

**METRO Gold Line Community and Business Advisory Committee (CBAC)  
Harding High School; East Side Community Center  
1526 East Sixth Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106  
Notes for the July 26, 2018 Meeting**

Members Present: Allison Hawley March, Darrell Paulsen, Heidi Schumacher, Hussein Khatib, Mary Brandt, Nancy Volkman, Nyagatare Valens, Pat Cosgrove, Regina Rippel, Steve Morris, Tom Giannetti

Members Absent: Chai Lee, D'Angelos Svenkeson, Donald Gonser, Doug Swalboski, Ernesto Ortiz-Diaz, Jessica Johnson, Jorge Samper Zelaya, Joseph Skeen, Koua Lee, Molly Gagan-Vlaisavljevich, Rebecca Nelson, Reva Jones-Simmons, Richard Kramer, Robert Crawford, Torin Gustafson

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Steve Morris, Business Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. and led introductions around the room.

He informed the Community and Business Advisory Committee (CBAC) members in attendance that the goal of today's meeting is to get through a technical walkthrough of the entire METRO Gold Line. Because of this, conversations and discussions may be limited for the sake of completing the route. Committee members can follow up with project staff offline if they have additional questions.

**2. JUNE 28 FOLLOW UP**

Hally Turner, Interim Gold Line Deputy Project Manager, led a brief follow up from last month's CBAC meeting to respond to questions that could not be answered during the meeting, including questions about property assessments and the initial Gold Line route selection process.

Hally Turner noted since the CBAC members who asked those questions are not in attendance today, she will follow up with the group about the responses via email.

**3. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Liz Jones, Gold Line Community Outreach Coordinator, led a brief overview of the public engagement the Gold Line project office conducted in the last month, including two open houses, two neighborhood meetings, and door-knocking in impacted neighborhoods. She noted that at the next CBAC meeting, project staff will go into a deeper dive of the public feedback received at the recent events and pop ups.

At the Hudson Road neighborhood meeting, attendees tended to prefer mixed traffic lanes over bus-only lanes, and at the White Bear Avenue neighborhood meeting, the attendees generally preferred a Hazel Street station more than a Van Dyke Street station. On Tuesday, July 31, there will be another neighborhood meeting for the Mounds Boulevard and Maria Avenue station options. CBAC members are welcome to attend the upcoming neighborhood meeting.

- Darrell Paulsen, Community Co-Chair, stated that the caliber of feedback received at the open houses is a testament to the project staff's commitment to meaningful engagement with the Gold

Line community. He noted that there will always be vocal opponents but most people who attended were interested in diving deeper into the issues and opportunities in the Gold Line corridor.

- Steve Morris noted that there were not a lot of “passive” attendees. Those who attended the open houses and neighborhood meetings have had great questions and feedback.

Hally Turner asked if CBAC members have any recommendations for where project staff should be next. For example, staff could have a pop up at a grocery store or table at a community event. The next round of open houses is not planned until next year, but project staff want to keep Gold Line in the community’s attention.

CBAC members did not provide specific recommendations during the meeting and were informed that they can email or call project staff to let them know of any upcoming engagement opportunities.

Liz Jones gave an update on upcoming engagement activities, including: giving a presentation to the District 1 Land Use Committee on August 6; attending corridor block parties on August 7 for National Night Out; tabling the August 9 Saint Paul Police Safe Summer Nights cookout at Conway Recreation Center; and tabling during a fresh food distribution at Dayton’s Bluff Elementary on August 14.

#### 4. ROUTE WALKTHROUGH

Hally Turner and Joe Klein, Gold Line Associate Planner, led the route walkthrough. They began the route walkthrough discussion with an overview of legend symbols on the aerial corridor maps. Anywhere there is a color overlay on the map (not the aerial image) is where construction is anticipated. The solid pink lines are the where Gold Line will have bus-only lanes. Sometimes the lanes will be curbside running, center running, or running both lanes on one side of the roadway. The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) requires that at least fifty-percent of the route is dedicated.

The pink and gray lines are lanes for mixed traffic. Station platforms are the yellow rectangles. Sidewalks are the white lines. The gray roadway sections are places where the project expects to realign ramps or complete road construction. The orange sections mark a grade separation. These could be bridges or underpasses. The pink dashed lines are noise walls. The dark gray boxes are park-and-rides. The circles in the intersections are traffic signals. The black circles are existing traffic signals and the green and red circles are new signals.

- Pat Cosgrove, Helmo Avenue Business, asked why fifty-percent of the transitway needs to be dedicated? Is it a category or funding requirement? *Both. At least fifty-percent of the Gold Line transitway needs to be dedicated in order to receive funding from the FTA New Starts program or funding category.*

The aerial map analysis started at the Woodbury Theatre station. Gold Line would preserve the existing park-and-ride at the Woodbury Theatre, but there is a proposed new park-and-ride ramp and station at the end of the route.

- Nancy Volkman, Helmo Avenue Resident, asked what are the buildings between the existing park-and-ride and the proposed park-and-ride? *That is an apartment complex.*

## Gold Line

- A community member in attendance at the CBAC meeting asked how people who lived in the apartment complex will turn on or off Guider Drive? *Gold Line is preserving two lanes in the center for traffic. There will be painting or striping to mark the bus-only lanes. There will not be a physical barrier or curb to keep cars from crossing over the bus-only lanes.*
- Nancy Volkman asked if there would be a station at the Woodbury Theatre and at the new park-and-ride? *Correct, project staff are proposing this, but the Woodbury Theatre Station at the intersection of Guider Drive and Queens Drive would remain the main stop.*

Buses will turn left onto Bielenberg Drive. Gold Line is proposing a new traffic signal at the Bielenberg Drive and Guider Drive intersection for the buses to transition from a dedicated guideway to mixed traffic at Tamarack Nature Reserve. On Bielenberg Drive, buses transition back to dedicated transitway with center running lanes. The city is planning to install a traffic signal at the Nature Path intersection in advance of Gold Line. The Tamarack Road Station is near the north end Bielenberg Drive access to Tamarack Hills shopping center. There will be a new traffic signal at this intersection and the stations will be located on the far side of the intersection, past the stop light so buses aren't stopped for a long time on one side of the traffic light.

- Pat Cosgrove asked what kind of signal priority technology will be used along the Gold Line route? *In different places along the route, project staff are exploring different levels of signal priority. Bus rapid transit (BRT) buses in the Twin Cities now mostly use shortened red light or extended green light to keep on schedule. Some signals may allow buses to go before other vehicles are allowed to proceed.*
- Nancy Volkman asked if there was already a traffic signal at the intersection of Tamarack Road and Bielenberg Drive? *There is already a traffic signal at Tamarack Road and Bielenberg Drive. The proposed Tamarack Road Station that will have a new traffic signal is north of the Tamarack Road and Bielenberg Drive intersection.*

There are more proposed traffic signals at intersections on Bielenberg Drive as the bus travels north to Helmo Avenue.

- Steve Morris asked what are the dotted lines on the side of the roadway? *The lines mark the right-of-way. Bielenberg Drive will be slightly widened during construction, but it will remain in the existing right-of-way.*

The curve at Bielenberg Drive and Hudson Road will have a new traffic signal. Buses will go over the new Bielenberg Drive and Helmo Avenue bridge. There is expected to be one lane each direction for buses, one lane each direction for traffic, and a bike and pedestrian trail on the bridge.

- Pat Cosgrove asked if Gold Line project staff are preparing BRT infrastructure, like the Bielenberg Drive and Helmo Avenue bridge, for the potential that the line is converted to rail in the future? *If Gold Line ever is converted to rail, infrastructure would be retrofitted. BRT is planned to fit the community until 2040 and well beyond. It's also rare to transition BRT lines to light rail. More than likely, Gold Line would just add more buses or larger buses to the route if ridership grows beyond what is anticipated.*
- Steve Morris noted that Woodbury Leadership Academy is going into the old Globe University building on Hudson Road. 600 to 800 people are expected to travel to and from there every weekday in the morning and afternoon. *The former Hartford building at 500 Bielenberg is also*

## Gold Line

*near the Bielenberg Drive and Hudson Road intersection, and that building has many workers. Project staff are preparing for traffic mitigation in this area. For example, we can time traffic signals at the Bielenberg Drive and Hudson Road intersection to ease traffic back-ups in the morning and evening as people go to and from work and school.*

- Heidi Schumacher, Woodbury Theater Resident, asked if the Woodbury Leadership Academy is a charter school? *Yes, it's grades K-8.*

On the Bielenberg Drive and Helmo Avenue bridge, buses will be center running and then move to side running after the bridge. There will be a traffic signal where the southbound Helmo Avenue lane and the bus-only lanes cross that will help buses transition from center running to side running. The southbound Helmo Avenue traffic will only be stopped if a bus is coming up to the intersection.

Otherwise, it will always rest in green. The same goes for eastbound 4th Street.

- Nancy Volkman asked if the project will do anything to the Helmo Avenue and 4th Street four-way stop intersection? Do project staff not expect a lot of traffic through this intersection? *Staff are looking at traffic information, but we don't have enough details to share anything or make any conclusions. There could be different traffic control measures at this intersection, but those are not known yet.*

The blue line near the Helmo Avenue park-and-ride is a retaining wall. The project considered the corner lot at the Helmo Avenue and 4th Street intersection for the park-and-ride but placing it near the bridge made more sense because the corner lot is developable.

- Steve Morris asked what building is currently at the location of the Helmo Avenue park-and-ride? *The building is owned by Crossroads. The property owners are aware this project is occurring and we're working with them to relocate businesses in their building. Crossroads also owns the building at Tanners Lake that will be a full property take.*

Gold Line will run in mixed traffic from Hudson Boulevard to Hadley Avenue on 4th Street.

- Nancy Volkman asked if there are any stops planned along 4th Street or Hadley Avenue? *No, but there could be a future stop. Depending upon what goes into the parcel south of 4th Street. Our design does not prevent us from adding a stop.*

From Hadley Avenue, buses will be running curbside and traffic will run in the center. A center turn lane will be added to allow vehicles to turn onto side streets or businesses. At the Greenway Avenue Station, cross walks will be built behind the station, so pedestrians don't have to cross in front of the bus. There could be a median in the center of the eastbound and westbound lanes to give pedestrians a refuge as they cross traffic.

MnDOT is considering a flyover ramp from I-494 to westbound I-94; the planned Gold Line guideway is preserving space for the potential future flyover to be constructed.

- Regina Rippel, Mounds Boulevard Resident, asked if there will be any designated parking at the Greenway Avenue station? *No, the only park-and-rides will be at Union Depot, Sun Ray, Helmo Avenue, and Woodbury Theatre Stations.*

There is a new sidewalk connection proposed between Greenway Avenue and Dellwood Lane. The blue and white hatched sidewalk is a potential pedestrian connection, but we are looking to see if there is a solution for the stretch. To put in sidewalks in this section there are some major issues the

## Gold Line

project needs to resolve, including; environmental impacts to Tanners Lake, shrink lane widths and roadway for room to put in the sidewalks, and this is not a prime connection for residents. People going to businesses along Century Avenue are more likely to use the Maplewood Station since it is closer; however, there are benefits to corridor-wide pedestrian connections.

- Tom Giannetti, Greenway Avenue Business, asked if there is a difference between the red hatched lines and the gray and red hatched lines? *The gray shows where there will be construction. At the red hatched lines, we expect that there will just be restriping.*
- Tom Giannetti said it would be nice to have a pedestrian sidewalk between Dellwood Lane and Century Avenue, but his business needs to have parking. He asked who will determine if the sidewalk is built? *The Gold Line project is not completely certain there is room on this stretch to fit the sidewalk, but the City of Oakdale has shown a strong preference for sidewalks. There are strong opinions on both sides. The first step is to see if the trail can fit in with the design and the station area planning consultants think we will be able to build a 10-foot trail.*
- Nancy Volkman asked if the project will be filling in the lake to make more room for the trail and roadway? *No, we can fit in two traffic lanes and if there is space available we can add a trail. The project does not want to impact the lake. No retaining wall between the lake and roadway or trail is expected.*
- Tom Giannetti asked if access to businesses will be maintained during construction? *There will be staging to maintain traffic flow and access on Hudson Road.*
- Allison Hawley March, Greenway Avenue Resident, asked what the plan is for the existing 219 bus route? Will those taking the 219 be able to transfer onto Gold Line? *We don't have that information yet. Metro Transit is looking at the transit connections corridor-wide and we'll have more information on what 219 and other routes will look like later.*

Gold Line will run in mixed traffic around Tanners Lake and then go into bus-only lanes at Century Avenue on the northside of Hudson Road. From Century Avenue to Earl Street, there are no traffic signals so the bus will be able to move quite quickly. The two white lines of restored trail are privately owned 3M trails that Gold Line will restore due to any anticipated construction impacts.

There will be a grade separated bridge over McKnight Road. There are a couple of options the project staff are considering to get pedestrians off or on the McKnight Road bridge, including a helix ramp or touch down. Neither Saint Paul nor Maplewood have a preference. We are vetting options along with the environmental information. The McKnight Road bridge is expected to have visual impacts because of the midcentury modern architecture of the 3M campus.

- Nancy Volkman asked if there will be any construction on McKnight Road or Century Avenue? *No, McKnight Road and Century Avenue will not be impacted.*
- Pat Cosgrove noted that the Maplewood Station is not a very convenient stop to access 3M. *For security purposes, 3M wants the stop here because the main door from this station has secure access. There are also two 3M buses that circulate the campus, so employees can hop on one of those to get closer to their building.*
- Pat Cosgrove asked if other bus routes will be able to use Gold Line's dedicated bus lanes? *Yes, we'll have more information on that as the walkthrough gets to Sun Ray.*



## Gold Line

At Sun Ray, we don't expect any impacts to TJ Maxx, but there will be impacts to mall parking spots. There will be a crossover station at Sun Ray. The Twin Cities has a couple of these crossover stations on other METRO lines.

- Steve Morris asked if the Sun Ray Station will be at grade? *Yes.*
- Steve Morris asked if there has been discussion about the Sun Ray pedestrian crossing to the park-and-ride? He noted that this is a busy area, there are bad sight lines, and there is no signalized intersection. *Gold Line is looking at pedestrian options in this area. We'll continue looking at how to prevent issues at Pedersen Street.*

There is a potential park-and-ride behind Sun Ray. Project staff are looking at how many stalls are needed. Surface parking may still be used at this spot.

- Heidi Schumacher asked if Gold Line will run mostly during rush hour or all day? *It'll run all day from about 5 a.m. to midnight and it'll have a frequency of about every 10-15 minutes. This may change slightly in the evenings and for weekends and holidays.*

There are a couple of express buses that currently travel from Sun Ray. Express buses will be able to use the Gold Line bus-only lanes.

- Darrell Paulsen noted that at the open house he heard some people who are concerned about making certain the bus-only lanes are clearly marked that other traffic cannot use these lanes. *The project team is working on the necessary traffic control measures for Gold Line.*
- Steve Morris asked if bus-only lanes are not just for Gold Line? *Correct, only a few routes will be able to use the dedicated lanes though because their route already follows the Gold Line corridor.*
- Darrell Paulsen asked if MVTA buses can use the dedicated lanes? *Yes, can be coach buses however this station is not part of MVTA's service area and coach buses would likely be operated by Metro Transit. The 294 to Stillwater and the 350 to Maplewood could use the bus-only lanes.*

There will be an underpass constructed at Ruth Street. There will be a reconstruction of the westbound I-94 ramp to put in the underpass. White Bear Avenue has two potential station locations at either Van Dyke Street or Hazel Street. There is no technical recommendation, so we're listening to community feedback. In general, we've heard a preference for Hazel Street because it's closer to residences and has more options for development.

There will be another underpass at White Bear Avenue. Gold Line transitions back to mixed traffic here. Hudson Road is a low volume road and is not expected to slow down the Gold Line bus.

Where Hudson Road and Old Hudson Road meet, Gold Line transitions back to dedicated lanes. Gold Line will pass over Etna Street on a new bridge. The City is expecting redevelopment in this area and the project team is considering potential pedestrian connections south of I-94.

- Hussein Khatib, Etna Street Business, asked if the Gold Line project will be doing construction on the westbound I-94 ramp to Etna Street? *There will be some reconstruction of the ramp from northbound Highway 61 to westbound I-94 ramp. The bridge structure of the ramp will not be impacted.*
- Hussein Khatib asked what are the black lines in some intersections? *Crosswalks that the project will be restriping.*

- Steve Morris noted that he has heard concerns from the community about putting in crosswalks and sidewalks around the Etna Street and I-94 intersection since there is a lot of fast moving traffic going on or coming off the freeway.

Gold Line will continue in dedicated lanes and will pass on a bridge over Johnson Parkway. Bridge will be at a similar grade as I-94.

At the Earl Street Station, the project will put in a signalized intersection. The community provided feedback that there is a stronger preference to maintain on-street parking with one-way traffic than have two-way traffic on Hudson Road. The Earl Street bridge is in orange because we're anticipating impacts to the bridge during construction. We are expecting to complete a re-decking. Not a reconstruction of the bridge.

Gold Line is weighing options on Mounds Boulevard or Maria Avenue Station location. The feedback we've heard from the community so far is a preference for the Mounds Boulevard Station. For this option, the dedicated guideway would continue parallel to the westbound I-94 exit ramp and there's more visibility at the station, but the Mounds Boulevard would station require more construction because we would need to add bus lanes and reconstruct the I-94 ramp. Gold Line would then run in mixed traffic over the Kellogg Boulevard bridge.

- Pat Cosgrove asked if there are any plans to fix issues on the Kellogg Boulevard bridge? *There are currently no funded plans from the City or County to work on the bridge. The Kellogg Boulevard bridge is deemed safe for Gold Line buses and other vehicle traffic.*
- Regina Rippel asked who decides the Mounds Boulevard and Maria Avenue station location? *A neighborhood meeting on the station location is being held on July 31 and we'll collect feedback from residents about their preferences. We're also continuing discussions with the City of Saint Paul to get their station location preference. However, we're carrying both options to the environmental analysis so there is not a rush to decide station location now.*
- Regina Rippel said she uses Mounds Boulevard a lot and it is a busy, dangerous intersection for pedestrians and cars. Traffic would get backed-up even more than it already is and there is no street parking for transit users. She prefers a Maria Avenue station. *Saint Paul Councilmember Jane Prince and Gold Line staff members are out door-knocking tonight in the Mounds Boulevard and Maria Avenue neighborhood. We're hoping to hear good feedback from the community and then the City can give Gold Line some policy guidance.*

The bus continues in mixed traffic from the Union Depot. It has stops at Sibley Street and Wacouta Street, Minnesota Street and Cedar Street, Hamm Plaza and Rice Park, and the terminus is near the transit center on Smith Avenue. This transit center is mostly an operator layover facility. It will not have public parking.

## 5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

## 6. ADJOURN

Hally Turner adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

**Meeting Materials Provided:**



## *Gold Line*

Meeting Agenda, July 26, 2018

Alignment Roll Plots

**Next Meeting:** August 23 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at Harding High School in the East Side Learning Hub.