

METRO Purple Line BRT Corridor Management Committee
Notes for the June 29, 2023 Meeting
Held Virtual through Webex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Charles Zelle, Vice Chair Victoria Reinhardt, Sue Vento, Scott McCune, Mai Chong Xiong, Nelsie Yang, Laurie Malone, Nick Thompson, Luke Schlegel, Ianni Houmas, Gretchen Artig-Swomley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Walsh, Nikki Villavicencio, Len Cacioppo, Lilly Melander, Lesley Kandaras, Eric Goebel, Mike Barnes

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT: Craig Lamothe, Liz Jones, Liz Sund, Mike Rogers, Sam O'Connell, Sarah Ghandour, Jennifer Lor, Winona Yang

1. WELCOME (CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL)

Chair Charlie Zelle called the meeting of the METRO Purple Line BRT Corridor Management Committee (CMC) to order at 1:00 PM on June 29, 2023. Chair Zelle welcomed everyone. Chair Zelle reviewed housekeeping rules for virtual meetings and noted the Purple Line BRT website <https://www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project> where the meeting agenda and presentation can be downloaded, and the recording of the meeting can be viewed.

Review of 4/06/2023 Purple Line CMC Meeting summary notes. No comments or edits were raised.

2. Community & Business Advisory Committee (CBAC) Report

Laurie Malone provided summaries of the May 22nd and June 21st CBAC meetings. The project team shared information and answered questions on RMS phase I and II as well as Arcade St. station design at both meetings. The committee had a lot of questions regarding the redesign of White Bear Ave for safety and traffic concerns, but overall positive support for evaluating the Maryland and White Bear Ave route. The committee reiterated the importance of translated and accessible materials. They discussed safety issues like snow removal and traffic congestion for increased considerations for accessibility. They provided several ideas and connections to businesses, community organizations, and multi-family housing complexes on Maryland and White Bear Ave to share with the team for outreach and engagement. No questions were asked.

3. Community Outreach & Engagement Report

Liz Jones provided an overview of the recent and upcoming engagements and activities. We are building awareness that we are looking at White Bear Ave. Overall feedback was safety and security, transportation behaviors along White Bear Ave and Bruce Vento, existing conditions of White Bear Ave and Bruce Vento, transit service, and route cuts/decline in service frequency and reliability. Overall feedback themes are preference towards White Bear Ave, safety and security, business access, accessibility, route connection, and development opportunities for local businesses and future housing development. No questions were asked.

4. BRT Route Modification Study Phase II Update

Craig Lamothe presented updates on the BRT Route Modification Study Phase II; the area between Johnson Parkway and Maplewood Mall Transit Center is the RMS Phase II, and we may study extensions to Vadnais Heights or Century College after the initial evaluation. We have been coordinating and working with project partners on the RMS Phase II scope and will develop and address technical challenges.

Craig provided an overview of the technical considerations, including lane re-purposing, traffic, and property access impacts, guideway, station location considerations, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Craig explained the Environmental Review process and that we comply with the State and Federal processes. If we end up with Maryland and White Bear Ave alignment, we will need to supplement all the environmental work done in 2020-21 to reflect the new project and will take about 12 months to complete.

Craig provided an overview of the RMS Phase II project inputs, including traffic study, capital/operating cost, ridership analysis, and FTA project rating evaluation. In early Fall/Winter, the federal government will issue new guidance that could change the way the federal government evaluates and rates projects.

Craig presented the six evaluation process steps. Reviewing existing conditions and corridor characteristics, development of Maryland and White Bear Ave design options, screening down to the most promising design options, recommending the preferred design options, comparing BRT on White Bear Ave to co-located with Bruce Vento Trail, and recommending a revised locally preferred alternative.

Craig provided an overview of the projected schedule. In September, we plan to bring the proposed potential station locations for Maryland and White Bear Avenue, technical information, and what we've heard from the public on the proposed potential station locations. In October, we'll preview the most promising design concepts. In March, we will come back for action on the preferred concept after four months of technical evaluation and public feedback. In April 2024, we will have metrics for a Bruce Vento Regional Trail and White Bear Avenue comparison and look at a potential extending the route in June.

Craig and Liz asked the members for feedback on the following questions.

Question #1: Recommendations of individuals who might be interested in representing the business or residential interest along the White Bear Avenue corridor.

Council Member Yang thanked Craig for the presentation and details. She recommended the East Side Area Business Associations and White Bear Avenue Business Association.

Council Member Vento recommends reaching out to grocery stores. She asked if there are any plans for the Ramsey County nursing home on White Bear. Commissioner Reinhardt said they will look into it. Craig said we are aware there is a lot of Ramsey County-owned property with potential opportunities for redevelopments on the Eastside. We are starting to track and have

conversations with cities and the county about redevelopment or development. Commissioner Reinhardt also said there are a lot of opportunities.

Ianni Houmas said they are doing some engagement and would like to invite everyone to 1626 White Bear Ave, St. Paul 55106, tonight from 630-8 for community engagement. Hosted by Greater East Side and Payne-Phalen Community Councils, ESABA, Freedom Forum, The Streets, MICAH, and WBABA.

Winona Yang asked if we started conversations or have a plan to support businesses during and after the construction. Craig responded at this phase of work, we will be looking at a high-level on what it means to construct Purple Line on White Bear Ave and Maryland, and if selected we will work on a plan. Chair Zelle responded we are developing a new division to support and collaborate on transit projects and ensure we are applying the learnings of various transit projects. Nick Thompson said we will be developing a plan for before and after construction. We are trying to start a new model on Blue Line Extension that will work well for the Purple Line.

Council Member Vento said the conversation at Council Meeting described how project staff has been working with business and communication efforts. We are aware of the impact it has on business and efforts be made to reduce stress. People should direct questions toward the purple line staff.

Commissioner Xiong recommended engaging and getting feedback from the Iowa high-rise public housing, residence, event centers, and events such as Cups and Cheers, White Dragon Hall, and Unison. Craig said we'll be doing walking tours in the corridor with businesses.

Liz Jones provided additional information on outreach, engagement, and communication methods. The focus is on soliciting feedback on corridor use, challenges, constraints, and opportunities. We launched an interactive map to engage with people to leave feedback. We'll also start canvassing, corridor tours, and committee meetings. We'll do station location outreach and engagement between July 24-August 11.

Question #2: What are other strategies for outreach you would like to see?

Council Member Vento suggested Hayden Library as a meeting location, pop-up site, etc., as well as a possible station location.

Commissioner Xiong asked if we had a phone line/voice message to leave feedback in their written language. Liz said we don't have a specific phone number, but we have the ability to translate services through phone calls. Liz will research and see if anyone has any resources.

Question #3: What are other community events/pop-up locations we should visit?

No comments or recommendations.

Question #4: Who are other community groups we should meet with? Any other feedback.

Council Member Vento suggested Mounds Academy and Maplewood/ St. Paul Business Groups.

Question #5: Are there any other business groups we should meet with?

Council Member Vento suggested Costco.

Council Member Yang suggested reaching out to Korean businesses and the community. Liz asked her if she can send her the contact information.

Question #6: Neighborhood, homeowner groups we should meet with?

Winona Yang posted in the chat: Pastor Marcus Cage runs R-Recovery Services at 1340 Hazel St N. It is a block or two off White Bear. They provide drug treatment programs and housing services. Pastor Marcus Cage's #: 763-607-8544

Chair Zelle said this is helpful information. He asked for an update on the Maplewood City Council Workshop. Commissioner Reinhardt said all information was a positive productive work session. Craig said they asked the same questions at the workshop and received positive feedback. No Rush Line Coalition provided constructive feedback and suggestions. We've been invited back to Maplewood in August to give an update on the project.

5. Next Steps

Chair Zelle expressed gratitude and stated the next CMC meeting will be in September 2023. We will continue to move forward, stay connected, and provide updates. Get back to a monthly schedule starting in September.

6. Other Items/Around the Table

There were no other items.

7. ADJOURN

Chair Zelle adjourned the meeting at 3:19 PM.

Meeting Materials Provided:

Meeting Agenda, June 29, 2023

CMC PowerPoint Presentation,

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz Sund, Purple Line Administrative Lead