



METRO Blue Line Extension

Meeting of the Community Advisory Committee

January 11, 2022

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

CAC Members: Ellis Beck, Alicia Brandt, Thomia Brown, Brett Buckner, John Chamber-Dunn, Kathy Fraser, Jason Greenburg, Jeff Guertin, Jonathan Hansen, Jericho Huggar, Adam Hutchens, Giuseppe Marrari, Ken Rodgers, Melanie Sedqi

Agency Staff and Guests: Nkongo Cigolo, Neha Damle, Nick Landwer, Cathy Gold, Trevor Roy, Tim Sandvik, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Koehl Simmons, Joan Vanhala, Kjerstin Yager, Jer Yang

Meeting Summary

1. Call to Order and Welcome (Nkongo Cigolo)

Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

2. Introductions (Nkongo Cigolo)

Nkongo introduced himself to the group and provided an opportunity for CAC Members and project staff and guests to introduce themselves.

3. Review Membership and CAC Charter (Nkongo Cigolo)

Nkongo asked members whether they had an opportunity to read the charter, several members indicated they had. Nkongo asked if any there were any questions about the CAC charter. Melanie Sedqi asked why Golden Valley was still included on the list of cities to provide a representative when the current alignment no longer goes through Golden Valley. Nkongo stated this was because LRT infrastructure will be constructed near Golden Valley so they wanted to extend an invite.

Nkongo then began reviewing the charter and explained the role of the CAC and its members, as well as the CAC's role at the CMC. Nkongo then reviewed the role and responsibilities of the co-chairs and explained that co-chairs attend the CMC and may need to express viewpoints at the CMC that are not their own. After explaining the roles of co-chairs, Nkongo asked Jason to explain why he is interested in the role of co-chair. Jason explained as someone who has lived in Minneapolis and many other large cities where he needs to use transit, he is an advocate for transit and wants to make sure the voices of people who use transit are heard. Jason stated his top priorities for this project include making sure the end product is great and that community voices are heard. Nkongo then asked if there was anyone else interested in being a co-chair.

John Chambers-Dunn asked if co-chairs need to be present at every CMC meeting. Jason explained he is generally available for the CMC and would be able to attend every meeting even if the other co-chair is not



able. John stated he is interested in becoming a co-chair but as the representative from Golden Valley, he would feel more comfortable with someone from one of the cities along the alignment if anyone was interested.

Brett Buckner said as a previous member of the CAC, he would support Jason as co-chair. Nkongo asked if any other members were interested. Kenneth asked to move to approve Jason and John as co-chairs. Several members expressed support, there were no objections from any other members to approve Jason and John. Nkongo stated he would amend the charter to reflect Jason and John as co-chairs.

4. Project Update (Nkongo Cigolo and Neha Damle)

Nkongo started the CAC presentation and gave an update on the current stage and upcoming schedule of the project, including ongoing environmental work and community outreach, stating that while a general alignment has been selected, the project is looking at alignment options in a few locations. Ellis Beck asked when presenting the alignment to the community, if we are looking for feedback related to moving the alignment or if those decisions are set in stone. Nkongo replied that now is the time to hear feedback from the community. Jason reiterated that it is important to continue to receive feedback from the community. Ellis asked if we ever present the route options to community members and ask for their feedback, Jason said yes.

Jason asked if community representatives such as mayors or elected officials give feedback that they have received to the project. Nkongo explained there are a couple of steps, such as the CMC, issue resolution meetings when the Metropolitan Council will meet with the city partners, TPAC where the project team meets with elected officials, the environmental comment period, and the project team will also be going in front of city partners at 30% design to gain municipal consent.

Nick Landwer, Metropolitan Council, explained the project is regularly working with the city staff and county officials during the issue resolution process. Rattana Sengsoulichanh, City of Minneapolis, explained that the City of Minneapolis' staff are in constant communication with the project and elected officials.

Nick then gave a project engineering update. John asked what some of the specific design issues and opportunities are. Nick responded it depends where in the alignment and these can include landscaping, intersection geometry, pedestrian infrastructure. John clarified that these are not station locations themselves but the design decisions around the stations. Nick confirmed this to be the case.

Cathy Gold, Hennepin County gave an update on Anti-Displacement. John asked Cathy whether, during her work, she ever had encountered a situation where the community was defining displacement differently than the project. Cathy stated the project team and CURA has surveyed people to ask for their definition of displacement and those are available on the website. Cathy stated when the original Blue Line was first built displacement did not occur until the line opened, during the Green Line along University Avenue it happened before the line was built, for the Southwest Green Line Extension, it was even earlier; so we are planning to get ahead of it. Cathy stated the team is trying to make the Blue Line Extension project a model for future projects in regard to anti-displacement and in pursuit of that goal is having conversations with other cities across the country. John asked if these are peer cities in terms of the train infrastructure. Cathy stated these projects are going on in similar communities nationwide in terms of having a BIPOC population.



Cathy then shared an update on Cultivate Arts. Jason asked if these events were announced to the prior CAC. Joan Vanhala, Hennepin County, stated that Cultivate Arts started with the previous Blue Line project, the most recent phase occurred between July 2022 and October 2022 and admitted the project team could have done a better job activating BAC and CAC support. Jeff Guertin asked why the Cultivate Arts website was not included in the Met Council website. Cathy explained it is a Hennepin County initiative, but that the link is on the MyBlueLine website.

Discussion Questions

- Ken Rodgers stated he cannot use Mentimeter because it is not accessible for those who use screen readers. Jason stated that that is okay and the members can just have an open conversation rather than using Mentimeter.
- *Question 1: What would the community/organization you represent think about the schedule and decision process presented above?*
 - Ellis stated he thinks in general public transportation is inefficient, but thinks the timeline is correct for our project.
 - Melanie stated that her and her neighbors have been waiting on the light rail forever, thinks the process is long.
- *Question 2: Is there any information you need to help answer questions you receive about the project?*
 - John wants to be comfortable knowing about the planned route. Jason thinks providing some background on previous phases of the project could be helpful for newer members of the CAC/BAC. Nick stated most of this information is on the website, but the project team could probably pull something together for it. Jason said that we can look at the project website before asking for the project team to do work.
- *Question 3: What other outreach/engagement tips would you suggest for 2023?*
 - Jason asked if there are ideas for re-engaging the community or any new strategies to engage the community. John asked if there has been engagement in downtown Robbinsdale and expressed a desire for a QR code or survey CAC members use when getting feedback from the community. Jason stated he wants the community more active but thinks CAC members need to be more active, Jason explained CAC members can have events.
 - Thomia Brown explained that her community just found out about the project last year even though a segment of the route is near her neighborhood along Lyndale Avenue. Jason said there needs to be more outreach. Jericho said that in his experience, the best way to engage is using a list of community events to notify community members. Jason said it is up to the members of the CAC to attend community events and reach out to the project team to get preparation or project materials whether that's handouts or surveys. He shared that he wanted to make sure him and John have what they need to share feedback and ask questions at the CMC.
 - Jason feels this is covered but asked for any final comments, no members stated they had final comments. Nkongo mentioned the survey could be emailed out as well.

5. Next Meeting: February 1, 2023

Jason thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:06 pm. Next meeting is February 1.



6. Adjourn

Nkongo adjourned the meeting at 8:06 PM.