



Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

Minutes of the July 21, 2016 Meeting

Present: Jim Adams, Chris Berne, Denise Butler, Jan Callison (Linda Higgins), Adam Duinick, Meg Forney, John Griffith, John Humphrey (Brian Lamb), Barb Johnson, Jeffrey Lunde, Peter McLaughlin (Scott Schulte), Mike Opat, Lona Schreiber, George Selman, Peter Wagenius (Betsy Hodges), Tou Xiong (Blue Line Coalition Alternate), Larry Fonnest (Alternate, City of Golden Valley)

Not in attendance: Aasim Shabazz, Andy Snope, Denny Walsh, Garry Cunningham, Jeff Kolb, Jon Olson, Kate Catron, Liz Wielinski, Marika Pfefferkorn, Olga Parsons, Pat Bursaw, Regan Murphy, Rich Gates, Shauen Pearce, Shep Harris, Tim Willson

1. Call to Order

Chair Duinick welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 1:34 PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 7th, 2016

Chair Duinick asked the committee to review the meeting minutes from the July 7, 2016 meeting and asked if there were any edits. Mayor Jim Adams made the motion to approve the minutes; Council Member Schreiber seconded the motion. Meeting minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Update

Chair Duinick indicated that conversations were ongoing regarding a special session to approve the transit bill. There was noted to be some disagreement between parties, and that the focus of that concern was the Southwest LRT project. The Chair related that nothing would happen in regard to the transit bill or any special session until mid-August at the earliest.

4. Adjusted Project Scope and Cost Estimate Recommendation : Committee Action

Dan Soler reminded committee members of the topics covered in the previous CMC meeting, noting that his purpose at this meeting was to present an overview of that information and allow committee members to consider those options before them in regard to the final scope and cost estimate.

Mr. Soler presented information on the additional project cost participation from MnDOT, Hennepin County and the City of Brooklyn Park, also accounting for the additional Federal Transit Administration funds. It was noted that these funds, roughly \$40 million, were over those previously identified by the project.

Mr. Soler, on behalf of the project, presented the recommendation to bring the additional \$40 million into the project. This would bring the adjusted cost estimate to \$1.536 Billion.



This project cost allows for a contingency of between 28-30%. This actual percentage will be dependent on what the committee agrees to bring forward as far as additional scope items. Mr. Soler also noted that discussion between the project office and the City of Crystal had taken place and that an agreement had been reached in regard to the ownership and maintenance of the Bass Lake Road Pedestrian Bridge. The agreement allowed that Metro Transit would own and operate the pedestrian bridge, assuming that the city would acquiesce to a bridge design with no elevators and would provide snow removal.

Mr. Soler noted that a draft resolution of approval was sent to CMC members prior to the meeting for their perusal. He also let the committee know that they had the ability to change those resolutions as needed.

CMC Resolution: Discussion/Approval

Beginning discussion of the resolution proposed for the Blue Line Extension Project, Chair Duininck indicated that any action taken that day would go to the full Metropolitan Council for review in August.

Chair Duininck brought attention to the two items that received the most attention last meeting: Bass Lake Road pedestrian bridge and the Hiawatha OMF modifications.

Chris Bernie indicated the CAC had concerns regarding the length of time that Sochacki Park would need to be occupied, and the stipulation that other land would need to be bought to compensate for the use of the park (a 6f property) and asked if cost for the additional land was in the cost estimate. Mr. Soler responded that at this time the project believed they had identified a parcel near West Broadway and Hwy 100, which would serve as an adequate replacement. This property is under MnDOT ownership and it was believed that the project's right-of-way budget had sufficient funds to purchase an easement on the property.

Commissioner Opat proposed that the committee move to enact on the resolution which was seconded by Barb Johnson

Commissioner Opat then proposed to make an amendment that would set a total dollar amount, not to exceed \$5 million, for overhaul bay improvements at the Hiawatha OMF facility. This would be a reduction of \$4 million for this scope.

Commissioner Callison asked where the potential \$4 million in funding for Hiawatha OMF improvements would come from if the allocation is reduced. Mr. Soler noted that reduction in scope could help make up those costs and/or look to Metro Transit for additional funding.

Chair Duininck asked for a vote on the amendment, the amendment was unanimously passed and was adopted.



Tou Xiong of the Blue Line Coalition then spoke, asking that attention be paid to environmental justice elements in regards to the FEIS. In particular, he noted the area of 63rd Ave, relating that the coalition had several concerns in regards to the area and that he encouraged the project to continue to work with the coalition and other community partners to ease reservations and address concerns.

Council Member Schreiber proposed an amendment to the resolution that the Bass Lake Road Pedestrian Bridge be taken out of the project scope. She described various safety concerns due to experiences with the Brooklyn Center transit hub, which influenced her proposal. She also noted that there was some belief that the pedestrian bridge would not be used to the extent others thought it would be.

Denise Butler of the Blue Line Coalition, agreed with Council Member Schreiber. She noted that her reservations stemmed from the lack of information on usage, and a belief that proposed at-grade improvements would be adequate to support the additional pedestrian traffic due to LRT.

Mayor Adams reminded committee members that there would be no enclosed portion of the pedestrian bridge, similar to Columbia Heights, no climate controls to attract people to loiter. He related that the Crystal police chief supported this option over the others explored. The Mayor also noted that maintenance would be easy and recalled that anticipated pedestrian traffic would be up to four times of what it was now, with addition of LRT. The fact that residents supported the bridge was also noted.

Commissioner Opat indicated that he also supported the amendment to remove the pedestrian bridge from the scope. He told committee members that Hennepin County had designs underway for significant pedestrian improvements. These improvements would be put into effect within the next two years and would include pedestrian islands and updated pedestrian crossings. The Commissioner also noted that the street the bridge would cross was a house moving route, which meant that the pedestrian bridge would have to be higher than it would otherwise. It was thought that the height would discourage people from climbing up to the bridge as opposed to crossing at grade.

Council Member Selman asked if the proposed Hennepin County pedestrian improvements would be added to the project costs, similar to those proposed for 63rd. Mr. Soler noted that they would not, as they were part of a separate Hennepin County project that will be outside of the Metro Transit Blue Line Extension Project. These improvements would also take place sooner than those at 63rd.

Mayor Adams noted that he felt the community input, regarding their concerns about safety were important to take into account, and that he would oppose an amendment to strike the pedestrian bridge from the scope.



Chair Duinick called for a vote on the amendment to remove the Bass Lake Road Pedestrian Bridge from the project scope. The amendment passed and was adopted. Chair Duinick asked if there were any more amendments that committee members would like to propose. There were none.

Chair Duinick called for a vote on the resolution, noting the reduction of funding for the Hiawatha OMF improvements and the striking of the Bass Lake Road Pedestrian Bridge from the project scope. The resolution was passed and adopted.

Community and Business Advisory Committee Feedback

Chris Bernie, of the CAC, reminded community representatives to be present at meetings such as this, as it was an important way to have input into the project.

5. FEIS Update

Kathryn O'Brien from the Blue Line Extension Project's Environmental Team, noted that the Final Environmental Impact Study (FEIS) was published on Friday, July 15th, and would be available for comment for 30 days.

Ms. O'Brien also outlined next steps which included the ROD, anticipated in September 2016 and the Determinations of Adequacy (MEPA) which would incorporate formal action by the Metropolitan Council.

Chair Duinick offered congratulations to the project office, noting that the Blue Line Extension was the first project in the region on the 2 year FTA time frame. Commissioner Opat also noted the significance, stating that it spoke to the work done by the project, stakeholders and the ability of the project to be ready to go. He felt that any state funding proposals for transit should include the Blue Line Extension Project.

6. Next Steps

Dan Soler indicated that the next FTA milestone would be to submit the project for a New Starts Rating on August 22nd. This would signify the end of the Project Development phase. Mr. Soler also noted that the action taken today would be brought forward, with the final cost and scope, to the full Metropolitan Council in September as part of the Application to Enter Engineering, at which time the final budget would be set.

7. Adjournment

Chair Duinick adjourned the meeting, noted that it was likely that the August meeting would be canceled, and that September would be the next meeting. The meeting concluded at 2:15 pm.