



METRO Blue Line Extension Meeting of the Business Advisory Committee

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Blue Line Project Office
6465 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members: Ian Alexander, Terry Austin, John Barobs, Dan Doerrer, Rita Endres, Donna Sanders, Jamar Smith, Jamez Staples, Dr. Tara Watson

Agency Staff and Guests: Chris Beckwith, Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Nick Landwer, Emilee Roschen, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Dan Soler, John Sutter, Kjerstin Yager

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Dan Doerrer, called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

2. Adopt Meeting Minutes

Dan Doerrer asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Rita Endres made a motion and Jamar Smith seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

3. Upcoming Meetings and Attendance

Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, discussed two of the handouts that provided information about upcoming in-person community meetings and workshops. Mr. Cigolo said that there would also be virtual options for people who cannot attend in person.

Mr. Cigolo reminded the members that attendance is being tracked for the BAC meetings.

4. Project Update

Chris Beckwith, Metropolitan Council, reviewed what the Metro Transit's "Metro" System is and the components of it and how it interacts with the local service. Ms. Beckwith reviewed the route recommendation schedule and emphasized that June is an important timeframe because that is when the Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) is handed over to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for review.

5. Environmental Update

Neha Damle, Metropolitan Council, discussed Chapter 4 and 5 and how it will be built into the SDEIS. Ms. Damle described the elements analyzed within Chapter 4, which covers community and social analysis. Dr. Tara Watson, asked if changes can be made after the SDEIS is submitted and approved. Ms. Damle responded



that in the SDEIS is when options and station placements are studied analyzed. Ms. Beckwith added that the FTA is looking if the document adequately addresses issues covered and that there's enough detail. Ms. Beckwith said that the FTA's review is to make sure that the SDEIS is complete enough for the public. Terry Austin asked if there's a thirty to forty-day period to do re-evaluations and provide comments after the June submittal date. Ms. Damle responded that there will be a comment period when the public can submit their concerns.

Ms. Damle described the elements that would be analyzed in Chapter 5, which covers the physical and environmental analysis. Jamar Smith commented that there should be reference to the physical structure and how to replace buildings. Jamez Staples asked what will be done about underground and overhead utilities. Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, responded that the project would look at utilities that would be impacted because of the train. Mr. Landwer said that they wouldn't want the watermain running underneath the train tracks. Mr. Landwer added that for overhead utilities, the project team would work with each jurisdiction if they were impacted. Mr. Stales asked about energy. Ms. Damle responded energy would be about the energy required to move the train. Mr. Staples brought up that in St. Paul, some buildings experience brownouts when two trains run by at the same time and recommended the project team to look into that. He also mentioned looking into buildings along the line and to provide some sort of resource, so buildings are not without power. Mr. Landwer responded that Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit invest in renewable energy, and they work with Xcel Energy to offset usage. Mr. Landwer added that the power usage of the train is minimal but will look into the brownouts. Rita Endres asked what happens after these items are analyzed. Ms. Damle responded that the SDEIS is required for the project. Ms. Damle discussed that the SDEIS analyzes conditions, and the next step is about mitigation. Mr. Landwer added that this study will determine if there are impacts which would identify mitigation. Terry commented that Chapter 5 doesn't discuss parking. Ms. Damle responded that parking would fall under Chapter 4, and so would property impacts.

6. Crystal Design Elements

Mr. Landwer discussed that the project principles help guide the design and how the Design Decisions Document. Mr. Landwer stated that this document is used for each community and documents discussions, evaluations, engagement, input, considerations, and it keeps a log of outstanding issues. Mr. Landwer added that this document will help inform the environmental work.

Mr. Landwer described the different design options that are being evaluated in Crystal. One option would be 6 lanes at grade with LRT and the other would be 4/5 lanes with an interchange. Mr. Landwer discussed how the 6 lanes at grade option would have a pedestrian structure to cross County Road 81. It would take about eight minutes to cross County Road 81 and added that this option still has a lot of conflicts. Mr. Landwer discussed the 4/5 lanes with the interchange and mentioned that this would clean up the intersection, would require a three-minute walk to cross and it would reduce much of the conflicts. Jamar Smith asked if this design would be similar to Lake/Minnehaha. Mr. Landwer responded that the roadway would be up and over the intersection and the station would be at grade. Mr. Landwer added that they like to keep stations at grade because it's most accessible.

Mr. Landwer stated that the project team recommendation is leaning toward the 4 lanes with interchange option. Mr. Landwer said the project would look at traffic at Highway 100 and understand how to maintain the capacity. Rita Endres asked if the station has a design yet. Mr. Landwer responded, no, it's in preliminary



design. Mr. Landwer said the project will work with communities so that the station fits. Dr. Tara Watson, asked if the weight of commercial vehicles and trucks will be restricted. Mr. Landwer responded there won't be restrictions. Dan Soler added that this section of County Road 81 doesn't have restrictions today and won't in the future. Dr. Watson expressed concern about congestion and said that trucks can't turn, and they hold up traffic.

Mr. Cigolo discussed feedback received from the February 27, 2023, open house, and other previously heard feedback.

Mr. Landwer previewed the future month's design decisions for Robbinsdale and Minneapolis.

7. Anti-Displacement Update

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, shared that the Anti-Displacement Working Group completed Phase 1. Mr. Soler discussed that Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) would be laying out anticipated outcomes that they heard, suggested policies to lead the outcomes, cost, roles, and timing that would be associated with the policies. Mr. Soler added CURA would present their report to the Corridor Management Committee (CMC). Dr. Watson made a comment about a document that was at the workshop at the Capri Theater that laid out what was discussed. Mr. Soler responded that it was a list of policies that were under consideration. He added that this committee will get an early look at the recommendations from CURA in the April timeframe. Mr. Soler stated that the April meetings will discuss Robbinsdale and there will be a special CMC meeting for just the Anti-displacement work.

8. Discussion and Members Feedback

Dr. Tara Watson, discussed that at the last CMC meeting, she brought up the BAC's concerns and made the committee aware of this group's discussions. Mr. Soler commented that the CMC at times may take actions to make recommendations to the Metropolitan Council or Hennepin County boards, but not all the time. Mr. Soler added that there's a CMC for all light rail train (LRT) lines and over the years Community Advisory and Business Advisory Committee member representatives have been added. Mr. Soler stated that the same information presented here is presented to the CMC and the members are interested in knowing what the BAC and CAC members are saying and feeling. Ms. Beckwith commented that at the last CMC, the Brooklyn Park Mayor and Councilmember brought up specific concerns.

Donna Sanders called attention to the West Broadway Coalition (WBC) letter that lists the group's concerns. Donna stated that WBC would be against the project going along West Broadway until the concerns were addressed. Donna mentioned that they were in contact with a group along the Green Line who had filed a lawsuit to make changes after the EIS was released. Ms. Beckwith asked for clarification if the WBC was against the project as whole or just going along West Broadway. Donna responded that they are supportive of transit but not along West Broadway. Mr. Soler stated that he appreciated the letter. Dr. Watson said this could be brought back with the question of WBC being against the "BLRT project" or "West Broadway". Mr. Smith commented on the third concern about parking and said that there's talk about prioritizing people walking, biking and rolling, but something absent from design is how people access parking. He said that it's not a direct impact of the design, but the overall design should have a principle about going down the stretch of West Broadway. Mr. Smith added that there's a lot of attention to park-and-ride. Ms. Beckwith asked if Jamar was talking about parking or access to business. Mr. Smith responded parking for residents and Jamar



stated that parking should be part of the principles. Ms. Beckwith responded that this could be brought to the CMC as they adopted the principles. Pastor Doerrer mentioned that a meeting happened in Robbinsdale that raised similar concerns. Pastor Doerrer asked who he should connect the resident to. Donna responded she could be a point of contact. Ms. Beckwith added that Mr. Cigolo would be a point of contact from the project team.

9. Next Meeting: April 4th

10. Adjourn

Dan Doerrer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jamez Staples seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.