



Metropolitan Council

Brooklyn Park Community Activity Center, 5600 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443

Meeting of the METRO Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

February 19, 2015

Members Present:

Chair Adam Duininck	Gary Cunningham	Marika Pfefferkorn	Scott McBride
Aasim Shabazz	George Selman	Meg Forney	Scott Schulte
Andy Snope	Jeffrey Lunde	Mike Opat	Shauen Pearce
Barb Johnson	Jim Adams	Pat Bursaw	Shep Harris
Betsy Hodges	Jon Olson	Peter McLaughlin	Tim Willson
Brian Lamb	Linda Higgins	Regan Murphy	
Denise Butler	Lona Schreiber	Rich Gates	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Adam Duininck called the February 19, 2015 meeting to order at approximately 1:05 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 17, 2014 MEETING MINUTES

It was noted that Mayor Betsy Hodges was at the December 17, 2014 meeting and that should be corrected to the minutes.

Commissioner Linda Higgins made the motion to approve minutes. Council Member Lona Schreiber seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Robin Caufman began the presentation by going over the advisory committees. Issue Resolution Teams (IRTs) have been meeting for approximately 6-7 weeks. The TPAC committee just had their first meeting on February 2, 2015. CAC and BAC letters requesting membership appointments were sent out to Cities and County on January 29, 2015. A response identifying appointed members is due by March 6, 2015. Those committees will hold their first meetings in early April. We have the Corridor Management Committee with your third meeting today and the Metropolitan Council who are very active and engaged in this project.

Ms. Caufman thanked the Cities, County, MnDOT and Park and Recreation Board for designating staff to serve on the IRT committee and we appreciate their involvement.

No questions for Ms. Caufman.



4. TECHNICAL ISSUE #4

Alicia Vap went over the map and issue surrounding both the Golden Valley Road and Plymouth Avenue Stations stating we are looking at all the technical analysis of both stations. We have been looking at the station locations including slopes, soil impacts along with wetlands and flood plain impacts. We also have information gathered for DEIS like population and employment. We also look at qualitative factors such as access to underserved populations, access to key destinations, accessibility, and access to regional parks.

Commissioner Linda Higgins stated that it is really important to have both of these stations – not an either/or. She stated that they serve very different communities even though they both are in Golden Valley. Looking at the Plymouth Avenue Station, most of the Golden Valley residence won't go there because there is a regional park between where the Golden Valley residents live and the station. However, North Minneapolis residents will use that station. The Golden Valley Station is the one that Golden Valley residents will use. It is critical to have both stations.

Council Member Lona Schreiber mentioned that she had been to a meeting with a representative of the Three Rivers Park District. They went over some of the projects they are looking at in the next couple of years. She thought they were going to do something more in this area as well. Council Member Schreiber thinks it would be a good idea if staff could check in with Three Rivers Park staff to get an update and see what their plans are and coordinate with them.

Alicia Vap advised that staff is already coordinating with Three Rivers Park District and there are a number of things going on in this area with Mary Hills Park and a trail. We are coordinating with the park agencies.

Commissioner Higgins added that the Minneapolis Park Board, who work on this park, is looking at a new visitor center not far from the Plymouth Avenue Station and the historic chalet is there where you sign in for golf and all kinds of winter activities.

Dan Soler responded to Commissioner Higgins and stated that we have been tracking the Theodore Wirth Park master plan as well. We do have a copy of their Master Plan.

5. TECHNICAL ISSUE #10

Mr. Soler presented the next Technical Issue #10, which involves the segment of West Broadway in the City of Brooklyn Park between Candlewood up to 93rd Avenue. This segment has been in Hennepin County's Transportation Plan for reconstruction for a number of years. Hennepin County has been working with the City of Brooklyn Park until summer 2014. With LRT entering the project development phase, we have come together with the City of Brooklyn Park and Hennepin County to look at the roadway construction project being done in coordination with the construction of the light rail project.

Hennepin County has funding for reconstruction of the roadway from Candlewood to 93rd. BPO, the City of Brooklyn Park and Hennepin County are working together to



bring both of those projects together at the same time. Teams have been created to look at how the environmental work for the road work can be completed, how design and construction can come together and how public involvement can be coordinated. The roadway project will advance environmentally under State environmental rules, BPO will complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement for light rail. We are working on bringing the two designs together and construct them as one to reduce impact.

The City and County have a lot to say about what the roadway is going to look like, and BPO is going to have a lot to say about what the LRT is going to look like. We want to get a recommendation and consensus from the City Council so we can bring it to CMC by the end of April.

There are a number of community engagement efforts to help the community understand the issues surrounding this coordinated effort and help pull this together.

Council Member George Selman asked if there is a time and location for the March 5th Open House.

Mr. Soler responded that we are still working out the final meeting details.

5. TECHNICAL ISSUE #13

Ryan Wilson advised that the BLRT is proposed to run for approximately 8.5 miles in the BNSF corridor. The existing BNSF corridor is approximately 100 feet wide. It is privately owned and operated by BNSF today. It is single track through the corridor in the center of that corridor. The design that we are advancing has the BLRT project occupying the eastern 50 feet and shifts freight rail to the western 50 feet, accommodating single track as well as a service road for BNSF to perform maintenance on the track. Coordination meetings with BNSF began back in late 2014. Monthly coordination meetings are taking place between staff and BNSF. BNSF have not given firm direction to date. Key elements that impact the final design will be locations of Xcel transmission lines, input by all five cities, and safety. Safety is an important shared goal between both BNSF and BPO.

Scott McBride asked Ryan to explain the “not precluding future track or capacity improvements.” Is there room to do that in the 50 feet that they are left with in that corridor?

Mr. Ryan Wilson explained this direction came at the end of 2014. We have been looking at what space is in the corridor and we believe it is possible to accomplish those things, but there are a lot of conversations that need to be had with BNSF to ensure all pieces can come together to accomplish their objectives, as well as BLRT objectives. I can't say that we have reached agreement that it can happen, although we believe the project will be able to co-exist.

Mr. Ryan described the potential for Canadian Pacific and BNSF to connect their lines. BNSF continues to work with us on LRT project to figure out how LRT can coexist with



any improvements that BNSF is looking to make to their line. They haven't given us any different direction to date.

Mayor Jim Adams spoke of the large impact BNSF proposed connection will have in Crystal. A good portion of Crystal will take a rather large environmental impact from the two rails. I know Robbinsdale doesn't necessarily have the solutions or remedies that we may have for grade separation. This is something that without grade separation, whether it be LRT or freight, we are going to have a very very hard time with emergency services within our boundaries.

Mayor Ship Harris echoed Mayor Adams comments. The City of Golden Valley Council just passed a resolution earlier this week expressing our concerns for this proposal as well. My question for Mr. Wilson is if monthly meetings are occurring with BNSF, is the next meeting going to include this topic on an ongoing process, or is that a separate track/separate discussion?

Mr. Wilson replied that we do have a recurring meeting, the next one being the beginning of March. There is no agenda yet. I think the importance in the relationship to this LRT project might make it a recurring item on the meeting agenda. BSNF is not under any necessary orders, nor do they have to share advance details with the project office so long as they are sharing any information that might be related to our design in this area. We would be open to asking them about any updates they have, but I can't guarantee that we are going to get a lot of updates from BNSF at that meeting about these projects.

Mayor Harris stated that he understands the Governor and perhaps the Transportation Commissioner recently met, or had a conversation with BNSF about the connector proposal. Is there any follow-up that is going to come from that? I haven't heard back what the result was of that meeting. Are you aware of that? Or any other members of MnDOT are aware of that.

Mr. Wilson responded that he has not heard the result of that discussion. He was aware there was an intention for the commissioner to meet with the railroads last week but did not have any details to share with the committee.

Council Member Selman thanked Crystal and Golden Valley and other communities for partnering with Robbinsdale and all those cities staff for the hard work they have done in the last three weeks on this project. The BNSF connection came out of the blue and none of us were staffed or ready for it. As it impacts Robbinsdale, the length of the proposed train would close all of our at grade crossings at the same time for minutes. We have a fire station and a side of this track and it goes through the middle of our city, so it is not just a casual inconvenience, it is lives literally at stake.

Mayor Adams added that West Metro is the department serves Crystal and New Hope. This will cut off half of New Hope and half of Crystal as well. This particular freight and safety issue is very large and will be compounded by LRT. We have as a department, offered our services to Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park and help them with mutual aid and auto aid and that helps with the south side of their cities. It becomes an issue for



them as well because they will need to purchase more equipment, need to expand fire departments to take care of services that we are actually covering at this time. Plus, we will need to rely on a more permanent basis some other services from some other communities. Our fire department – we have two and a half fire departments that simply could not respond past that freight line, which leaves us on the north side very vulnerable. I can't emphasize enough how seriously we take this.

6. ADJOURN

Chair Duininck adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:38pm.

Next meeting will be on March 12th from 1:00 – 2:30pm. Location to be determined.