

Meeting Minutes: Community and Business Advisory Committee

Date: 7/7/2022
Location: Virtual, Metro Transit Project Offices

Attendance

- Liz Jones
 - Craig Lamothe
 - Colin Owens
 - Jim Gersema
 - Beth Bartz
 - Leila Bunge
 - Sara Pflaum
 - Steve Heckler
 - Tong Thao
 - Brent Peterson
 - Carol McFarlane
 - Dale Grambush
 - Darrell Paulsen
 - Debra Canfield
 - Jack Byers
 - Joan Ballanger
 - John Slade
 - Don Mullin
 - Katherine Knudsen
 - Mary Buerkle
 - Laurie Malone
 - Zach Mensinger
 - Paul Bolstad
 - Rebecca Nelson
 - Regina Rippel
 - Shelly Hauge
 - Abby Alldaffer
 - Ianni Houmas
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Meeting Notes

Presentation – Liz update on project and outlined CBAC Charter

Questions / Comments

John – request to send out a formal contact list

Darrell - Sent out the application so should be public information, but Liz clarified the contact info is only used internally with project staff but can connect to opt-in/opt out

Presentation – Craig overviews the Purple Line project (Funding, Route features, Public Engagement, Station Area Planning)

Questions / Comments

Mary – does environmental assessment include traffic flow? Craig responded and said traffic is a part of that. Is under environmental tab in site, Liz to follow up.

Laurie – Were these studies done pre-covid? Craig said review was in 2020 with data from 2019, the data is constantly updated and is reviewed on annual basis on ridership and capital costs. Once we complete 30% design (60, 90, 100) refresh capital costs estimate.

John– Environmental justice, making sure everyone is served; was this a part of the Purple Line? It is its own chapter in environmental doc.

Carol – went to Rush City, what happened? Is it going to WBL? Craig mentioned there were many modes reviewed for this project but over time certain items were discarded over a 20 year period and got shorter and more targeted based on feedback. June meeting WBL suspended services.

Katherine – Will we get more information about the route modification study and can we connect with them? Craig mentioned Jim will fill in and Beth Bartz is in charge of the RMS process.

Presentation – Back to Liz for the WBL City Council Actions

Questions / Comments

Presentation – To Jim for Route Modifications

Questions/ Comments

Carol – Concerns about existing transit service the 219 going to Century College. Jim responded connecting with city stakeholders for possible routes and make sure they are consistent with Purpose and Need and the route to Century falls under that study.

Mary – concerns about safety at Buerkle crosswalk and TCO.

Carol – Will there be a transit bridge over 694? Jim, yes there will be. Concerns about the usage of the bus, only six cars on park and ride. Jim mentioned that ridership is trending up and seeing more and more demand. This is a long-term investment and are conducting studies to determine what that it will look like in the long term.

Shelly – Is there any kind of plan for getting people across 61 from east to west? 700 apartments developing in the area. Jim says the refinement is still too early for that. Focused on West side and needing to do more technical evaluation. Was there a consideration for shorter buses? Sees the buses and not having many people in them. Jim mentioned space for riders, bus driver shortage, do we need more buses for peak usage? People's tolerance for being closer together is more prevalent post-COVID, is being thought of and discussed as project moves on.

Mary – Does endpoint option two have a grocery store in it? Jim and group mentioned there is a Costco, Cub Foods and an Aldi.

Katherine – Does any bus route currently serve WBL? Jim, currently no, but there have been routes (265) used to go up there due to pandemic and rider shortage.

John – wonderful how many options are evaluated, 92 year old ex teacher looking forward to going to Vikings game. What are the ways we can move beyond the political barriers in WBL. Concerns about loss of station due to a 72-person vote. Craig - there are options to serve WBL like the 219 and connects college to St. Paul and Sun Ray. There may still be opportunities to serve the community. How do we support the area with existing bus service?

John – concerns about funding issues with county not funding purple line connector. Craig mentioned there will be comprehensive studies on the current routes.

Carol - Line to WBL was reduced due to low ridership.

Katherine - mentioned gas prices are high and might change how well the line is received by officials. Still very important to add to Purple Line.

Abby – No background in Purple Line, does seem "an awful waste of money" for changing the route after 20 years of approval and being thrown out the window based on one Council vote. Avid believers in transit.

Carol – When are we going to fully fund Metro Mobility and Transit Link? Craig redirected to the scope of the project. Liz will follow up with materials.

Presentation – Liz – Upcoming public comment period

Questions / Comments

Shelly – Will PL Project Staff provide materials for engaging the community? Liz mentioned are willing to provide resources to share and communicate to the broader public, can attend separate events and look to CBAC members for community outreach

Action Items

- Send out a contact list of CBAC members to the group (opt in/opt out)
- Put a callout for co-chairs of the CBAC
- Send out a Doodle Poll for meeting options in August
- Send Mary Buerkle site with environmental study. Potentially to the whole group.
- Liz to follow up with resources about Metro Mobility to Transit Link for Carol
- Liz to follow up with details to communicate ideas and get feedback on how to engage communities in public comment period.