

## Meeting Minutes: Community and Business Advisory Committee

**Date:** 2/23/2024

**Location:** Hybrid: Metro Square & Microsoft Teams

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### Attendance – (19) total attendees

- Jack Byers
  - Rebecca Nelson
  - John Slade
  - Don Mullin
  - Debra Canfield
  - Laurie Malone
  - Ian R. Buck
  - Joan Ballanger
  - Ianni Houmas
  - Carol McFarlane
  - Torin Gustafson
  - Patrick Horan
  - Felicia Anderson
  - Kevin Kelly
  - Craig Lamothe
  - Stephen Smith
  - Sara Pflaum
  - Colin Owens
  - Leila Bunge
  - Emilee Roschen
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### Meeting Notes

#### Project Update

Craig Lamothe gave an overview of the Federal Capital Grant Program. Craig shared high-level information about ridership, improvements that BRT would bring to the user experience, and project budget regarding this project.

John Slade asked about the budget. Craig responded that where the project is today, they are not supposed to ask the FTA to rate the project yet. The project team is attempting to project what they may receive for a rating from the FTA but there are pieces to the rating that the project team is still working on. Craig added that the project may need to revisit some of the scope. Stephen Smith added that project costs that change over time may be influenced by discovery of new things. The FTA conducts a risk assessment about the project – assessing the schedule and amount of contingency for risky items in the project’s scope.

Patrick Horan asked about clarification on the populations (BIPOC) that were projected to use the mass transit. Craig responded that BIPOC stands for Black Indigenous People of Color, and 29% of the metropolitan population today and are 55% of who are riding transit today. Patrick asked if there’s a pattern in the amount of people going to work today and if there are projections of how that may evolve.

Stephen responded that projections are difficult since things are changing. Craig added that there's a difference in the days of the week – predominantly flat throughout the week.

Patrick asked if the proposed service would vary/flux with the demand intervals or if it would be a constant service. Craig responded that the final service plan isn't set in place but ultimately, the project wants to provide service level for what the demand is. The Route 54 wouldn't duplicate the Purple Line, and Purple Line would have service on Sundays, unlike the Route 54.

Patrick asked if there would be notifications to the public when construction takes place so people can avoid delay. Craig responded that the project team would continue outreach and engagement throughout the project. Things will look different during design and construction. There would be a lot of material to keep people updated.

Patrick asked about accessibility on the buses. Craig responded that BRT buses look like buses on the exterior, but they are laid out differently on the interior – more standing room. Stephen added that the stations are designed to be at a height so the buses wouldn't have to deploy a ramp every time – be at a level so it's easier to board.

Patrick noted that there's a large church on the route going toward North Saint Paul and that there would likely be a number of people who would want to take a bus.

Stephen shared that the project team plans to take ridership and cost information out to present to the public soon. Stephen reviewed the project schedule and added that they will also present the different options that are being studied. The goal is to get community feedback and take the project recommendation to the CMC in May. There are four options right now but want to get down to one. Stephen shared that community engagement will run from March to April and that the goal is to explain how the project got to where it is, review evaluation details, and share information to be able to talk about the similarities and differences between the options. Stephen also shared the overall project schedule – currently in the Project Development Phase and hoping to get to a final alignment by September 2024.

## **Engagement update**

Colin Owens shared an overview of recent engagement activities and events in the corridor, including visits to high-rise developments, surveys with M Health Fairview Hospital, and pop-ups where people use transportation. Colin shared upcoming comment periods, some materials that will be shared during engagement events, and upcoming activities.

## **Additional Q&A**

John Slade said he was part of the council member meeting and there were questions regarding local business owners being charged for assessments. Sara Pflaum responded that if the city of Saint Paul is doing construction, even if it's on a county road, they would likely assess. The project team has checked with both Saint Paul and Ramsey County and both parties said there would not be assessments. There could potentially be charges for sewer or water connections that are on business private properties when

utility replacements take place, but that's handled outside of the project. Ramsey County has a separate funding source for transit projects. Craig shared an example of when it happened during the Central Corridor project. Sara added that this project is loosely associated with the Robert Street construction project because there will be a station there but that's a typical Saint Paul project and they will assess properties – assume it'll be a similar process for the Jackson Street project.

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## Action Items