



**METRO Blue Line Extension
Community Advisory Committee Meeting
December 11, 2017
Blue Line Project Office
5514 West Broadway Avenue, Suite 200
Crystal, MN 55428
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Meeting Summary

CAC Members: Vicki Moore, Steve Schmidt, Tonja West Hafner, Giuseppe Marrari, Chris Berne, Catherine Fleming, Stefan Watkins, La Shella Sims

Agency Staff and Guests: Sophia Ginis, Dan Pfeiffer, Rachel Dammel, David Davies, Sam O’Connell, Nick Landwer, Juan Rangel, Alicia Vap, Shelley Miller, Jim Toulouse, Dan Soler, Chad Ellos, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Lori Bullard

1. Approval of September 11, 2017 Meeting Summaries

Minutes were approved with no edits.

2. Bassett Creek Storm Sewer Construction Update

Nick Landwer presented. Over a year of coordination with project partners took place for this work, including MnDOT, Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, and Met Council Environmental Services. There was also a public outreach and media campaign, including:

- Mobile friendly web mapping tool
- Construction video
- Community radio/newspapers
- Door-knocking
- Neighborhood meetings
- Twitter
- Press release
- Email blasts
- Variable message signs
- Project newsletter

The contractor began mobilization the week of October 23rd. A 12-day closure of Olson Memorial Highway began October 30th after the morning rush hour, and the contractor worked 24-hour days during the closure. Olson Memorial Highway was back open to traffic on November 11th. The connection to the south end of the tunnel will take place over the winter, and restoration will occur in spring 2018.

The condition of the tunnel was in better shape than anticipated, which eliminated some work that was planned to connect to the north end of the tunnel. A temporary connection was made between the old pipe and new pipe to maintain drainage from Olson Memorial Highway; this will be removed when the LRT is constructed. When the south tunnel connection is made, a 66-inch sanitary sewer that is located under the storm sewer will be lined.

Catherine Fleming said the project did a great job with the communication, and traffic wasn't as much of a nightmare as she expected. She asked if the remaining work will be done by the Super Bowl. Nick Landwer said they should be done towards the end of January and will clean things up as they go. Catherine asked what the Met Council Environmental Service is. Nick said they operate the regional sewer system. Catherine asked if there was documentation she could review on environmental impacts. Nick said there were some contaminated soils and sludge that were hauled away to appropriate sites, which is documented in the Response Action Plan. Vicki Moore asked if they have to cap the contaminated soil that is left in place. Nick said they are doing testing and have found only a few spots with diesel contaminants, and that soil was also hauled off. The soil that is being placed is clean.

La Shella Sims asked if it is correct that once the station is built that they won't be using any of the old pipe. Nick Landwer said that is correct, they will remove the rest of the old pipe. La Shella asked what the procedure is if residents start having problems. Nick said they can contact the project office, but they don't anticipate anyone having issues. Sam O'Connell noted that Sophia Ginis would be the contact person.

Vicki Moore said people are concerned that asbestos was pulled out. Dan Soler said there was no asbestos, but there are procedures that would've be followed if it was found.

Stefan Watkins asked how much of the construction will be 24 hours a day when the LRT is being built. Nick Landwer said for the most part it will not be around the clock, but certain closures will be worked on 24 hours a day. Dan Soler added that specific work tasks will need to be continuous (e.g., pouring a bridge deck).

3. West Broadway Reconstruction: 71st-74th Ave

Chad Ellos presented. West Broadway between 71st and 74th Avenues is a three-block gap that has projects programmed all around it, but this segment was not being reconstructed as part of other projects. Hennepin County and Brooklyn Park funded and designed this project to complete the reconstruction of this segment of West Broadway. Between 71st and 74th, there will be one lane of traffic in each direction and off-road trails on both sides. Plans for this project will be added to the final plan set for the LRT project.

A public open house was held on November 2nd, and about 20 people attended. Most attendees thought it made sense to do this work while the rest of the projects are being done.

Chris Berne asked if there are still ongoing discussions regarding connections to Jolly and the frontage road. Chad Ellos said a block of 73rd is included in the 71st to 74th project, and the connection to Jolly is being discussed as part of a separate Hennepin County project on CR 81.

Tonja West Hafner asked if this project would be constructed at the same time as the LRT. Chad Ellos said it will likely start in 2019 and last two construction seasons. The design is being coordinated but they have their own schedules.

La Shella Sims asked if all the parties are coordinating on this. Chad Ellos said all the agencies are coordinating, and they are communicating to the public. Tonja West Hafner added that it has been pretty clear there will be changes in that area and that the concerns seem to have been addressed. Chad noted that the 71st to 74th segment will be shared as being added to the BLRT project. Dan Soler added that Hennepin County, Brooklyn Park, and BPO have been working together closely on projects that happened this year on CR 81 as well.

Catherine Fleming asked if there were any requirements associated with the funding. Chad Ellos said there is federal funding involved, which is why this project has to start in 2019. The funding is only for the road reconstruction and does not include adjacent development.

4. 90% Design Plans and Next Steps

Nick Landwer presented. The 90% design packages are being finished up now. There are two civil construction packages divided by geography: Civil 1 and Civil 2. Civil 1 includes Target Field Station, Olson Memorial Highway, and the freight corridor to the CSAH 81 flyover bridge. Civil 2 includes Jolly Lane to the OMF. The packages include:

- Roadway, bridges, retaining walls
- Utilities
- LRT guideway
- Freight rail
- Stations
- Park-and-rides

The Civil 1 and 2 packages were delivered on November 17, 2017 and have been shared with project partners for review and comment. Comments will be addressed and changes included in the final plans. A set of the civil plans is 10,000 sheets.

In the next few weeks, the 90% specifications for the Civil packages and the Systems package are due. The OMF plans have been delivered and will be distributed to the project partners. The Systems and OMF 90% specifications are then due in mid-January.

Q1 2018 design activities include:

- Olson Memorial Highway design advancement
 - Median landscaping and signage design
 - Detailed stormwater design
 - Private utility coordination
 - TPSS screening
- West Broadway design advancement
 - Landscape and signage design
 - Detailed stormwater design
 - Private utility coordination

- Oak Grove Parkway parking structure
- Advanced design packages (critical path items for construction)
 - Floodplain mitigation/MCES forcemain along Bassett Creek and the freight rail corridor
 - Theodore Wirth Parkway Bridge
- Freight rail corridor
 - Document current design assumptions for negotiations team
 - Document BNSF impact mitigation
 - Design support during negotiations

Steve Schmidt asked if a crash wall is being included in the design. Nick Landwer said that it is. Steve asked if there is a chance additional environmental documentation would be required like for SWLRT. Dan Soler said it will be based on what we end up with as we review current design assumptions with BNSF. With SWLRT, the tracks are further apart so a crash wall was not initially proposed. That corridor is also historic, so because there wasn't a wall there it was not considered an adverse effect in the SWLRT environmental documentation. For BLRT, we've proposed some corridor protection that was disclosed in the environmental documents. In some areas the corridor protection is a wall and in others it is a ditch, which acts both as a drainage feature and corridor protection. The ditch areas include intrusion protection, which would detect if a train crosses the area and send a message to both the freight and LRT control centers. The BLRT project already had an adverse effect determination for adding LRT to the rail corridor, so mitigation was already incorporated. If the corridor protection changes to all wall for instance, FTA would need to weigh in on documentation needs, but we should be well positioned because we already identified an adverse effect and are working on mitigation. FTA will review any significant design changes that occur as part of negotiations.

Catherine Fleming asked if the railroad would assume any degree of financial responsibility. Dan Soler said replied that Met Council will assume all liability for operations. BNSF will still own the property, and Met Council will have an easement right from BNSF.

La Shella Sims said negotiations are usually a give and take and asked what the railroad is going to give. Dan Soler said in this case it is more about what the railroad will require. The Monticello subdivision we will be building along carries 3-5 trains per week, so it's not a high use subdivision. However, BNSF is not happy about the County preventing their connection in Crystal back in 2014, which was a win for the communities but might have consequences for our negotiations. Vicki Moore asked what the Monticello subdivision carries. Dan said it mostly carries construction materials (lumber). Vicki asked how heavy of a load they can carry on the tracks. Dan said he doesn't know the weight restrictions but there are speed and load restrictions. The BLRT project will upgrade the 8 miles of track they have to move, but the rest of 22 miles of the subdivision will not be affected by the project.

Catherine Fleming asked what the requirements are for stormwater runoff. Nick Landwer said all stormwater runoff will be treated. It will go to a ditch then be treated through retention or detention.

Chris Berne said they've been told in the past that negotiations on this project can't be seriously started until SWLRT negotiations are complete. With the recent SWLRT issues, how does that affect our timeline? Dan Soler said they have been deliberate about how soon the Met Council, Hennepin County, and MnDOT engage with BNSF until they know where they stand with BNSF agreements with SWLRT. The Met Council recently sent the SWLRT agreements to FTA and are just getting some comments back now so those need to be buttoned up. They are attempting to have the Met Council chair and County commissioners go sign the SWLRT agreements with BNSF and kick off BLRT discussions. Funding priorities between projects are policy maker decisions; our job here is to be ready.

5. Station Design Advancement: 63rd Avenue and Bass Lake Road

Shelley Miller presented.

63rd Avenue

Some key features of this station include:

- Access via elevator/stair tower and from at-grade entrance, both serving existing park-and-ride
- Park and ride will have two levels
- Station will have three canopies
- Plaza area includes enhancements to existing staircase (covered), an indoor bike-and-ride (access caged area with Go-To card), and outdoor bike parking

La Shella Sims said there had been previous conversations at the CMC meetings about paying for maintenance and asked who would pay for maintenance at this station. Dan Soler said it would be paid for by Met Council because it is going from a Met Council park-and-ride to the LRT station.

Vicki Moore asked if solar panels would be added to the roof of the park-and-ride. Shelley Miller said the Met Council has been doing retrofits and will likely add solar panels in the future.

Chris Berne asked why there is a bus stop indicated in the park-and-ride lot in addition to the ones on 63rd. Shelley Miller said there is an existing stop at the park-and-ride that will remain but it is only used occasionally (e.g., for the state fair). Service planning will evaluate demand a year before the project opens. Steve Schmidt added there have been discussion at the city level about removing that stop and creating a plaza. Alicia Vap said Met Council wants to make sure they can maintain flexibility in the long term and would likely be open to shared use on the weekends but they don't want to give away rights at that location permanently.

Giuseppe Marrari asked how the elevator will indicate which level you should go to for the station. Shelley Miller said she hasn't seen the detail yet, but it will likely say something like LRT station, Parking 1, and Parking 2 like at Target Field Station.

Bass Lake Road

Some key features of this station include:

- Enhancements at the intersection with boulevard trees and a median respite
- Access via surface park-and-ride and from at-grade entrance at Bass Lake Road
- Bike parking

- Canopy design emulates wing of airplane as a nod to the Crystal airport
- Between-car barriers on station platform (this feature is being added to all LRT stations)

La Shella Sims asked if suburban bus service would continue or if it would bring the riders to the LRT. Shelley Miller said if you take an express bus you'll likely continue to take that bus, but the local routes will feed into the LRT system.

Stefan Watkins noted that he represents Golden Valley, and right next to that station is the Courage Kenny center. He anticipates that a lot of people will try to take the train instead of taking Metro Mobility to/from Courage Kenny but it is about an 1/8 mile from the station to the Courage center. Could the fee for Metro Mobility be waived between the LRT station and the Courage center? Dan Soler said they are working with the city and county to make the path between the station and the Courage center accessible. Dan Pfeiffer added that you can use your Go-To card to transfer between LRT and Metro Mobility. Nick Landwer said there is a representative from Courage Kenny on the BAC so they will raise this issue with her, but he believes they have considered the idea of a circulator to/from the station. Alicia Vap added that Hennepin County has a planning grant from the FTA, and Kerri Pearce Ruch noted that they are looking at circulator service for both clients and employees at Courage Kenny and first- and last-mile connections to stations, among other things.

6. 2018 Committee Schedule and Next Steps

Sam O'Connell presented. Our meeting schedule for 2018 includes the following dates. Meetings are scheduled from 6:00-8:00 pm at BPO.

- January 8
- February 5
- March 5
- April 9
- May 7
- June 11
- July 9
- August 6
- September 10
- October 8
- November 5
- December 10

We likely won't have all 12 meetings because things will not change between 90% and 100% design as much as they have in the past. Anticipated topics for 2018 include Hennepin County activities and construction activities and communications

Catherine Fleming asked at what point we'd talk about economic development in the station areas. Dan Soler said that's part of what we want to tackle in 2018 and will be looking to Hennepin County and other partners for when that information is ready to share. Kerri Pearce Ruch said she anticipates providing an overview in January of activities outside the scope of the project but important to the communities, including economic development and housing.

7. Rail-Volution Highlights

Steve Schmidt was disappointed in the conference. He found it interesting but didn't get the information he wanted and didn't feel the information was relevant to the Twin Cities. His favorite part of the conference was riding the train in Denver.

Catherine Fleming found the presentations about gentrification and displacement interesting, including information on rules to help renters, freezing taxes on properties around stations, and eliminating parking requirements to help spur development.

Sam O'Connell noted that you can view some of the presentations and conference materials on the Rail-Volution website if interested.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm. The next CAC meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2018.