Today’s Topics

• Approval of February 11, 2021 BLRT CMC Meeting Summary

• Committee Reports
  ▪ Community Advisory Committee Report
  ▪ Business Advisory Committee Report

• Initial Route Identification
  ▪ Process
  ▪ Route Options
  ▪ Communications and Engagement

• Route Evaluation Next Steps

• Community Consultants Update
Approval of the February 11, 2021 Meeting Summary
Committee Reports

• Community Advisory Committee Report
• Business Advisory Committee Report
Initial Route Identification
Steps to Route Identification

• Reestablished the Project Management Team comprised of Met Council & Hennepin County staff to help deliver this critical investment

• August 13, 2020 CMC: Committee first discusses the need to move the Blue Line Project forward without using freight rail
  ▪ Decision came after a multi-year effort to negotiate with BNSF that included many levels of government and offers including purchasing the corridor
  ▪ Met Council & Hennepin County committed to finding an LRT solution and maintaining as much of the project as possible in recognition efforts by partner communities over many years

• October 8 & December 10 CMC: Discussion, modification and adoption of Project Principles to set the project scope and guide decision making
Steps to Route Identification

• CMC’s adoption of Project Principles provided the framework for the project management team to explore solutions:
  - Meet Federal Transit Administration New Starts criteria
  - Maintain existing alignment as much as possible
  - Mitigate negative impacts
  - Compliment existing and planned transitways

• Reestablished regular Issue Identification Teams & Advisory Committee structure

• Initial community engagement focused on desired destinations, opportunities, and concerns for potential new routes, which helped staff validate the direction of work underway
Project Management Team Recommendations

• Preview recommended routes in Areas 1, 2 and 3
• Discuss options presented
• Next steps for engagement and evaluation
Area 1 Considerations

• The current alignment & stations along West Broadway in Brooklyn Park can be preserved
  ▪ Route is not impacted by the freight rail corridor
  ▪ Modifications to the route and stations is not needed to connect to the remainder of the project

• Consistent with the Project Principles:
  ▪ Retain as much of the previous alignment as possible
  ▪ Maintain existing termini: Target Field Station in Minneapolis and Oak Grove Station in Brooklyn Park

• Serves major destinations in Brooklyn Park: North Hennepin Community College, multiple commercial areas, Target Campus
Area 2 Considerations

• Consistent with Project Principle: Maintain existing alignment as much as possible
  ▪ Multiple station area elements could be preserved

• Need to avoid geographic features such as Crystal Lake, Twin Lakes, and the Crystal Airport

• Serves major destinations including Crystal's business district, downtown Robbinsdale, North Memorial Campus
  ▪ North Memorial Campus identified as most missed destination from former alignment
Area 3 Considerations

• Review of options consistent with Project Principles:
  ▪ Minimize residential, commercial and environmental impacts
  ▪ Complement existing and planned METRO transitways
  ▪ When appropriate, pursue opportunities to serve even more people and destinations, especially areas with lower rates of car ownership/vehicular access and those with mobility challenges
Area 3 Considerations: Public Right of Way

• To fit the LRT guideway, sidewalks, and two travel lanes about 75 feet of right of way is needed

• When additional right of way is available other elements can be included: boulevards, bikeways or street parking
Area 3 Considerations: Compatible Land Use

• Light rail is better suited to higher density residential and commercial areas

• Best to place routes where the LRT investment can also leverage related community benefits
Area 3 Connections
Route Options: Not Recommended

- Penn & Emerson/Fremont were not recommended as they did not meet the multiple Project Principles:
  - Complement existing and planned METRO transitways
  - Minimize residential, commercial and environmental impacts
- Both roadways have narrow Right of Way
- METRO C & D Lines are a valuable part of transit network
Route Options: Not Recommended

- Lyndale between West Broadway & Lowry
  - Narrower right of way
  - Significant residential impacts
  - Houses are closer to the sidewalk/street
Route Options: Not Recommended

- Highway 55 to Highway 100
  - Does not serve as many riders and destinations
  - Longer route could result in increased travel time
  - Greater diversion from previous alignment
  - Very little initial support for this corridor
Committee Discussion
Communications & Engagement

• Ongoing communications & engagement effort through April 30, 2021:
  ▪ Radio and newspaper ads reaching diverse communities
  ▪ On-going social media efforts
  ▪ Videos
  ▪ Continued reach out to community & business stakeholders
  ▪ Community consultants’ kick-off efforts
Visit Project Website: BlueLineExt.org

- Tools to engage
- Information and maps
- Committee details
- Contact information
Multiple Methods to Share Feedback

• Leave comments on the interactive map
• Take a survey
• Provide general comments online or by emailing sophia.ginis@metrotransit.org
• We will come to you: invite us to an event or gathering
Upcoming Virtual Townhalls

- A staff presentation followed by time for the community to ask questions and provide comments
- Events will be recorded and available on the project website via YouTube

- Thursday, March 25: 6:00 – 7:30 PM
- Tuesday, March 30: 12:00 – 1:00 PM
- Tuesday, March 30: 6:00 – 7:30 PM
Feedback Sought

• Begin discussion on the new options to advance
  ▪ Validate if the options presented seem right
  ▪ Understand what options are resonating with residents and businesses
  ▪ Identify if anything is missing
  ▪ What opportunities or issues does the community see right away
  ▪ What other information is needed to support a route option
  ▪ Begin discussion about desired station locations along new portions of the route

• Evaluation goals, which will help refine objectives and evaluation criteria to help analyze the benefits and impacts between options
Evaluation: Project Goals

• Improve transit access and connections to jobs and regional destinations
• Improve frequency and reliability of transit service to communities in the corridor
• Provide transit improvements that maximize transit benefits, while being cost competitive and economically viable
• Support communities’ development goals
• Promote healthy communities and sound environmental practices including efforts to address climate change
• Advance local and regional equity and work towards reducing regional racial disparities
Route Evaluation Next Steps
Approach & Timeline

December 2020 – March 2021
- BLRT Project Principles
- Develop Initial Route Modifications

Late Spring – Summer 2021
- Evaluation Based on Initial Screening Criteria and Community Feedback
- Refine Route Modifications

Winter 2021
- Evaluate Based on Project Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Criteria
- Route Modifications Recommended for Evaluation in EIS

TIER 1: Qualitative Evaluation Grounded in Project Purpose and Need
TIER 2: Quantitative Evaluation
Next Steps: Continue to Seek Solutions

**Project Goals, Objectives and Criteria**

**Conceptual Engineering and Design**
- Engineering Analysis to Understand LRT & Roadway Configurations
- Potential Station Locations
- Right of Way Impacts

**Community Benefits**
Further efforts to address anti-displacement, equitable development and community wealth building

**Previous Project Commitments**
Address investments related to the previous alignment
Next Steps: April – May 2021

• We share the communities’ concerns about displacement and are working with partners at every level towards short and long-terms solutions
  ▪ Beginning a multi-agency effort to fully maximize the benefits that can come with a multi-generational major transit investment

• Next meeting focused on these four topics
2021 Activities and Beyond

- End of 2021: Adopt a community supported route
  - Conceptual engineering for new route options, including station locations
  - Evaluation of project benefits and impacts
  - Identify a community supported route
  - Identify environmental path moving forward

- Beyond 2021
  - Begin environmental analysis
  - Municipal Consent
  - Develop construction ready engineering plans & design details
Community Consultants Update
Community Engagement Cohort Contractors

- 10-month contracts with 17 community organizations that are trusted community partners with expertise on cultures and geographies
  - Area 1: Priority focus of 3 community organizations
  - Area 2: Priority focus of 3 community organizations
  - Area 3: All 17 community organizations will focus here
- Collaborative and coordinated across the corridor
- Includes 7 contracts focused on amplifying communications
Next Meeting: Thursday, April 8 at 1:30 PM
Stay Connected!

• Project website: bluelineext.org
  ▪ Project news, maps, surveys, what we’re hearing
  ▪ Committee meeting materials: agenda, handouts, presentations, meeting minutes
  ▪ Sign-up for GovDelivery project updates
  ▪ Connect with staff for your questions or schedule a presentation

• Follow us:
  ▪ Twitter: @BlueLineExt
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