



Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

Minutes of the July 16, 2019 Meeting

Present: Jim Adams, Denise Butler, Sandie Cagaoan, Reva Chamblis, Joanie Clausen, Molly Cummings, Mike Elliott, Irene Fernando, Catherine Fleming, Nestor Garcia, Shep Harris, Lisa Jacobson, Wes Kooistra, Robert Lilligren, Jeffrey Lunde, Regan Murphy, Candace Oathout, Mike Opat, Matthew Rentsch, Abdi Salah, George Selman, Nora Slawik

Not in attendance: Mike Barnes, Chris Berne, Myron Frans, Jacob Frey, Chris Meyer, Jon Olson, Olga Parsons, Marika Pfefferkorn, Joo Hee Pomplun, Kale Severson, Aasim Shabazz

Several elected officials were recognized, including state legislators, county commissioners, and city council members.

1. **Call to Order**-Chair Slawik welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 1:35 PM.

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 29, 2018**

Chair Slawik asked the committee to approve the November 29, 2018 minutes. Mayor Lunde motioned to approve, with Commissioner Fernando seconding the motion. Meeting minutes were approved.

3. **Chair's Update**

Chair Slawik briefly reflected on her trip to Washington DC, where herself and others met with elected officials and the FTA regarding the Blue Line Extension.

As Chair, Slawik has three main priorities:

1. Focus on the region's economic competitiveness. Working with businesses is something she wants to continue. She wants to build a region where people not only can live, work and raise a family, but a place where people want to live, work, and raise a family. It's about mobility, being able to get to work or school, have affordable housing, great parks, strategic infrastructure and smart plans.
2. She wants to ensure the region is a place where all people – not just some – can be prosperous. She wants to continue the Council's focus on equity. Everyone should be benefitting, and there is a lot of work to do to realize that.
3. She wants to make sure to embrace the Walz-Flanagan vision of One Minnesota. Not just saying we believe in partnership and collaboration, but practicing it daily, in everything we do. Our future depends on us coming together to tackle shared challenges, across all communities, state agencies and with our own agency.

Chair Slawik then summarized the last discussion the Council and Hennepin County had with BNSF. The team met with representatives in April 2019 to discuss 90% design



plans. In that meeting BNSF restated their objections to co-locating their freight operation with the Blue Line Extension.

Since that discussion with BNSF, the Council and our partners at Hennepin County have been discussing how to proceed with moving the Blue Line Extension forward.

The Council continues to update the FTA on project activities.

Chair Slawik assured that local project partners and stakeholders will continue to be engaged as a path forward is identified. The Council is committed to working on an achievable and sustainable solution that will honor the work done by communities in the corridor.

4. BLRT Project Update

MarySue Abel reported on the project update and current activities. Design elements are 90% complete and the project continues to support cultural resource (section 106) activities. BPO continues FTA coordination and will submit a New Starts application with an updated schedule. She also reported that staff time has been allocated to other project and Council departments.

Activities on hold are Right of Way, preparation of 100% plans and specifications, and preparation and submittal of FFGA application.

Environmental activities include Phase II Archaeological Study at floodplain mitigation site and the Floyd B Olson memorial statue.

MarySue reported that the project has received a Medium-High New Starts rating in the fiscal year 2020. The project will be submitting an updated New Starts application on August 23, 2019 and anticipates maintaining our Medium-High rating. The project office will be shifting the FFGA application deliverable from Q4 2019 to Q4 2020 due to the revised project schedule.

Kerri Pearce-Ruch from Hennepin County provided a brief overview of Bottineau Community Works activities that support the project. She reported that there are approximately 16,200 jobs within ½ mile of the 11 proposed stations, employment growth by 2035 estimated at 20,800 in new station areas and 159,600 in downtown Minneapolis, population within ½ mile of stations 30,900, and ridership nearly 27,000 estimated weekly boardings.

Approximately \$522M in development near planned stations since 2014. Urban Land Institute (ULI) Minnesota has identified the line as an Opportunity Corridor based on land availability for business growth and redevelopment.



More than \$3.7M has been invested in planning, community engagements and economic development efforts along the corridor.

The cities within the corridor each spoke on how the line is changing their cities. Brooklyn Park Director of Community Development, Kim Berggren, discussed how the city has adopted Station Area zoning to implement vision of the station area plans with a focus on walkability and less on land use type, to allow for more investment, and provide predictable processes for developers.

The City adopted a mixed-income housing policy in November 2017 which requires 15% of total units in a development to be affordable. This applies to new developments over 10 units seeking city financial assistance or a zoning change.

Ms. Berggren stated that the Oak Grove Station is currently green space. This station would serve Target's 4,000 employees. A public park is also planned in this area.

President McDonald, North Hennepin Community College (NHCC) - reported on the Center for Innovation and the Arts (CITA) at NHCC and how seven partners are working together on this project. The feasibility study has been completed and it is on the short list for Minnesota Bonding in 2020. This center would replace the dated North Hennepin Community College facility, expand their partnership with Metropolitan State University, advance cultural engagement, community education and youth programming. There is also potential of adjoining a STEAM magnet school.

John Sutter, Crystal Community Development Director, reported on the upgraded Bass Lake Road Streetscaping project. These updates are intended to spur business success and private investment in the existing buildings or set the stage for redevelopment. Becker Park is in the midst of a major upgrade which includes a plaza area (possible ice rink in winter), playground/splash pad, and performance stage and lawn. It also serves as a water filtration site.

The City of Crystal has also adopted new zoning ordinance effective in the spring of 2018. This new ordinance is generally less restrictive, focused on regulating the right things and flexibility in response to changing market and residential needs.

Mayor Murphy from Robbinsdale asked all the elected officials to help push the BLRT through. He stated how the entire City Council was in attendance today because of the importance of this line to Robbinsdale. They are already seeing high density residential projects (Birdtown Flats – 152 units – late 2019, Parker Station Flats – 197 units – construction late fall 2019) in anticipation of the line.



Jason Zimmerman, Planning Manager, represented Golden Valley. He reported on the coordination of Golden Valley with Minneapolis on station area planning, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on station design and access to Theodore Wirth Park, Robbinsdale and Three Rivers Park District regarding Sochacki Park, and Three Rivers Park District regarding future completion of Bassett Creek Region Trail.

Golden Valley will be rezoning the St. Margaret Mary site to create future transit-supportive opportunities. They are also utilizing mixed use zoning in nodes throughout the city to encourage flexible redevelopment.

The city is also exploring options for “last mile” connections with the help of consultants. This is a critical link from light rail stations to large employers to the west and downtown areas.

Jim Voll, Minneapolis Principal Planner, talked about station area planning for Penn and Van White stations. They are also changing zoning to capitalize on more jobs near station areas. Olson Towne Homes redevelopment project in the works to expand housing near the Van White station.

Question/Comment Session:

Mayor Harris, Golden Valley – What is the status of the federal appropriations request? Potential Tour – wants to see a tour with legislators in the very near future.

Hennepin County Commissioner Opat – Stated it had been many months since the group has been together. He acknowledged all who had come together today. Everyone sees the need and that the route has been decided. The political will is here. Commissioner Opat went on to comment that the BNSF line is lightly used and they have cooperated with us in the past, letting us tour the line on a couple separate instances.

Metropolitan Council Member Chamblis – She is in full support of the corridor alignment, stating that we are going to make this happen.

Mayor Lunde, Brooklyn Park – People are investing in light rail even though it isn’t here yet. Every year that we wait it hurts the community. We need to meet monthly, even if it is small group that reports back to a larger group. Chair Slawik stated she’d take that under advisory.

Denise Butler, Blue Line Coalition – Ms. Butler called out the letter sent to the Chair which she earlier had passed around to CMC members. Ms. Butler spoke about the urgent equity issue stating the line has a highly diverse community which includes 48%



persons of color, 19% living below poverty, and many living under pressure of displacement. She asked the following questions:

- How is equity being addressed?
- How can they be involved in creation of the agenda?
- What jobs are being created?

Metropolitan Council Member Lilligren stated he was glad to be at the table. He stated he sees strong support for this project across the Council. The Council is committed to addressing equity concerns.

Hennepin County Commissioner Fernando stated the need to identify tactical barriers.

Metropolitan Council Member Cummings was excited to see all the partnerships being formed. The City of Hopkins has transformed due to SWLRT. She has no doubt that the Metropolitan Council is 100% committed to seeing this line happen.

Abdi Salah of Minneapolis Mayor Frey's Office, addressing racial inequity is a priority to the City. He encourages stakeholders to stick together in support.

Mayor Harris – asked what the committee's next steps are.

Chair Slawik reported that next steps would include:

- Quarterly CMC meetings
- Corridor Tour
- Response letters back to the corridor Mayors and the Blue Line Coalition

5. Adjournment – The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM

Next CMC Meeting: TBD