

## MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** July 12, 2018  
**Time:** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
**Location:** East Side Enterprise Center

### ATTENDEES

Name	Community of Residence or Affiliation	Present
<b>Committee Members</b>		
Dave Anderson	Vadnais Heights	X
Mark Bayuk	White Bear Lake	X
Samantha Crosby	Maplewood	X
Frederick Dahm	Maplewood	
Raquel de la Bastide	Vadnais Heights	X
Lisa Freese	Saint Paul	
Richard Johnstone	White Bear Lake	X
Mark Lynch	White Bear Lake	X
Sandy Matzdorf	White Bear Lake	
Robert Morse	Vadnais Heights	X
Darrell Paulsen	Maplewood	X
Brent Peterson	Saint Paul	X
Eric Saathoff	Saint Paul	X
Shoua Salas	Saint Paul	
Romi Slowiak	Saint Paul	X
Therese Sonnek	Maplewood	X
TraNeicia Sylvester	Saint Paul	
Yin Thong	Maplewood	
Julie Vang	Saint Paul	
Carolyn Wensman	White Bear Township	
Michael Werner	Vadnais Heights	X
Cynthia Whiteford	Saint Paul	X
<b>Project Team Members and Other Attendees</b>		
Frank Alarcon	Rush Line BRT Project Team	X
Beth Bartz	Rush Line BRT Project Team	X
Andy Gitzlaff	Rush Line BRT Project Team	X

Adele Hall	Rush Line BRT Project Team	X
Jessica Laabs	Rush Line BRT Project Team	X
Luke Soiseth	Rush Line BRT Project Team	X
Alicia Valenti	Rush Line BRT Project Team	X
Nora Slawik	Mayor, City of Maplewood and Chair of Rush Line BRT Project Policy Advisory Committee	X
Ron Trach	Owner and Manager, White Bear Lake Shopping Center	X
Paul Cassidy	Stinson Leonard Street	X
Brenden Hoehn	Intern for Mayor Nora Slawik	X
John Slade	Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing	X

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Nora Slawik, Chair of the Policy Advisory Committee made opening remarks and Frank Alarcon facilitated introductions among members of the Community Advisory Committee and other meeting attendees.

### 2. Role of the Community Advisory Committee

Beth Bartz provided an overview of the Community Advisory Committee and its role. This committee will advise the Rush Line BRT Project team and decision makers on key project design, station area planning, environmental analysis and operational plan decisions from a community and business perspective. The committee will advise on communication and public engagement techniques and opportunities. The committee charter includes more information, including the role of the chair and vice chair. All members of the committee can run for either role. Selection of the chair and vice chair will occur at the next Community Advisory Committee meeting in September. Community Advisory Committee meetings are anticipated to occur quarterly.

### 3. Project Overview

#### *Tasks and Schedule*

Frank Alarcon discussed the project process to date. The last phase was the Pre-Project Development Study, which considered 55 route segments and seven bus and rail transit vehicles. This phase occurred between 2014 and 2017. Eric Saathoff asked if there will be space inside buses for bicycles and Robert Morse asked how ADA accessibility will be addressed and how many bicycles will fit on each vehicle. Frank said that accessibility will be enhanced by level or nearly-level boarding and improved winter maintenance, and that the bicycle capacity will depend on the transit vehicles purchased. Darrell Paulsen said that there is a need to utilize buses with capacity for more than two wheelchairs and that it would be ideal to have this change systemwide, but in the meantime that BRT projects can lead the way. Dave Anderson expressed support for this suggestion, citing the number of healthcare institutions along the route. Frank mentioned the high number of senior and assisted living

facilities along the route. Robert stated that tandem bicycles are also used by people with disabilities and suggested that BRT vehicles should accommodate them. Therese Sonnek added that people will likely bike from North St. Paul to connect with the Rush Line.

### *Purpose, Need and Goals*

The purpose, need, and goals established during the Pre-Project Development Study will carry into the current environmental analysis phase. There were significant public engagement efforts during the Pre-Project Development Study phase, with over 5,200 people participating in more than 150 events. There was also a deliberate effort to reach out to typically underrepresented communities. The purpose of the project is to provide transit service that satisfies the long-term regional mobility needs for businesses and the traveling public and supports sustainable development within the study area. The goals of the project are to increase transit use, develop an implementable project, improve quality of life, improve sustainable options, enhance regional connectivity and support the local vision for sustainable development.

The main outcome of the Pre-Project Development Study was the locally preferred alternative, which includes the route, general station locations and type of transit. The locally preferred alternative was selected because it best meets the project goals.

A video of the Orange Line BRT in Los Angeles made for the Gateway Corridor/Gold Line project was played to show an example of dedicated BRT.

### *Transitway Development Process*

Beth Bartz provided an overview of the environmental analysis phase of the Rush Line BRT Project. Mark Lynch asked what will happen to the Community Advisory Committee once the environmental analysis phase has concluded and the project transitions to the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit and moves into the project development phase. Beth said that the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit will be responsible for that decision. Beth outlined the four key tasks of the environmental analysis phase: environmental analysis, preliminary engineering, station area planning and public engagement. Preliminary engineering determines the orientation of the transit lanes in the roadway and the precise location of station platforms. The environmental analysis is based on this engineering and evaluates potential impacts to transportation, community and social factors and physical and environmental resources.

Beth said that the environmental analysis is performed in compliance with state and federal environmental laws, and that the federal class of action is an Environmental Assessment. Beth said that an Environmental Assessment is the federal class of action rather than an Environmental Impact Statement because the project is using existing right-of-way and thus its environmental review requires a lesser level of detail and process, though both classes of action examine the same issues. Romi Slowiak asked how an Environmental Assessment is different from an Environmental Impact Statement. Beth stated that the process for an Environmental Impact Study is more intensive and takes more time than the process for an Environmental Assessment. Beth listed the components of station area planning, the role of station area working groups in the process and the structure of these groups.

Robert asked about transit service to Forest Lake, Hugo and other northern suburbs. Frank said that the last phase of the project determined that the core market for high-frequency transit service in the corridor is between Saint Paul and White Bear Lake, based largely on population and employment data and growth projections through 2040. Frank stated that part of the current phase of work is looking at possible transit connections to the northern suburbs and areas east and west of the BRT

route, but that there is not sufficient demand for high-frequency, bidirectional transit north of White Bear Lake. Therese Sonnek asked if local bus service in the area would be reduced when operation of the Rush Line BRT Project begins. Frank said that they do not anticipate any reductions in bus service, though some routes might be adjusted to facilitate connections to the Rush Line. Therese asked how the station area planning working groups were determined. Beth said that they were created in collaboration with cities and that in the future the Community Advisory Committee will be invited to working groups, then added that the structure varies by community because the cities lead them and described the differences among each group. Mark Lynch asked if there would be BRT at the connection between Highways 36 and 61. Adele said that Highway 36 has been identified as a highway BRT corridor but that it has not been funded. Ron Trach asked which stations will have parking. Frank said there will be parking at the Maplewood Mall Transit Center and likely the County Road E and Highway 36/English stations, as well as either the downtown White Bear Lake or Marina Triangle station. Dave Anderson asked whether there would be some way to create a connection between the park-and-ride in Vadnais Heights and the Rush Line. Mayor Slawik suggested attending a station area planning working group meeting.

Adele Hall gave an overview of the demographic characteristics found in the corridor, the Community and Public Engagement Plan and themes from public engagement conducted so far. This phase will build on the public engagement that occurred in the previous phase. The goal is not just to raise awareness of the project but also to gather input into the decision-making process. Romi asked if the Rush Line BRT Project team had spoken to any current transit riders. Adele said that the project team has not conducted an onboard survey but that it will be considered. Frank added that the project team is currently organizing a pop-up event at the Maplewood Transit Center. Cynthia Whiteford asked if there would be any pop-up meetings in downtown Saint Paul, especially to get feedback from communities that may not feel engaged. Adele said that the Project team is currently evaluating several possible activities of this nature.

#### 4. Small Group Discussion

Frank asked the Community Advisory Committee attendees to break into three groups for facilitated discussion of the following four questions:

- Do you have additional ideas of where Rush Line public engagement could take place in your community?
- What destinations are near the stations in your community?
- How would you reach the station nearest you? Is there infrastructure in place to reach it safely and conveniently? If yes, what works? If no, what can be improved?
- What qualities of the BRT service do you find most valuable?

Members of the Community Advisory Committee identified several opportunities for additional Rush Line BRT public engagement. They are listed below:

- **Saint Paul:** Music in Mears, Hmong churches, Karen churches, Payne Avenue Harvest Festival, Payne Avenue Business Association, East Side Area Business Association, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater MSP, Art in the Hollow, Listening House, Terrace

Heights, Railroad Island Task Force, apartments on Sibley Street and E. 7th Street, and Duluth and Case Recreation Center.

- **Maplewood:** Trinity Church, Maplewood Farmers Market and pop-up meeting at Borchert's Meat.
- **Vadnais Heights:** Vadnais Square and Vadnais Heights Farmers Market.
- **Gem Lake:** Gem Lake Stadium Bar and Grill.
- **White Bear Lake:** White Bear Lake Farmers Market, White Bear Township Days, Ecumen Senior Facility, Hanifl Performing Arts Center, Dellwood Music Festival, Boatworks Commons Apartments and Century College.

Committee members discussed stations will be located nearest to them, how they would access these stations, and whether it is safe to use their chosen mode to access these stations. They said it is challenging to access the Arcade station via bicycle and that it is not included in the city's bike plan. Members also said that it is unpleasant to walk to the Arcade station from the south. The Payne Avenue and Phalen Village stations are both easy to access on foot and via bicycles. It is also challenging to bicycle along Larpenteur Avenue and in downtown Saint Paul. One member noted that the current alignment makes it relatively difficult to access St. John's Hospital and the Maplewood Mall from the planned stations, and Frank explained that the routing in the St. John's Hospital/Maplewood Mall area is currently being refined to best serve those destinations.

Committee members identified the qualities of BRT service that they find most valuable. High frequency, lighting and wayfinding were most often listed as important aspects of good transit service, with wayfinding being identified as crucial for people with disabilities to orient themselves. Accessibility for seniors was also noted as an important quality. One member identified wayfinding and access from the Gateway Trail to the Frost Avenue station as particularly important. Another member asked if it would be possible for the route to be streamlined. Members also stated that they would like to see aesthetic amenities such as trees and greenery along the route and in station areas. Some members stated that midnight is too early in the night to end service, citing the number of people who live in the corridor and work nontraditional hours, such as people who work in healthcare. Near-level boarding and stations similar to train stations were also identified as valuable qualities. Members who live in and near White Bear Lake identified a need for safer pedestrian facilities at Highway 61. One member also stated that bikeshare would be a good way to increase access to the Rush Line.

### 5. Scheduling Next Meeting

Based on the availability of committee members, it was determined that the committee's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 18, 6-8 p.m.