

# Meeting Minutes: Community and Business Advisory Committee

**Date:** 8/23/2024  
**Location:** Virtual, Microsoft Teams

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## Attendance – 8 total committee member attendees, 5 staff members, 2 guests

- Pat Horan
  - Felicia Anderson
  - Ianni Houmas
  - Joan Ballanger
  - Kari Moore
  - Laurie Malone
  - Rebecca Nelson
  - Torin Gustafson
  - Julie Martinez
  - Cyndi Harper
  - Stephen Smith
  - Sara Pflaum
  - Liz Jones
  - Colin Owens
  - Emilee Roschen
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## Meeting Notes

### Arcade Street Station Update & Next Steps

Stephen Smith shared an update on the Arcade Street Station analysis. He shared that the project office had talked with the owner of Seeger Square (Glimcher Group) and engaged with two consulting firms to explore this area in terms of transit-oriented development potential and station location alternatives. The goals of this study were to create value for the community, promote the Purple Line, and create an active and accessible station area. The project also wanted to be near Arcade and Neid to promote development and redevelopment. There were three development scenarios that were considered and analyzed under a range of market conditions.

Stephen discussed that conversations with the Glimcher Group revealed potential opportunities and challenges with the redevelopment of the privately-held sites. This property is a well-functioning asset for the Glimcher Group, and they do not have any current plans to sell this property. The Glimcher Group does not have any experience with mixed-use redevelopment and would unlikely lead a TOD project at Arcade. Redevelopment in the near term would require significant public agency intervention but could deliver significant value to the community – a potential of 700-1,100 units of new housing. Because this commercial property is fully-leased, the politics of a public agency purchasing this site are challenging.

Stephen also shared that the Arcade Station, option A2, preliminary (30%) design was completed in July. This design accommodates the Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi Daylighting Phalen Creek Project. Stephen noted

that the project team understands this station isn't perfect but under the constraints, it's the best the design team could do to fit a station near Arcade. There are still conversations the project office wants to have with district councils and other community members.

## **Metro Transit's Network Now**

Cyndi Harper, with Metro Transit, presented Metro Transit's Network Now program, which is the Met Council's vision through 2027. This is a short-term plan to resolve the status of suspended routes and to deal with facilities associated with those routes. This plan has goals to improve the network of new and redesigned routes, make frequency and span improvements, prepare for Metro line investments, and grow micro transit networks. This work started in 2022 and went public in 2023. The plan will be distributed and available for the public to review and comment on. The plan would be submitted to the Met Council to be approved in early 2025.

Cyndi talked about the Metro Micro Project Expansion that's part of this proposed Network Now plan. The objectives are to reach areas that are difficult to effectively serve with fixed routes, connect to the network at transit centers and transitway stations, and use of a mobile app. This program is looking to add 8 more zones.

Julie Martinez, with Metro Transit, shared that there will be an online comment form so that the public can comment on the document. The plan will be released on September 12. There will be in-person and virtual meetings for the public to attend. Once the comment period closes, the team will refine the plan based on feedback and seek Met Council approval in early 2025. The phased implementation would start in 2025 until 2027.

Cyndi shared that the northern endpoints specific to this corridor, the plan assumes the Purple Line is using the Bruce Vento Trail, but the team is aware that there are conversations about using White Bear Avenue and Maryland Avenue. Since the Purple Line project is outside the 2027 deadline, Metro Transit would update this plan if there's a change to the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Cyndi shared there is a transit zone focused on the Maplewood Mall area. Other routes that would get improvements include the route 71, 219, and 223.

In the chat, Felicia Anderson asked if key express routes include weekend coverage. Cyndi responded that they are not planning to do weekend service on the express service.

In the chat, Joan Ballanger asked about the community line to the area around the new Heights and the area that has no coverage between White Bear Avenue and Century Avenue. Joan added that as a transit rider, the nearest bus is difficult to get to, more than 7 blocks, with no bus service between White Bear Avenue and Century Avenue. Cyndi responded that they are talking about an east and west option going through that area.

Ianni Houmas commented that he had heard some of the work being done with the Blue Line Extension project and this is great to hear.

## Route Modification Study Update: Northern End Point Viability

Stephen Smith shared that the project had done some outreach and engagement but had been suspended it based on the viability of the northern endpoints. Neither option was viable under the FTA guidance. In April, the FTA released updated proposed guidance which made both endpoints viable. Stephen reviewed project ratings for both alternative endpoints/extensions under the proposed guidance. Both endpoints/extensions will increase the overall project ridership and serve more transit-reliant customers from zero-car households.

Pat Horan asked which line of business the developer (Glimcher Group) was in and how impactful would their interest be. Stephen responded that their business model was in strip malls, they don't have a housing portfolio or experience in redevelopment.

Pat asked if security measures were taken into consideration because of concern about people leaving their cars. Stephen said there's only a park-and-ride proposed at the Maplewood Mall and by 35E near Vadnais Heights (for an alignment ending at CR D). There is no proposed park-and-ride for the Arcade area. If people were riding and hiding, it would be on private land, which would be a different problem. Once in the design phase, the project team would look more into security and have a safety and security workshop.

Stephen talked through the next steps for the project. The Corridor Management Committee's (CMC) action on a fully revised LPA recommendation will be delayed from October 14 to December 5 to allow any necessary and additional technical analysis, and outreach and engagement. The project team would further explore and answer open questions to inform the decision-making. The project would engage with project partners, stakeholders, interested parties, and the public about the value and considerations of expanding Purple Line north of Maplewood.

## Outreach & Engagement Update

Colin Owens gave an overview of recent canvassing efforts done on National Night Out (August 6). Project staff visited 23 National Night Out events along the corridor, distributed flyers and paper surveys, and spoke with residents at apartment complexes. The feedback was a mixture of support and opposition. Colin shared an update on the Hello Lamp Post campaign throughout the corridor. This two-way communication platform via signage and the user's cell phone has so far generated 294 conversations, totaling 1,383 messages from respondents. Colin shared recent and upcoming events.

## Additional Q&A

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## Action Items

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