

**METRO Gold Line Community and Business Advisory Committee (CBAC)
Culver's, 2065 Old Hudson Road, Saint Paul
Meeting Notes of the May 29, 2018 Meeting**

Members Present: Allison Hawley March, Chai Lee, D'Angelos Svenkeson, Darrell Paulsen, Donald Gonser, Doug Swalboski, Ernesto Ortiz-Diaz, Heidi Schumacher, Jessica Johnson, Jorge Samper Zelaya, Koua Lee, Mary Brandt, Nancy Volkman, Nyagatare Valens, Rebecca Nelson, Regina Rippel, Steve Morris, Torin Gustafson

Members Absent: Hussein Khatib, Joseph Skeen, Molly Gagan-Vlaisavljevich, Pat Cosgrove, Reva Jones-Simmons, Richard Kramer, Robert Crawford, Tom Gianetti

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lyssa Leitner, Gold Line Deputy Project Manager, convened the meeting at 6:03 p.m. and led introductions around the room.

Members were also asked to answer what station they represent, if they are a business or residential representative, and why they wanted to be on the committee.

Multiple committee members stated that they applied to be on the Community and Business Advisory Committee (CBAC) because they are interested in transit and community development, and they want to ensure that any new transit that goes into their communities support their neighborhood's interests. Many also mentioned that they were drawn to the CBAC because of challenges with the existing transit network in their neighborhoods, including long travel times and low frequency.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Lyssa Leitner provided an overview of the project starting with how the METRO Gold Line fits in with the rest of the METRO system. The METRO system is a network of transitways with frequent, all-day service between stations with enhanced amenities. Gold Line will connect with the Green Line light rail transit (LRT) at Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul.

Gold Line is anticipated to begin service in 2024. It is estimated to have a capital cost of \$420 million and an annual operating cost of \$5.1 million. Costs are inflated to assume 2024 service. By 2040, it is estimated to have 8,000 daily riders. Data is extrapolated out to 2040 to ensure the service fits long-term growth and ridership in the east metro.

LRT was not selected for the corridor because it is not cost effective. Cost effectiveness is a strict requirement by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to receive federal funding for transit projects, so one reason bus rapid transit (BRT) was selected is because it is economical for the corridor. Dedicated BRT operates in exclusive bus-only lanes, whereas LRT operates on tracks in a dedicated guideway. BRT has limited stops, it's given signal priority, transit riders pay before they board, boarding is near level, stations have improved features, and has frequent all-day service that operates seven days a week. BRT is similar to the buses the University of Minnesota operates between the Saint Paul and Minneapolis campuses.

Gold Line

- Regina Kippel, Mounds/Maria Resident, asked if there needs to be new lanes constructed both ways for Gold Line to operate? *Yes, new bus-only lanes (and in certain cases emergency vehicles) need to be constructed.*

The CBAC reviewed a Gold Line project video made a year and a half ago that provides a high-level overview of how BRT will operate in the corridor. The CBAC will advise the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) on station design and how the vehicle operates through neighborhoods to reach these stations.

- Darrell Paulsen, Maplewood Station Resident, asked if Gold Line would stop right in front of the liquor store in Maplewood? *It will stop very close to the liquor store.*
- Regina Kippel asked if Gold Line will be a double bus? She mentioned concern that a large bus will not be filled up during the middle of the day. *The BRT could be an articulated bus with an accordion fold in the center. Vehicle size will be looked at further into the design.*
- Regina Kippel asked if Gold Line will be operating in mixed traffic from Landfall to Oakdale? *From Century to the station in Landfall, Gold Line is mixed traffic and at the Greenway Station it will run on shoulder, and then in a dedicated guideway again.*
- Darrell Paulsen asked if there will only be two wheelchair spots in the bus like the existing A Line bus or if there will be more? He mentioned challenges with the two wheelchair areas being taken, and when someone tries to get on with a stroller or wheelchair, they have to wait for the next bus. *Wheelchair seating will be determined when the vehicles are purchased. At this point into the future, they may have a different set up for wheelchair seating.*
- Rebecca Nelson, At-Large Ramsey County, asked how the option to route down Maria would work? *Would not be adding dedicated lanes in Maria because there is not enough room. On Maria Gold Line would operate in mixed traffic.*
- Darrel Paulsen asked why Maria is being considered? The team during the Gateway Corridor Study was also looking at Maria and Mounds. It's not ideal to go into a residential area. *The Mounds option hugs I-94 and there is a very tight space between the roadway and homes. The study team knew this back then, but now we know down to the foot. This is a question of can lanes on I-94 be narrowed can be narrowed and how close can you get to the neighborhood and homes.*

Lyssa Leitner led a brief overview of project partners and key staff, and then discussed funding. Through 2018 and 2019, the project has \$25 million for funding for the environmental work. Ramsey and Washington County are each contributing 34% of that funding, the state is covering 8% and the former Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) is contributing 24%.

- Darrel Paulsen asked if Washington and Ramsey County have more say in the project because they give more money? *The county boards vote how much they will spend, and that's how much Ramsey and Washington County agreed to. The Met Council and Metro Transit will operate the Gold Line, therefore, they have bigger say in how the Gold Line will operate and run its service.*

The overall project funding, anticipated to be \$420 million, 26.5% from both Ramsey and Washington County, 0.5% from the State, 1.5% from CTIB, and 45% is coming from the Federal New Starts program.

Gold Line is in the Project Development phase for the next two years. During this time, the team will be working on completing the environmental review and advancing the project design. At the end of this period, we will know what people will see when they look out their windows.

Gold Line has five key goals: 1) Improve mobility (ridership & travel time); 2) Be cost-effective & economically viable; 3) Support economic development; 4) Protect the natural environment; and 5) Preserve & protect quality of life. No decision will be made unless they align with these goals.

3. CBAC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Lyssa Leitner provided an overview of the Gold Line committee structure. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provides technical guidance to the CBAC and CMC. The CBAC advises the CMC on the project design. The CMC advises the Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County and Washington County on the design and construction of Gold Line. All technical design information will be brought to CBAC to receive input before any decision is made.

The draft CBAC Charter was handed out and discussed. CBAC's purpose is to serve as a voice for the community, advise the CMC, provide input on design (e.g. stations, operations, bike and pedestrian, bus lane locations, etc.), and serve as an information resource and liaison to the community.

Lyssa Leitner asked when monthly CBAC meetings should be held? While a date and time for regular meetings was not determined, it was agreed upon that it would be ideal to have a regular standing meeting each month with a set date and time. She mentioned that CBAC members are always welcome to schedule a time separately to meet with her or other members of the project staff if they cannot make the monthly meeting.

CBAC will have two co-chairs that give a corridor-wide perspective on the project. One co-chair will be a business representative and one will be a residential representative. The co-chairs are tasked with leading the committee through their tasks and ensuring charter compliance. Co-Chairs will identify agenda topics, and they will also serve on the CMC. CMC meetings are held from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. at the Metropolitan Council Chambers on the first Thursday of every month.

- Darrel Paulsen asked if the CBAC co-chairs can participate in the CMC meeting via phone or Skype? *Yes, CBAC co-chairs could participate via phone but the hope is that you could be in regular attendance at the meetings. It could be worked out so the co-chairs alternate each month for who goes to the CMC meeting.*

Those who are interested in becoming a co-chair may send a one-paragraph statement of interest to Liz Jones by June 15. Metropolitan Council Chair Alene Tchourumoff will select co-chairs and those people will be announced at the next CBAC meeting.

ACTION: Liz Jones will follow up via email so all CBAC members receive co-chair application information.

4. 2018-2019 LOOK AHEAD

Lyssa Leitner led the 2018-2019 look ahead discussion. During this time, the team will be working on advancing the project design and engineering, including items like the location of stations, how the bus lanes will fit with the existing road lane, bicyclist and pedestrian elements, and station sizing and

what goes on each platform. As these items become clearer, the project cost may be updated as well as the data to get a federal program rating.

CBAC's role is to provide input into the project design and engineering. This may include asking questions and providing feedback on design options, bringing your community perspective, and helping the technical team ensure information is clear to a wide range of audiences.

Lyssa Leitner asked the CBAC members what questions they have right now on the project, and what are the questions they are hearing from their neighbors and community members.

- Rebecca Nelson asked how the station location is determined? *Hubs and distance are key factors that help determine station location. Every station is approximately a half mile from the next, but it's also important to look at where people work and live. That's why the Sun Ray Station is less than half mile from the White Bear Ave Station.*
- Rebecca Nelson asked if there will there be coordination with local buses? *Yes.*
- Torin Gustafson, Maplewood Business, stated that parking is a big question for 3M. 3M does not want their employee parking lots to be taken as park-and-rides. *We have heard a lot from 3M and Helmo Station residents about concerns of "hide and riders." These are people who park in unauthorized places and then take transit. There will be continued coordination with 3M and other areas on parking.*
- Nancy Volkman, Helmo Station Resident, stated that since so many 3M employees will be taking BRT, there won't be as many parking spaces needed there.
- Chai Lee, Sun Ray Resident, asked how will the existing transit hub at Sun Ray be affected? Will that park and ride be impacted? Will the local bus stop be impacted? *The existing Sun Ray transit hub and local bus routes will stay and will supplement Gold Line. However, the express buses may decrease frequency and service.*
- Nancy Volkman asked where Gold Line will be stopping in Sun Ray? *Right in front of TJ Maxx. A block and a half away from the existing park-and-ride.*
- Doug Swalboski, Sun Ray Business, asked if the Gold Line station will be on public or Sun Ray property? *It will be purchased from the Sun Ray developers.*
- D'Angelos Svenkeson, At-Large Ramsey County, stated that he has heard people are concerned that we're creating a BRT around an ocean of parking lots. People will still need to drive and park to access and use transit.
- Nancy Volkman stated that she has heard residents concerned about parking in the local neighborhood around Helmo Station. There's open land around the neighborhood, and developers are interested in putting in condos and apartments which will also have impacts on parking in the neighborhood.
- Nancy Volkman also asked about the proposed new bridge along Helmo Ave that crosses I-94. *There will be a bridge across I-94. No entrance or exit ramps for other vehicles. The bridge will be located on the west side of Hom Furniture.*
- Steve Morris, Tamarack Station Business, wanted to know if there have been discussions with MnDOT about what the 494/694 interchange will look like. *Yes, flyover ramps for Gold Line have*

been discussed, but any changes wouldn't preclude any of the construction that will happen from 2019 to 2020.

- Steve Morris asked if the BRT bridges will be bus only? *Staff are looking at pedestrian and BRT only bridges. But the bridge may be for all modes at Helmo and Bielenberg.*
- Jessica Johnson, Etna Street Resident, stated that from Hwy 61 there is no pedestrian access to get north of I-94. *Staff are proposing a new pedestrian crossing 94 at Etna Street and Hwy 61.*
- Donald Gonser, Greenway Station Resident, stated the bridge over 694 connecting to Oakdale does not have pedestrian and bicycle access. *There is a proposed pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure on 4th Street Bridge and the Project is not looking at expanding the bridge.*
- Mary Brandt, Mounds/Maria Business, stated that she is concerned about the proposed BRT route taking the Kellogg Blvd bridge into downtown. She is concerned about safety and would like the bridge to be updated before the BRT route takes it. *Gold Line will run in mixed traffic on Kellogg Blvd bridge. The City of Saint Paul is completing some repairs this summer and they're looking at a more extensive bridge project later. Regardless, Kellogg is determined to be structurally sound by the City for vehicle traffic.*
- Mary Brandt asked what the detour route for Gold Line will be during Kellogg Blvd construction? *7th Street would be used during construction.*
- Jorge Samper Zelaya, White Bear Station Business, asked where the CBAC members can go to find more details on the project and the latest project information? *That will be answered under the next agenda topic.*
- D'Angelos Svenkeson said that he has heard people asking how much of the project is already final and what stations are still open for discussion.
- Donald Gonser asked if bus route 219 is going to continue service after Gold Line starts operating. *219 will stay, but schedule and frequency might change.*
- Donald Gonser asked how the CBAC will hear from the design and technical committees? *Technical staff will be brought in to present different topics during the CBAC meetings.*

Lyssa Leitner explained cost uncertainty by project phase. As we know more about design, the cost uncertainty goes down and we get closer to the actual cost.

The environmental review will also be completed in 2018 and 2019. The environmental review analyzes potential impacts and makes certain the project complies with federal and state laws regarding land use, parks, historic properties, safety, etc. From now until fall 2018, staff will identify what design elements need to be included in the environmental review process, update the design, and conduct public outreach to receive feedback on the design. From fall 2018 through summer 2019, staff will analyze design elements for environmental resource areas and there will be an agency technical and legal review. Then summer to fall 2019, there will be a public comment period on the environmental document, staff will respond to public comments, and an environmental decision will be made.

Liz Jones, Gold Line Community Outreach Coordinator, gave an overview of public engagement on the project. Before 2018, there were over 500 stakeholder meetings with community members, business owners, and elected officials in the corridor and project staff are preparing for more public

meetings and open houses this summer. Open houses will be held on July 17 and 18 in Saint Paul and Oakdale, and there will also be smaller targeted public meetings tailored to specific needs of each community group.

ACTION: Liz Jones will send information on the open house events to CBAC members.

She stated that Gold Line project staff will also be attending community events and fairs over the summer and asked CBAC members to let her or other project staff know if they have any ideas on additional outreach Gold Line could be conducting or community events that staff should attend. Comments from Gold Line project outreach will be reported back to CBAC.

- Doug Swalboski asked if project staff could create a poster to hang in businesses that has information on the project and the name of the CBAC member at that location who can speak more on the project?

ACTION: Liz Jones will speak with project staff about creating a project poster for CBAC members.

- Allison Hawley March, Greenway Station Resident, asked if there was somewhere CBAC members could go online to share tips for reaching communities? Could be a chat room or a Facebook group.

ACTION: Sophia Ginis, Metro Transit Community Outreach Coordinator, will look into an outreach forum or toolkit.

CBAC members have “homework” that they should complete before the next CBAC meeting, including:

1. Visit project website and review meeting materials
2. Have conversations with friends, neighbors, coworkers, employees, etc. about the Gold Line
3. Think about questions you or others have about the project and how we can provide better information
4. Submit a short paragraph if you are interested in being a co-chair

At the next CBAC meeting, members should be prepared to provide input on design options along the route and help the technical team design the outreach process for engagement events in July.

- Regina Rippel asked if CBAC members will receive more information on the design elements they will provide feedback on during the next meeting before the meeting date? *Staff will send out an agenda and meeting materials before the next CBAC meeting.*

5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Each CBAC meeting will have time for public comment. The public is encouraged to attend CBAC meetings. Comments should be limited to three minutes and remain respectful. Comments will be summarized in the CBAC meeting summary.

There were no public comments.

6. ADJOURN

Lyssa Leitner adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.



Gold Line

Meeting Materials Provided:

PowerPoint Presentation, May 29, 2018

Charter of the METRO Gold Line BRT Community and Business Advisory Committee (CBAC), May 29, 2018

Next CBAC Meeting: TBD