next phase. Chris said that owners who live outside of the community versus long-term tenants are very different and the renters need to be a part of this conversation. Felicia agreed. Dan clarified that when he talked about space, they are talking about how roadway features fit and what properties may be impacted or purchased. Felicia thanked Chris for his opinion and agreed that residents in this area, even though this committee is about engaging businesses, need to be heavily involved in making the decision.

Mike Opat said that it needs to be balanced. There are also cases where business owners for example, loss their parking and were overwhelmed by comments from advocates who lived 25 miles away and would never go down that corridor. KB Brown said that he is still processing this recommendation. Felicia Perry agreed when she first saw 21<sup>st</sup> she thought it was overwhelming. She said she learned more about it at a meeting, and she learned why it's in the conversation still. KB said that when he first looked at the route, he was interested that the gas station was removed. Felicia and Chris shared that the gas station remains with the 21<sup>st</sup> option, but the liquor store would be removed. Felicia said it is necessary to understand the noise and parking impacts. Felicia and KB both agreed that residents and businesses are important and should be brought together in a meeting where they can hear from each other. Sophia agreed there needs to be a deeper evaluation of impacts and more in-depth conversation with this area. Felicia read the content regarding anti-displacement in the recommendation. She asked for more review of this recommendation and comments on it. It would be good to finalize this today, but if more needs to be added that could be shared. KB asked about the CMC. Sophia shared that it is made up of all the mayors from the corridor and a few others including the head of the MAC and members from the Blue Line Coalition and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board. Chris identified the language about minimizing displacement is easy to glaze over. Sophia asked if there was more specific language to include on that point. She suggested making more specifics on takings and making the human impact clearer. Chris said that was a good discussion. He asked if there could be a metric to minimize against. Felicia identified that the language that the working group uses includes different types of displacement: cultural, physical, and economic displacement. Sophia said that could be added. Felicia said yes, for example with economic displacement, it might make sense for a property owner to raise prices, but the living wage has not been transferred to a resident who then cannot afford their rent. Sophia suggested adding a bullet to the recommendation to include in addition to physical displacement, the other parts of displacement. Felicia said she is comfortable with this document. Chris said he would prefer that 21<sup>st</sup> was not an option, but he is ok with it as is. Mike said that it seems light on suburban content, but he will let the CMC make those changes. Chris asked if there will be communication about this passing. Sophia said that they will be making a newsletter and communications. The CMC is a voting body, and they will be taking a vote. Then it will be going to the Met Council and Hennepin County Board for a vote. This committee's charter was set through the route recommendation. She said they are proposing that at the July meeting, there will be a discussion about what the committee should be focusing on, including an update on the anti-displacement work. Then the committee will be reappointed for the next phase. Chris asked if they will be reappointed to the committee automatically, or if there will be an application process. It seems like this group should grand-fathered in. Sophia identified that the municipal partners determine that process. Sophia said in regard to the Met Council, they will have an application process, to be transparent about the process and make sure that members are participating. Sophia said it would be rare to not reappoint a member that was engaged in this if they were still interested.



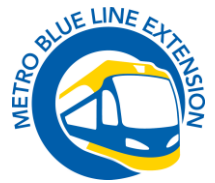
**4. Next Meeting: June 12**

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, said the next regularly scheduled meeting is the day after 4<sup>th</sup> of July, so she suggested moving it to the following week, Tuesday, July 12.

**5. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31AM.

DRAFT



## Chat

from Liz Morice to everyone: 7:58 AM  
good morning!

from Ian Alexander to everyone: 8:05 AM  
Yes, everyone's dream come true: I can't talk!

from Joan Vanhala to everyone: 8:05 AM  
sometimes it helps to resend the meeting invite?

from Pa Nhue Vue to everyone: 8:05 AM  
Are people having trouble with audio? Is it just me?

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 8:06 AM  
my audio is good

from Ian Alexander to everyone: 8:06 AM  
motion!

from Pa Nhue Vue to everyone: 8:06 AM  
I just called in. I can hear now, thanks!

from Ian Alexander to everyone: 8:07 AM  
I motion that we approve.

from Ian Alexander to everyone: 8:07 AM  
Aye.

from Mike Opat to everyone: 8:16 AM  
There were significant comments in opposition Robbinsdale about design in road corridor.

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 8:17 AM  
Hearing that there will be thousands of pages once the Environmental report is included sounds overwhelming to think about. How are we planning to help folks digest the information for clarity and understanding? I've personally been asked about this part of the process so I know folks are interested. But I would love if we can find ways to ensure the information is accessible and digestible.

from Mike Opat to everyone: 8:31 AM  
Dan, will that Robbinsdale resolution be shared with this committee?

from Mike Opat to everyone: 8:32 AM  
I'm not sure if I'm on that mailing list.

from Mike Opat to everyone: 8:32 AM  
mike.opat@northmemorial.com

from Mike Opat to everyone: 8:32 AM  
Please add me

from Mike Opat to everyone: 8:33 AM  
Thank you.

from Roy, Trevor to everyone: 8:33 AM  
[https://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Web-Docs/2022/Route-Modification-Report/Addendum\\_BLRT-Route-Modification-Report\\_June2022-F.aspx](https://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Web-Docs/2022/Route-Modification-Report/Addendum_BLRT-Route-Modification-Report_June2022-F.aspx)

from Pa Nhue Vue to everyone: 8:34 AM  
The staff addendum was sent in a second email on 06/01/22.

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 8:34 AM  
Sophia, are you still there?



from Roy, Trevor to everyone: 8:36 AM

Mr. Opat, your North Memorial address is in our mailing list

from Mike Opat to everyone: 8:45 AM

He did request it and I believe Marcia Glick accepted the request.

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 8:49 AM

Residents along 21st were NOT engaged. I can say that with confidence as someone who lives on 21st and who has been on this committee. That recommendation did NOT come from us.

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 8:52 AM

The assessment on 21st should also include how it impacts the residents and families who live along that route. I know this committee is focused on businesses.

from ian to everyone: 8:53 AM

I am driving and my audio is not working... I can email after the call... I'm listening, Chris. I'll respond.

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 8:56 AM

Agreed Chris!

from Dan Soler to everyone: 8:59 AM

I have to move to a next meeting. Thanks BAC members for your participation.

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 9:01 AM

Thank you Dan!

from CW to everyone: 9:09 AM

@dan and sophia - so would the visualizations down 21st still show impacted properties in pink? I'd like to see the side by side screenshot so I can understand it better.

from Mike Opat to everyone: 9:26 AM

I have to go to another meeting. Thanks.

from Felicia Perry to everyone: 9:27 AM

Thanks Mike!

from Landwer, Nick to everyone: 9:29 AM

I have to join another meeting so dropping off now.

from kb to everyone: 9:29 AM

I have to go to another meeting thanks everyone

from Yager, Kjerstin to everyone: 9:30 AM

July 12, 2022