

METRO Purple Line BRT Corridor Management Committee
Notes for the June 6, 2024 Meeting
Held Virtual through Webex

MEMBERS PRESENT: Victoria Reinhardt, Mai Chong Xiong, Nikki Villavicencio, Ianni Houmas, Nick Thompson, Laurie Malone, Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Ploua Yang, Scott McCune, Luke Schlegel, Bill Walsh

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chair Zelle, Chai Lee, Gail Cederberg, Lesley Kandaras, Khani Sahebjam

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT: Stephen Smith, Sarah, Pflaum, Liz Jones, Emma Lucken, Kathleen Murphy, Nat Graham, Liz Sund

1. WELCOME (CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL)

Vice Chair Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioner called the meeting of the METRO Purple Line BRT Corridor Management Committee (CMC) to order at 1:05 PM on June 6, 2024. Vice Chair Reinhardt welcomed everyone and reviewed housekeeping rules for virtual meetings; and noted the Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) website <https://www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project> where the meeting agenda and presentation can be downloaded, and the recording of the meeting can be viewed.

Commissioner Reinhardt noted that the minutes from the April 4, 2024, CMC have been circulated. If there are any editing requests, please communicate them to Chair Zelle or Craig Lamothe, Project Manager, Metropolitan Council before the finalization and post them on the project's website.

2. Community & Business Advisory Committee Report

Ianni Houmas, Co-Chair of the Community and Business Advisory Committee (CBAC), provided an update from the May 24, 2024, CBAC meeting. He reported that the CBAC discussed design options for St. Paul and Maplewood, including conversations regarding roadway space and improving sidewalk gaps, traffic delay analysis for St. Paul and Maplewood sections of the White Bear Ave corridor, evaluation criteria, and ways to provide feedback during the comment period.

3. Recent and Upcoming Outreach & Engagement Activities

Liz Jones, Community Outreach and Engagement, Metro Transit, provided an overview of the current public comment period. She updated everyone on recent and upcoming events and meetings, the progress of engaging with potentially affected properties, and shared initial feedback from the public comment period.

4. Arcade Street Station Update

Sara Pflaum, Engineering and Design Manager, Metro Transit, provided an update on the Arcade Street Station current and upcoming activities. She provided an overview of the current

preliminary design (Option A2), and visualizations of what the Arcade Street Station would look like.

Emma Lucken, Station Area Planning Lead, summarized the current and upcoming activities associated with the Arcade Street Station Area Site Redevelopment Feasibility Study. The analysis will determine the public investment required and explore a potential public-private partnership for acquiring the necessary parcels for an alternative alignment of Neid Ln. In mid-July we'll engage with the property owner to review A2, Neid Ln. extension to Phalen Blvd., and Neid Ln. extension with roundabout options, and discuss potential site redevelopment.

Commissioner Reinhardt, stated over the last several years, first under County and now under Council leadership, a lot of effort has gone into exploring alternative station locations in an attempt to get station platforms at the Arcade and Neid intersection. This is a very challenging area. The location Sara spoke to is the only location we are moving forward with unless the results of the study Emma spoke to open the possibility of an attainable public-private partnership. In which case, we would carry forward both station locations through the design and environmental processes while attempting to firm up the public-private partnership. Only one location can be included in the construction bidding documents in late 2026. That is the real deadline.

5. Bruce Vento Regional Trail Colocation vs. White Bear Avenue Corridor: Differentiating Criteria Comparison

Stephen Smith, Deputy Project Manager, Metro Transit, provided a high-level comparison between the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Colocation route alternative and the White Bear Ave corridor route alternative.

White Bear Ave corridor has more stations and key destinations and a different demographic profile compared to Bruce Vento Trail corridor. Other factors such as Land Use, transit operations, ridership, property impacts, environmental, and cost were also discussed. Both corridors are eligible for Small Starts under current FTA guidance.

Commissioner Xiong asked if Route 54 has a similar runtime. Stephen will send runtime information for Route 54.

6. Narrowed Center Running Option in St. Paul

Sara Pflaum, Engineering and Design Manager, Metro Transit, provided the history of the center running option in St. Paul and mentioned it was not recommended for Tier 2 evaluation. The narrow center running option in St. Paul was reconsidered based on community advocacy for increased pedestrian safety and improved transit capacity. The option of center running for the corridor and its benefits, including reduced property impacts and improved traffic operations, were discussed.

Sara presented cross sections and layouts showing the dimensions and design of the center platform stations. Some intersections posed challenges for station placement, leading to proposed adjustments to maintain traffic flow and avoid property condemnation.

Stephen Smith, Deputy Project Manager, Metro Transit, presented evaluation criteria focusing on pedestrian access, property impacts, station access, traffic operations, and transit operations. Center running option evaluations includes more major property impacts and potential more full takes, similar LOS at signalized intersections but reduced neighborhood traffic connectivity, improved safety due to reduced left-turn conflicts, dedicated area for transit operations but increased maintenance challenges, CIG viability underway, and other criteria similar to side-running.

Commissioner Reinhardt said she's looking forward to learning what we hear from stakeholders and interested parties during the upcoming engagement process. She encouraged committee members to attend one of the community meetings in July or August.

7. Next Steps

Stephen Smith provided an update on the schedule and a preview of upcoming CMC meetings.

8. Other Items

Commissioner Reinhardt expressed appreciation for the work done by the staff and acknowledged that the information presented was extensive. The Vice Chair encouraged people to reach out to staff with any questions.

9. Adjourn

Commissioner Reinhardt announced that the upcoming Purple Line CMC meeting is set for August 1, 2024, and concluded the meeting, adjourning it at 2:32PM.

Meeting Materials Provided:

Meeting Agenda, June 6, 2024

CMC PowerPoint Presentation,

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz Sund, Purple Line Administrative Lead