

# Meeting Minutes: Community and Business Advisory Committee

**Date:** 6/28/2024  
**Location:** Virtual, Microsoft Teams

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## Attendance – 7 total committee member attendees, 4 staff members

- John Slade
- Joan Ballanger
- Ianni Houmas
- Torin Gustafson
- Felicia Anderson
- Darrell Paulsen
- Laurie Malone
- Craig Lamothe
- Liz Jones
- Beth Bartz
- Emilee Roschen

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## Meeting Notes

### Project Updates: Johnson Parkway

Craig Lamothe shared a high-level project overview and explained if Purple Line is on White Bear Avenue and crosses the proposed bridge onto Maryland Avenue, the service would lose its value compared to if it were to be on Bruce Vento Trail. Craig walked through three different layout options. With the bridge, it would be in place of a former freight bridge, and it would carry the Purple Line across the Bruce Vento Trail corridor behind Cub Foods to connect to Maryland. A Cook Avenue extension is another option with the bridge, which would shift the Cook Station closer to the recreation center, close Magnolia Lane and bring the guideway and trail behind Cub Foods. The third option would change how Magnolia Lane connects to Johnson Parkway and would create more traffic and conflicts for pedestrians and bicyclists navigating that intersection. Craig reviewed community considerations and outreach activities done in this area and feedback head. There will be continued engagement around these three options with the community and stakeholders.

Darrell Paulsen asked how much conversation there was with District 2. He said that District 2 had expressed some information they were given about Purple Line and the alternatives.

Liz Jones said that these concepts are new and the project team has just started talking to people this month about them. The project team talked with Ianni and Lisa to bring it back to the District 2 council. The project team has been sharing the information through events and canvassing. The project team has also met with District 4 leadership and has shared information with their whole board. This information will be presented to District 5's full board. The project team would like to have some more conversations and take the feedback to discuss internally and decide what to recommend to the CMC.

John Slade asked about the bridge cost and the impact on the project.

Craig Lamothe responded that the cost is somewhere between \$10-20 million and comes into the calculation to be part of the Small Starts program, particularly being on White Bear Avenue. The travel time benefit of the bridge is not strong if the bus runs on White Bear Avenue and Maryland Avenue, and there's more sensitivity to the value of ongoing maintenance of those structures. The project team wants the bridge to provide a transit benefit.

Felicia Anderson said she's curious about how weighted the public input is. People who live in the Realife Cooperative would live next to the bridge and the church would have 3-4 services a week.

Craig Lamothe said that bringing this information to the committees has the purpose of getting perspectives on how people would weigh the different entities. One perspective heard from District 5 is that the church may be impacted but it may not be there forever. The project wants the committees to help inform the decision-making.

Darrell Paulsen said he knows the church family and they are embedded in the community and doesn't anticipate them going anywhere else soon. Darrell said the past 8 months, he's been trying to work with the church in the efforts of this project.

### **Project Updates: Corridor Comparison**

Craig Lamothe reviewed content that would be presented on boards and published to the project website with information of comparing the different corridors. There will be a public comment period asking people which corridor the Purple Line should go in. Narrow center-running in St. Paul will also be included as part of engagement.

John Slade said he thought Small Starts couldn't be over \$400 million.

Craig Lamothe said that the project would have to adjust its scope and move scope out of the transit project. There could be scope that goes away entirely, or scope could be moved to other entity's buckets, i.e., Ramsey County. Things that are not necessarily a function for the transit project, i.e., sidewalk and boulevard, concrete versus asphalt, are things that could be moved out of the project's scope. The Bruce Vento Trail cost is all within the scope.

John Slade said that as a community organizer, he's looking at what the Blue Line Extension did to get anti-displacement funding from the state. Purple People are talking about having conversations with city, county, and state.

Craig Lamothe said that shifting of dollars would shift to the county, but not a lot to the city. The state doesn't tend to fund these types of things. Anti-displacement is different because it's outside the Blue Line Extension project, and it's funded by a variety of sources.

## Project Updates: Engagement Approach and Events

Liz Jones shared there's an engagement plan throughout the whole corridor. Liz shared upcoming engagement activities.

Darrell Paulsen said he's excited to see this [Hello Lamp Post] technology be used. He said that QR codes are effective when you talk about construction and detour changes, as well as part of other transit projects.

John Slade said there should be destructive testing.

Liz Jones said that Colin is working on tweaks with Hello Lamp Post and adjustments can be made even when it goes live.

## CBAC Meetings

Liz Jones reviewed the project committee look-ahead schedule.

## Additional Q&A

Ianni Houmas asked to get a copy of the slide deck.

Liz Jones said they will send the presentation out.

Darrell Paulsen said he's heard talk from the community that the Purple Line is going down White Bear Avenue and that it's the preferred alternative. He said he's wondering what would give those people the opportunity to say that.

Liz Jones said that they've heard a lot of support for Maryland to White Bear Avenue and continue to hear support for that alignment. The project has been talking a lot about White Bear Avenue and continue to hear a lot of disinterests in the Bruce Vento Trail alignment.

Darrell Paulsen asked if it's because the project didn't do as good of a job of being intentional and transparent for outreach for the Bruce Vento Trail.

Liz Jones said there's an effort to do both. Maryland and White Bear Avenue hadn't had engagement done.

Darrell Paulsen said that's maybe why it feels like there's disengagement and White Bear Avenue feels fresher and has intentional engagement versus Bruce Vento Trail.

Joan Ballanger said she thinks people have forgotten about Bruce Vento Trail. She said she lives closer to Maryland and White Bear Avenue and people say it's so busy and has transit. There are new immigrants to her neighborhood and elderly people. The only buses are on White Bear Avenue and people from her neighborhood have to walk far. Something to think about is how we make areas that are not accessible now, more accessible.

Liz Jones said that microtransit was implemented in North Minneapolis and it will also start when the Gold Line opens. It will help broaden the reach.

Felicia Anderson asked a question in the chat [If White Bear Ave is not the chosen route, will Ramsey County still go ahead with the 4 to 3 lane conversion?].

Craig Lamothe said there was a high-level feasibility study done by the county and it identified different segments that would make sense to go from 4 to 3. It would likely be a request by the city.

Craig Lamothe noted that Purple Line would bring things like Sunday service unlike Route 54. The Purple Line would bring better facilities, safety and security, higher-quality shelters, higher priority for snow clearance, etc.

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## Action Items

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