



Blue Line Extension Corridor Management Committee

Minutes of the October 13, 2016 Meeting

Present: Adam Duinick, Lona Schreiber, Mike Opat, Jim Adams, Chris Berne, Rich Gates, Scott Schulte, Andy Snope, Meg Forney, Regan Murphy, Tom Willson, Peter Wagenius, Gary Cunningham, Marika Pfefferkorn.

Not in attendance: Linda Higgins, Myron Frans, Betsy Hodges, Shauen Pearce, Denny Walsh, Brian Lamb

1. Call to Order

Chair Duinick welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 1:32 PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 21, 2016

Chair Duinick asked the committee to review the meeting minutes from the July 21, 2016 meeting and asked if there were any edits. Commissioner Schreiber made the motion to approve the minutes; Commissioner Opat seconded the motion. Meeting minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Update

Chair Duinick reported steady progress and noted that earlier that week the Blue Line Extension Project was awarded a \$1.2 million grant from the FTA. It was indicated that those awarded funds would go to local communities for projects that would coincide with the introduction of light rail along the corridor. Chair Duinick offered congratulations to the Blue Line Extension staff who put together the application for those funds.

4. Environmental Update – Record of Decision

Kathryn O'Brien reported to the Corridor Management Committee on the award of the Record of Decision by the FTA. This marked the approval of the FEIS, and Kathryn indicated, was a signifier to the community that the FTA was committed to moving forward with the project. It was noted that the record of decision kicked off a 150 day period in which anyone could challenge the FEIS. That period would end in early March 2017. The Met Council also approved the determination of adequacy for the FEIS which begins a 30 day challenge period that would elapse in early November 2016.

Kathryn O'Brien walked through next steps for the project's environmental team, which included finalizing the environmental permitting, complying with the requirements of section 106 MOA (historic interpretive design elements) and developing a mitigation monitoring program.



5. Design Updates

Dan Soler addressed the committee and noted that part of the development of the project was working on risks that were identified early on in project development. The largest item of risk still being worked on was negotiation and agreements with both BNSF and Canadian Pacific Railways. Dan indicated that the project office continued to work with BNSF regularly, however there were issues, which included the culture of freight rail in Minnesota. Dan Soler did note that he and his staff were working with the governor's rail coordinator and rail coordination office, who had been a help as well. In the end, there was still a long way to go, but the project office remained committed to continued work towards agreements with BNSF. It was also noted that the project office had a meeting scheduled with Canadian Pacific the following week to continue coordination.

A. Freight Rail Corridor Construction Sequencing

Nick Landwer greeted committee members and began his presentation by outlining a segment map of the corridor. He noted the 3 segments the corridor had been divided into for construction sequencing: Olson Memorial Highway, the Rail Corridor and West Broadway. Nick noted that the freight corridor in particular, would be a construction challenge due to factors such as having to work within a 100 ft right-of-way, poor soils in the area, existing Xcel utility lines which would need to be relocated, and the need for freight operations to be maintained during construction. Due to all of these factors, construction sequencing would be particularly important.

Nick presented slides which outlined in detail the construction sequencing for the freight corridor.

Mayor Murphy asked why transmission lines in this area could not be buried. Nick Landwer indicated that, when buried, transmission lines generated great amounts of heat. As a result, large vaults would need to be placed around them to cool the lines. However, doing so would take up a majority of the right-of-way in the area.

Chair Duinick asked what materials the piles and platforms were made from and what depth the piles would go into the ground. Nick Landwer noted that the piles could go as deep as 8ft, drilled by an auger, and would be filled with rocks and grout to hold them together. The platform would be constructed from some kind of geo fabric topped by a class 5 compacted gravel.

In regard to Canadian Pacific, Nick Landwer noted that the project planned to construct a flyover bridge over Canadian Pacific tracks. He presented an aerial image of the site, outlining the area the bridge would inhabit. An image of the proposed bridge structure was shown, noting the length and general materials that were proposed to be used. It was indicated that the bridge would span just over 1300ft, with piers set at 120ft intervals. Canadian Pacific



freight would pass beneath the bridge and that location was also presented in the image. It was noted that in the location the train would pass under, the bridge clearance would need to be 24ft in height.

Council Member Gary Cunningham asked what the height of the apex of the bridge would be. Nick Landwer indicated that it would be roughly 30ft in height, 24ft clearance plus the decking, tracks and railings.

B. Plymouth Ave Station Area

Nick Landwer presented information on the Plymouth Ave Station Area, changes had been made to the previously presented plans due to the discovery of a 36 inch interceptor pipe that ran parallel to Bassett Creek and freight rail beneath the Plymouth Ave Bridge. It was noted that this 36 inch pipe was very old and the condition of it and the piles was not clear, but assumed very poor. Due to this, the project proposed to reconstruct the pipe. This also had the benefit of making it possible to open up the area beneath the bridge, adding another portal, and allowing a more natural channelization of Bassett Creek through the area. Less vegetation would be disturbed as well. An updated design of the area was presented, noting that the changes were also cost neutral.

Sketch-up views of the area were presented, to give CMC members a better understanding of the massing and design of the Plymouth Ave Station area.

Council Member Gary Cunningham asked if the trail that ran along the creek was handicap accessible, as the only access to the trail seemed to be from a staircase to the side of the bridge. Nick Landwer responded that the LRT station was handicap accessible. However, this particular trail connection did not have a ramp, as this staircase was just a convenient connection opportunity. It was also related that it would not provide year round access to the trail, as the park board had indicated they would more than likely close it in winter.

Council Member Andy Snope asked if a ramp could be built at the location to provide handicap access to the park trail. Nick Landwer noted that it had been looked at but it had been determined that the impacts to park land would be too great.

Nick Landwer then presented information on secondary access at Plymouth Avenue Station. It was noted that there were two accesses to the station, one in the vertical circulation (stairs and elevator) and a ramp from Xerxes to the north of the station.

Previously there had been a third access point shown, via a staircase and track crossing on the south side of the station. However, due to sightline issues identified during further engineering, it was proposed to eliminate the third access point. Sketch-Up images of the areas in which sight distance would be an issue for LRT drivers and LRT passengers were shown, outlining the severe safety concerns the crossing would present.



Council Member Gary Cunningham asked Nick to clarify what accesses would remain. Nick Landwer outlined the vertical circulation tower and the ramp from Plymouth/Xerxes intersection which would remain in station area plans. He also clarified for the committee member that the ramp was long to account for grades and keep it ADA compliant.

Council Member Cunningham also asked what the distance from Xerxes to the station platform was via the ramp. He was also interested to know who would be maintaining it. Nick Landwer indicated that the ramp would be roughly 700ft-800ft and that there would be a plan in place with Metro Transit Maintenance to clear snow, ice, etc. from the ramp.

Chair Duinick asked if the removal of the third access point would impact the ridership counts. Nick Landwer related that it would not, and that this decision was simply to ensure the project did not design an unsafe crossing.

C. OMF Architecture

Alicia Vap outlined the OMF's location, functionality and location. She noted that after Oak Grove Station there would be a quarter of a mile of non-revenue track, which would be used for pull out and pull in of trains.

Committee Member Peter Wagenius asked if the addition of the OMF in Brooklyn Park would change the location at which trains dropped cars, as it was currently happening at Hiawatha. He noted his preference for it to take place at the end of the line, as he'd seen people coming from the airport get confused when asked to switch to other cars at Hiawatha. Dan Soler believed it could happen at either location, but noted that the idea of doing it at the end of the line did indeed have merit as there would be turn over time there anyway, and as the project progressed they would keep it in mind. Committee Member Wagenius thanked the project for their willingness to consider it and stay flexible.

Alicia Vap continued to outline the design of the OMF, noting that it was surrounded on three sides by park land and on the other by developable land. The building itself was designed to be around 600ft in length. A detailed layout of the building was presented, outlining what functions each area would have.

On the outside of the building, staff had worked to integrate nature into the design and break up the long wall. The design developed displayed precast panels, interrupted at different intervals by reflective surfaces. (How reflective the surface would be had not yet been settled on.) The facility was shown from several different locations, noting the views of the building. Alicia Vap also indicated that final signage and finishes had not yet been decided on.

Council Member Gates asked how often the bypass track would be used, as he had some concerns, as the city had big plans for the adjacent park. Council Member Gates also noted that he would also like more information on the dropping of cars in this location, as he was worried about safety and traffic concerns. Alicia Vap indicated that the bypass track was intended to provide occasional operational flexibility, and would not be used frequently during



the day. She also noted that she would get information on exact counts to the city. However, she also noted that there would be a fence between the park and OMF to provide some further separation. Project staff had also been working closely with the city's parks office, trying to keep the bigger programmable areas further from the OMF.

6. Station Design Overview

Alicia Vap walked CMC members through the overview of station design, noting station area, site and platform as the 3 key areas. Station site and platform elements were also outlined, relating that platform elements would be consistent from platform to platform throughout the corridor.

The progress made in regard to station design and lessons learned from past projects were then outlined. Alicia Vap noted the unique designs of every station on the Blue Line had presented problems for maintenance staff who had to handle different materials in different sizes for each station, making it hard to store and fix quickly. It was also problematic for riders who could not predict where certain elements on the platform would be from station to station. On the Green Line, most stations had public art, which due to a revision in the Federal Transportation Bill, the Blue Line Extension Project could no longer include in its scope. This was due to being an FTA project.

Alicia Vap then outlined the design priorities that BLRT staff were following for their station designs. These included:

- a. Respond to lessons learned
- b. Provide safe and accessible facilities
- c. Enhance customer experience
- d. Develop design consistency in regard to customer wayfinding, constructability and cost, and maintenance
- e. Respond to character and context of each site
- f. Incorporate Section 106 / Secretary of the Interior Standards

Marika Pfefferkorn noted that she felt that as public art was no longer in the project, that project staff would need to be very strategic in informing communities of that fact. She also felt the project office should lead the initiative to help communities get funding in place for public art.

Alicia Vap outlined the areas of the station that were available for variation. This included the roof edge and underside, standard Metro Transit glass panel sizes, column pain colors and concrete platform surface treatments. It was noted that specific concept designs for each station would be shared at the November 10th CMC as well as the November 7th CAC/BAC and community open houses set to take place that month.

Alicia addressed what the purposes of the community open houses, which were to educate the community about station design evolution and receive feedback on design concepts.



7. Adjournment

Chair Duininck indicated that he wanted to note before the meeting adjourned that this past September Metro Transit set a record for ridership. With both a one day record of 36,000 riders in a single day. Green Line also set a record for LRT, with weekday ridership of over 45,000, which was over 2,000 riders more than the previous year.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30.

Next CMC Meeting: Thursday, November 10, 2016
Hennepin County Rockford Road Library
6401 42nd Avenue North
Crystal, MN 55427