



METRO Blue Line Extension
Meeting of the Corridor Management Committee
October 13, 2022
1:30 PM
Metro Transit Heywood Council Chambers

CMC Member Attendees: Jim Adams, Mike Barnes, Reva Chamblis, Jeremiah Ellison, Irene Fernando, Jason Greenberg, Robert Lilligren, John Pacheco, Ricardo Perez, Gillian Rosenquist, Charlie Zelle

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council, called the meeting to order at 1:33 PM.

Chair Zelle encouraged members of the public to submit comments to Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, and noted that any comments submitted before October 21st will be part of the meeting minutes. Chris Beckwith, Metropolitan Council, expressed appreciation to have Nkongo on the project staff and introduced Nkongo to the members of the CMC. Chris then introduced two other new members of the project staff, Jer Yang as administrative assistant and Annie Xiong as agreement specialist.

2. Approval of September 8, BLRT CMC Meeting Summary

Chair Zelle asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mayor Jim Adams, City of Crystal, made a motion and Council member Robert Lilligren, Metropolitan Council, seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

3. Environmental & Design Next Steps

Chris Beckwith provided an update on the environmental phase project schedule, showing the steps that the project is taking during the environmental process. Previously, the project had an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) and now the project team is selecting design options to move into the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). The project team conducted public outreach in September and has narrowed down the routing from Target Field to West Broadway from four to two options and the routing between 21st Avenue and West Broadway from four to two options. Chris stated that the benefit of this is to study only the feasible options in the environmental review moving forward.

Nkongo Cigolo provided a summary of public engagement work conducted over the past month. He stated that during September, the project team held three in-person workshops



and several stakeholder meetings in addition to feedback that was gathered online through the interactive map and survey. Nkongo explained they have been advertising using non-traditional means as well as traditional means and wanted to thank Hennepin County for their assistance in setting up a changeable message sign to advertise for the Minneapolis public meetings.

Nkongo provided a recap of the results of their September engagement efforts. According to feedback received from the community, the East I-94 Option was the most favored, with Lyndale Avenue as a 2nd option. The community expressed a desire for the project team to understand community concerns around station location, access, and property impacts and specifically the alignment's proximity to the Twin Cities International School. Additionally, four options were evaluated for the 21st Avenue/West Broadway area; Option A, Option B, Option C, and Option D. Option A, which includes light rail in both directions on West Broadway, was favored by the community. Second to this was Option D, which includes light rail in both directions on 21st Avenue. Both Option A and Option D are proposed to move forward. Common themes that we heard in this area include ensuring station location proximity to local businesses and maintain parking.

Nkongo then reviewed the dates for the upcoming October public meetings, stating that there will be a meeting in each city along the alignment. These meetings have already been advertised and communicated to our community partners to hopefully get a good turnout to the meetings.

Chris stated project staff used a narrative description and a sliding scale to evaluate the options that Nkongo reviewed to generate discussion during community events and to help determine which options to eliminate from further consideration. Chris first presented the Target Field Station to West Broadway options. She stated the West I-94 Option was the least preferred; this option had a few more right of way impacts, is difficult to site a station, and is located off the street network; therefore, the project team is proposing to eliminate this option. Next Chris discussed the West Broadway /21st Avenue options. Option A and Option D are proposed to move forward. Both Option B and Option C split the traffic between West Broadway and 21st Avenue in this area and Option C splits the light rail. According to Chris, what we heard from the community was that this is difficult to understand and more complicated and expensive to build. Chair Zelle acknowledged that this engagement is not determining, it is filtering.

Commissioner Irene Fernando, Hennepin County asked if residents expect to see their suggestions as part of the evaluation. Chris responded that these comments will carry into the design phase, and the project team will continue to incorporate them into the engineering and station area planning work. Commissioner Fernando added that there has



historically been a pattern of disinvestment along this corridor and wanted to highlight a continued commitment to the community.

Council Member Reva Chamblis, Metropolitan Council asked about existing public transit being a criterion, and if residents are already near existing transit, how does that effect the criteria? Chris responded that if there is existing good bus service, they will look to enhance it and whether the project is bringing transit access to businesses and residences. Council Member Chamblis followed up stating she thinks it is great that economic development is being considered in neighborhoods that have historically seen little investment. Council Member Chamblis asked if there could be improvements in the way we explain what the design process is and when the community can expect to see more detailed designs. Chris gave an example of a graphic which showed the environmental next steps and emphasized there will be public input every step of the way. Council Member Chamblis asked if there was an assumption made whether customers would take the light rail rather than a car to access businesses? Chris responded the assumption is some people will take the light rail, some people will still prefer to drive or walk. Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, City of Minneapolis noted the 33 responses on a survey question, and that he had a concern about the level of outreach and stated he'd like to see the number of responses go up into the hundreds or thousands to get a more representative sample.

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, reviewed the publishing of the environmental notice of intent in the EQB monitor and compared the route options carrying forward with a no build. This notice will explain what has changed since the last Final Environmental Impact Statement, which was published in July 2016. The project team is currently working on the SDEIS to evaluate the new route options. Information from the 2016 FEIS that still applies will carry into this SDEIS. Nick then explained the SDEIS process will take several months.

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, stated that what we are recommending today is the scope of the environmental analysis that will be studied. Dan provided a summary of the changes through the corridor from north to south. In Brooklyn Park, the one change is that the roadway portion of West Broadway was funded separately from the project and therefore wasn't covered in the environmental analysis but now will be covered as well. It is the same design and analysis but will have to be brought into the federal environmental process. In the south end of Brooklyn Park, the pedestrian bridge was proposed before and will carry forward but now goes over the BNSF rail line to the light rail station. Additionally, the station location changed and is now at the center of County Road 81. Dan explained in Crystal, they are looking at two design options at County Road 81 and Bass Lake Road: at grade intersection with a pedestrian bridge or an elevated structure with a diamond interchange, and both will be studied in the environmental study. We will also study various lane configurations per the city's resolution. In Robbinsdale, previously the alignment was on the BNSF rail line, now it would be on County Road 81, and we don't have final station or



park and ride locations identified in Downtown Robbinsdale. All these options will be studied in the environmental document. According to Dan, we know there is a desire to have a station at the North Memorial Hospital with an elevated structure. In Minneapolis, the environmental analysis will study light rail on West Broadway up to Irving. Dan noted previously this segment went through Golden Valley. At Irving we will look at two options: light rail on West Broadway and light rail and 21st Avenue. We will now call these the West Broadway Option and the 21st Avenue Option. Additionally, we will evaluate two options from 21st Avenue/West Broadway to Target Field Station. This is what we're recommending to study over the next 12 months in the environmental document.

Nick stated that comments on the Notice of Intent will be accepted through November 7. We will come forward with a preferred route option after the SDEIS and will be informed by public engagement.

Commissioner Fernando asked Nick to clarify which document is being referred to and asked if the documents can be cited differently. What are we asking people to comment on? Nick clarified the comment period is for the Notice of Intent, which describes the scope of the project. Dan added it was supplemental because it is supplemental to the previous 2016 FEIS.

Ricardo Perez, CAC agreed with Commissioner Fernando that the processes and documents get confusing. He stated there should be more clarity in the official timeline and asked how the team is planning to collaborate on the work the Anti-Displacement Working Group (ADWG) is doing. Dan responded that is a great question and agrees that the ADWG can't be a separate effort. The recommendations of the ADWG will be documented as mitigation in the environmental document and will be carried out together.

Reva Chamblis asked someone from the anti-displacement work group to speak to the needs of the group. C Terrence Anderson, CURA, said he's not sure if he has an answer today but expressed there is a desire for parts of the community to become more involved in the design of the route. Dan added that the project team will evaluate more ways to involve the ADWG and the group's values, concerns, and decisions into the environmental process as well.

Council Member Robert Lilligren pointed out he isn't seeing a tribal consultation process reflected in the topics to be studied in the environmental document. Kelcie Young, Metro Transit, stated the project team is plugged in with the tribal organizations. There will be ongoing efforts to evaluate historic preservation and appropriate engagement will be conducted with tribes. Council Member Lilligren thanked Kelcie for that and stated that although there are two federally recognized tribes that share geography with the Metropolitan Council and there are many tribes represented in our population and in this



area and asked whether or not tribal engagement has been conducted. Dan stated that's a great example in the way the environmental scope is changing, not only because of a change in route but also because of a change in regulations and guidelines. Commissioner Jeff Lunde, Hennepin County stated there will be a concerted effort outside of the project to support the efforts of the ADWG, which will include funding. He stated there may be opportunities to look at more things like noise in the EIS and the bus tour was very impactful and should be done again for other community leaders. Dan agreed the project will support staff from the cities in their anti-displacement efforts.

4. Anti-Displacement Update

C Terrence Anderson, CURA, reviewed the progress from the ADWG. We talked at our first meeting about what displacement is and what we have learned from the existing light rail projects and looked at 27 anti-displacement policies. C Terrence explained that their work right now is about re-organizing government to make sure people are not displaced and understanding how the 27 identified anti-displacement policies can be implemented. Our work between June and September deepened our understanding of these policies through surveying agencies to understand what they are already doing or what are the challenges they are seeing. C Terrence stated at the September 24 workshop we asked community what is important to them. We learned that 14 of the 27 policies are already in place or could be. C Terrence also noted that the community has an expectation that they will see how implementation happens with these policies.

C Terrence explained that CURA has bucked the anti-displacement categories in four ways: existing policies, likely policies, policies with resistance, and new policies. The new policies were not part of the original 27 and weren't evaluated before. C Terrence stated we need to assess what we need to change to make existing policies work better; there are things that are already working but we might need to point to those to make them more effective. He stated that in addition to CURA's work, it is also important to understand the roles government has in enacting the policies and expressed a desire to include cost in the discussion. C Terrence explained that they have heard that community wants to understand more about the anti-displacement policies and believe that it won't be wasted effort at the end of the day. The project ends February 2023 so now is the time to start thinking about implementation. The next full Saturday ADWG meeting is in December and an interim meeting will held before then. Cathy Gold, Hennepin County stated the team is looking forward to the back-and-forth conversation between the ADWG members and our government representatives to make outcomes actionable. Chair Zelle expressed appreciation for all the work the group has done so far.

Council Member Lilligren commended C Terrence and CURA for their work and abundance of consideration to the cost of the recommendations. Excited to see how the roles are identified and how local communities organize their resources to put the policies in place.



Council Member Ellison stated it has been great to participate in the community outreach activities and expressed that this work should be a model for how we talk about displacement and anti-displacement moving forward. He commented that people do not go away when they are displaced, they go to other places where their needs are still not met. People who are displaced by this project, might go to the Brooklyns (Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center), they might go to New Hope, they might go to the street and then we are still trying to address displacement. Council Member Ellison noted that he is looking forward to making these recommendations real and understand where the funding is coming from. Cathy stated C Terrence will be at the October public meetings as well to report out.

5. Next Meeting: ~~November 13, 2022~~ (Next meeting will be December 8)

6. Adjourn

Chair Zelle adjourned the meeting at 2:57 PM.