

**ROBBINSDALE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL WORK SESSION
February 28, 2023
6:00 p.m.
Robbinsdale City Hall
4100 Lakeview Avenue North**

MINUTES

1. The work session was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Wagner at 6:00 p.m.
2. Council Members present: Murphy, Webb, Parisian, Wagner, Mayor Blonigan
3. Staff present: Tim Sandvik, City Manager; Rick Pearson, Community Development Director; Richard McCoy, Public Works Director; Kayla Kirtz, Assistant to City Manager – Communications
4. Guests: Director of Engineering and Design, Blue Line Project Office; Director of Transit, Hennepin County; Journalist, SunPost; HNTB staff; Bolton & Menk staff, MetroTransit staff; Kimley Horn staff; Co-Chair of the Stop Light Rail on 81 Committee

Discussion: Blue Line Extension Light Rail

5. Sandvik introduced the work groups and committees working on the Blue Line project, explained the project timeline, and explained the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.
6. Sandvik introduced HNTB. Mario from HNTB gave the presentation.
7. Wagner asked about the potential station at North Memorial Hospital. HNTB staff clarified that their scope did not include the North Memorial station. Sandvik explained that city staff and the project office are in communication with staff at North Memorial.
8. Blonigan asked if the HNTB study looked at alignments on the side of the road rather than the center. Project staff discussed.
9. Murphy asked if project staff analyzed ridership data to justify two stations in Robbinsdale. HNTB staff noted the report and the Director of Engineering and Design noted the environmental impact statement which will include a ridership model. Murphy asked about the ridership numbers produced from pre-pandemic data. Project staff noted that the Federal Transit Authority's guidance is to run ridership models with pre-covid numbers due to uncertainty of numbers post-covid. Murphy asked for a timeline on when the Council would have final ridership numbers and project staff responded that they could pull a range of numbers within the next month. Murphy asked if the data will be looking at bus rapid transit and staff responded that it will not.

10. Blonigan asked for an explanation of the Vissim model, HNTB explained the model.
11. When discussing the park and ride location options, the Hennepin County Director of Transit noted that the park and ride should be in close proximity to the station.
12. Murphy asked if there would be a park and ride in Crystal, project staff responded that the current proposal is an approximately 160 spot surface lot in addition to the existing park and ride just north in Brooklyn Park. Wagner asked if park and ride can be used by both transit riders and shoppers to access nearby commercial businesses, project staff responded yes. HNTB staff noted that a park and ride further north on County Road 81 (CR81) would benefit business access.
13. Blonigan noted his preference for the location on 41st Avenue rather than 40th Avenue because it is more centrally located to downtown and riders would be more likely to access downtown businesses.
14. Pearson asked about the surface parking lot numbers accounting for bus space as well and staff responded that the numbers do include bus space.
15. Murphy asked if Elim Church is still an option for a park and ride location. Sandvik and project staff explained that Elim Church is an option for redevelopment.
16. Wagner asked about the traffic patterns with US Bank as the location option. HNTB explained that they don't have the traffic patterns for US Bank but can produce them.
17. Blonigan asked if the project was planning to include turn styles, project staff responded no.
18. Wagner asked about infrastructure for electric vehicle (EV) charging at park and rides, staff responded that they would consider multimodal transportation options including EV charging stations.
19. Webb asked about the design, construction and security of other park and rides. Project staff responded that a proposed park and ride would include traditional security including lighting, cameras, and open areas. Wagner asked if light pollution is considered. Webb discussed safety measures for a park and ride that community members will find safe. Murphy asked if the environmental impact statement includes safety concerns.
20. Blonigan asked if there is new technology for traffic lights to operate differently during different times of the day. HNTB staff responded yes and explained some of the technologies.
21. Bolton & Menk gave their presentation.
22. Webb stated that the aesthetics of the project is really important to community members. Webb would like to know what the park and ride will look like and if there is updated technology and equipment that the city can request. Bolton & Menk staff responded that

from a design standpoint a park and ride should be discreet, visible but not overwhelming, and in scale with its surroundings.

23. Wagner asked if parking space numbers should be planned conservatively or with larger numbers in mind and Bolton & Menk staff asked what the Council prefers.
24. Blonigan discussed the three factors posed by Bolton & Menk: lane configuration, traffic operations, and streetscape & pedestrian safety.
25. Blonigan noted the presentation referring to CR81 as the “front door” of Robbinsdale and asked what the Council thinks about that. Webb explained that she likes to think of CR81 as the front door because it connects people to neighboring communities. Murphy explained that CR81 gives Robbinsdale a lot of visibility. Project staff noted that CR81 has opportunity to be improved, Parisian agreed and noted her priorities for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Wagner agreed and highlighted environmental factors, green elements, historical and educational elements, meaningful amenities, solar panels, and prioritizing Robbinsdale residents’ needs.
26. Murphy stated that he thinks the development opportunity alone does not justify light rail and that development will happen regardless.
27. Webb asked about displacement in Minneapolis as a result of LRT and Hennepin County responded that there will be some acquisition of properties. Webb stated that pedestrian safety is important to her and residents.
28. Blonigan stated his feelings that the project is not communicating enough to Robbinsdale businesses about anti-displacement information and resources and that there needs to be a plan. Sandvik discussed the anti-displacement work group and business advisory committee efforts. Project staff have been door knocking with businesses along the corridor.
29. Webb noted that a lot of light rail conversations are hypothetical and residents are concerned with whether or not the light rail is coming and they want to know about municipal consent. Hennepin County stated that they and the Met Council are advancing the project under the assumption that light rail is happening.
30. Project staff confirmed the Council’s priorities: pedestrian safety, conservative parking garage size, aesthetics, distinctly Robbinsdale characteristics, and accessibility.
31. Project staff explained that stations have a uniform footprint with design elements that match the neighborhoods they are in.
32. Sandvik encouraged the Council to connect with project staff, city staff, and continue conversations about light rail project details and priorities.

Staff Updates

33. None.

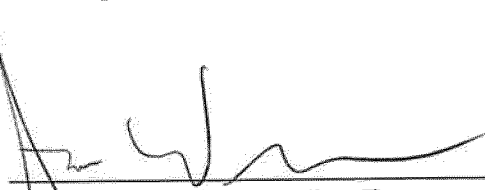
Council Updates

34. None.

ADJOURNMENT

35. Mayor Pro Tem Wagner adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.


Kayla Kirtz, Recorder


Aaron Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem