



METRO Blue Line Extension
Meeting of the Corridor Management Committee
April 21, 2022
1:30 PM
WebEx

CMC Member Attendees: John Pacheco, Irene Fernando, Mike Barnes, Gene Montanez, Nick Thompson, Charles Zelle, Reva Chamblis, Mike Opatz, Bridget Rief, Becka Thompson, Rebecca Fabunmi, Jeremiah Ellison, Kathi Hemken, Jeffrey Lunde, Alicia Vickerman, Bill Blonigan, Gillian Rosenquist, Tonja West-Hafner, Tom Olsen, Ricardo Perez

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Charlie Zelle, Met Council, called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM.

2. Approval of February 10, 2021 BLRT CMC Meeting Summary

Chair Zelle asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember West-Hafner made a motion and Commissioner Lunde seconded. The minutes were approved.

3. Committee Reports

Chair Zelle started with a few items. He welcomed Councilmember Pacheco and Gene Montanez. Chair Zelle congratulated the project team for winning the APTA Exceptional Performance in Diversity award.

Gene Montanez shared an update about the CAC meeting. He shared there was an almost consensus about the line. The project team shared a lot of the work happening. The committee is on board with the recommendation and work moving forward.

Sophia Ginis, Metropolitan Council, shared an update in place of Felicia Perry (chair, BAC) who was absent. They discussed the route recommendation. There are many people who have properties on the route. They shared concern about displacement. They discussed the timing of the anti-displacement group, and some members wishing the group was farther along with recommendations.

4. Report Modification Report

Sophia shared an update on the route options and work to create a meaningful process in the last 18 months. She reviewed the work done in each area. She shared milestones of the



project from 2020-2022. She shared how the routes were initially shared, station study areas were added, and routes were further refined. Each of the milestones had public engagement within the process.

Sophia described the many points of contacts over this time, including over 300 events, thousands of conversations, and comments. They had to be creative in the beginning due to the complications of the pandemic. The work has continued in this way with many virtual options. All of this input has built toward the recommendation. She also acknowledged the work of the community cohort. Partnering with community and cultural organizations, helped the team learn and go deeper within communities. The advisory committees also helped. Gene Montanez (Robbinsdale, CAC Chair) helped organize events and went above and beyond. They received over 500 comments on the draft modification report.

Dan Soler, Hennepin County, provided details about the Route Modification Report. Dan highlighted the cities and areas covered by the route. The Blue Line Extension will be at-grade after Target Field at the intersection of 7th Street and 6th Avenue. The project will then travel north on Lyndale, and west on West Broadway or 21st Avenue. From Irving it will continue on West Broadway, with a station around Penn Avenue. From there it will go to North Memorial. It then continues on CR 81 through Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park. At 73rd it crosses over and follows West Broadway.

Overall, the project worked to follow project principles which included maintaining a similar alignment and the same termini. He reviewed the evaluation process which included ratings of Poor, Good, and Excellent. He shared the rankings and how they were influenced by the comment period. He showed a few graphics that demonstrated the difference between the two options. This included walkshed maps and how differently the two routes would serve neighborhoods. In destinations he highlighted the number of destinations along both routes, and the regional destinations that make West Broadway the best option. Dan emphasized the options for engagement coming up, and the way those opportunities will help elicit feedback. The goal after this is to have a route that the CMC, Hennepin County and Met Council can vote on to support.

Dan shared a number of next steps in a high-level timeline, which outlined the environmental work and design. He pointed out the timing and how they will hold votes for municipal consent.

Chair Zelle shared that the hope is for the next meeting to have a vote for consideration of this route. Commissioner Fernando shared appreciation for the work that has been accomplished in a short amount of time. The project team has helped share up to date information at every step of the way, and she emphasized the importance of continuing to share in this manner. Mayor Blonigan expressed appreciation for the comments that were



addressed including changing the ratings on the evaluation (from excellent to good). Robbinsdale is not fully behind this. Their comments are in the agency letter that is referenced. He appreciates that there is some response to this. He said they saw Representative Ilhan Omar in Washington, DC, and she had not been aware that Robbinsdale was not fully on board. He asked that that be made clear with representation going forward, that they are not all behind this.

Councilmember Ellison said that he is cautiously optimistic and encouraged by this plan. He said that he applauds all the work that has gone into this. He thinks the challenge now is that they double-down on the anti-displacement efforts and those strategies. If the project is able to be collaborative with Minneapolis and with the economic development in the community, then we are going to be providing some much-needed infrastructure in an area that needs it. He acknowledged there is a long road ahead. He thanked all the staff involved in this. He also wanted to thank this CMC for continuing to center anti-displacement and continuing to hold the line on that work. It's encouraging knowing it's on their minds.

Councilmember Chamblis thanked the group for their efforts. She has heard feedback already on the route recommendation. There are some people who haven't responded or been engaged thus far, and they are starting to get engaged. It's very important we continue to engage everyone as much as possible. There were people who were unaware of alignment changes until this latest press release. Regarding anti-displacement, there were some who said it was too early, others who feel it is too slow. She noted that it is not too early to anticipate the investments and make the preparations needed for anti-displacement efforts. The last area she touched on was station area planning. She has questions about that process of planning and how community groups and others will be included in that process.

Commissioner Lunde said he is thankful for the work done so far and acknowledged the work still to come. He said he encourages his constituents to make sure to stay involved if they want their ideas included. He pointed out that as we learned with Highway 55, it is never too soon to start the anti-displacement work. He looks forward to having more engagement as Covid recedes.

Commissioner Olsen thanked the group for the work that has happened so far. As soon as this was released, he shared it and many people provided positive feedback, including how they would take the train to Robbinsdale.

Commissioner Thompson thanked everyone and agreed that this is a great route. They have a huge capital campaign for North Commons and seeing how this might impact that space is front of mind. She thanked them that anti-displacement was centered. She also said it's great to see how Capri will have access.



Commissioner Fernando acknowledged Councilmember Rosenquist's comment about Highway 55. She agreed that there should be BRT to complement the system and assure access.

5. Anti-Displacement Working Group Update

Cathy Gold, Hennepin County, provided background and history of the anti-displacement workgroup. She reviewed the priorities for the initiative in the beginning, including the priority for local expertise. She updated the group on the work being done by CURA. This has included convening a work group and initiating the research. The group will have four eight-hour sessions with topics including case studies, housing displacement, business displacement and finalizing recommendations. She highlighted the qualitative and quantitative research that has begun. Chair Zelle thanked Cathy and highlighted that C Terrence will be back for future meetings to update the group on this work.

Ricardo Perez said that they agree that the route proposed is a good route. He said that the timing with anti-displacement is disappointing and asked that the anti-displacement be included in the timeline of environmental and engineering work going forward. Dan thanked Ricardo for that comment. He said that the anti-displacement work is happening throughout this process, and he shared that they should find the areas that fit with each part of this schedule.

6. Next Meeting: May 12, 2022

Chair Zelle pointed out that the next meeting, due to timing, should be cancelled and after that the next regularly scheduled meeting should be June 9. Sophia shared that they will be using libraries along the corridor for in-person meetings.

Chair Zelle confirmed that the comments from the comment period will be published. Sophia said that they will produce a summary for this committee that will be categorized. Mayor Blonigan thanked Sophia Ginis for being the Easter Bunny at a Robbinsdale event.

7. Adjourn

Chair Charlie Zelle, Met Council, adjourned the meeting at 2:47 PM.