



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

CAC Members: Kathy Fraser, Jason Greenberg, Gene Montanez, Scott Booher, Felipe Sosa, PeggySue Imihy, Giuseppe Marrari, Catherine Fleming, Ken Rodgers, Adam Hutchens, Ellis Beck, Brett Buckner, Cory Funk

Agency Staff and Guests: Sophia Ginis, Andrew Gillett, Jason Tintes, Cathy Gold, Dan Soler, Jesse Struve, Jim Voll, Joan Vanhala, John Sutter, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Kristine Stehly, Nick Landwer, Sam O'Connell, Trevor Roy, Liz Morice, Bill Emroy, Llewellyn Farrington

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. She shared an overview of the agenda and what to expect with the meeting.

2. Adopt March 2 & 22 Meeting Minutes

Ellis Beck moved to approve the minutes. Brett Buckner seconded the motion. The meeting summary was adopted.

3. What to Expect: Schedule Update

a) Technical Advancement

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, shared an overview of next steps. He shared the project approach and timeline.

Ellis Beck asked if elevated rail was still on the table. Dan said that they would show how that would work and what the cost benefit analysis is. Jason Greenberg said that Robbinsdale is asking a lot about elevated options. Dan said that a number of policy makers have asked about that as well. Ellis said that a lot of questions he is getting are about why it can be afforded for the Green Line Extension and not this project. Gene Montanez asked about accessibility to the stations if it were elevated. Catherine Fleming asked if it's possible to have both West Broadway and Lowry built. Dan said that ridership would need to justify the costs of building, both would be difficult. Catherine said it would be good to have development opportunities for both corridors.

b) Community Engagement Activities

Sophia shared that they start incorporating feedback from day one. They are getting input on a few major areas: missing route options, station locations, community issues and opportunities, and project goals.



Sophia shared some of the recent engagement activities. She shared an overview of upcoming work.

4. LRT System Overview

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, provided an overview of the METRO system. He provided a comparison of commuter rail, light rail, streetcar, and heavy rail. He shared the operating assumptions of the Blue Line.

Nick emphasized that light rail significantly reduces carbon use compared to a single occupancy vehicle. Nick shared a few versions of track design and explained how trains run. He showed center running versus side running design and platform types. Scott Booher asked about the time spent at stopped lights on the Green Line. Dan shared that it was a process in the first six months of operation to improve speed. They started coordinating with the lights four intersections ahead to improve that timing. Scott said that is helpful because in the beginning it was very slow. Dan said that they could not just have the train race by like a freight engine, but they've learned a lot about how to speed it up. Nick shared aspects of station area planning including multimodal connections and safe crossings. Nick shared how the light rail fits in different contexts.

5. Anti-displacement Working Group

Sam O'Connell, Metropolitan Council, shared an update on the Anti-Displacement Working Group. She shared that they continue to seek solutions for community benefit and previous project commitments. She reviewed some April Advisory Committee feedback including the need for a third-party facilitator, need to start as soon as possible, request for national examples and possible shared definitions for discussion. They also heard feedback about the fact that anti-displacement is complicated, there are many organizations who work in this area and this requires a commitment from the project. She shared feedback they had received from committees about facilitators and experts on the topic. Brett shared a correction of the name should be Anika Robbins.

She asked for feedback on who should be at the virtual table and on what are the essential components on the facilitator role. She shared next steps on this work. They will be bringing back the RFP to the group for feedback to make sure that role covers what is needed. The project will continue to talk about this in other parts of the project, including the project goals and evaluation criteria. Catherine asked who would be deciding who will get the contract after they received the proposals, and also wondered what their ultimate goal is. Sam shared that she would likely be seeking input on it from the advisory committees, in addition to agency partners. Catherine said that they are not subject experts unless they've been displaced. Sam said that the goal of this group is to develop policies and create community wealth building opportunities. They would provide implementable recommendations. Catherine said that its not feasible to prevent it from happening, but minimizing it is possible.

Sam shared LRT development trends. She explained the differences that were seen between the Blue Line and Green Line development patterns. Sam provided background on how the corridor worked with the business community.

Giuseppe Marrari said that he wants to make sure we understand what did not work. He wants to make sure we are taking that into our learning. It would be good to know why these businesses have closed. Sam O'Connell agreed that has to be a part of the learning, and the Wilder Foundation has done some of that work. Catherine emphasized that its important to understand if they were BIPOC businesses. Catherine also pointed out that there might not be the financial understanding or resources for businesses to understand the impact



of the construction. They might not have the time or expertise for that. There needs to be auxiliary services for that.

Catherine asked, how much money do we have for these? Sam shared that we need to put together a funding program. There is a lot that could be done to help with the technical services and the team needs to make sure they have the resources. Jason asked if this was the right way to be thinking about this work. Nichole Buehler stated the need for these things in place and guaranteed up front because of the development pressures they are already experiencing. Giuseppe shared that it is a start. Mistakes have been made, and this is progress, but it's important to acknowledge past failures. Dan shared that there are different impacts and different types of displacement. There were lessons learned in the first year in 2011 of Green line construction in terms of, for example, sidewalks and temporary access to each door. Brett said that we are viewing this from a deficit lens. They need to have access to financing, and there have been some great improvements that way. PeggySue Imihy shared that some people are ready for this. How do we talk about this in a way that doesn't get intertwined with gentrification which is complicated? There are ways to have property values increase and people can build wealth this way. We need to address displacement and have intentional investment.

Jason suggested the group should meet more often. Sophia shared some safety guidelines and how to meet in person. Dan said that as a staff they could have two meeting a month, one on technical information, another on community benefits. Brett said this might be special interim meetings. It's not possible to make decisions and help with this only two hours a month. Sophia shared that was possible, with some flexibility. Sophia shared that people would email their availability. She could follow-up with the chairs about that. They would target a Wednesday night, and if it would be just for the summer.

6. Next Meeting: June 1, 2021

Sophia asked about the meeting in July and if they could switch to July 14, due to the July 4th holiday.

7. Adjourn

Chat

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 6:15 PM
question

from Catherine Fleming to everyone: 6:18 PM
Question

from J. DeVon Nolen to everyone: 6:23 PM
Why would we want it on BOTH corridors?

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 6:24 PM

Agreed with Catherine on elevation, same goes with tunnels. We want access to the street.

from Gene Montanez to everyone: 6:24 PM
OK Dan :-)

from Ginis, Sophia to everyone: 6:25 PM
We do love the discussion! :-)

from J. DeVon Nolen to everyone: 6:27 PM
That context is helpful. thank you

from Catherine Fleming to everyone: 6:29 PM
How many cars, Dan



from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 6:30 PM

Thanks for answering everything Dan.

from Cory Funk to everyone: 6:31 PM

When we talk about station locations, please make sure to include information on East-West transit connections also. It's not only about North-South.

from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 6:33 PM

I really appreciate the different forums for community input. I like the interactive map. It helps facilitate great community engagement.

from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 6:46 PM

does it run 24/7 or are services suspended during a certain period?

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 6:46 PM

it stops running at midnight

from O'Connell, Sam to everyone: 6:48 PM

Existing Blue Line schedule for reference: <https://www.metrotransit.org/route/blue>

from Scott Booher to everyone: 6:52 PM

Nick, could you please speak to center-running learnings for the Green Line, specifically the time it takes to get between cities, and how much time is currently spent stopped at lights, thanks.

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 6:52 PM

What is the right-of-way width comparison between University vs. Broadway/Lowry?

from Catherine Fleming to everyone: 6:54 PM

For later discussion, issues with the station lights and signage on University Ave in St. Paul

from felipe sosa to everyone: 6:57 PM

What's the estimated run time to the target campus from downtown?

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 6:57 PM

unknown right now, old route was about 31 minutes

from felipe sosa to everyone: 6:57 PM

Thanks!

from Ginis, Sophia to everyone: 7:14 PM

Thanks Brett for the correction

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:31 PM

Is that weekly averages or monthly?

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 7:37 PM

Who owned those businesses that closed? Were they locally owned BIPOC businesses?

from Joan Vanhala to everyone: 7:42 PM

<https://www.hennepin.us/economic-development>

from Joan Vanhala to everyone: 7:42 PM

<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/business-services/business-assistance/community-development-business-assistance/>

from Cory Funk to everyone: 7:43 PM

Hard to do on a virtual meeting. There are polling question options on Webex for questions like this.

from Kerri Pearce Ruch to everyone: 7:44 PM

Bottineau Community Works, funded through a McKnight Foundation grant, has been providing outreach and technical assistance to businesses in the current station areas. NEON has provided outreach, technical assistance and microgrants to businesses in Minneapolis, Robbinsdale and Crystal. Neighborhood Development Center and ACER have been serving businesses in the Brooklyn Park station areas.

from Kerri Pearce Ruch to everyone: 7:44 PM



This work is intended to be a start to the business support that will be needed before and during construction.

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 7:45 PM

I think its already happening right now. Northside home values have gone up 10% in the last year

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 7:46 PM

Homebuying pressure from the pandemic and blue line speculation are already driving housing prices up

from H Ellis Beck to everyone: 7:49 PM

Yeah, this is going to be a tough time to slow down housing prices. Especially with the current dearth of "starter homes" metro-wide. I'm not saying it's not worthwhile (it is), just that it's a task that needs to be tackled with a real plan

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 7:50 PM

one way that I've heard gentrification talked about is not only about movement but about who profits and I think we need to find ways to ensure that people who have been here for a long time can benefit financially from this project.

from H Ellis Beck to everyone: 7:51 PM

Yes, absolutely.

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 7:53 PM

Yes, we can do that Brett, but you

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 7:54 PM

** you're right, the policies and investments have to happen up front!

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 7:56 PM

If the folks here are benefiting and aren't being forced out then it's not gentrification.

from Catherine Fleming to everyone: 7:56 PM

Displacement is a concern, gentrification...not so much

from Brett Buckner to everyone: 7:58 PM

Are we locked to just one meeting per month?

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 7:58 PM

The definition of gentrification means that current residents/business owners get forced out because they no longer afford to live/do business in their community.

from Ginis, Sophia to everyone: 7:58 PM

No we can meet on a topic, special meeting

from Catherine Fleming to everyone: 7:58 PM

Can we partner with a funding source to establish to buy the properties and put in a trust for the community

from Gene Montanez to everyone: 7:59 PM

In person and WbEx meeting combined?

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 7:59 PM

I think gentification can occur without displacement.

from Felipe Sosa to everyone: 7:59 PM

Yes. If we can add a follow up call!!

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 7:59 PM

displacement is often a symptom but it doesn't have to be a result.

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 8:00 PM

Without displacement, it's just investment and community actually benefiting from that investment.

from H Ellis Beck to everyone: 8:00 PM



Could drop a poll for in-person? Just to gauge comfort/safety. I agree these tough topics are made tougher by Zoom

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 8:00 PM

Gentrification means displacement

from Catherine Fleming to everyone: 8:00 PM

we should have a mix of folks, without displacing long term residents

from Giuseppe Marrari to everyone: 8:01 PM

im happy to meet in any way, masked and following all guidelines.

from Nichole Buehler to everyone: 8:01 PM

Yes, Peggy Sue, we should be able to have investment without displacement!

from Catherine Fleming to everyone: 8:03 PM

Sounds good, Dan. We need this increase, especially in the beginning

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 8:04 PM

<http://gentrification.dl.umn.edu/sites/gentrification.dl.umn.edu/files/media/diversity-of-gentrification-012519.pdf>

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 8:04 PM

I think this is a really good research paper from CURA about gentrification and displacement.

from Farrington Llewellyn to everyone: 8:10 PM

Thank you Nichole for advocating for northside

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 8:11 PM

Agreed with Nichole, after the routing is picked it will be too late.

from PeggySue Imihy to everyone: 8:11 PM

we need to get policies in place now.