

**METRO Purple Line Corridor Management Committee
Notes for the April 29, 2022 Meeting
Held at Metropolitan Council Chambers – 5th Street**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Charlie Zelle, Vice Chair Victoria Reinhardt, Bill Walsh, Scott McCune, Sue Vento, Mike Barnes, Nick Thompson, Sheena Denny, Eric Goebel, Nelsie Yang, Nikki Villavicencio, Len Cacioppo

MEMBERS ABSENT:

1. WELCOME (CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL)

Chair Charlie Zelle called the meeting of the METRO Purple Line BRT Corridor Management Committee (CMC) to order at 10:38 a.m. on April 29, 2022. Chair Zelle welcomed all attendees back to an in-person meeting at the Metropolitan Council Chambers with gladness to have allowed some time to meet acquaintance with one another. This is Purple Line's very first Corridor Management Committee (CMC) meeting. The CMC meetings ahead are planned to be held virtually. The Purple Line BRT website can be found at <https://www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project> where you can also download the today's meeting agenda and presentation.

Rollcall is taken and introductions made.

a. Regional Vision for Transit

Chair Zelle comments how the map illustrates that the Purple Line starts from Point A - Saint Paul to Point B - which is being figured out. There is importance is considering how it will integrate with the rest of transit. Transit is a system. Public transportation is a system; it is not a line.

Chair Zelle invites Vice-Chair Victoria Reinhardt to share the history of Rush Line.

b. Long History of Project Planning

- i. Vice-Chair Victoria Reinhardt shared the history of Rush Line and how Purple Line is a segment of Rush Line, an ongoing project since 1998.
- ii. Corridor communities have been involved in every step along the way to determine what transit investments make the most sense in the corridor. Most of the transportation system was taking place in the West Metro, but the East Metro was not forgotten. Purple Line and Gold Line are evidence of that we are connecting all areas of the Metro. "Trail and transit will co-exist."
- iii. In 2017, the municipalities along the Purple Line route endorsed the Locally Preferred Alternative – bus rapid transit from Saint Paul to White Bear Lake – and in 2020 reaffirmed this support with resolutions endorsing the project's preliminary design plans.

c. Robust Public Engagement History

- i. Community engagement has been top priority through every phase of the project.
- ii. Input from residents, workers, and businesses has shaped the selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), the location of stations, the preliminary design, the project's commitment to electrical buses, and more.

- iii. Community engagement will remain a critical component of the Purple Line as Met Council moves forward with the project.

Chair Zelle commends the hard work and planning of the Rush Line. Met Council looks forward to the ongoing partnership with Ramsey County including all present and future project partners.

2. CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chair Zelle speaks on the importance of the CMC, its role, and responsibilities as detailed in the previously sent out charter for review. Chair recognizes Craig Lamothe, Project Manager, to present.

- a. Craig presents the project committee structure and CMC charter role and responsibilities. This committee is advisory to the Council and County.

Craig turned the presentation back to the Chair.

Chair Zelle opens the floor for any questions, comments, or edits to the charter. There is no meeting protocol. Hands can be raised, and one will be acknowledged to speak.

Scott McCune asked about the reoccurrence of the CMC meetings.

Craig responded that the recommendation is for the 2nd full week of the month.

- b. Chair Zelle welcomed for a motion to adopt the charter. Nelsie Yang motioned, Eric Goebel second. No further discussion was raised. Chair Zelle calls for a voice vote resulting with unanimous “aye” around the table, no opposition.

Chair Zelle confirmed the adoption of the Purple Line Corridor Management Committee Charter.

Chair Zelle welcomed Deputy Project Manager Frank Alarcon to lead the committee to the next topic

3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Frank Alarcon, Deputy Project Manager proceeds to share on the following items.

- a. Scope
- b. Purpose and Need
- c. Cost Estimate and Funding Approach
- d. Schedule. Currently the project is in the Project Development Phase seeking grant approval. Design is at 25%. Under current project assumption, Construction Phase is projected to begin 2024 and will conclude in 2026 with revenue service starting then. If an alternative route modification is decided on, timeline will reflect according to those changes.

Frank Alarcon turns the meeting back to Chair Zelle.

Pause for questions and comments.

Sue Vento shared in reference to Vice Chair Reinhardt’s remarks about the Rush Line going to Rush City. Rush City is still hoping and looking forward for Transit to go there.

Chair Zelle thanked Frank for the presentation and Sue for her comments.

Chair Zelle welcomes Council Member Bill Walsh of White Bear Lake to discuss recent resolution related to the Project passed by his City Council.

4. WHITE BEAR LAKE CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Bill Walsh briefed the Committee on the process and comments of surprise from White Bear Lake (WBL) in response to the Purple Line Project. Bill confirms that there were several votes along the way, well and full information was provided by the Project and Outreach, both Ramsey County and the Metropolitan Council.

- a. City's history of concerns, discussions and actions
- b. City's recent actions. White Bear Lake with its downtown is unique. WBL's thought that prevailed in its resolution is essentially "Our downtown, our unique flavor – the Project like this does not fit our city." Discussions over progression and being left out is felt to be one of the City's best discussions. No criticism of the planning process.

Bill Walsh, encouraged by what has been presented so far today, hopes that some of the language of the resolution may have room to be modified or adjusted to continue good future discussions.

Chair Zelle thanked Bill for his presentation and representation. He speaks on the importance of language and generational impact decisions.

Chair Zelle directs the meeting over to Project Manager Craig Lamothe to share on the Roadmap response.

5. A ROADMAP TO RESPONDING TO THE CITY'S RESOLUTION

Craig Lamothe shared the Project's research on impact and potential route modifications. Looking for discussion today, not for direction or action.

- a. Option #1 Continue to advance the Locally Preferred Alternative
- b. Option #2 Truncate the BRT project to either at Maplewood Mall or near County Road E, and add a Purple Line Connector between Maplewood Mall and downtown White Bear Lake
 - i. Potential routing and station/stop locations

Craig Lamothe turns the meeting back to Chair Zelle.

Chair Zelle reiterated that there is no decision being made today but there is a lot of information to be looked at and considered. It is important to bring the information received today to your Cities and County to have discussions and get reactions. Does Purple Line stick with the environmentally cleared path or consider shortening it with a lot to nuance of alternatives. We will likely revisit these options at our next meeting in June.

Chair Zelle pauses for questions, comments, and discussion.

Vice Chair Reinhardt states, as a member of advisory to this Committee, that the alternative should involve a connector bus going to White Bear Lake as WBL has committed to. It will provide a scheduled and reliable service to for people who are dependent on Transit. It will serve the economic and civil needs of the business and people of White Bear Lake.

Vice Chair Reinhardt thanks all of the staff from Ramsey County and Met Council for putting much into this Project to meet the needs of the people, meet Federal requirements and move the us forward in a positive way with an integrated transit system for the metro area.

Eric Goebel states that he strongly supports alternate route 1c. Willow Lake Blvd has a lot of industrial companies so the route would support workers in/to Vadnais Heights. Is there a possibility to route 1c. differently to service that area?

Chair Zelle responds that this is a start of the process to modify an alternate route with options.

Len Cacioppo asked about the ridership stats presented and usage of the connector. "If there is a connector bus between Maplewood and downtown WBL, why wouldn't the reflected 150-350 people be able to ride that bus?"

Craig Lamothe responds that the Project is using data considering connectors and transfers, so the numbers reflect as so.

Bill Walsh weighed in that many have asked throughout the Project discussions, “It’s heartening to hear that you still can get a federal funded project with a plan like this. WBL is not anti-bus. The alternatives are possible and buses to White Bear are important.

Nikki Villavicencio shares her excitement of the options present for alternate routes. With thoughts on the Purple Line Connector, a suggestion is to make the modifications as similar as possible to the route. Voiced concerns raised about rumors of no sidewalk improvements and informs the room of the dangers and inaccessibility. Also voiced the importance of informing and broadcasting to the community the “why” for smaller busses so they know its availability for all to ride.

Nelsie Yang echoed the importance and value for electrical buses. She would like to hear from the Project which route they may be leaning to. Nelsie also raised questions about “risk” of alternate routes.

Craig Lamothe responds that risks may relate to property rights, acquisition, roads and stations, and flexibility.

Bill Walsh comments that the presented alternative routes shows that the Project listened and responded to WBL’s resolution. He cannot comment on which alternative route but will bring back to his city what has been presented for discussion.

Nick Thompson comments that the plans and commitment is to open the Purple Line Connector the day Purple Line opens.

Vice Chair Reinhardt speaks to the need to hear from Vadnais Heights because the alternatives open opportunities for Vadnais Heights.

6. ADJOURN

Chair Zelle draws attention that we are at meeting time’s end. Chair acknowledged the conversation, and encourage the study required, and the need to have the conversation. Thanked the committee members for being present and engaged. The next meeting will be held in June.

Chair Zelle gives Craig Lamothe a final opportunity to say final words.

Craig Lamothe briefly highlights the Project’s next steps which is to continue evaluation of the alternatives presented today, bring back alternative metrics in June, outreach and engagement, and general public open house. If enough information is available in June, the Project is seeking recommendations to suspend the LPA so that the Project can focus on advancing the alternatives. Come August, the Project hopes to be able to present the best alternative options and have the committee weigh in.

Chair Zelle emphasized that June is not the final sub-alternative, it is considering to suspend the LPA. This will be a process for some time.

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Meeting Materials Provided:

Meeting Agenda, April 29, 2022

CMC PowerPoint Presentation, April 29, 2022

Respectfully Submitted,

Paphoua Hang, Project Office Administrator