

METRO Purple Line Corridor Management Committee  
Notes for the June 17, 2022 Meeting  
Held Virtual through Webex | Viewable at <https://youtu.be/s6nIPQVrzXw>

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Charlie Zelle, Vice Chair Victoria Reinhardt, Sue Vento, Nikki Villavicencio; Eric Goebel, Bill Walsh, Len Cacioppo, Scott McCune, Nick Thompson, Mike Barnes, Nicole Frethem

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Chris Xiong (for Council Member Nelsie Yang)

**GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT:** Lyssa Leitner, Jon Solberg, Mayumi Morgan, Craig Lamothe, Liz Jones, Jim Gersema, Barb Bartz, Mike Rogers, Mai Chong Xiong (CM Dai Thao Office, City of Saint Paul)

### 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 12:35 PM on June 17, 2022. Chair Zelle welcomed all our first virtual CMC. Chair Zelle provides housekeeping rules for virtual meetings and 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.

Rollcall is taken and introductions made.

Review of 4/29/2022 Purple Line CMC Meeting summary notes. No comments and edits were raised.

Chair Zelle introduces the topic overview of the Route Modification Study and staff recommendation to suspend the advancement of the current Locally Preferred Alternative to downtown White Bear Lake.

### 2. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR REPORTS

Chair Zelle shares his appreciation for all the work that has come to this point. We are moving quickly with a few check-ins along the way which will be shared those things will be shared on today.

Vice Chair Commissioner Reinhardt noted that there is importance in the voiced staff recommendation and that it is understood that the section that is not moving forward is to downtown White Bear Lake. The rest of the line, up and to, is still moving forward.

\*Chair Zelle welcomes Project Manager Craig Lamothe and Community Outreach and Engagement Lead Liz Jones to present to the CMC.

### 3. BRT ROUTE MODIFICATION STUDY

Craig Lamothe introduces the BRT Route Modification Study, the resulting Universe of Route Modifications, and the Route Modifications Advanced for Technical Evaluation. Liz Jones shares on the current Community Engagement & Communication efforts and plans. Craig shares the projected Evaluation, Feedback & Decision Timeline.

- a. Route Modification Screening Process
- b. Universe of Route Modifications
- c. Route Modifications Advanced for Technical Evaluation
- d. Community Engagement & Communications
- e. Remaining Schedule

\*Chair Zelle asked Vadnais Heights Council Member Goebel to speak to any reaction or thoughts to the configuration or modification options to the Vadnais Heights Square?

\*CM Goebel shares that the Council has not discussed as whole on these modification options to Vadnais Heights yet. Personally, CM Goebel see that going down Willow Lake Blvd will serve the industrial businesses in Vadnais Heights; going to the 35E Park & Ride will serve Vadnais Heights well.

\*Chair Zelle notes that the Route Modification Study opens a few new thoughts and complexities to the Project. Addressed to CM Walsh, some of these routing and end points, the Project will still go through White Bear Lake, respecting the resolution which indicates for the Project not to enter White Bear Lake, how might White Bear Lake respond?

\*CM Walsh states that their Council has not yet but will be meeting on these Project modification options updates. Personally, CM Walsh sees the route modification option to Century College as a good idea. However, as of today, the White Bear Lake Resolution does state that the Project should not encroach into White Bear Lake. Personally, a similar route that gets into White Bear Lake to get to Century College is acceptable, but it does get more difficult with the approach to cut into White Bear Lake with County Rd E and some of the stops mentions. We can also anticipate discussion with the North/South dynamic of White Bear Lake. CM Walsh's final comment is that we should stick to the sense of the Resolution which is not to encroach into White Bear Lake.

\*Chair comments his appreciation to CM Walsh's response and noting the Resolution.

\*Vice Chair Reinhardt acknowledged the strict reading of the Resolution but also brings up that the comments and arguments made being not anti-bus but not wanting the Project in downtown – the conversation was particular to coming into downtown. Vice Chair Reinhardt hopes that the community particularly the South-side of White Bear Lake will consider this route modification option.

\*Vice Chair Reinhardt also takes a moment to acknowledge her alternate, CM Frethem, is joining in on the call today.

\*Chair Zelle also takes the opportunity to acknowledge Washington County representative Lyssa Leitner and welcomes her to speak.

\*Lyssa Leitner notes that Commissioner Fran Myron is usually one to represent Washington County however he was unable to make it today. Both Commissioner Fran Myron and Commissioner Stan Karwoski have been briefed on the Project. Washington County is interested in hearing more. One big question regards Mahtomedi and their response to the Project. Washington County commissioners also have questions as to where White Bear Lake stands on these route modification options. Washington County commissioners are hopeful that some of the Century College options stay on the table until they can hear from their communities.

\*Craig thanked the committee for the discussion and confirms the information that has been and will be shared to the City and County representatives.

\*Chair Zelle thanked Craig and Liz for their presentation to the CMC. And open floor for comments.

\*St. Paul Representative Mai Chong Xiong voiced that the Hmong Freedom Celebration Festival will be held this year at the Como/McMurray fields and will be a great opportunity to connect with thousands of people and residents of the Eastside community. She also mentioned that Hmong Media network is available if it is desired to be attained.

\*Vice Chair Reinhardt commends the staff work on the Project has been phenomenal and at excellent standards. Vice Chair Reinhardt also states again that the vote to suspend is specifically to suspend the action of going into the area of downtown White Bear Lake – it is not suspending the whole line. It is important to note that so that an alternative route, which are exciting alternative options, can be decided on.

#### 4. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Craig Lamothe shares with the CMC that the Project has been advancing the project south of Beam Avenue. The Project has been meeting with St. Paul and Maplewood every other week for those areas of alignment. Progress is being made. The Project expects to be at about 30% Design complete essentially ending preliminary engineering for that segment in the early Fall time frame. With that, staff is recommending to

- a. Suspend Advancement of Current Locally Preferred Alternative to Downtown White Bear Lake (the Project north of Beam Ave)

The Project believe that it provides greater clarity to the Project partners and general public on the anticipated direction the Project is heading. It is important for those who would no longer be served and also those who were not anticipating on be served before the route modification study was initiated. An action to suspend will allow focus of the upcoming community engagement to be on the BRT route modification options and not on the LPA (or defending the LPA).

\*Chair Zelle opened up for any questions or comments. None.

\*Chair calls for a motion to approve the recommendation.

\*Vice Chair Reinhardt moves the motion to approve the recommendation.

\*Council Member Walsh seconded from White Bear Lake.

\*Chair Zelle called for a voice vote. All in favor, none opposed. The motion is carried. The committee is officially suspending the LPA North of Beam Avenue and are officially going into the modification study.

\*Chair Zelle invites Craig to discuss next steps.

#### 5. NEXT STEPS

The format will remain as virtual meetings. Next meeting is 7/13/2022. Subsequent meetings will bring what is discovered and to be determined to the Committee on 8/24 and allow a rough 30-day period to respond to any questions that may arise from discovery. We hope that the 9/16 meeting will be an opportunity for the Committee to discuss and deliberate how it would like to proceed with the Purple Line.

A recommendation of a slate of 28 members is to be presented to Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee to sit on as our Community & Business Advisory Committee (CBAC) with the appointment of 2 representatives to co-chair the CBAC and to sit on CMC as members.

\*Chair Zelle opened the floor for any final questions or comments. None.

#### 6. ADJOURN

Chair Zelle adjourned the meeting at 1:29 PM.

Meeting Materials Provided:

Meeting Agenda, June 17, 2022

CMC PowerPoint Presentation, June 17, 2022

Respectfully Submitted,

Paphoua Hang, Project Office Administrator