



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee Meeting

June 1, 2021

6:00PM

WebEx

CAC Members: Kathy Fraser, Jason Greenberg, Gene Montanez, Giuseppe Marrari, Ken Rodgers, Adam Hutchens, John Wolhaupter, Ellis Beck, Brett Buckner

Agency Staff and Guests: Sophia Ginis, Kjerstin Yager, Nick Landwer, Jason Tintes, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Pa Nhue Vue, Trevor Roy, Tim Sandvik, Cathy Gold, Janet Moore, Andrew Gillett, Liz Morice

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council welcomed the group. Jason Greenberg began the meeting at 6:03PM.

2. Adopt April 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes:

Jason Greenberg asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Brett Buckner moved to approve the minutes and Ken Rogers seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

3. Route Modification Report

a. Staff Recommendation

Sophia provided a review of the route modification process, including the transition from using rail property in 2020 and the initial routes released in 2021. The first question at this time was did we get this right? The project looked for more suggestions and ideas on routes that were missing. In December 2021 the Draft Route Modification Report was released and it intentionally did not have a route recommendation, so the project could hear from the community.

Sophia summarized the comments heard in the comment period. This included several general topic areas. The biggest areas included noise, construction, property, and traffic. Sophia shared examples of what those were like, regarding people's homes or other specific concerns.

Kathy Fraser asked if any of these things came out in the “other” category (11%). Sophia shared that this was a collection of very random things that didn’t belong in other categories. Regarding the comment summary, Ken Rodgers noticed there was repetition in the various areas. He is wondering if they were repeats or heard in several categories. Sophia said that they did include all the comments received. There were some form emails that were captured in the raw comments that did not have identifying people. Kathy Fraser and Jason Greenberg asked a question about route feedback (general support or opposition- 21%). Jason would like to know why that is not broken into support versus of opposition. Sophia said that this is not a vote and it is not representative so breaking it out in that way, did not make sense for the summary. They are looking at individual comments. The project will take action on these comments and that is what they were looking at. There is support and opposition in many of the other categories. Jason said that if you look at design, for example, that is broken out into several categories. It seems like that general category could have more detail in a similar manner. Sophia shared an example of anti-displacement: people shared their support of the light rail and opposition to the timing of the action. Jason said that is an example of a category that would be good to have; anti-displacement comments could be a category. Jason said that example seems like general support. Adam Hutchens agreed with Jason’s comments in the chat. Sophia shared that in the future they might have more background questions for the comments to understand for example, who is sharing comments from Robbinsdale or other specific cities, or it could be zip codes or other identifiers that the Met Council typically uses. Jason agreed that would make the information more useful.

Kathy said that she’s not opposed to the way the comments are categorized. She shared that it is helpful to know who is supportive for buy-in with the community and moving the project forward. Ken Rodgers shared that he framed it in his mind as the number of comments gives the number of people engaged and finding out where the public is so the project staff can either work to educate or bring more programming towards certain areas. Many comments are based on where people are coming from, so their understanding of the project may be different than this committee and it’s helpful to know that to gear/share information to the public. Sophia agreed and she said they want people to feel empowered to shape this process. She identified that there is a lot of fear and that does generate a lot of the comments. She said that sometimes they need to move the project forward to have more meaningful conversations about this concerns and comments. Right now, we need to adjust where this project is going? Many people gave forward-looking comments, asking for more details about the project.

Gene Montanez pointed out that combining safety engagement and ped/bike design that would be a significant category. He agrees that separating out that category area makes sense, so that their concerns and opinions are better understood. The 21% needs to be adjusted.

Sophia shared general corridor wide comments about the support or opposition, specific concerns including the evaluation of parking, desire for landscaping, traffic calming etc. There were comments about the existing traffic and how it could be made more pleasant. Adam asked if there will still be parking on Broadway from Lyndale to Penn. Sophia confirmed that there would not be. Sophia shared concerns including what the project is doing with anti-displacement and other impacts.

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, reviewed the staff recommendation. This recommendation details the route from West Broadway in Brooklyn Park, to County Road 81 in Crystal and Robbinsdale, to West Broadway in Minneapolis, connecting to Target Field Station in Downtown Minneapolis. He identified station areas including the station areas. He pointed out that the station at North Memorial could be called now Lowry because it serves the neighborhoods surrounding the hospital as well. He identified the Penn and Emerson/Fremont stations in Minneapolis. The route had identified Lyndale Avenue. Jason asked about the 14 bus, will this go

away when light rail begins? Nick shared that not necessarily. They will look at the service and what it duplicative and what is needed. Sophia also identified that east-west connections will also be a part of service planning in the future. Jason asked about the takes by the Capri. Nick shared that it would depend on many factors and there will be more conversations about options and impacts with folks in that area.

Nick shared the report next steps. He said based on feedback that they've heard and a council resolution by Minneapolis, they will reevaluate options connecting Target Field Station and West Broadway Avenue. They will also be conducting anti-displacement work and environmental documentation at the same time. Nick shared the schedule and pointed out that this is the beginning of the process. He identified the upcoming steps in the next few years, including municipal consent. The earliest construction would begin is 2025. The construction would be phased, so the full corridor won't be under construction at certain times- in seasons most likely. The final goal is to be open in 2028.

Nick shared some components of the next phase of environmental review. This includes review and documentation of impacts including noise and vibration, visual impacts, property impacts, parks, soil and water impacts, and safety. They will further develop design details including placing stations, design sidewalks and connections. There will be ongoing public engagement. Sophia pointed out that they can't address some concerns without moving forward, so that is part of the reason they need a vote and process to move the project forward.

b. Discussion & Committee Recommendation

Jason Greenberg asked for comments from the group. Ken Rodgers said that he identified safety concerns and perceptions. He said that he heard at an earlier meeting today, that there is a task force on safety and reviewing what is being used on light rail and buses and making recommendations on how to improve perception in this area. He said that is a very targeted area, but the program will be taking place for the next 6 to 9 months, so there is not yet a lot to say about that. It was eye-opening to him how many comments related to that and is an important initiative. Sophia underlined the effort that Ken brought up and thanked him for sharing that comment.

Jason clarified that they would be taking feedback now on the resolution to be amended before it is adopted at the CMC next week. This was an email attachment. Adam shared a question in the chat which included a question about elevated track options. Jason said that could be included as a design consideration. Ellis Beck said that there is mention of park connections, could there be an inclusion of comments to other businesses or local areas that will increase ridership. Adam had a question about budget left in the chat. Kathy and Jason voiced the need for anti-displacement efforts to be included throughout the process. Kathy said that we need it throughout the development life cycle. Jason asked for clarity on the budget question from Adam. Adam said that he sees that it is more expensive to have elevated, but he said that if it is possible in the Southwest project, it seems premature, without an official budget to preclude it here and also not balanced (when the flyovers are in more expensive neighborhoods). Sophia said that they are concerned about being cost-competitive, but it is also seeing how those design options add to the transit option they are providing. Sophia pointed out this is a comment about equitable development as well; she added a comment regarding equitable investment as a design option. Ken Rodgers pointed out that the elevated options always harm the disabled community. He said that he wanted people to hear the other side of that design

option. Sophia modified that bullet to include both of these areas. Jason Greenberg brought up that travel patterns have changed in the Twin Cities since the start of this project. It does not necessarily need to be in this document, but it is a topic that comes up in his city often, and it should be part of the discussion. Nick shared that they are doing traffic counts currently, so there will be more information about that. They are finding that traffic is coming back. Sophia confirmed that same review is happening around ridership. Ellis Beck said it's not a bad point to bring it up, and it's good to get more data. He shared that the travel patterns would have to change dramatically for this not to be a good transitway. Adam shared that there might be other users than commuters using this line-for leisure or day-to-day travel. Ken pointed out this is part of the regional transportation system. There are other uses that are as important as commuting when considering that perspective. Sophia added a bullet about further study for regional transportation. Ken pointed out that everyone is living in a period of transition now. Sophia identified that there are other connections that are making that important. She also added a sub-bullet about types/reasons for riding.

Gene said that there should also be marketing to make sure people use this line. Sophia said that in the future they could invite the marketing director to this meeting to touch on this point further. Ken pointed out that climate change and climate effects are a consideration and should be part of the marketing in the future. Sophia added a section that included future communications and touched on these two points.

Sophia shared that this will be shared with the group and Gene and Jason will also have it in their materials. There was general consensus of the support of the document, including claps and thumbs up reactions.

4. Next Meeting: July 6, 2022*

Sophia identified that this committee has reached the end of work based on the charter. Assuming the route gets full approval, the committee members will need to be reconfirmed. This committee would have one more meeting that is regarding anti-displacement in July. Ideally, they will celebrate the work that they've done in some way. Generally, the group shared that the 13th would be a better time for them. Sophia also identified that they will not be able to do hybrid overall, it will need to be virtual, or in-person and they will look at the covid information. There was no support voiced for keeping the 6th. Jason asked about the anti-displacement meeting happening this weekend. Sophia shared the whole meeting will be streamed virtually. She said that there will be long notes summarizing the meeting. There will also be a shorter version that is highlights of the meeting. Sophia thanked the group for their thoughtful feedback and discussion, and time over the last several months.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44PM.

Chat

from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 6:14 PM

Did any themes come out of the other category?

from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 6:14 PM

The 11% Other Category

from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 6:18 PM

Do we know what percentage support vs oppose the route?

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 6:24 PM

Agreed

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 6:38 PM

Will there still be parking on Broadway from Lyndale to Penn?

from Ellis Beck to everyone: 7:05 PM

I think it's a pretty solid representation of what we've been talking about, but now I'm looking for a comment, haha

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:05 PM

With all of these concerns of parking, ped crossings, traffic flow, congested roadway, bicycle space, is there still no interest in looking at raising the tracks between Lyndale and Lowry stop?

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:08 PM

I know there is budget concerned but with no official budget it's hard to compare apples to no other option. Along with the infrastructure money being spent at the national level, there seems to be a chance to reconsider.

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:08 PM

There I'll stop

from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 7:08 PM

There isn't anything about the anti-displacement work.

from Adam Hutchens to everyone: 7:37 PM

Cannot make the 6th, 13th would be better if possible.

from Gene Montanez to everyone: 7:38 PM

Twins tickets?

from Kathy Fraser to everyone: 7:39 PM

can only make the first hour on the 13th.