

Meeting Minutes: Community and Business Advisory Committee

Date: 05/22/2023
Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendance

- John Slade
 - Debra Canfield
 - Joan Ballanger
 - Darrell Paulsen
 - Craig Lamothe
 - Stephen Smith
 - Sara Pflaum
 - Colin Owens
 - Galen Ryan
 - Steve Heckler
 - Zachary Mensinger
 - Brent Peterson
 - Ian R. Buck
 - Ianni Houmas
 - Mary Buerkle
 - Dale Grambush
 - Paul Bolstad
 - Rebecca Nelson
 - Laurie Malone
 - Jack Byers
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Meeting Notes

Colin presented the meeting agenda and led introductions.

Update on Arcade Station Option

Feedback from public engagement indicated that Arcade A is the preferred option. Arcade B and C have too many safety and proximity concerns. Project staff introduced “Arcade A2” to meet community preference and advance the engineering of the guideway. An evaluation summary and station concept plans are included in the presentation slides.

Update on RMS Phase I & Phase II

Stephen Smith and Craig Lamothe presented on the RMS Phase I and the RMS Phase II. Phase I evaluated options for a new northern endpoint after the City of White Bear Lake passed a formal resolution, opposing the Project. Endpoint options include I-35 and County Rd E Park & Ride in Vadnais Heights (End Point 1), the Maplewood Mall Transit Center (End Point 2), and Century College on the boarder of White Bear Lake and Mahtomedi (End Point 3).

Project staff evaluated End Point options, informed by the Arcade Station option considerations, to determine which end points and routes would be eligible for federal funding. The evaluation included modifying project elements to increase the ratings for funding eligibility. RMS Phase I determined that

End Point 2, route options 2C and 2D were the only eligible options. 2C and 2D differ by how they serve St. John's Hospital.

Craig Lamothe presented on RMS Phase II. RMS Phase II will evaluate a route option to the Maplewood Mall area via Maryland Avenue and White Bear Avenue instead of using the Bruce Vento Trail corridor north of Maryland Avenue. This next phase is a response to ongoing engagement with the City of Maplewood and an interest from Ramsey County in reevaluating a route along White Bear Avenue. The Project's CMC concurred with the Phase II approach in April 2023. The goal of this next phase is to develop the new routing alternative up to a level of detail sufficient for a comparison to the Bruce Vento Trail route. This phase could consider options to reach Vadnais Heights or Century College. RMS Phase II will end with a comparison of an advance White Bear Avenue route to the Bruce Vento Trail route to determine which option is best for area residents and businesses. RMS Phase II will also end with a recommendation on the northern endpoint.

Project staff will present the work plan from Phase II, including schedule and key committee actions, at the June CBAC meeting. A summary of RMS Phase I and Phase II is provided in the presentation slides.

Community Engagement Update

Colin Owens presented on recent and upcoming public engagement activities, including a preview of initial feedback.

Membership Update

Colin Owens presented a membership update: as the alignment changes, committee members have the option to leave the committee if they would like; all are welcome to stay.

Question and Answer

John Slade – talked about upcoming engagement and advocated for continued participation from White Bear Lake folks.

Ianni Houmas – What is the project timeline?

Craig – will present a schedule next month. This next phase will take over a year, looking for station location concurrence in the late fall. Need to update project evaluation next spring.

Dale – How much room is on Maryland Avenue, will that have dedicated lanes?

Craig – don't know yet, project will be evaluating corridor concepts.

Ianni – How is the A2 option cheaper than the others with the bridge.

Craig/Sarah – A1 is costly for bridge tie in and shifting Phalen Boulevard. A2 is about half the cost despite the bridge. Siting station close to activity and lower cost create a win-win.

Ian – Was an elevator consider for Arcade B.

Craig – that was the initial vision but moved to Arcade A in response to community safety/activity concerns. There are additional maintenance issues with elevators

Brent – provided feedback on potential drawbacks from reducing traffic lanes on White Bear Avenue and Maryland Avenue. Don't try to combine with/replace planned aBRT lines

Jack – concern about Wells retaining wall hiding the station and limiting economic “vibrancy” for Arcade Station at Neid.

Joan – concern about adding more buses to White Bear Avenue, need more eastward connections, need more traffic calming interventions

Darrell – only Highway 169 BRT is specifically called out in transportation omnibus funding

Presentation of next steps and next meeting

Joan mentioned Monday mornings don't work for them. Doodle poll format doesn't work well either.

Action Items

- Schedule next CBAC meeting