

## Meeting Minutes: Community and Business Advisory Committee

**Date:** 04/24/24 & 4/26/24 (Two meetings, each 1-hour, same discussion topics)

**Location:** Hybrid: Metro Square & Microsoft Teams

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### Attendance – 11 total committee member attendees

- Jack Byers (4/24)
  - Rebecca Nelson (4/24)
  - John Slade (4/24)
  - Debra Canfield (4/24)
  - Zachary Mensinger (4/26)
  - Joan Ballanger (4/24)
  - Ianni Houmas (4/26)
  - Torin Gustafson (4/26)
  - Felicia Anderson (4/26)
  - Leah Gayle (4/24)
  - Darrell Paulsen (4/24)
  - Craig Lamothe
  - Stephen Smith
  - Sara Pflaum
  - Liz Jones
  - Colin Owens
  - Emma Lucken
  - Galen Ryan (4/26)
  - Morgan Ellis (4/24)
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### Meeting Notes

#### New Center-Running Option in the Saint Paul section.

Sara Pflaum presented the new center-running option in the Saint Paul section that is under design and soon technical evaluation. This new option is anticipated to extend the schedule for selecting a preferred White Bear Ave corridor concept.

The new option includes new design features in the Saint Paul section. Driveways and unsignalized intersections will be right-in/right-out. There will be slightly more narrow station platforms. There will be less boulevard space, more property impacts. Still evaluating what this option entails for the trade-offs.

#### From 4/24 Meeting:

John Slade commented that side-running transit lanes seem to have cars drift into them and that they are harder to enforce. The faster and more reliable transit service in the center lane should be matched to the negatives of the two side-running lane option. Faster transit service is more important, which center lane does that better.

Sara Pflaum responded that the project is studying enforcement strategies of bus lanes. Project staff expect side running to be slightly slower than center aside from general traffic conflicts, due to trash or mail services getting in the way. Details of this option are still in the making.

From 4/26 Meeting:

Zach asked what was the reason/thought behind requesting this option be looked into? This option is a request from Ianni and community members to better evaluate the “best for transit” option for this section. This option could better slow down traffic through the corridor too.

Zack shared concerns about the rider experience at station platforms. It's easy to stand back from traffic at sidewalk adjacent stations, not so with center-running platform.

## **Other Design Option Overview**

Sara presented the key differentiators from the two evaluated options in Saint Paul and the two evaluated options in Maplewood. This information can be found on the project website.

From 4/26 Meeting:

Zach suggested that preventing left-turns at unsignalized intersections is a Pro, not a Con (as written), because it improves safety for everyone). To the effect it reduces mobility along the corridor should help make the bus even more attractive as an option.

Torin commented that limiting left-turns can make things less convenient in some cases but improving safety conditions in others. Making left turns on WBA can be quite dangerous.

Torin advocated for consistency along the corridor, Felicia agreed adding that ped safety is most important.

Felicia asked about the signal at Ripley, proposed to be removed in upcoming County project, Purple Line would keep the signal. Community is advocating for signal to remain. The County project manager has indicated the signal will remain.

Liz shared that there will be another public comment period this summer about the center-running option in Saint Paul and a comparison with the Bruce Vento Trail option.

## **Arcade Street Station**

Project staff presented an update about the Arcade Station. The project is developing new visualizations/views to demonstrate the visibility of the station in the surrounding area. The project is also conducting a new market analysis of adjacent private property to inform any new alignment opportunities that would require participation by the property owner.

Staff displayed several vantage points of a rough model in SketchUp that would be rendered more in the next few months. The vantage points were discussed with the group to determine if other views would be helpful for soliciting feedback.

From 4/24 Meeting:

Jack suggested views from the intersection of arcade and York and from the intersection of arcade and east 7<sup>th</sup>. John agreed with Arcade and York, wanting to know if the station will be hidden from view. Jack suggested widening the perspective of the station area. Project staff will evaluate alternative views.

John asked if CBAC can make a recommendation to the CMC about a policy issues. Craig responded that the CBAC can make recommendations, in an advisory capacity. Formal recommendations can be advanced through a collective consensus; otherwise, the co-chairs of the CBAC share discussion highlights at CMC meetings.

Project staff will share policies guiding the project and the CBAC charter.

Stephen and Jack discussed the purpose of the elevation views and the general placement of the station. Jack advocated for a different station location. The elevation exercise is about strategizing how to make the current location the best it can be.

From 4/26 Meeting:

Felicia commented that the station feels far away from the shops on Arcade. Zack says it seems to debilitate the walkshed.

## **Arcade Station – Stie Redevelopment Feasibility Study**

Staff presented a new site redevelopment a feasibility study that the project is conducting to evaluate redevelopment opportunities for Seegar Square in the Arcade station area. The project has identified a general site plan that makes the most sense for transit but the decision will be up to the property owner. The project has not yet engaged the Glimcher group, the property owner, on this matter (last talked to in the fall of 2022). The project is working on fully analyzing the site opportunities before engaging the Glimcher group.

There will be more engagement with the CBAC about the Arcade station area and the planning process.

From 4/24 Meeting

John asked if the project could use eminent domain to acquire the property. Craig responded no. As small starts project, the project does not have the capacity to absorb the 20 million dollars it would take to acquire it. Sara also mentioned that eminent domain on BRT projects is harder than LRT projects, there are more opportunities for bus routes to avoid property acquisition. It can be harder to justify.

## **Transition to Small Starts**

Staff presented that the project will be transitioning within the FTA's Capital Investment Grants project from a New Starts project to a Small Starts project. For more information about the what this means and the reasoning behind it, view the [April CMC meeting](#).

Committee members asked what triggered this transition. Staff responded this is primarily due to the forecasted ridership and how much project cost that ridership can support. The implications of the transition to Small Starts can be discussed at a future meeting.

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## Action Items

- Evaluate additional Arcade station area views
- Share project policies and CBAC charter with committee members
- Distribute April CMC presentation with meeting materials